

Levels & Curves

These are both tools used to adjust the brightness & contrast of your image.

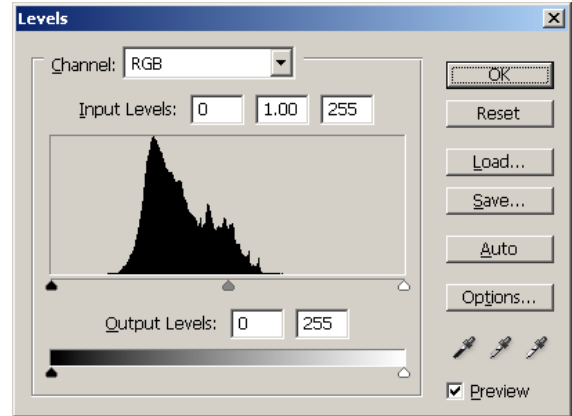
Brightness/Contrast – Quick & Easy to Use BUT Lack of Feedback & Inflexible.

Levels – Quick & Easy to Use, Good Feedback & Flexible
Quick & Easy to Use AND Good Feedback - Input Levels equivalent to Brightness/Contrast.
Flexible – Other Options...

Curves – NOT Quick & Easy to Use, Poor Feedback BUT Flexible.

Rather than the 3 brightness controls in 'Levels' – this can have as many as you need/want...

Has the Input/Output options, but NO 'histogram' (Poor Feedback).



Levels – Flexible – NOT just capable of altering the Brightness of an image, but ALSO the Colour Balance of an Image:

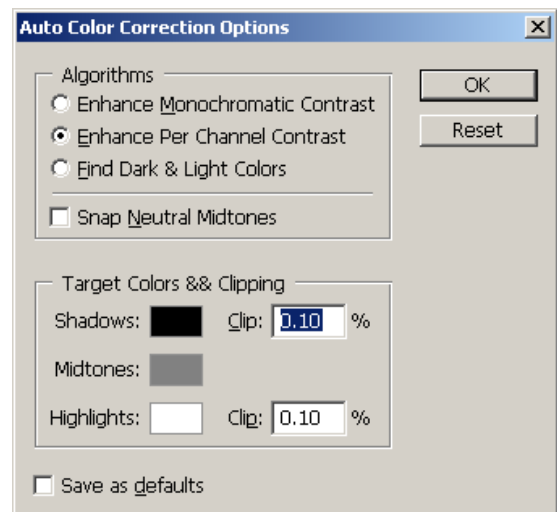
1 – Automated (several options) – press the 'Options' button

The 3 'Algorithms' are equivalent to Auto Contrast, Auto Levels & Auto Colour (sequence is the order they were included in Photoshop).

An additional option (for ALL) is the 'Snap Neutral Midtones' – If it works well for your image USE IT

For those wanting a very COMPLEX option there is Target Clours & Clipping – VERY involved & complex, with SMALL benefit (my opinion ONLY).

2 – Semi-Auto Option – Choose the 'Grey Eyedropper' & click on something in your image that SHOULD be grey (neutral) – if you don't like the result, click somewhere else.....



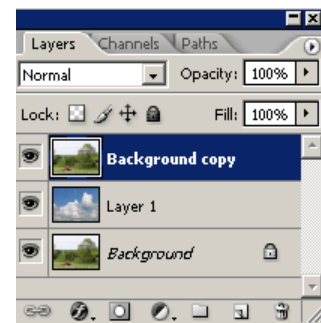
3 – Manual – In the 'Levels' dialogue box you will see the 'Channel' dropdown menu – here the individual colour channels can be adjusted.

Layer Masks

Open BOTH your images in Photoshop.
Make your image to be 'inserted' ACTIVE
Drag this 'layer' onto your other image
this will become the TOP layer (the one you will see).
Your image will be in the lower 'Background layer'.
Now duplicate your 'Background layer'
(this will show as 'Background copy') &
drag this to become the TOP layer.

Now select the area you DO NOT want to be hidden
always select the simplest subject & use INVERT if required...

When you are happy with your selection just ADD a layer mask (by default it uses the selection) & if you want to modify it – select the 'layer mask thumbnail' & by using the brush tool either paint with BLACK or WHITE.



<http://www.picsize.com/>