

Digital Imaging Group

Adjustment Layers

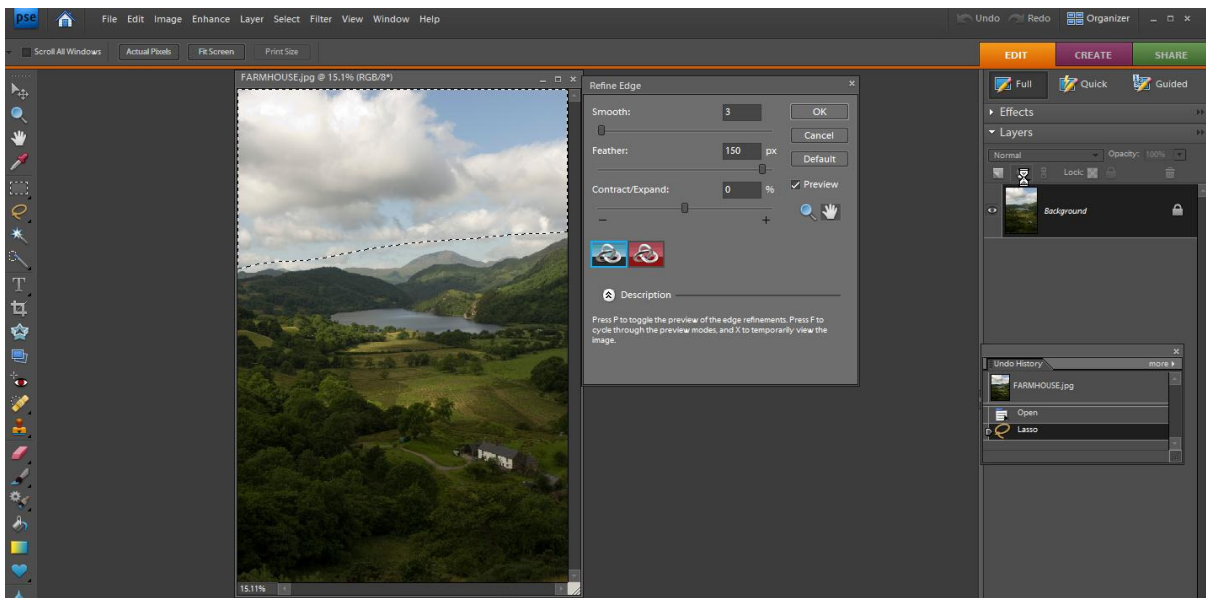
Very important lessonhow to use Layers to adjust the image.

We are going to use one of the Selection Tools and a series of adjustment layers to change the contrast and colour of an image.

Open Image



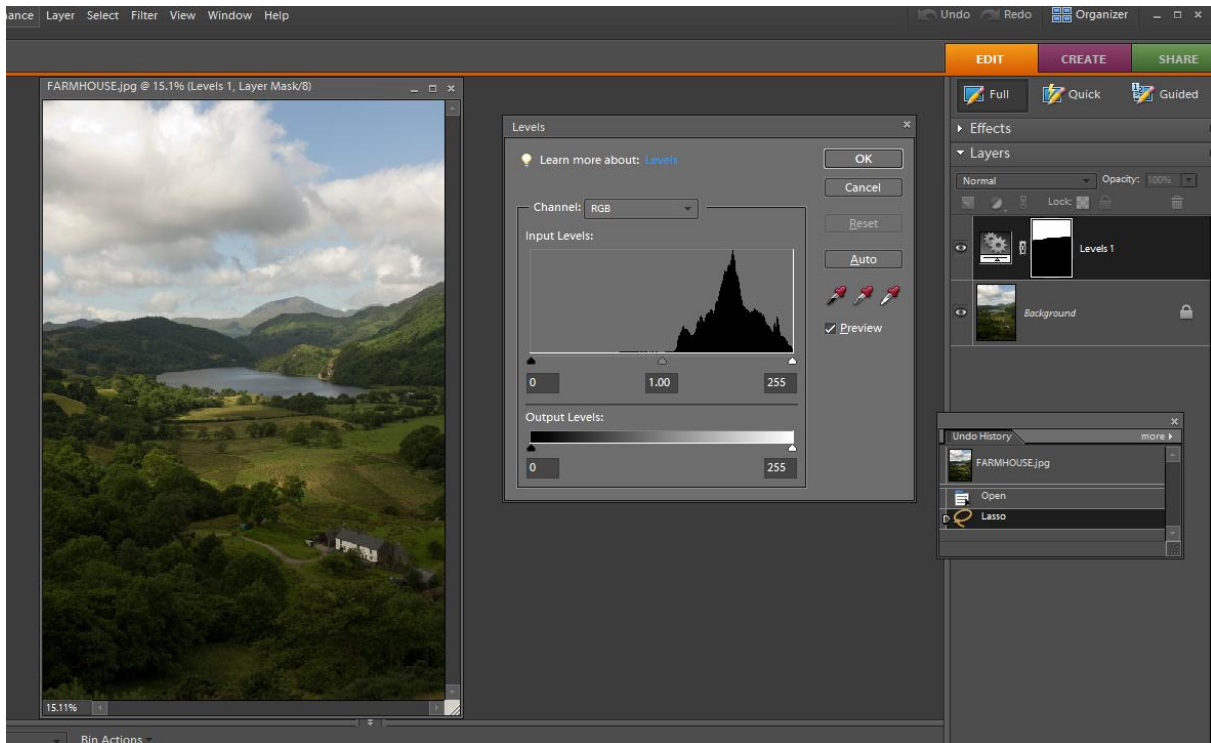
This image is a typical image which at first viewing seems to be ok but it can be improved to give the sky more impact, then the contrast of the image can be improved, the foreground can be lightened and the whole image can be warmed up.



Select the Lasso Tool and make a rough selection over most of the sky above the mountains. Select

Refine Edges and set the Feathering to 150 px.

Open the layers pallet from the drop down menu in the Window tool on the top tool bar. Locate the 'create adjustment layer icon' which is a circle half black and half white. Selecting this will provide a drop down menu from which you should select Levels.

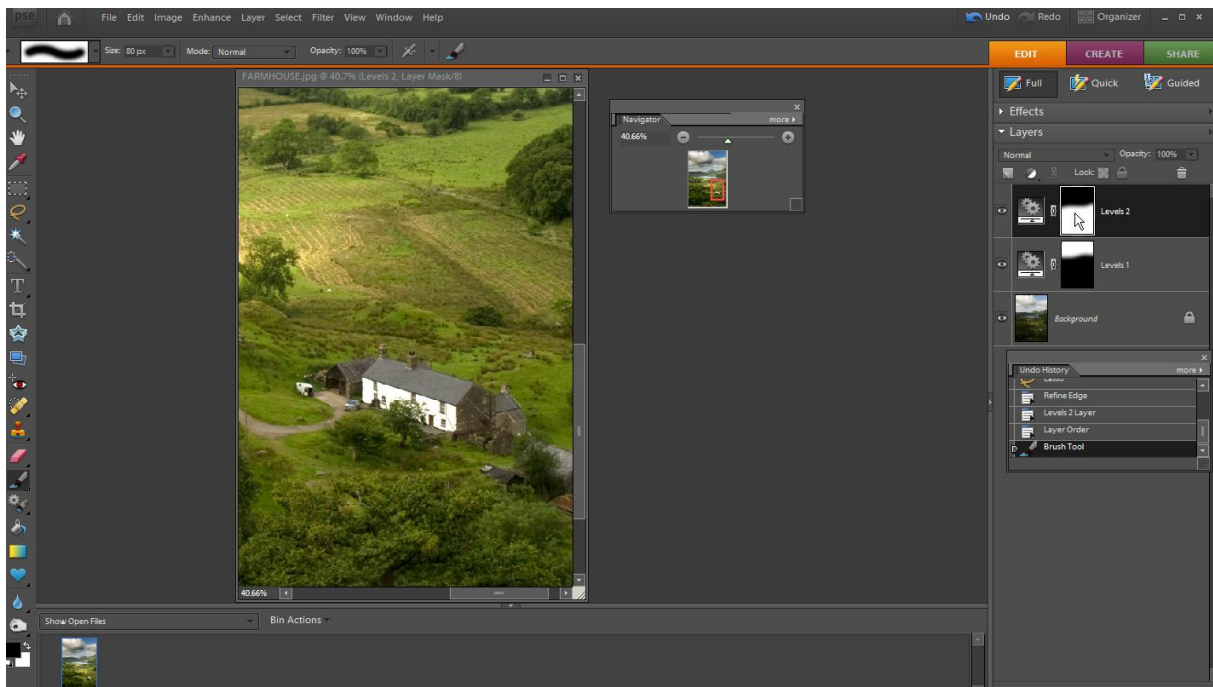


This will provide a box containing the histogram showing the amount of each of 255 shades between black and white in the area you have selected. You will notice that the graph is well to the right of the scale indicating that all the pixels in the area you have selected are light in tone. Note also that a second layer has appeared in the layer stack called Layer 1 above the Background layer which is your original image. The cogs on the left indicate that this is an adjustment layer.

Select the little black triangle immediately underneath the histogram and move it to the right and you will notice the area you have selected on the image starting to darken. Likewise the white triangle if selected and moved to the left will lighten the selection. Selecting the middle grey arrow will allow you to adjust the mid tones in the image.

As a suggestion move the black adjustment until the number below it changes to about 75, and the mid tone slider to about 0.8. As always, the appearance is a matter of taste and you should make your own judgements.

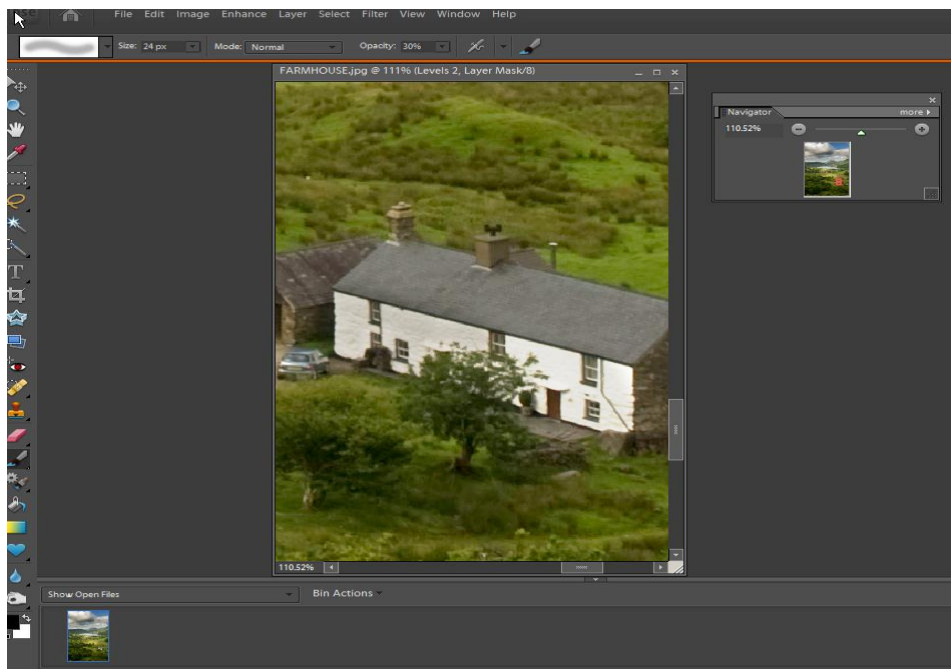
Using the Lasso tool again, select an area over the top of the lake to the bottom of the picture, feathering and creating a new adjustment layer as above. This time the histogram is placed to the left of the scale showing that most of the pixels are dark. Adjust the contrast of the bottom half of the picture to suit. I would suggest something like white slider at 145, mid tone slider at 1.2 and the black slider at about 11, just to increase the contrast a little. This will have the effect of lightening the whole area within your selection, making the farmhouse very light.



Using the Navigator, enlarge the area of the farmhouse. Select the icon on layer 2 in the layer pallet as shown and a white box will appear round it indicating that it can be edited. You have in effect placed a 'Mask' over the layer. Select the Brush tool and adjust the brush size using the square brackets key. Make sure that Black is the foreground colour by checking the two overlapping boxes at the bottom left of your screen.

Adjust the opacity control to about 20%

Now carefully start to paint over the white on the farmhouse and you will see the detail that was there before start to return. You are in effect revealing the layer underneath the one you are working on by painting away the changes that you imposed on layer 2. The more you paint over it the more

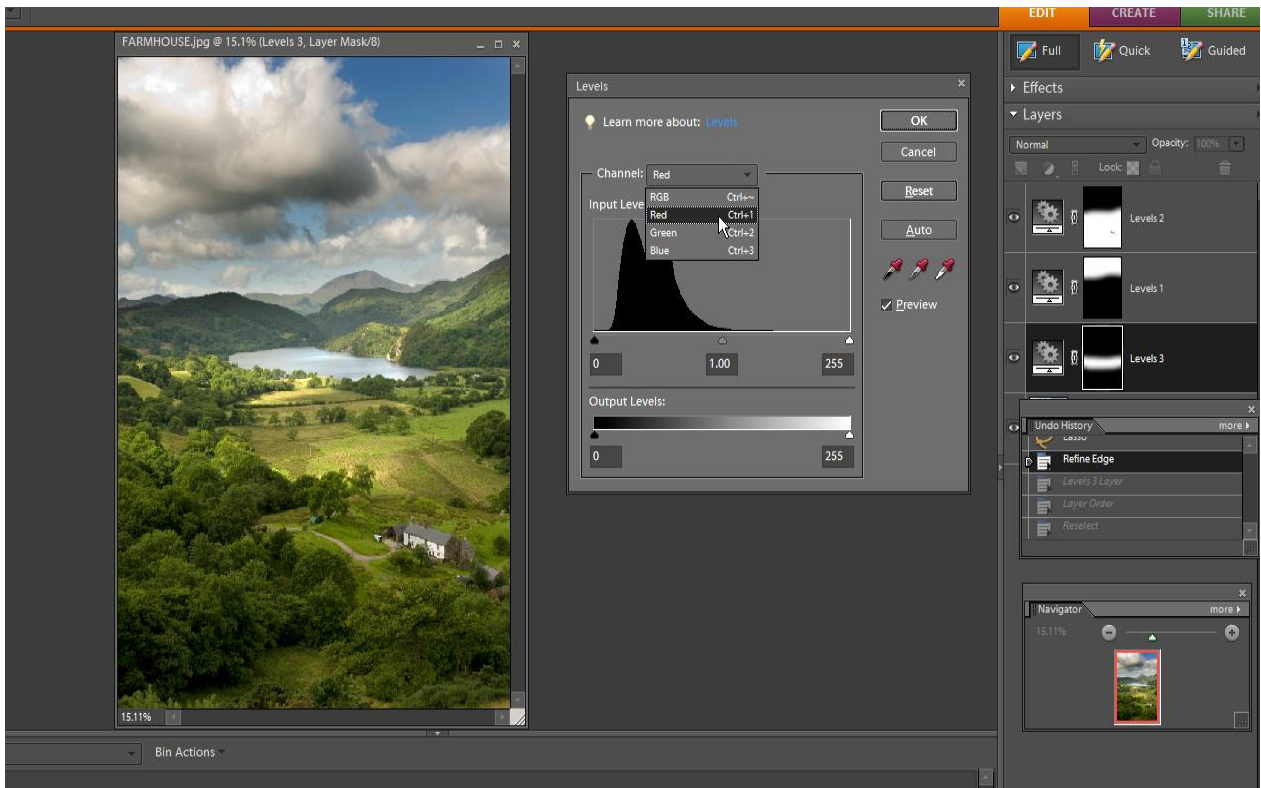


you remove which is why I suggested reducing the opacity to allow you to do this slowly.

Here I have worked only on the left hand side of the house to show the effect.

I suggest that you reduce the opacity even further and work over the water of the lake in places to bring back some of the detail there too.

Select an area between the farmhouse and the lake and create yet another Levels adjustment layer. If you click on the RGB Channel just above the histogram (see below) you will then be able to select Red and using the sliders as before adjust the red content of the area to warm it up a bit. Clicking on the eye icon at the side of the level in the level pallet will allow you to switch the effect on and off so that you can see the difference made.



Remember all these adjustments are made to your taste and the effect that you want to create, and at this stage are still changeable. If you double click on the cog icon at the side of an adjustment layer that layer becomes live again and you can readjust it, so that in this instance if you wanted to go back and change the settings in layer 2, clicking the cog icon at the side of layer 2 in the layer stack will bring back the histogram and allow you to change it again without changing the other layers.

Before and After ...what do you think?

