

Luminosity Mask

Luminosity Mask — early prototype for comment

What this is

This is the earliest of the masking prototypes, and it has since been superseded by the Zone Mask prototype. It is included because the question it asks is a simple one and worth answering on its own: when a selection is made by brightness, what is the clearest way to show you what has been selected? If you are testing more than one prototype, try this one first and the Zone Mask afterwards.

Try it in this order

1. Open the page. A grey gradient with tone bars loads automatically.
2. With the Mask Zone set to Lights, look at the red overlay — the brighter parts of the gradient are selected most strongly.
3. Switch the Mask Zone to Darks, then to Mids, and watch the selection move.
4. Drag the Feather slider. Low values spread the selection wide; high values tighten it onto the extreme tones.
5. Drag Strength down to see the whole selection weaken evenly.
6. Switch the View to Greyscale. This is the same information shown as the mask itself.
7. Switch back and forth between Red Overlay and Greyscale a few times, then load one of your own photographs and do it again.
8. Decide which of the two views tells you more, quickly. That is the question this prototype exists to answer.

Every option on screen

Control	What it does	Why it is there
Load Image	Opens a picture from your computer.	So the views can be judged on real photographs, where it matters.
Lights	Selects the brightest pixels most strongly.	The most commonly wanted selection — skies, highlights, reflections.
Mids	Selects the middle tones, fading at both ends.	For adjusting the body of an image without touching its extremes.
Darks	Selects the darkest pixels most strongly.	For shadow work.
Feather	Widens or tightens the selection.	A luminosity selection is never all-or-nothing; this controls how gradually it falls away.
Strength	Sets how fully the zone is selected.	For applying a change gently.
Red Overlay	Shows the mask painted onto your picture in red.	Keeps the selection anchored to the image, so you see which parts of your photograph are affected.
Greyscale	Shows the mask on its own, white through black.	Exact, but abstract. Better for judging fine differences in selection strength.

What to look out for

- This prototype has been superseded by the Zone Mask, which replaces Lights, Mids and Darks with the eleven Ansel Adams zones and adds a second mask that can be combined with the first.

- The overlay here is red. In the later prototype it is magenta by default, because magenta almost never occurs in a real photograph and so cannot be confused with the picture itself.
- There is no adjustment attached, so the mask cannot be seen doing any actual work. The Zone Mask prototype adds that.
- Nothing can be saved or exported.

How to feed back

Please send your thoughts to [Photoedithelp.com](https://photoedithelp.com). Screenshots are welcome. The most useful feedback is where something confused you, where you expected a control to do something it did not, and anything you wanted to do but could not find a way to.