

2010-07-27-cccc-Fourth Tue People-in-Motion

Fourth Tuesday Digital "People in Motion"

Because our images are static, to feel that the people (or other subject) in the image are "in motion" they, or their background should be blurred a bit (or a LOT).

We'll come at this from two directions; setting up the shot to Take the image with a feel of motion; and second, using a 'normal' image, add the 'Motion Blur' in Photoshop.

For the camera setups, we'll discuss keeping the background sharp and the subject blurred and keeping the subject sharp and the background blurred.

Camera Setups;

Background sharp, subject blurred:

This could include a sharply focused street scene where all of the people are blurred or look like ghosts; a waterfall where the water is a blurred mist while the background is sharp and clear; or a night scene where the cars are just streaks of their head, tail and brake lights.

This type of setup requires a good tripod and a cable or remote release. For night shots you expose for the background and set the shutter speed low enough so that you get the results, blurred, ghost etc. For a daytime shot of a stream or waterfall, you might not be able to slow the shutter speed and adjust the aperture to get proper exposure so you may need a Neutral Density Filter to allow the shutter to be open long enough to blur the subject.

Sharp Subject, Blurred Background, done by panning the camera:

These shots work because we see the subject fairly sharp yet the background is blurred giving a feeling of motion. The feeling of motion is controlled by changing the exposure or lens to make the background more or less blurry. The main technique used is to 'pan' (move) your camera to follow the subject with a slow enough shutter speed to blur the background.

The following YouTube video talks about the technique of panning and gives several tips on ways to get great shots.

Adorama 'how to pan' on you tube...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXzNtp1shXU>

Following, are notes from the video:

- The technique works better with a long lens (around 200mm)
- Keep the subject full in the frame smaller subjects are hard to differentiate from the background.
- Work with subjects moving Left to Right or Right to Left, not toward or away from the camera.

Six things to set:

1. Shutter priority mode
 2. Use a slow shutter speed (start around 1/40th or 1/50th of a second) slower for a bike and faster for a fast car
 3. Continuous focus mode (AI Servo on a Canon) so the camera is always focusing
 4. Use the center autofocus point as it is the fastest response point and the circle helps center the subject
 5. Shoot when the subject is directly in front of you
 6. Set continuous drive mode (shutter keeps firing while you have your finger pressed on the shutter button, not single shot)
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-Background blur and the effect can be increased/reduced by how close you are to the subject and how close the background is behind the subject. (this is discussed in the video)

- Use a tripod or monopod with a ball or fluid head to help stabilize the camera

-a longer lens enhances the blur of the background

-people and horses may not work so well as they have a less desirable up/down motion that may not work well with left - right panning...

Motion Blur in Photoshop

Photoshop has a filter called 'Motion Blur' that you can apply to an image. Typically, you apply it to the entire image and then mask the subject so that the Motion Blur has an affect on the background alone.

Select your image and Duplicate the Background layer by dragging it to the 'copy' icon in the bottom of the Layers Palette and select the new layer.

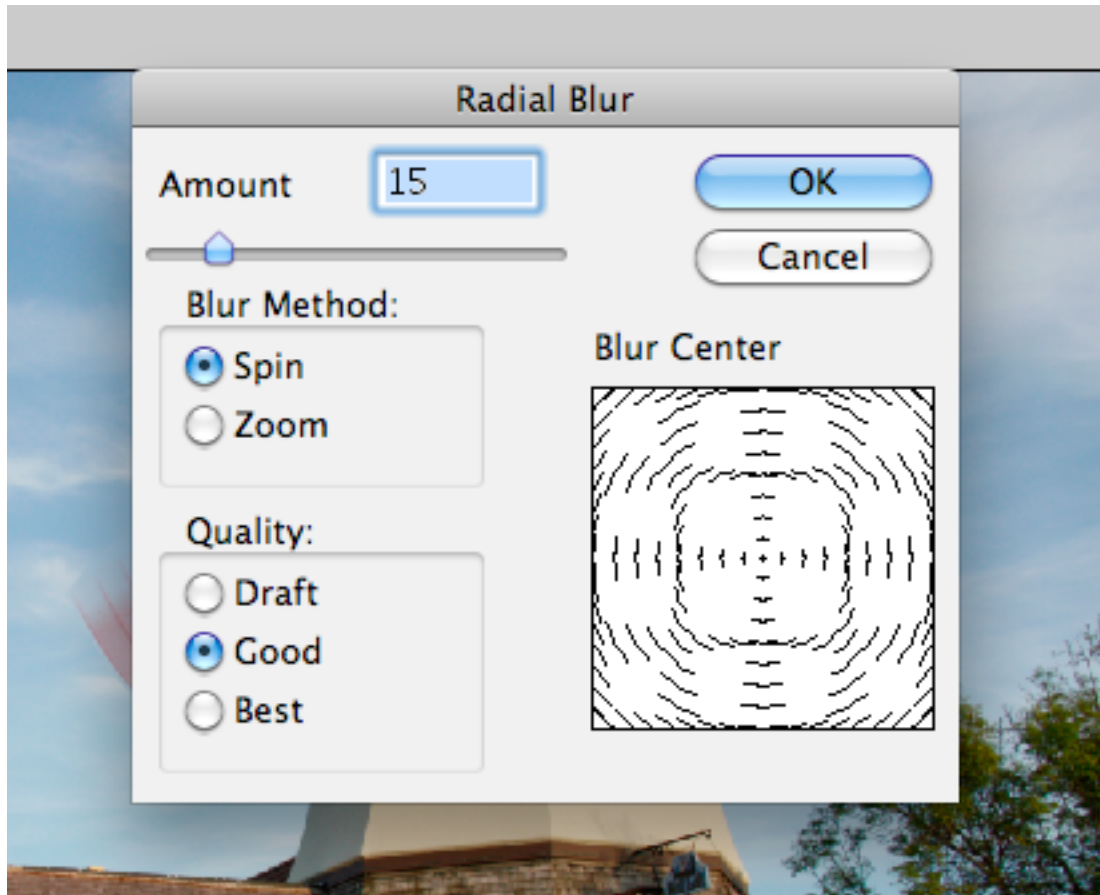
Filter > Blur > Motion Blur and watching the Preview, select the Angle and Distance in pixels to set the Direction and Amount of Motion Blur that you want. Note that the size of the image will make a difference in the settings, so one setting does not fit all.

Once your image has 'Motion' add a Layer Mask by clicking the Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers Palette, select the Brush tool and set Black as your Foreground color. Fill in the area of the Layer Mask that has the subject.

A second option is to make a selection of your subject and copy it to a new layer so that when you do a Motion Blur of the background, you do not need to do a Layer Mask to clear up the subject. Results are a bit different between the two options and you may want to try each one to see if you prefer one over the other.

Radial Blur

If your image has wheels/blades/rotor etc. you can make a copy of the background layer, selecting the wheel with the elliptical tool and then Filter > Blur > Radial Blur. You can now adjust the Amount, the Blur method (spin preferred for a wheel etc.) and Quality. You can also click and drag the Blur Center if you want an off center 'spin'. (see the figure below for details) You can NOT see a preview of this feature, only guess and re-try if you get it wrong.



Once you are happy with the Rotary Spin, you can add a Layer Mask and clean up spaces between the blades or struts on a wheel etc.