Photographic Backgrounds

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Photographic Backgrounds
by Jenifer Juris

Make your own unique and dreamy photographic backgrounds. In three quick steps you'll have the beginnings of something beautiful.

Step One: Open a Photo

Keep in mind the following ideas when selecting a photo for this tutorial:

- Repeating Pattern – Images of autumn leaves, white snow, confetti on a table, or rain on green grass are all great ideas for photographic backgrounds.
- Shoot at 90˚- Often photos that are shot straight down or straight ahead will make the most sense visually for a background image. If they are shot at an angle other than 90˚, it can cause confusion for the eye.
- Open a photo (File > Open) that you wish to use as a background for your digital project.
- Press the letter D to reset the Color Chips.
- Press the letter X to switch the Foreground Color Chip to white.

Here are a few examples of good photos for this tutorial:

Step Two: Crop the Photo

- Get the Rectangular Marquee tool.
- In the Tool Options, click on the New Selection icon. Set the Feather to 0px and the Aspect to Normal. (Photoshop: Set the Style to Normal.)
- On the document, hold down the Shift key and click and drag a selection around the portion of the photo you wish to use.

Note: Using the shift key here will ensure you get a square selection. I'm doing this because I plan to make a square (12×12) scrapbook page.

- In the Menu Bar, choose Image > Crop.
- Press Ctrl D (Mac: Cmd D) to deselect.

Step Three: Add Haze

Adding haze to your image helps create a softer background. This keep your background from competing with the other items you add to your project.

- In the Layers panel, click on the Create a New Fill or Adjustment Layer icon and choose Solid Color.
- In the dialog box, the color chip should be white. Click OK.

Note: At this point, your document will fill with solid white. This is exactly how it should be.

- In the Layers panel, lower the Opacity of this new layer to 30%.

Note: You may need more or less haze depending on the photo you're using so feel free to adjust the opacity of this layer as needed.

Step Four: Merge and Save the Image

- In the Layers panel, make sure the top layer is the active layer.
- Press Ctrl E (Mac: Cmd E) to merge the two layers together.
- Save the image (File > Save As) as a high quality JPG with a unique name.

Now your photographic background is ready to be used on a scrapbook page or other digital project.

Here's a look at my finished scrapbook page:

I can't wait to see how you use this idea in your own project!

Credits:
Page & Photos: Jenifer Juris
Tutorial: Photographic Backgrounds by Jenifer Juris
Kit: Baby It's Cold Outside by Jady Day Studio
Fonts: Trajan Color, Marcella Script, Argent CF
Example Photos (above): Stock Photos