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With digital photo processing becoming a highly specialized industry, the programs that are available for enhancing pictures are unlimited. But they come with some caveats too. Each picture retouching involves some dos and don'ts-both need to be balanced so that it is not called a dirty job-, which means there are some very smart methods of retouching and some, which can ruin the success story. Whether one is using Photoshop or any other software, the key is to understand what will work. To understand the dos and don'ts it is best to know where in the first place the need arises.

Picture retouching can be done for the following:

- Identifying layers to mask
- Noise reduction
- Skin color & adjusting the tones
- Sepia Appearance or getting a retro look
- Adjustment of light and dark areas
- Air brushing-i.e for creating smiles, or tear drops

Of course there are other areas also where picture retouching proves to be valuable, but these are the major areas of its applications. Hence, we target these essential groups and consider the dos and don'ts that are applicable. For a neat and a very professional look an editor will have to keep in mind some notes. Like, for example, frequent use of the clone stamp. This may not work in all cases. It tends to give an elevated opacity appearance. It does more harm when matching the skin tones is required. The best thing to do would be to reduce the opacity and use the airbrush to get a near ideal effect. The blur tool also works fine in some cases. Employing some time saving techniques are also appreciated. Experienced editors rely on even Gaussian blur to ensure it is not a dirty job. Many editors like to make use of it. But at times it is a definite no-no as it can make the human subject look like a mannequin. Instead the median is the ideal tool to get the work done. It can reduce the blemish and also erase some fine hair coming on the face.

Picture retouching involves getting the right texture on the composition. Maintaining the balance of editing and also perfecting its texture is not an easy task. But it can be controlled effectively. For example if the sunrays do not fall uniformly it creates shadow or dark area. The best thing would be to direct moderate the intensity of the areas where the sunlight falls. It can create the perfect texture. Level adjustments are another area that helps in creating uniformity of the dark and light areas of the picture. The Pen Tool is valuable. It can perform wonders, especially when delicate work needs to be done. Does the subject has stuff wedged in between the teeth and is looking ugly? It can be removed with the Pen Tool. Now who needs a dentist? This is even not a dirty job. In fact the subject will be pleased to know that the teeth are squeakily clean.

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[Atiqur Sumon](#) - About Author:

Atiqur Sumon

Chief Executive, DTP & SEO Expert at Outsource Experts Ltd.

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