

Converting a Color Image to Black and White.

Sometimes there are images that just scream out that they would be wonderful in black and white. There are a number of ways to convert a color photo to black and white.

Some work better than others, some are automatic and others require a few extra steps. Each extra step that is taken increases the quality of the black and white image.

Whatever method you use you will want to further enhance the conversion with some fine-tuning. Using a Levels or Brightness and Contrast (or both) Adjustment layer will bring out additional details.

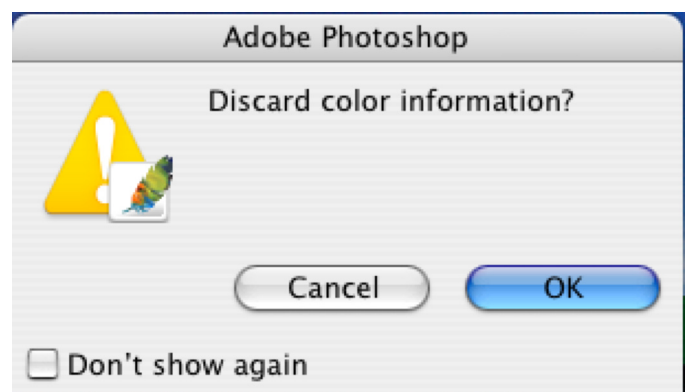
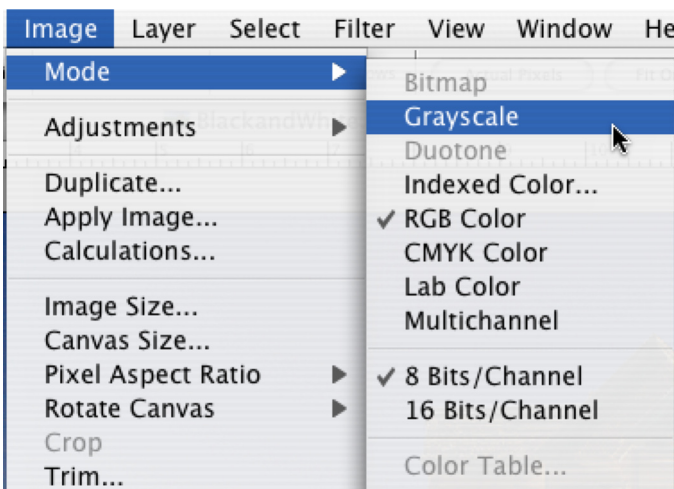


Covert to Grayscale

The most common way to convert an image to black and white is to use the Grayscale command in the Image -> Adjustment menu.

But, this is not the best way. Photoshop will remove all color information, creating a grayscale image. It will use the same conversion method for every image.

While it may work well for some images in most cases you will want to have more control over the settings.

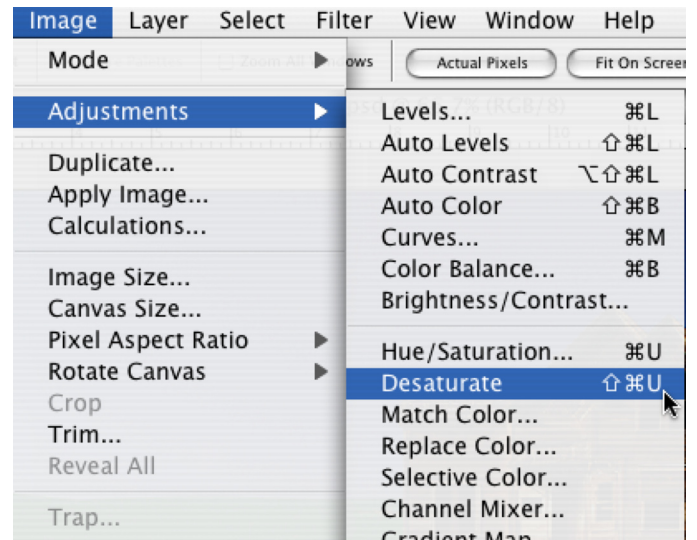


Convert to Black and White By - Desaturate or Channels

Desaturate

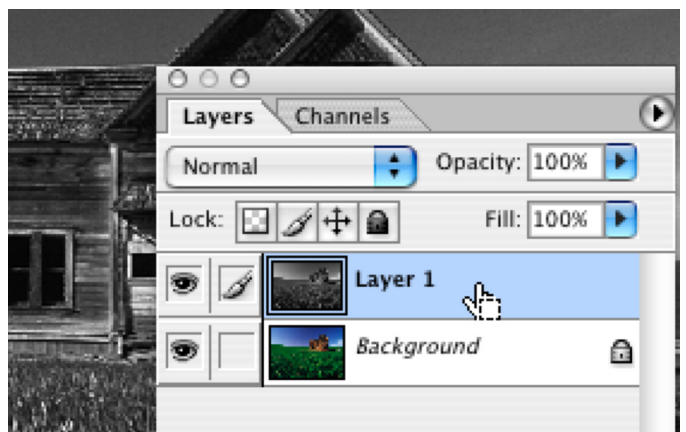
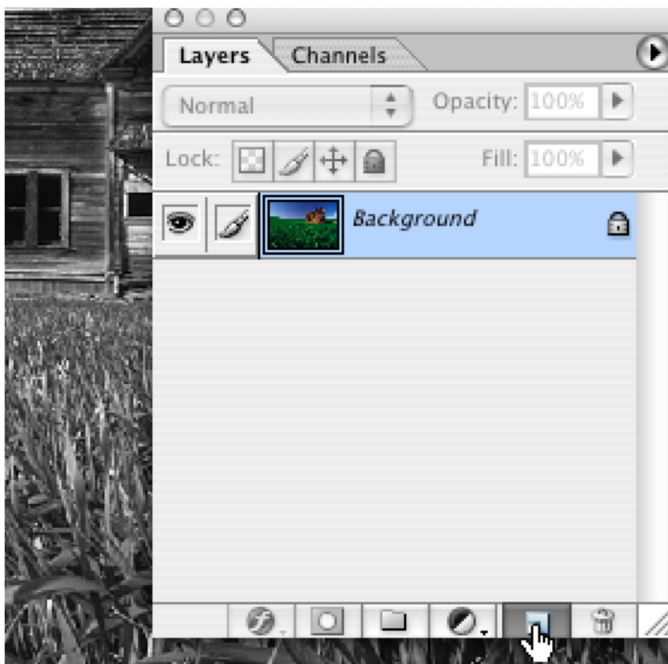
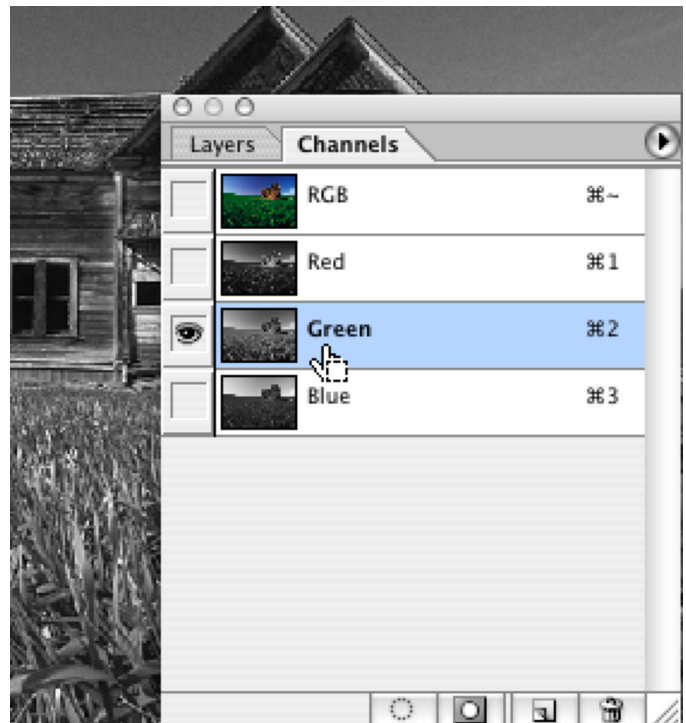
Another common method is to use the Desaturate option, also in the Image -> Adjustment menu.

This method differs from Gray Scale in that it keeps the color information (stays in RGB mode).



Copying a Channel

Another common practice is to copy one of the Red, Green or Blue channels and paste it into the Layers window.



Convert to Black and White By -LAB

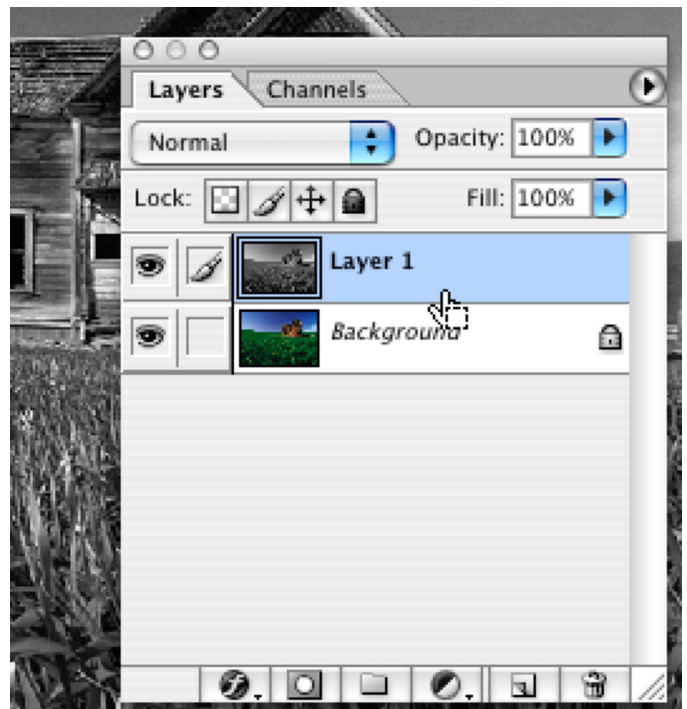
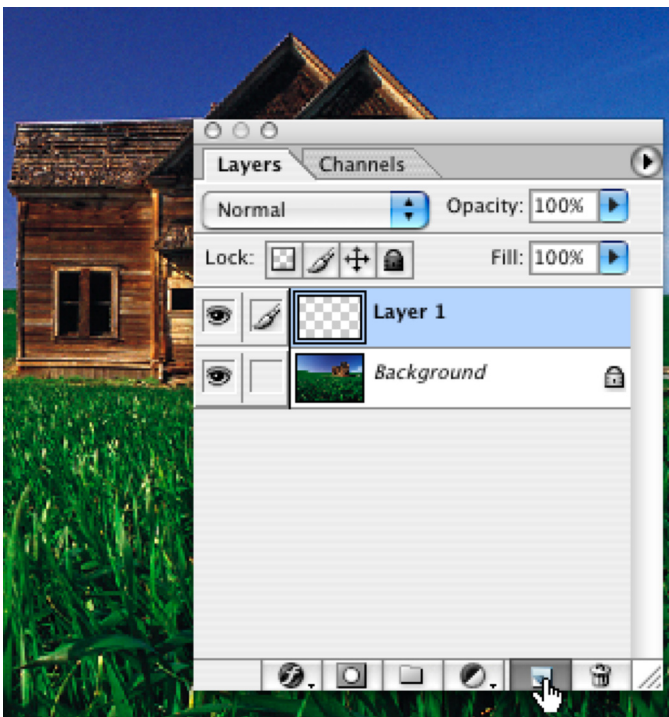
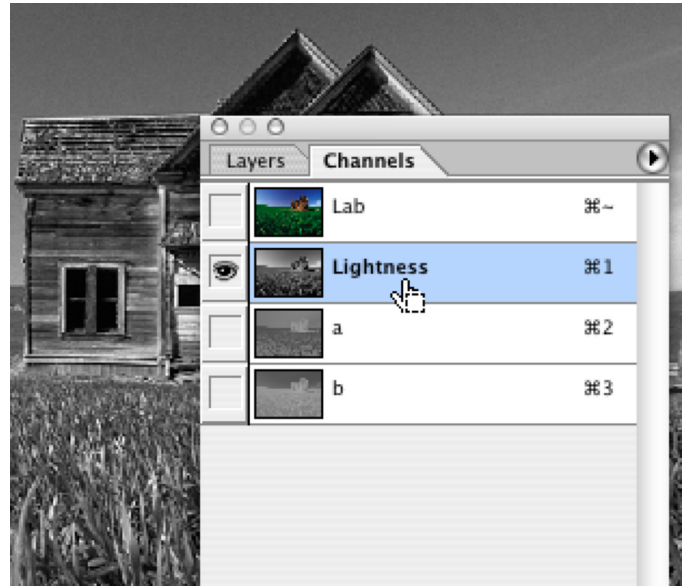
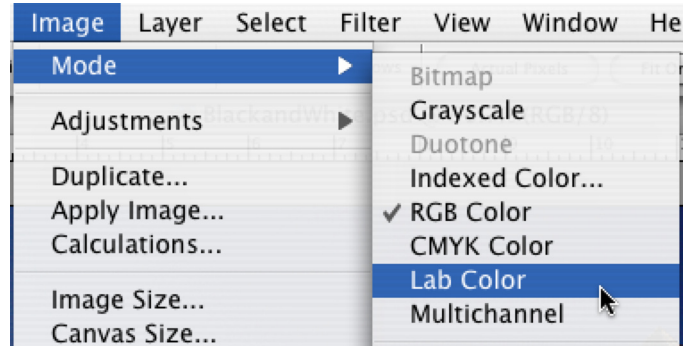
Lightness Channel

Another way that is better than the options above is to convert the RGB image to the LAB color space.

This keeps all the color information and gives you a Lightness channel that can be copied and pasted into the layers window.

Using the Lightness channel is often better than using one of the single RGB channels.

The image should be converted back to RGB once the Lightness channel is pasted.



Convert to Black and White By -Channel Mixer

Channel Mixer

The best way to convert to black and white is to use a Channel Mixer Adjustment layer and checking the Monochrome option.

You will have the ability to control how much of each channel influences the conversion.

It has a similar effect to using color filters on black and white film to enhance various areas of the image. (I.e., the sky, the highlights or shadows, etc.).

