

# LET'S PRACTICE



PSA EID STUDY GROUP # 22

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## March-Can Spring Be Far Behind?

In this second issue, Jo-Ann has asked about removing a background and replacing it with a solid color.

She mentioned birds or flowers as a subject. While a black background would probably be suspect in a true Nature contest, it does provide striking images.

The backlighting on my tulips was there as you can see. I did nothing with that part. However the background is extremely distracting.

By extracting the flowers and placing them on a black background, it creates a more striking image.

On the next page, I will describe the steps I took to get from "before" to "after".

Have fun—and Let's Practice.

Marti



Before



After

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## Removing a Distracting Background

Step 1: Open your original image and make a copy of the background layer (CTRL J). (If you wish to do any processing in Camera RAW, do it as you open the image, concentrating on the subject to be extracted)

Step 2: Choose your selection tool. This could be lasso, quick select ... whatever your favorite method.

Step 3: If you are working in Photoshop CS4 or 5 (maybe 3?) you will want to click on Refine Edge in the top option bar. (See Page 3 for Refine Edge instructions)

Step 4: Once you have your edges refined, output to New Layer with Layer Mask, click OK and exit the Refine Edge dialog box.

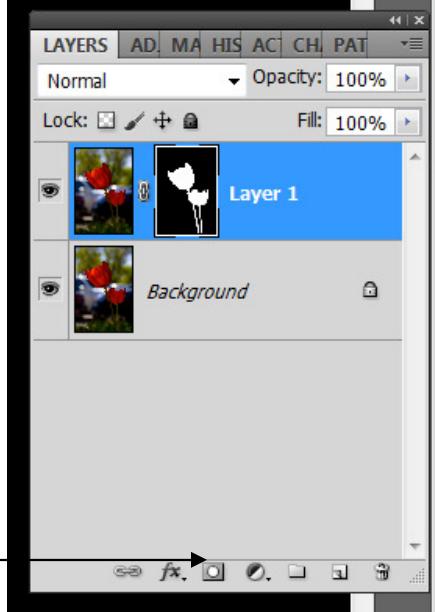
Step 5: Go to your background layer—choose a large brush and the background color you wish to use (in this case it was black).

Step 6: Paint over the entire image. Whatever was in white in your mask thumbnail will be saved and the rest of the image will be your chosen background color.

Step 7: SAVE

### Elements Users:

Step 1: Open your original image and make a copy of the background layer

Step 2: Create a layer mask (click here) 

Step 3: Do steps 5-7 above.

## Refine Edge—(loosely) taken from Adobe Photoshop CS5 Book by Scott Kelby

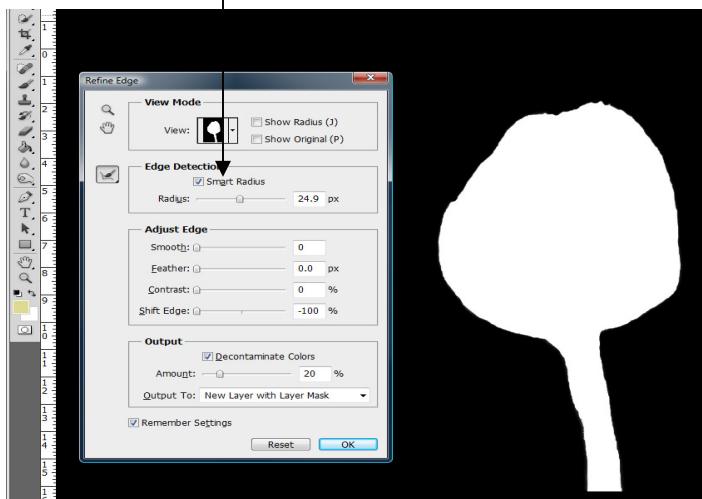
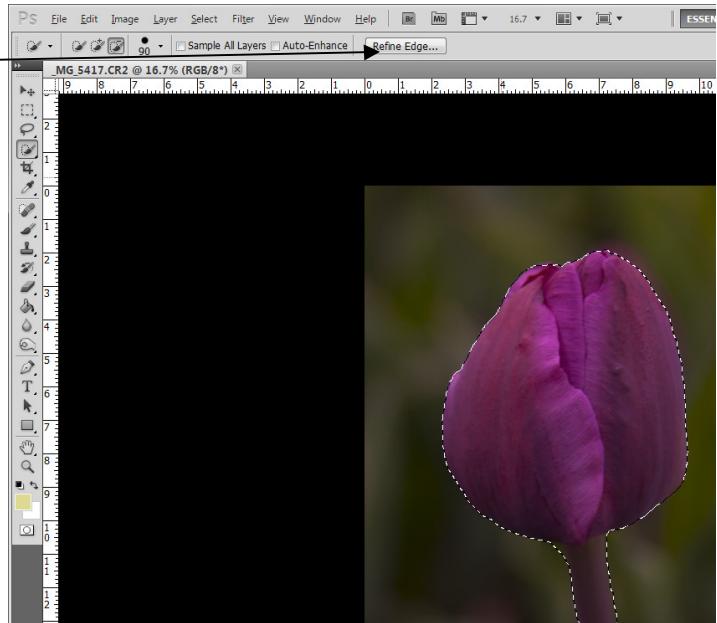
After you have opened your image and made your selection, click on the Refine Edge button.

You will get the Refine Edge window where you can begin to make adjustments to your selection.

Choose the Black & White view which shows the selection as a standard layer mask.

Kelby recommends just using the Edge Detection section and avoid the Adjust Edge because it takes a lot of time to get the sliders “just so”.

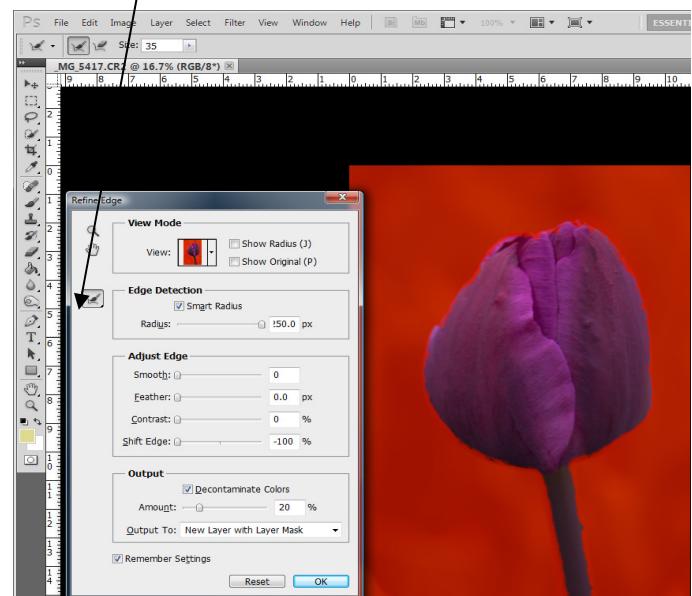
Check the Smart Radius box. This is what knows the difference between a soft edge and a hard edge so it will make a mask that includes both.



You can turn it on and then check the box at the bottom that says “Remember Settings” to leave it on all the time.

Drag the Radius slider to the right to see more detail in your selection. The trickier the selection, the higher the radius amount.

Next, we'll change the view to Overlay (from the same menu as this Black & White choice. This shows the parts that didn't get selected in white. If you have those spots, click on the Redefine radius tool.



Get the brush and paint over the areas where the white is showing. It will redefine those areas.

To output the selection, most times you will choose New Layer with Layer Mask which places the selection in the same document. This way you can paint over any areas that you messed up on (such as my under selection of the tulip).