

Mask Pro provides you with a variety of tools to meet any masking challenge. While we could use an image for this tutorial that could be cut out with a few clicks of the mouse, it would not illustrate all of the powerful features of Mask Pro.

Typically, images to be masked are cut from high-contrast, homogenous backgrounds. But sometimes the background doesn't lend itself to masking: either the photographer had no control over the background, or the image was not created with the intention of having it masked. In this tutorial we will isolate the entire image of a lion from its background—complete with feathery mane and chin hairs—so you can see how easy it is to mask even the most challenging images with Mask Pro.



## Tutorial 1: Entering and Exiting Mask Pro

---

What you intend to do with your masked image will determine which command you use to open Mask Pro. You will either be: removing the background of the image or creating a selection while keeping the background. You can also open Mask Pro in Composite View, so that you can see other layers in the document “behind” the layer that is active as it is masked.

### To remove the background from an image:

1. **Open the “lion.psd” image in Photoshop or Photo-Paint.**

The lion.psd image is located in the Mask Pro application folder on your hard drive.

If you are going to remove the background from an image (rather than use Mask Pro to create a selection), Mask Pro must have somewhere to store the mask. The lion.psd has an opacity layer to store the mask. For your own images you can create a channel in many ways, such as by converting the background to a layer (double-click Background on the Photoshop Layers palette) or by switching into Quick Mask mode, creating a layer, creating a layer mask, etc.

2. **Enter Mask Pro by choosing Extensis ⇨ Mask Pro ⇨ Mask....**

The Mask Pro dialog box will appear, with your image in the main window. This is the workspace that you will use to create your mask.

### Tip

Mask Pro provides unlimited Undo (**Command-Z [Ctrl+Z]**) and Redo (**Command-Y [Ctrl+Y]**), so you can experiment as much as you like.

3. **Create your mask** (see “The Basics of Keep and Drop” on *page 65*.)
4. **When you have finished masking your image, return to Photoshop by choosing File ⇨ Save/Apply.**

Your mask will be returned to the targeted layer as transparency.

### To create a selection:

1. **Open the “lion.psd” image in Photoshop.**

The lion.psd image is located in the Mask Pro application folder on your hard drive.

2. **Enter Mask Pro by choosing Extensis ⇨ Mask Pro ⇨ Select....**

The Mask Pro dialog box will appear, with your image in the main window. This is the workspace that you will use to create your mask.

3. **Create your mask** (see “The Basics of Keep and Drop” on *page 65*.)
4. **When you have finished masking your image, return to Photoshop by choosing File ⇨ Save/Apply.**

A selection will be created around the portion of the image that you masked.

### To open in Composite View:

1. **Open the “lion.psd” image in Photoshop.**

The lion.psd image is located in the Mask Pro application folder on your hard drive.

2. **Enter Mask Pro by choosing Extensis ⇨ Mask Pro ⇨ Mask Composite....**

The Mask Pro dialog box will appear, with your image in the main window, and any active layers visible. This is the workspace that you will use to create your mask.

3. **Create your mask** (see “The Basics of Keep and Drop” on *page 65*.)
4. **When you have finished masking your image, return to Photoshop by choosing File ⇨ Save/Apply.**

## Tutorial 2: The Basics of Keep and Drop

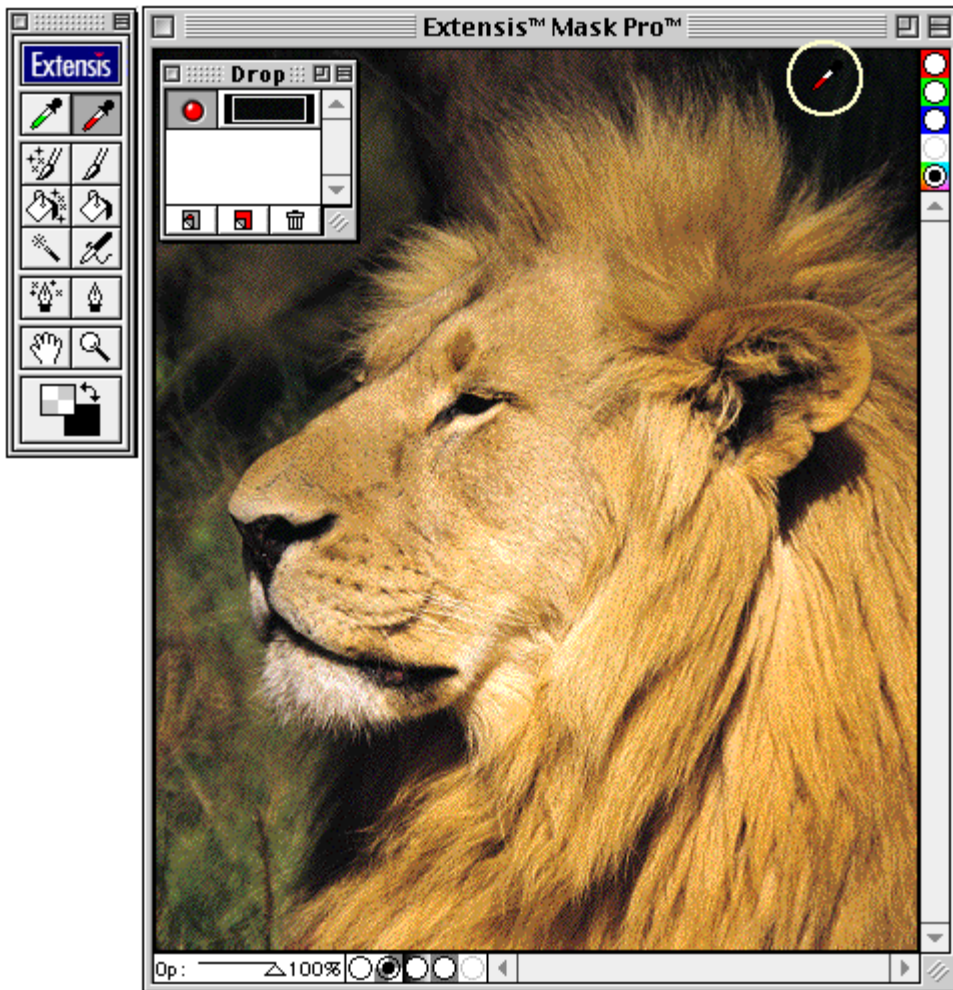


Red (Drop)

1. Open the “lion.psd” image in Mask Pro (*see page 63*).
2. Choose the Red Eyedropper from the toolbox.

The Red Eyedropper is used to choose which colors are dropped from the image.

3. Drag across a small section (1”) of the dark area in the upper right of the image, above the lion’s mane.



Dragging here will create a dark, almost black, drop color in the Drop palette.

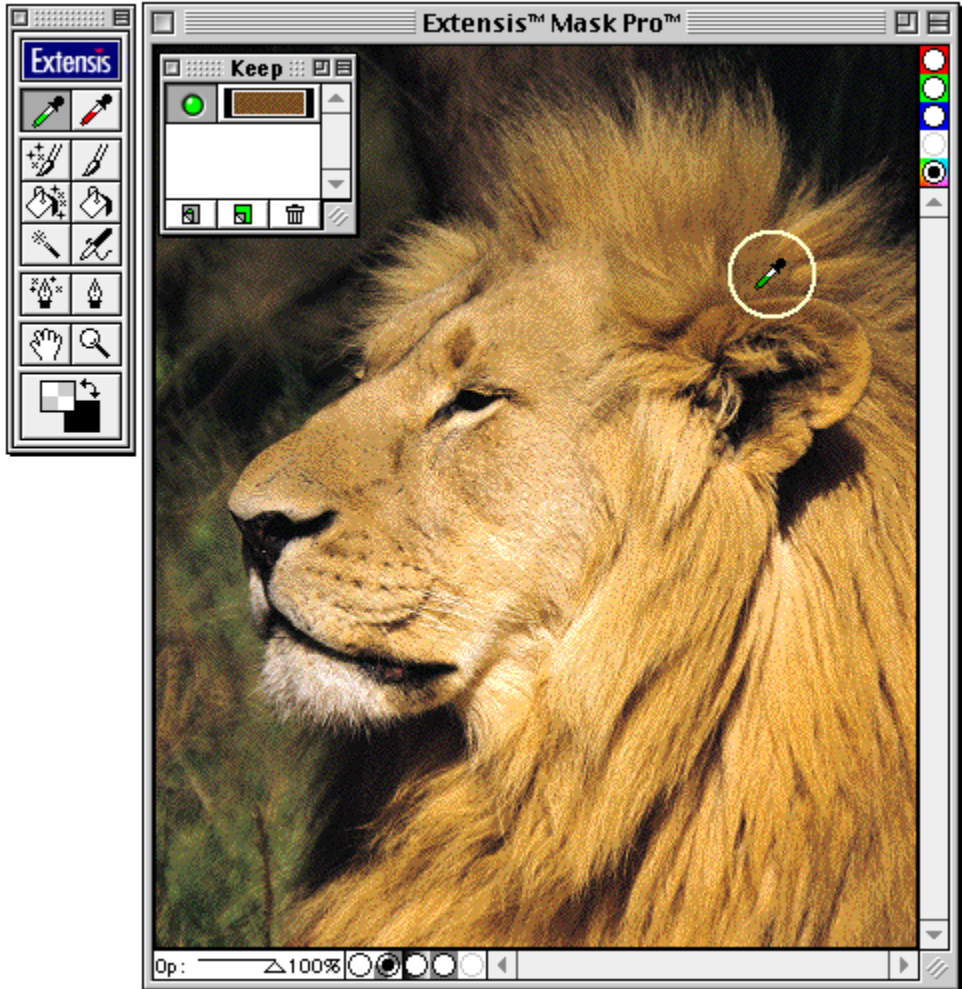


Green (Keep)

4. Choose the Green Eyedropper from the toolbox.

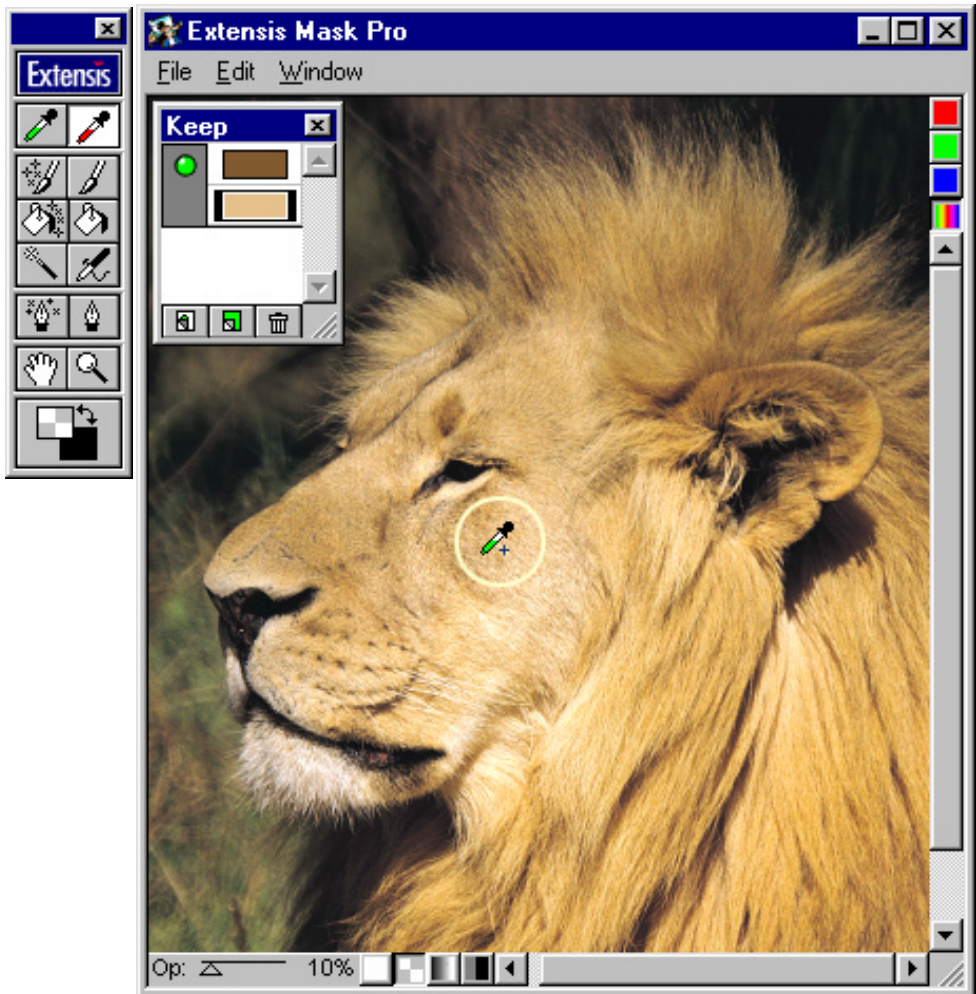
The Green Eyedropper is used to choose which colors are kept in the image.

5. Drag across the lion's mane, above his ear.



A keep color will be added to the Keep palette.

6. Press Shift, and drag across the light area of the lion's cheek.



Pressing the Shift key while dragging allows you to add a color to the palette. A "+" appears next to the eyedropper cursor, indicating that a color is being added.

If you do not press Shift, the color you select will replace the active color on the palette.



Magic Brush

7. Choose the Magic Brush from the Toolbox.
8. On the Transition/Threshold palette, move the Threshold slider to the halfway mark. Move the Transition slider just to the right of the Threshold slider.



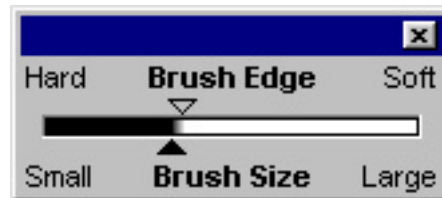
The Threshold slider controls how much of the image is kept or erased. The closer the slider is to the right, the more of the image is kept.

The Transition slider controls how smooth the edge of the mask will be.

9. On the Brush Palette, move the Edge slider just to the right of the Size slider.

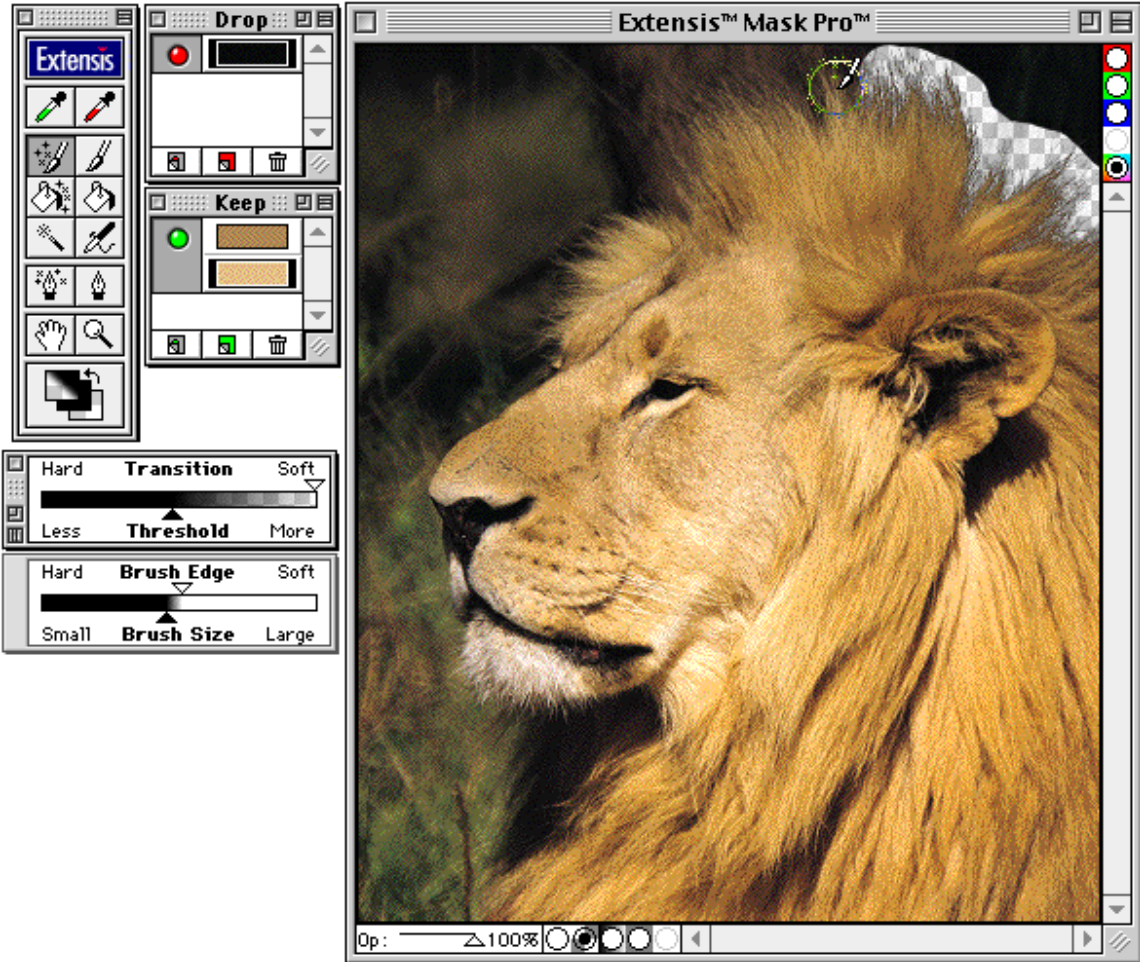
#### Tip

To make your brush bigger or smaller as you mask, use the **Right** and **Left Arrow** keys or the **Square Bracket** keys [ ].



The Brush Edge slider controls how smooth the edge of the brush itself will be.

10. Click and drag around the outside edge of the mane.



As you drag, you'll notice that the lion's mane is masked away from the background, which turns into transparency.

### Tutorial 3: Additional Keep/Drop Manipulation

1. If it isn't already open, open the "lion.psd" image in Mask Pro (see page 63).
2. If you have not just completed the "Basic Keep and Drop" tutorial, select a drop color and two keep colors as described in steps 2-6 of that tutorial (see page 65).
3. Click on the drop color in the drop palette.  
The cursor will change into the Red (drop) Eyedropper.
4. Drag across the green area in the lower left corner of the image.



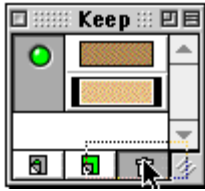
The drop color will change to the dark green color.

5. Using the Magic Brush, drag along the bottom part of the lion where the fur along the edge is golden.



You may have to adjust the Threshold setting (to the right) in order to get a good edge.





6. Click on one of the Keep colors and drag it to the trash can on the Keep palette.

This will leave you with a single active, Keep color.

7. Drag along the dark, almost black mane area of the lion to set the existing Keep color to the color of the dark portion of the mane.

### Tip

Use as few Keep and Drop colors as possible. You can generally achieve good results with no more than four colors total between the Keep and Drop palettes.



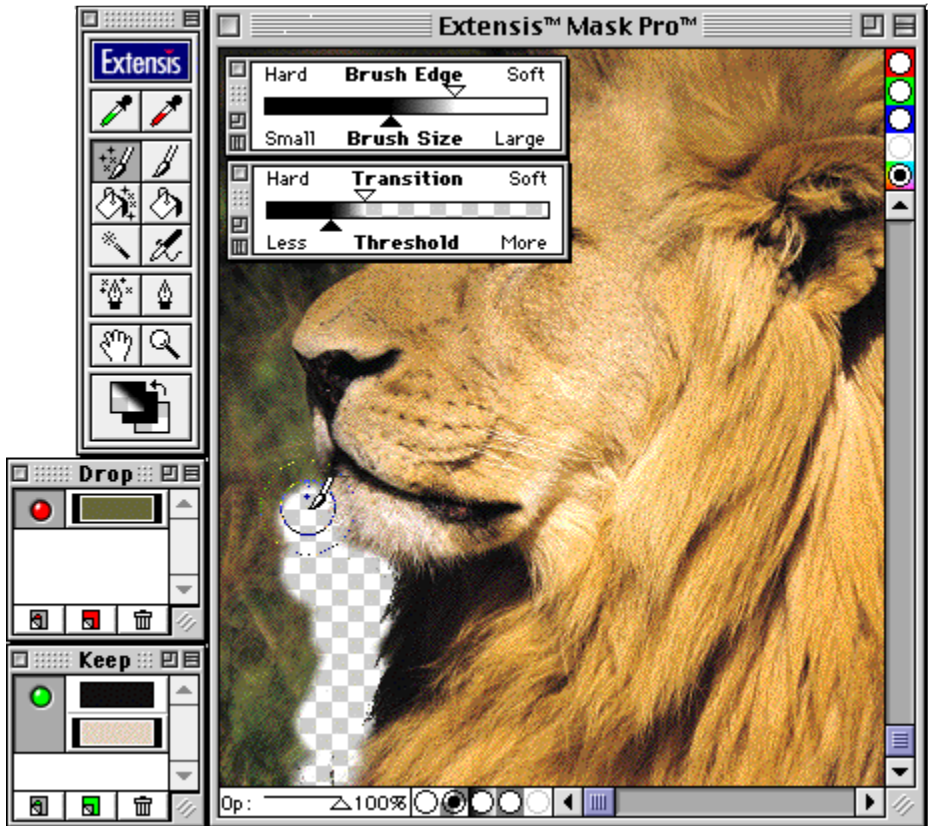
This will change the Keep color to an almost-black color.

8. Press Shift and drag through the chin to add the light color of the chin to the Keep palette.



This adds a second, much lighter color to the Keep palette. Be sure to avoid accidentally dragging into the background color.

- Using the Magic Brush, drag along the dark portion of the mane and the chin. Stop at the lips of the lion.



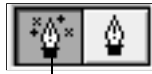
The background will be removed. You may have to play with the threshold setting to get the best result possible.

Threshold settings like these will produce good results on most images. For an in-depth discussion of Transition and Threshold, see *page 21*.



## Tutorial 4: Using PrecisionEdge Detection

1. If it isn't already open, open the "lion.psd" image in Mask Pro (see page 63).

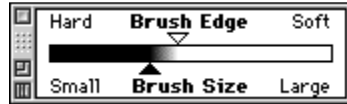


Magic Pen

2. Choose the Magic Pen tool from the Toolbox.

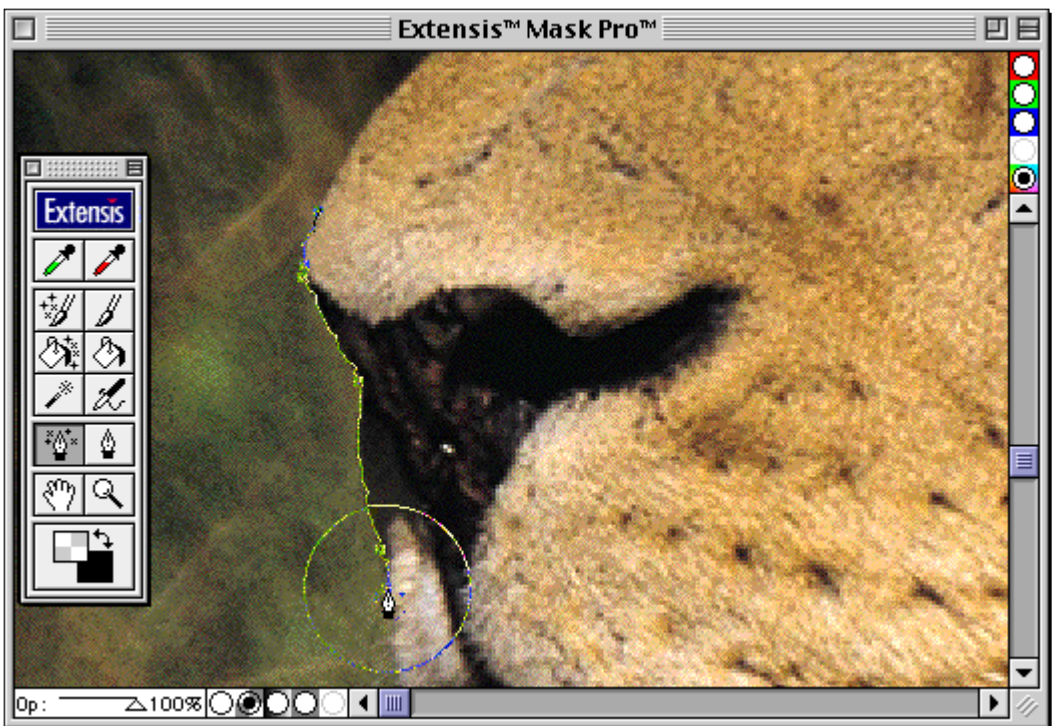
The Magic Pen finds edges automatically.

3. Set the Brush size about halfway on the Brush palette.



The Brush Size determines the search radius that the Magic Pen tool uses to find an edge.

4. Click above the Lion's nose and drag down around it.



As you drag, the path will snap to the Lion's nose.

5. If the edge snaps to the inside of the nose, backtrack to where the edge is on target, release the mouse to drop a point, then click and drag again to finish outlining the nose.

Setting a point in this way lets Mask Pro know which of the available edges you're trying to use.



Pen

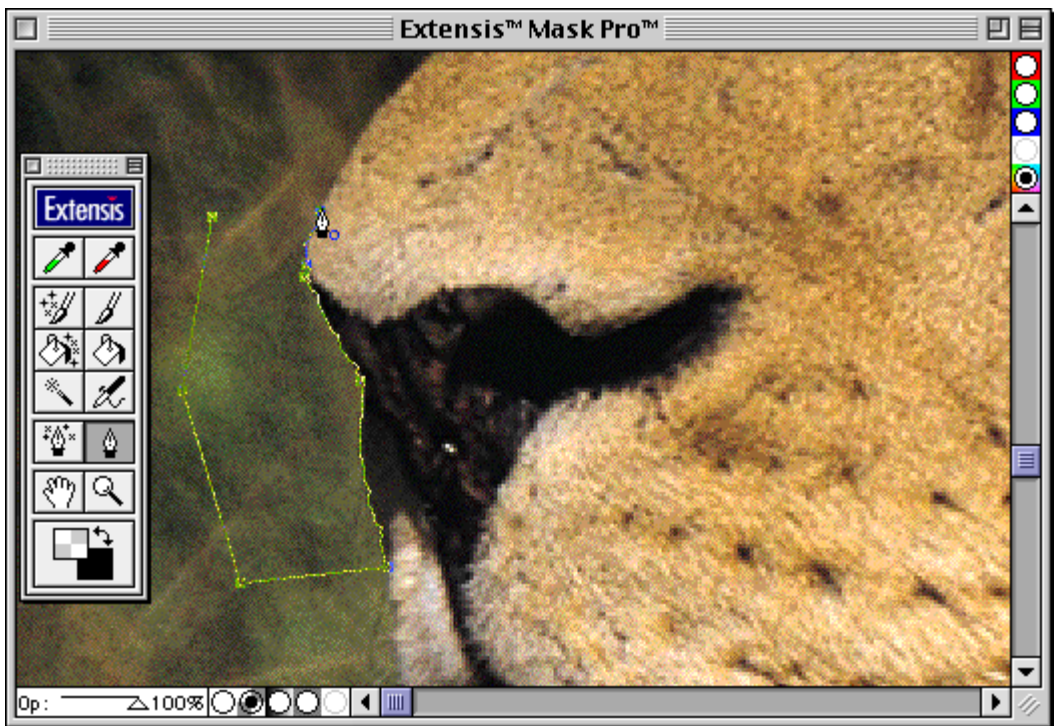
6. At the bottom of the nose, at the lip area, press the "P" key. This will change the tool to the regular Pen tool.

The Pen tool works exactly the same as the Pen tool in Adobe Illustrator (versions 7 & 8).

7. Click to the left of the nose, near the left edge of the image. Click again along the left edge of the image, up as high as when you first started dragging the Magic Pen tool.

The idea here is to surround an area outside the nose.

8. Click one more time on the original point where you started drawing with the Pen tool.



The Pen tool cursor will display a little circle when the end point meets the starting point (⦿). This lets you close the path, or continue drawing along the same path.

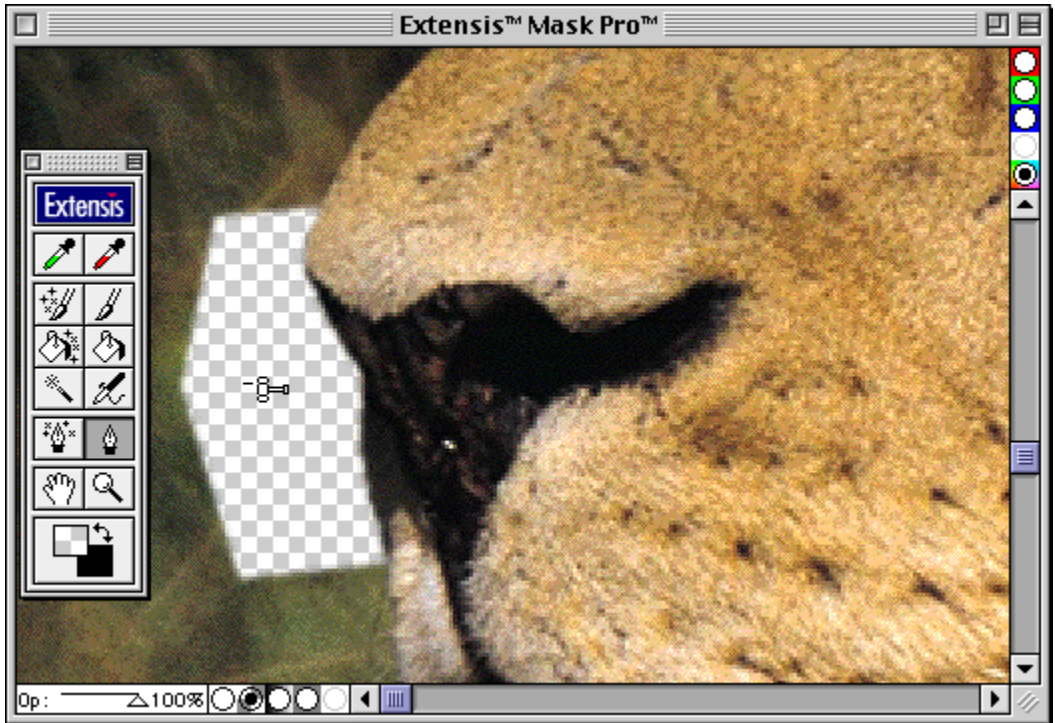


Erase

**9. Set the Mask Mode (at the bottom of the toolbox) to Erase.**

When you click with the Pen or Magic Pen tool after creating a closed path, the area you click in (inside the path or outside the path) will be erased.

**10. Click inside the path to remove those pixels.**



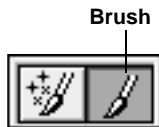
When placed inside the closed path, the Pen tool cursor will turn into a gavel (☞). When you click with the gavel, the pixels inside the path will disappear from the image.

## Tutorial 5: Cleaning Up a Mask

1. If it isn't already open, open the "lion.psd" image in Mask Pro (see page 63).
2. Create the mask edge using Mask Pro's tools.
3. Click the Cleanup Mode button (at the far right) along the bottom of the Mask Pro window.

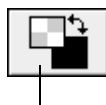


Cleanup mode shows you which pixels are being kept (white), dropped (black), and which ones are partially transparent (gray).



4. Choose the standard Brush tool.

The Brush tool ignores Keep and Drop colors, Erasing or Restoring depending on the Mask Mode setting in the toolbox.

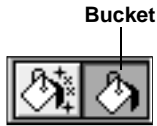


5. Change the mask mode (at the bottom of the toolbox) to Erase.

Using the Brush tool now will erase pixels from the image.

6. Draw a solid black line between the edge of the image and the area that can be dropped from the image by dragging with the Brush tool.

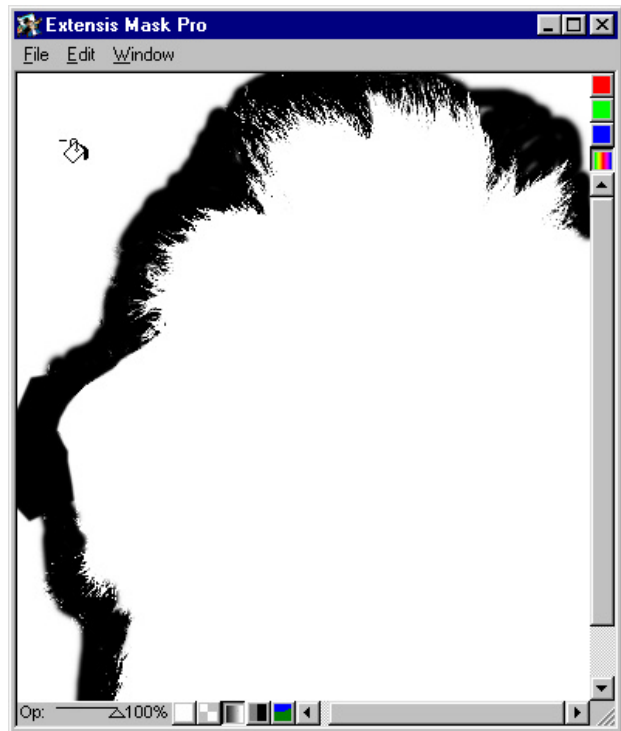
Be sure to draw a continuous line (no breaks). This will allow the Bucket tool to work without affecting the mask edge you've created.



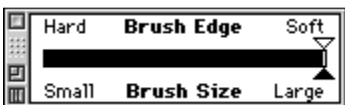
7. Choose the Bucket tool from the toolbox.

The Bucket tool is used to Erase or Restore solid areas.

8. Click in any white areas that have been separated from the mask edge.



Those white areas will turn black, indicating that they've been erased.

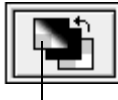


9. Make the Brush Size as large as possible.

You may have to reduce the Brush softness in order to drag the Size slider all the way to the right.



**Magic Fill**



**Erase/Restore**

**10. Choose the Magic Fill tool from the toolbox.**

This is the tool that looks like the Bucket tool with sparkles. It is used to erase/restore any “loose” pixels that fit within the brush size rectangle.

**11. Change the Mask Mode to Erase/Restore**

This mode allows the Magic Fill tool to get rid of both specs outside of the mask and holes within the mask.

**12. Double-click on the Magic Fill tool.**

All specs and holes will be eliminated.

