

Adding a Moon to your Landscape using Photoshop Blending Options

by [Robert Thomas](#)



The final image with the moon

In this tutorial you'll learn how to add a moon to your image, and use luminance blending to realistically blend the object into your image. We'll even be able to move the clouds in front of the moon!

This tutorial can also be used to place any other type of object in your image. For example you could place a sun, bird, tree, etc.

The Steps

Quick steps for advanced Photoshop users

1. Place your moon image to your destination image.
2. Adjust the "This Layer" slider in the Layer Style dialog box to mask out the background around the moon.
3. Adjust the "Underlying Layer" slider in the Layer Style dialog box to bring the clouds in front of the moon.

Place the moon image in your destination image

In Photoshop, open the image you want to place the moon into.

Click on **File > Place**, and select your moon image. Click on "Place" to add your moon image as a new layer in your destination document. Press the Return key (PC: Enter) to accept your changes.

Move the moon to a suitable location

Press and release the "V" key to select the Move tool and drag the moon to a location that suits you.



Moving the moon to a suitable location

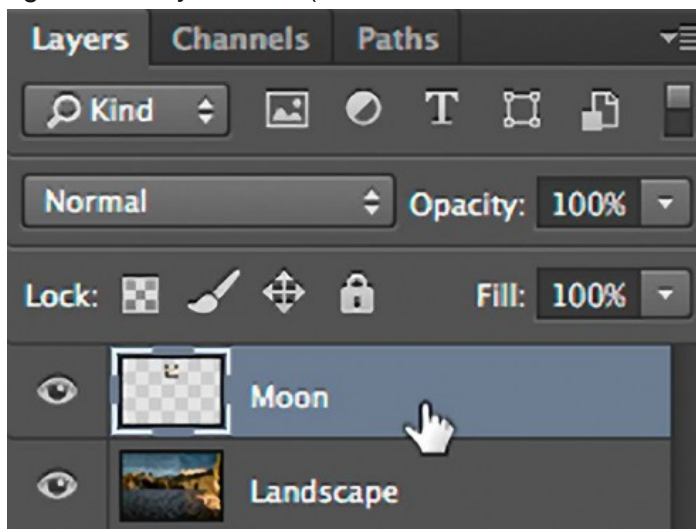
If your moon image has a dark background like mine, you could probably change the blend mode for the layer to Lighten or Screen to remove the dark background surrounding the moon.

Conversely if your moon has a light background, you could probably change the blend mode of the layer to Multiply or Darken to remove the light background surrounding the moon.

I want to show you how to use luminance blending, so for the sake of this tutorial leave the blend mode set to normal. For detailed information on Photoshop Blend Modes, read [“Photoshop Blend Modes Explained.”](#)

Mask the moon’s background using luminance blending

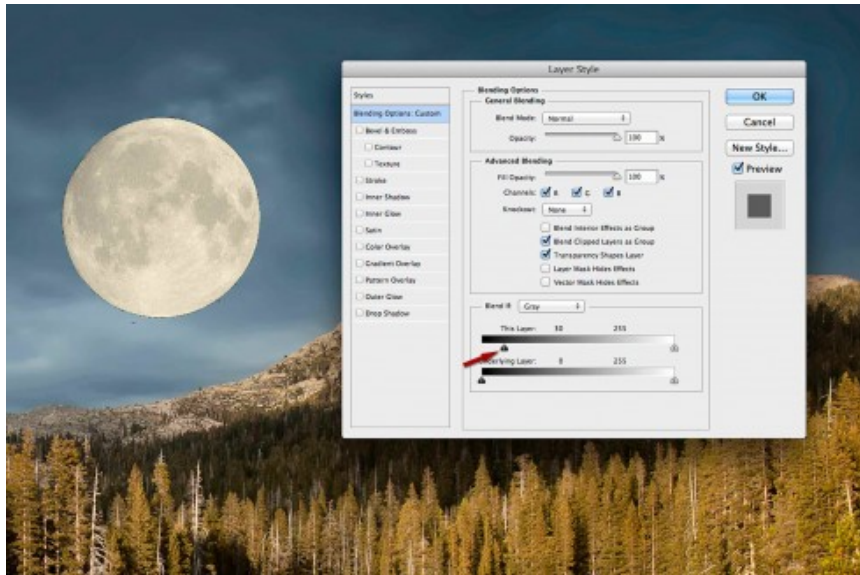
Open the Layer Style dialog box by double-clicking on the moon layer—click anywhere to the right of the layer name (don’t double-click on the name).



Double-click the layer to open the layer styles dialog box

If your moon image has a dark background like mine, drag the left slider in the “This Layer” section to the right until the background disappears. Don’t move the slider too far—stop dragging as soon as the background disappears.

If your moon has a light colored background, you would drag the right slider to the left.



Dragging the “This Layer” slider

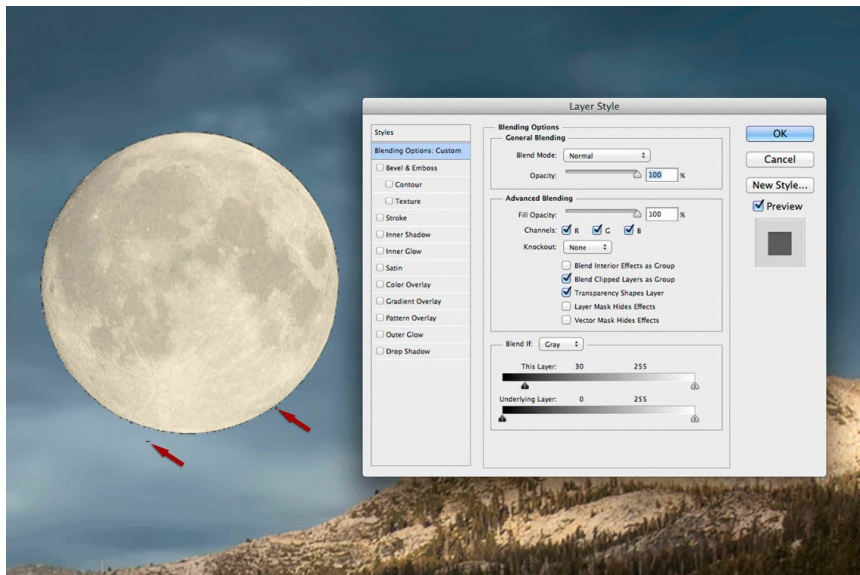
If the changes you’re making in the Layer Style dialog box aren’t being displayed on the screen, be sure the “Preview” box is selected.

In the illustration above you can see that I moved the slider to the right, and the value for this slider has changed to 30. This tells Photoshop that for the current layer, luminance values of 30 or lower should be masked-out and be transparent.

Fine-tune luminance blending

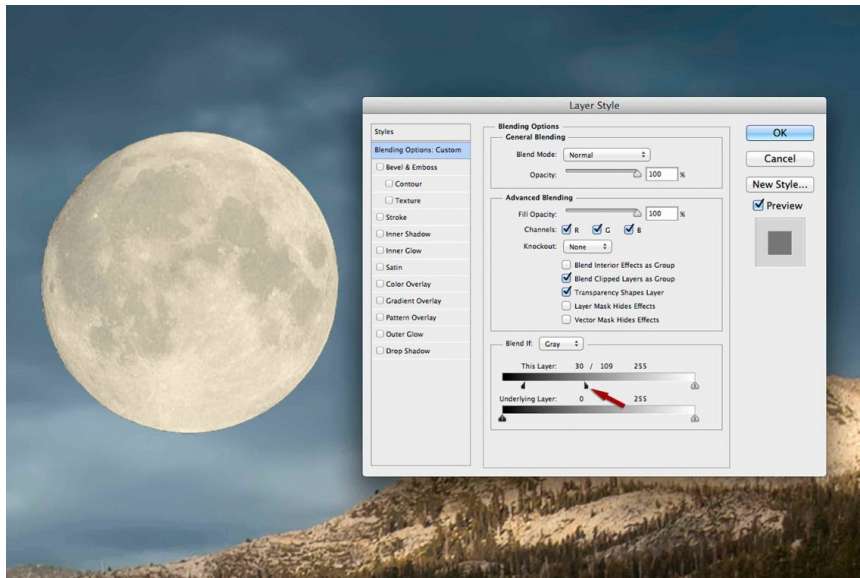
While still in the Layer Style dialog box, press and hold the Command key (PC: Control) and click on your image to zoom in.

You’ll probably notice some artifacts around the perimeter of your moon.



Artifacts remain around the object

To remove these artifacts, Option+Click (PC: Alt+Click) and drag the right *half* of the slider you just moved—drag the slider to the right. This effectively splits the slider into two pieces. Continue to drag this half of the slider to the right until the artifacts disappear, and click on OK to accept your changes.



Splitting the Luminance Slider in “This Layer” section

In the illustration above you can see that I moved the right half of the slider to the right, and the value for this slider has changed to 109. This tells Photoshop that for the current layer, luminance values between 90 and 109 should gradually be transitioned from transparent to opaque for a smoother effect.

It's important you understand why these sliders give you these results. I want to keep this article simple & short, so I recommend you read my chapter on **“Luminance Blending.”**

View the entire image

Zoom out a bit to see the entire image.

To zoom out, press and release the “Z” key, and hold the Alt key (PC: Option) while you click on your image.

Re-size the moon

I need to make the moon smaller because it's looking too large for the scene that I'm working with.

To re-size the moon, select the moon layer and use the keyboard shortcut Command+T (PC: Control+T) to open the Free Transform tool.

Re-size the moon by holding the Shift key while dragging one of the corners. When the moon is about the right size, release the Shift key and mouse button, and press the Return key (PC:Enter) to accept your changes.



Resizing the moon with the Free Transform Tool

It's important you hold the Shift key while you re-size the moon to maintain the aspect ratio!

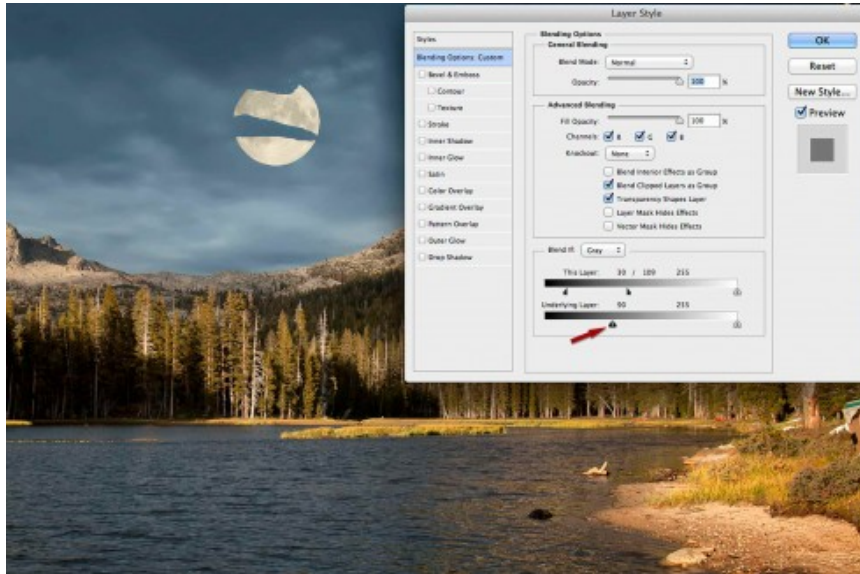
Move the clouds in front of the moon

The image I'm working with has clouds in it, and the moon looks artificial because it's in front of the clouds; some of the clouds should be floating in front of the moon. We'll use luminance blending again to move the clouds in front of the moon.

Open the Layer Style dialog box again by double-clicking on the moon layer—click anywhere to the right of the layer name (don't double-click on the name).

If your clouds are darker than the moon, drag the left slider in the "Underlying Layer" section to the right until you start to see some of the clouds appear on top of the moon.

If your clouds are lighter than the moon, drag the right slider in the "Underlying Layer" section to the left until you start to see some of the clouds appear on top of the moon.

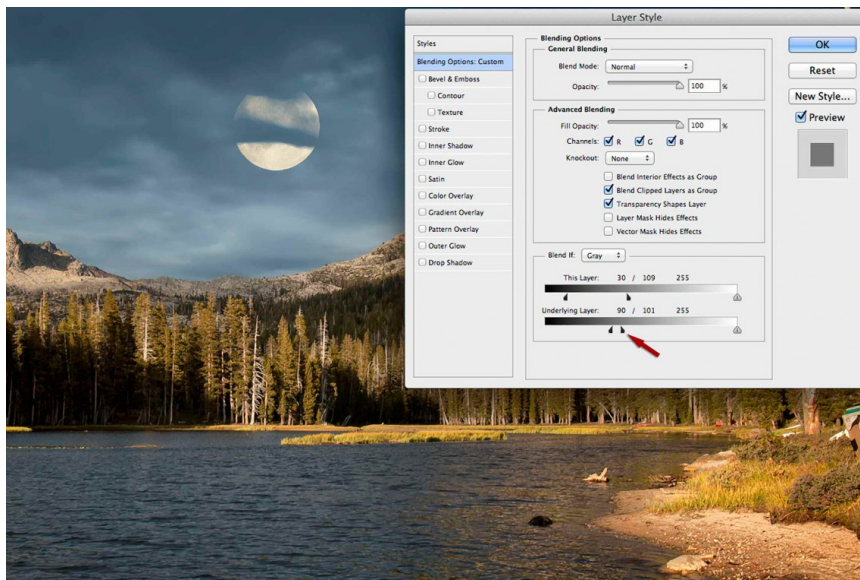


Adjusting the Underlying Layer slider

In the illustration above, you can see that I moved the left "Underlying Layer" slider to the right, and the value for this slider has changed to 90. This tells Photoshop that for the layers below the current layer, luminance values of 90 or lower should punch-through the current layer, and become opaque.

Fine-tune blending the clouds

Option+Click (PC: Alt+Click) and drag the right half of the slider you just moved to the right. This effectively splits the slider into two pieces. Continue to drag this half of the slider to the right until you get the effect you're looking for, and click on OK to accept your changes.



Splitting the Luminance Slider in the “Underlying Layer” section

Reposition the moon

Tap the “V” key to select the move tool, and drag the moon around in your image until you’re satisfied with its location.

If the clouds don’t look quite right after moving the moon around, re-open the Layer Style dialog box and readjust the settings in the Underlying Layer section.

Layer Styles changes are parametric—you can always revisit your changes in the Layer Style dialog box and modify them.

Knowing how to use the Photoshop blending options effectively can open a world of possibilities for you. I think you’ll find these options invaluable when you need to add a creative touch to your images.

The final image with the moon



The final image with the moon

<https://www.google.com/search?ei=Z1WjXb6rHILh-gT-4J6lAg&q=how+to+add+a+moon+to+a+photo+in+photoshop+using+luminosity&oq=ho>

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