

Adobe Photoshop CS

Converting Color Image to Black and White

Russell Brown. Adapted from *The Photoshop Show—Starring Russell Brown* to be published by Adobe Press and Peachpit Press. Russell Preston Brown is a Sr. Creative Director at Adobe Systems, Inc. He has worked with Adobe Photoshop since its introduction, over 12 years ago. Visit Russell's Web site at <http://www.russellbrown.com/>.

Converting images from color to black and white can be done in a variety of ways using Adobe® Photoshop® CS tools. However, I have always wanted an easy, interactive way, to adjust the relationship between the tonal values when converting the image. This technique makes it easy to convert, and adjust images, without making a lot of complex selections. You don't even have to get a degree in mathematics! For best results be sure to use this technique with 16-bit images.



1. Create an adjustment layer.

With the file open you'd like to convert, create a new adjustment layer by going to Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Hue/Saturation. At this time, don't do anything to the settings, simply click OK. This will create an adjustment layer without altering or harming the original image.

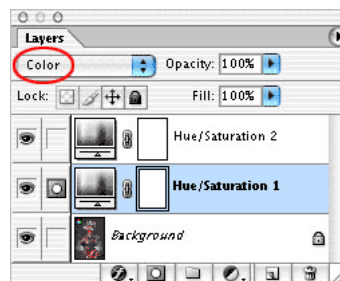
2. Create a second adjustment layer.

Create a second adjustment layer in the same way as step 1, Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Hue/Saturation. Yes, we're creating a second Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Set the Saturation to -100 to desaturate the image completely. Then click OK. By the way, this second adjustment layer can also be done with Channel Mixer for more sophisticated results. Select the Monochrome check box and adjust the sliders if necessary. Then click OK. I like using Hue/Saturation because it is just plain easy.



3. Change blend mode of first Hue/Saturation adjustment layer.

Target the first Hue/Saturation adjustment layer (Hue/Saturation 1) you created by clicking on the layer in the Layers palette. This will highlight the layer. Then change the blending mode for the layer to Color.



4. Adjust the hue of the image.

Double-click on the Layer thumbnail for Hue/Saturation 1 layer to bring up the adjustment dialog box. That's the beauty of adjustment layers. You can double-click on these at any time to change your adjustments. Because this adjustment layer was set to a Color mode, we can adjust its Hue and Saturation. Move the Hue slider to adjust the grayscale values of the image. Find a setting you like for the image you're working on.



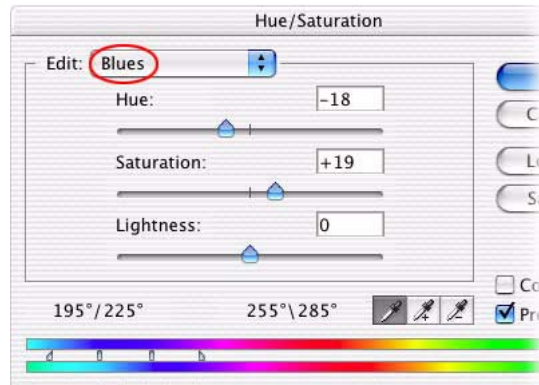
5. Adjust the saturation of the image.

Move the Saturation slider to get a little more finesse out of those particular shades that you've chosen.

Use Hue for the broader range of adjustments, Saturations for the smaller adjustments.

6. Adjust a specific color range.

To target a range of color, click on the Edit menu and select the range of colors you'd like to edit, for example, Blues. This will adjust just the color of the sky, not the woman's hair or face. Then move the Hue and Saturation sliders as in steps 4 and 5. Notice how only the Blues in the background are changing. Is this control or what!



7. Adjust another color range.

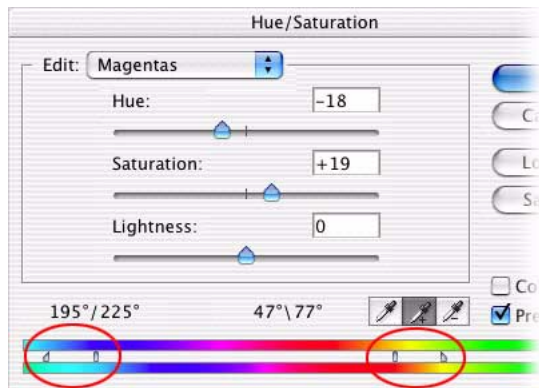
To adjust just the woman's hair and skin, select Reds from the Edit menu. Move the Hue and Saturation sliders.

Tip: To see the adjustment in color, turn off visibility of the Hue/Saturation 2 layer.



8. How to adjust a group of colors.

To select a group of colors to adjust, select the Eyedropper tool, place your cursor on the image, and hold down the Shift key. A plus sign will appear next to the Eyedropper tool. Click on one color, then another (for example blue and red). Notice how the range at the bottom of the Hue/Saturation dialog box has increased to include the selected group of colors to adjust. Then move the Hue and Saturation sliders.



9. Finish making the adjustments.

When you've finished making your adjustments, click OK. Remember, the beauty of adjustment layers is that you can always go back and change your adjustment without altering the original image.

10. Conclusion.

So there you have it—the incredible, spectacular Russell Brown technique for converting color images to black and white. Now you also have all this same control on 16-bit color images. Amazing, but true!

