



Getting Started	Starting Image
<p>What I've found is that there is no single, simple method that will work for selecting hair. What I have come up with is a method that will work under all circumstances. It is a bit tedious, though.</p> <p>Most of my pictures didn't have a nice clean background. That made creating a mask difficult.</p> <p>This was typical. Notice that it's not easy to even see the hair.</p>	 A screenshot of a Photoshop window titled "EPUG_DSCN0633_1.psd @ 66% (New background, RGB/8)". The main canvas shows a photograph of a man with dark hair, glasses, and a goatee, wearing a light-colored sweater. He is positioned in front of a large wooden bookshelf filled with books. The background is somewhat cluttered and lacks a clean, uniform color.

Creating more contrast	Cleaning up the image
<p>Whatever it takes so that you can easily see the hair. Here, I just used the Shadows/Highlight image adjustment.</p> <p>Because there is such a complex background, I left the image in color. Some people like to desaturate the image or use channel mixer. They didn't work for this image.</p>	 A screenshot of a Photoshop window titled "EPUG_DSCN0633_1.psd @ 66% (New background, RGB/8)". The main canvas shows the same photograph of the man as in the previous image, but with significantly increased contrast. The highlights on his hair and the shadows in the background are much more pronounced, making the hair stand out more clearly against the complex background.

## Mask creation

Use the lasso tool to create a selection inside the figure. Use Edit/Fill to fill the selection with white. In masks, remember that “white reveals and black conceals.”

You could also use the Filter/Extract tool to create the selection.

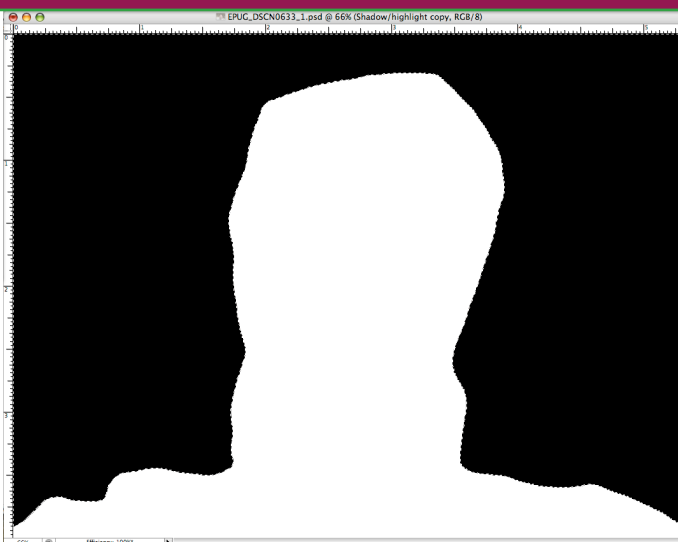


## Completing the rough mask

Choose Select/Inverse. This will invert the selection such that everything that isn't white will be selected.

Choose Edit/Fill and fill with black.

The result will look like this.

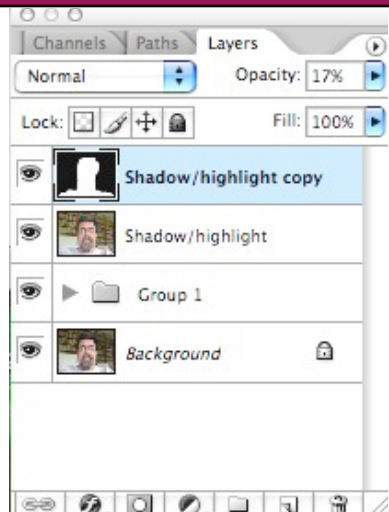


## Preparing to Refine the Mask

Deselect the mask.

Decrease the opacity of the “mask in process” layer to around 20%.

*TIP: set the foreground and background colors to white and black. You can then press the x key to change the brush color back and forth from white to black and black to white.*



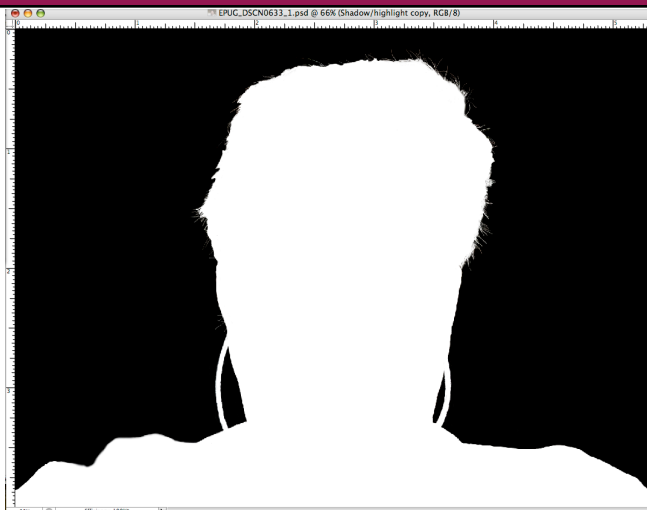
## Refining the Mask

Now it's time to play crayons. Select the brush tool and have white as foreground color.

Size of brush depends on the the size of your image. Here, I used a 20px brush for the rough work and 1px for hair strands.

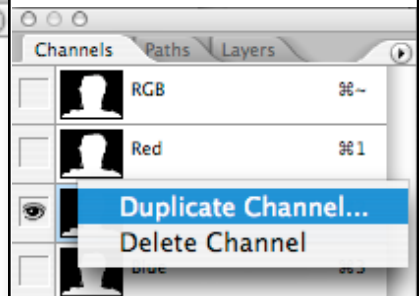
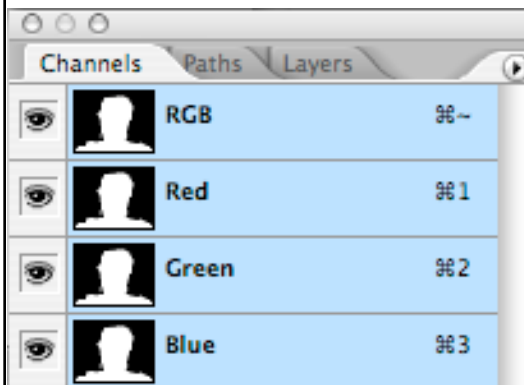
Yes, it's tedious. But it works.

*TIP: It's extremely difficult to do this without a Wacom tablet.*



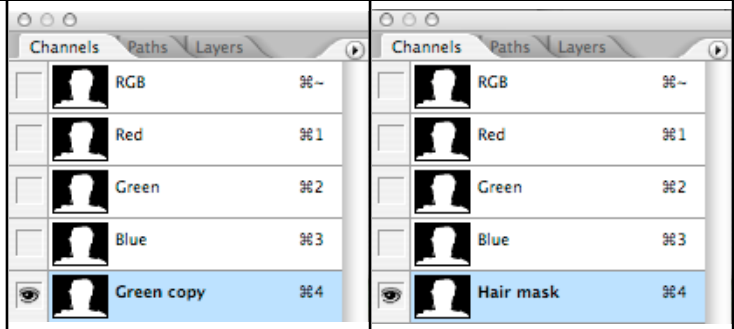
## Turning the Mask Layer into a Real Mask (part 1)

With our black/white painted mask layer highlighted, go to the channels palette. Select one of the color channels; they're all the same. Right-mouse click and choose “duplicate channel.”



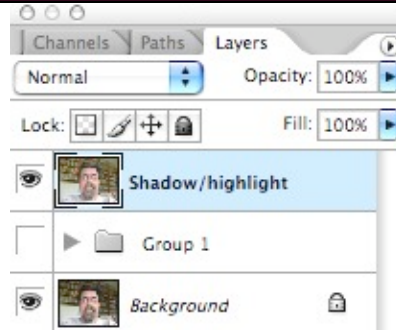
## Turning the Mask Layer into a Real Mask (part 2)

Here I double-clicked on the Green copy and renamed it “Hair mask.”



## Turning the Mask Layer into a Real Mask (part 3)

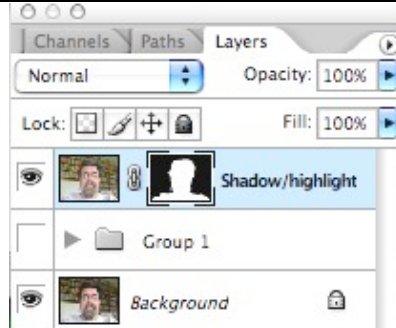
Now comes the scary part! Go back to the layers palette and delete the painted mask layer that we spent so much time on. Don't be scared; just do it.



## Turning the Mask Layer into a Real Mask (part 4)

Choose Select/’Load Selection’ and load “Hair mask.” This will put “dancing ants” around the hair selection.

Now, choose Layer/Layer Mask/Reveal Selection. Voila! It's done.



## Hey! Is he trying to pull a fast one?

The image looks just the same!

The figure is really on the Shadow/highlight layer and the bookcases are on the Background layer.

Look at the next panels below.



## Insert a Different Background to See the Masked Hair

For instance ... here's my wife trying to get my attention.



## ... or a completely blank background

Well, really green.

