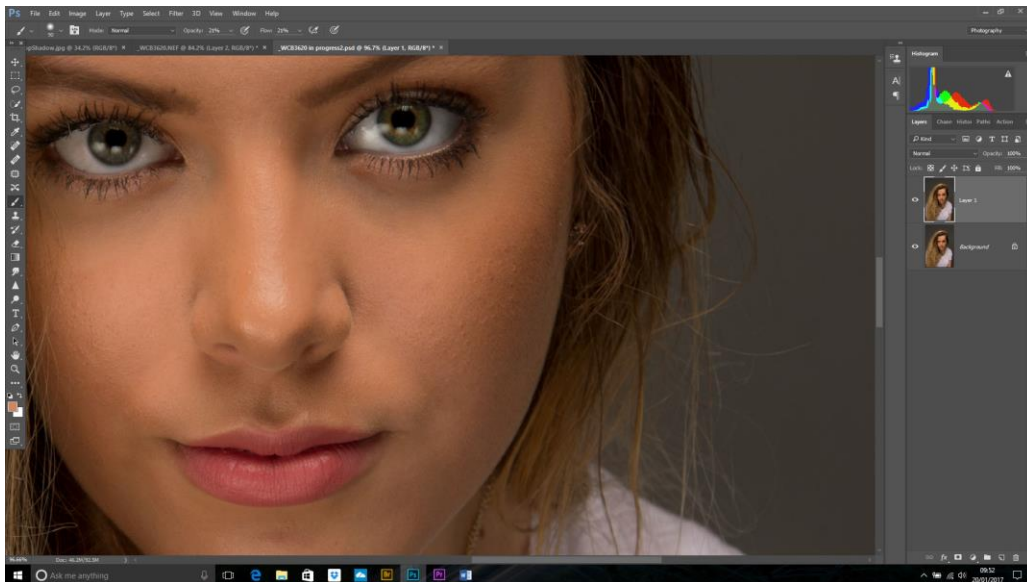


# Skin Smoothing using Inverted High Pass

In my opinion, when retouching portraits it is important to keep the picture looking 'real.' Never believe anything you see in magazines – everyone has flaws. There are many techniques for smoothing skin but I like this one as it is not too complicated or long-winded and gives you lots of control to retain some of the texture from the skin. Some methods, like frequency separation, give better results and offer more control but it takes a lot of practice to become good at this and for the moment it is best left to professional retouchers who have loads of time and/or getting paid by the hour.

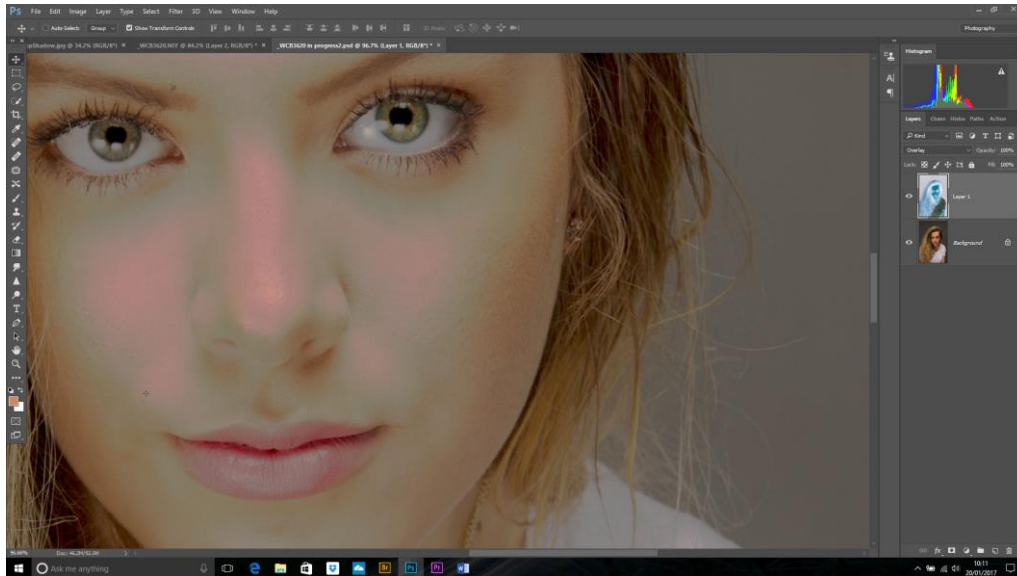
Okay, let's plod on.

Open your image and make a copy (cntl+J) and do your initial retouching – removing small blemishes with the healing brush and any shiny skin using either the clone stamp tool or brush with skin colour at low flow on Darken mode. Flatten this and make a copy (cntl+J).



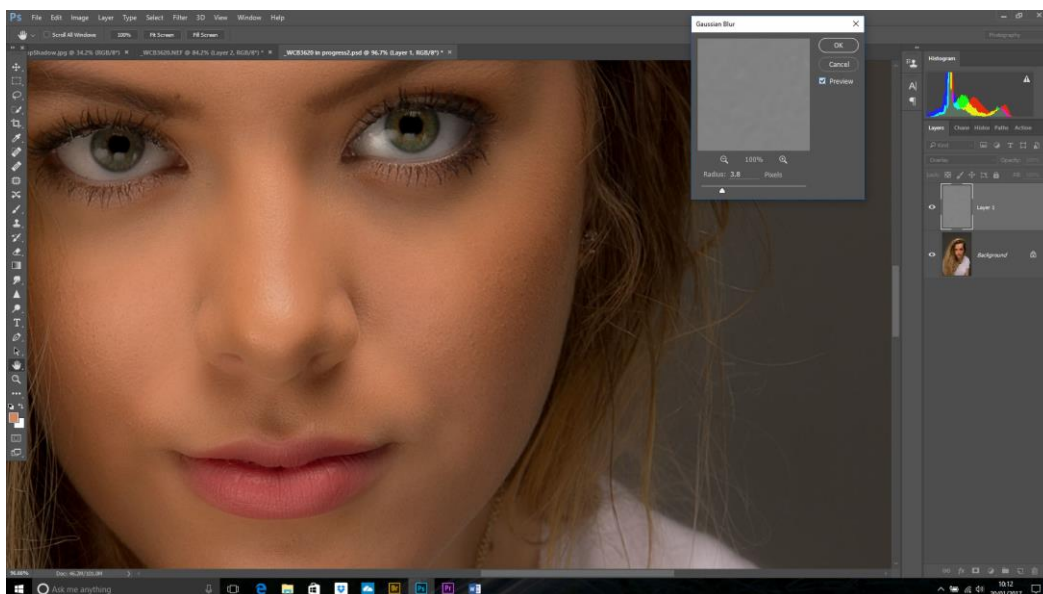
Change the blending mode of this new layer to Overlay

Invert this by either Layer>adjustment>invert or the shortcut is Cntl+I



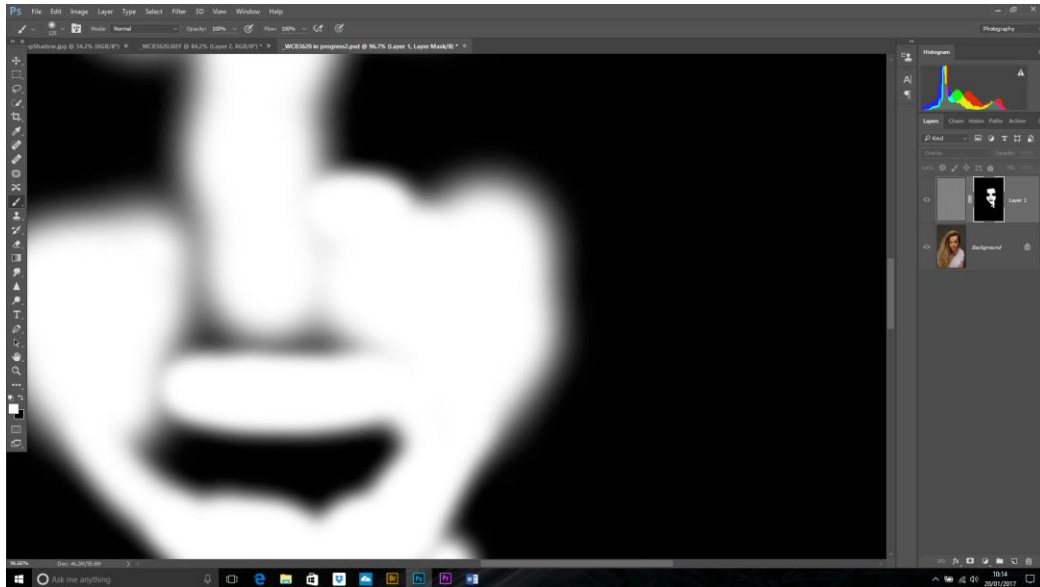
Filter>Other>High Pass and set the amount to about 10px.

Now, we want to apply a blur using Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Move the slider until we you get the right balance between skin smoothing and texture, usually 1-4px. Remember the more blur you apply the sharper the image will become!



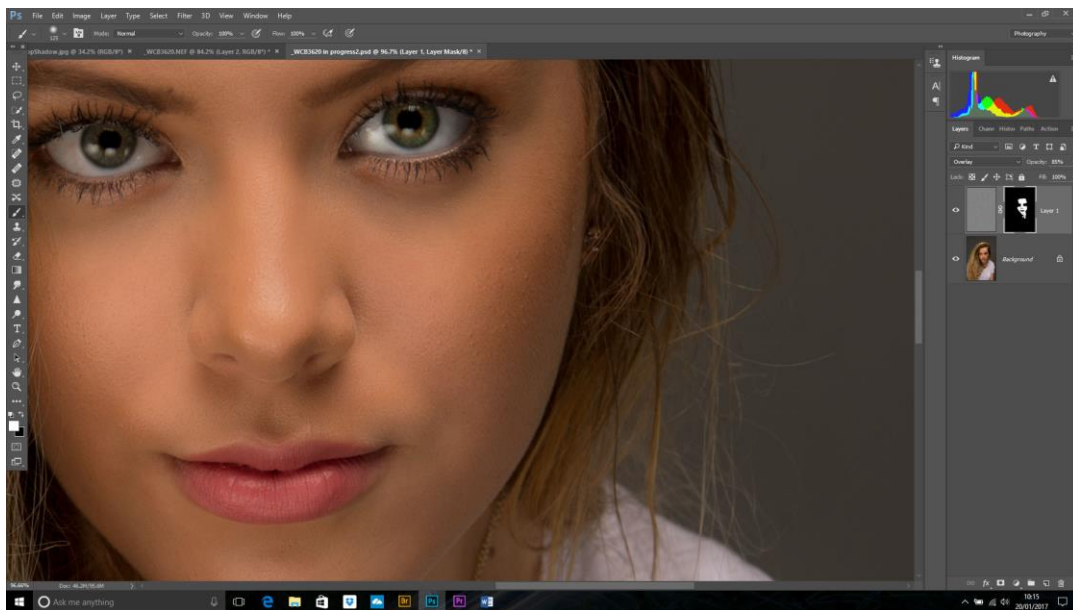
This takes some of the detail away from areas we don't want smoothed, so apply a Reveal All (black) mask by holding down Alt and clicking the mask icon at the bottom of the layers palette (rectangle with a circle inside).

Select the brush tool (B) and white as your foreground colour and paint on the mask at 100% opacity. Paint only the areas of skin you want smoothed and avoid areas of detail (hair, eyes, teeth etc.). Check your mask by holding down Alt and clicking on the mask. Paint any gaps to see and keep changing the size of the brush to get into small areas of skin.



Alt+click on the mask icon to return to normal view.

Lower the opacity of this layer to about 85%.



Done.