

For all you Photoshoppers wanting your own slice of paradise, here is the tip for you! You will learn how to create your own rainbow using the new Photoshop gradient tool, along with channels and layer masks. It's a virtual pot of gold.



Adobe Senior Art Director
Russell Preston Brown in
a virtual paradise with
Adobe® Photoshop® 4.0™
INTERMEDIATE



RAINBOW IN PARADISE WITH PHOTOSHOP 4.0

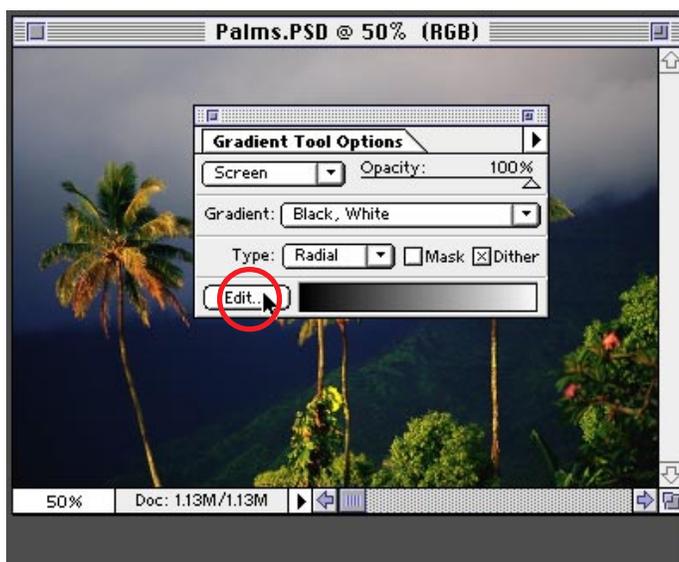
1. Open the image you want to begin working on. As you can see, I have chosen an image that lends itself to a natural-looking rainbow, with a dark stormy background and front highlights.



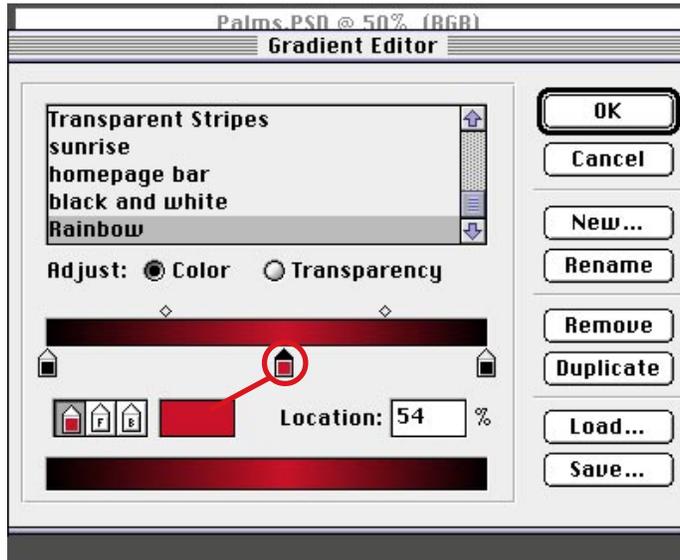
Shortcuts

Throughout this document, "Command/Ctrl", means Command on the Macintosh and Ctrl on Windows. "Option/Alt" means Option on the Macintosh and Alt on Windows.

2. Open Gradient Tool options by double-clicking on the Gradient tool. Click the Edit button to bring up your Gradient Editor dialog box.



3. Next, select New to begin creating your rainbow gradient. Once you name the new gradient, start adding colors by simply clicking below the gradient bar. Edit your new color by clicking in the color swatch area.



Duplicating Colors
By holding down the Option/Alt key while clicking on any color square, you can duplicate that color.

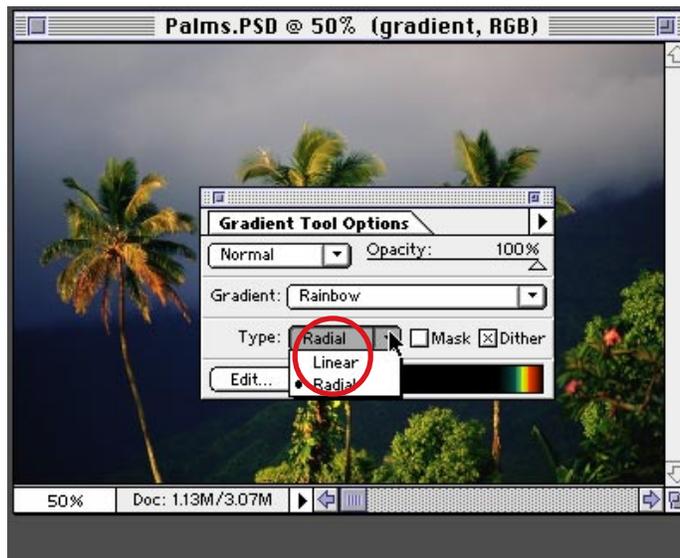
4. The key step here is to make sure that your color bands are at one end of the bar, as in the example shown. I've chosen the following simple set of four colors: 28-137-18 / 210-255-0 / 255-60-0 / 0-0-0 for black

You can also experiment to find your own color solutions, if so you might be tempted to create that soft blend right here—but don't do it! We will do that later. Click OK once you have the gradient you want.
[Download gradient for PC](#)
[Download gradient for Mac](#)

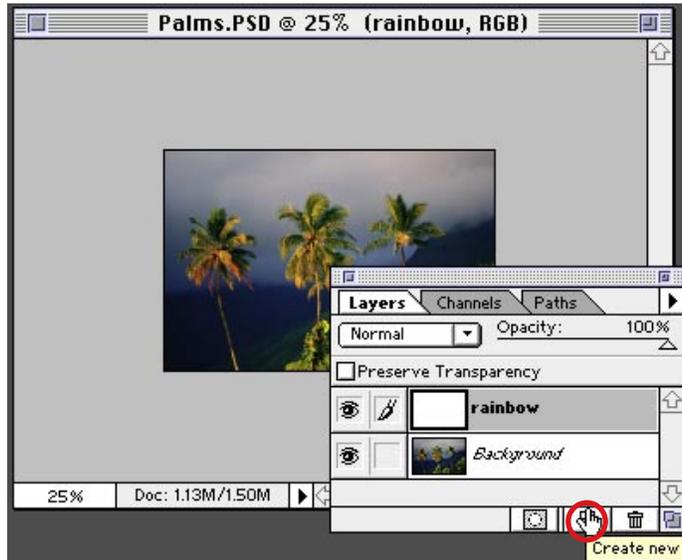


Tab Tab Tab!
When your colors are close together, use the Tab key to move through your selections to ensure you don't accidentally select the wrong one.

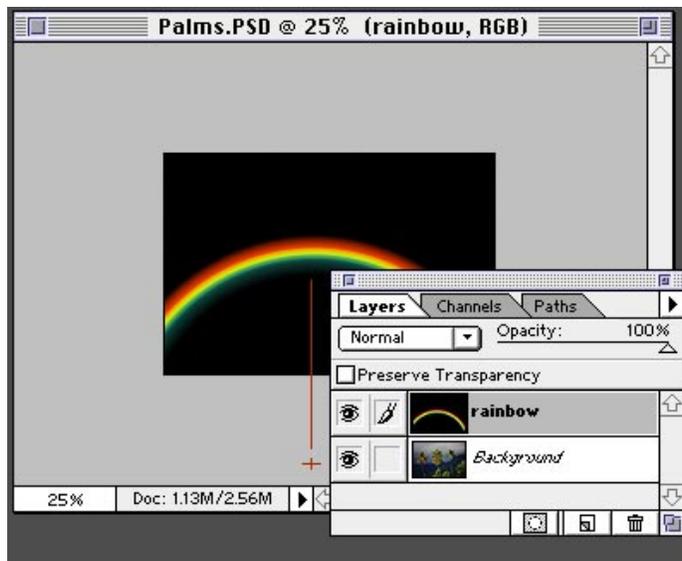
5. Finally, set the Type of gradient to Radial.



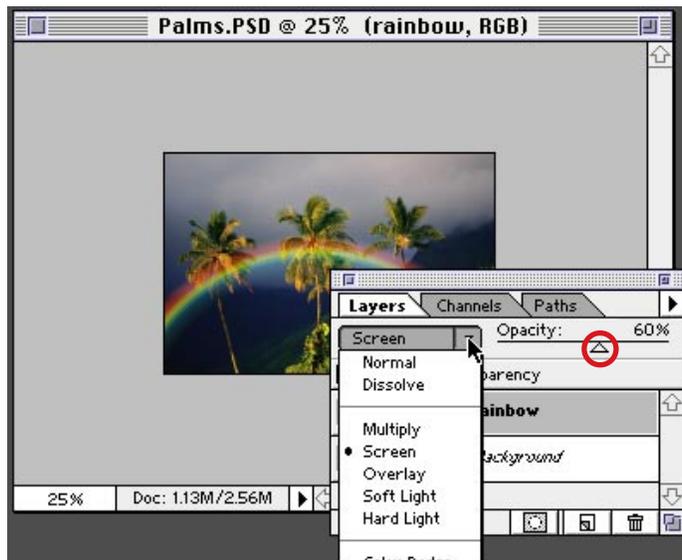
6. Create a new layer for the rainbow by pressing the new layer icon. Then zoom out so that you can start the gradient well below the actual image.



7. Click and drag your gradient tool about two-thirds the way up the image. Yikes! Right away you will notice two obvious problems: The gradient will be black with harsh bands of color.



8. So first, set the Layer mode to Screen and move the opacity back to 60%.

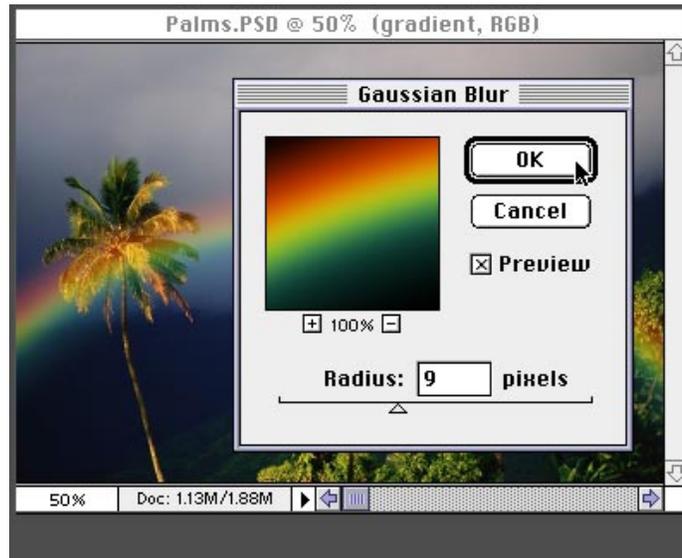


Screen Mode

This Blend mode is like taking two separate transparencies and projecting them on top of each other. Resulting colors will always be lighter. Black will change nothing and white remains white.

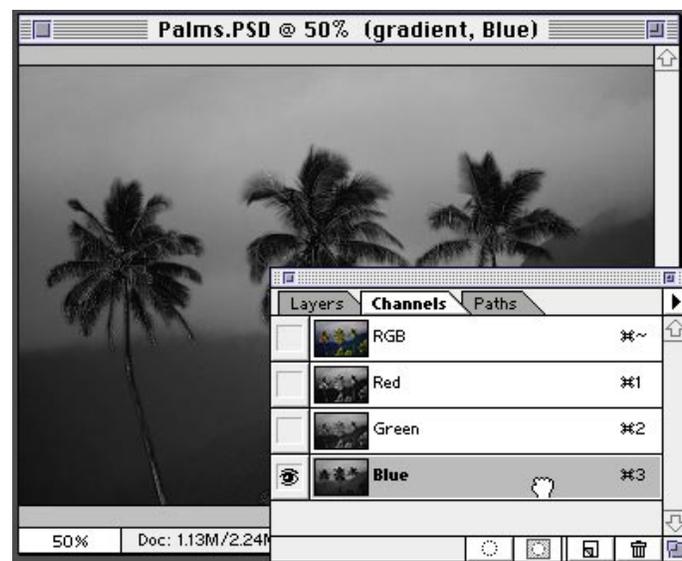
9. Next we want to soften the bands of color. Choose Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur. Your image resolution will determine how much you will want to set your blur to. I chose about 9 pixels for this 72-dpi image.

There is still one thing that we need to do. We need to make the rainbow appear as though it's coming from behind the trees. We can do this using a simple layer mask.



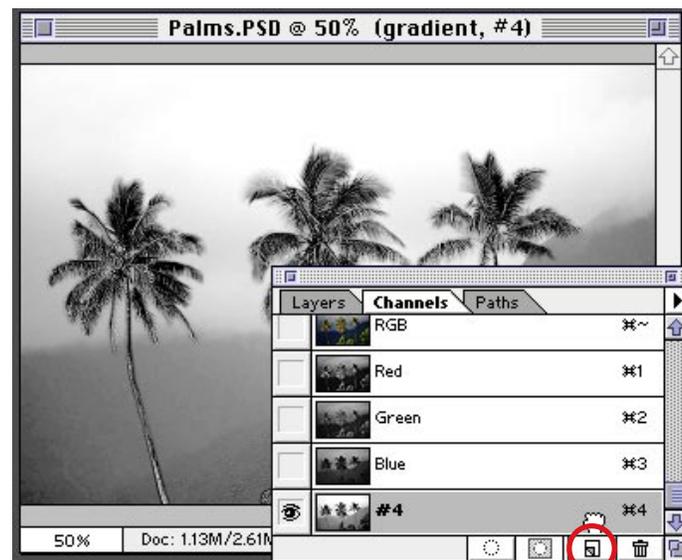
How much blur?
The degree of Gaussian blur will depend on your image size and resolution. For lower resolution, less blur will be sufficient, for higher resolution you will need to go higher.

10. You could paint a mask to hide parts of the rainbow or start with one of the channels in your image. I am going to use the channels, but some photos may not work as well as this one. First turn off the Rainbow layer (click on the eye next to the layer) and go to the Channels palette. Now, view each channel separately to find which one has the best contrast to make a layer mask.

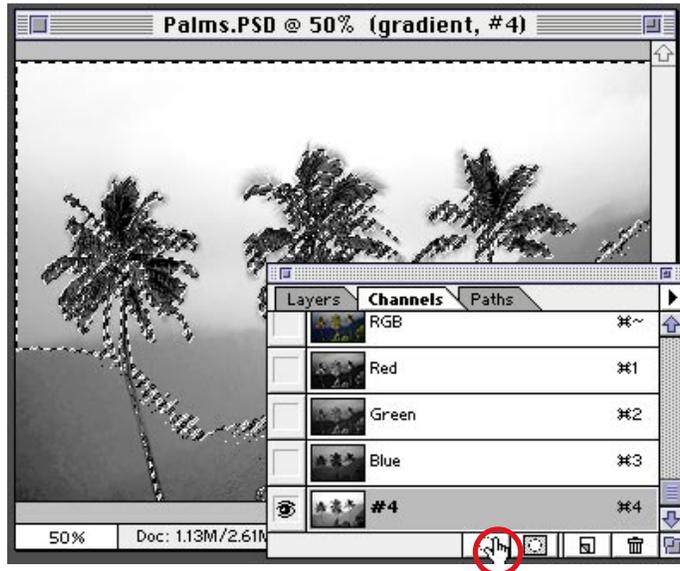


Display Shortcut
To go through your channels quickly you can use these shortcuts:
Command/Ctrl+1 = Red
Command/Ctrl+2 = Green
Command/Ctrl+3 = Blue
Command/Ctrl+~ = Composite

11. Duplicate this channel by dragging it over the new channel icon. To heighten the contrast as I've done, you can adjust the levels by choosing Image > Adjust > Levels.

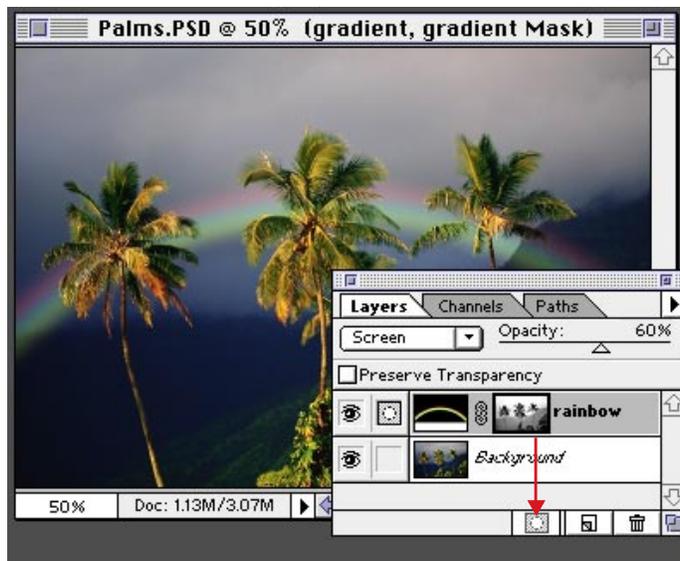


12. Turn this new channel into a selection either by dragging it over the dotted circle at the bottom or using the shortcut: Command/Ctrl + click on the target channel.

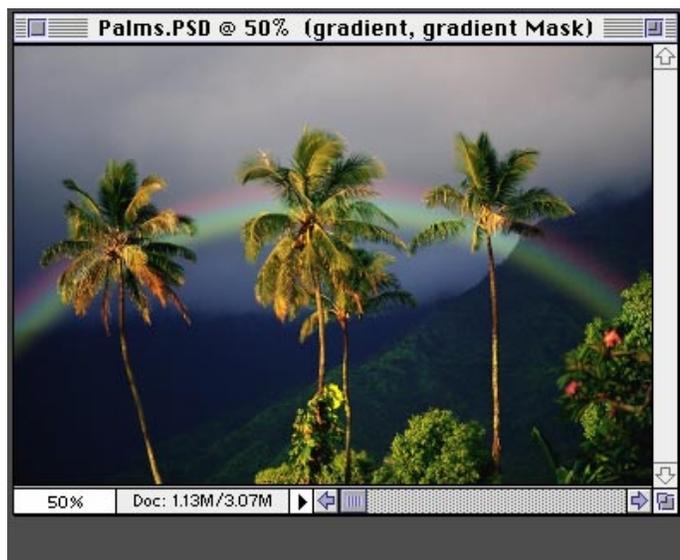


Layers Shortcut
To load the channel selection from your Layers palette, press: Command/Ctrl + Option/Alt + 4

13. Switch back to the composite channel and then back to your Layers palette. Target your rainbow layer. With the channel as your selection click the layer mask icon.



14. There you have it! The perfect rainbow in paradise.



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