

NEUTRALIZING A COLOR CAST

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The traditional and still standard way of neutralizing the color in a digital file is to use the middle eyedropper tool found in the levels dialog to click on a grey card. This neutralizes the card and applies the same change to everything else in the file. But it has one nasty drawback: it only works if the target object REALLY IS a neutral grey to start with. If the target object is not neutral grey, but because it is dirty or for some reason has a cast of its own, this approach can result in an image with very strange color. What if you WANT that object to be neutral gray in your shot but it is off a little in reality? Here is a way to impose a neutral pallet on it anyway.

Step	Action	Result/Notes
1	Add an Adjustment Layer using the Photo Filters adjustment layer function by clicking on the Adjustment Layer Icon and selecting Photo Filter as the type..	This will create a new layer. However it also is a layer that comes up as a layer mask for some reason. This will also open up the Photo Filters dialog window.
2	To get rid of the layer mask do the following: 1. Unlock the mask by clicking on the Icon that looks like two links of chain. 2. Drag the layer mask frame to the trash to delete it.	If you do not do this the quick mask (that you cannot see) will read as red and completely confuse the following steps.
3	In the Photo Filter Dialog Window, click on the box to select Color .	This lets you select a custom color instead of the predefined ones.
4	Click on the default colored square	This opens up the Color Filter Dialog where you can select colors.
5	Use the eyedropper tool to click on an area on your picture that you want to be neutral gray.	When you move the cursor over the image area it will change to the eyedropper to allow you to select any color in the file.

6.	In the L*A*B Section of the color dialog box, note the setting in the channels marked a. and b. Then reverse them + or -. For example of the numbers are positive numbers, add a minus sign (-) in front of them. If it already has a minus sign, remove it or change it to a plus (+) sign.	The picture will neutralize the targeted subject area. If it is not exact you may need to adjust the density slider to tweek the setting. When it seems OK, click on... OK.
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The image area you selected will now be neutralized and the same color correction will have been applied to the entire image.