

## Before making color and tonal adjustments

The powerful tools in Photoshop can enhance, repair, and correct the color and tonality (lightness, darkness, and contrast) in an image. Here are some items to consider before making color and tonal adjustments.

- Work with a monitor that's calibrated and profiled. For critical image editing, this is absolutely essential. Otherwise, the image you see on your monitor will look different when printed.
- Whenever you make a color or tonal adjustment to an image, some image information is discarded. It's best to be judicious regarding the amount of correction you apply to an image.
- For critical work and maximum preservation of image data, it's best if the image you work with is 16 bits per channel (16-bit image) rather than 8 bits per channel (8-bit image). Data is discarded when you make tonal and color adjustments. The loss of image information is more critical in an 8-bit image than a 16-bit image. Generally, 16-bit images have a larger file size than 8-bit images.
- Duplicate or make a copy of the image file. Working on a copy of your image preserves the original in the event you need to use the image in its original state.
- Remove any flaws such as dust spots, blemishes, and scratches from the image before making color and tonal adjustments.
- Plan to use adjustment layers to adjust the tonal range and color balance of your image rather than applying an adjustment directly to the image layer itself. Adjustment layers let you go back and make successive tonal adjustments without discarding data from the image layer. Keep in mind that using adjustment layers adds to the file size of the image and demands more RAM from your computer.
- Open the Info or Histogram palette in Expanded view. As you evaluate and correct the image, both palettes display invaluable feedback on your adjustments.
- You can make a selection or use a mask to confine your color and tonal adjustments to part of an image. Another way to apply color and tonal adjustments selectively is to set up your document with image components on different layers. Color and tonal adjustments are applied to only one layer at a time and affect only the image components on the targeted layer.

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