

**GlossyTutorialPDF**

# Table of Contents

<b>1 Reflective Surfaces in Photoshop.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 For Starters.....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 Glossy Interfaces.....	2
2.2 The file.....	2
<b>3 Creating the base form.....</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1 Using Quick Mask.....	3
3.2 Use the Elliptical Selection Marquee.....	3
3.3 Continue building your interface form.....	3
3.4 Now, to soften the corners.....	3
3.5 Use the Levels to tighten up the outline.....	4
3.6 Exit the Quick Mask Mode.....	4
<b>4 Create base form.....</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1 Next we'll create a base form.....	5
4.2 Save Selection Channels.....	5
<b>5 Create Upper Reflection.....</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1 Duplicate Channel 'profile alpha'.....	6
5.2 Gaussian Blur the new channel.....	6
5.3 Create a new channel.....	6
5.4 Now, create a new layer.....	7
<b>6 Create Lower Reflection.....</b>	<b>8</b>
6.1 To create the lower reflection.....	8
6.2 Now add the gradation.....	8
6.3 Create a new Layer.....	8
<b>7 Add Detail.....</b>	<b>9</b>
7.1 Here we've added an Information Icon.....	9
7.2 Added relief to the Icon.....	9
7.3 Add a parting line.....	9
7.4 If you liked this tutorial, you should check out ButtonGadget.....	9

## ☐☐☐ Reflective Surfaces in Photoshop

Last Updated: 5/23/2003



I use glossy materials a lot in interfaces and thought it might be valuable to others to 'reflect' it here.

If you like this effect, you might also enjoy looking at other tutorials at [chipp.com](http://chipp.com).

Authored by: Chipp Walters

## 2 ☐☐☐ For Starters...

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### 2.1

#### Glossy Interfaces...



Lately, I've found myself using a lot of glossy, reflective interfaces. I use them for client applications, like [HemTools](#). I also like using them for web interfaces as well. Anyway, after the success of my [glass button Flash tutorial](#), I thought I should try this one. I hope you enjoy!

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### 2.2

#### The file.



You can click on the [LINK](#) button below to download a copy of the file used in this demonstration. It's in .zip format, but I'm pretty sure Mac users can unzip with Stuffit.

I use Photoshop 5.5 on a WinXP PC. I've tried both 6 and 7 versions, but I find I can work faster and use less screen real estate in 5.5. In fact, I don't know of much I can't do in 5.5 that I can do in 6 and 7.

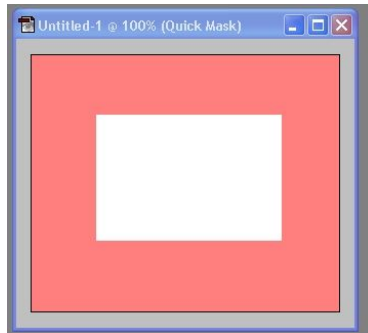
This tutorial will demo in 5.5, but those of you who are using 6 or 7 will find it easy to follow along as well. All the features can be duplicated in PS 6 or 7 with ease.

## 3 Creating the base form

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### 3.1

#### Using Quick Mask

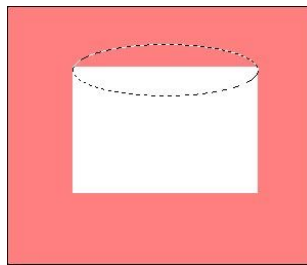


We'll need to start off by creating a base form. First I create a new document, then select a rectangle and enter the Quick Mask Mode, using the buttons under the color selector. This is what it looks like when I'm in Quick Mask Mode.

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### 3.2

#### Use the Elliptical Selection Marquee



And create an ellipse and move it to the top. Then fill with white.

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### 3.3

#### Continue building your interface form



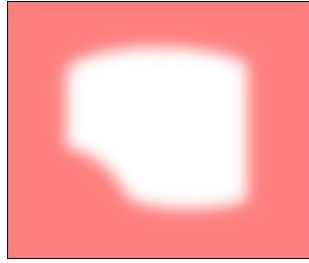
Using elliptical and rectangle marquees and filling and deleting until you get a shape you like. Sorta like this one.

Note: you can select all and ctrl drag to center.

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### 3.4

#### Now, to soften the corners

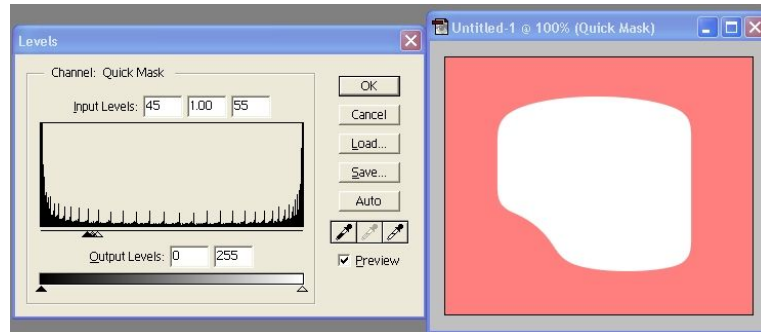


You'll need to first apply a gaussian blur. I used a setting of 7 on this one.

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### 3.5

**Use the Levels to tighten up the outline.**



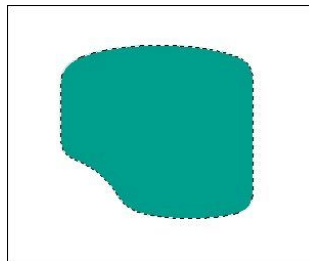
By adjusting the 3 triangles on the top slider of the levels window towards each other, the outline tightens up and creates radiused edges where before they were hard.

Don't put the triangles too close or you'll get alias artifacts (stair stepping). If you move them more to the right, the interface (white area) becomes larger – to the left, smaller.

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### 3.6

**Exit the Quick Mask Mode**

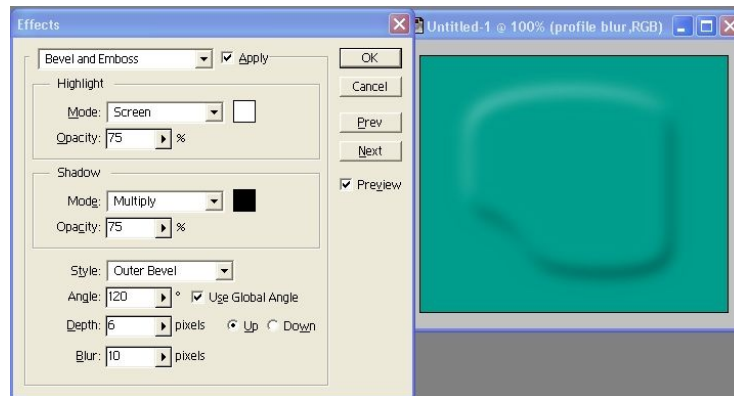


Then create a new layer, name it 'profile' and fill with a favorite color.

## 4 :: Create base form

### 4.1

Next we'll create a base form

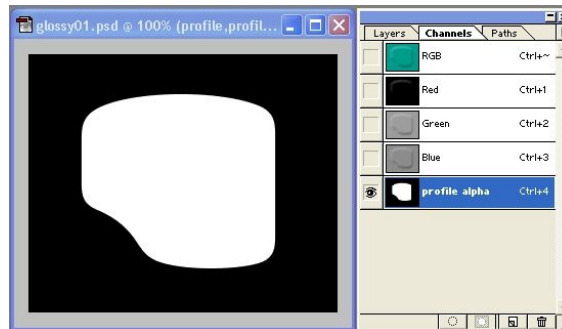


We can do this easily. Deselect all . Select the Background layer and fill it with the same layer. Then turn off layer 'profile.' Then duplicate it and name it 'profile blur.'

With 'profile blur' selected, perform a gaussian blur (setting 7).and turn on layer effects for it as shown.

### 4.2

Save Selection Channels

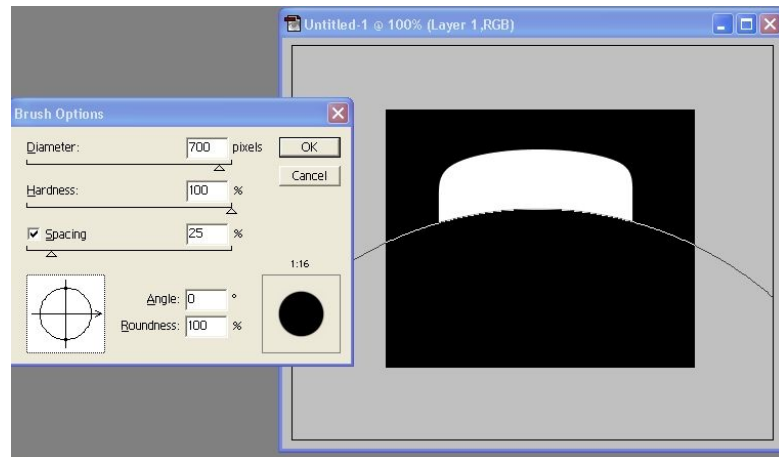


In order to create the reflection, we'll need to create some selection Channels. Ctrl-click on layer 'profile' to create a selection, then choose Save Selection under the Select Menu and name it 'profile alpha.' Then view channel you just created.

## 5 :: Create Upper Reflection

### 5.1

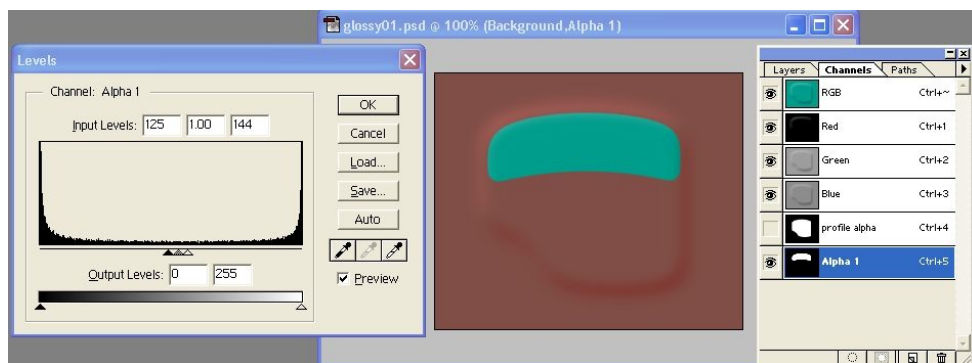
#### Duplicate Channel 'profile alpha'



Then create a real big brush. See image for details. Then click once to remove the lower 2/3 of the profile. You may need to make your window larger in order for the brush to have enough room to work.

### 5.2

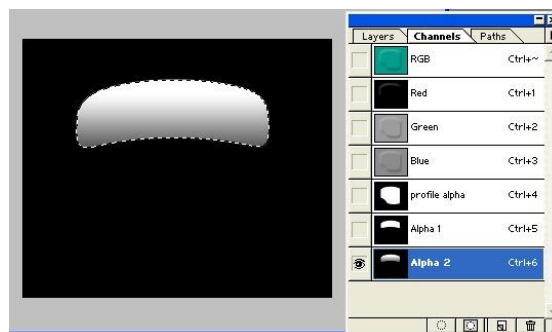
#### Gaussian Blur the new channel



with a setting of 7 (again) then use the levels to 'squeeze' it tight. It helps to turn on the RGB channel so you can see what size to 'squeeze' it to. Make it just smaller than the soft effects in the RGB channel.

### 5.3

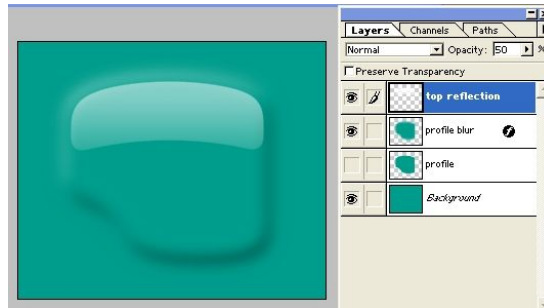
#### Create a new channel



and ctrl-click on the previous channel to create a selection in the new channel. Use the gradient tool to create a gradation like the picture.

## 5.4

Now, create a new layer

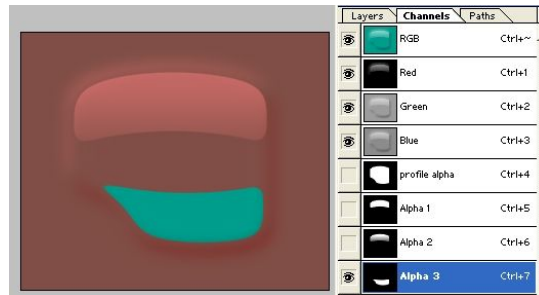


and name it 'top reflection.' Load the selection of the graduated channel and fill with white. Then fiddle with the transparency until you get it just right (I used 50% transparency).

## 6 :: Create Lower Reflection

### 6.1

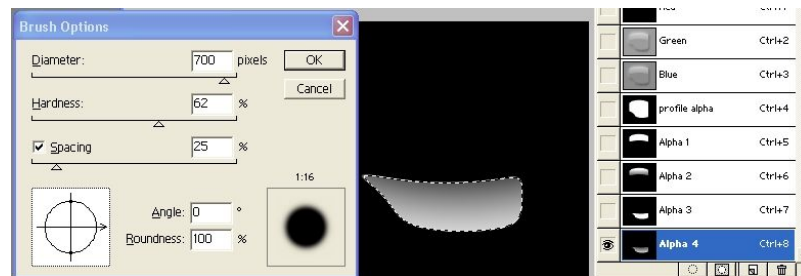
To create the lower reflection



We'll essentially repeat what we did to create the upper reflection. Duplicate the 'profile alpha' channel, use the big brush to remove the upper 2/3 of it. Gaussian Blur with 7 and set levels as shown below.

### 6.2

Now add the gradation



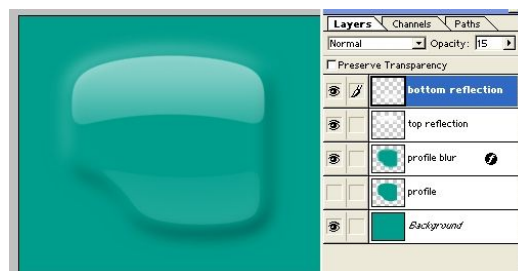
This time we'll do it a bit differently. We'll use the brush tool with very soft settings (see picture). Create a new channel, use the selection from the previous step, use a white brush and click it until you have a gradation you like.

But, it will be going the wrong direction. So, you'll invert it will it's still selected (ctrl+i). Then you may need to do a Select>Modify>Contract 1 pixel, invert selection and delete to get rid of any fringe artifacts.

Your final channel should look like the one in this picture.

### 6.3

Create a new Layer

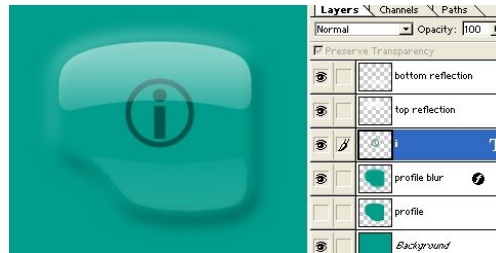


and name it 'bottom reflection.' Use the selection from the previous step and fill with white. The bottom reflection should be much subtler than the top, so set the transparency to a smaller number (I used 15).

## 7 :: Add Detail

### 7.1

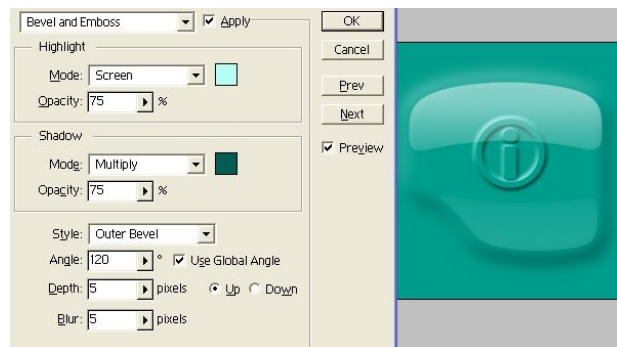
Here we've added an Information Icon



by using the Webdings font and the letter I. Note the placement in the layers so that the I is below both reflected layers.

### 7.2

Added relief to the Icon



Notice the effects settings. Especially notice the hilite and shadow settings are NOT the default white and black, but instead shades of the base color — in this case green.

### 7.3

Add a parting line



By adding a small dark line and using the shown effects, a quick parting line can be rendered. Notice, the parting line layer is ABOVE the reflected layers.

You can continue to tweak the interface, adding buttons, and indicators as you like.

### 7.4

If you liked this tutorial, you should check out [ButtonGadget](#).



**ButtonGadget™** is the *easiest to use* **PROFESSIONAL button generator** available. It builds buttons for websites, applications, and multimedia apps, with only a *few mouse clicks*. Files can be exported as JPG's with javascript or 32-bit PNG's with alpha channels ready for compositing.

Check out the [ButtonSets page](#) to see a few of the buttons which can be rendered by ButtonGadget.