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# *Stepwise Sepia Toning using Adobe Photoshop*

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## *Conventional Sepia Toning*

*Sepia toning is used by photographers to create a warmer print tone. The conventional sepia toning process consists of the following steps:*

**Thoroughly wash the completed black and white print,  
Soak the print in bleach until the silver image is completely converted  
from its metallic state,  
Rinse the bleached print in water to remove all traces of bleach,  
Tone the print in sepia toning solution,  
Wash thoroughly and dry the print.**

*It is much easier to obtain consistent, even results if the hypo used to fix the print does contain hardener. Wash times are usually extended by 50% to ensure that all traces of fixer have been removed. Any fixer which remains in the paper will reduce silver when it is placed into the bleach.*

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## *Conventional Stepwise Sepia Toning*

*Stepwise sepia toning is a variation on the conventional toning process. The print is only partially bleached before being toned, creating a step or partial*

increment of toning. The effect is similar to the multi tone image (duotone) created by the printing industry. Typically, the shadows remain black while the midtones of the image are a warm brown color. This gives the toned image a little more punch due to slightly greater shadow contrast. The following processing steps occur:

**Thoroughly wash the completed black and white print,  
Soak the print in a dilute bleach solution while providing gentle agitation,  
At a point when the silver is partially converted, remove the print and wash thoroughly,  
Tone the print in sepia toner until all bleached silver is toned,  
Wash thoroughly and dry the print.**

*This stepwise toning process can be iterated to create tritones and quadtones. This is accomplished by bleaching a layer of silver and toning one color, then bleaching the next layer of silver and toning it a different color. This iterated approach gives even greater control over image toning. When done carefully the results can be quite impressive. Unfortunately, the process is very time consuming and finicky.*

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## *Digital Sepia Toning*

*Digital imaging techniques can be used to emulate this stepwise toning process of conventional photography. Adobe Photoshop for the Mac or PC provides excellent controls for achieving a stepwise toned look with black and white digital images. Within a few minutes you can experiment with variations which might take an entire day to do the conventional way. The digital process is consistent, has no finicky wash requirements and does not involve the ecologically harmful chemicals which are used in most toning processes.*

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## *Digital Sepia Tone Sample*

*The following images are of an Anasazi rock dwelling in Wupaki National Monument just North of Flagstaff, AZ. Immediately below is the black and white original image:*



*The stepwise toned version below has color much like the original rock dwelling:*

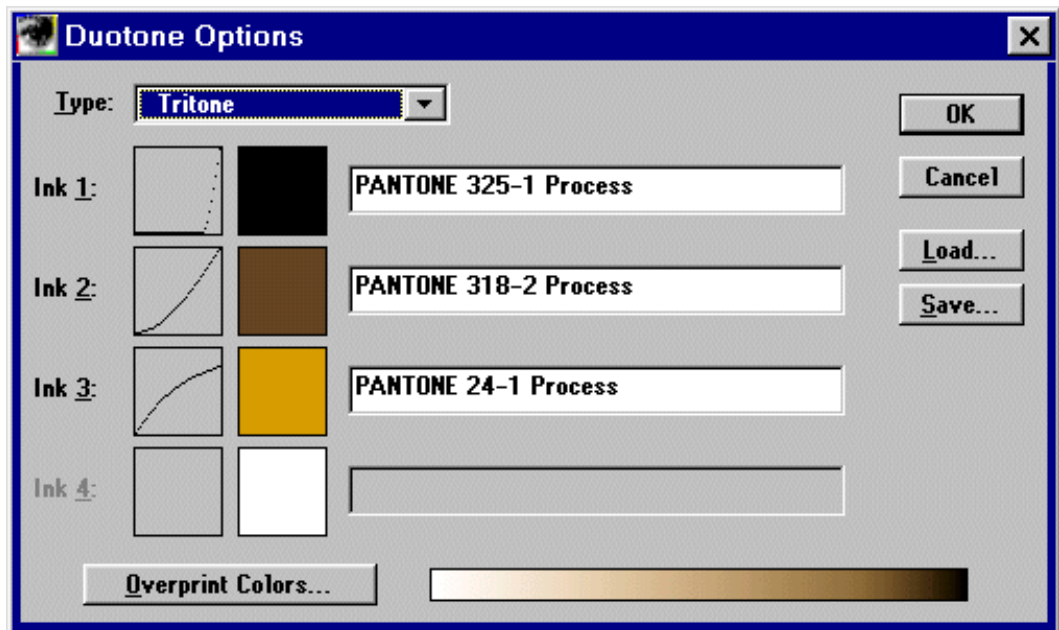


*Notice the shadow density and multi tone character of the image. This is characteristic of stepwise toned prints. The original was scanned in black and*

white and modified in Adobe Photoshop to create the warmed toned image reproduced here.

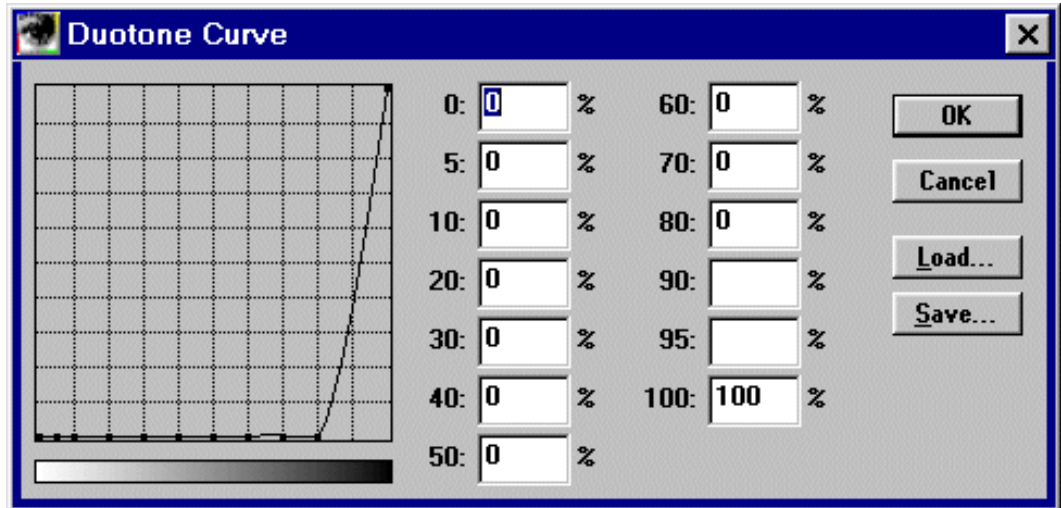
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# Digital Sepia Toning Technique

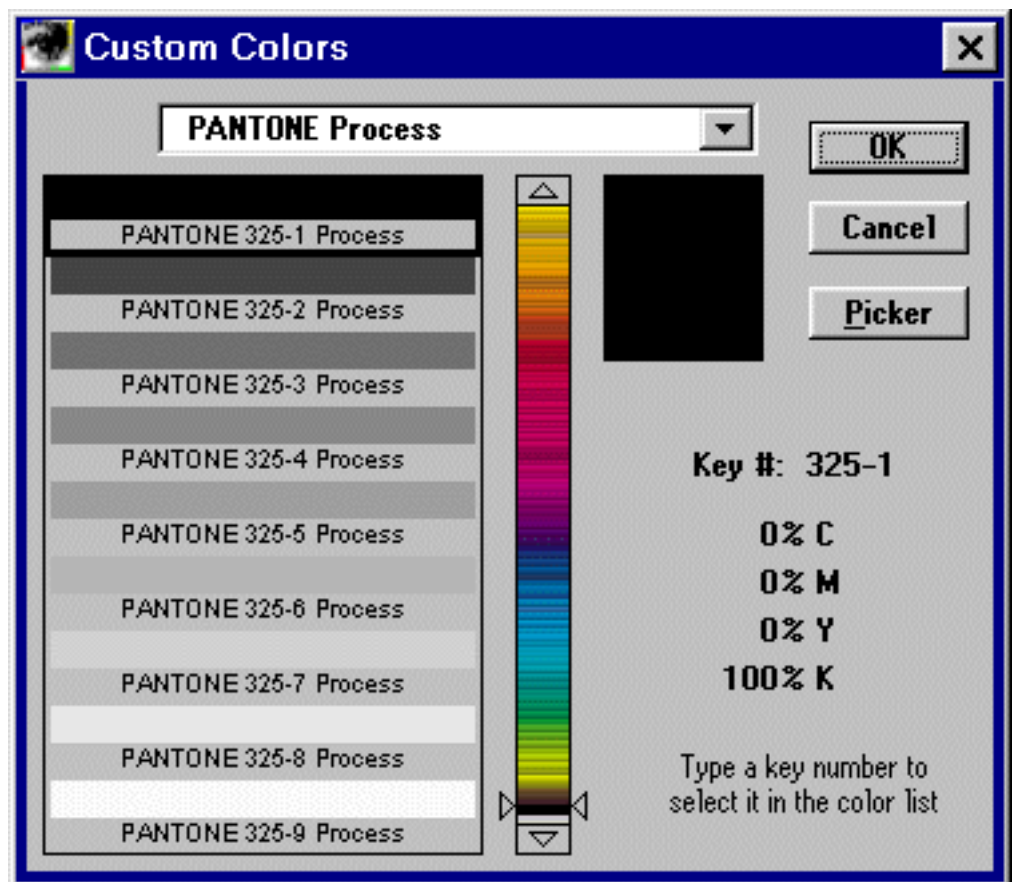


If your image is not already in grayscale format, select Mode and Grayscale, then select Mode and Duotone to bring up this dialog box. Select Duotone, Tritone or Quadtone in the text window. In this case selected Tritone.

~ Shadows ~

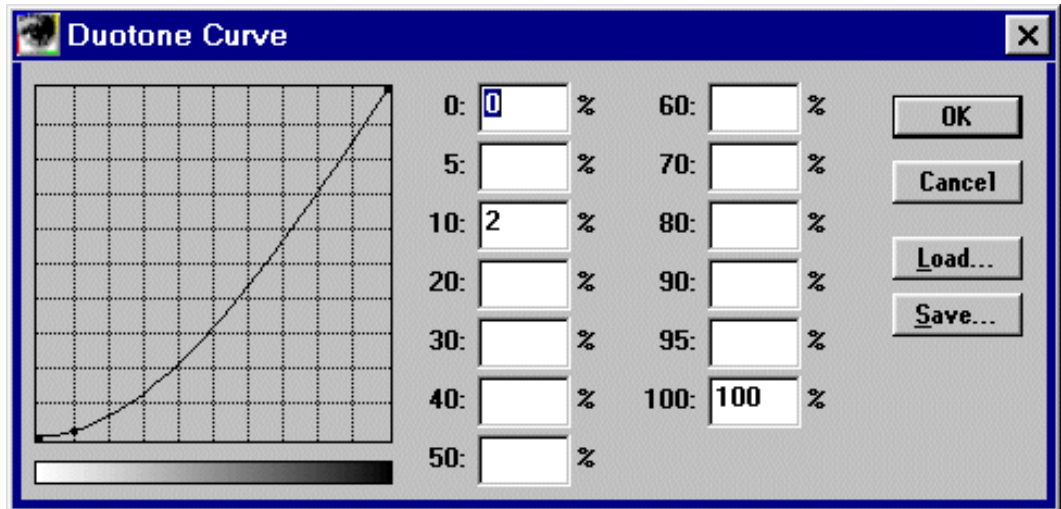


*Click on the 1st curve box to bring up this dialog and shape the curve so that it primarily covers shadow areas. You can drag and drop points on the curve or you can set values in the text entry windows.*

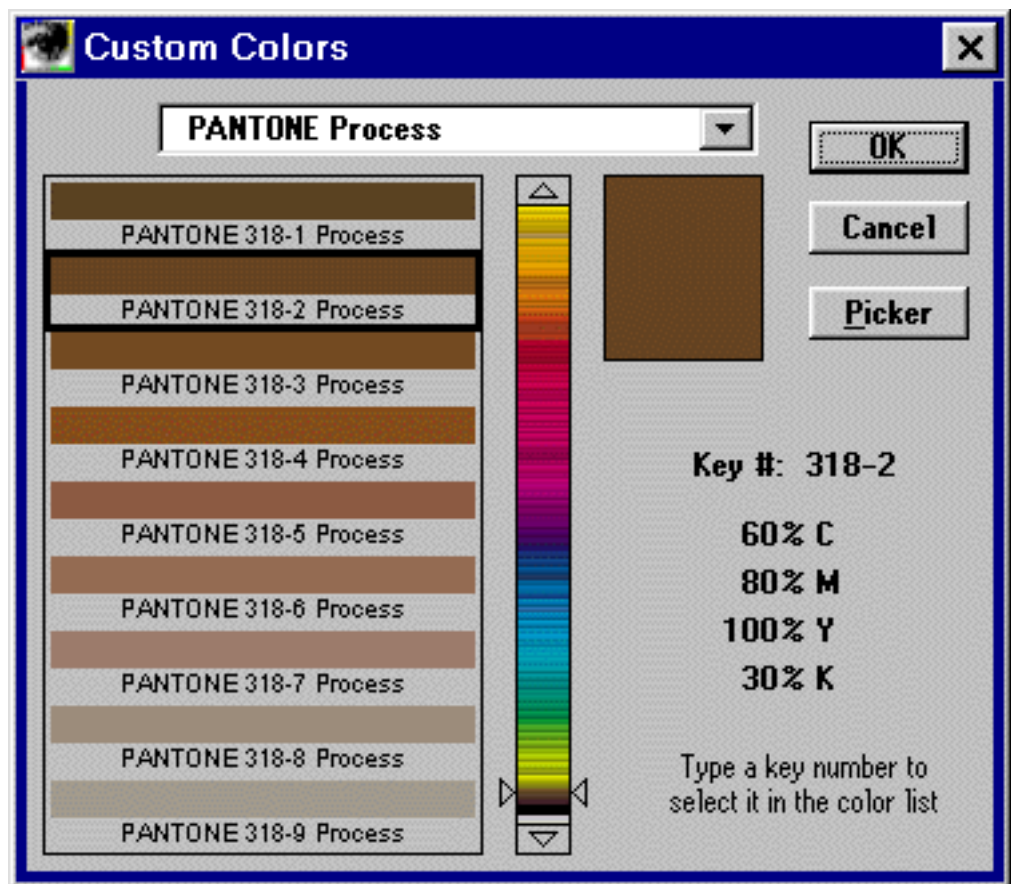


*Click on the 1st color swatch to bring up this dialog and use it to select a hue for the shadow areas.*

## ~ Midtones ~

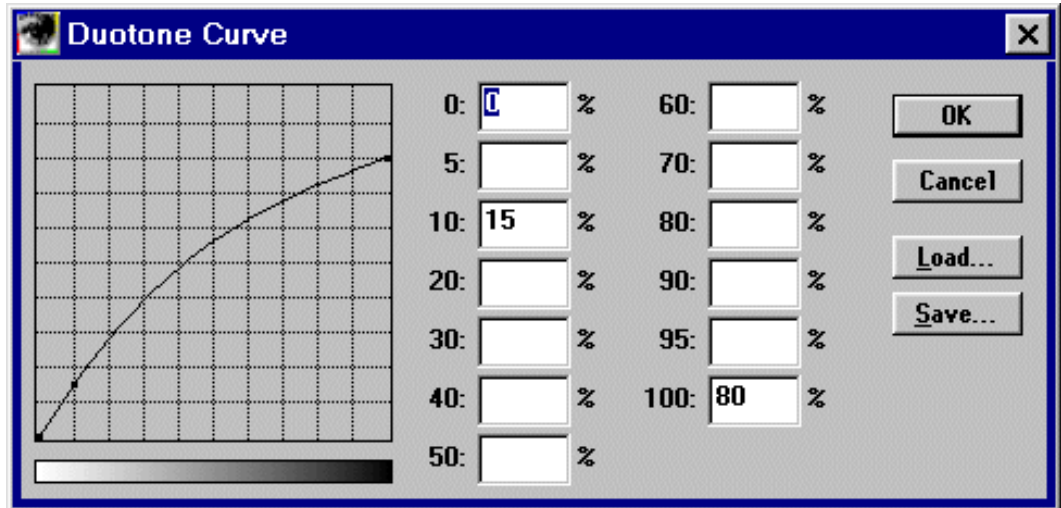


*Click on the 2nd curve box to bring up this dialog and shape the curve so that it becomes the midtone curve. You can drag and drop points on the midtone curve or you can set values in the text entry windows. A variation for midtone curves is to hold them flat for a very short ways at the highlight end. This is similar to what is shown for the shadow curve above.*

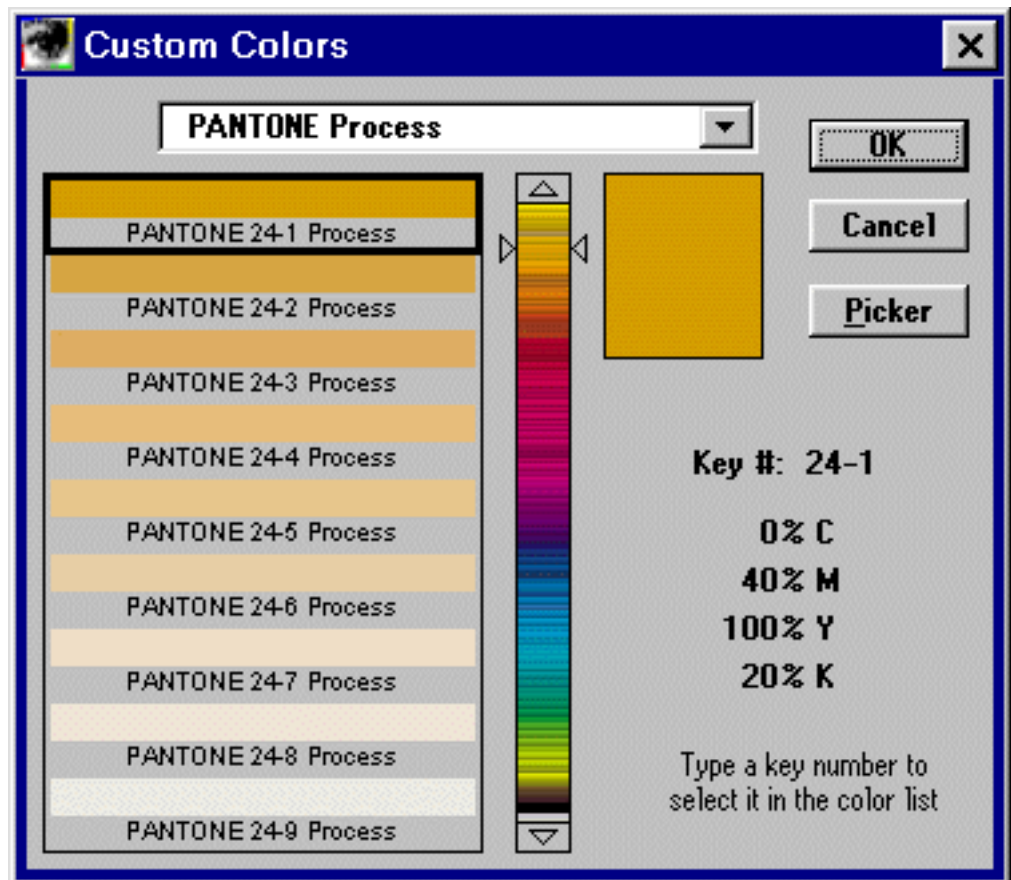


*Click on the 2nd color swatch to bring up this dialog and use it to select a hue for the midtone areas. The color selected for midtones will become the predominant color for the image.*

**~ Highlights ~**



*Click on the 3rd curve box to bring up this dialog and shape the curve so that it becomes the highlight curve. As with the shadow and midtone curves, you can drag and drop points on the highlight curve or you can set values in the text entry windows.*



*Click on the 3rd color swatch to bring up this dialog and use it to select a hue for the highlight areas.*

*Once you find a particularly useful set of toning parameters, you can save them for use again on another image. The preview capability makes it easy to adjust curves and try many different color combinations. I usually find that Tritones seem to work nicely. They are a good compromise between complexity and flexibility. The one-to-one color mapping with highlights, midtones and shadows make adjustment more intuitive. Occasionally, you may find it useful to adjust the contrast and brightness of a black and white image before or after toning. Pull a toned reference image onto the screen when you need to create matched sets of toned images.*

*Toning prints this digital way is so much easier and more flexible. The ease and speed with which a matched set of toned prints can be created will be greatly appreciated by those who have struggled with creating consistent results the conventional way.*

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