

## Blending Photos in PSE

Someone requested that I do a tutorial on blending pics into the background in a LO. Since I haven't used this technique in a while, I had to play with it first. This is what I came up with. Want to find out how I blended that photo? It was surprisingly easy!

First, open the photo you want to use, plus a background paper so that you can see how the blending works. Select your photo, right click on the photo's layer in the layers menu, and choose 'layer from background'. A window will pop up where you can give the layer a name if you want (I usually don't), then click 'ok'.

Now select the cookie cutter tool on the left side of the screen (the little person inside a heart). At the top of the page, there is a pull-down menu where you can choose the shape you would like to use. Look around at all of the shapes available, using the two little arrows in the top right corner of the box to find other shape categories. I prefer to just use the simple circle shape. Once you've found the shape you want to use, find where it says 'feather' a few spaces to the right of the shape menu. In the box next to 'feather' type in a number. I used 50 in the example below, but you can play with it and find just the right amount of feathering for your photo. After you've set your feather number, click and drag on your photo to use your cookie cutter shape on the pic. Move and resize the cookie cutter until you have just what you want, then click on the check mark at the top of the page.

Just a tip for advanced PSE users, if you want to select a very specific shape, like a baby's face, you can use your lasso tools with the feathering. Once you've got your object selected and your feather number set, click ctrl+shift+i all at the same time to select the inverse, then click ctrl+x to cut the pic.

Okay, now that you have your photo cut and feathered, drag it onto your background paper. If you want your pic to be black and white, make sure the correct layer is highlighted in the layers menu, go to the 'enhance' tab at the top of the screen, go down to 'adjust color' and choose 'remove color'. Tada! B&W!

Now play with your blending and fading. At the top of the layers box on the right side of the screen, there is a pull-down menu that says 'normal' in it. These are your blending options. Try different options to find which blend you like the best (I used 'hard light' on the example LO). To fade your pic, change the opacity slider that is located next to the blending menu. Play with both the blending and opacity until you have just what you want.

If you want your pic to look faded, but you don't want the pattern from the background paper to show through, either use a pre-made matte from a kit, or make your own simple matte. To make one, go to your layers menu. Right under the blending options you'll see an icon that looks like a piece of paper with a corner folded up. Click on that icon to make a new blank layer. Drag the new layer so that it is between your paper and your photo. Fill that layer with a color of your choice, using the paint bucket tool. Make sure that the filled layer is selected, go back to your cookie cutter, and cut out a matte using the same technique you used on your photo.

That's about all there is to it. In my example layout, I used a couple of additional techniques to get Sophie's clothes to look faded and the starfish to stand out, but the basics are the same. If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail me at [stephanie@thebakerstuff.com](mailto:stephanie@thebakerstuff.com)

Happy Scrappin'!