

Split-Toning

Often called monochrome but really it's duotone. You will find many excellent tutorials online for how to achieve split-toning, but most of them require full Photoshop, with its more comprehensive version of Adobe Camera Raw or Lightroom. Following those tutorials is impossible for Photoshop Elements users (I never worked out why Elements users download the same upgrades of Adobe Camera Raw as Photoshop users would, from exactly the same download link, but end up with a cut-down version).

This, though, is something I've picked up from a variety of sources and my own experimentation - it works for PS Elements. And it's simple!

I expect we all know by now how to make a Sepia version of a B&W picture, and I expect many have dabbled with various other toning methods.

Split toning is often used to simulate the quality and colour cast of old photographic paper - platinum, palladium, sepia, selenium and blue.

Instead of using just one colour, as in the Sepia version where you hit "Colorize" in a Hue/Saturation adjustment and go for a sepia colour at an appropriate saturation, the split-tone process on PSE (and PS if you don't want to use the over-complicated tutorials) just requires the use of the Gradient Map adjustment layer. You can set your two colours up in the foreground/background paint swatches and run a gradient map using "Foreground to Background", or you can make the gradients and save them for future use.

Anyway, with a black and white image prepared (whichever way you like to make a b&w **except** via "Image > Mode > Grayscale") and given a little contrast boost, you need to choose your two different toning colours . Set **foreground colour to set the tone for shadows** and **set background colour for your highlights** - obviously if you set black and white that's exactly what you'd get, but we want something different.

Ok, so what colours work well..... I like all of these so it's not easy to tell you which to use, but.....(set the hex numbers in the colour palette - Foreground is the first number, Background the second number)....

Copper-Blue..... Dusky Blue (#4A616F) Muted Orange (#E6CFAA)

Rich Sepia..... Chocolate (#63441C) Cream (#FFF5D8)

Neutral..... Muted brown (#45392B) White (#FFFFFF)

Blue Tone..... Midnight blue (#2A4468) Muted cyan (#A9C6C6)

Now go to the Layers Palette and make a Gradient Map adjustment layer. You should see a smooth blending gradient of your two selected colours. Click OK. You will see a disappointing looking image that's not what you wanted. Now all you need to do is change the Blend Mode to "Color" and Viola! Alter Opacity as required.

If you're still not perfectly happy, you can still make small adjustments to the two colours used - that's the beauty of using adjustment layers, you can go back time and time again to adjust your colours.

Now, the best bit of all.....

You can make as many Gradient Maps as you like and keep them in one file, stacked on top of each other - whether with an image or not - and save that file as a PSD. From then on, if you feel like you want to use a split-tone effect on any other picture you can just open up the PSD and drag any of the Gradient Map layers on to the new picture, try a few out and choose one. If you like one in particular you can discard any of the unused ones (the ones not at the top of the stack). The original PSD with all the Gradients is untouched, as you only dragged copies of the gradients over to the new image. Cool, eh?

You might even find some more hints and colours online, or you could just find a toned picture online, bring it into PSE and use the eye-dropper tool to sample the darkest and lightest areas to use as your tone range for the gradient.

OK, here's one I made earlier.....



Happy toning!