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The extract command can be used for separating objects from their background. Making complicated selections is always one of the most difficult tasks we face and can make or break your artwork. The tools in previous versions of Photoshop were good, but the ones in Photoshop 5.5 are even better.

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1. Begin by opening the photo or image you want to separate from the background, and then go to image>extract. [ *fig 1* ]



[ *fig 1* ]

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2. The interface pops up with a selection of tools on the left, your image in the middle, and tool options on the right. [ *fig 2* ]

## Extract



*fig 2 ]*

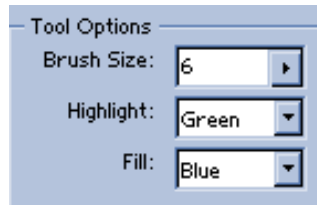
3. You begin by drawing with the highlighter around the image. You want the highlight to slightly overlap the edge of the image, and the background. [ *fig 3* ]



[ fig 3 ]

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4. Depending on your image, you may want to adjust your brush size to make the highlight larger or smaller. I used 6 on the large areas, and 4 on smaller ones , like the fingers. [fig4 ]



[fig 4 ]

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5. When you have the highlight completely surrounding the image, then you will use the paint bucket to click in the area you want to keep. You do not have to highlight areas of the image that run into the side of the image. See [fig 3 ] .When you click the paint bucket in the area you want to keep, it will fill with blue. [fig 5 ] Blue is the default color for the fill, and green for the highlight. You can change that if you want to. See [ fig 4 ]



[fig 5 ]

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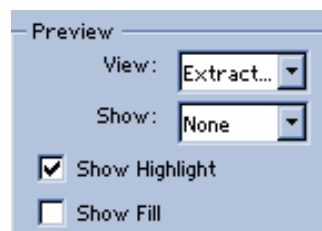
6. When you have the image filled with blue, you can click the preview button to see the extracted image. [fig 6]



[fig 6]

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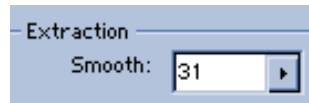
7. You can then click OK to accept it, or use the tools to make modifications. To view the image in its original state, Click original [fig 7 ].You can use this menu to toggle between views. You can also choose whether to show the highlight and fill, or turn them off.[fig 7 ].



*[ fig 7 ]*

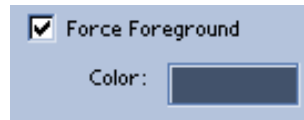
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8. If you need to correct the highlight, you can use the eraser to remove it. When you have it the way you want it you will need to click the paint bucket in the image to fill it again before you can preview the correction. Use the Extraction> Smooth slider to determine how precisely the background is removed. 0 is the least precision. I used 31 with this image. *[fig 8]*

*[fig 8]*

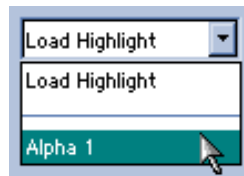
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9. If you have an area that can't be enclosed by drawing around it with the highlighter, such as the leaves of a tree, you need to use force foreground. *[fig 9]* That will make the highlighted area the area that is retained so that you can just color the part of the image you want to keep with the highlighter. Then you specify the keep color with the swatch. *[fig 9]* So if the background was black and the tree leaves were blue, you could highlight the entire tree leaves and choose the blue color with the eye dropper. Then the black background would be removed. This is good for areas of wispy hair, or branches, or detailed objects that are ordinarily very difficult to remove from the background!

*[fig 9]*

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10. If you have a selection saved as an alpha channel, and you want to load it for the highlight, you can click the name of the alpha channel in the drop down list. *[fig 9a]*

*[fig 9a]*

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*the end*