

Lighting Effects filter

For many years Photoshop had a Lighting Effects filter which was temporarily removed when Photoshop made the transition from being 32-bit to 64-bit processing enabled. A lot of engineering resources were devoted to making everything in Photoshop 64-bit. Some components didn't make the cut and the Lighting Effects filter was one of those things that got quietly dropped. In part it was because the filter interface was rather dated and only offered you a tiny preview. The intention all along was to update this filter properly at some point. The Lighting Effects filter was returned in Photoshop CS6 and can now be found in the Filter ⇒ Render menu. The Lighting Effects filter is driven by Photoshop's 3D engine, allowing you to edit what is known as a '3D postcard'. The lighting controls are the same as those available for full 3D rendering in Photoshop, but are applied to a flat plane image surface. If you are familiar with the old-style Lighting Effects filter you'll notice that some of the original presets have been updated in this new version. When used properly, this filter is an occasionally useful Photoshop tool for applying creative effects.

To see the filter in use check out the step-by-step tutorial on pages 3–4. You will notice that Lighting Effects opens the image in a Full Screen mode. At the top are the Options bar settings shown in Figure 1, where you can click on one of the three Lights buttons to add a Spot, Point or Infinite light source. In the case of the Spot and Point lights you'll see a circle where you can drag any of the four handles to control the positioning and width of the light source. In the case of the Infinite light you'll see the light control shown in Figure 2. These can be used to adjust the light angle and coverage as well as the effect intensity.

Creating a texture map

As mentioned here and in the tutorial over the page, you can use any of the RGB channels or an alpha channel as a texture map. To create a texture similar to the one shown in the tutorial steps, try using the Fibers filter, which is also contained in the Filter ⇒ Render submenu.

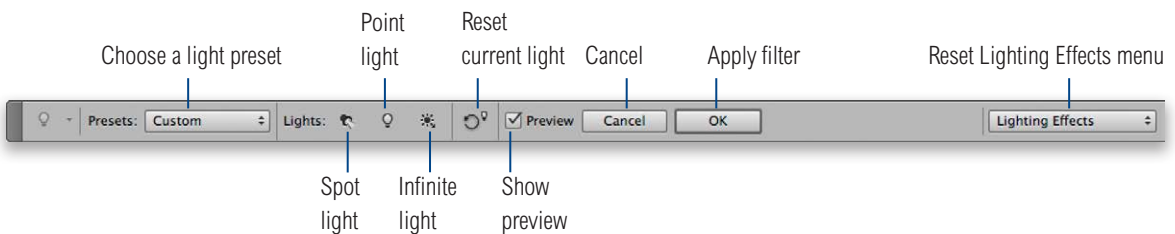


Figure 1 The Lighting Effects Options bar.

To add more lights, you can either click on the Light buttons in the Options bar, or **alt** drag on an existing light to make a copy of the light. As you add more lights you'll see these appear listed in the Lights panel shown in Figure 3.

If you create a lighting effect and would possibly like to reuse it, then go to the Presets menu (Figure 1) and save the current lights setting as a new lighting effect preset. To select a saved preset, go to the same Presets menu and select it from the list.

Properties panel adjustments

In the Properties panel (Figure 4) you can click on the menu at the top to switch between the three types of light sources: Spot, Point or Infinite. If you click on the Color box you can choose a color other than white for the light source. Below this is the Intensity slider, which controls how bright the light will be. For all the following settings you can click and drag in the settings box or on the field name with the **⌘** (Mac), **ctrl** (PC) key held down to access the scrubby sliders (hold down the **Shift** key as well to amplify a scrubby slider adjustment). Although the lighting controls are primarily designed for editing 3D objects, these will still be effective when working on a 3D postcard, 2D image. If a Spot light is selected, the Hotspot slider allows you to control the width of the hotspot. Gloss and Metallic interact with each other. In the context of lighting a 3D postcard, a low Metallic setting applies a slightly foggy lighting effect. Unless this is something you specifically wish to create, I suggest you leave this at the default +100 setting. The Gloss slider can then be used to add contrast to the lighting effect. The default -79 setting is a good starting point and if you take this down to -100, you'll get a more natural, matte surface effect. As you increase the Gloss amount you'll be adding more contrast to the lighting. Ambience controls the amount of background fill. With a low Ambience a lighting effect will cast dark shadows, while a high setting will produce more filled in, lighter shadows. The Ambience slider is also linked to the color selected in the Colorize swatch. Depending on the color selected here, a positive Ambience value applies an increasingly saturated fill color based on the Colorize swatch color. A negative Ambience applies the inverse of the Colorize swatch color. The Texture menu allows you to select a channel or alpha channel to use as a texture map and below that there is a Height box to determine the texture height (a higher amount will produce a more pronounced texture).

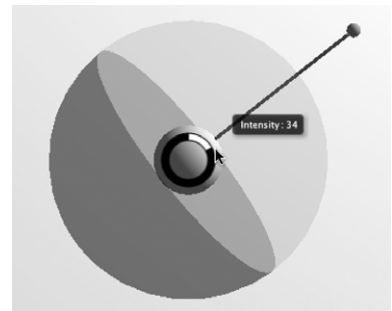


Figure 2 The Infinite light control.

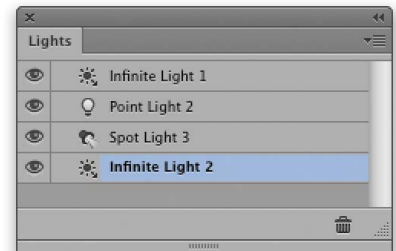


Figure 3 The Lights control panel.

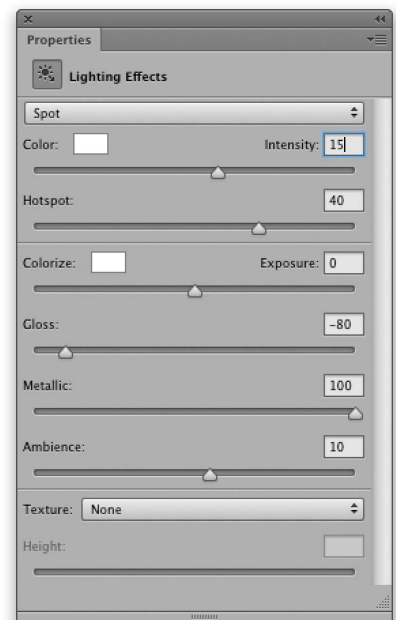
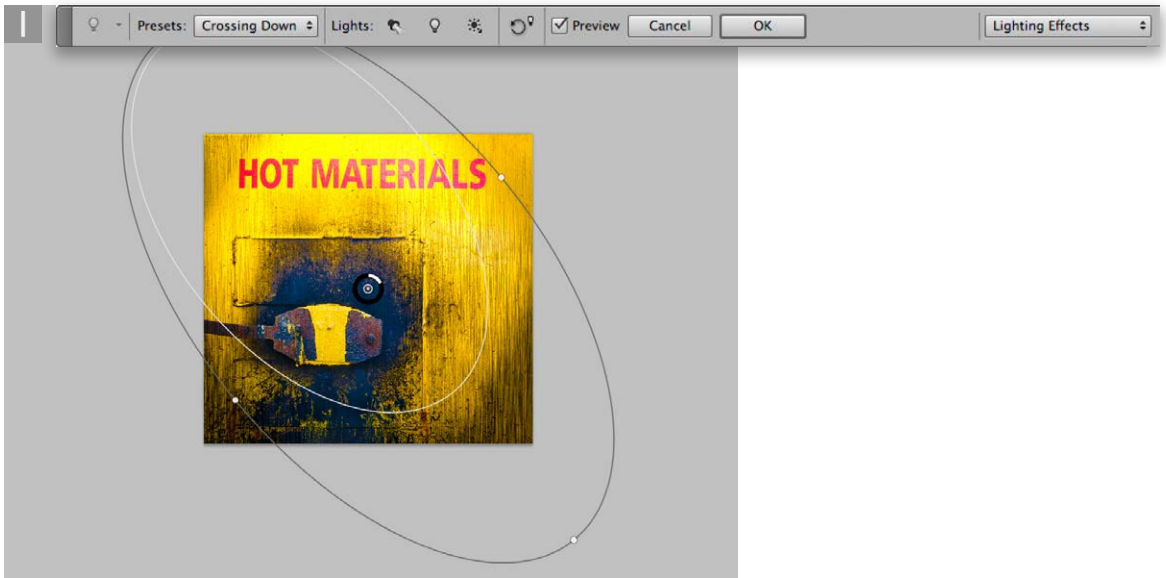
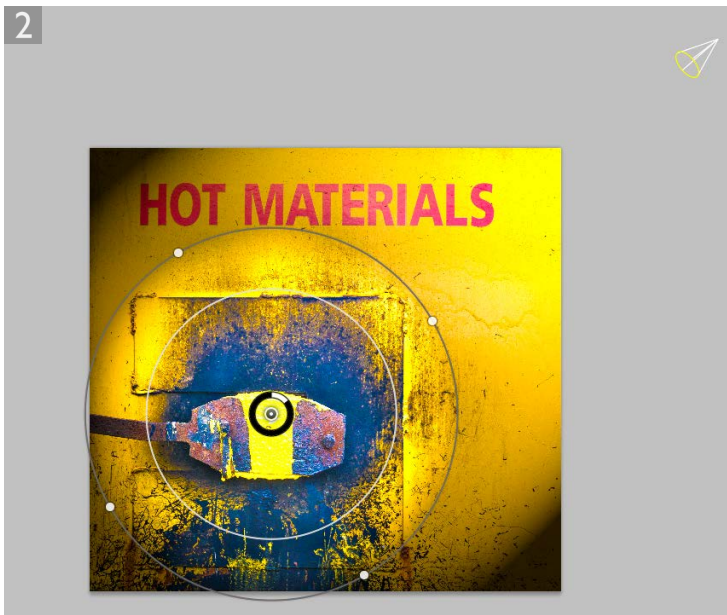


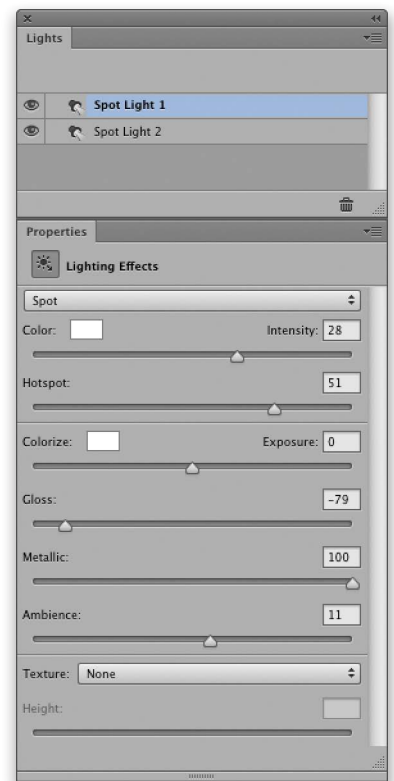
Figure 4 The Properties panel.



1 This shows a photograph opened in the Lighting Effects filter. To start with I went to the Presets menu in the Options bar and selected the 'Crossing Down' preset lighting effect.



2 This added two Spot light sources. I clicked on the light control shown above in Step 1 and dragged the handles to make the light coverage area smaller and more focused on the area seen here and edited the light source settings, reducing the Spot light Intensity.





3 I then went to the Lights panel and selected the other light source. Here, I selected a pre-saved Alpha 1 channel as a texture source. With the Height set to 3, this added a fibrous texture to the photograph, which responded to the angle and other light source settings.



4 This shows the final, filtered version.

