

LAYERS TUTORIAL 2

I covered basic layers and manipulation in the “Basic Layers Tutorial”. Now I want to show you layers in a more practical situation.

You may have noticed one of my pastimes is creating “visual puns” which is a play in pictures on words. For instance you all probably have seen the two below:



“MERCEDES BENDS”



“HOT CHICK IN SOUP”

These are old favorite of mine and the other day when I was visiting a client she said “I went out to dinner last night and half way through the meal I suddenly felt quite light headed”. A light bulb (pun intended) went off in my head and I thought this would make a great visual pun. When I got home I searched my archives and sure enough I found a picture of me in a restaurant. (Actually I found **lots** of pictures of me in restaurants; it’s another one of my pastimes).

I decide to make this a lightheaded subject. To show you how I did this I am just going to show a series of captures out of PhotoShop Elements as I constructed the image.

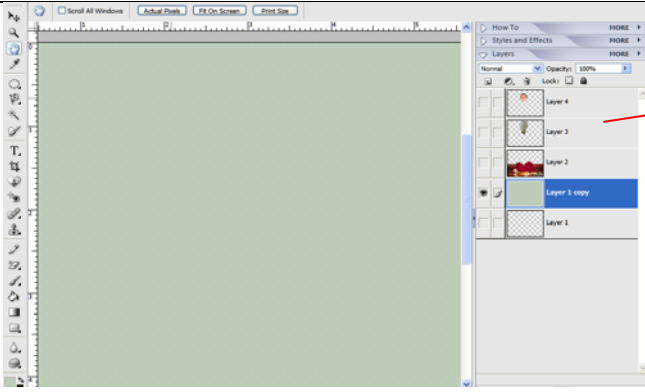
Unlike the first tutorial I am not going to post any pictures for downloading as I think you can find your own to play with to get a similar result. It does not have to be a restaurant scene you can take pictures from anywhere and manipulate them in a similar fashion to what I have done.

So this is what I did:

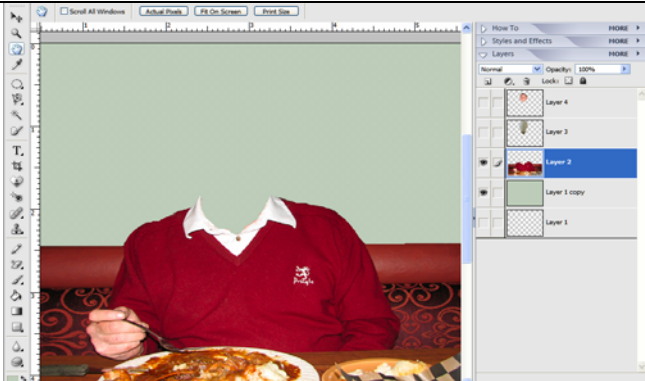


This is the original picture. I did not like the background as it is too distracting plus I needed some more room above my head for the light globe.

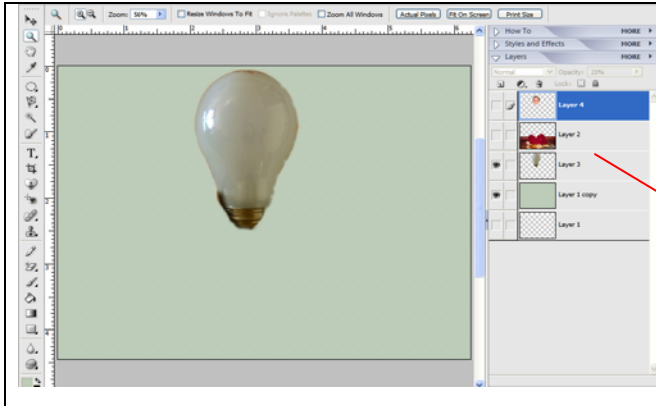
Using the **magnetic selection tool** I carefully traced out the outline of the bottom half of the picture excluding my head. I kept this selection active and opened a new project (below) in Elements and sized it roughly 6" square.



If you look at the **layers panel** you can see this shows all the layers making up the final picture but I will show them one by one. After creating the new project I made a duplicate layer and selected a new solid color adjustment layer (remember that from tutorial one) and gave it this color.

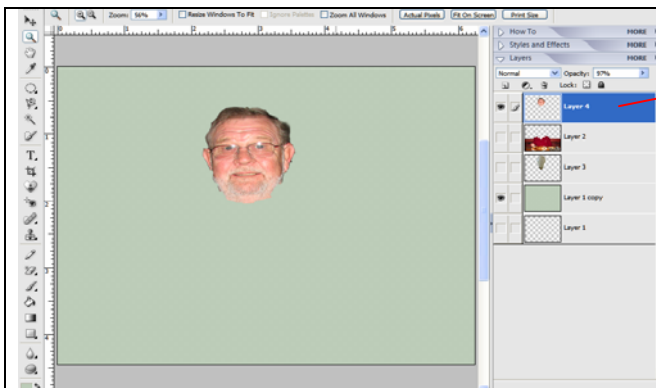


I then copied the selected area from the main picture and pasted it into the new project. I now have three layers:
Original, transparent
Layer 1, filled with color
Layer 2, just the booth and body



I then took a picture of a light globe that I had previously downloaded from Google Images (I think) and put on a transparent background as an image. I went **select> all** in this image and pasted it into my picture. However I want this behind my body (**layer 2**) so I demoted the layer in the layer pallet by dragging it down.

I now have the main portions of my composition. You will notice in the above illustrations I am only showing what is being described; I turn off the layers I do not want to see by clicking on the eye icon by the layer in the pallet to hide the layer. This is good practice as you can see just what you are working with. I bring layer 2 back into view; resize and move the light globe behind where my head should be and slide it into my shirt. As the globe layer is beneath the body layer as I move it down the body covers the lower portion of the globe. When the globe is positioned to my satisfaction I can look closely at the shirt collar and if necessary, by switching to layer 2 erase any small discrepancies. I now want to add a “ghostly face” effect to make it appear that my face is inside the globe. Returning to my original picture I select and copy my head.



The head is pasted into the picture as **layer 4**. (Note I have layers 2 & 3 hidden). I can now turn on the other layers and maneuver the head into position in the light globe and make sure it fits as I want.



After I am satisfied with the positioning it is only a matter of **selecting the head layer (layer 4)** and adjusting the **opacity slider** to make the head appear inside the globe. In this case about 30%.

In the spirit of visual puns I called this “**Feeling Lightheaded**”.

I know some are going to ask why I did not just leave the head on and place the globe over it. The answer is that I wanted the globe to replace the head and fit into the shirt and I only needed the “face” rather than the whole head and neck for the ghostly effect. It is easier to manipulate the globe when the space where the head should be is empty.

Wasn't that easy? Now go find some pictures of your own and try this! If you like bring them to a SIG meeting and show them to all of us.

Here is the full size version:

