

Montage Tutorial

Digital Image Pro

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The technical component of this tutorial has been written for Microsoft Digital Image Pro (DIP) Suite 10 users, however, the concept behind the steps has been outlined to support reference by other software users.

1. Canvas

Create a new canvas. I like to use 8" x 8", but it depends on the photos you want to use. For a full look, I like to have a *background* layer - one that is detailed yet subdued. Sometimes I use a scanned image of a piece of paper that I crumpled and unrolled, but today I am using a close-up of a cluster of roses.. This layer acts as the backdrop and fills in any areas where pictures may not meet.

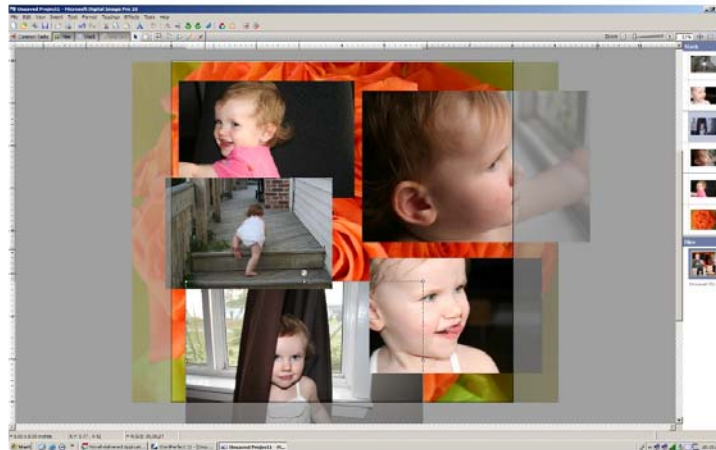
Insert > Picture > From My Computer - select picture for background. Crop or scale the picture as necessary to ensure it covers the entire canvas.

2. Import

Import the photos you want to use in the montage in to your canvas. I have selected five that I like from one photo shoot, but you can use any number and type of photos you want. Resize the photos to fit loosely within your canvas. You will be altering all the images and will be resizing (up and down) from there depending on what image you want to focus on.

Insert > Picture > From My Computer - select pictures
Format > Scale to Fit - resize photos to fit within canvas

figure 1.



3. Filter

I think a similar color scheme adds to the continuity of the montage, but it's your choice. I am filtering all images (including the background image) to sepia.

Select all photos
Effects > Filters > Sepia

figure 2.



4. Crop

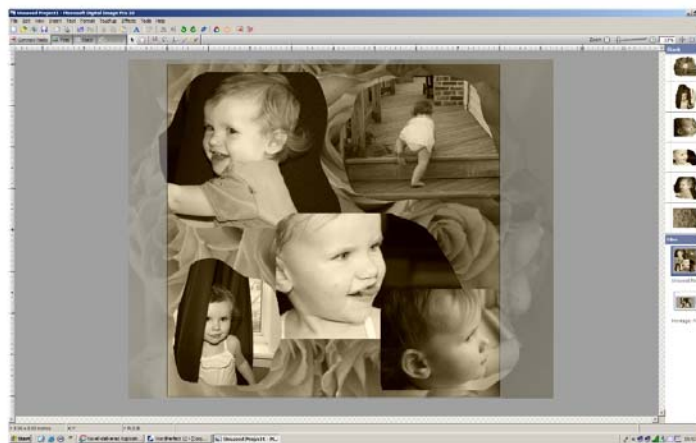
The photos now need to be cropped so that only the main part of the image is shown. I always use the freehand marquee tool to select an area to crop. You want the cropped image to be rounded, but not rigid (refer to Figure 3 to see the results of my cropping).

Select a photo

Freehand Tool > draw cropped area > Invert > Delete (this will leave you with the selected area, with edges deleted)

Crop all your pictures. If you find later that you wanted to leave more in the picture (or take more out), you can reinsert the picture and redo this step.

figure 3.



5. **Arrange**

This step is up to you and depends on what you want to accomplish with the montage. Is it to highlight one particular photo with support from the other photos, or is it to showcase a series of photos, where they each have similar weight in the story to be told? Depending on your answers, you can arrange the photos to suit your needs.

Although you are taking preliminary arrangement steps now, you will be arranging the photos for the rest of this exercise.

6. **Edges**

The photos in a montage are seamless in that one flows into another. To get this effect, soften (or feather) the edges of each picture so that you are unable to tell where one ends and another begins.

In DIP, I use the Soften Edges function, with a degree of 40:

Select all Photos (excluding the background photo)
Effects < Edges < Soft < 40 < Done

figure 4.



7. **Transparency**

Vary the transparency of each photo, based on how much you want it to impact the final piece. I like the look of one or two barely-there pictures - one that you don't notice until you've studied the picture for a while. I have adjusted the transparency of each of my pictures from 40% to 80%, with the exception of the main picture which has only 10% transparency.

Effects < Transparency < Even < 40 < Done

figure 5.



8. Transparency Brush

You can use the transparency brush to soften any edges that need further refining. I tend not to use the brush much - just for touch-ups. I didn't use it at all in this montage.

Effects < Transparency < Transparency Brush

9. Text

I usually add text at the end of the piece, placing it where it looks the best. I like to shadow the text and use colors that already exist in the piece. Fonts for this montage are Carpenter ICG at 108 points and Gill Sans, 15 point, expanded at 15 points.

figure 6.



9. The final product

