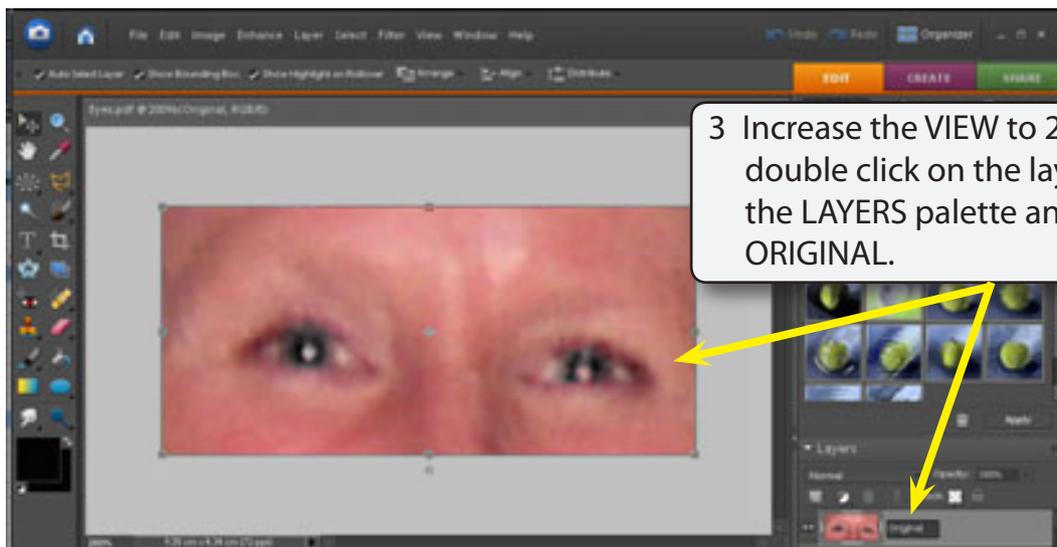# Enhancing Photos of Faces

Cameras do not always do justice to people. Photoshop provides a number of tools to help improve the appearance of faces in photographs. In this Chapter, layers will be used to improve the skin tone of a face, highlight the eyes and change the eye colour.

Loading the Image

1   Load Photoshop Elements or close the current file and select OPEN from the FILE menu.

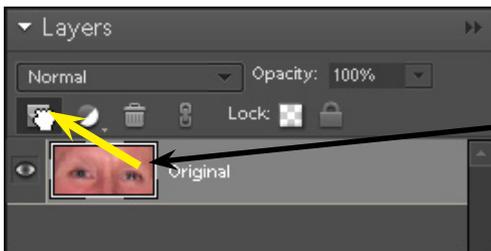2   Access the PSE6 SUPPORT FILES, open the CHAPTER 16 folder and open the file:

<p style="text-align:center">Eyes</p>

3 Increase the VIEW to 200% then double click on the layer name in the LAYERS palette and rename it ORIGINAL.

4   Look closely at the image. It is a poor photograph, the skin is reddish and 'blotchy'.
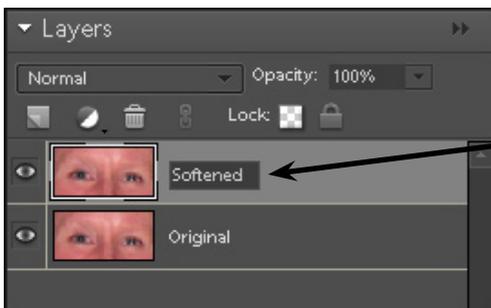
Duplicating the Layer

When changes are needed to be made to the original layer, a duplicate of the layer can be created so that major changes can be made to the copy without affecting the original image.

1 Move the pointer over the ORIGINAL layer thumbnaik in the LAYERS palette and drag it over the CREATE A NEW LAYER icon at the top of the palette.
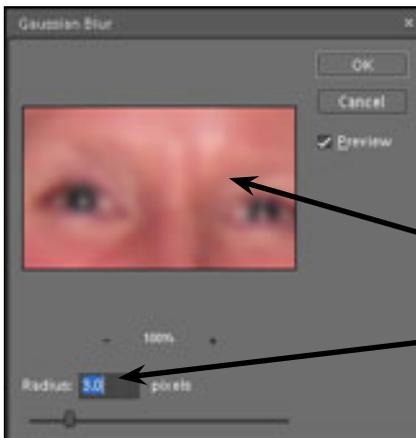
2 A copy of the layer should be produced.

3 Change the name of the new layer to SOFTENED.

Blurring the Image

The duplicated layer will be blurred to give the skin a softer more even look. After this we will sharpen sections of the image such as the eyes.

1 The SOFTENED layer should be selected.

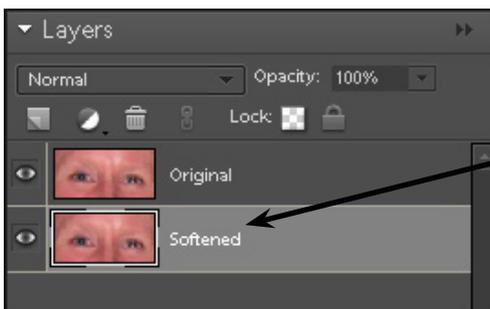2 Display the FILTER menu at the top of the screen, highlight BLUR and select GAUSSIAN BLUR.

3 Set the RADIUS box to about 3 pixels to blur the face.

> **NOTE:** **The PREVIEW frame can be used to scroll around the picture. Also, with the mouse depressed the original image is displayed. When you release the mouse button the effect of the blur is shown.**
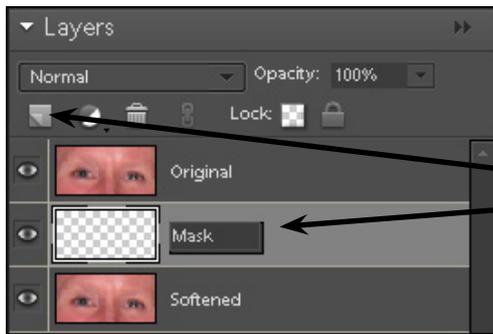
4 Select OK and the tone of the skin should look softer and smoother.
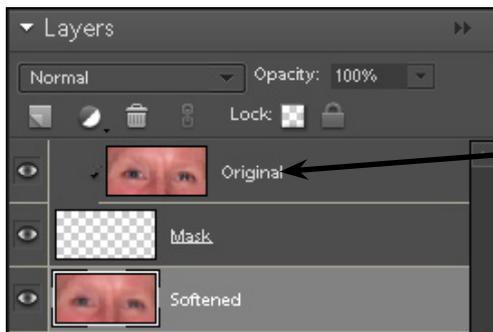
Adding a Mask to the Layer

Parts of the face such as the eyes don't need to be blurred so a mask will be added over the original layer. By doing this we can paint on the mask to display the original eyes, but leave the skin blurred.

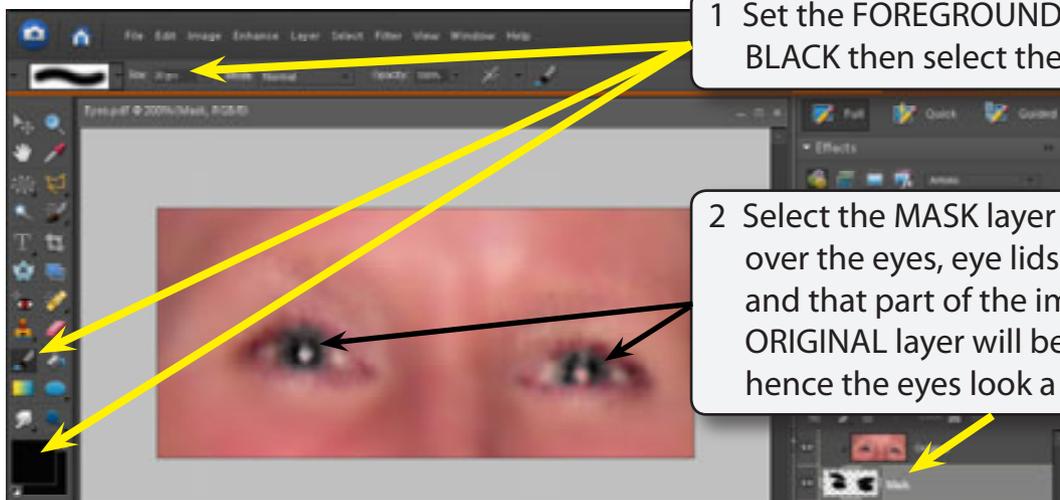1 In the LAYERS palette move the SOFTENED layer below the ORIGINAL

2 With the SOFTENED layer selected, click on the CREATE A NEW LAYER icon at the top of the LAYERS palette to add a blank layer between the two layers, then rename it: MASK

3 Select the ORIGINAL layer then display the LAYER menu and select GROUP WITH PREVIOUS so that the ORIGINAL layer is masked by the MASK layer.

Sharpening the Eyes

1 Set the FOREGROUND COLOUR to BLACK then select the BRUSH TOOL

2 Select the MASK layer and paint over the eyes, eye lids and eyebrows and that part of the image from the ORIGINAL layer will become visible, hence the eyes look a little brighter.

NOTE: By blurring the image we have set the skin tones to look more consistent and then sharpened the import parts of the image.
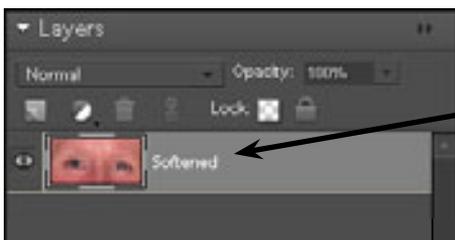
© Guided Computer Tutorials 2008

3 Return the zoom to 100% and save the file in your STORAGE folder as a PHOTOSHOP file under the file name:

Face

Merging Layers

Once you have made changes to a set of layers and you are happy with them they can be merged into one layer to reduced the number of layers present in a file. This process is called MERGING LAYERS.
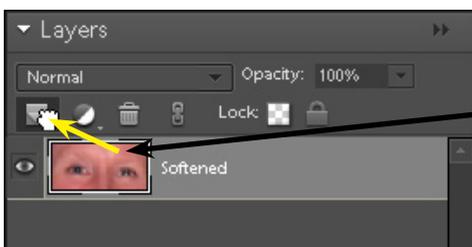
1 Select the SOFTENED layer in the LAYERS paleete then display the LAYER menu and select MERGE VISIBLE.

2 The layers should be combined into one layer called SOFTENED.

Creating a Duplicate Layer

As you start building changes to a file it is best to make a copy of the layer, make changes to the copy and, once you are happy with the changes, merge the copied layer with the original to create one layer. This process can be continued until the production is complete. If you do not like changes to a file the copied layer can always be deleted and a copy of the original layer remade.

1 Drag the SOFTENED layer over the CREATE A NEW LAYER icon at the top of the LAYERS palette.

2 A duplicate of the layer should be created.

NOTE: You can also create a duplicate layer using the LAYER menu or the LAYER PALETTE MENU.