



ImageSkill Software

Background Remover v 3.2

User's Manual

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## Introduction

Background Remover is a Photoshop-compatible plug-in for Windows designed by ImageSkill Software that can work with both commercial software like Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Photoshop Elements, Corel (Jasc) Paint Shop Pro, Microsoft Digital Image Suite, and free software like XnView.

The main purpose of the Background Remover is to extract some part of an image i.e. "the object" and remove other part that is unwanted, i.e. "the background". It is capable of determining areas of pixels to be modified, areas of pixels to be partly modified and areas of pixels to remain unchanged. The partial modification means the restoration of the non-distinct edges of objects in partly transparent regions that is done by the subtracting the background color but leaving object's color there. It allows a user to blend or composite the cut-out object with a different background properly. The cutting objects may be used for collage, scrap-book and greeting card creation.

Using Background Remover you can get a result you really want that is unachievable with other masking programs like Adobe Magic Extractor, Corel Knock-Out, Microsoft Expression and so on. And it takes very little time and efforts on your part.

You do not need mark an object and background accurately. Simply mark a few parts of them by special tools and get a desirable result nearly instantly. This result can be adjusted by one slider only but there are additional tools for its fine tuning. If necessary you can also use erase/restore brush for the manual correction of the background removing. To control the quality the result you can preview the extracted object against colored matte background.

## Features at glance

- Extraction of different object types (solid, lace-like and semi-transparent objects)
- Very simple and intuitive user interface with only a few controls
- Original high-speed extraction algorithms
- Color unmixing for background replacing
- Tools for debris removing and holes filling within received mask
- Switching between original image and result one and preview the extracted object against a colored matte background for result checking.
- Multilingual interface (English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Japanese, Chinese Simplified, and Chinese Traditional)
- 16-bit image support

## System Requirements

Computer	Pentium 400MHz
Operation System	Win2000, Win2003, Win XP, Win NT3, Win NT4, Vista, Windows 7
Hard Drive	you must have free space about 10 Mb
RAM	64Mb
Miscellaneous	mouse or other pointing device
	You must have suitable graphic host software (see below)

## Registering ImageSkill Background Remover

You can order full version of this plug-in via **ShareIt** and **RegNow** services (either accept PayPal). If you buy Background Remover through these services you receive user name and unlock key. Please, enter their carefully without additional blanks. Use copy-paste method.

If you have any trouble with unlock key, write [sales@imageskill.com](mailto:sales@imageskill.com)

Registered users receive our email newsletter containing information about new product releases and updates, free downloads, articles, tips, and special offers and discounts.

Just now, we upgrade our products for registered customer free of charge.

## Getting Technical Support

If you have any trouble, questions, feature requests or notes please contact us at the following addresses:

E-Mail: [support@imageskill.com](mailto:support@imageskill.com)

Web site: <http://forum.imageskill.com>

You can get the help you really need!

## Examples

Source image



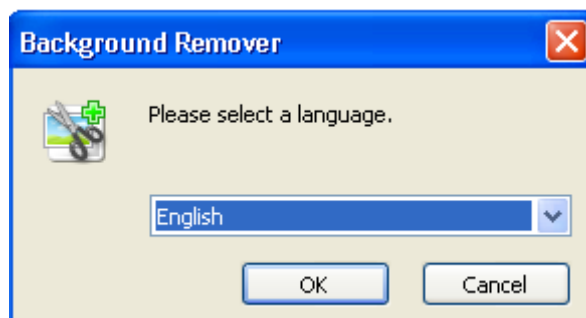
Extracted image



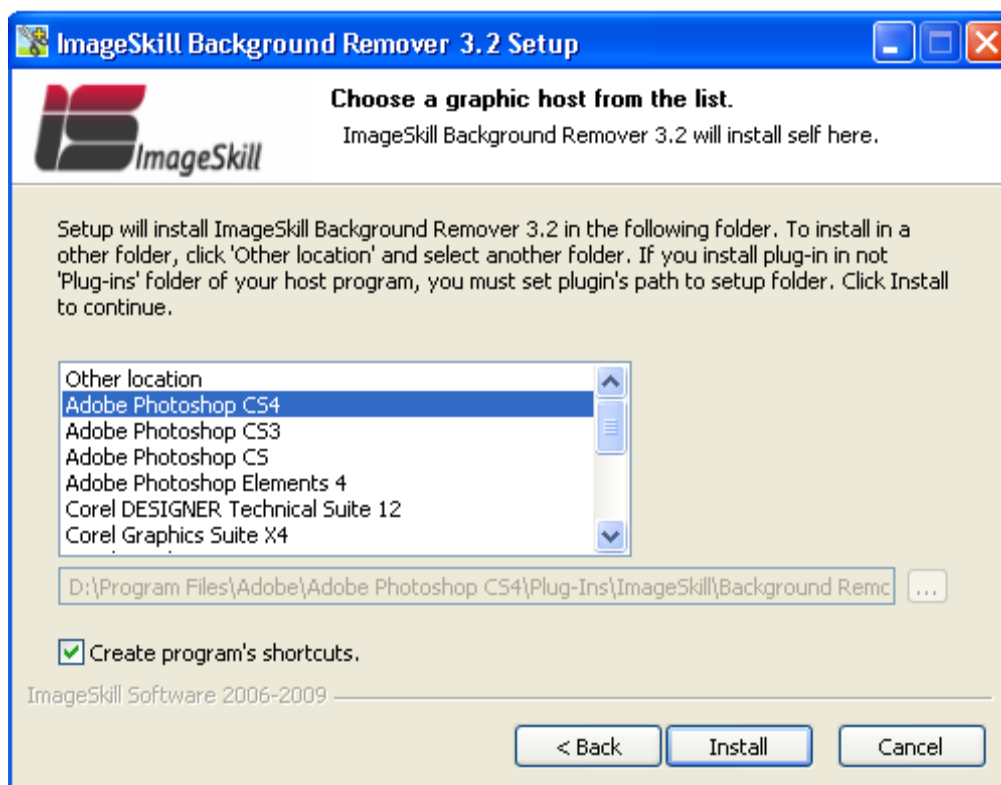
## Getting Started

### Installing and uninstalling

Run setup file. Installer's engine automatically selects an appropriate language during installation but still leaves a way for the user to choose language manually from the drop-list.



Then the program will ask you to close all other of the running applications. After accepting the terms of agreement the installer finds suitable graphic hosts. Choose one of them from a list. If you want to install plug-in in other folder, select item "Other path" and set folder for installation. In this case you must set "Plug-ins path" of your graphic host to setup folder.



Plug-in can work under the following graphics host properly

- Adobe Photoshop 7, CS, CS2, CS3, CS4
- Adobe Photoshop Elements 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
- Jasc Paint Shop Pro 7, 8, 9
- Corel Paint Shop Pro (Photo) X, X1,X2, X2 Ultimate
- Corel Photo Paint 11,12, X4

- Xara Xtreme, Xara Xtreme Pro
- Microsoft Digital Image Suite 2006

Plug-in may be compatible with other graphic hosts as well.

In order to uninstall plug-in run uninstaller (file uninstall.exe) or use **Add and Remove Programs** item in the **Control Panel** of **Start Menu**.

## User interface

Background Remover has 3 main sections (see description below):

- A: View parameters
- B: Toolbar
- C: Tool's parameters

Pressing the "OK" button causes the returning to graphic host with applying object extracting.

Pressing the "Cancel" button causes the returning to graphic host without source image changing.

The "Help" button runs short HTML help.



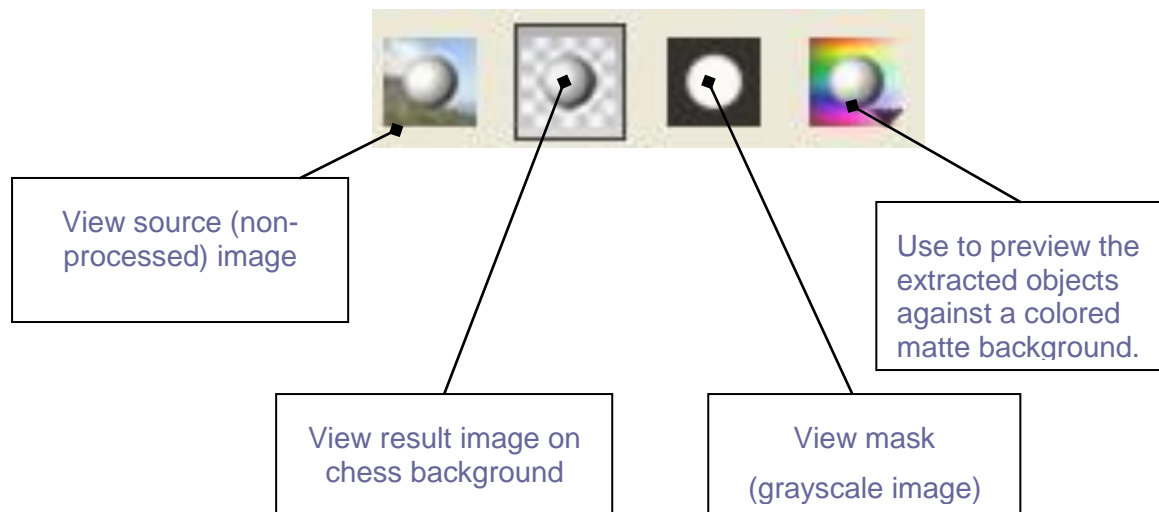
Progress bar and prompting line are placed at the bottom of the main window.



The number of undo/redo steps depends of physical computer's memory.



## A. View



You can switch between source, processed images and mask at any time.

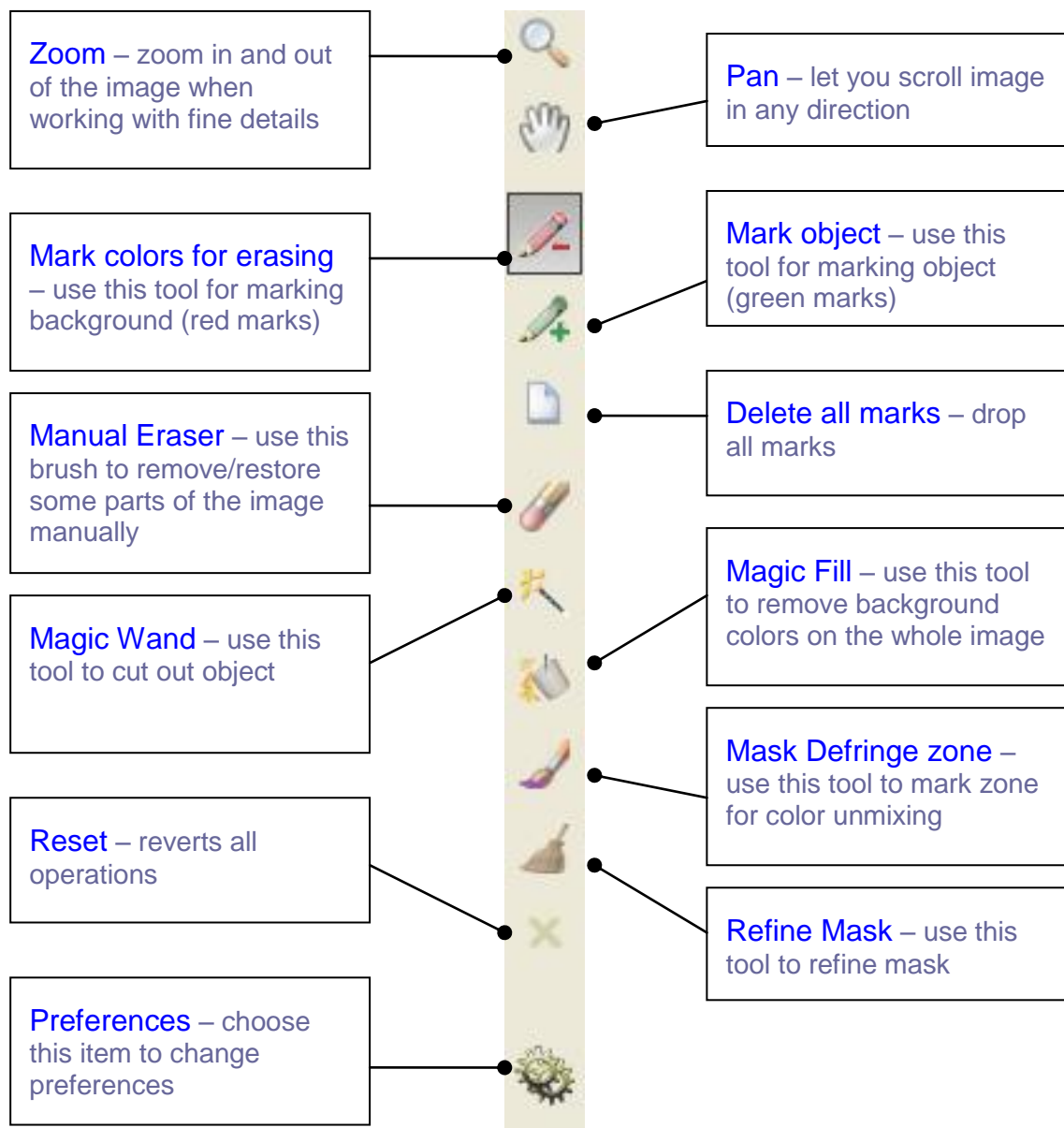
The last option allows you to place temporarily the extracted object against a chosen matt with uniform color. It makes easier to evaluate visually how this object will be looked like in a future composition on various backgrounds. Note, that this placement is only temporary one. After exit the Background Remover the main graphic editor places the result on chessboard again.





From left to right:

Source (original) image, Result of extraction, Result Mask, Result image on grey background.

## B. Toolbar



The active tool is marked by black border.

Tool Name	Description
 <b>Zoom</b>	Zoom in and out of the image when working with fine details. Click to zoom-in. Right-click to zoom out. Use mouse wheel to zoom. The title bar of the main window displays the zoom percentage.
 <b>Pan</b>	Let you scroll image in any direction. Click and drag to scroll image in a desired direction.





### Mark colors for erasing

Use this tool for the marking background (red marks). Click and drag to mark background. Use Right-click to erase marks (both object's and background's marks are erased). Use **Ctrl** button combination (press and hold Ctrl button) in order to switch to **Mark object** tool.



### Mark object

Use this tool for the marking object (green marks). Click and drag to mark object. Use Right-click to erase marks (both object's and background's marks are erased). Use **Ctrl** in order to switch to **Mark colors for erasing** tool.



### Delete all marks

Drop all marks and fix current result. After pressing this button you return to a previous active tool.



### Manual Eraser



Click and drag for erase. Right-click and drag for unerase. You can adjust brush size, opacity, hardness and step.



### Magic Wand



This is the main image extraction tool. Use the **Magic Wand** in order to extract connected object like people, things etc. Click and drag to erase background. Use Right-click to restore object. You will process only connected local area, not whole image.

You can adjust the aggressiveness of the background elements removing by **Strength** parameter. The greater its value is set the more stronger background is removed.

If you process image where object are placed on textured background, check flag **Textured Background**.

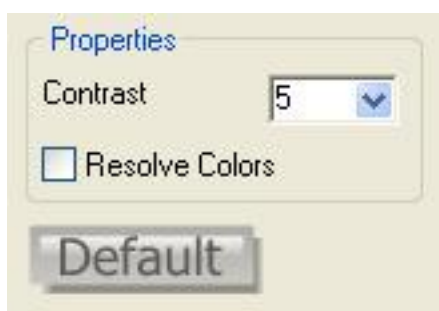
You can refine the resulting mask by contraction (if the result image has colored border around cut object). Set **Strength** parameter to a specific number of pixels that you want to contract the mask.

You can smooth transition between the object and the background by increasing **Feathering** parameter.

In order to fill holes in the resulting mask check the **Fill Holes** flag. Then all areas marked as background will be saved in the result image; while other ones marked as object and debris will be go away.



### Magic Fill



This is super significant image extraction tool. Use the **Magic Fill** in order to extract disconnected objects like brunches of tree, jewelry etc. Click and drag to erase background. Use Right-click to restore object. You will affect on whole image. Pixels with colors that look like colors marked as background will be processed. To some of them the transparency value will be assigned. If object and background share some colors, check **Resolve Colors** flag.

You can refine result mask by adjusting the **Contrast** parameter.



## Refine Mask



Use this tool for the result mask refinement.

Use **Contract** slider to contract mask in order to avoid undesirable border around cut objects.

You can smooth transition between object and background by increasing **Feathering** parameter.

Use **Boundary Smoothing** slider to smooth mask's border.

Use **Contrast** slider to binarize mask.

Adjust **Fill Holes** and **Remove Speckle** in order to fill holes and remove debris in the result mask respectively.



## Reset

Revert all operations and reset image to the original one.



## Preferences

Using this item you can change preferences like chessboard size and color, selection annotation, and language.

## Working with Background Remover

All example commands and images shown below are valid for Adobe Photoshop CS3.

### Source data


Plug-in can process RGB layer data with 8 or 16 bits/channel only. If your image has no layer you must create one at first. If you try to run ImageSkill Background Remover under flat (background) image data you receive the following message

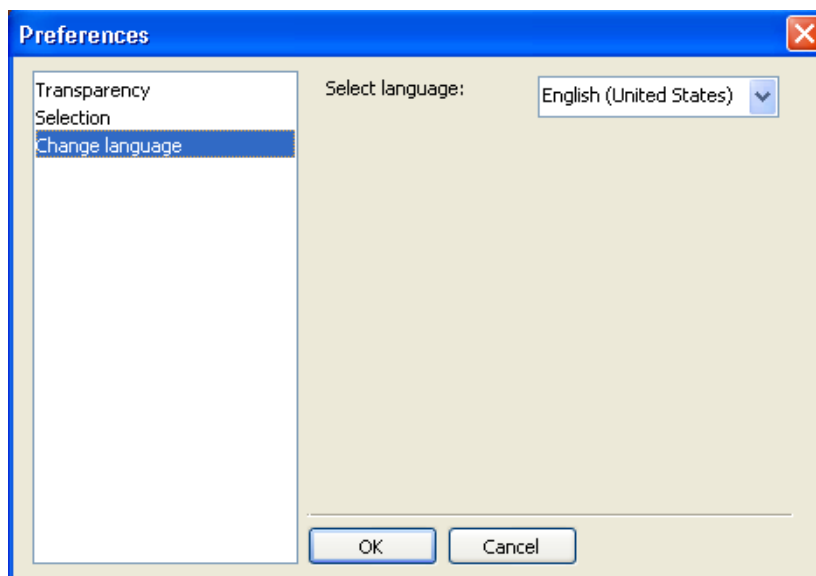


If you work with palette image (like GIF, palette BMP etc) you must transform it to 24 bit color image at first.

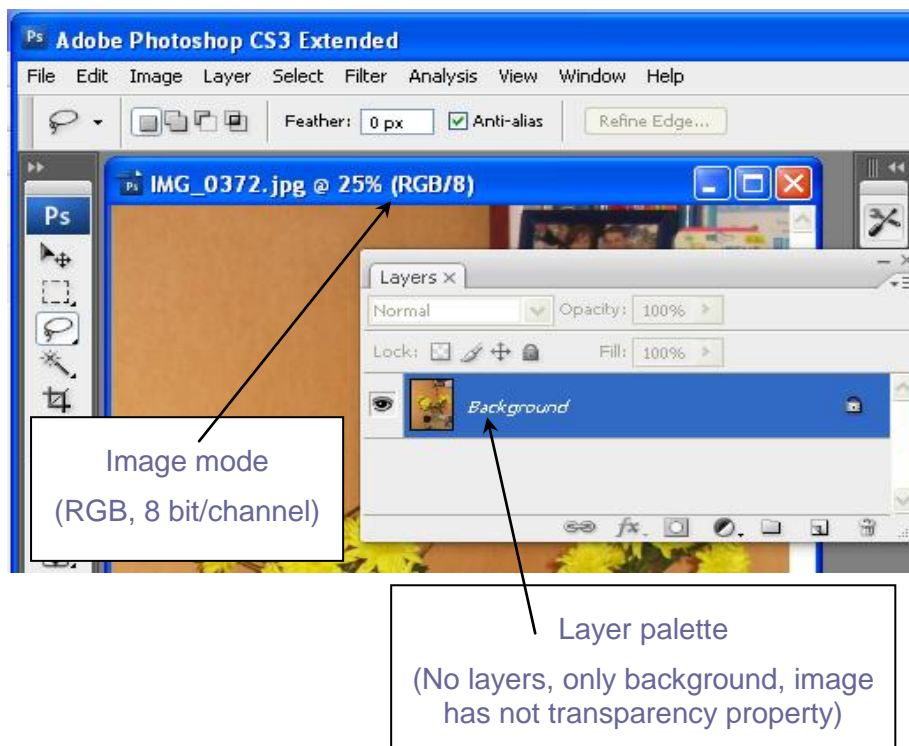
### Change language

The Background Remover 3.2 has ten-lingual interface (English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Japanese, Chinese Simplified, and Chinese Traditional). To change the

language in the process of working with the plug-in you need to click on [Preferences](#) item  and select "Change language". Then choose an appropriate language from the drop-list and click OK button. Close the application and restart it again to apply the new language.



## Starting Background Remover



Run your graphic host.

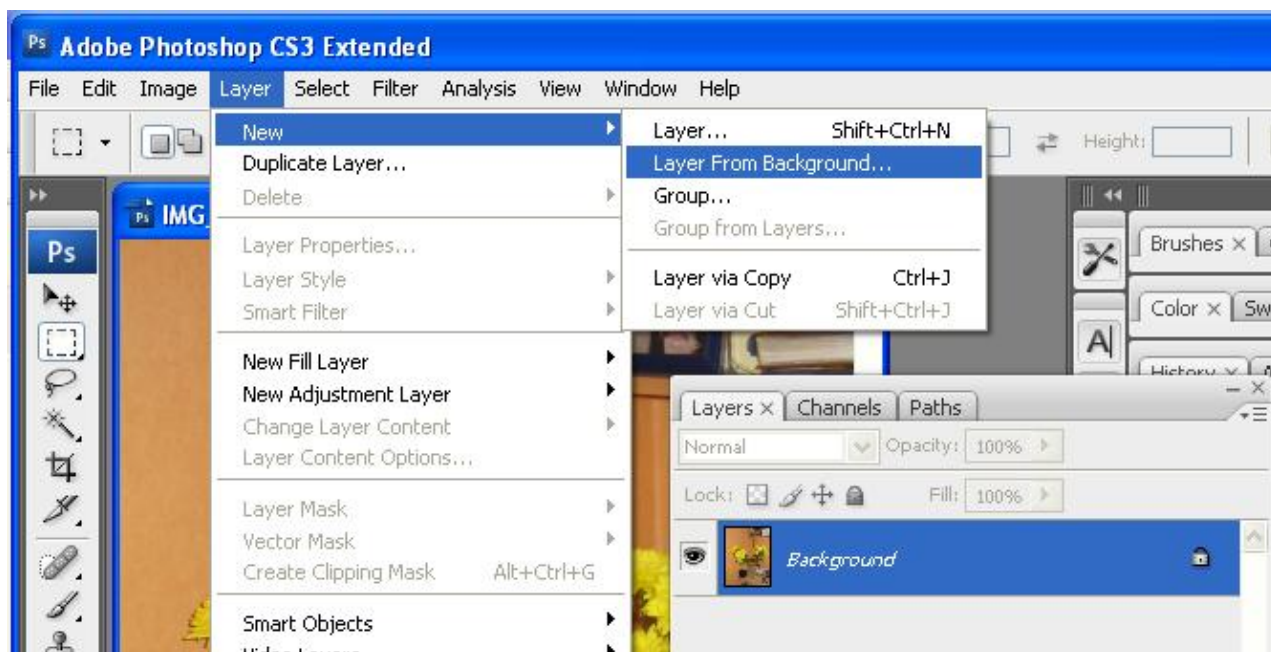
Open an image (for example camera shot in JPG graphic format).

This is background image in RGB graphic format 8-bit/channel. This image has no layer data yet. It means that image does not have transparency property (so-called "Alpha channel")

You can check it by "Layers" window. (Use menu item "Window->Layers" or press short-key F7).

In order to use Background Remover you must add "Alpha channel" in image data, i.e. to create layer from a flat image.

You can do it by using "**Layer->New->Layer from Background**" command.

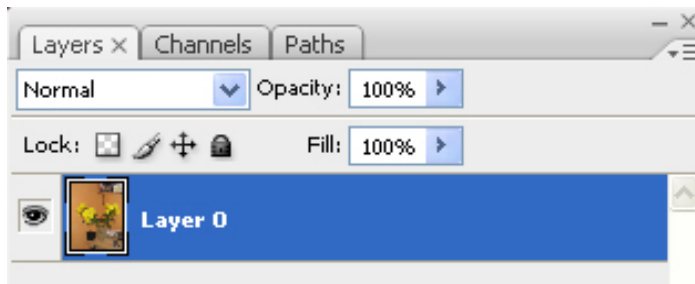


**ATTENTION: DO NOT USE "Layer->Duplicate Layer" or "Layer->New->Layer via copy" commands.** Otherwise you receive 2 identical images. The lower one having name "**Background**" is your source image, while the second one having name "**Layer 0**" is the duplicated layer (your image + alpha channel). Just after **Background Remover** processing

(when you press OK button in **Background Remover** main dialog window), you will not see the result but the source image ("**Background**") only that is viewed through processed layer ("**Layer 0**").

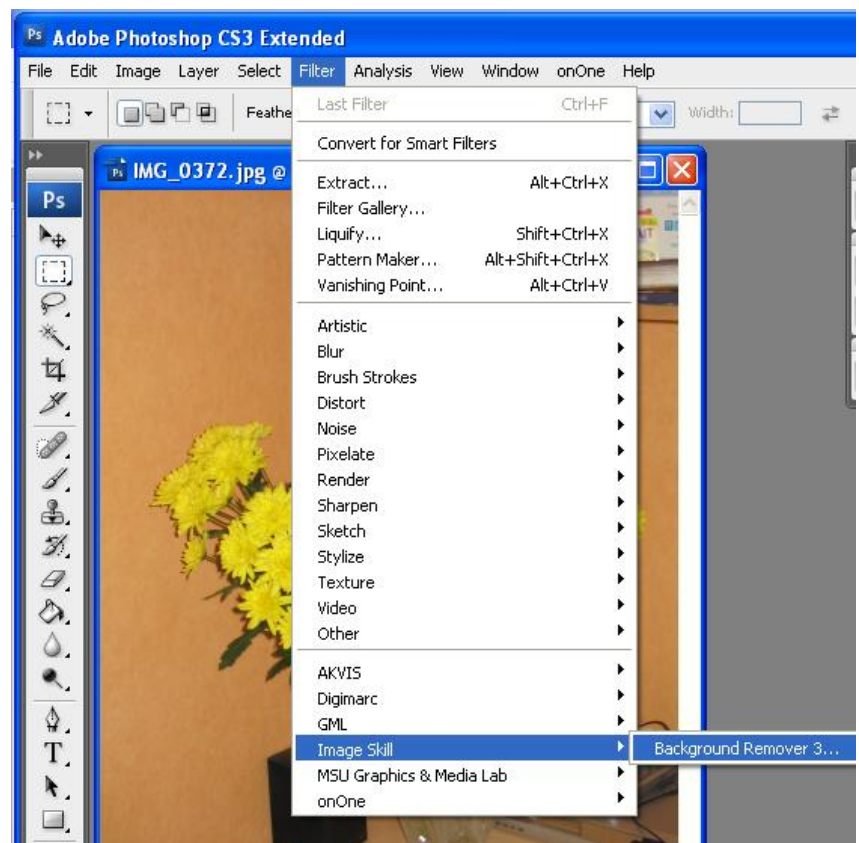
To avoid the feeling that **Background Remover** does nothing **please use "Layer->New->Layer from Background" command always.**

Please control your data in "**Layer**" palette (hot key- F7). After applying the command "**Layer->New->Layer from Background**" it should show the following










In "**Layer**" palette you have only 1 layer with name "**Layer 0**".

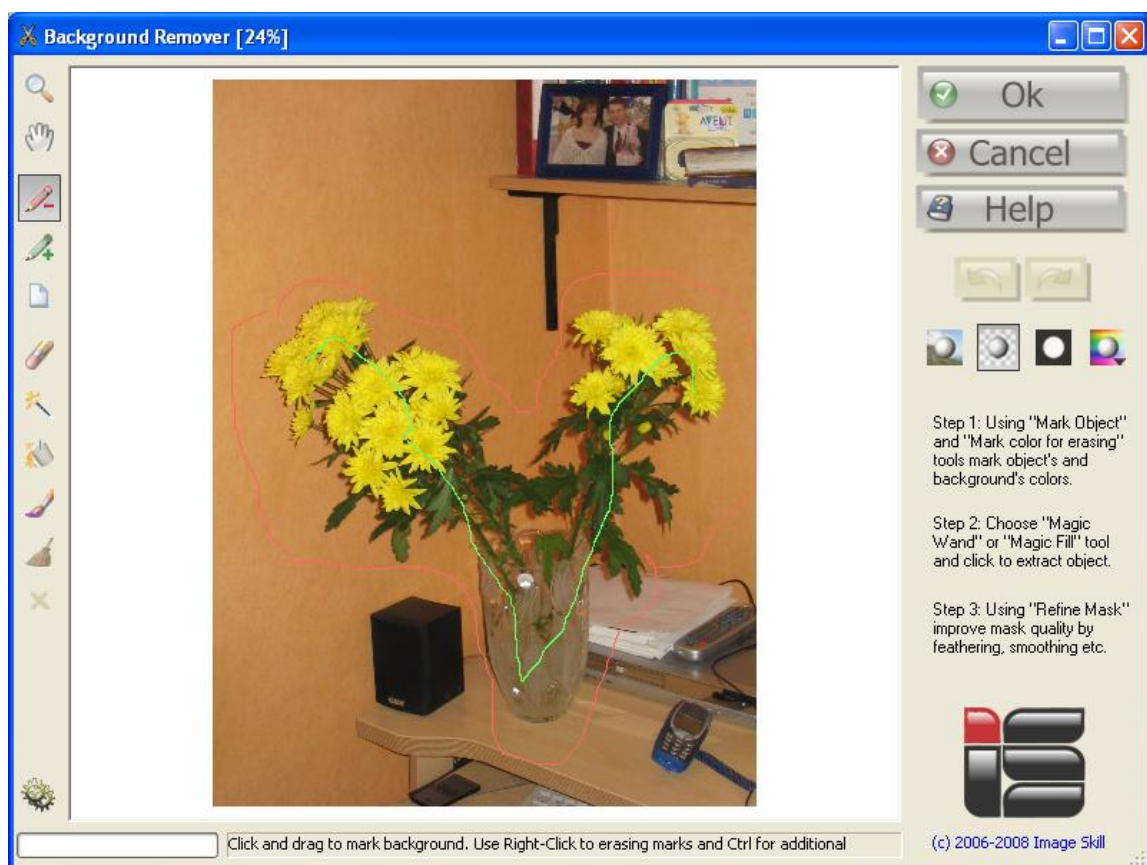
So, just now we have suitable data (RGB image with 8bit/channel with additional Alpha channel) and we can run Background Remover using "**Filter->ImageSkill->Background Remover 3**" command.





## Extracting objects

1. In order to extract object you must mark some "Object" and "Background's" colors with green and red stripes respectively. This procedure is performed with the tools **"Mark object"**  and **"Mark color for erasing"** .
2. After the marking process is completed you only need to click on **"Magic Wand"**  or **"Magic Fill"**  tool to fulfill the operation of the object keeping and background removing. You can adjust the strength of the extraction by setting the relevant parameter of the chosen tool.
3. The color unmixing is done by **"Mark defringe zone"**  tool.
4. You can clean received mask by debris removing and holes filling using **"Mask Refine"**  tool.
5. After that you can use **"Manual Eraser"**  tool to correct final mask if necessary.
6. You can check the result of the extraction, using preview the extracted object against colored matte background, and see the result mask as well.

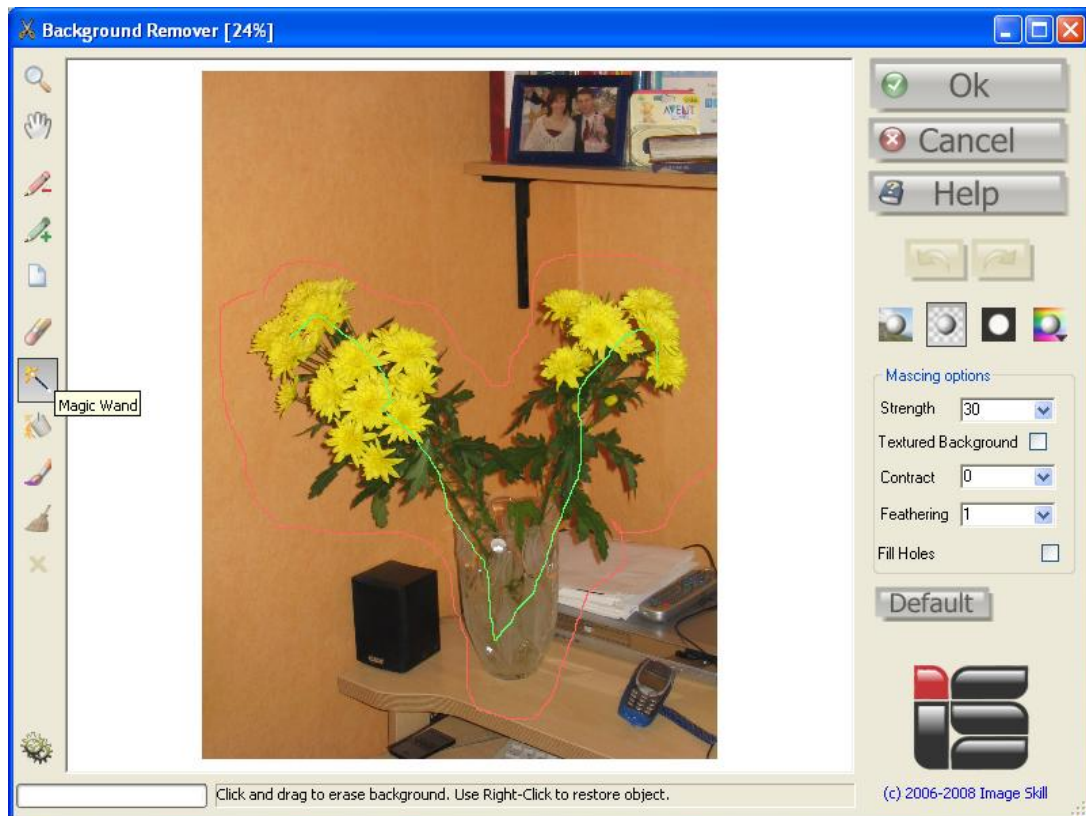


Mark background and object colors using **"Mark object"** and **"Mark colors for erasing"** tools.



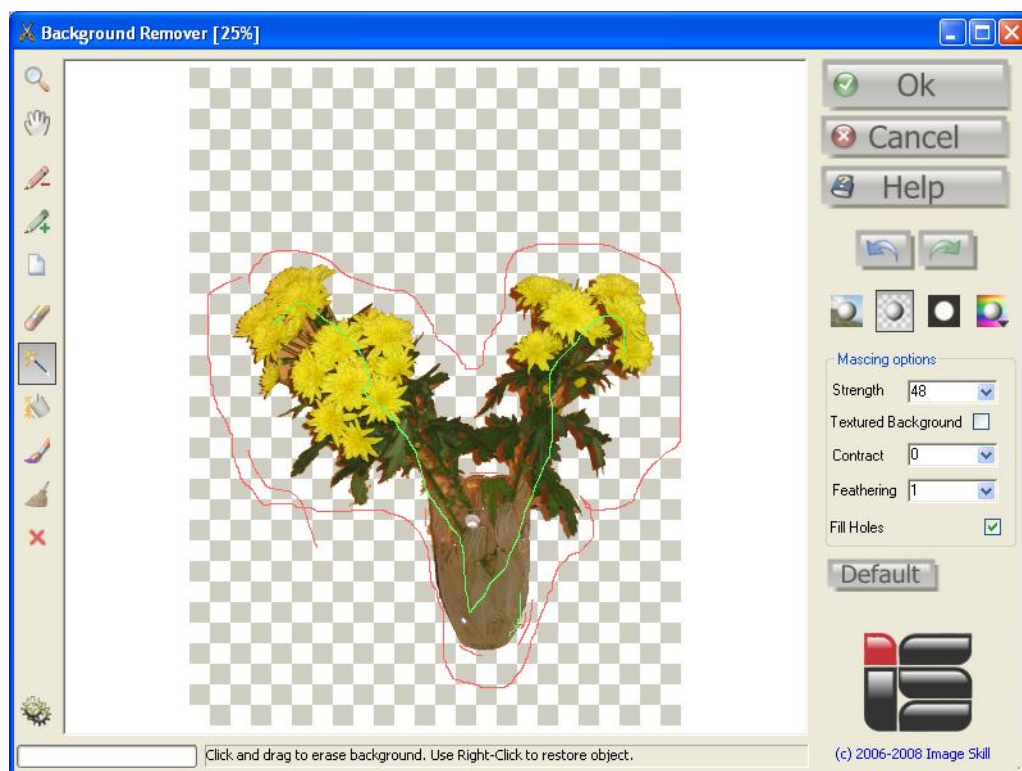
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If you make wrong marks you can erase them by right-click and drag. You can switch between these tools by pressing “**Ctrl**” button. Then choose “**Magic Wand**” tool for flowers extracting.



Click and drag mouse - you will mark background (red points) and erase it at the same time.

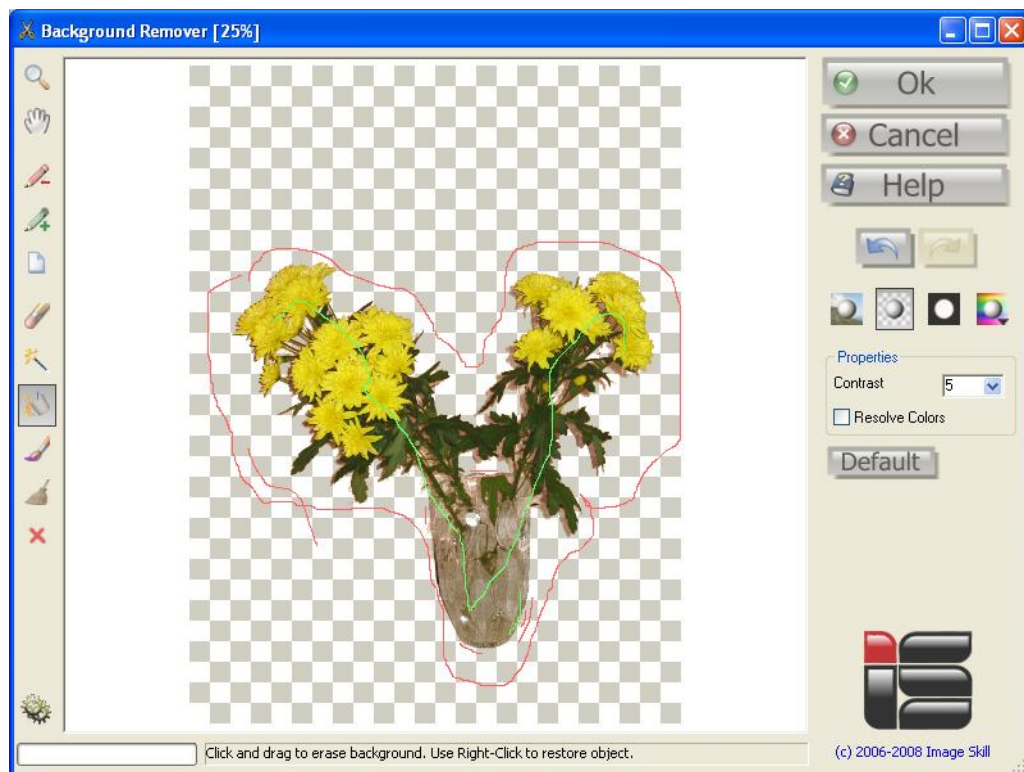
If you do something wrong you can always revert to the previous operation by pressing Undo button. Making right-click and drag you can restore object's part and mark it as object (green points).



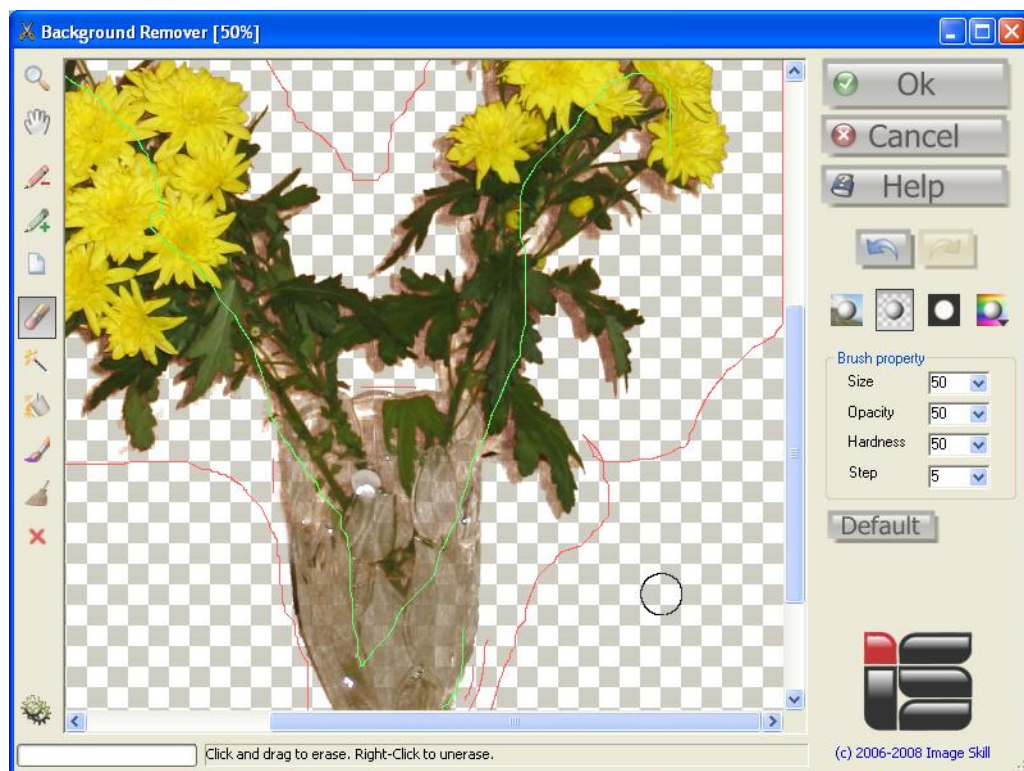
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You can adjust erasing strength by **Strength** control. Possibly you have to make a few strokes in order to succeed.

Then select **Magic Fill** tool and click to erase background in the vase.

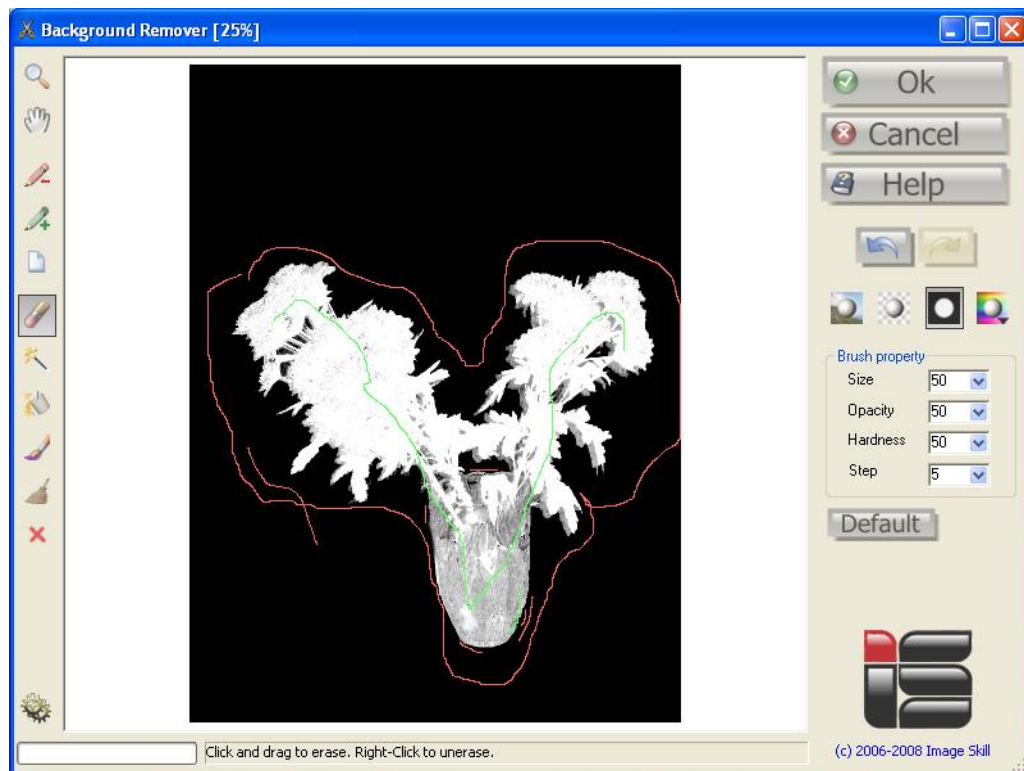


If necessary, choose **Manual Eraser** for the final tuning.

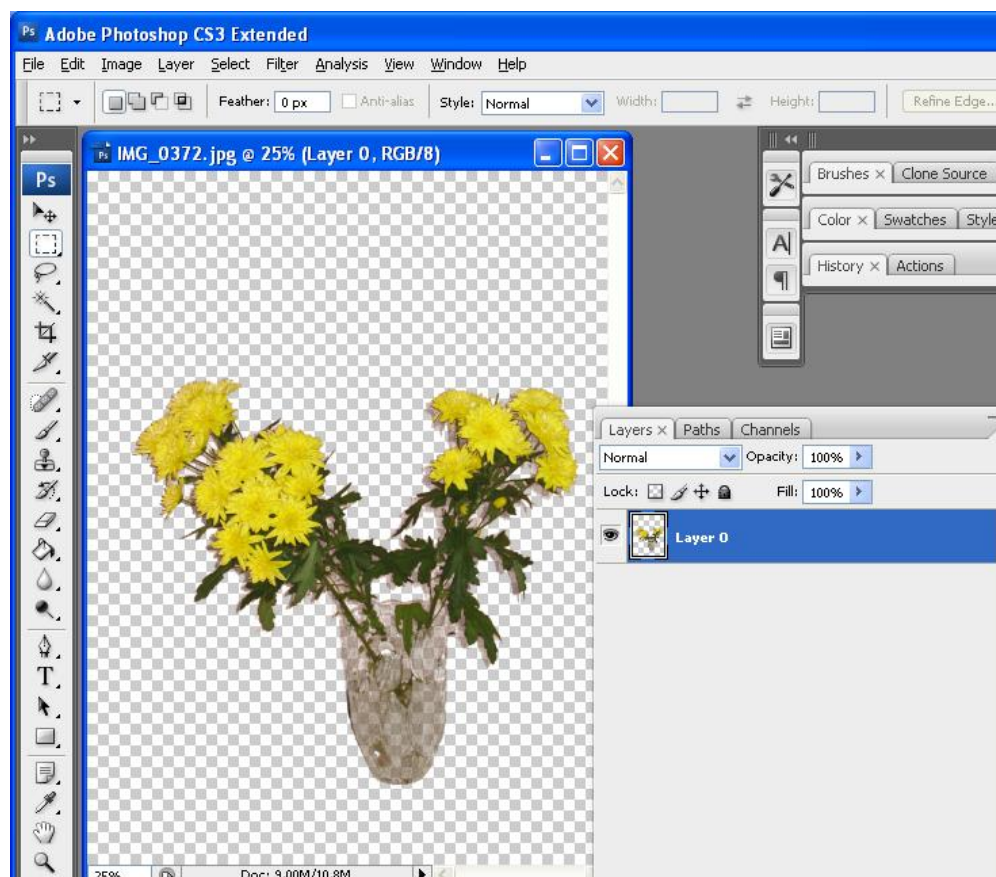


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You can control mask (or see the result in chrome key) using different view option (four buttons below “[Help](#)” button).



When you finish, press OK and return to CS3.





## Semi-Transparent Object Extracting

Use this tutorial to learn how to extract a semi-transparent object (girl with flying hair) from a textured background.

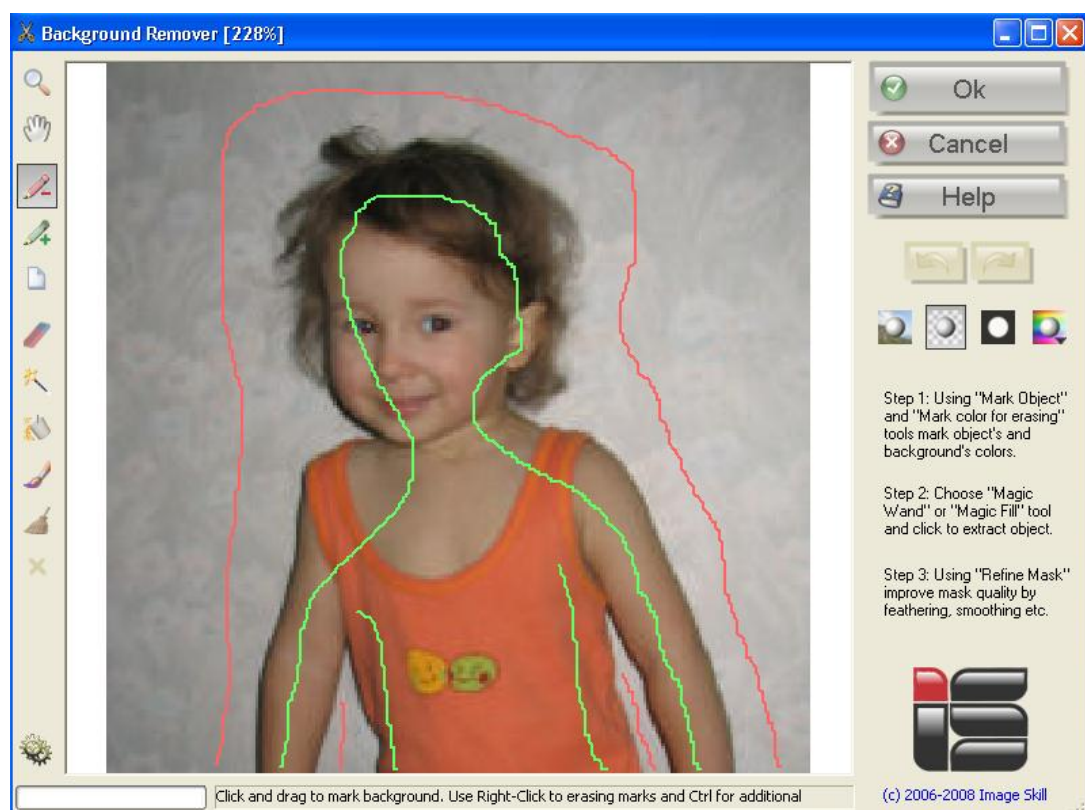


Source image

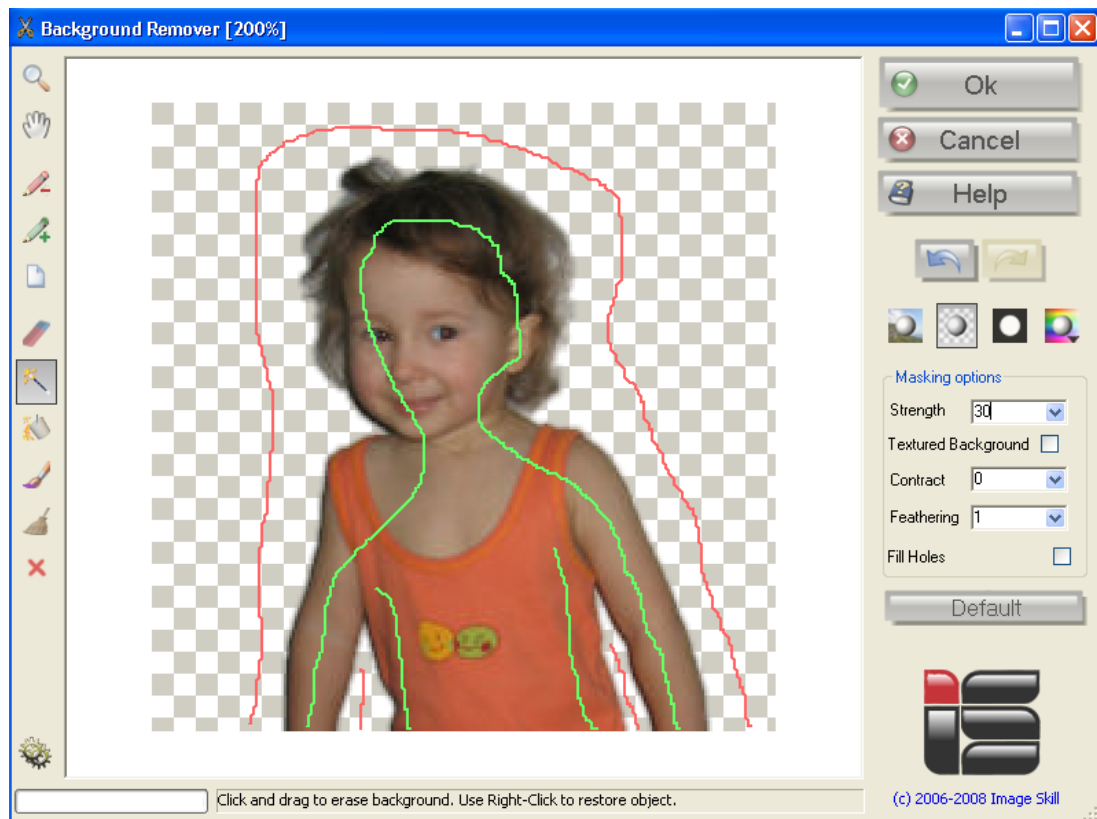
Create layer from background image as described above and run Background Remover.

Select **Mark Object** tool and mark object (green curve).

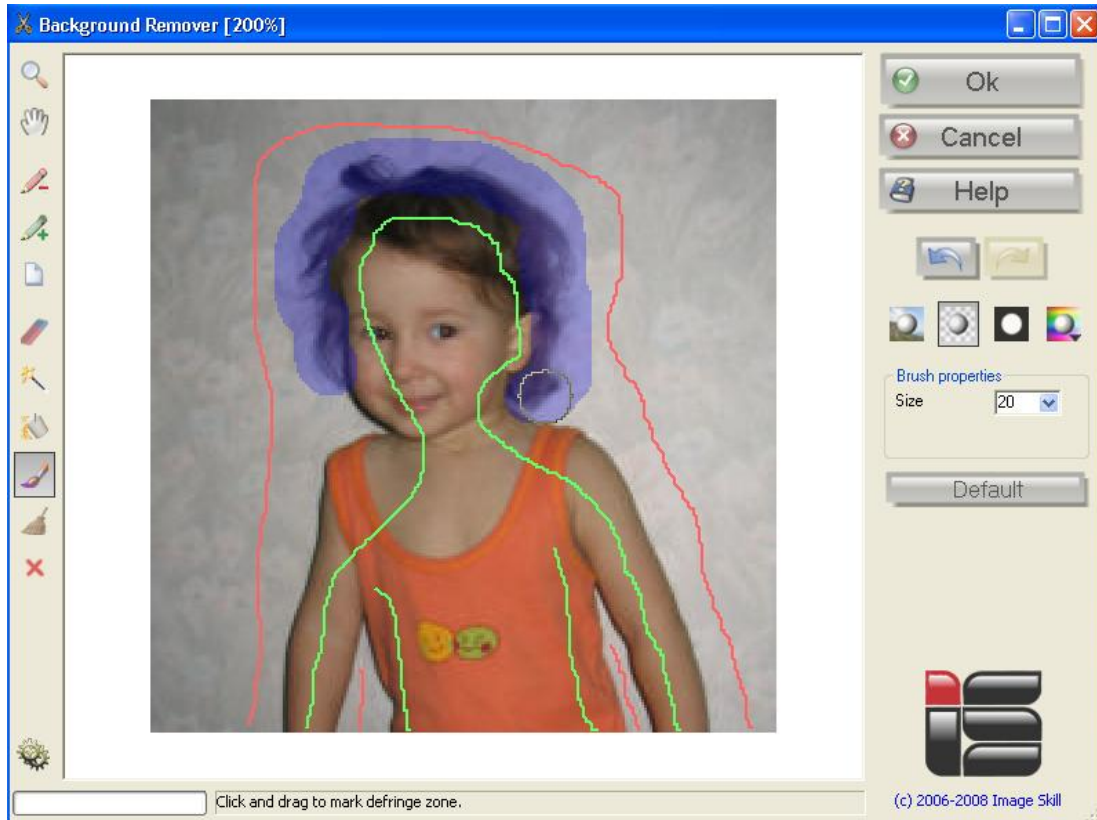
Select **Mark color for erasing** tool and mark background (red curve).



Select Magic Wand tool and extract portrait.

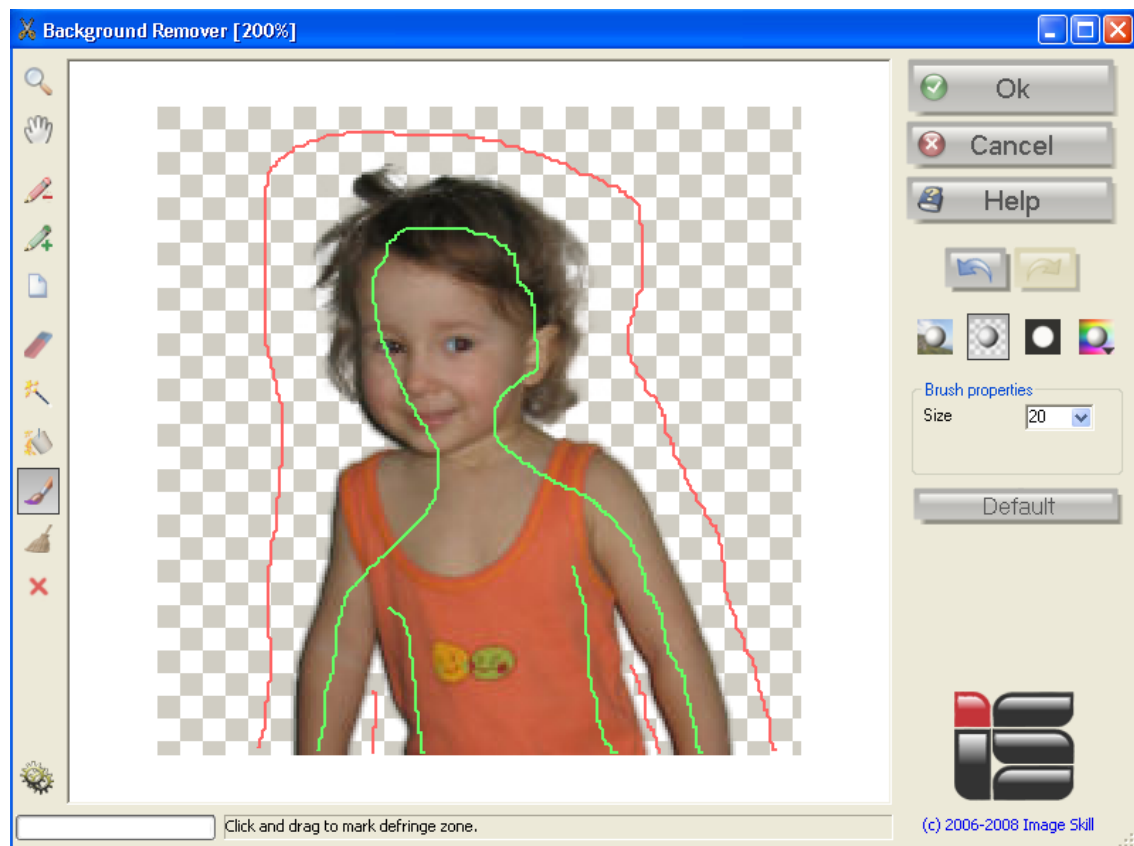


Choose **Mark Defringe zone** tool and mark girl's hair.

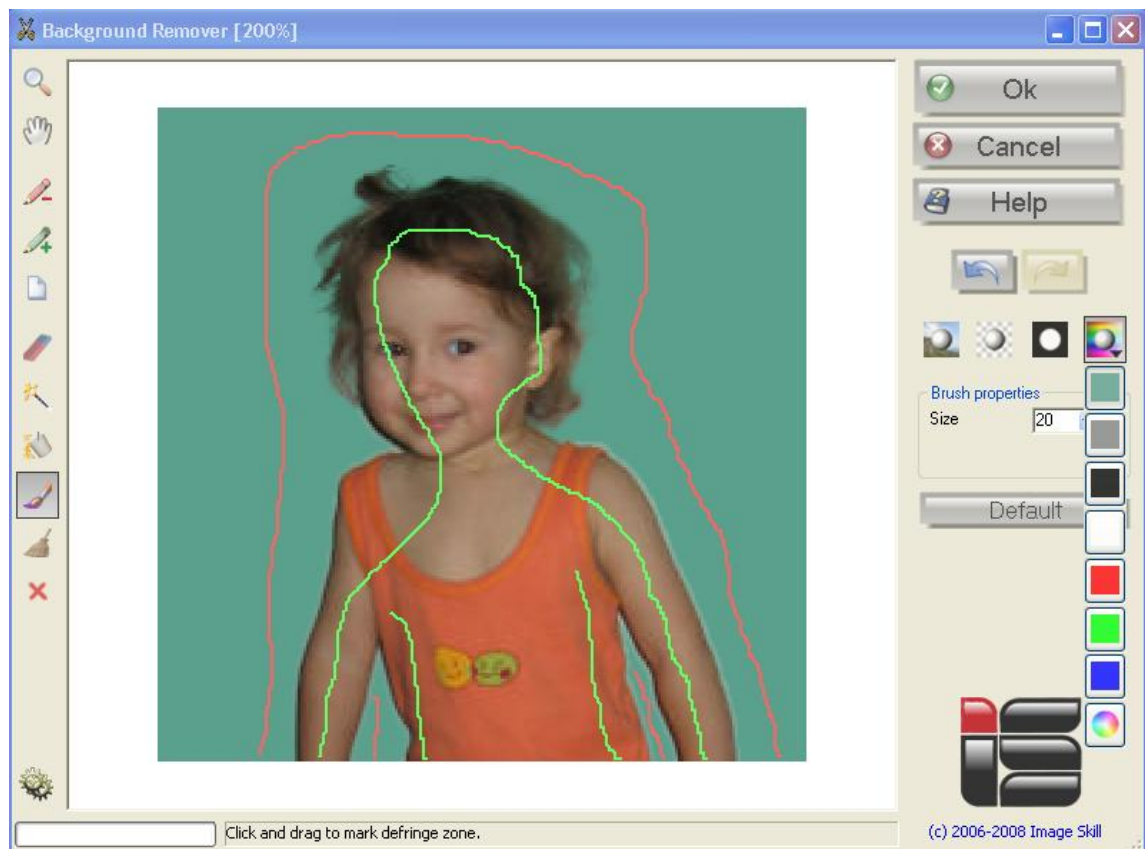


After marking the process of color unmixing is run.

You can see that colors are unmixed properly and girl's hair look naturally.



You can check the result by placing it against colored matted background.



## Lace-like Object Extracting

Use this tutorial to learn how to extract a lace-like object (jewelry, branch of tree etc).

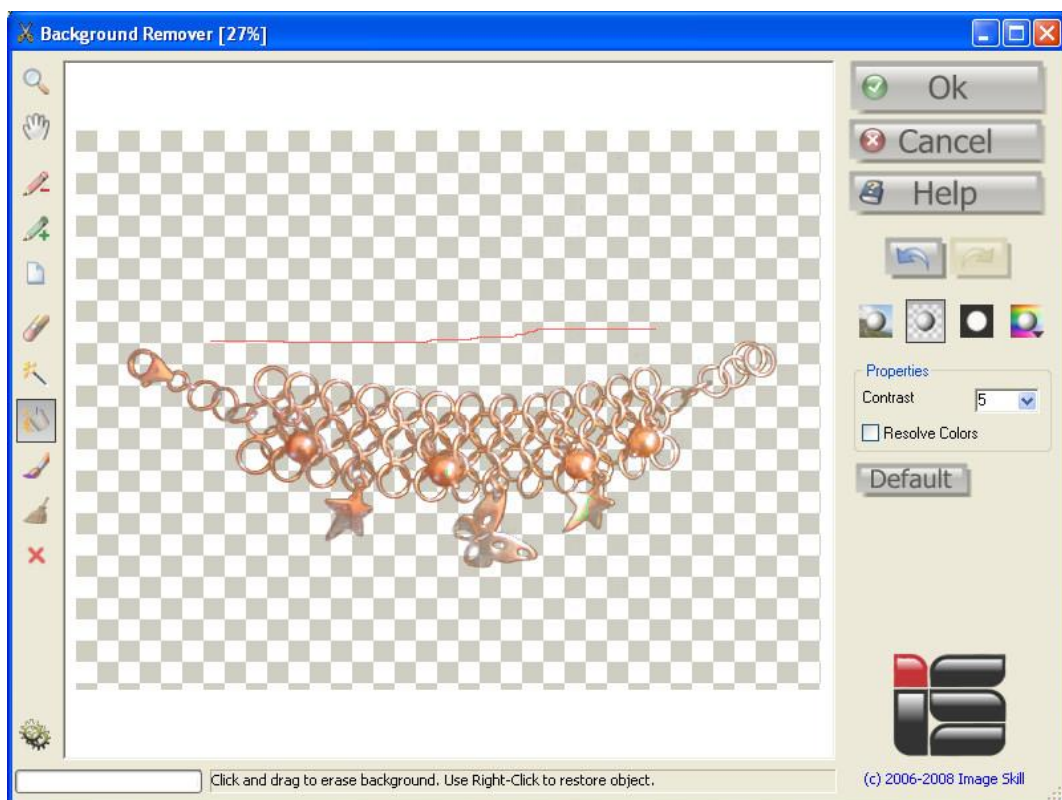


Source image

Create layer from background image as described above and run Background Remover.

Select **Mark Object** tool and mark object (green curve).

Select **Magic Fill** tool and mark background (red curve). Make a mouse click to launch extraction.

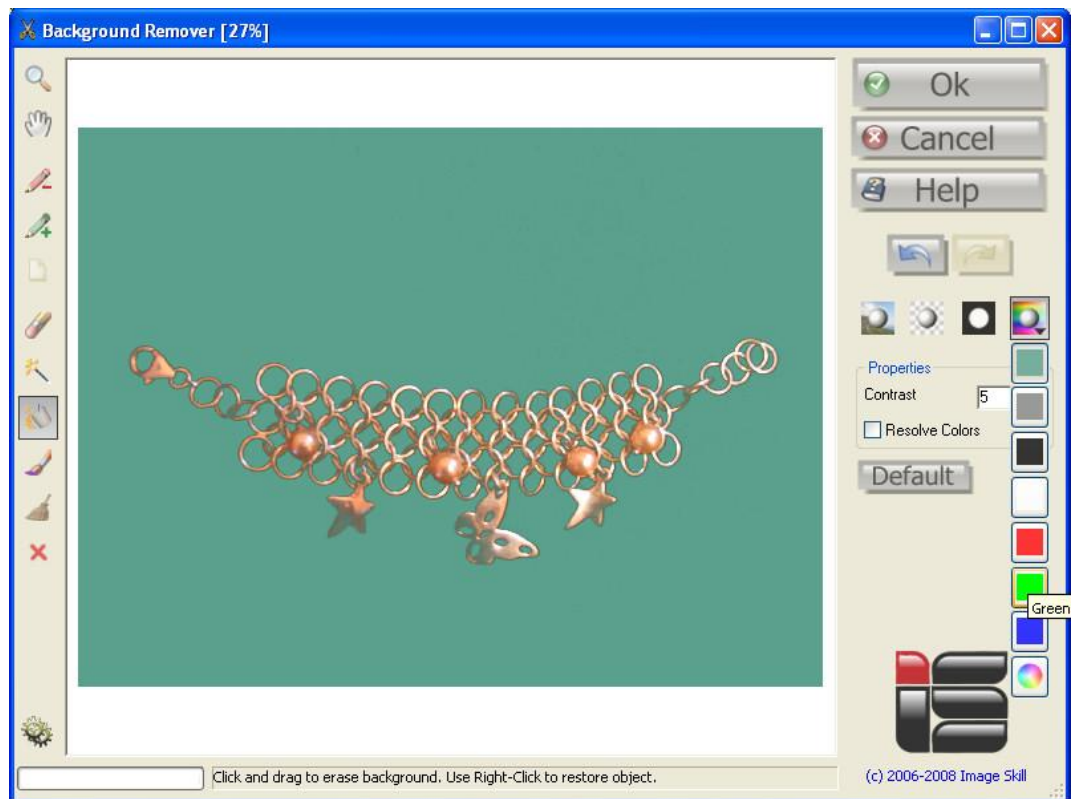


Using **Magic Fill** tool you can set colors for removing by left mouse click and set colors for keeping by right mouse click. Whole image is processed, so you can extract lace-like object by marking object and background colors. Pixel's colors looking like a marked background colors will be processed. To all of these pixels some transparency value will be assigned.

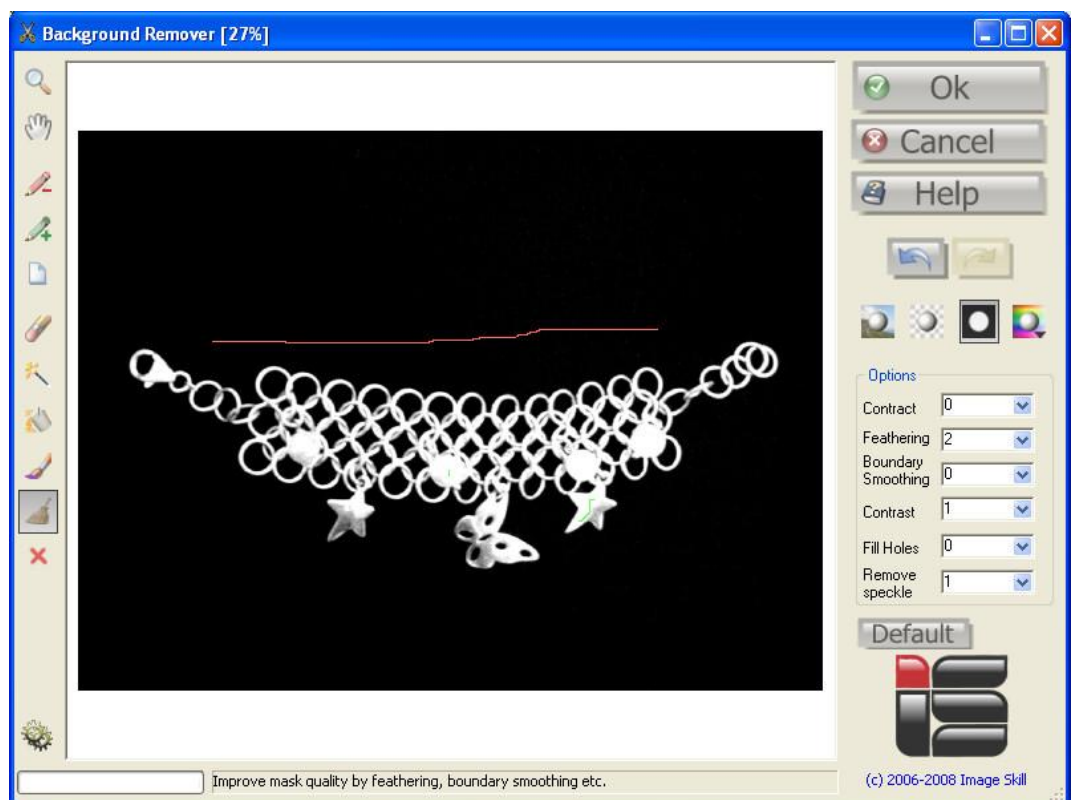
If object and background share some colors, check "**Resolve Color**" flag.

You can refine the resulting mask by adjusting the **Contrast** parameter.





You can check the result by placing it against colored matted background.



The final mask tuning can be done using [Mask Refine](#) tool.

## FAQ and Troubleshooting

### I can not run Background Remover or Background Remover is grey out in graphic host's effect menu.

Graphic hosts disable the plug-in if the current image is not suitable for use with Background Remover. Image must be in RGB format with 8 or 16 bit/channel and must have a layer (i.e. image must have 4 channels: R, G, B, and Alpha). If image has CMYK, LAB, Grayscale or something other than RGB format, you have to convert it to RGB. If image has no layer you have to create it at first.

### What does happen if my image already has transparent area?

When you process image with transparent areas, the final transparency in such pixels will be not less than source transparency, i.e. plug-in does not increase alpha value in transparent areas.

### How does plug-in process selection?

The Background Remover affects to selected area only. The unselected area is still unchanged. The unselected area is shown with red semi-transparent color in main plug-in window. Plug-in deals with the bounding box selection.

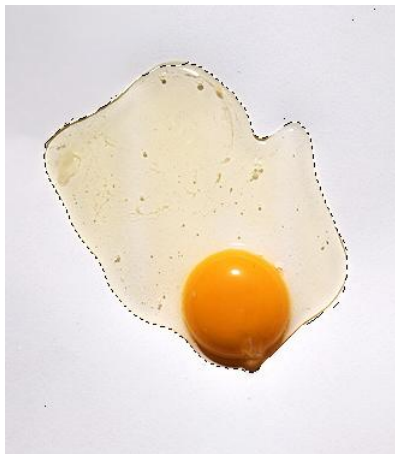
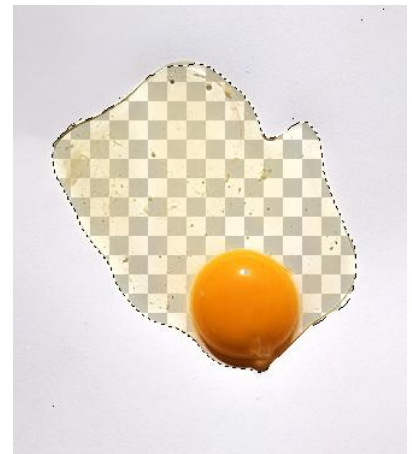


Image with selection



The unselected area is filled by semi-transparent red color



Result of the processing

#### NOTE:

If you did not find answer on your questions, write your questions to [support@imageskill.com](mailto:support@imageskill.com) or send them to support forum <http://forum.imageskill.com>