

// REDUCING BACKGROUND CLUTTER

Depth of field control is one of the most important tools in a photographers creative arsenal. With it, you can reduce the distraction of busy backgrounds, or ensure that everything in your image is razor sharp. This effect is an easy way to bring attention to a specific part of an image by keeping only a small portion of the image in focus while taking the rest of it out of focus, similar to how things would look if we had shot the photo with a narrow depth of field.

Creating a Narrow Depth of Field

- 1) Open the image in need of adjustment in **Photoshop**.
- 2) Choose **Convert for Smart Filters** from the **Filters Tab**.
- 3) In the **Layers Palette** you will see a small icon at the bottom of the layer icon showing that it has been converted. (**figure A**)
- 4) Choose **Blur>Gaussian Blur** from the **Filters Tab**.
- 5) Drag the **Radius** slider to the right to adjust the amount of blur. Take care not to blur the image too much or the effect will not look natural. You can modify the blur effect at any time by double clicking on filter name in the **layer palette** (**figure B**).
- 6) The entire image should now be out of focus. To bring the subject back into focus, choose the **Brush Tool (B)** from the tool bar, change the **brush Hardness** to 0% (**figure C**), and change the **brush color** to black (**figure D**).
- 7) With the white **Layer Mask Icon** (**figure E**) selected in the **Layers Panel**, paint over the subject using the black feathered edge brush to remove the blur and bring the subject back into focus.
- 8) When finished, select **Flatten Image** from the **Layers Tab** to merge the duplicate layers into one final layer and **Save** the image.



Before //



After //

