

FEATHER/VIGNETTE/BLEND TUTORIAL

By: Hummie

One of the most frequent questions I see on groups is how to blend a photo into a background. This technique is called feather or vignette. Vignette is just a fancy word for a photo fading into the background. Feather is what the tool in Elements is called that you will use to achieve this effect.

Tip: You can also do blending by using a clipping mask as in [this tutorial](#).

1) In the sample below, you see I have a background layer which I filled with the paintbucket tool and a layer with my photo (of one of my favorite places on earth to go!)

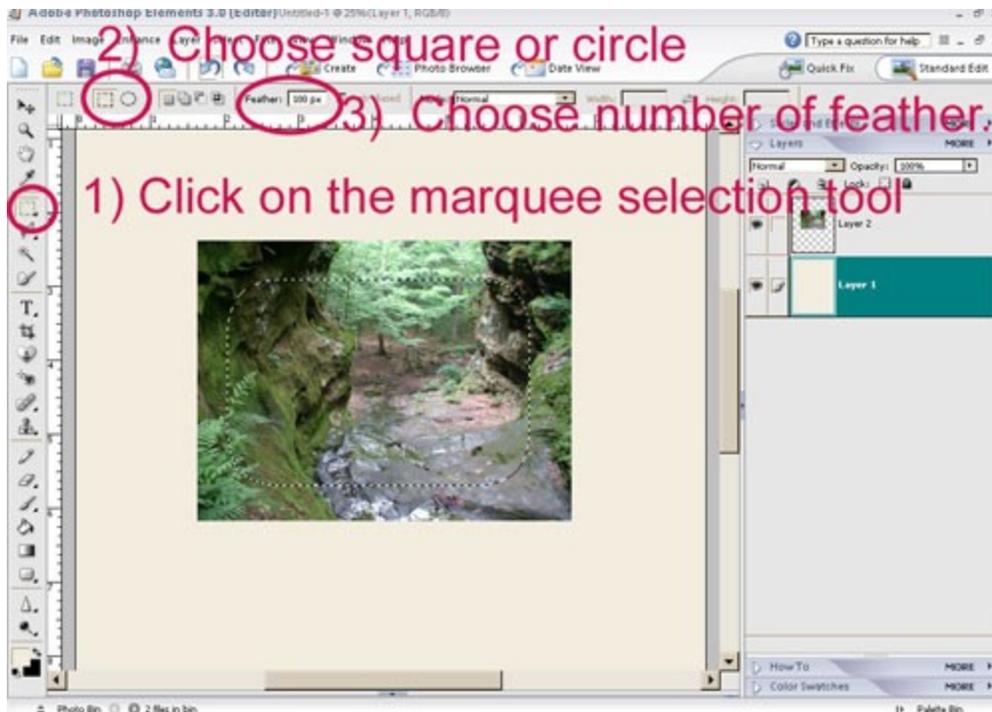
2) As in the photo, click on the marquee selection tool, then choose square or circle. In my sample, I used the square, but I probably see the circle used more often.

3) Choose the number of your feather by typing it in the box. You will have to play with this setting until you find what you like. After you have done these instructions and maybe do not like what you have, just hit the undo button and choose a different feather number.

Basically, the higher the feather number, the greater distance the photo will be feathered and/or blended out. I believe I used 50 for my sample.

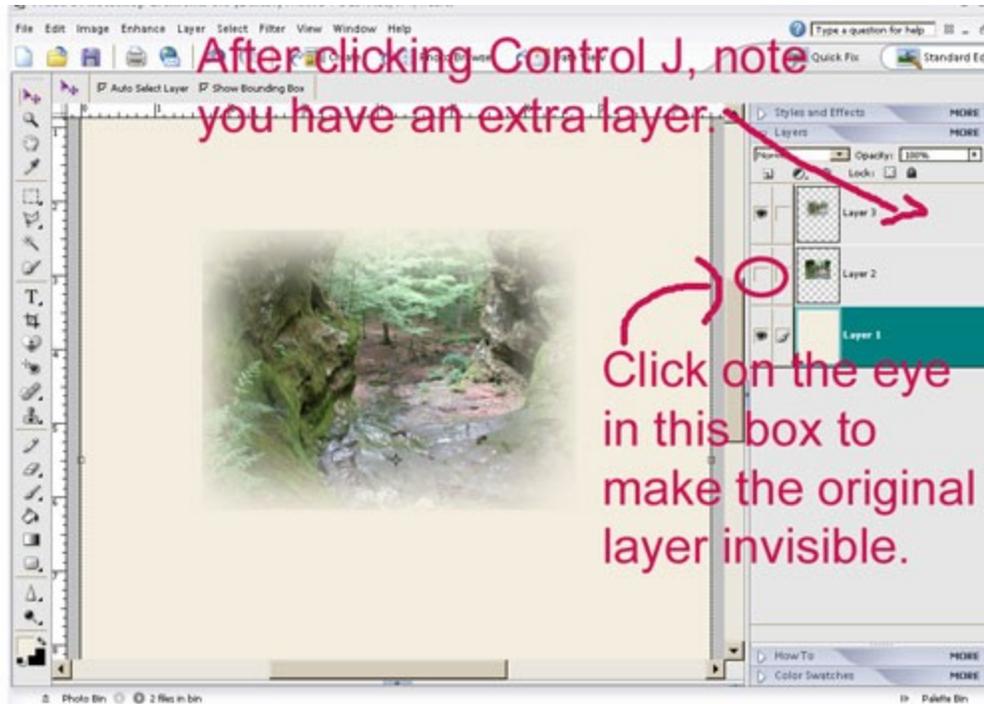
4. Draw with your mouse on your photo to make the selection. If you look really close, you can see where my marching ants are in the sample below. I did not draw directly along the edges of the photo, but a distance from the edges.

Tip: It is *important* that you draw your selection *after* choosing your feathering. It does not work to change your feathering after you have drawn your selection (although that can be done in my second method below--sigh!).



5) Make sure the layer with your photo is the active layer (the layer that is darker). Then simply hit Control J (Right click and choose Layer via Copy in Elements 2). Like magic! You have a third layer that is blended! Look at your layers palette to the right on your screen. Notice you now have three layers.

But your desktop doesn't look any different! Why? You need to hide your original layer. Click on the box with the little eye to make that layer invisible.

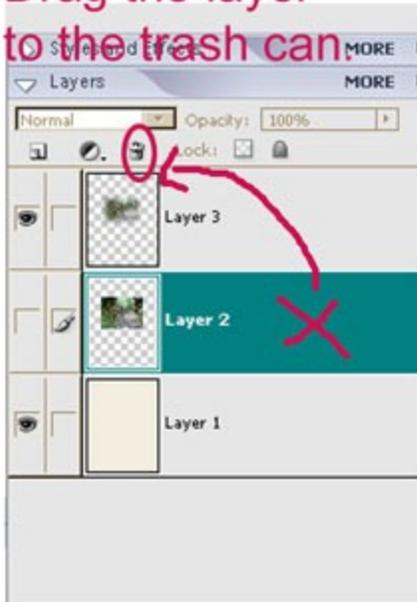


6) This is the point where if you do not like what you see, hit the undo button and choose a different number for your feathering.

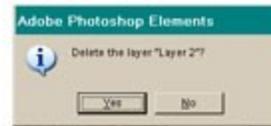
I also prefer this method because it leaves the original layer unchanged. Sometimes after I build my layout more, I find I do not like what I did and I want to re-feather it or maybe leave it un-feathered. It is easy to just delete your feathered layer and start over with your original.

However, once you are satisfied, you can delete you original layer. There are many ways to delete layers. Look at the sample below for three different ways. That is what is so wonderful about Photoshop, there are always many ways to accomplish the same thing.

Drag the layer to the trash can.



Right click on the layer and choose delete layer.



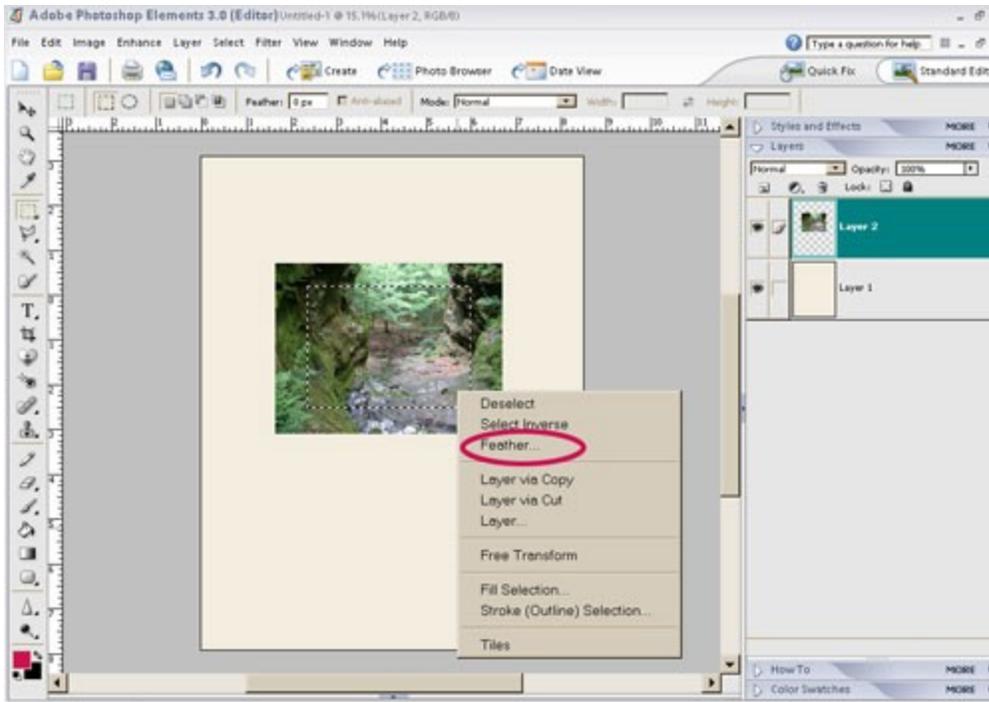
Hit the delete button on your keyboard (make sure layer is active layer).

TECHNIQUE 2!

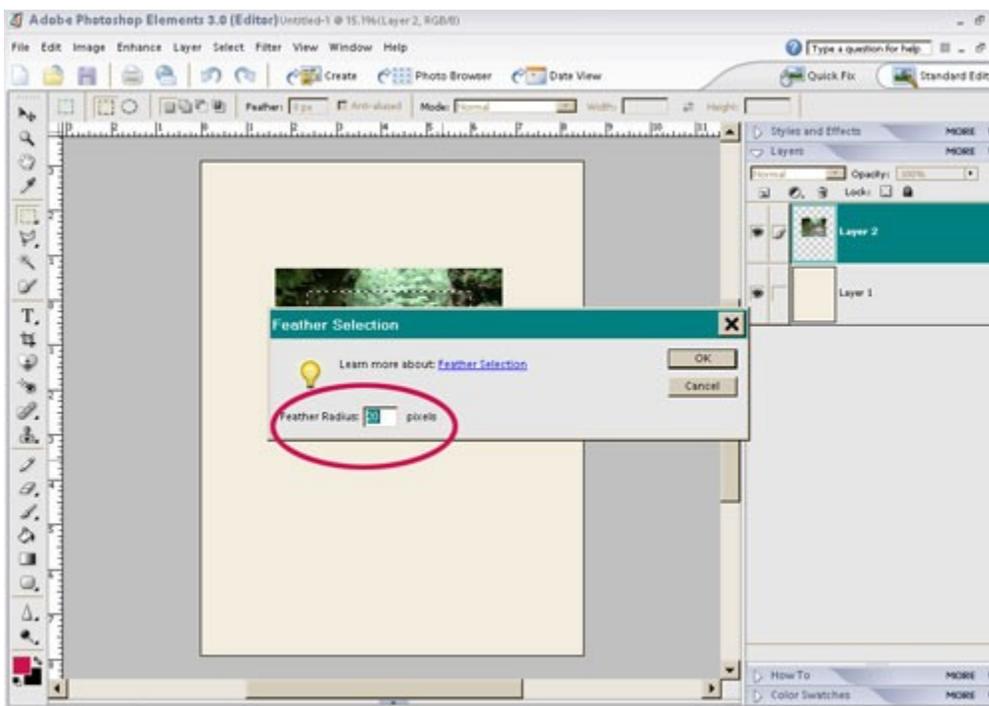
1) Speaking of more than one way to do something, here is a second way to do the feathering!

Use your square or circle selection tool to select part of your photo as you did above (only leave the feather box at zero.)

2) Right click on the selection and choose feather.

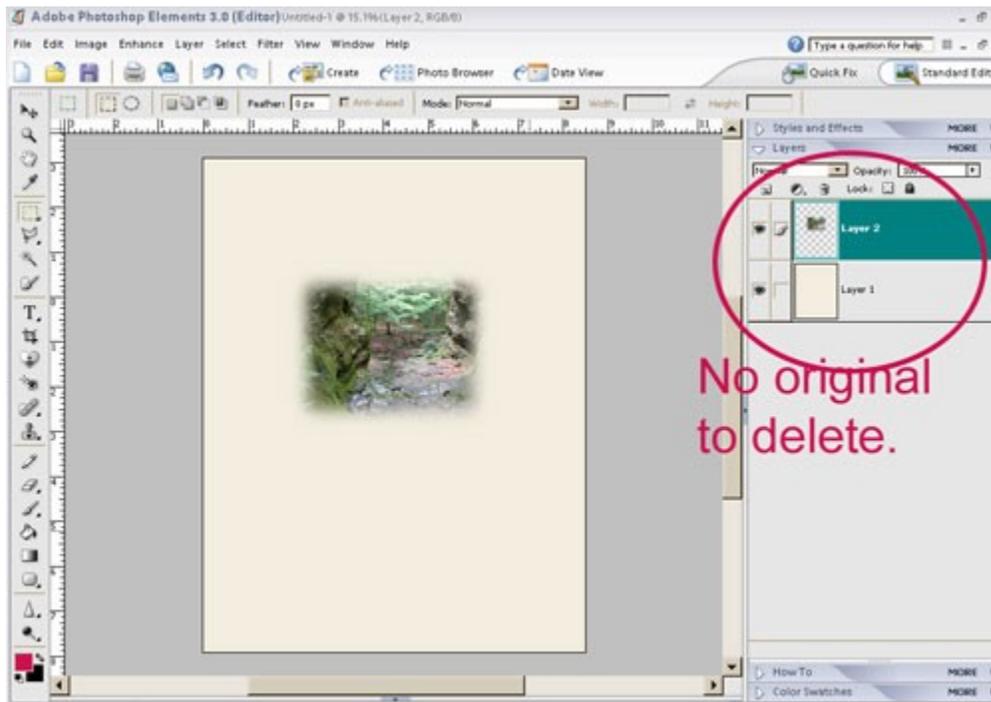


3) Type in your amount of feather. Click okay.



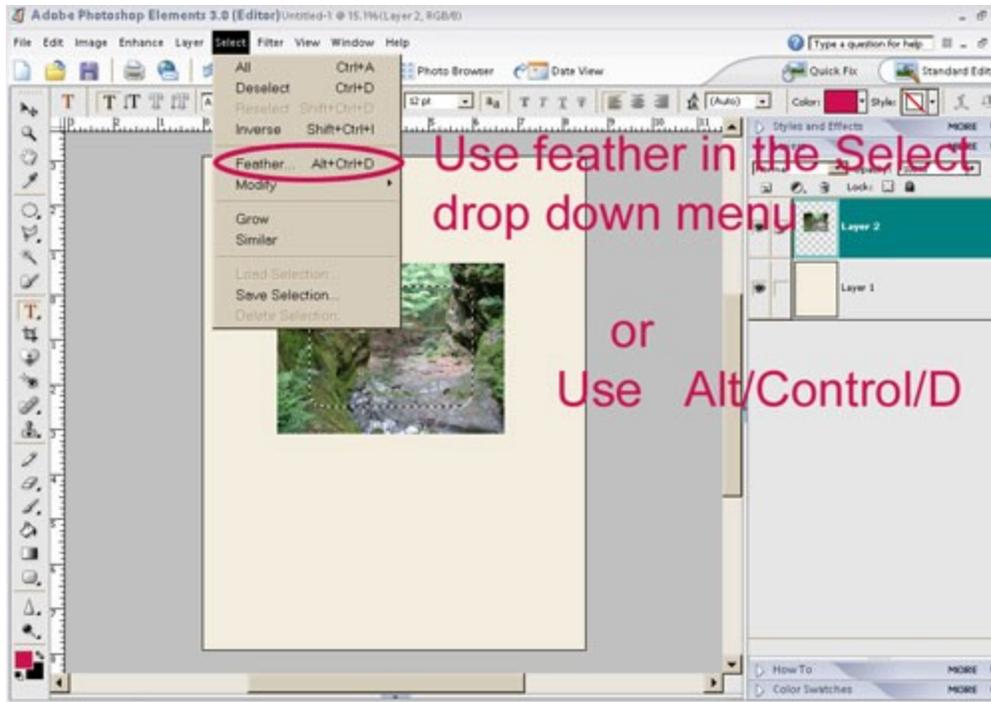
4) Right click again and select "select inverse." In effect, you have now selected/chosen all of the area around your photo instead of your photo itself.

5) Hit the backspace key on your keyboard to delete your selection around the photo. The results will be as in the sample below. Note that there is no third layer and, therefore, you have permanently altered your original layer. Of course, you can hit the undo button now and redo it, but if you decide you do not like it after working further on your layout, you will have to delete this layer and re-import your photo into the layout.



MORE OPTIONS!

Well, just to confuse you some more, I will give you some more options! <smile> As in the example below, rather than right clicking and choosing feather, you can also find that setting under the Select drop down menu. You can also achieve the same thing by using Alt/Control/D on your keyboard.



Now, let's confuse you some more! These commands can also be used with the first method I showed you! Yep, that's right! We can mix and match the techniques in both of the above methods as follows:

- 1) Choose your selection tool (circle or square) and leave the feather at zero.
- 2) Draw your Selection.
- 3) Right click and choose feather and choose the number (or use the drop down menu or key codes as in above photo).
- 4) Hit Control J (as in the first method, but not the second).
- 5) Etc.....I think you can get the idea!