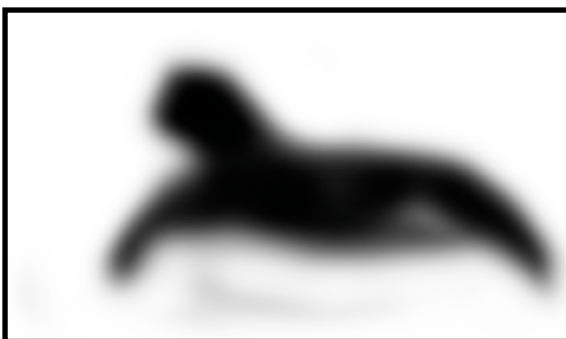


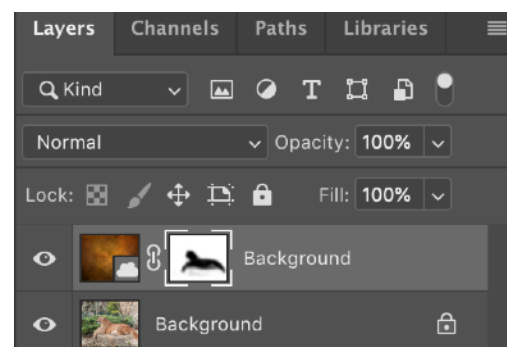
A Few Ways to Replace the Background in Your Photos

Quick & Dirty

1. Open the subject image in Photoshop
 2. Select & Open the desired background
 3. Drag or copy the background over the the subject image.
 4. Use Free Transform (Edit>Free Transform or Cmd/Ctrl+T) to resize & reposition the background so that it covers the subject image.
 5. Reduce the Opacity of the new background layer so that the subject layer is clearly visible.
 6. Add a Mask to the new background layer by selecting the Mask icon from the Layer tools at the bottom of the Layer tab. A clear or white Mask will appear next to the background image icon in the Layers panel.
 7. Reduce the new background layer Opacity slightly (80-90%) so that the subject image is visible.
 8. Use a Brush (B) with black as the selected color to “paint” over the subject so that the new background image is “removed” from the subject. No need to be overly precise at this point. The brush Size should be large enough to fit in the subject image area and the Hardness should be set to 0%.
- If you make a mistake in painting in the Mask, press Ctrl/Cmd+Z to Undo or change the brush color to White and paint away the mistake.
9. Once you’ve completed the initial Mask painting, reduce the brush Opacity to about 30% and enlarge the brush so that you can work with only about 1/4 of the brush size touching the subject.
 10. With white as the brush color, you need to reveal more of the background image so that it “blends” slightly into the subject. You will probably need to adjust the brush size as you work around the subject outline.
 11. Brush several strokes with the edge of the brush to get the final affect of the background image blending into the subject image. Zoom in and out and change brush tip size as needed for more precise painting.



This is what the final Mask and Layer stack looked like:



And the original & final images . . .



This method provides a good quick view of the replaced background, but does not take into account the difference in color tone between the new background and the original subject. A more finished product can be had with just a little more work.

A Better Way to Go . . .

The biggest differences in this method will be:

- Using PS Tools to make a more precise selection of the subject
- More precise blending of the subject with the new background
- Using the Camera Raw filter to make final adjustments to the “stamped” layer
- Using the Color Profiles in Camera Raw or in Lightroom to better blend the overall color tone and contrast of the two layers

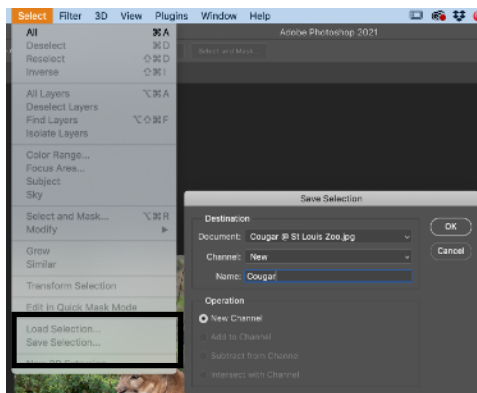
1. Open the subject image in Photoshop

2. Select & Open the desired background

3. If the subject is separated from its original background by contrast, color, or focus, use the Select Subject tool (Select>Subject) to place a selection around the subject. Refine the selection as much as possible using the Quick Selection tool or any other selection tool: Select & Mask, Lasso, etc.

NOTE: Absolute precision is not necessary since we'll be merging the new background into the subject just a bit. Also, add a bit of the subject foreground to the selection so the subject does not appear to float in the new background.

4. Use Free Transform (Edit>Free Transform or Cmd/Ctrl+T) to resize & reposition the background so that it covers the subject image. Don't worry about selecting too much foreground since it can be covered with the new background image.

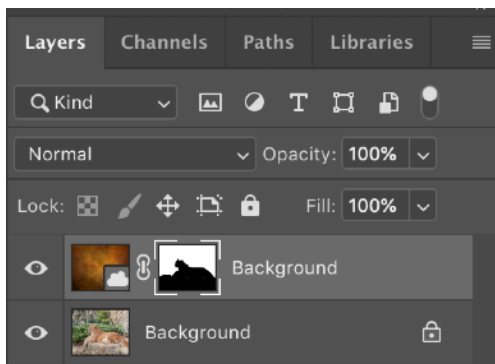


The image to the right shows the area selected for this example. The cougar was selected with the Select>Subject tool and the rock foreground was added using the Quick Selection tool.



OPTION: Save and rename the selection you made just in case you need it again. (Select>Save Selection).

5. Drag or copy the new background image onto the subject and resize/reposition to fit.



6. With the Mask still active over the subject layer, select the new Background layer and press Alt/Opt+the Mask icon to add a black mask to the new background.



Time to Blend the New Background Image into the Subject Image & Refine Color

1. Select the Brush tool and set Hardness to 0%, Opacity to about 25%, and resize the brush so that about 1/4th of the brush (the soft edge) reaches over the subject. Using the soft edge of the brush will blend the Background into the Subject.
2. Select the Mask and brush around the edges of the Mask so that the new Background blends into the Subject. Repeated brush strokes will be needed to get a realistic blending. To eliminate the foreground more quickly increase the Opacity of the brush as needed.
3. Select the top layer in the Layer Stack and press Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Opt+E to create a stamped layer. This will blend all the lower layers into one while keeping all layers active.
4. Make the stamped layer a Smart Object (Right-click and select Smart Object).
5. Select Filter>Camera Raw Filter to make final adjustments to the image.
6. While in the Camera Raw Filter go to Profile>Color and click on the Grid icon to the right of the tab. Select a Folder of filters and roll over each to see the effect. Click on the one you like best, then go to the top of the list and use the slider to increase or decrease the effect.

Here is the final image and Layer Stack:

