

Color Grading in Photoshop

Transform Your Images with Professional Color Techniques



BEFORE

AFTER

Introduction to Color Grading

🧠 Definition & Purpose

Manipulating colors to **enhance mood** and **visual appeal** of images

🔧 Color Correction vs. Color Grading

Correction: Fixing colors to appear natural

Grading: Creative expression and style

📷 Importance in Photography

Creates **emotional impact**

Enhances **visual storytelling**

Establishes **artistic style**



Tools for Color Grading in Photoshop

Camera Raw Filter

Advanced color control with **color wheels** for shadows, midtones, and highlights

Adjustment Layers

Non-destructive editing with Curves, Color Balance, Hue/Saturation

Color Wheels

Control **hue, saturation, and luminance** for precise color adjustments

Built-in Presets

Quick application of **professional looks** and cinematic styles



Using Adjustment Layers

◆ Non-Destructive Editing

Apply color changes **without altering** original pixels

Toggle on/off to compare before/after

Adjust opacity for subtle effects



Curves



Color Balance



Hue/Saturation



Gradient Map



- ✓ Use **layer masks** to apply adjustments selectively
- ✓ Change **blend modes** for creative effects
- ✓ **Stack multiple** adjustment layers for complex grades

Color Wheels and Color Theory

🎨 Understanding Color Relationships

🕒 Complementary Colors

Colors **opposite** on the wheel create **contrast** and visual interest

🌐 Analogous Colors

Colors **adjacent** on the wheel create **harmony** and unity

🌡️ Balancing Warm and Cool Tones

☀️ Warm Tones

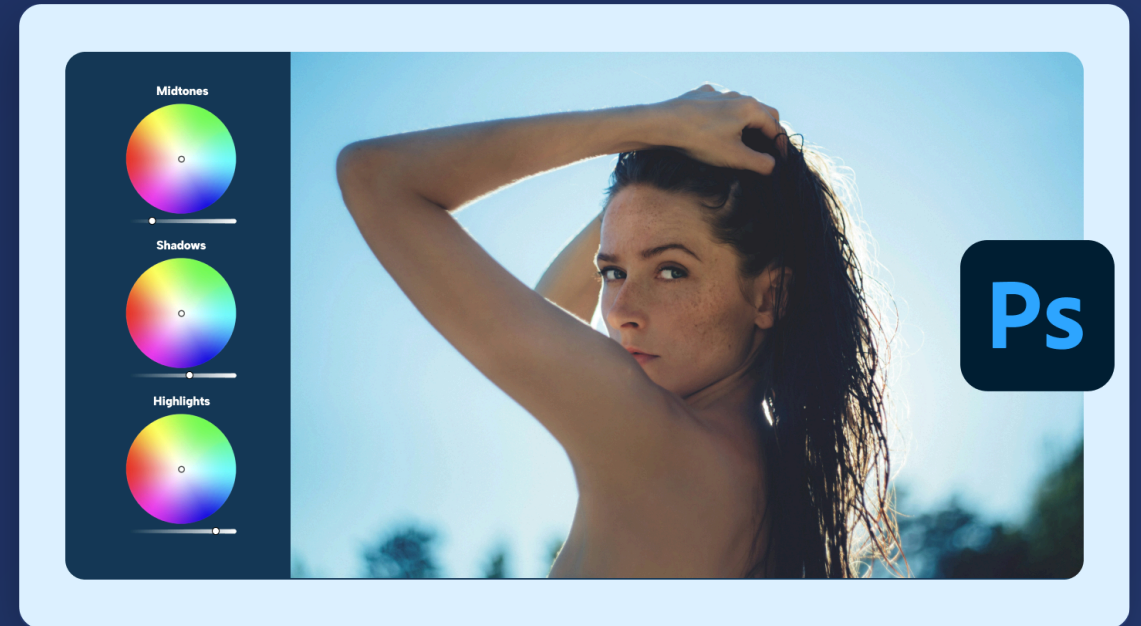
Reds, oranges, yellows create **energy** and **intimacy**

❄️ Cool Tones

Blues, greens, purples evoke **calm** and **distance**

💡 Professional Tips

- ✓ Use **teal & orange** for cinematic look
- ✓ Apply warm to **highlights**, cool to **shadows**
- ✓ Adjust **saturation** for mood intensity



Step-by-Step Workflow

1

Prepare the Image

Convert to **Smart Object** • Work with **RAW files** • Set proper **white balance**

2

Basic Adjustments

Fix **exposure** • Adjust **contrast** • Correct **color casts**

3

Apply Color Grading

Use **Camera Raw Filter** • Add **Adjustment Layers** • Control **shadows/midtones/highlights**

4

Fine-Tuning & Final Adjustments

Adjust **opacity** • Refine with **layer masks** • Add **vignette** for focus

Pro Tip

Work **non-destructively** to maintain flexibility throughout the process



Common Mistakes to Avoid



Overdoing Color Grading

Excessive saturation • **Unnatural skin tones** • Loss of detail • **Cartoonish appearance**



Misusing Color Tools

Wrong tool for the job • **Ignoring color theory** • Inconsistent application • **Poor workflow**

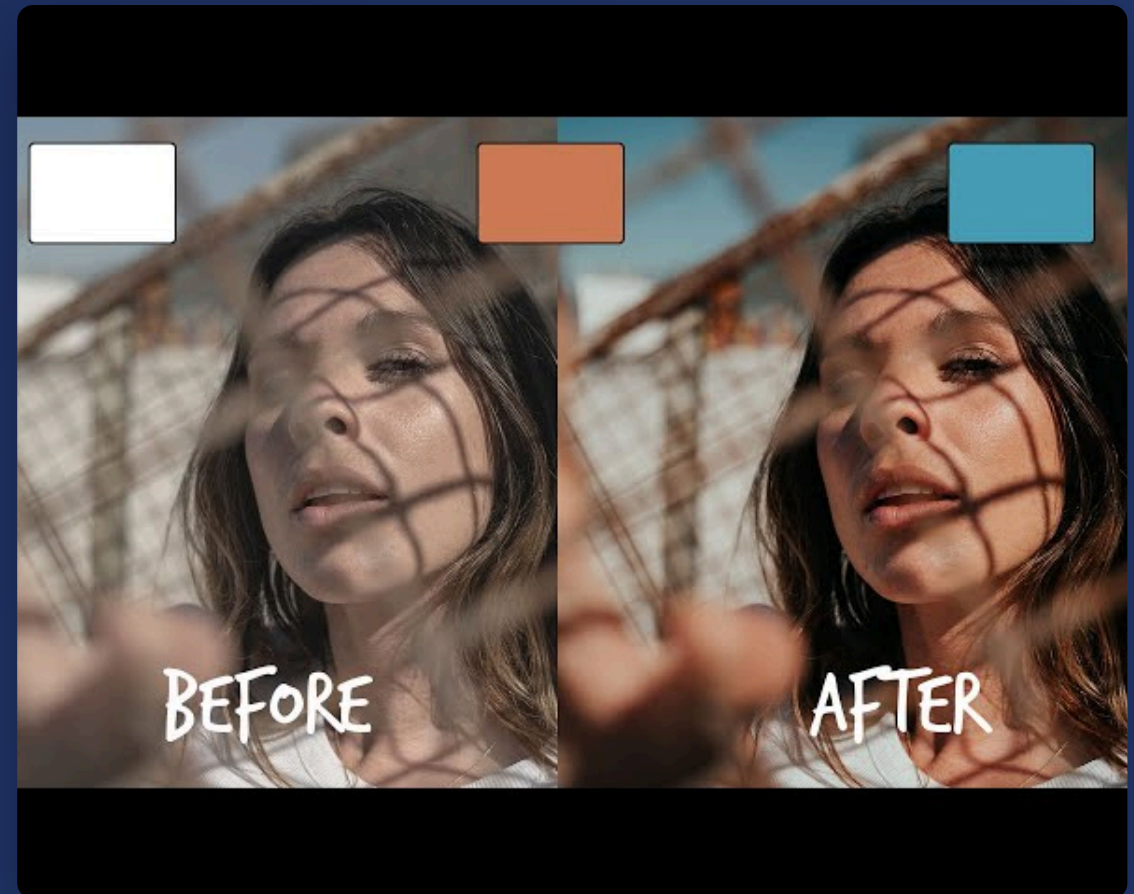


Not Knowing When to Stop

Endless tweaking • **Over-processing** • Losing original intent • **Second-guessing**

Remember

Subtlety is key • Take breaks • Compare with original • Get feedback



Tips for Professional Results



Consistency in Color Grading

Create a **recognizable style** across your work

✓ Save presets

✓ Match tones

✓ Reference images



Experimentation & Practice

Develop your **unique vision** through continuous learning

✓ Try different tools

✓ Analyze pros' work

✓ Build a portfolio



Complementary Colors

Use **color relationships** to create visual impact

✓ Teal & orange

✓ Blue & yellow

✓ Purple & gold

★ Remember

Color grading is an **art form** — develop your style while mastering the technical aspects

