

Removing Ringlights

After showing some of my pictures that were shot using a ringlight, it was obvious some of the club didn't like the look and asked how you can change it to look 'normal.'

Well, here goes...

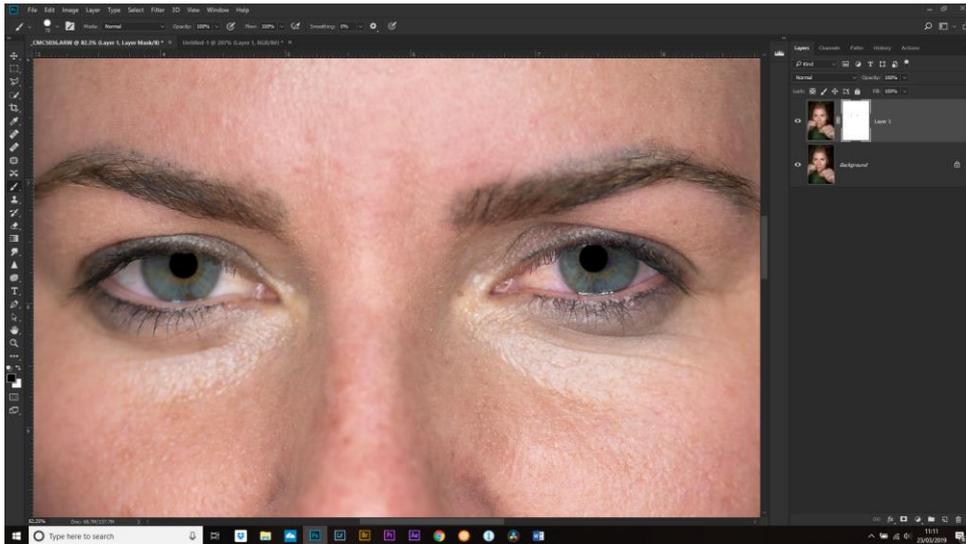
The process involves 2 stages:

- i) removing the original ringlight then
- ii) adding a catchlight and fill light to make it look 3-dimensional.

Open the ringlight shot and copy the background layer.

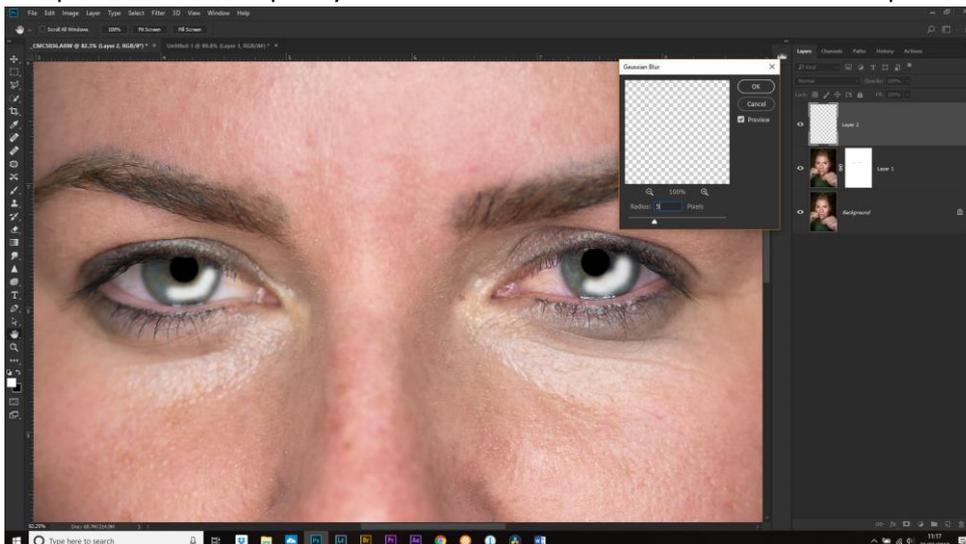


Zoom in to the eyes. With a fairly hard round brush (90%-ish) make the brush just bigger than the lights and paint them out with a single click. I went over the eyelashes a little, so make a mask and using the same black brush just run it over the parts of the eyelashes that were lost.



I'm going to put a catchlight top left, so first I'm going to add a fill to the eye directly opposite this – so bottom right.

Make a new layer. Take a white brush and paint a few strokes on the iris. I used 50% opacity and painted 3 strokes per eye. Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Here I added a 5px blur.



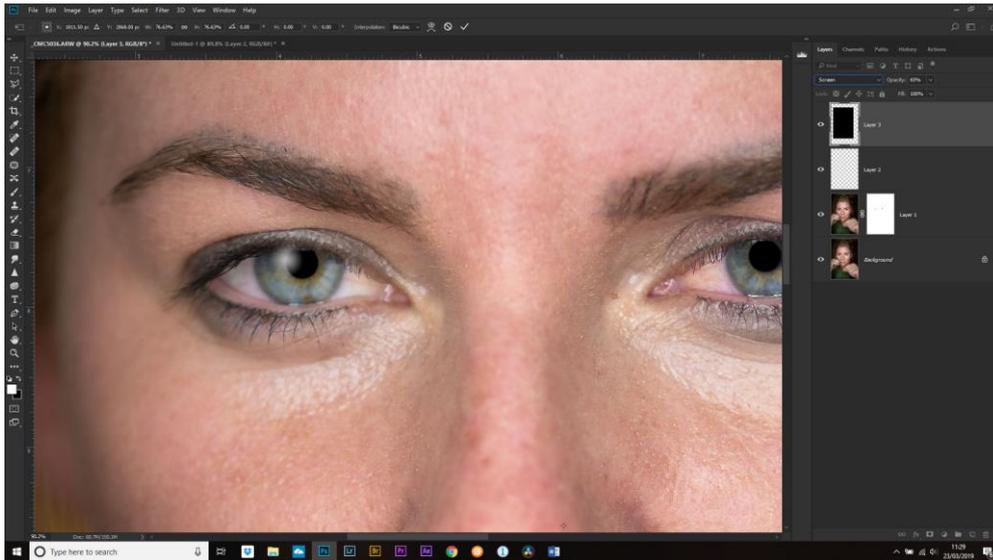
Change the blending mode of the layer to Overlay and drop the opacity until it looks natural.

Now for the catchlight!

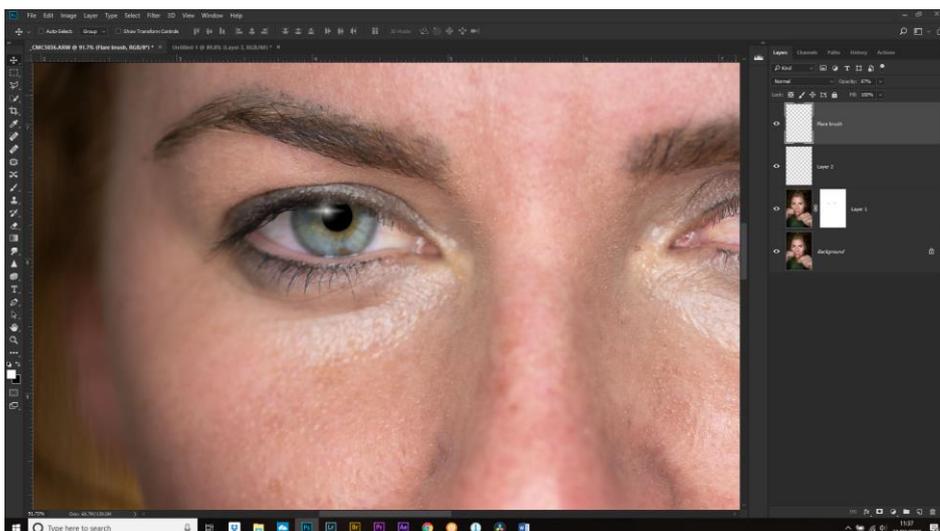
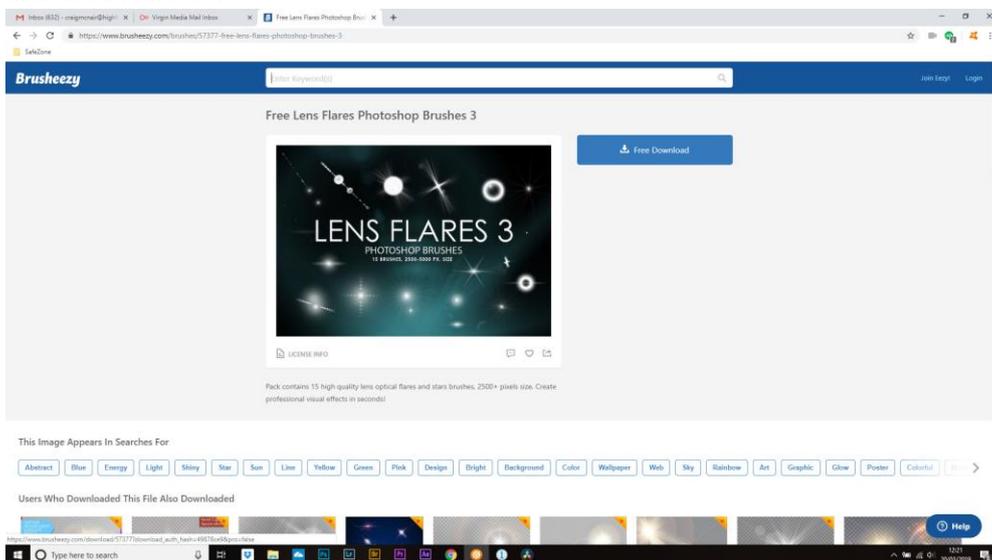
Make a new layer.

There are several ways to add a catchlight – the simplest being just painting a white spot. I've never managed to make this look realistic, though.

Better still is to paint a radial gradient. On a new layer paint a white to black gradient (radial) and change the blending mode to Screen. Click on the dot and drag to reposition. Drop the opacity to suit.

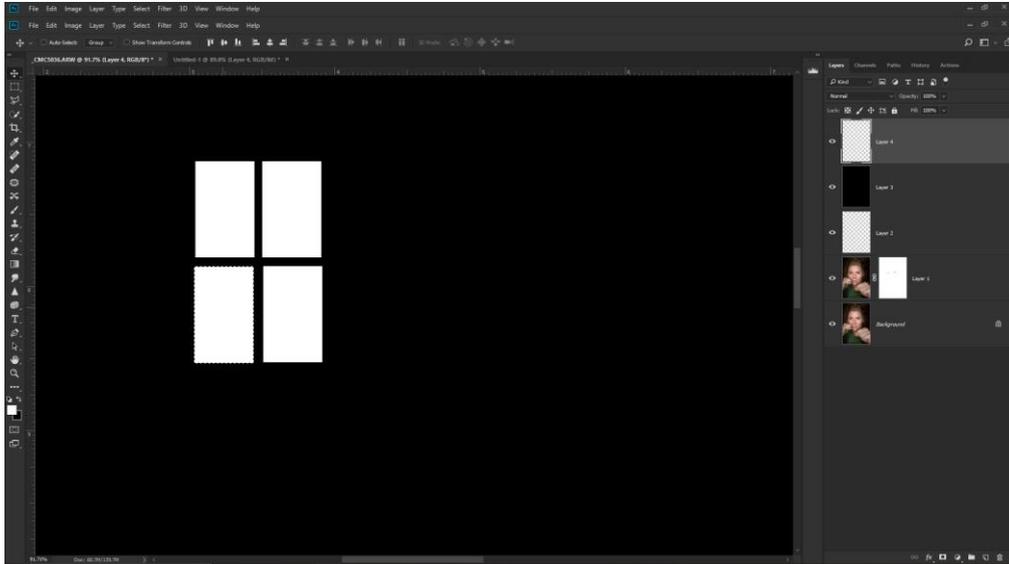


The third way uses downloaded brushes. I downloaded these from Brusheezy>Lens Flares 3 and used Flare 35.

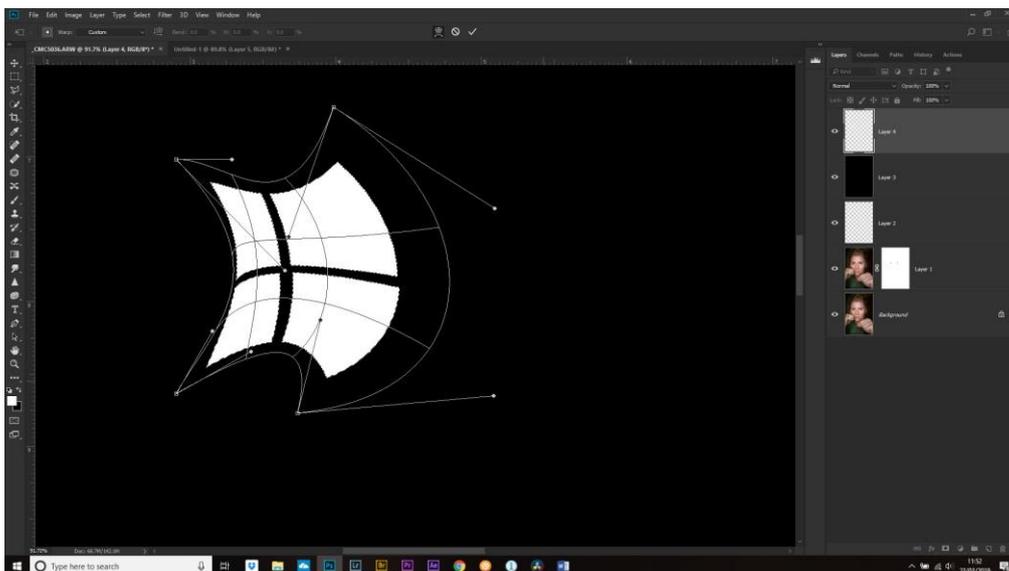


If you want to get a little bit more complicated, you can add a window reflection! First I'm going to make a new layer and fill it with black. I'm going to make another new layer above this and draw a rectangle using the marquee tool and fill it with white.

Select the move tool (V) and while holding down Alt – click and drag to make a copy of the white square. Do this again and again to make a window effect.

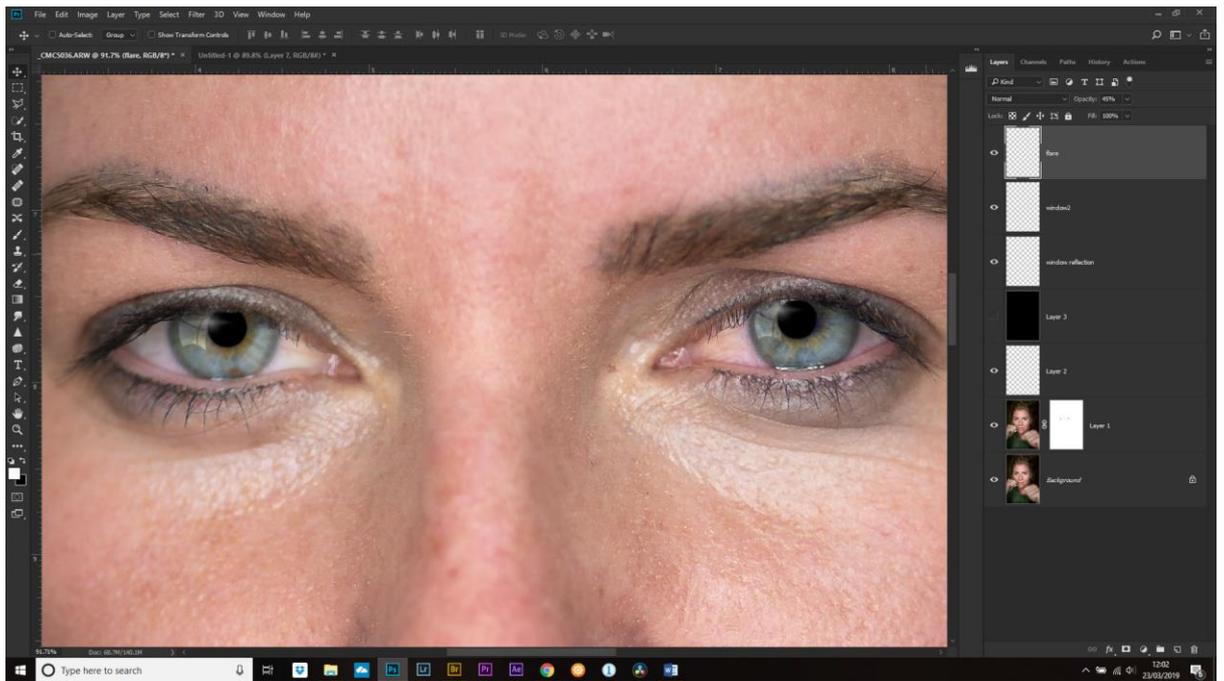


Deselect. Edit>Transform>Warp and drag the corner out to make it distorted.



Switch off the black layer and resize/rotate the 'window' reflection. Try different blending modes and opacities – here I used Overlay at 40%. Copy this layer and reposition over the other eye.

If you want, you can add a further catchlight using the flare brush technique, too.



Done!