



Background layer



Middle layer, set to the Overlay blending mode with masked areas



Top layer, set to the Overlay blending mode



Five Different Blending Methods

You can blend images in at least five different ways:

1. **TRANSPARENT LAYER:** Simply stack two images and reduce the opacity of the top image layer in the layers palette.
2. **FEATHERED DELETION:** Use a feathered lasso (or eraser set to varying opacities) and permanently delete portions of a top layer image. This method is not recommended because you cannot bring parts of the image back if you delete too much.
3. **LAYER MASK:** Add a layer mask to a top image layer, then use a black paintbrush, with varying opacities to hide some areas. This method is flexible because white paint brings back hidden areas.
4. **GRADIENT MASK:** Add a layer mask to a top image layer, then use the Gradient tool, set to Black-to-White, to create a gradual blending of the two images.
5. **BLENDING MODES:** Apply various blending modes (Overlay is often the best) to the top image layer blend it with the image(s) below and the pixels magically intermingle.

The first three blending methods are covered in my Visual Media Course Manual. A tutorial for Method 4, Gradient Mask, is included in this text under Advanced Finishing. Blending Modes are addressed below. For instructions to get your type to pick up shades of images underneath, as shown in the example here, see the Title Overlay tutorial under Special Type Effects in this text.

Use Blending Modes to Create a Montage

1. Start with a background image, such as the lighthouse shown here. Then add another image on top. Change the blending mode to Overlay (at the top left in the Layers palette). Each image reacts differently with different modes, so try some other modes too. Sometimes you may prefer a different blending mode once you alter the Levels or Sat of an image layer.
2. Reduce the layer opacity as desired and apply a layer mask to partially hide the top layer in some areas to maintain the integrity of the background layer as desired. .
3. Try adding another image of some cool texture, such as the cracked paint at the left. Use Overlay blending mode to get the desired effect. Reduce layer opacity and use a mask to hide areas as desired.

TIP: Take macro photos of close-up texture to use for blending over images for interesting effects.