



[Learn how to sharpen your images in Photoshop using the High Pass Filter](#)

Most Photoshop users have their favorite way to sharpen an image. While Smart Sharpen and Unsharp Mask are tools that offer great results, the option choices within each tool can sometimes be confusing. Using the High Pass Filter is fast, easy, and can also offer great results, so it is very often the first sharpening tool I will try on an image.

How Does the High Pass Filter Work?

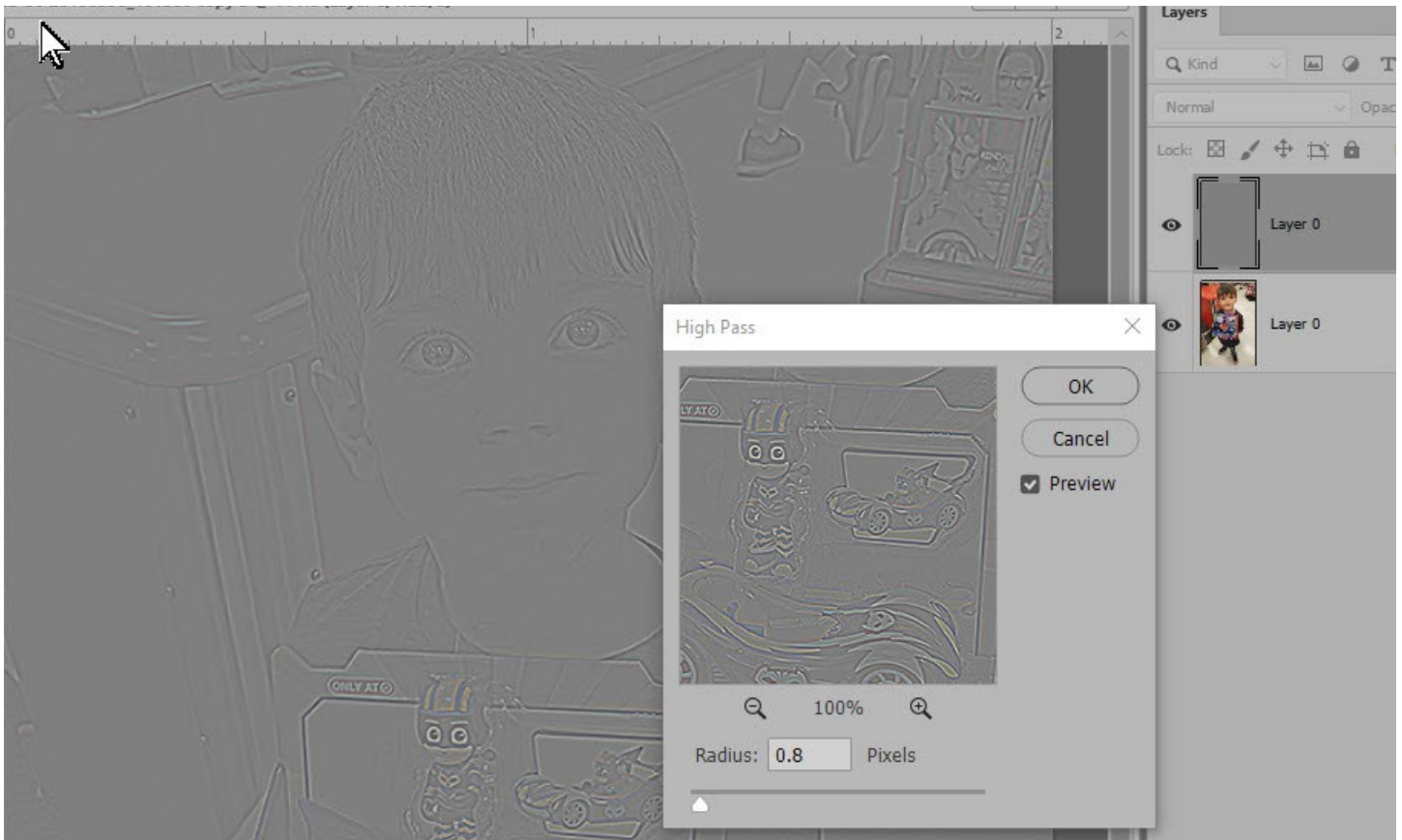
The High Pass Filter works by finding the edges within a photo and increasing the contrast along those edges, making the light side lighter and the dark side darker. This gives the appearance of a sharper image.

This is the image I will be working with today.



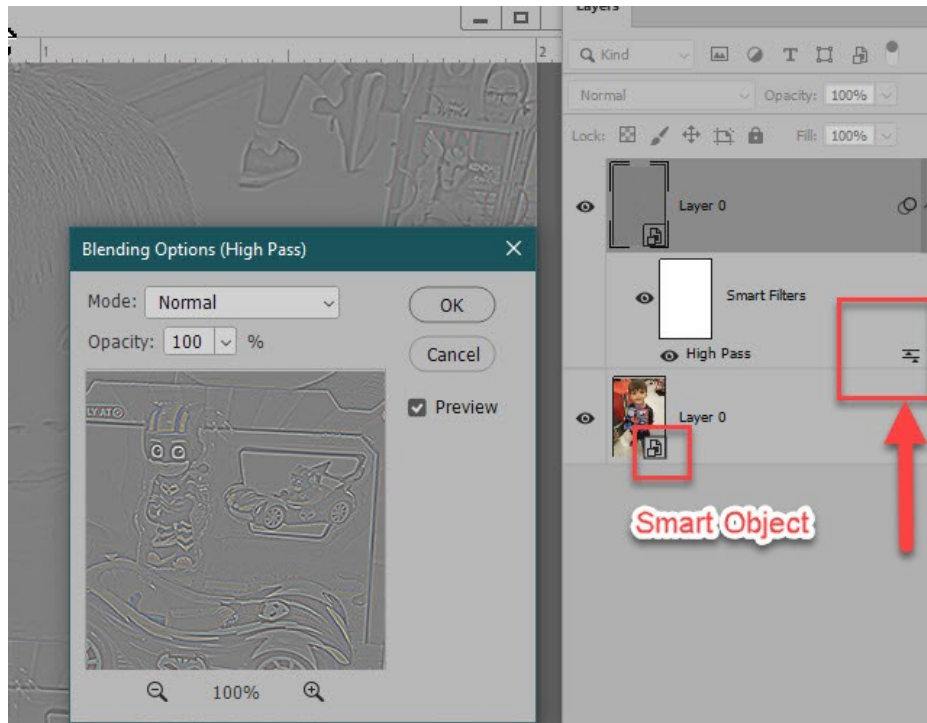
How to Apply the High Pass Filter

1. In the Layers Panel, Ctrl J (Cmd J on a Mac) to create a duplicate of the image.
2. Click on the duplicate image layer to make it the active layer.
3. Go to the top menu bar: Filter > Other > High Pass.
4. A High Pass Filter window will open, and the duplicate image in your Layers Panel will turn gray.
5. Move the Radius slider all the way down to zero. Your image will become completely gray. Then start moving the slider to the right. When you see the edges of your image begin to appear, stop. Click OK, and the High Pass Filter Window will close. In general, a value of 1-5 pixels works best, depending on the size of your image. For this image, 0.8 actually worked perfectly.

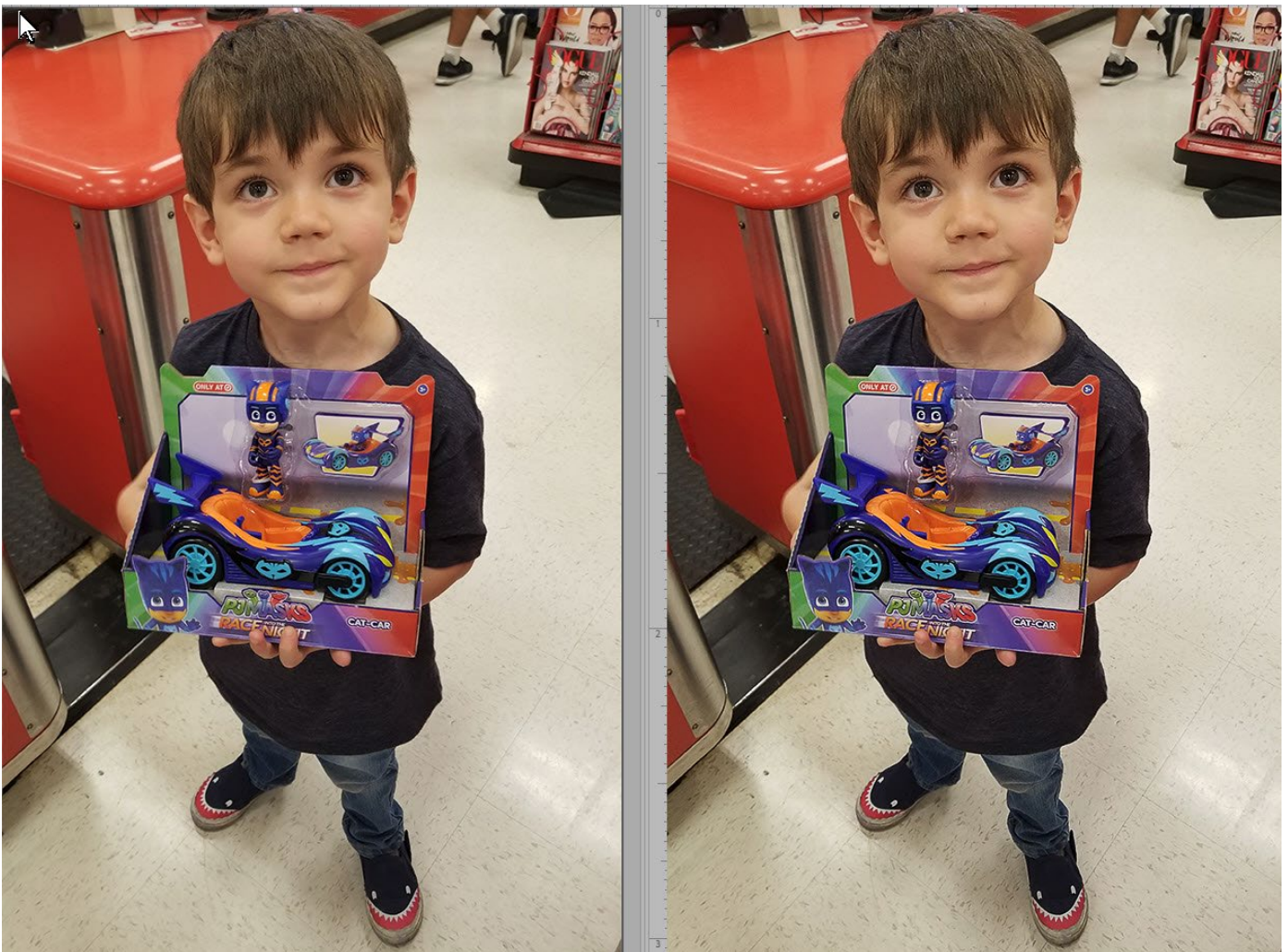


6. In the Layers Panel, change the Blend Mode of the High-Pass Layer (which is your duplicate photo layer) to Overlay or Soft Light. If the Overlay Mode is too harsh, you can reduce the Opacity of the Blend mode or try Soft Overlay. If it's not strong enough, you can try the Hard Light Blend Mode.

Note: If you are working in the full version of Photoshop and if your original image is a Smart Object, the High Pass Filter will be applied as a Smart Filter. Click on the down-pointing "v" on the far right of the duplicate layer to view the Smart Filter High Pass application. Double-click on the High Pass text to adjust the Radius; Click on the to the far right to open the Blending and Opacity Options. This is just a faster way to access the options mentioned above.



Before and After images for comparison:



High Pass Sharpening is a quick fix for an image that needs a boost!

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