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Photoshop Tips
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Extract Command

The Extract command in Photoshop 5.5 enables us to isolate a foreground object from its background. Even objects with undefinable edges like hair can now be clipped from their backgrounds with very little manual work.

1 Open an image you would like to extract the background from. I choose this image of a squirrel. You my use my image if you like. To save it, Right Click and choose "Save As" to download (Mac: Press and hold mouse button on the image, Select Save from the popup menu).

2 After you have loaded an image, go to **Image>Extract.** You'll see the same image come up in the Extract window.

3 The first thing we'll need to do is outline our foreground object, in this case it will be the squirrel. Select the Edge Highlighter tool (as shown). Now set a brush size and outline your foreground object. Zoom in if needed: Select the Zoom tool, click on the image to zoom inward and hold down the Alt key (Mac: Option) to Zoom out.
Tip: You will have difference results depending on the size of the brush you use. I have found that trying to use a small bush size on my squirrel gave me better results with minimal clean up work. If you have an image with long hair or wispy parts, then you may want to trying using a larger brush on those edges.

4 Now we need to fill our foreground object by using the Fill Tool. Select this tool and click in the center of the object.

5 Now we are ready to preview the image by pressing the "Preview" button at the top right corner of the window. You now should see the background disappear. Under the Preview Options you can change the background color if needed. If you like what you see, then press the OK button. Sometimes it's not always perfect and you may need to clean up some edges with the Eraser Tool. If this is the case, then click on OK, now select the Eraser and clean up the edges.

Here's my final image. I inserted a different background and made a glow around the squirrel using the Photoshop Effects.