

Create a “Photo Glow” Using the Gradient Tool and the Brush Tool

Tip of the Week by Barb Brookbank on January 1, 2013

I love “photo glows.” There is something mystical and energetic about a bright white light coming from behind a photo. I’ve also seen photo glows blended right into photos or mixed in with other elements to enhance backgrounds.



Now I’m seeing layouts with glows of different colors. Some are golden and some are even green!

I decided enough was enough! If I can’t buy all the glows I want, I’m going to have to make my own.

In this tutorial I’m going to show you how to quickly and easily create a “photo glow” using the Gradient tool and the Brush tool. After you know how to do it, the sky’s the limit!

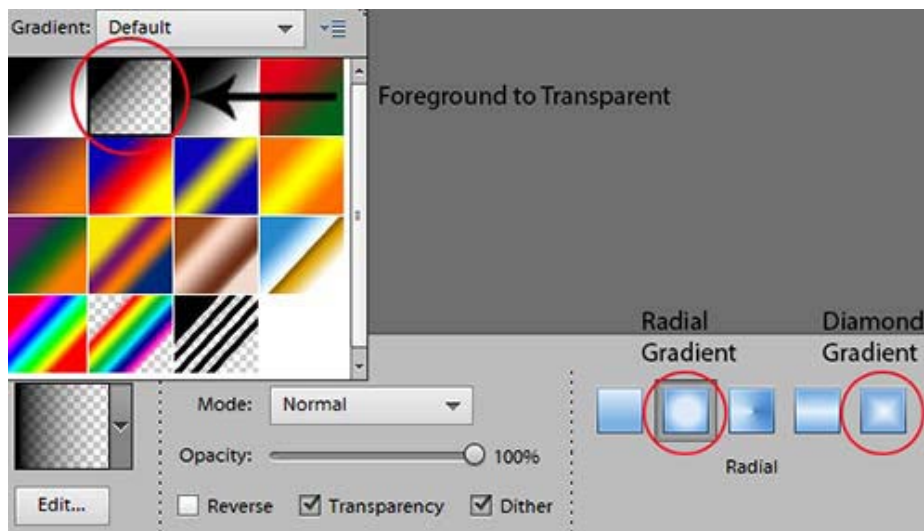
I like to start with a large document so that none of the glow runs off the edge of the page. If it does run off, you will end up with square edges—definitely not what you want.

Step One: Prepare the Workspace

- Create a new document (File > New > Blank File) that is 12in by 12in at 300ppi with a white background. (Photoshop: Choose File > New.)
- Press the letter D to reset the Color Chips to the default of black and white.

Step Two: Create a Radial Gradient and Some Diamond Gradients

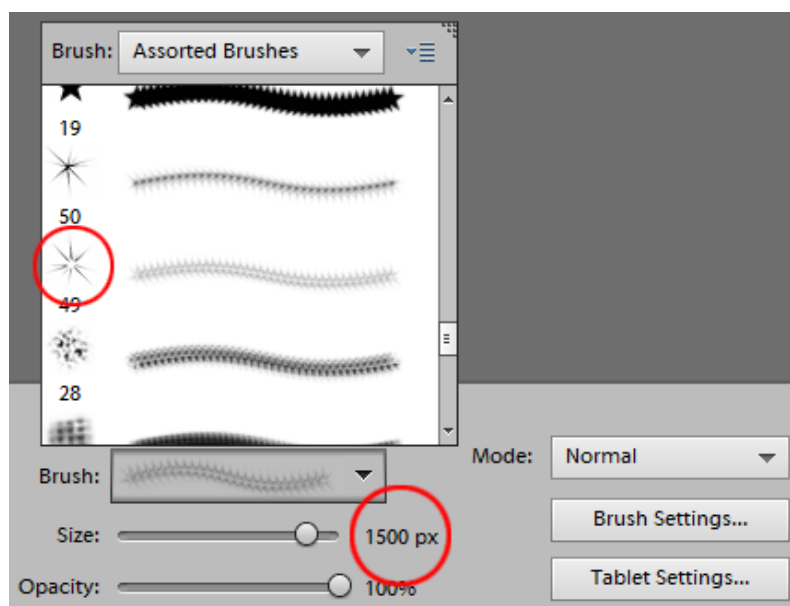
- Get the Gradient tool.
- In the Tool Options, click on the down facing arrow to open the Gradient Picker and choose Foreground to Transparent.
 - Set the Mode to Normal and the Opacity to 100%. Click on the Radial Gradient icon.
 - In the Layers Panel, click on the Create a New Layer icon.
 - On the document click and drag 3 inches out from the center of the page to create a circle that is about 6 inches in diameter.
 - In the Tool Options, click on the Diamond Gradient.



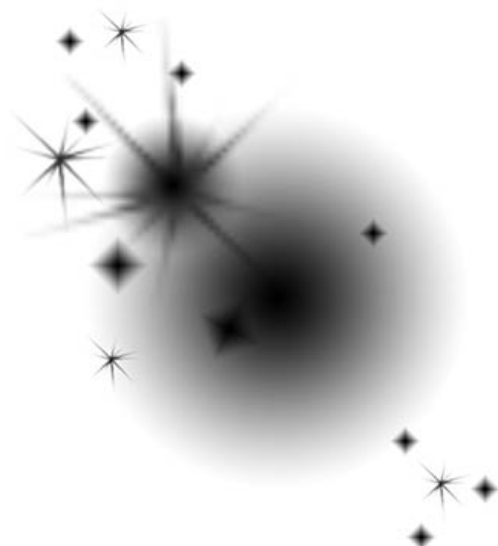
- Click and drag out about 10 tiny diamond gradients of varying sizes around the radial gradient. I placed mine to create a pattern that flows from the top left to the bottom right.

Step Three: Add a Starburst

- Get the Brush tool.
- In the Tool Options, click on the down facing arrow to open the Brush Preset Picker and choose Assorted Brushes.
- Choose Brush #49 Starburst - Large and set the Size to 1500 px.
- On the document, click on the upper left edge of the radial gradient to create a starburst.



This is just an example of what you can do. Use your imagination. Play around with it and see what you can come up with. Here is my finished photo glow after I added another radial gradient and used Brush #50 Starburst-Small.



Step Four: Use The Photo Glow on a Layout

- In the Layers panel, click on the photo glow layer and drag it onto your scrapbook page.
- Using the Move tool, position the glow behind a photo.
- Press the letter X to set the Foreground Color Chip to white.
- Press Alt Shift Backspace (Mac: Opt Shift Delete) to fill the photo glow with white.
- Adjust the size and position as desired using the Transform options.
- To intensify the effect, press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to duplicate the glow.

Take a look at my photo glow used on an actual scrapbook layout on the next page...

Credits:

Digi Scrap Tutorial: Create a "Photo Glow" Using the Gradient Tool and the Brush Tool by Barb Brookbank

[Photo Masks Volume I](#) by Susie Roberts

Background Papers: [Christmas Past](#)

by Susan Bartolini, [Sugar and Spice](#) by Digital Scrapper Designs

Tag, Ric Rac: [Christmas Past](#) by Susan Bartolini

Flower (recolored): *At Home* by Paislee Press

Photo: Tere

