

READ ME BEFORE YOU BUY

This document describes my pricing, non-support policy, prerequisite skills, and package contents for the Photoshop™ *MK Actions*. I'm keeping it simple and upfront so that you can make the best-informed decision about whether my actions and approach are right for you.

Because I am a one-man show, a retired guy with arthritis, I cannot spend unlimited time in front of the computer. I use that time making my art and sharing my techniques by creating these actions and tutorials.

Due to my time constraints and allegiance to low pricing, I cannot provide refunds or technical support. Therefore, it is important that you read this overview before you buy. If you see something that would not match your skills or interests, you may be better off with other programs and actions.

My Pricing Policy—Keep Price Low for Digital Materials

Because my actions contain extensive field-testing and refinement, extensive flexibility, and detailed documentation, many have urged me to price my material in the 200 to 300 dollar range. I won't, because I believe eBooks should be cheaper than print books. I am asking \$40 to \$50 per package, which includes the actions, sample images and illustrated tutorials.

My Customer Support Policy—There Is None at These Prices

I do this for fun and very little profit. If I charge more I could hire others to answer your questions. I don't mind hearing feedback from customers, but I really can't provide comprehensive technical assistance.

If you are a self-starter and a problem solver, then my actions may be a very good bet for you. If you need more coaching, please try another product. You can always consult the help manuals, books, YouTube videos, and your local camera club for the best support in the world. That's what I do.

Benefits of My Design—You Learn More about Using Photoshop

Because I provide heavily illustrated tutorials, you can learn about the tools, blend modes, selections, corrections, and layer strategies I use in my work. I purposely share the details in case you want to make your own action or modify mine later. My documentation makes learning how to use and customize my actions easier than most other products.

Prerequisite Skills

You should be familiar with Photoshop techniques related to layers, blend modes, masking images, painting on masks, using actions, and making selections. If you are a beginner to Photoshop, you need to master the basics first before trying my actions.

If you have never installed a Photoshop action before, the details are in a supporting document found online entitled *Getting Started with MK Actions*. I urge you to read this nine-page illustrated document before you begin using my actions.

THE 4 POWERFUL PACKAGES

Each package includes the actions, illustrated tutorials and practice images, which allow you to follow along with the directions to gain confidence and mastery. Although I don't provide technical support, with my tutorials and prompts you won't need my help if you have the prerequisite skills.

Green Screen Package (\$50)

This package is the basic tool for making a relatively quick selection of the green background and then removing it by following a few prompts. One action is for CS1 through CS4 and the other action is for CS5 and beyond. A special secret bonus action is included in this package, along with an illustrated tutorial and many practice images. These actions hold up competitively against both plug-ins and stand-alone programs costing much more.

Comparing Other Green Programs to MK Actions

In test after test my green screen actions work as well as the stand-alone and plug-in programs, but they do take more time. Most of those programs have limits that you can quickly reach when working with poorly lit green screens or fine detail, such as flying hair. Notice how my work stacks up against Photoshop selection tool Refine Edge and FXHome PhotoKey 3.



In addition to green screen extraction, my photomontage packages include actions to restore missing detail and create realistic edges. As a result, Jen Rene, who loves to play with her hair, can keep more of her hair after the green screen image is keyed (green removed).

Those other programs can cost \$200 to \$400 for the advanced versions. My green screen and photomontage packages together cost only \$100 and apply to more than green screen images.

If you purchased the earlier version of my green screen package, you will receive a free upgrade if you e-mail me a proof of purchase.

Photomontage Package (\$50)

Originally designed for green screen, these actions turn out to be essential tools for any cut-out image. Whether you cut out your subject using green screen software or selection tools in programs like Fluid Mask or Photoshop selection tools like color range or the pen tool, you will find these actions turn your cut outs into credible montages!

My actions are unique in this industry because they help you eliminate the fake or cut-out look as you add shadows, blend different color light temperature, and shade the edges. These advanced art techniques help you to refine edges so the subject will blend with even the most difficult or unforgiving background. For instance, a solid blue sky can reveal edges with halos or hard edges produced after keying out the green. Not to worry, because ***Minimizing Halo Edges*** goes to work for you. Other actions help you ***remove the “gray junk”*** left behind when lighting is not perfected. No other green screen program does that. And one action provides you with a ***light wrap*** effect for a soft lighting look.

The previous actions help you work on edge quality for your portrait, however there is one action that can be used on almost any image. It not only corrects edge problems but also adds a degree of realism not possibly previously except through tedious handwork. ***Shaded Edge*** blends foreground and background perfectly and may be the most powerful yet simple effect you can add to any photomontage.

Restoration comes to the rescue when your subject shows up with a green shirt or the flash fails to fire and the shirt and deep shadows are removed during the green removal.

Did you place your warm-lit subject against a cool night sky? ***Blending Color Casts in Foreground & Background*** will help you match the color temperature of the foreground subject with the background night sky, improving the realism of your image.

Want to have your subject leaning against a grunge alleyway wall full of graffiti? ***Making a Shadow*** will help you put a shadow on that wall. In full-length shots you'll also want shadows where the feet touch down.

The most critical steps are semi-automated with actions and backed up with an illustrated tutorial and practice files

Portraiture Enhancement Package (\$40)

Do you envy those photographers who possess enough lights and techniques to add hair lights, rim or edge lights or catch lights to eyes? The actions in this suite mimic these magic lighting techniques.

Faux Hair Light and ***Faux Rim Light*** provide post-production methods for creating accent lights effects.

Retro Black and White Conversion gives an image an other-era look.

Faux Catch Lights adds sparkle and depth to eyes that lack catch lights.

Hard-Soft Sharpening gives your images the look of Hollywood's classic, heroic tough-guy sharpness.

All of these effects will separate your images from the crowd.

Touch Ups Package (\$40)

I can finish an entire touch up in less than 5 minutes using a combination of the commercial plug-in Portraiture along with my own actions.

Skin Smoothing enhances your subject's beauty and reduces distractions.

Burning & Dodging with SoftLight helps you control local contrast. You can reduce bags under the eyes and darken double chin areas so they go away.

Shine Be Reduced reduces the harsh specular flash that produces shine on noses, cheeks, and chins. ***Whitening Teeth*** provides an inexpensive alternative to costly dental processes.

Special Sharpening Actions let you boldly or delicately sharpen lips, teeth, and eyes.

The Actions Work on More Than Green Screen Images

The entire suite of actions from green screen to touch ups originally was designed for images that began as green screen shots and later had the green removed. I assumed you would be working on a file where the foreground subject, typically a portrait, is isolated from the background. In these revised packages, most of my techniques work on any images that have been extracted. For example, if you shoot against a white seamless background and cut out the subject with Photoshop's Refine Edge tool, you will find your work grows in power as you use the Photomontage and other packages.

They also work well on any subject - even if it is a classic custom car. The sample below shows an image taken with an iPhone and photomontaged with a NASA background, using my desktop computer.



*Car shot at the Portland Art Museum exhibit: Allure of the Automobile
Background courtesy of NASA*

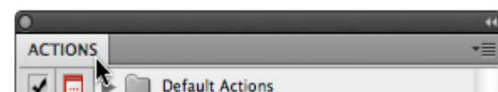
Likewise, the special effects and touch-up actions can be applied to just about any image once you select the area to be adjusted. For example, you can use the Lasso tool along the right side of your subject to isolate where the rim light will be applied.

MacCentric Roots

I've been using the Macintosh computer system since it first came out. I'm pretty good at it, but lame with PCs.

As a result, I cannot offer support or advice for those using my actions on the Windows version of

Photoshop. But all of the actions have been field tested by people using the Windows version. All actions appear to run from the standard Photoshop Action palette.



Most of My Actions Work with Most Versions of Photoshop

About 80% of my actions should work with Photoshop CS1 through the current version. Green screen actions have been updated and now utilize advanced tools in CS4 and CS5. These actions clearly state if they are for CS5 and beyond. When possible, I have created separate actions for CS1 through CS4 so that no Photoshop user is left behind.

The Photoshop program can grow complex as one customizes settings, preferences, use plug-ins, and works on files with many, many layers. As a result, sometimes the program will not work as planned. For example, when I was done upgrading and developing my actions using CS5, I

found that some would not perform any longer on CS1, even though most had started in CS1. I reset all my Photoshop preferences to factory defaults and this helped. This technique of resetting the preferences is now included in the help file entitled: *2 Getting Started With MK Actions_12*.

To my knowledge all actions work on an Intel Mac from CS1 through CS5. They have also been tested and work well in CS4 running on a Windows 7 PC. Still, you may find at times that a particular action may not work on your computer or your version of Photoshop. If that happens, you won't be able to use that action. However, there are generally enough details in the tutorial for you to perform the technique manually. If you don't think you can live with this ambiguity or make this kind of adjustment, then please don't buy my actions.

Go Ahead and Customize the Actions

As new features are added to future releases of Photoshop, you may want to add your own menu items or a new tool into my actions. Because my work methods are openly shared, you can easily adapt the actions to suit your individual needs.

Art Instead of Automation

If all you want to do is select an image and click a filter for special effect, then you will be making the same kind of picture each time; and others can easily copy your style. Most photo-based artists choose to work in more unique ways. As do I.

For this graphic poster of Jen Rene I made at least 3 duplicate layers. On layer one I adjusted the filter for her eyes. On layer two I adjusted it for skin tones or skin. And on the third layer I adjusted the same filter for the background or her dress. Then I blended these together using masks and brushes.



Michael's image required an equal amount of post processing, but the style was geared to realism and grunge.

The end result in both examples is art, not mouse-click auto-art. MK Actions can speed up your work tremendously by automating the

set up and the flow - like the semi-automatic camera modes for aperture or shutter priority.

My actions invite you to make choices about selections, filters, and application of effects. It remains hands-on art.

Your end results are unique.

If you prefer a completely automatic one- or two-click action, please don't buy MK Actions.

Expand Your Creative Reach

I cannot write a perfect action that will fit every situation. I can, however, be honest with you about my actions, their design, and my assumptions. I hope you find this document useful in making an informed decision about purchasing MK Actions to expand your possibilities.

Thank you for taking the time to review this prior to a possible purchase.



Most Sincerely,

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version 8