

## **GETTING STARTED: STANDARD EDITING**

First double click on paint.net to open the program. **Go to FILE, then OPEN then locate the file “ladybug original” photo.**

When I sit down to edit a photo, I usually start with the biggest “errors” that I find in the photo. In this case, it’s the color. The color here has the potential to really pop, but a lot of times if the lighting is not good or your camera’s white balance is “out of whack” (on the wrong setting for the photo), the colors can look dull, as they do here.

### ***Color Enhancement***

**Click on ADJUSTMENTS at the top, then on HUE/SATURATION.**

This brings up a box with three sliders in it: “Hue” on top (which we’ll use later), “Saturation” in the middle (we’re going to use this one now) and “Lightness” on the bottom.

Go ahead and **grab onto the ARROW in the SATURATION slider bar and drag to the RIGHT to “pump up the color.”** You can also type in a value in the white box\* to the right of the slider bar.

For this particular photo, I’ve found that a value of 120 looks good, so go ahead and **slide the ARROW in the SATURATION slider bar to 120 or type “120” in the BOX to the right.** Click OK.

\* Notice the button that says “Reset” under this box. If you don’t like the changes you made, hit this button to take you back to how the photo looked before you changed the saturation.

Another potential problem with this photo that we can fix is the alignment. Notice how the green edge of the blanket creates a diagonal, “crooked” line in the photo, which to some people is distracting (be aware, however, that there is no “right” or “wrong” way of taking a photo – different things are interesting to different people. I myself find “crooked” lines interesting in a photo, but some may prefer parallelism and symmetry.)

### ***Fixing Alignment***

To fix the alignment, **click on LAYERS on the top of the window, then on ROTATE/ZOOM.** Drag the dialogue box out of the way so you can still see your photo. You’ll notice a circle in the top left of the window with a THICK BLACK LINE POINTING TOWARDS “3:00” if we were to look at this circle like a clock.

**Position your mouse over this line and drag it (it will turn blue) one way or another around the circle to see how it changes the photo.** Notice how the numbers in the “Angle” box below change as you rotate the photo. Just like before with the saturation values, you can specify a degree that you want your photo to rotate.

For this photo, let’s rotate it to a -10.00 degree angle. **In the Angle box, TYPE -10.00, and make sure there is NOT A CHECK the “PRESERVE BACKGROUND” box in the bottom left corner of the Rotate/Zoom dialog box.** Click ok

Now you’ll see, as happens a lot in photo editing, that by fixing one mistake we caused another, but don’t worry! We can fix this one, too! Time to put your cropping skills to use!

## ***Cropping***

In the toolbar directly above your photo, **click on the word TOOL that is beside the little paintbrush**. In the drop-down menu, **click RECTANGLE SELECT**. Notice how your cursor changes to a plus sign with a box attached to it. This is how you know you've got the right tool.

Now we're going to remove the crooked lines on the borders of the photo we got by (ironically) fixing the crooked line in our original photo. THIS MAY TAKE A FEW TRIES.

**Position your mouse in the top left corner or where you want the crop to go and drag to get the size you want.** Keep in mind, our goal is to get as much of the photo in the crop as we can *without* getting any of the grey checkered areas we got from rotating the photo. This will take you a few tries. If you do not like your crop, hit CTRL + D to try again.

Once you are happy with your crop (designated by the moving dashed lines around the area you wish to keep), **click on the CROP TO SELECTION icon**, just under "Layers" (8<sup>th</sup> from the left, beside the clipboard – looks like a box with dashes in the corners) Voila! a nice, cropped image.

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Now that the major errors are fixed, it's time for the fun stuff. We're going to learn how to use the magic wand tool, layering, and have some fun with color.

## ***ADVANCED EDITING: LAYERING***

**Click on the TOOL button** again, the same one we clicked on to get the rectangle select, and this time, **click on MAGIC WAND** from the drop down menu.

Before we start doing some magic, though, we have to "calibrate" our wand. What the magic wand tool does is it selects similar colored pixels surrounding the pixel you click on. You can set the sensitivity (how much the wand "selects") by changing the tolerance percentage.

### ***Magic Wand: Calibration***

In the bottom most toolbar that has reads: "Tool", "Selection Mode" "Flood Mode" and "Tolerance", **click on the BLUE BOXES next to SELECTION MODE** to get a pull down menu. **Click on ADD (UNION)**.

Next, if you don't see a lightning bolt next to flood mode (if it's a globe), click on the globe and **select the lightening bolt (CONTINGOUS)**.

The last step to calibrate our magic wand is setting the tolerance. For this photo, I've found that a 40% TOLERANCE works pretty well. **Click in the middle of the blue bar next to tolerance and keep clicking/dragging either right of left to you hit close to 40 (there is no exact way to set it).**

## ***Magic Wand: Selection***

***THIS CAN BE VERY TEDIOUS, BUT STICK WITH IT!!!***

Now that our tool is calibrated, turn your attention to the ladybug. With your magic wand, **click on the RED AND ONLY RED parts of the ladybug**. Notice how the moving dashed lines appear around what the magic wand selected for you. **Keep clicking on the RED until you have all (or as much as you can get) of the red selected. DON'T TRY TO MAKE IT PERFECT, IT'S NOT AN EXACT ART. JUST GET AS MUCH AS YOU CAN.**

It helps immensely to zoom in on the image to see what is selected and what isn't. You can do this by clicking on the magnifying glass with the plus sign in it under "Effects" ONCE YOU HAVE THE RED SELECTED FOLLOW ALONG CAREFULLY SINCE ANY ERRONEOUS MOUSE CLICKS CAN MESS UP THE WORK YOU JUST DID.

## ***Adding Content to Layers***

Now that the red part of the lady bug is selected, we're going to split the photo into layers. **Click on WINDOW at the top, then click on LAYERS**. This brings up a tiny dialogue box that has the photo you're working on.

This is the "Layer Dialogue Box" and is very important in the following steps. Notice that in the box there is a "layer" called Background. Once you have another layer added it's very important to know how to view and switch between layers. Also notice the check box next to "Background." This check box is to select if you want the layer to be temporarily "invisible" or not. Try it out. Make sure there is NO check in the box and watch as your photo disappears.

Once we add other layers, it's helpful to make the layer you are NOT working with transparent, so remember what the check boxes do. When you are switching between layers, be sure to click the check box to make it visible AND click on the layer name (for example "Background") and make sure it is surrounded in blue. To make it easier, make this layer visible and all others transparent. Once you're set on making layers invisible or not and know how to select them, drag the Layers dialogue box to a corner and out of the way.

**Now click on LAYERS at the top, then ADD NEW LAYER**. Notice how this added another item to your tiny layer dialogue box, specifically a layer called "Layer 2."

**Make sure your red portion of the lady bug is selected and hold down CTRL + C to copy. Now make sure that "layer 2" in your layer dialogue box is highlighted (surrounded in blue) and then hold down CTRL + V to paste the red selection into the second layer. TO CHECK IF YOU DID THIS STEP RIGHT, "UNCHECK" THE BOX NEXT TO "BACKGROUND" IN YOUR LAYERS DIALOGUE BOX, AND MAKE SURE THE BOX NEXT TO LAYER TWO IS CHECKED. YOU SHOULD SEE THE RED OF THE LADY BUG ONLY.**

Now that we will be working with layers, be aware of whatever layer is "selected" (surrounded in blue) in your layers dialogue box. Everything you do will be done to that layer only.

**Make sure the background layer is selected, then hold down CTRL + D to deselect the red. (Don't worry, layer 2 is "saving" your red selection.)**

## ***Color Adjustment/Change***

This is where you can take one of two routes: either make the background black and white, or different colors than they are. Please read the following two paragraphs before making any kind of changes

For a more “psychedelic” photo, follow these instructions: **go to ADJUSTMENTS, then to HUE/SATURATION** and **click “RESET” to the right of each slider so all the values in the dialogue box read 100.** (paint.net automatically saves any values you chose earlier in your project and applies them again, which is something we do not want.) Play around with the HUE instead of the “Saturation” like we did before (Try setting the hue at -120!)

For a partial black and white photo, **go to ADJUSTMENTS and click BLACK AND WHITE.** Notice everything (including the lady bug) turn black and white.

Now click **on LAYER 2 in our layer dialogue box**, and just for ease of viewing, **make sure the box next to layer two IS checked and the box next to background IS NOT.** (again, layer 2 should now be surrounded in blue since this is the layer we want to work with now.)

You should just see a red ladybug on the screen over grey and white checkers, since this is the only thing we selected back in our magic wand step. Just to make sure you’re free to make changes **hold down CTRL + D** to “drop” any tool we might be holding or any selection we may have. In this step, we’re going to have two options also: to change the ladybug’s color, or to leave it red.

If you would like to change the color of the ladybug, **READ THIS PARAGRAPH.** If not, skip over it. To change the color, **click on ADJUSTMENTS at the top and then HUE/SATURATION. Again, click on “RESET” to the right of each slider. Slide around the arrow on the HUE slider bar until you have a color you like.** Click OK.

## ***Compressing Your Layers***

Next, in your layers dialogue box, **PUT A CHECK IN THE BOX BESIDE BOTH LAYERS** to see your new photo. If you like your results, **click the MERGE LAYER DOWN button** in your layers dialogue box (4<sup>th</sup> from the left). If it’s not letting you click it, make sure “layer 2” is selected.

**Save your photo as “Ladybug Retouched”,** then kick back and relax, photo editing master!

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\*\*I hope you enjoyed this tutorial, and hopefully you can find lots of ways to apply these techniques to your own photos! If you’re interested in seeing other people’s photos, I recommend joining <http://www.flickr.com>, an online photo-sharing community! There are lots of nice people there that will help you with your future photo editing hobby!