

# How to Cheat in Photoshop CS5

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This is not a “how to cheat” book. It’s a “get the look you need” book. And it’s great! It’s not a book for absolute beginners. You really need a basic understanding of *Photoshop* first. But if your day job is image composition, this book is exactly what the doctor ordered.

Combining elements from different sources can bring up all sorts of problems. Frequently lighting and color differences must be addressed. Issues of perspective and proportion crop up. Moving the direction in which the subject’s eyes are looking can make or break the “realism” of your composition. The book has the solutions for these and more difficulties.

Each section is color-coded, the divisions visible even with the book closed. Each example is complete on a two-page spread, which makes it easy to see both before and after, as well as the interim steps.



Everything here is task-oriented. The driving force behind this book is “how to create realistic photomontages.” So – if you add a pair of sunglasses to a scene, how do you create and orient their shadow? That and more is covered.

Need a light source? Add a lamp to the scene. Then darken the area except where the lamp’s light is being directed. Make sure the light is more intense inside the lamp. Is there a surface from which it’s being reflected? Add that in, and the scene is now much more realistic.

There are fifteen sections, and each one is essentially a mini-workshop in that particular subject.

The first skill to master is the art of making selections, which is precisely why *Photoshop* has so many selection tools. Putting two images together is easy. Making them look as though they started out together is what separates the novice from the pro. Accurate selections are the first step, so the first chapter concentrates on selection tools.

The subjects are “Natural selection” – how to capture the area you want and no more or less; “Transformation and distortion” – making elements of your composition belong together; “Hiding and showing” – working with layers and masks; “Image adjustment” – or making skintones (and other colors) match.

“Composing the scene” and “Getting into perspective” – placing subjects appropriately in relationship to each other and the background; “Light and Shade” – deals with realistically shadowing and lighting your composition; “Heads and bodies” – looks at everything from body position to fly-away hair, including matching one person’s head to another’s body.

“Shiny surfaces” – also deals with light on both reflective and transparent surfaces, and how it adds depth and realism to your composition; “Metal, wood and stone” – have hard, reflective surfaces and depth to deal with; “Paper and fabric” – can move, bend and flutter using the shading techniques taught here.

“The third dimension” – can be achieved with perspective, the vanishing point and a little *Repoussé*; “Hyperrealism” – in this book isn’t photographic realism, it’s added effects such as blurring for speed or flying glass with explosions. The next-to-last section, “Advanced techniques” – covers important tips and techniques (Bridge, ACR, natural media brushes) not directly involved in photocomposition; and the last section, “Working for print and the web” – deals with output.

The DVD included with the book has 74 movies (over three hours total) in Quick Time format. Most of them are less than two minutes with descriptive names so it’s easy to find what you want. But that’s only the beginning. There’s an image file for almost every example given in the

book, as well as 41 PDF's, mostly 1-2 pages, that were deleted from the printed book. True, some of these are from earlier versions of the book (this is its sixth edition), but that doesn't make the information less valid.

There are many more images included than those needed for the lessons. A lot of bonus content is on the DVD for the reader's use, some from earlier readers of his earlier works and some from the author's own website.

One folder named "Test yourself files" has 23 images for you to work with, each labeled as to what technique it's for. The author even includes a cheat sheet with hints on how to use the indicated technique for each image.

This book is a joy to work through. It also makes a great reference when you absolutely have to get something done NOW! The two-page format is a great way to present information and an easy way to learn it. It makes a great asset for any *Photoshop* user working with compositions.

**About:** *How to Cheat in Photoshop CS5:*  
*the art of creating realistic photomontages*

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