

Lesson 8-2: Using the Blur and Sharpen Tools

Figure 8-4

The Blur and Sharpen tools in the toolbox.

Figure 8-5

The options bar for the Blur tool.

Figure 8-6

The result of over-sharpening an image.

Figure 8-7

The original image.

Figure 8-8

The image with the lower images blurred.

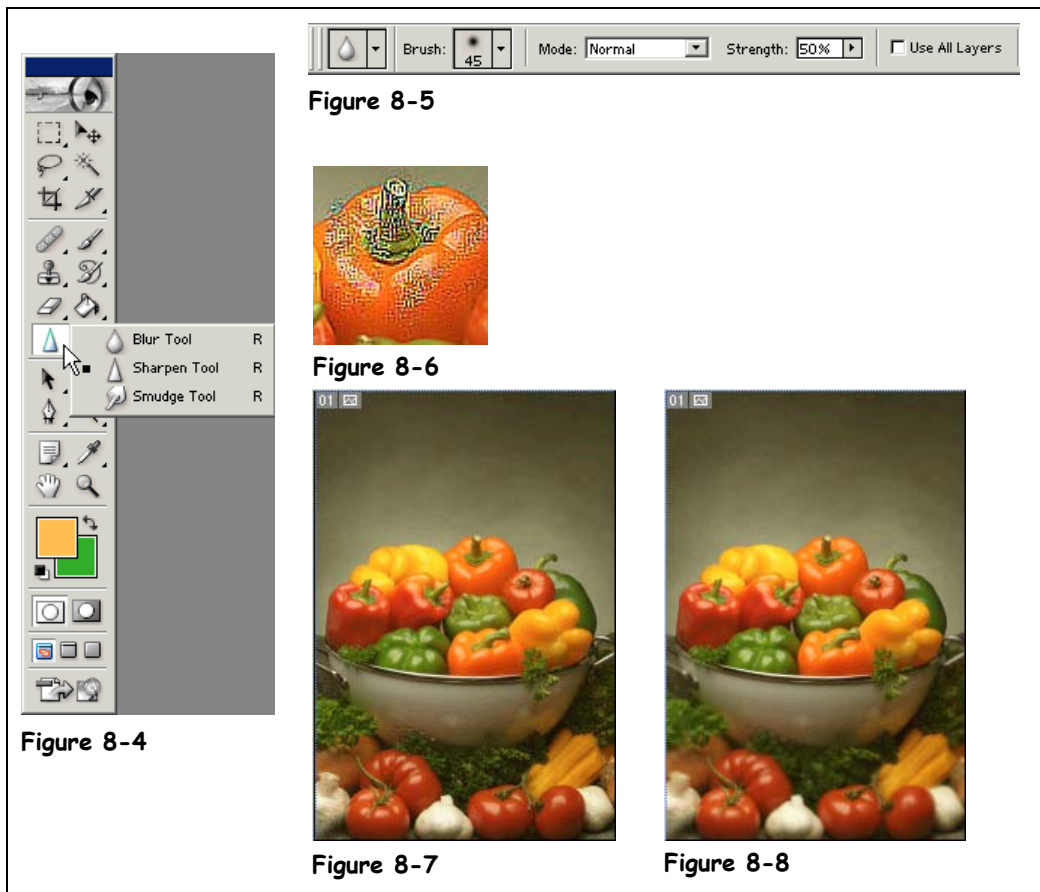


Figure 8-4

Figure 8-5



Figure 8-6



Figure 8-7



Figure 8-8

The Blur and Sharpen tools do exactly what their names say: they blur or sharpen parts of images.

Why would you want to blur or sharpen an image? If you want to make a particular part of an image stand out, you could blur all the other objects in the image just enough so that your central image pops. In addition, you can sharpen an image so that it stands out from the rest, whether you use the blur tool or not.

Let's try it.

1. Make sure the **Peppers** image is open.

Ask your instructor if you can't find your Peppers image.

This is an ideal image for the Blur and Sharpen tools, since it has so many objects in it. We want the vegetables in the bowl to stand out from the rest. First, let's use the Blur tool to blur the other objects in the image.

2. Select the **Blur tool from the toolbox.**

The Blur tool may be hidden behind the Smudge tool or the Sharpen tool in Photoshop, but it is located below the Eraser tool.

When the Blur tool is selected, the options bar will allow you to select how the Blur tool should work.



Blur tool

3. In the options bar, select a **soft-edged 45 pixel round brush.**

With the Blur tool you have the same brush options that are available for most other tools. The brush you have selected allows for a reasonable amount of coverage without making the blurring too obvious.

4. Make sure that **Mode is set to **Normal** and **Strength** is at **90%** in the options bar.**

Use the Blur tool brush just like a paint brush: Click and drag the mouse over the images that you want to affect.



Soft-edged 45 pixel round brush

5. Click and drag the **Blur tool over the bowl and vegetables at the bottom of the image.**

As you move the brush you can see that the lower images are becoming a little more blurry. This will cause a viewer's attention to be attracted to the objects that are in better focus.

You can also use the Sharpen tool to bring out the desired elements of your image even more.

6. Select the **Sharpen tool from the toolbox.**

If you don't see the Sharpen tool, click and hold the Blur tool and select the Sharpen tool from the menu. The Sharpen tool has the same options bar as the Blur tool. We'll use whatever size and shape the Sharpen tool has by default.



Sharpen tool

7. Move the **Sharpen tool back and forth several times over one of the **peppers** at the top of the image.**

Notice how the peppers become rather grainy as shown in Figure 8-6. Although this tool is available, use caution when using it since it can quickly make your image look too grainy.

8. Select **File → **Revert** from the menu.**

Compare the images in Figure 8-7 and Figure 8-8. The difference is subtle, but then again that's the point. You want to be able to direct your viewer's attention to certain objects without letting them know that you're directing their attention.

Table 8-1: Options for the Blur and Sharpen Tools

Option	Effect
Brush	Controls the size and shape of the Blur or Sharpen tool.
Mode	Determines how the effect is applied. Choose from Normal, Darken, Lighten, Hue, Saturation, Color or Luminosity.
Strength	Controls how much of each effect is applied at one time. Ranges from 1 percent to 100 percent.

Quick Reference

To Use the Blur Tool:

- Select the **Blur** tool from the toolbox and select the desired options from the options bar.

To Use the Sharpen Tool:

- Select the **Sharpen** tool from the toolbox and select the desired options from the options bar.