

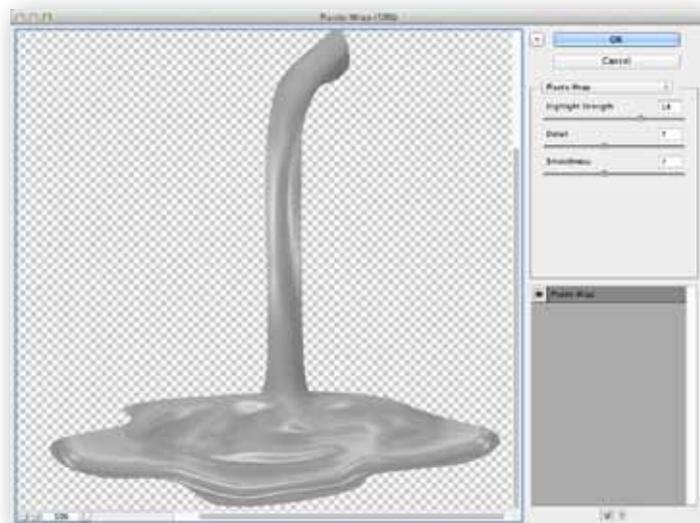
Introducing... Plastic Wrap

THE PLASTIC WRAP FILTER IS ONE OF THE MOST useful special effects Photoshop has to offer. Use it to make anything glisten – from beads of sweat on a dancer’s forehead to visceral internal organs. Oh, and if you really want to, you can also use it to draw plastic wrapping.

In this walkthrough, we’re going to use Plastic Wrap to create liquid pouring out of a bottle.

Up until Photoshop CS5, you could find the Plastic Wrap filter in **Filter > Artistic > Plastic Wrap**. Now this section is hidden, although you can still find it if you choose **Filter Gallery** from the menu.

To make Plastic Wrap appear in the main menu, go to **Preferences > Plug Ins** and check **Show All Filter Gallery Groups and Names**.



1 Start by drawing your basic liquid shape on a new layer. Choose a hard brush, and paint in a mid gray color. You’ll get a much smoother result if you use the Pen tool to draw a path, though, and then fill it.

When drawing the pool at the bottom, remember to draw it in perspective.



4 Open the Plastic Wrap filter (see the panel to the left for how to do this). Use a large Highlight Strength, and medium Detail and Smoothness settings.

It’s likely the first go with the filter won’t be perfect. On the left, you can see there’s no shine at the top of the liquid, for instance. So Undo the filter with **⌘ Z** (**ctrl Z**), paint a little more highlight with Dodge and Burn, and use **⌘ F** (**ctrl F**) to apply the filter again; keep doing this until it looks good.



2 Use the Dodge and Burn tools, set to Highlights, to add some basic shading around the edge of the liquid – just enough to give it some texture. Keep this subtle: don’t make the shadows too dark, and be careful to ensure the highlights don’t blow out.

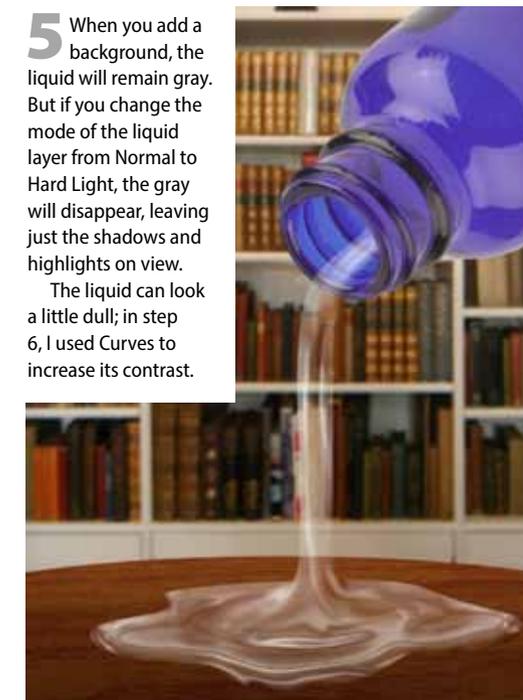


3 Continue with the Dodge and Burn tools, painting some roughly elliptical ripples inside the liquid. There’s no need to try to create accurate ripples here; it’s just the basis for the Plastic Wrap operation we’ll use next.

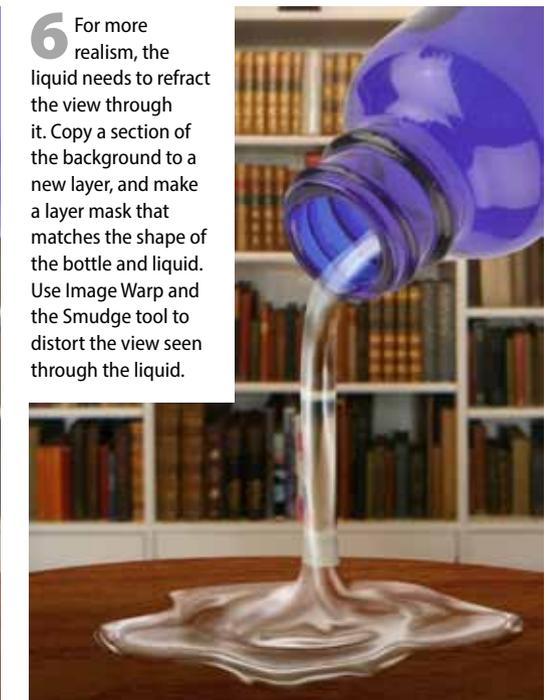


5 When you add a background, the liquid will remain gray. But if you change the mode of the liquid layer from Normal to Hard Light, the gray will disappear, leaving just the shadows and highlights on view.

The liquid can look a little dull; in step 6, I used Curves to increase its contrast.



6 For more realism, the liquid needs to refract the view through it. Copy a section of the background to a new layer, and make a layer mask that matches the shape of the bottle and liquid. Use Image Warp and the Smudge tool to distort the view seen through the liquid.



HOT TIP

To make the layer mask in step 6, hold **⌘ ctrl** and click on the thumbnail of the liquid in the Layers panel, then hold **⌘ Shift** (**ctrl Shift**) and click on the bottle layer’s thumbnail to add it to the selection; choose Reveal Selection when making the mask. Unchain the mask from the copied background layer, so it’s unchanged while you distort the view.

SHORTCUTS

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