

Raid Photographics - Guide to Levitation Photography



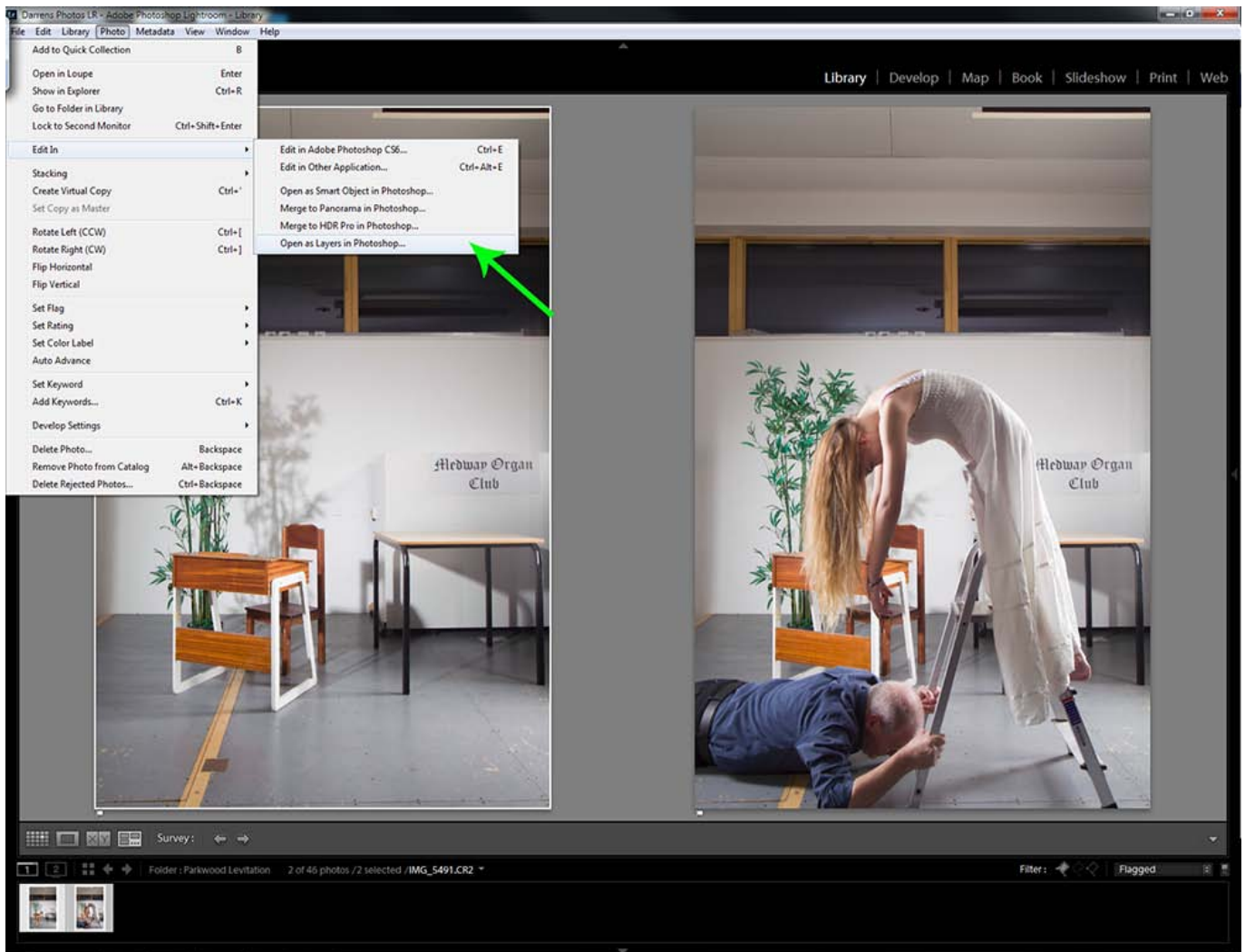
Equipment needed:

Camera, Lens, Tripod, Adobe Photoshop Elements and some patience and practice.

Practical Instructions:

- 1) Set your camera up on a tripod and get the composition of your scene.
- 2) Expose manually as you will need a consistent exposure between shots.
- 3) Set your camera to timer or use a remote control for triggering, you want to touch your camera as little as possible.
- 4) Once focussed on the position where your model will be, set your lens to Manual Focus so that it does not search for focus after, if this happens you will have a shift in focus resulting in your Depth of Field being in the wrong place.
- 5) Take your first shot of the scene with nothing in the image apart from the scene itself.
- 6) Bring your model in on a ladder or a stool of some kind, use an assistant to help sturdy the support system and get your model into position.
- 7) Take your second image DO NOT RECOMPOSE! If you recompose at any point you will need to take another shot of the scene with nothing in it.
- 8) When you are happy with the poses you have stop shooting and load your pictures into Lightroom or onto your computer for editing.

Merging to layers in Photoshop



Highlight both your images in Lightroom, your background image and your ghost image then go to:

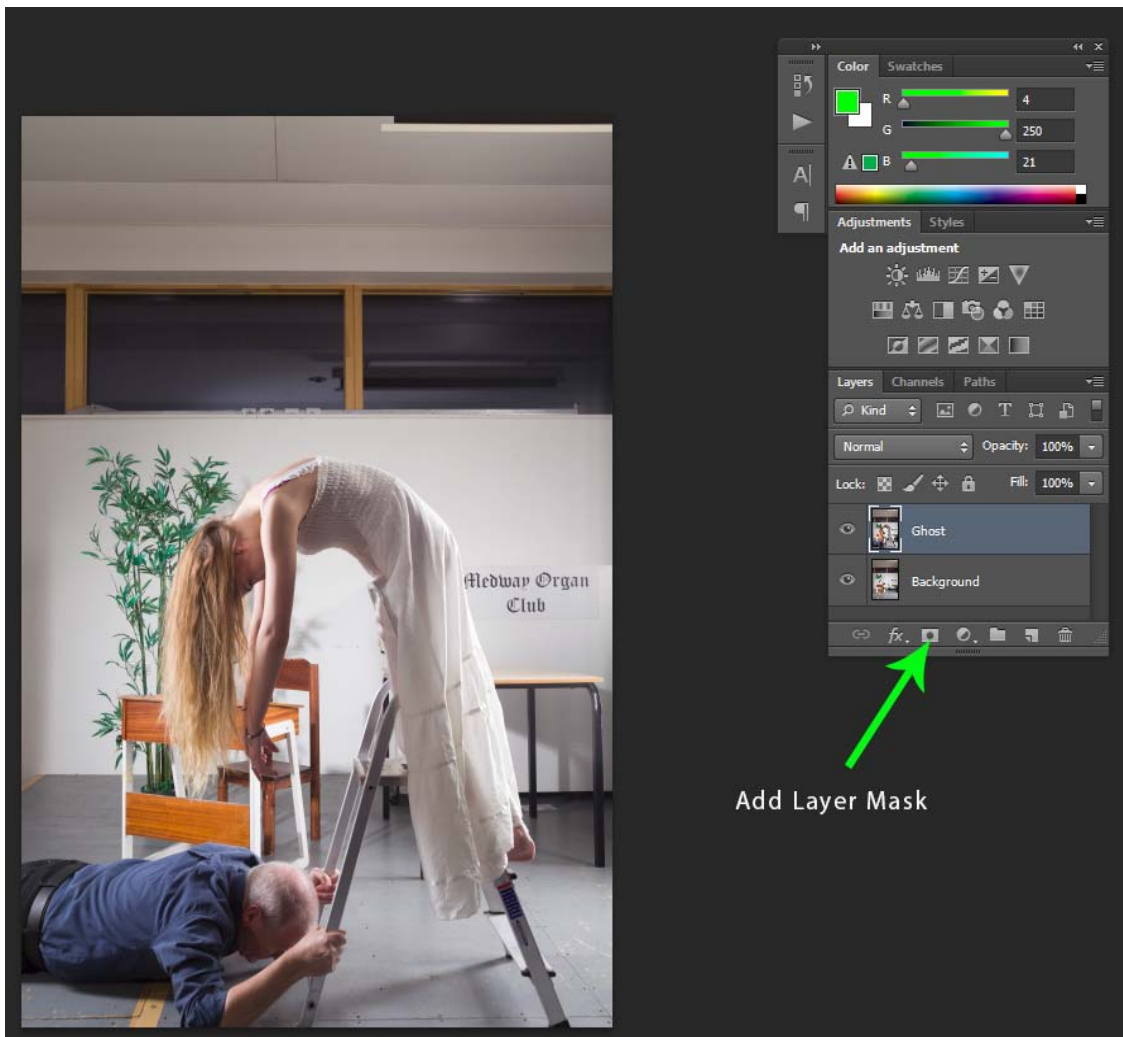
Photo> Edit In> Open as Layers in Photoshop

This will automatically launch your version of Photoshop and align the layers for you.

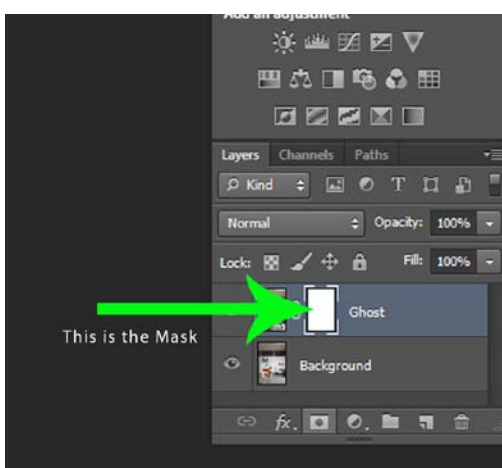
Alternatively you can load both images into Photoshop and use the Move tool (V) to drag and drop one image onto the other, simply click and drag from the centre of your first image, over to the tab of the second image, wait for the second tabbed image to appear then continue to drag your cursor over to the second image then release whilst holding the Shift key and it will lay them perfectly on top of each other.

If your ghost layer is not on top of your background layer in your Layers panel then drag the ghost layer on top of the background layer.

Adding a Layer Mask



Click the Add Layer Mask icon and a mask will appear to the right of the layer:



To remove part of the layer you will use your brush tool (B) and paint in black.

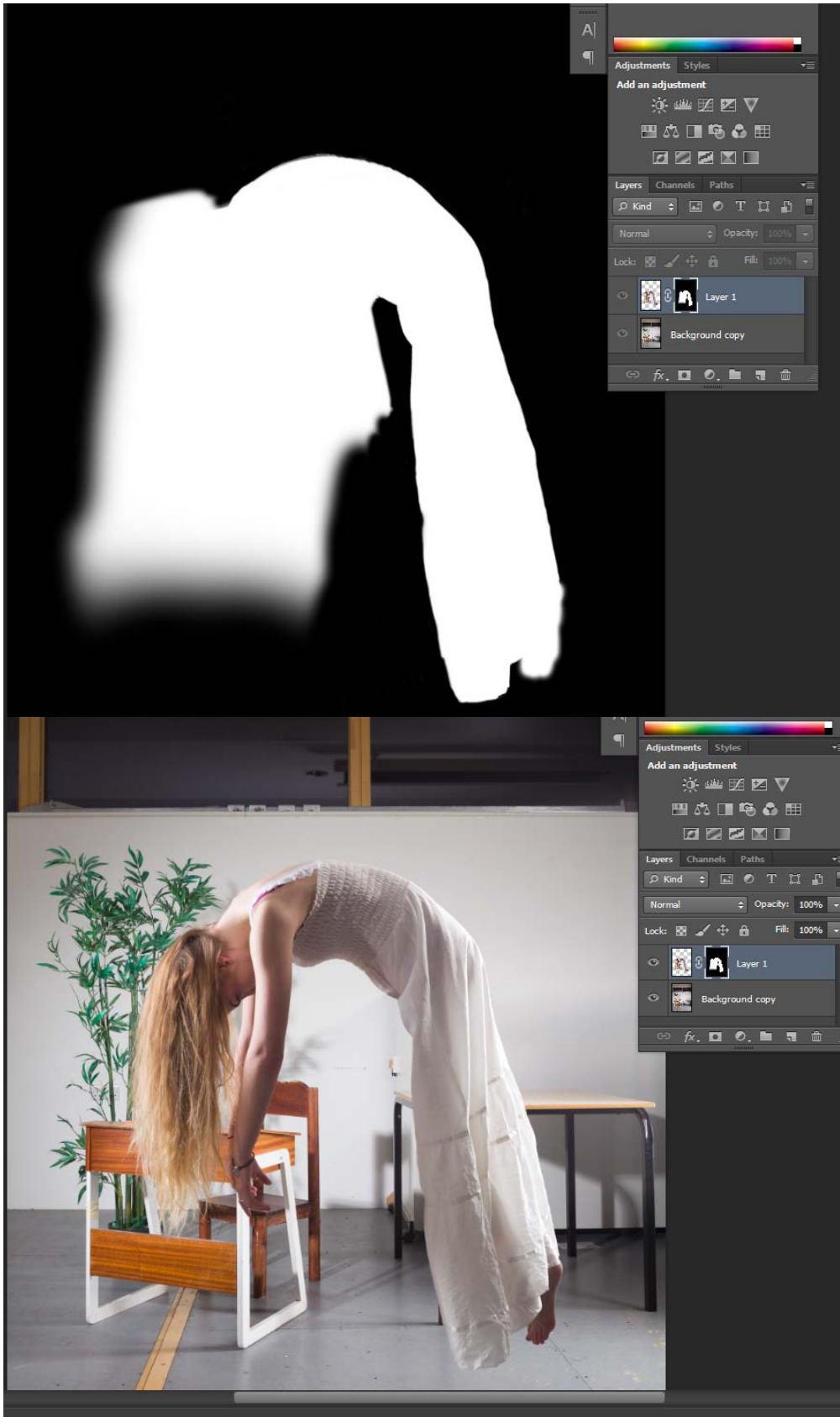
If you remove too much press 'X' to switch your foreground colour to white, then paint in white to reshoot the area you went over by accident.

Use the square bracket keys '[' and ']' to make your brush size smaller or bigger quickly.

Take your time to do this as this is the most critical part, zoom in using Ctrl (Cmd) +/- and use a smaller brush to get detailed areas. Eventually you should have just the ghost remaining, do not worry too much about doing the whole scene, just the areas where your support system is (the ladder and my assistant).

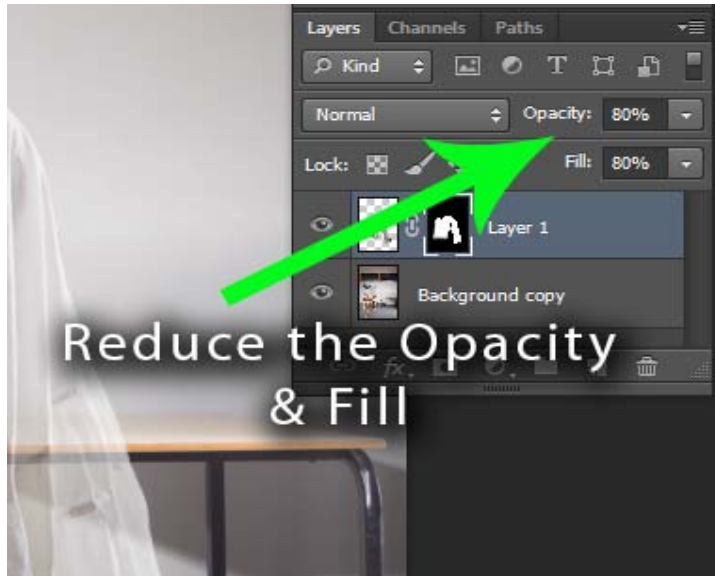
Raid Photographics - Guide to Levitation Photography

If you hold Alt and click on the Mask it will show you the mask over the image so that you can see any areas that you have missed. Paint these in, then click on the thumbnail of your image to remove the preview of the mask, then click on the thumbnail of the mask so that you are painting back on that instead of your image. It should look something like this:

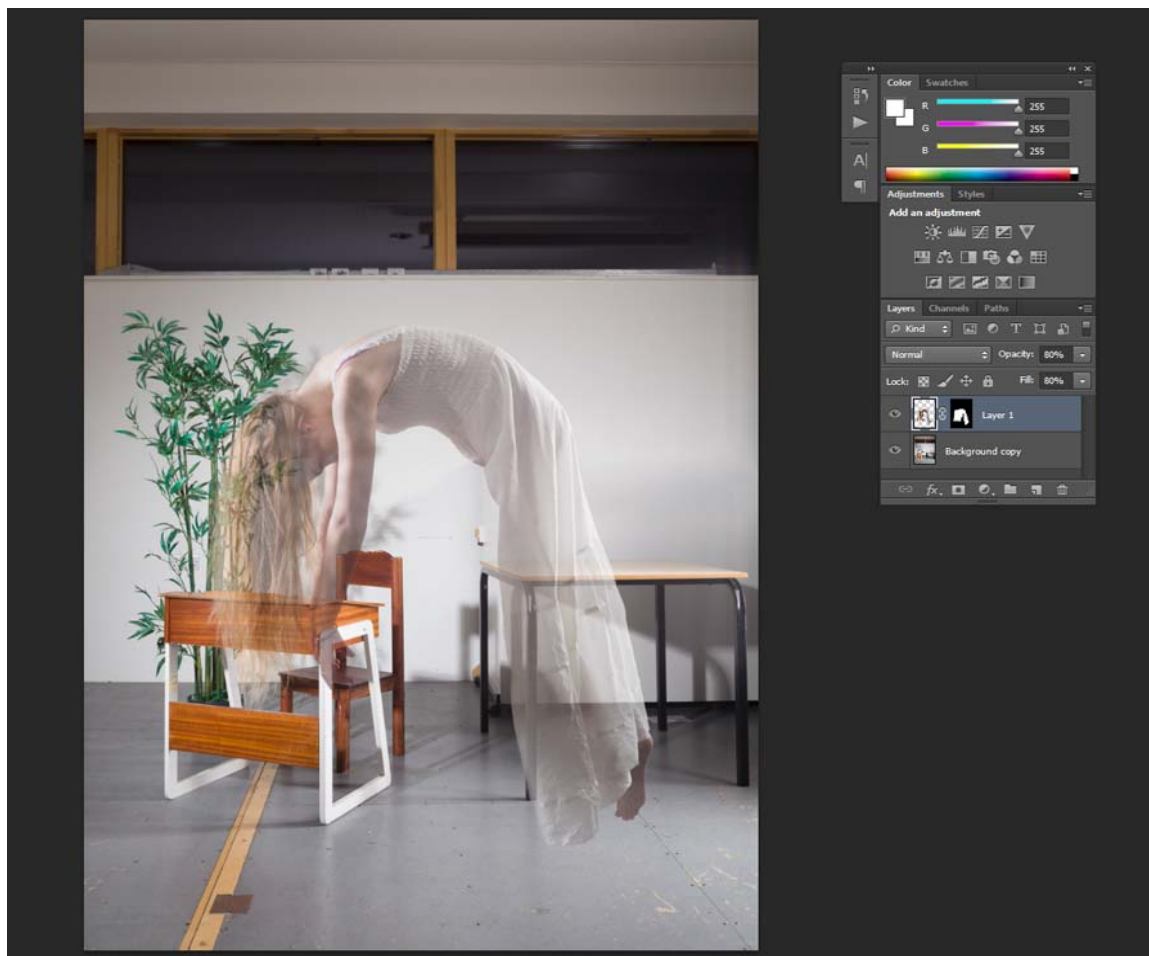


Making our Ghost Opaque

Now that your model is levitating we need to turn her into a ghost, to do this all we are going to do is reduce the opacity and fill of the top layer so that we can start seeing the background through it.



The amount you reduce it by will be different depending on the image you are doing. For this image I chose an Opacity and Fill of 80% as this looked correct for the image.



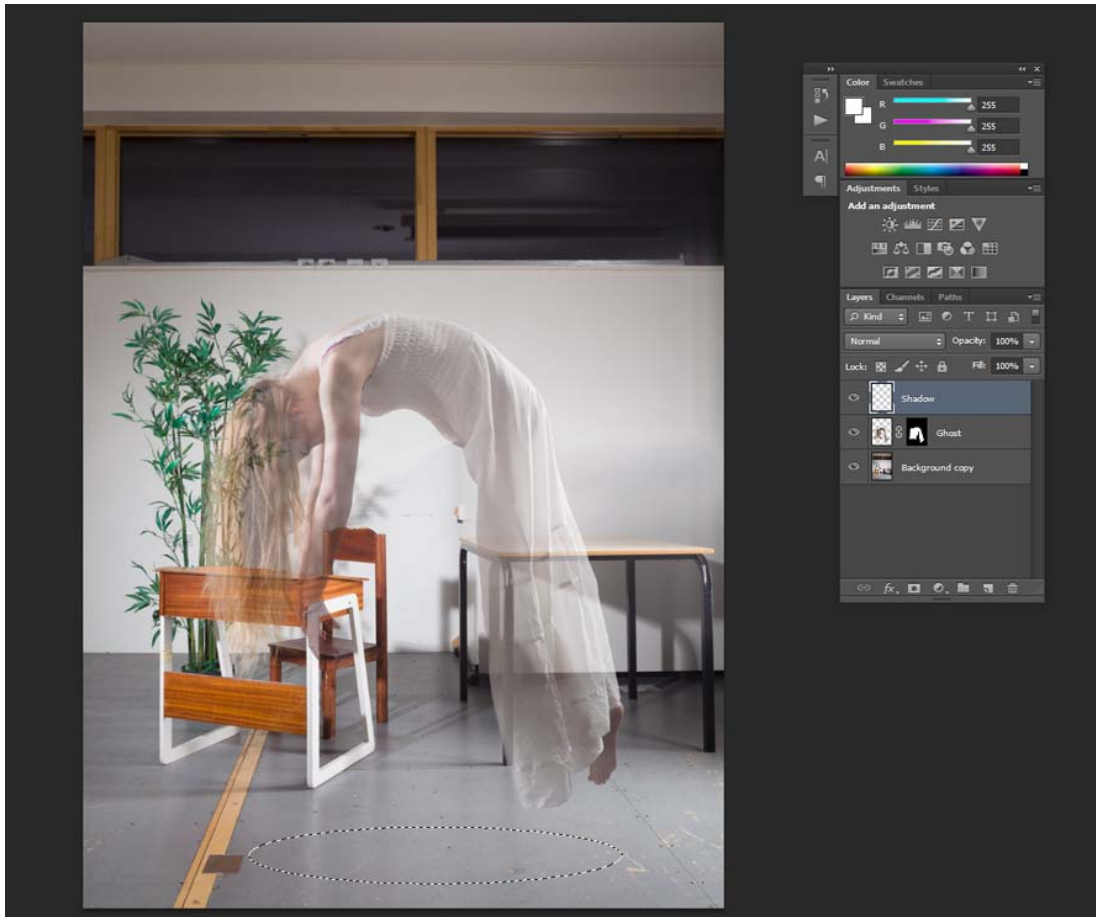
So there we have it, a ghost... but what is missing? Do ghosts have shadows?

Adding the Shadow

Create a new layer by pressing the add new layer icon or going to

Layer> New> Layer... or **Shift+Ctrl+N**

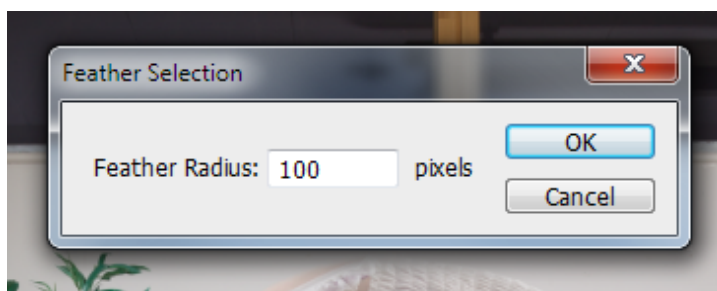
Grab the circular lasso tool (L) and drag an oval under the ghost:



Next we want to feather the selection so that we have a soft edge to our shadow, lets feather it by 100px

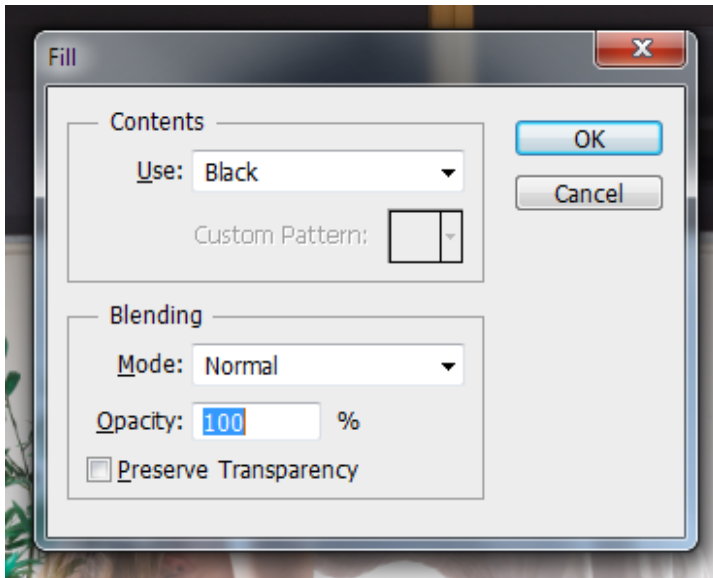
Select> Modify> Feather

Feather Radius: 100 pixels



Raid Photographics - Guide to Levitation Photography

The next step is to fill it in with black, you can either paint this in with a paintbrush or press Shift+Delete and choose Use: Black. Then press ok.



Then once again just adjust the Opacity and Fill of the Shadow layer until it looks a bit more natural.

And there you have it, your final image of your ghost floating. Of course you can take this further by adding textures and vignettes as I showed you on the evening, but this is as far as you need to go to create an effective looking ghost image. Good luck and post your results in my Flickr Group. <http://www.flickr.com/groups/1876532@N25/>

