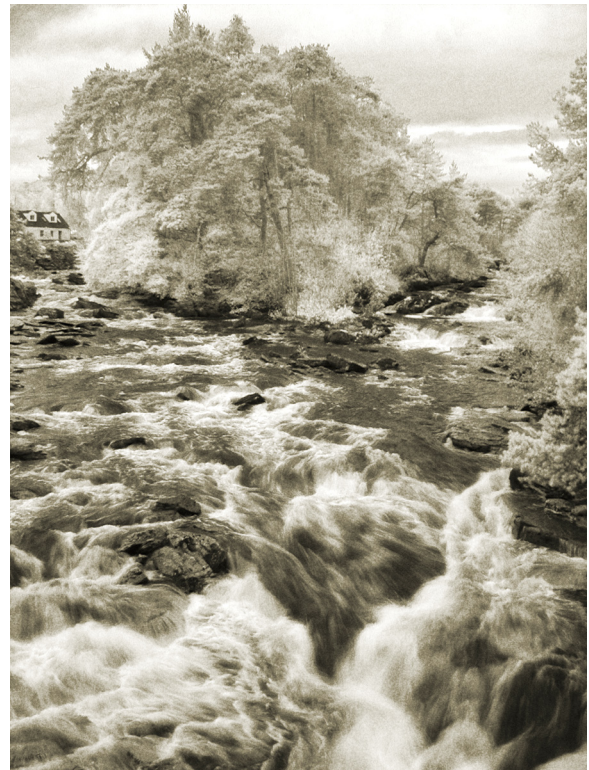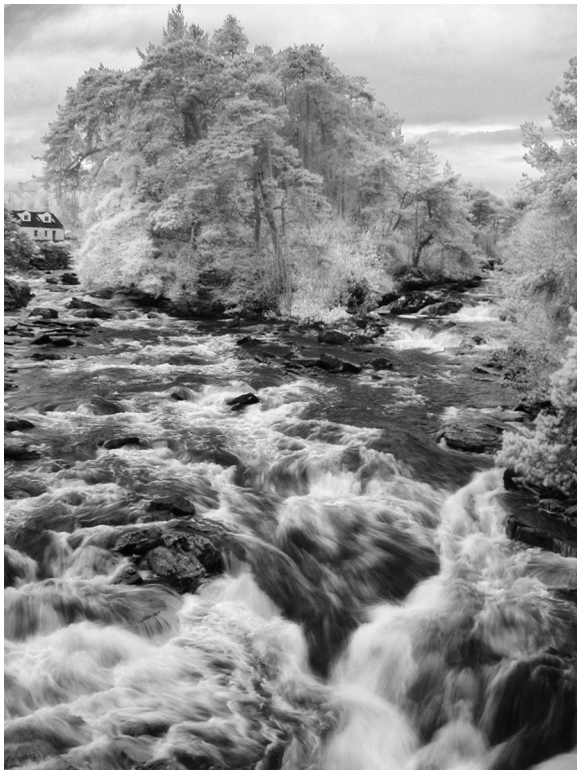# Enhance An Image By Adding Grain

Add Grain to an image to enhance it with the feeling of an old time photograph. In this exercise you will first desaturate the images to remove color to create a black and white image. However you could follow the same steps to create a grain on a color image by omitting the desaturate step.

Before you start this process, it is a good idea to plan the print size and final resolution. Reducing and enlarging the image after the process is completed will change the appearance of the effect.
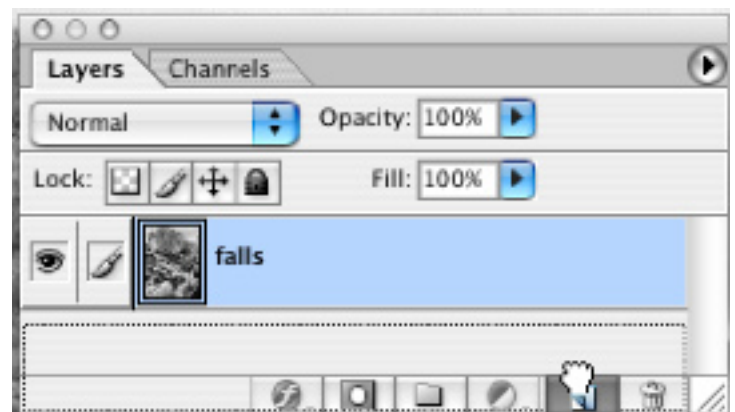

Duplicate The Layer

1. Open the image. Duplicate it by dragging the image to the New Layer icon located at the bottom of the Layers Palette.

2. Desaturate the new copy;
Image Menu -> Adjustments -> Desaturate

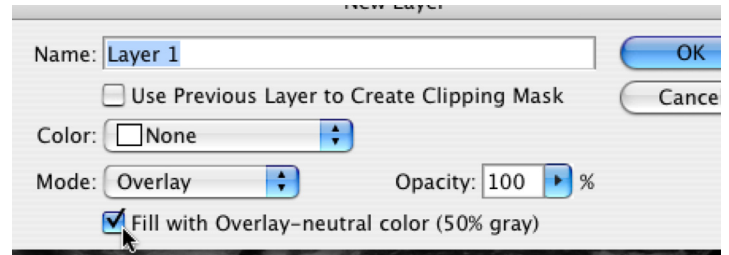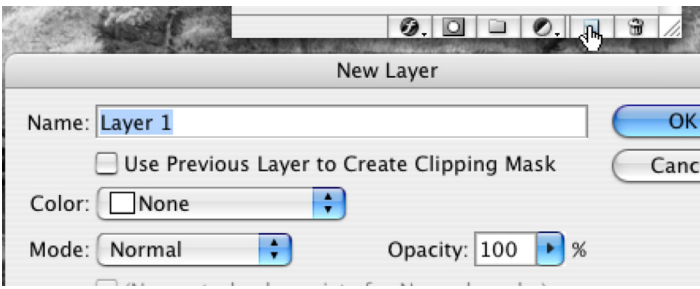**Note:** If using a black and white imge there is not need to desaturate the image.

3. Create a new layer filled with gray and set the Blend Mode to Overlay.
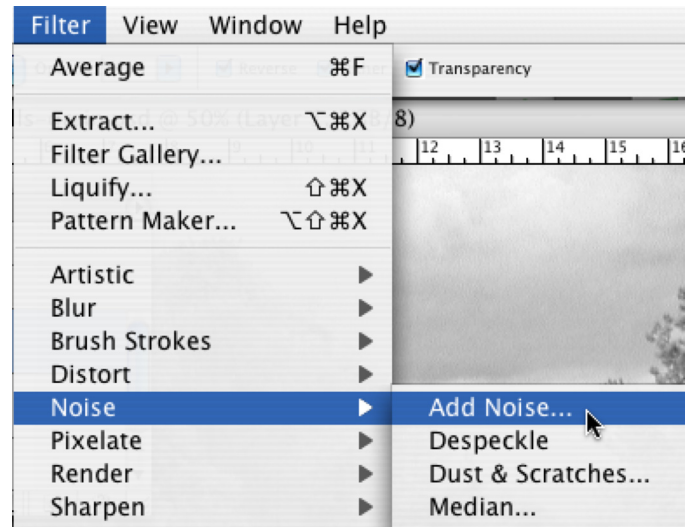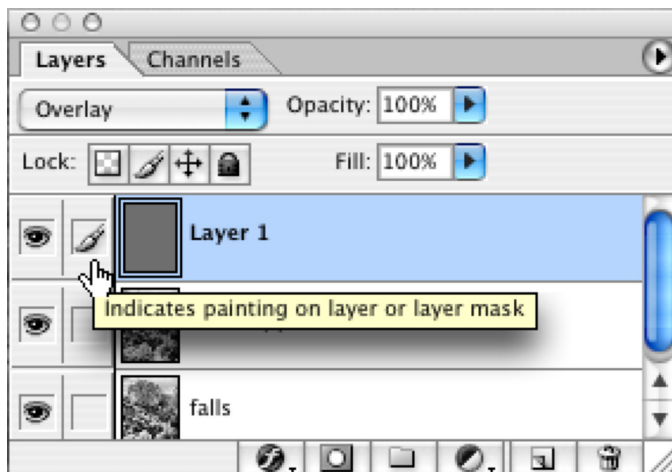
To do this:
  1. In the Layers window, hold down the option/alt button,

  2. Click the New Layer icon. The New Layer dialog box appears.

  3. In the Mode: box, choose Overlay.

  4. Check the "Fill with Overlay-neutral color (50% gray)" option box.

4. Add the grainy texture of old photos to this new gray layer.

  1. Make sure the New Layer is the Active Layer.
When a Layer is active, in addition to being highlighted, a paintbrush will appear in the Activity box.

  2. Filter menu -> Noise -> Add Noise.
     The Add Noise dialog box appears.

Adding Grain - The Grain Filter

You will have to decide how grainy you want your image to be.

1. Amount: - The lower the number in the Amount: box, the finer the grain, the higher the setting the coarser grain.

Another thing to consider with the Amount setting
The physical size of your image, meaning the number of pixels it contains, is a major factor when choosing this setting. The fewer pixels an image contains (i.e., 72 dpi), the smaller the number is needed to create the effect.

If the image contains many pixels (i.e., 300 +) you will need to use a much higher setting to get the same results.

2. Choose a Distribution style that best suits your desired effect.
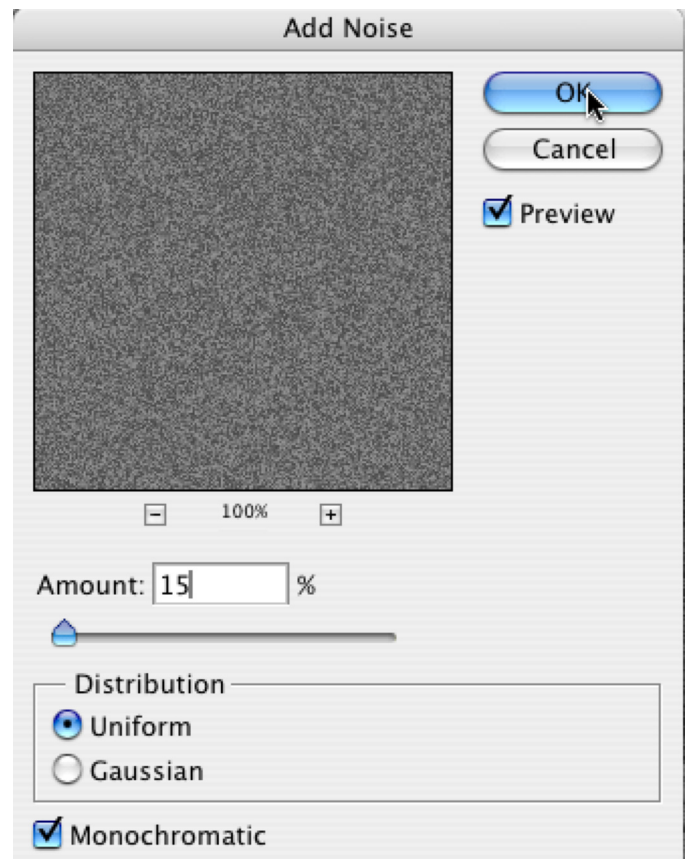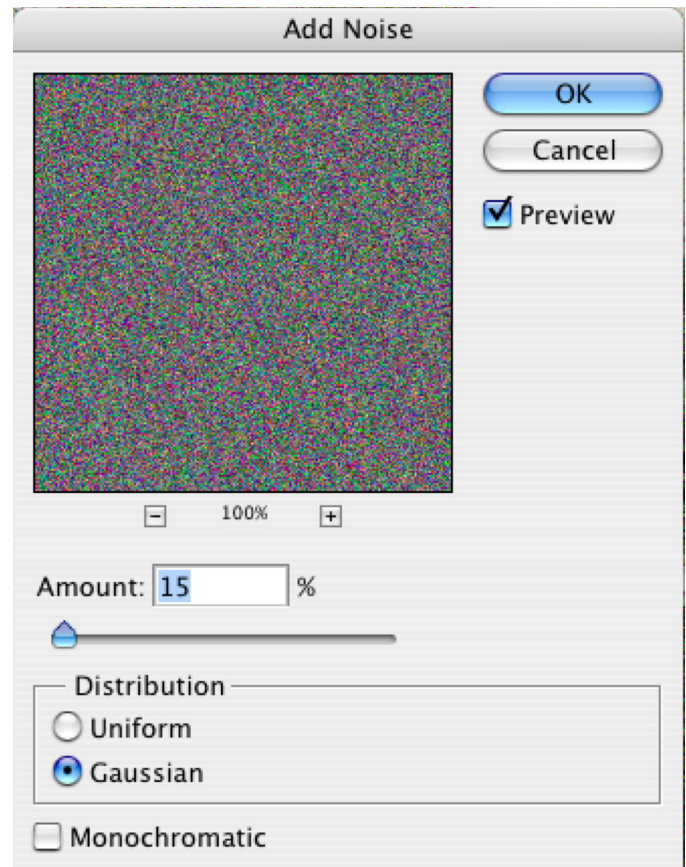
The Distribution Options
Uniform - The noise is more apparent in the mid-tones, less so in the highlights and shadows.
Gaussian - the noise is more apparent in the highlights and shadows and less so in the mid-tones. Also the noise pattern is a bit chunkier when Gaussian is chosen.
Monochromatic - This option will use gray noise instead of the full range of colors.

3. Choose Monochromatic, by clicking in the check box.

Note: You can leave this option unchecked if you're working with color images. You can always go back and Desaturate the noise layer later if you don't like how the colored pixel affect your image.
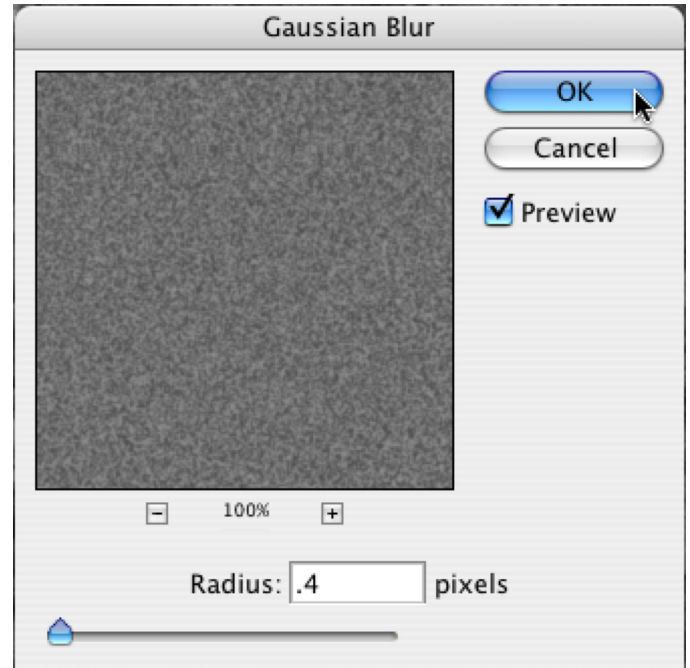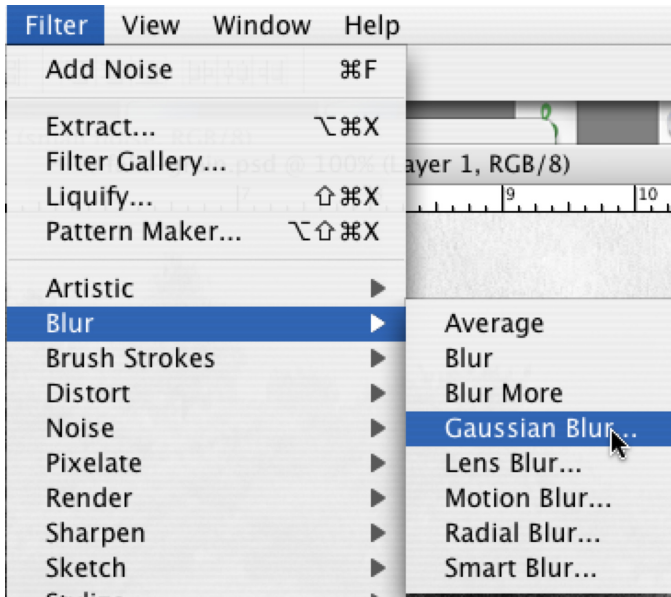
Adding Grain - Blur and Add Color

5. Soften the Noise with Gaussian Blur; Filter -> Blur -> Gaussian Blur.
A small amount should do fine.

Note: you can also try smoothing out the noise with the other Noise Filters,
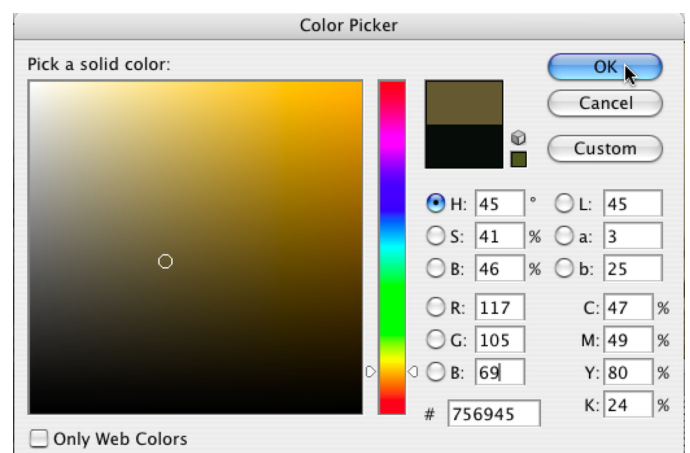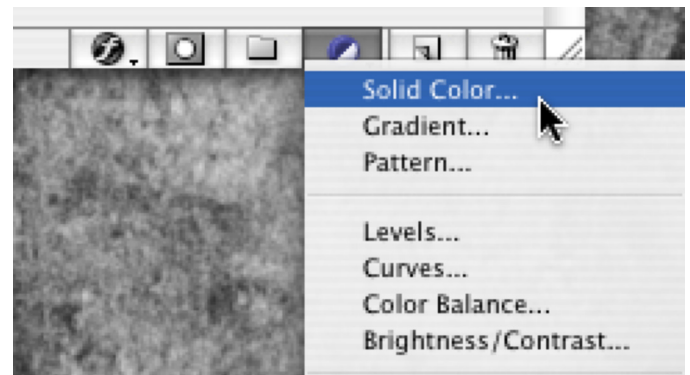Despeckle, Dust & Scratches, and Median.

To complete the old time look, you can add a colored layer to create tint the image. In this example will brown was used, but you can add any color you like.

6. Add a new Solid Color Layer.
Hold down the options/alt key.
Choose Solid Color Layer from the new Adjustment Layer icon.

7. Choose Modes: Color.
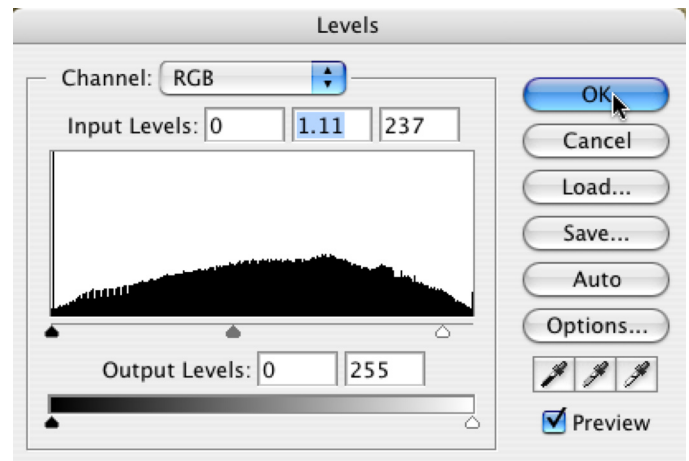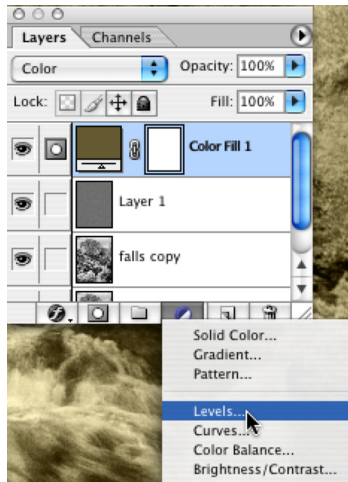The Color Picker appears.

Choose the desired color for the image.

Adding Grain - Levels Adjustment Layer and Options

8. Add a new Levels Adjustment Layer from the Layers window.

9. Lighten the midtones and shadow areas, and brighten the highlights by moving their controls to the left.

You can duplicate this Levels Adjustment Layer to make the effect more dramatic.

Other things you can do to change or enhance this effect.

1. Adjust the opacity of the color layer or further adjust the Levels layer, or do both.

2. Change the Blend Mode of the color layer to Soft Light or Overlay.
(**Note**: Other Blend Modes create interesting effects. Different images will behave somewhat differently with Blend Modes.)

3. Adjust the Opacity setting of the gray noise layer.

4. Try using the Film Grain Filter option in the Filters menu -> Artistic sub-menu

5. Let the original image come through to tint the gray noise layer.
In step 2 of the instructions above, set the Opacity of the Desaturate layer between 50% and 70%.
This will allow the original color layer below to tint the desaturated layer above.
The lower the Opacity setting the more color will show through the layers.
Follow the remaining steps. You can omit or add the color layer as you wish.