

Match Color

The Match Color command matches colors between multiple images, multiple layers, or selections. Color can be adjusted in an image by changing the luminance and color range options. A neutralize option is also available to remove color cast. The Match Color command only works in RGB mode.

The Match Color command works by matching the colors from one image (source) and replacing them in another (target). This command is useful when trying to get consistent color across a range of images. It also is effective for changing the appearance of an image altogether. This command can also be used on different layers in an image. This command changes the entire target image.

Using a selection allows changes to occur only in specific areas in an image. This is great for selecting the sky in an appealing image, and matching it to a sky selection in a sky image that needs a boost. This also works really well for skin tone matching. This is a useful and fun command to experiment with.

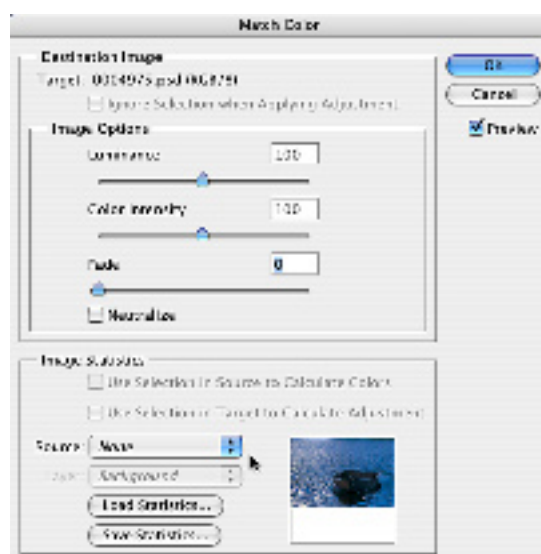
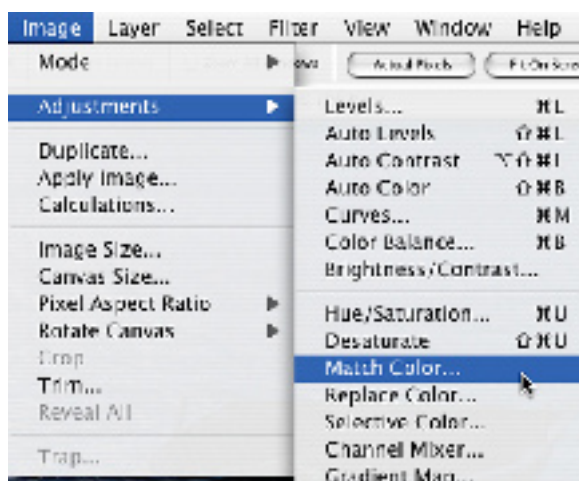
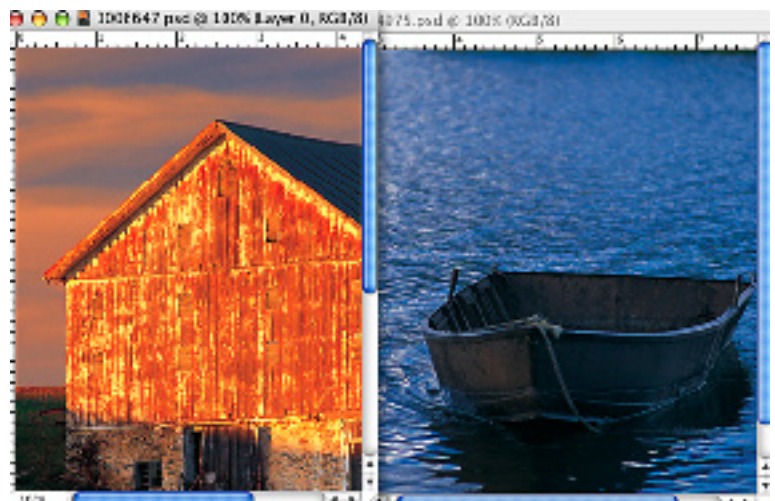
To match the color from one image to another image:

Open the images that you want to color match. You can open as many as you want.

Note: If you're applying the Match Color to a particular layer in the target image, make sure that layer is active before choosing the Match Color command.

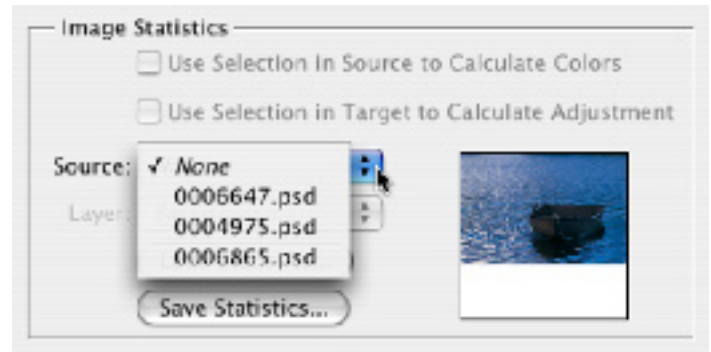
1. Activate the target image and then choose Image > Adjustments > Match Color.

The Match Color dialog box appears. The (target) active image window appears in the small preview box at the bottom of the window. In this example, an image of a boat in water.



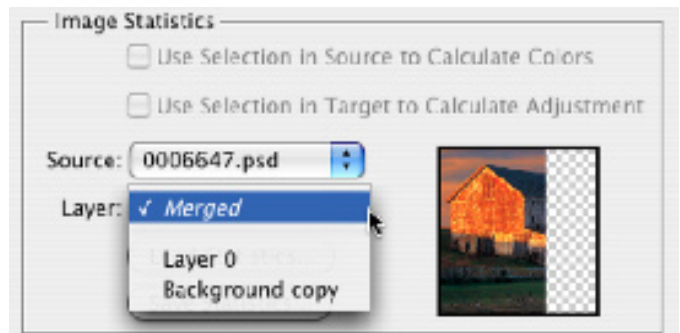
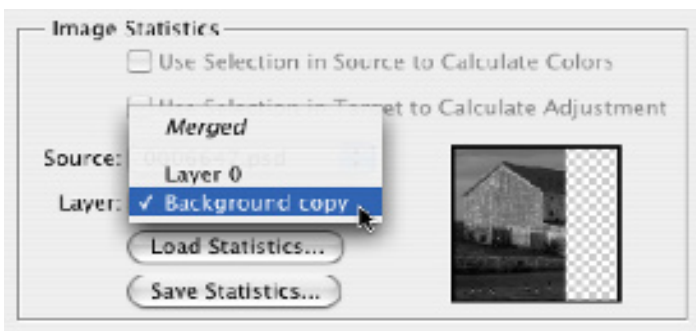
Match Color

2. In the Image Statistics area of the dialog box, find the Source drop-down menu arrow. Choose the source image. This is the image which you will be matching, or replacing color with in the target image.



Note: If the source image has layers, you would select the desired layer for the color source from that drop-down option.

You can choose Merged, if you want to match all the color layers.



Once the source and target have been selected, Photoshop will dynamically update the changes to the image on your screen. If you like what you see, click the OK button. There are other controls that we will explore shortly.



Match Color

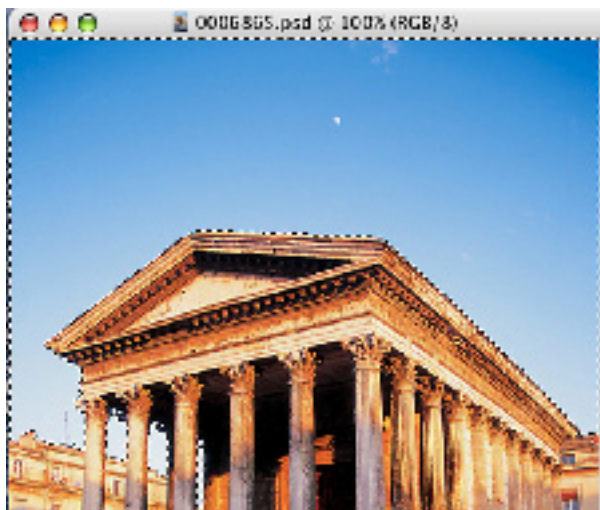
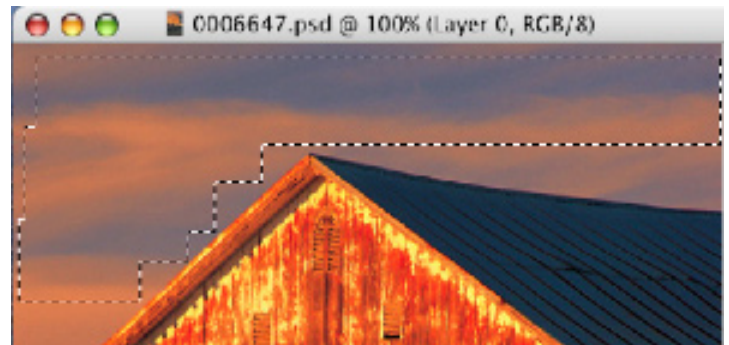
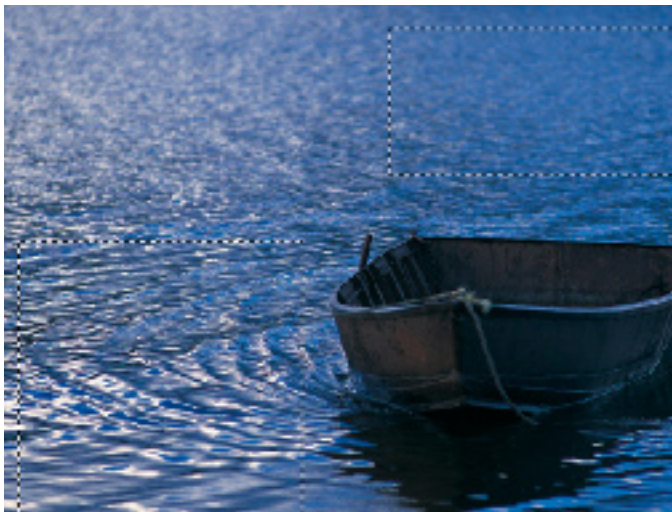
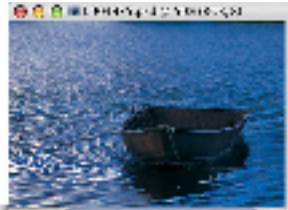
Match Color Using Selections

The illustrated instructions above show you how to use Match Color across a whole image. As mentioned in the introduction, you can use selected areas for sourcing and targeting. In other words, you can select just a portion of an image and match the colors in that selection to a whole image or to a selected area in an image.

For example, in my Illustration, I have a temple image whose sky color I want to change. I have a boat image with lots of blue water. I also have the golden sky in the barn image that could be interesting. So I will use all three images for this experiment.

1. Open the source and all target images.
2. Select the desired colored area of your source and target image.

There can be multiple source areas selected. Note the water illustration.



With the target image open and with the selected area active (in this case the temple image with all sky area as active selection)

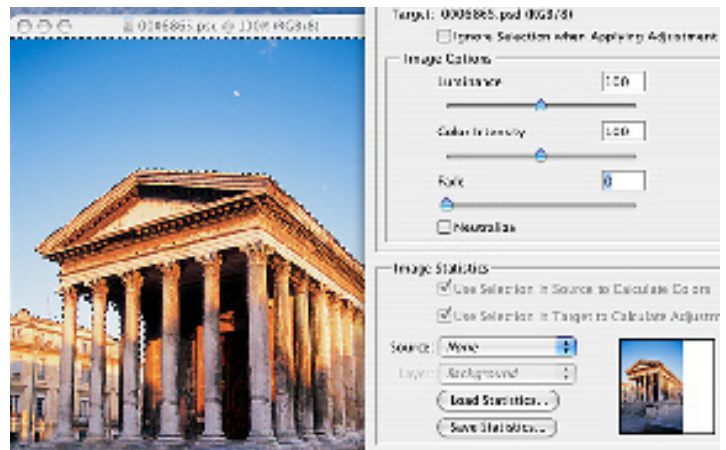
3. Activate the target image and then choose Image > Adjustments > Match Color.

Match Color

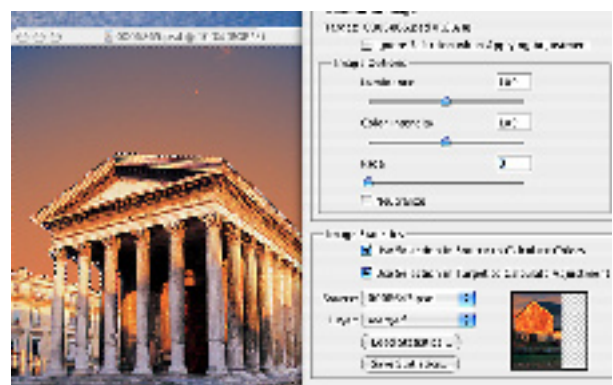
The Match Color dialog box appears. The (target) active image window appears in the small preview box at the bottom of the window.

In this case, the image of the temple.

4. In the Source drop-down box, choose your source image.



Notice how the selections in each of the source images below affect only the sky selection in the target image.



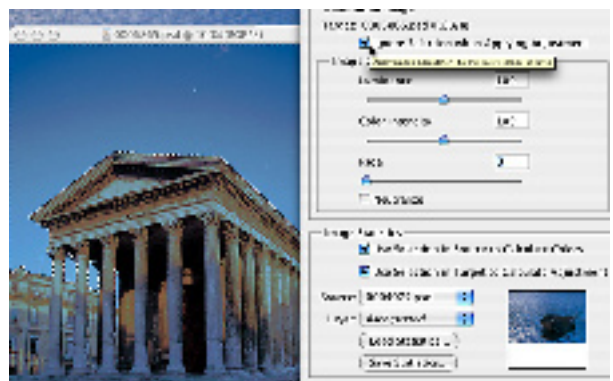
More Selection Options

The Ignore Selection When Applying Adjustment option.

Use this option if you're applying the adjustment to the entire target image.

Checking this option ignores the selection in the target image and applies the adjustment to the entire target image.

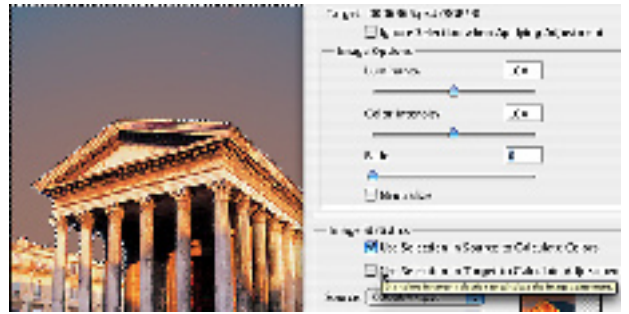
Notice how the selections in the blue water image are filling the whole temple image not just the selected (sky) portion.



Match Color

The Use Selection in Source to Calculate Colors option.

Deselect this option to ignore the selection in the source image, and use the colors from the entire source image to compute the adjustment.



The Use Selection in Target to Calculate Adjustment option.

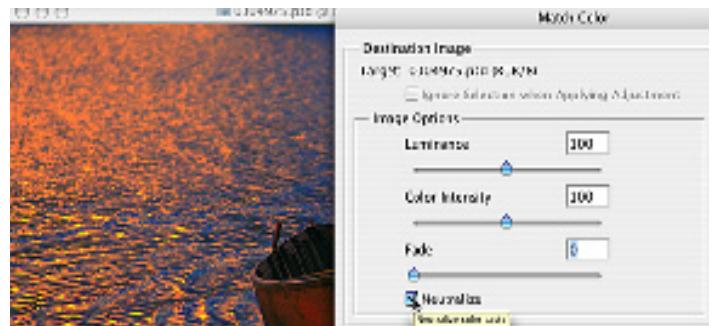
Deselect this option to ignore the selection in the target image and make the adjustment, using the colors of the entire target image.



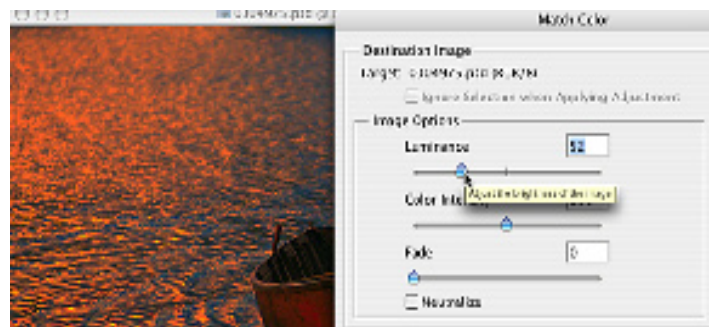
Extra Controls

Controls fine-tuning are available in the Image Options area of this window. The amount can be typed into the number box, or you can use the sliders. Always make sure the Preview option is selected so you can see your image change as you make adjustments.

First, let's look at the **Neutralize Option**. Use the Neutralize Option to automatically remove a colorcast in the target image.

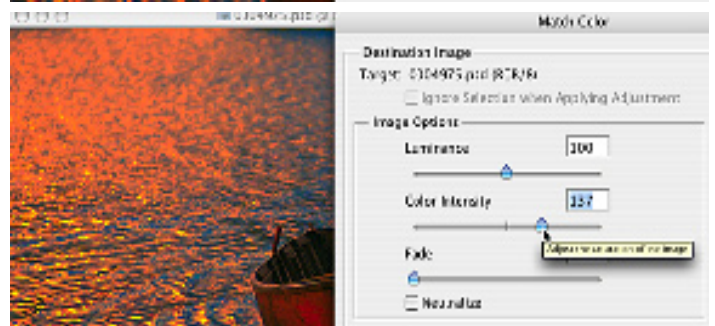


The **Luminance** slider increases or decreases the brightness in the target image. The default value is 100. The minimum value is 1, and the maximum is 200.



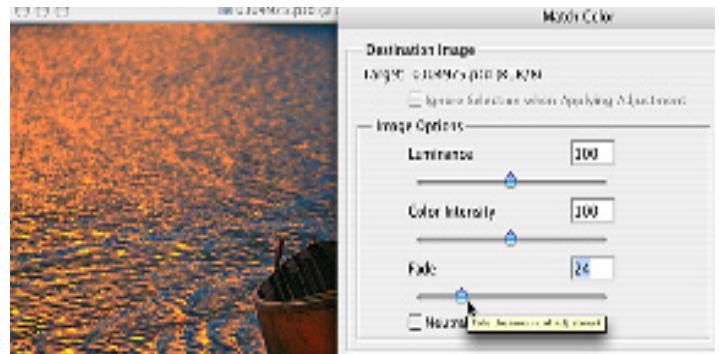
The **Color Intensity** slider adjusts the color saturation in the target image.

Values are the same as Luminance, except as you decrease the saturation, the image loses color. A value of 1 will be a gray scale image.



Match Color

The Fade slide: Moving the slider control reduces the amount of Match Color adjustment. Fading the colors back, kind of like an opacity setting.



You can also save your Match Color settings to use later with other images.

1. In the Image Statistics area of the Match Color dialog box, click the Save Statistics button.
2. Name and save the settings file.

To apply a saved setting:

In the same area of the Match Color dialog box, click the Load Statistics button. Locate and load the saved settings file.

It is important to note that this command's results vary dramatically. The outcome depends greatly on the source and target images, or selected areas in those images. It is a very powerful tool, especially for improving lighting across images or when trying to create dramatic lighting effects.



Here are a couple of examples of output from changes made to the Image Options and Image Selections areas of the Match Color dialog box. Both the temple and boat images were matched to the barn image.

