Portrait Editing in Photoshop

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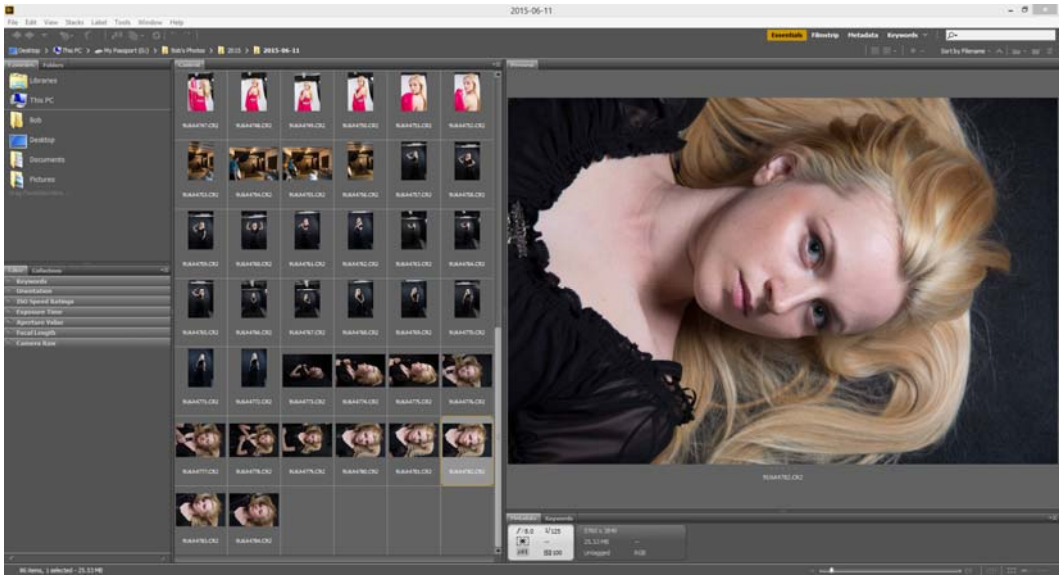
Step 1 – Preparing the Image

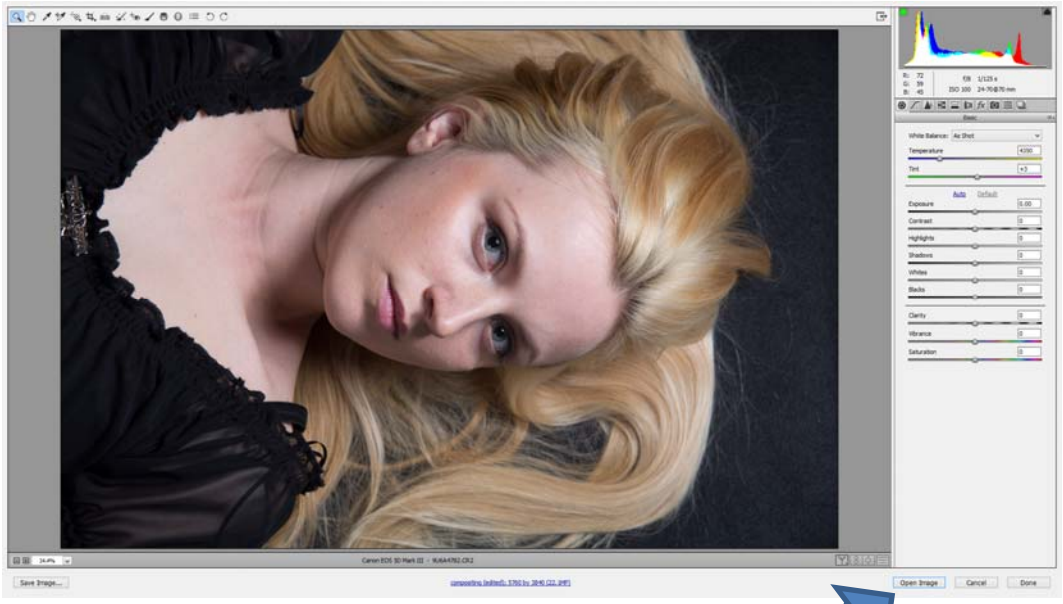
Open Photoshop

File - Browse in Bridge



Double click on the image to be edited

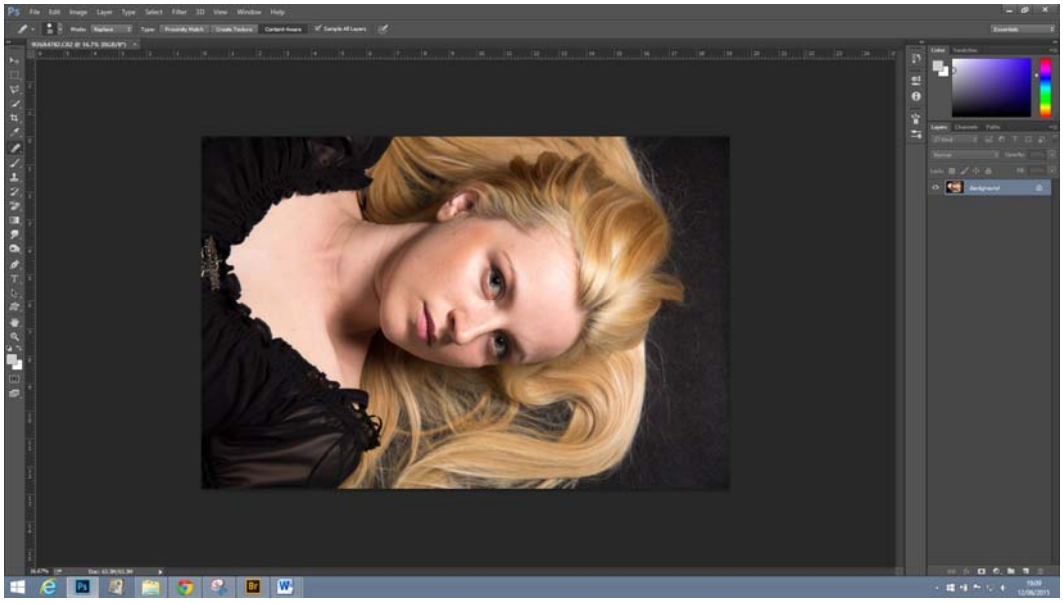
File opens in ACR



Adjust temperature and black and white points to suit

Click on Open Image

File opens in Photoshop.

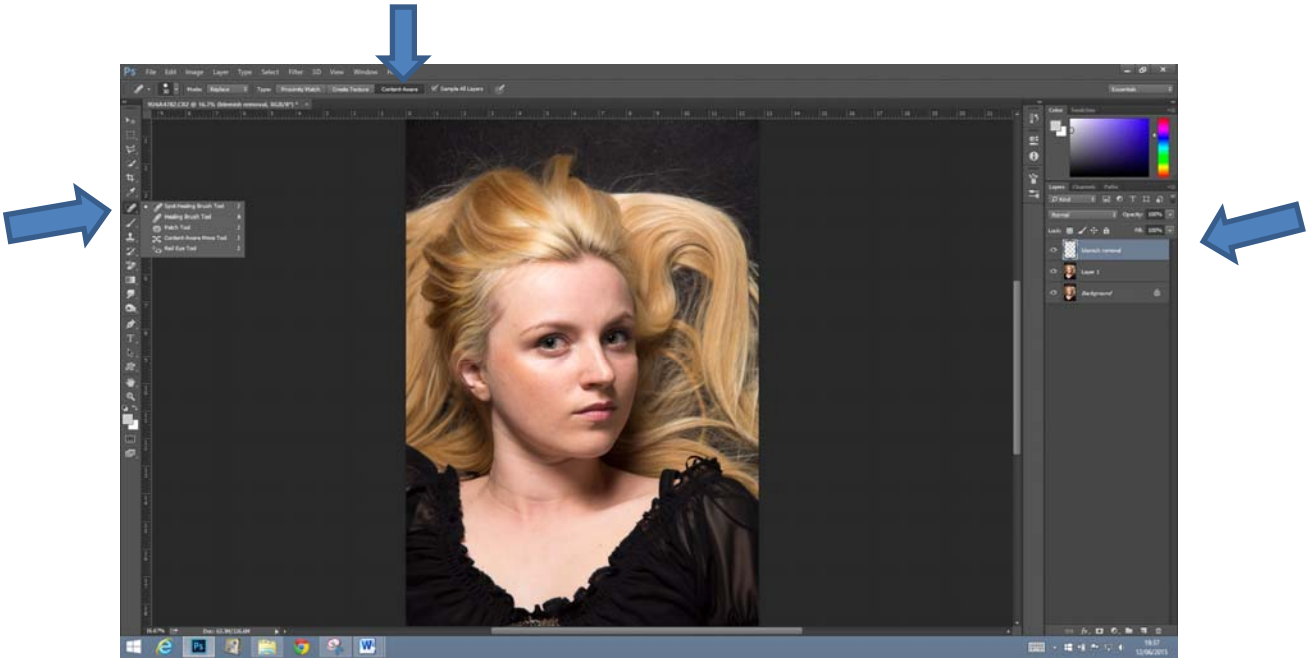


In this case rotate file 90^0 anti-clockwise

Step 2 – Blemish Removal

Ctrl J to copy background layer– always work non-destructively

Make new blank layer – name new layer ‘Blemish Removal’



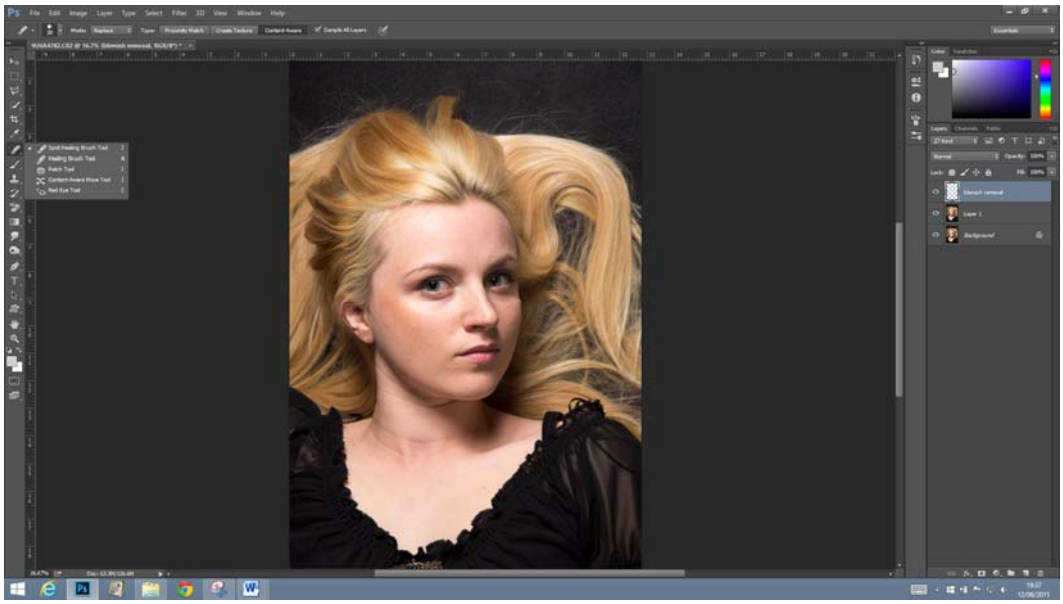
Select Spot Healing Brush (Could use Healing Brush, but Spot Healing Brush seems to work OK)

Make sure ‘Content Aware’ is selected

Zoom in to 100% using Ctrl +

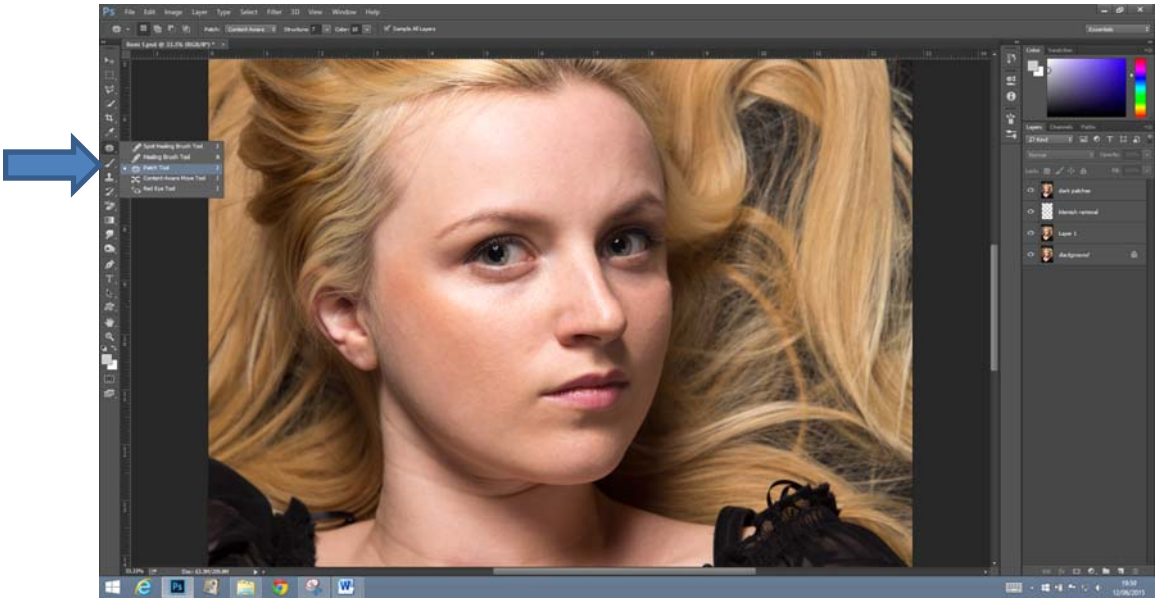
Increase/decrease brush size using square brackets keys,] to increase, [to decrease. Make brush slightly bigger than blemish and click on blemish.

Paint over each blemish



Step 3 - Dark Patches under Eyes

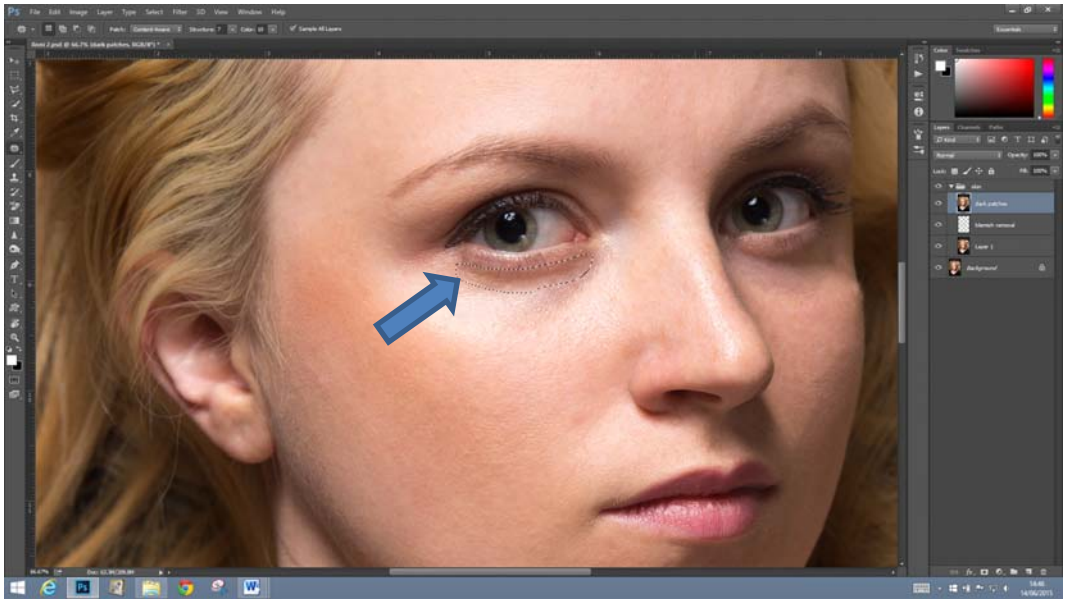
Make a 'Stamp Visible' layer using Shift+Ctrl+Alt+E – name new layer ' Dark Patches'



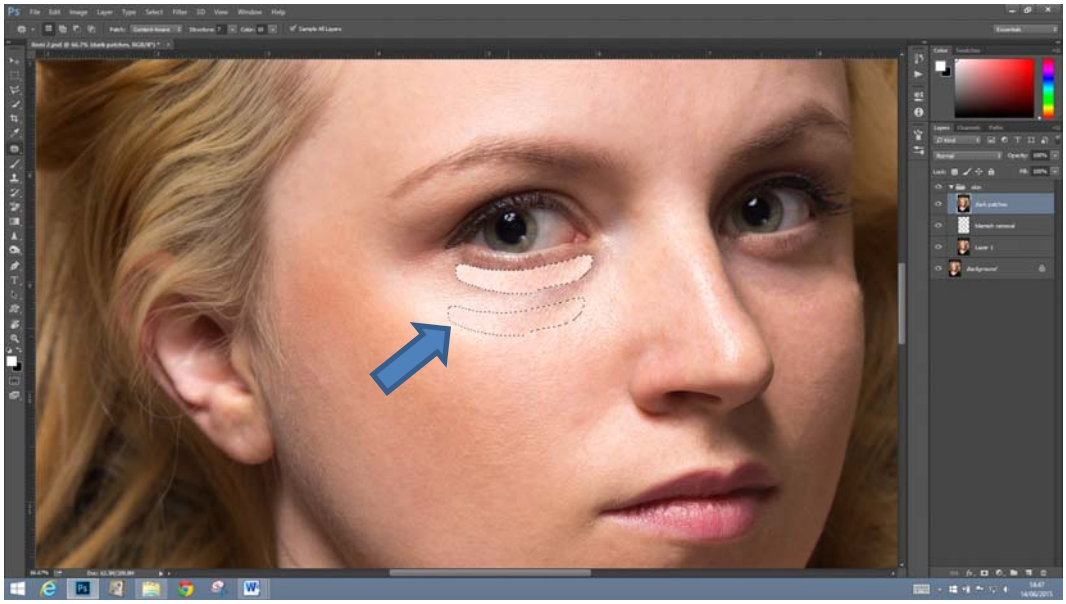
Sometimes the Patch Tool works – sometimes it doesn't

Select Patch Tool

Draw around the dark patch



Drag the selected area over a clean area of skin and release mouse.



Do the same for the other eye.

Consider reducing the opacity of the layer to bring back a few of the creases to make eyes realistic

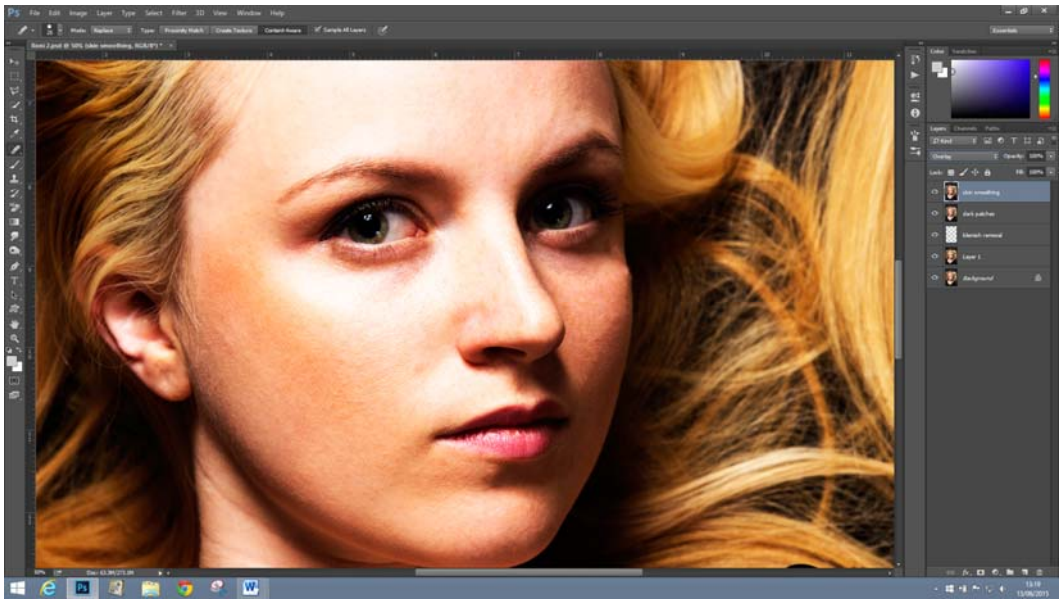
If the patch tool doesn't work – continue using the Spot Healing brush

Step 4 – Skin Smoothing

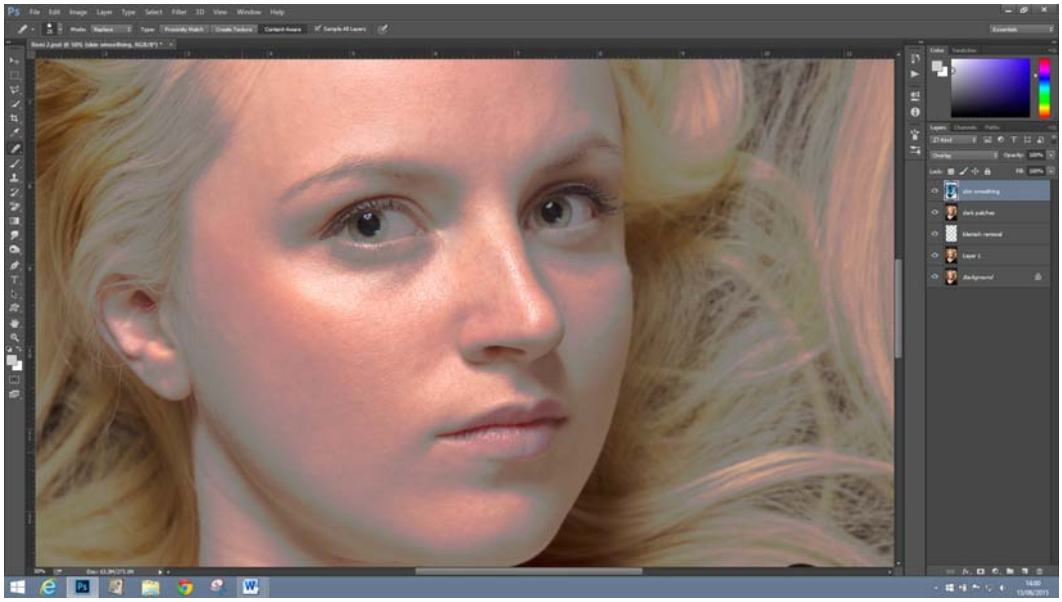
Make a Stamp Visible copy by pressing Shift+Control+Alt+E

Rename this layer ‘Skin Smoothing’

Change Blending Mode to Overlay

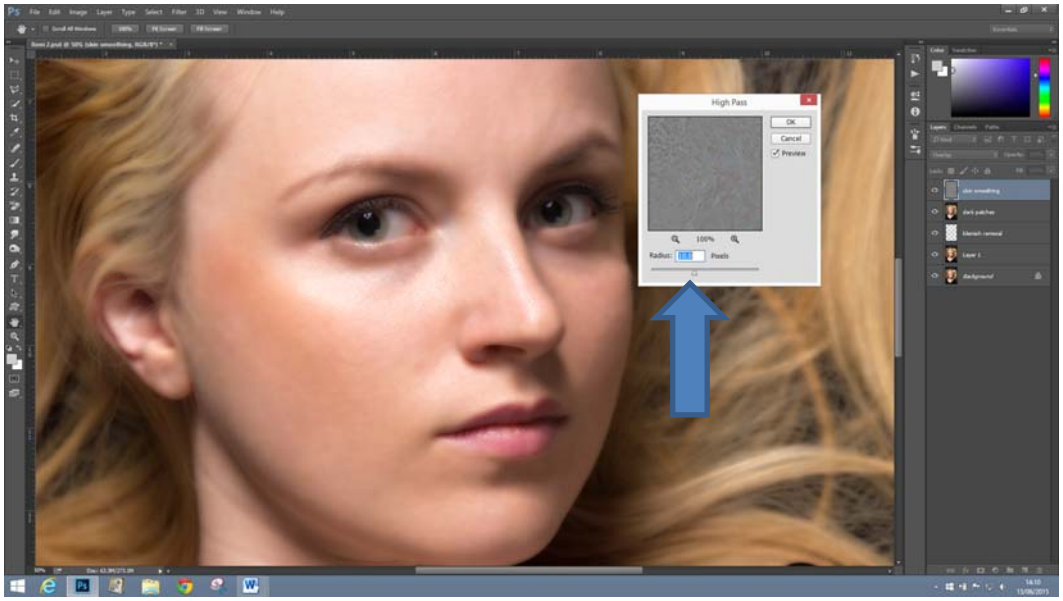


Invert the layer by pressing Ctrl and I

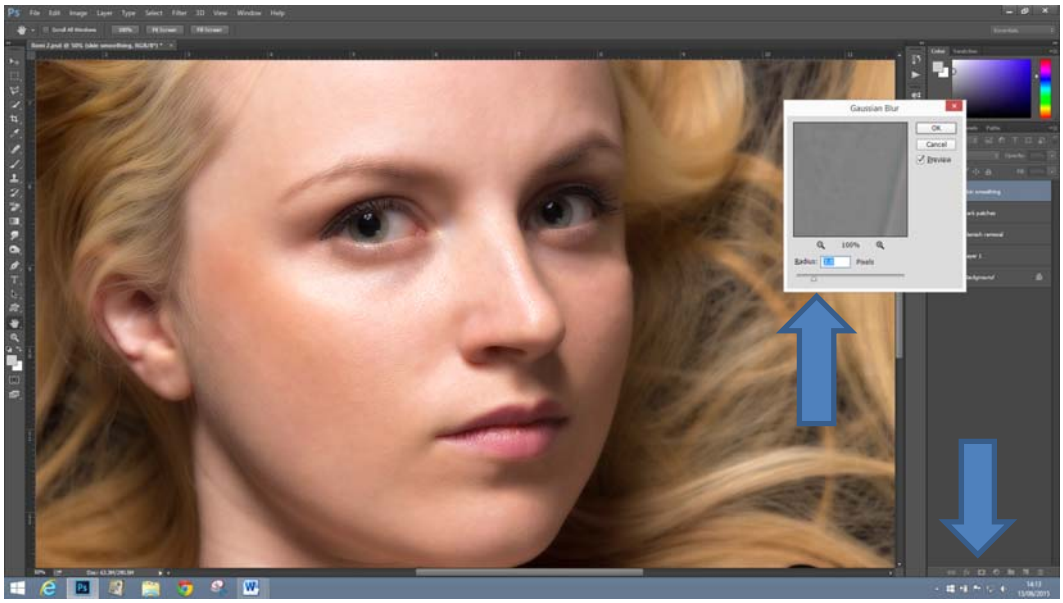


Go to Filter – Other – High Pass

Adjust radius to about 10px. To achieve the amount of blur required

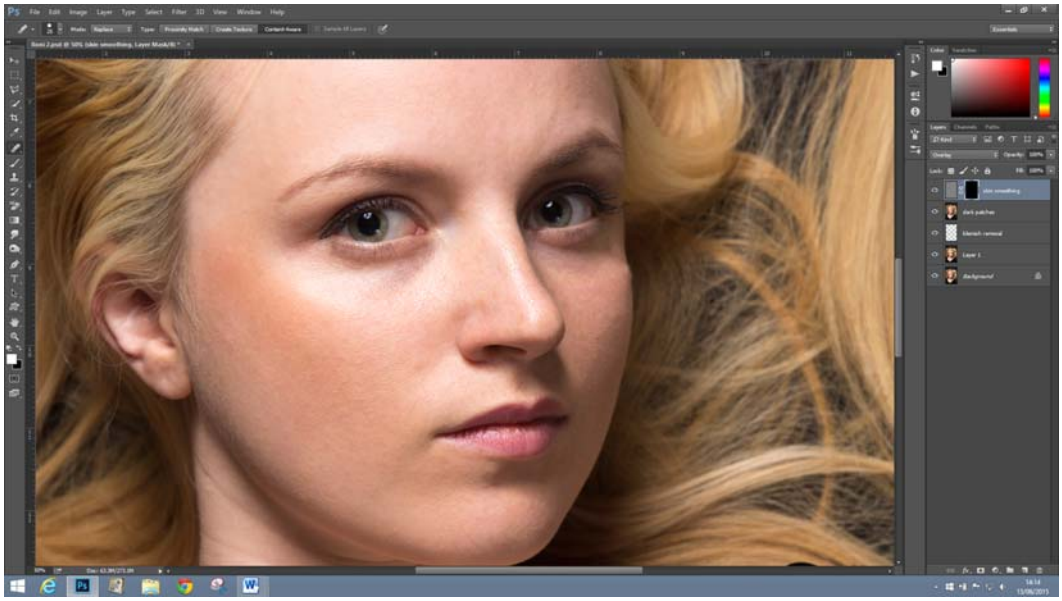


Working on the same layer - Go to Filter – Blur – Gaussian Blur.

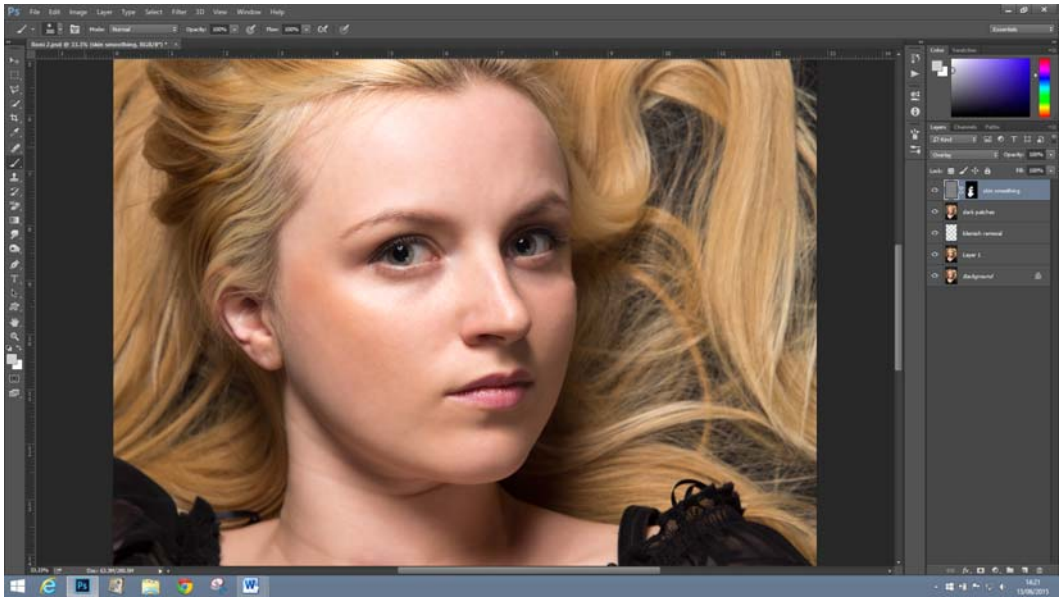


Increase the radius to somewhere between 2 and 3. (Note, because the layer is inverted, increasing the radius brings back the detail rather than blurring it.)

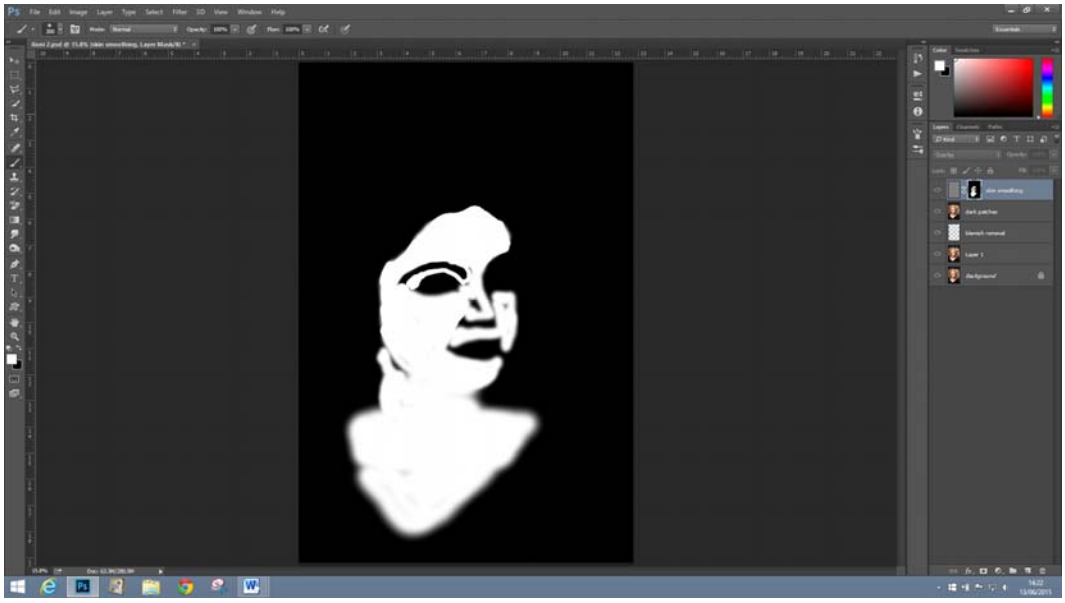
The effect has been applied to the whole of the layer. To rectify this apply a 'Hide All' layer mask by holding down 'Alt' and clicking on the 'Add Later Mask' icon at the bottom of the Layers panel.



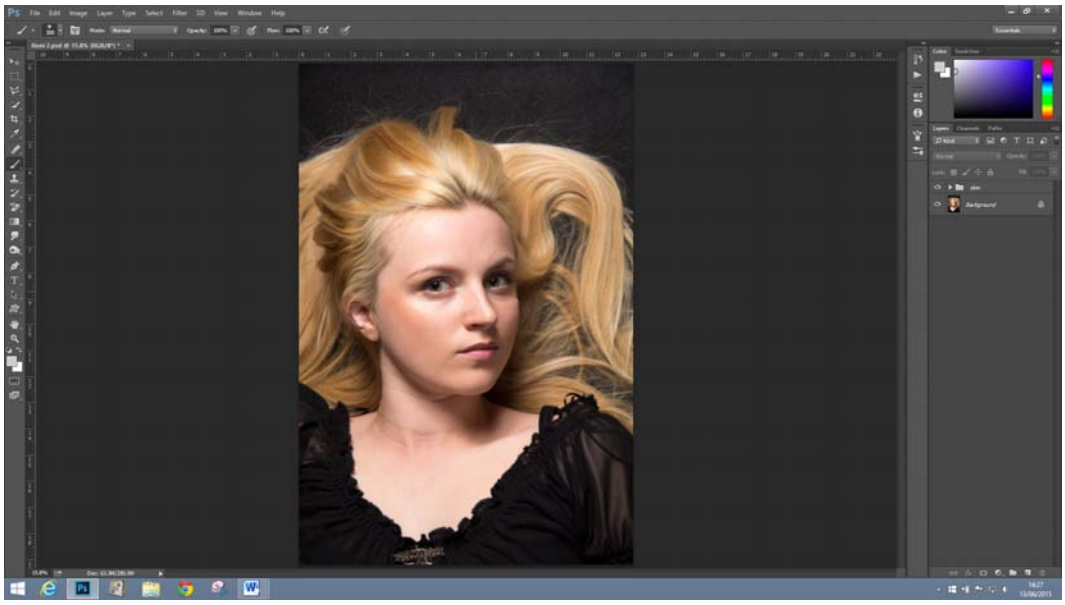
Using a white brush, and painting on the black mask, paint in the skin smoothing effect to the skin. Avoid painting over the eyes, nose and lips – areas where you still require detail to be present.



If you want to see where you have painted, press Alt, and click on the mask. Press Alt and click on the mask again to return to the normal view.



To tidy up the layers palette, click on the top, (skin smoothing layer), the shift click on layer 1 to highlight them. The click on Ctrl G to group them. Call this new group ‘Skin’



Step 4 – Eyes

Make a Stamp Visible layer by pressing Shift+Ctrl+Alt+E

Make a copy of this layer by pressing Ctrl+j

Rename this layer ‘Eyes’

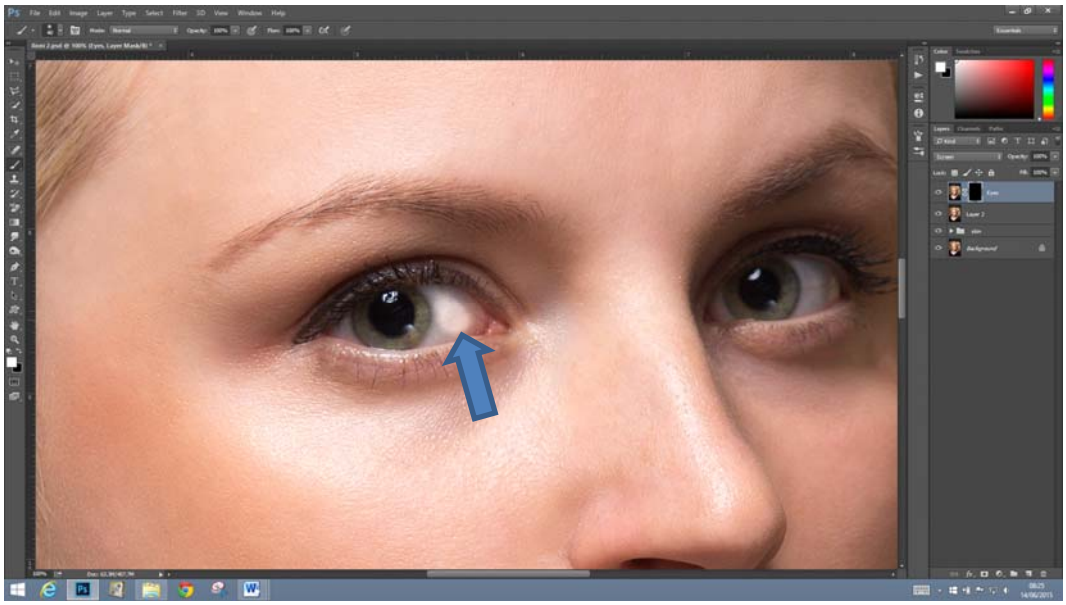
To lighten this layer change the blend mode to Screen. (In case you can't remember which blend mode to use, it is immediately below the 'Lighten' blend mode.

Changing the blend mode to screen lightens the whole image – we only want to lighten the eyes.

Add a 'hide all' layer mask to the image by holding down the Alt key and clicking on the Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel. This 'hides' the lightening effect. Make sure you are painting on the mask – not the pixels. The mask should have a square around it to show that it is selected.

Zoom in to about 100%

Change your brush colour to white and using a small brush paint the whites of the eyes. Don't worry too much if you stray over the edges. Once the whites have been lightened change the colour of the brush to black by pressing X on the keyboard. Paint around the edges of the eye to tidy up.



Do the same to the other eye.

To reduce the effect of the whitening and to give a more realistic look reduce the Opacity of this layer to suit, (usually less than 50%)

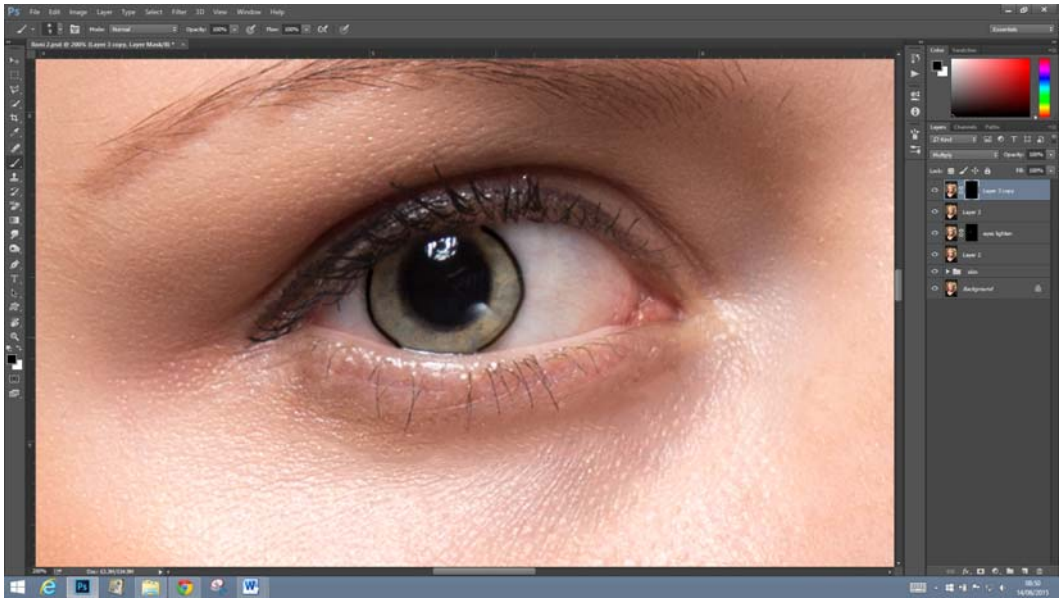
This same technique can also be used to whiten the subject's teeth – either on the same layer, or on another layer if varying degrees of whiteness are required.

To darken the edge of the iris – make another Stamp Visible layer using Shift+Ctrl+Alt+E. Make a copy by pressing Ctrl+J.

This time change the blend mode to Multiply. (Just under the 'Darken' blend mode). This darkens the whole image

Create a ‘Hide all’ layer mask by holding down the Alt key and clicking on the layer mask icon.

Using a small white brush, pain round the edges of the iris. Paint on the pupil too if required to darken it.



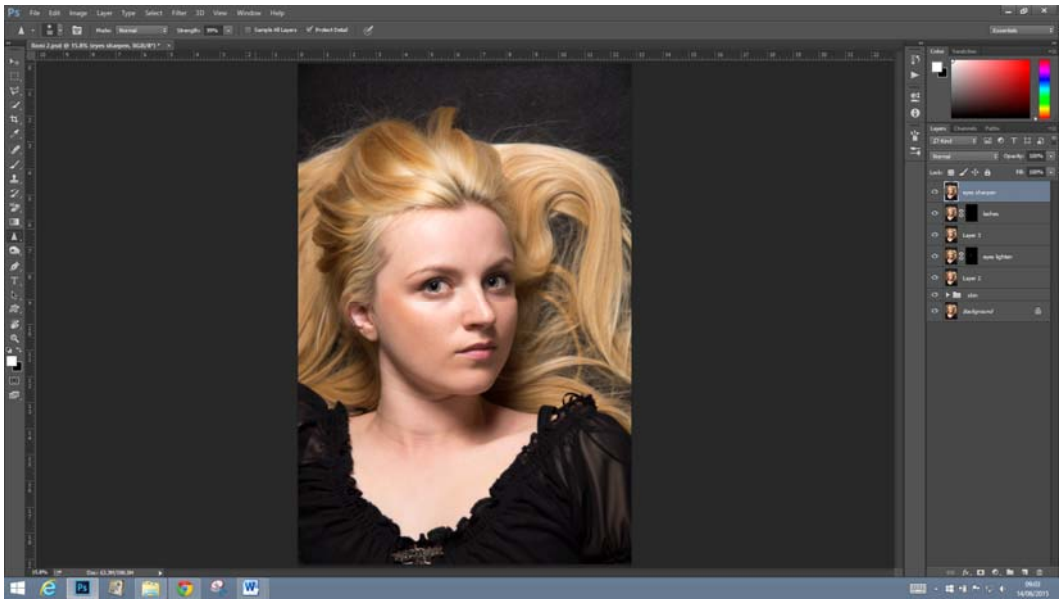
You can also enhance the eyelashes using this method

It sometimes helps to use the rotate function ‘R’ to turn the image while doing this.

Again, to reduce the effect lower the opacity of the layer.

To sharpen the eyes - make another Stamp Visible layer using Shift+Ctrl+Alt+E. Make a copy by pressing Ctrl+J.

Rename this layer ‘Eyes Sharpen’



Click on the Sharpen tool, (Which resides with the Blur and Smudge tools.)

Paint over the eyes, and reduce layer opacity as required.

Step 5 - Hair

The same technique can be used to add highlights to the hair

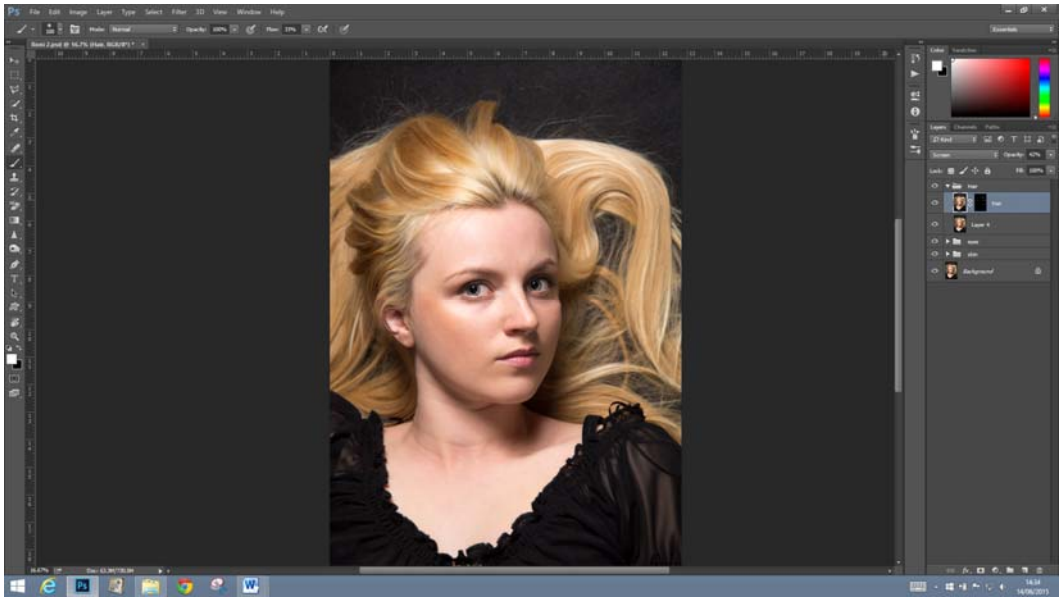
With the Eyes Group highlighted, make a new Stamp Visible Layer (Shift+Ctrl+Alt+E)

Make a copy of this layer (Ctrl J) – rename this layer Hair.

Change the blend mode to Screen – to lighten the whole layer.

Put a 'hide all' black mask on the Hair layer to hide the effect by holding the Alt key and clicking on the Layer Mask icon in the layers panel.

Select a small white brush and add highlights to the hair by drawing in the mask over the lighter parts of the hair.



Again, reduce the opacity to reduce the effect.

Step 6 – Hot Spot Removal

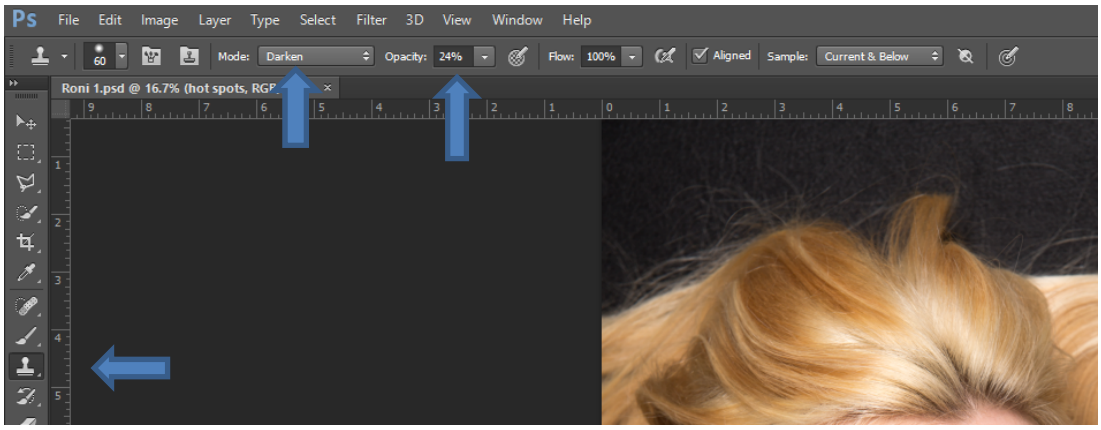
Create a new stamp visible layer using Shift+Ctrl+Alt+E.

Name the new layer ‘Hot Spots’

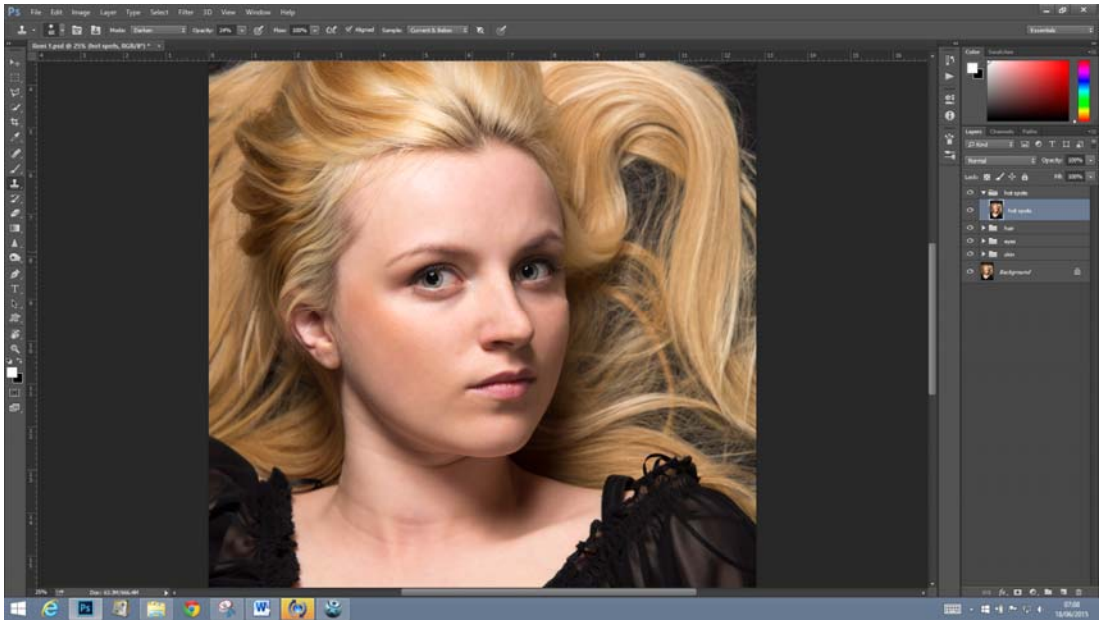
Select the Clone Stamp tool.

Set the blend mode to darken. With this blend mode only pixels that are lighter than the sample will be affected. The darker pixels will not be affected.

Set a low opacity, 40% or below.



Press Alt, and sample an area close to and darker than the highlight.

Dab over the hotspot to remove.

If the hot spot removal does not blend fully with the image try reducing the opacity a little, or try erasing gently with a large eraser brush with the opacity set to 25%