

Sharpening V.

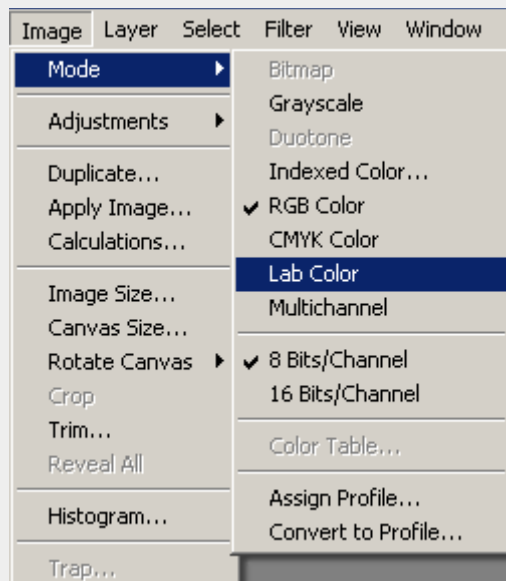
Level: advanced

We have already introduced a good handful of sharpening methods. This is because there are more than a good handful of them—not just the well-known Unsharp Mask. You can also combine good old Unsharp Mask with other solutions, which produces a better result as using it in itself. For example, you can ignore color channels during sharpening.



1. Open the photo

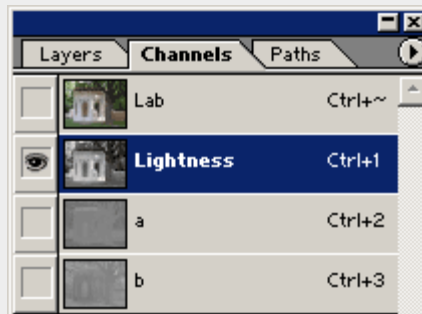
The point is to sharpen only the lightness information in the picture. Regarding the details, sharpening color channels is unnecessary.



2. Switch the channel

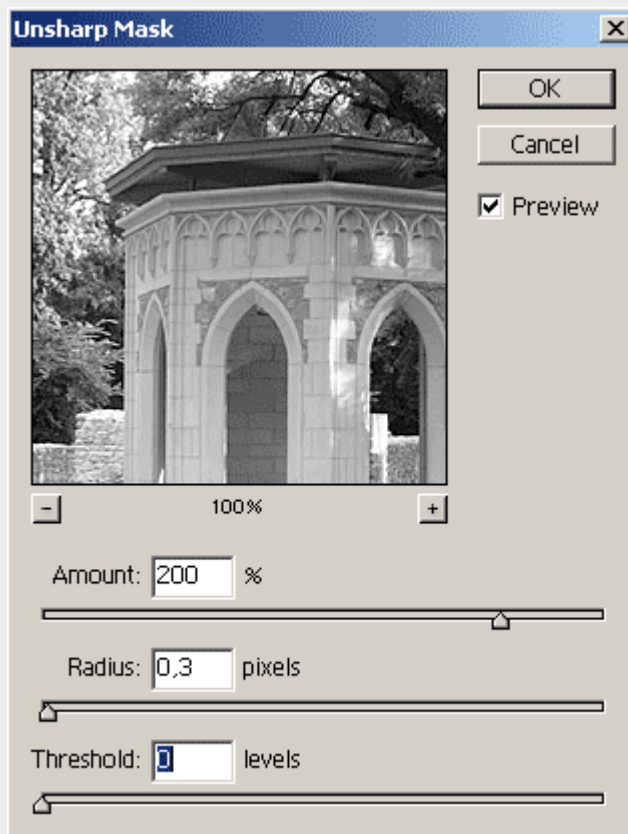
First of all, switch from **RGB Color** to **Lab Color** mode. **RGB** stands for the red (**R**), green (**G**), and blue (**B**) channels. That is, all three are color

channels. **Lab** mode provides two color channels (**a** and **b**) and a **Lightness** channel. The latter is what we need.



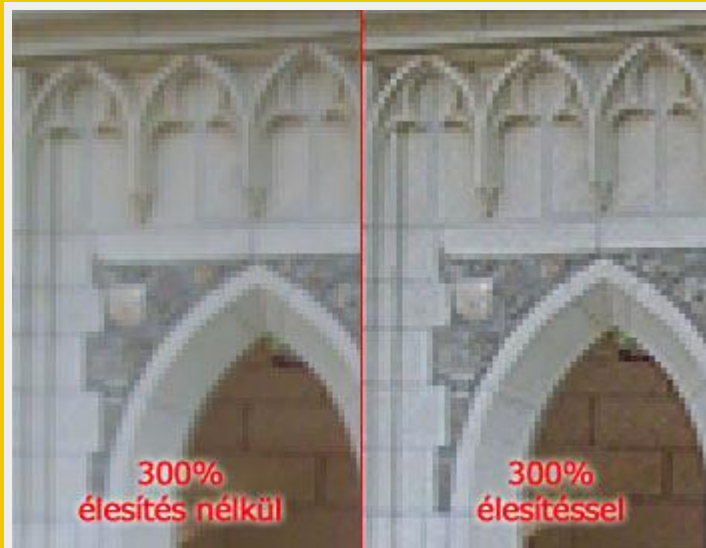
3. Choose light!

Switch to the **Channels** palette and select the **Lightness** channel. You'll see a monochrome picture showing the information in the selected channel. This is what you want to sharpen.



4. As usual

Sharpen the picture as you would normally do, e.g. using **Unsharp Mask**. Because of tiny details, we specified a low **Radius** and a moderate **Amount** value. We left **Threshold** at **0**. Set the values as you see fit for the particular picture.



**300% zoom without
sharpening**

**300% zoom with
sharpening**

5. No surprise...

...that the result is much sharper. Only the lightness information, the details of the picture were sharpened. This way, color noise wasn't increased—luminance noise, however, can grow by excessive sharpening.

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