



Cover Up or CU, is a sort of "Digital Foundation" or "Electronic Clearasil" - it's used for fixing blemishes and red or blotchy skin, but unlike a typical coverup, it doesn't simply paint over the blemish, it actually tries to alter the color and texture of the underlying skin to erase the blemish. It also allows you to smooth the repaired blemish to reduce skin texture. Cover Up keys on color, so the color of the blemish must be distinct enough from normal skintone for CU to isolate it.



Cover Up's skin selection and processing routines have been rewritten from the ground up utilizing the same high speed, precision algorithms as Makeup Artist. The skin repair routines are completely new, state of the art and a quantum leap beyond the original Digital Cover Up plugin.

Cover Up is based on FxFactory's plugin engine which makes use of the power of your GFX card to do its rendering, thus does not load down your CPU. It is compatible with the hosts that FxFactory supports, currently FCP 6 through Final Cut X, Motion 3 upto Motion 5, and After Effects. It requires at least 10.5 (Leopard) of the operating system.

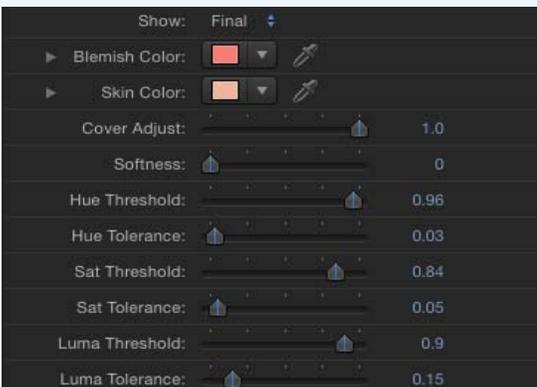
How to use the Cover Up plugin

Cover Up generates a mask based on the selected Blemish Color. This mask is used to determine where skin repair/color matching/smoothing occurs. You can adjust the mask to suit your situation. You may alter the characteristics of the repaired skin "fill" so it is only subtly altered to remove the blemish or so that it completely replaces the color of the entire image.

First I'll go over the controls for CU, then follow with a basic tutorial to adjust skin selection and tips for best use.

Because Cover Up uses a chroma keyer to select the blemish, if you are planning on adding a stylized "look" to your material (for instance with the Movie Color plugin), it is best to add CU first, before anything that may alter the skintones. However, if skintones are "off" due to localized lighting conditions, it can be better to correct for that prior to adding the Cover Up plugin.

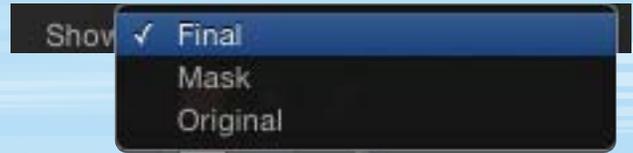
Cover Up plugin Control Description



Cover Up's basic setup can give you decent results right "out of the box", but you can often improve on this with some fine-tuning.

You may control what to Show (Final, Mask, Original), the Blemish Color, Skin Color, Cover Adjust, Softness, and the keyer adjustments (Threshold and Tolerance for Hue, Saturation, and Luminance). When the Show selector is on Mask, eCU makes keyer adjustments easily visible by turning the affected areas white.

We'll now step through each of the controls and give a brief explanation of their function.



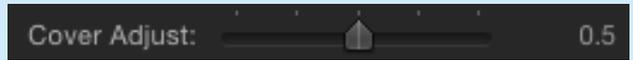
Show controls what aspect of the image is displayed, Final, Mask, or Original.



Use the Blemish Color eyedropper to choose a color most representative of the blemishes to be erased.



Choose Skin Color from an area not too far from the blemish to be erased as the blemish color will be replaced with the skin color.

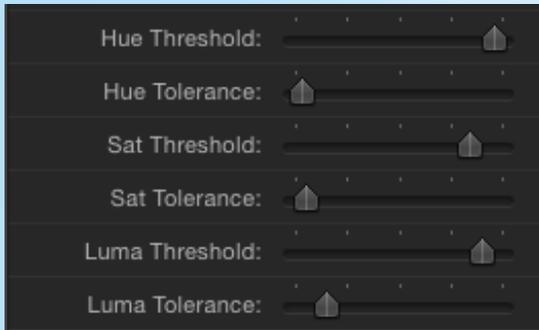


Lowering Cover Adjust reduces the range of tones that are allowed, and replaces those outside that range with the selected Skin Color.



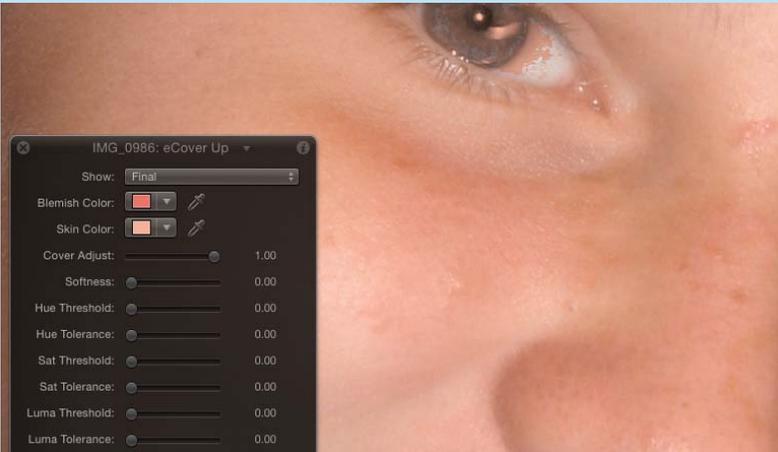
Softness applies a blur to reduce unwanted skin detail.

Adjusting Cover Up's keyer



To adjust Cover Up's blemish keyer, you are given **Threshold** and **Tolerance** controls for **Hue**, **Saturation**, and **Luma**. **Threshold** controls how far a color may fall outside the selected blemish color and still be included in the repair. **Tolerance** controls the fall off at the edge of the region to be smoothed. Raising **Tolerance** takes away from the mask, raising **Threshold** gives back.

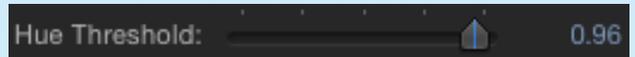
Begin by setting **Show** to **Original**, then using the **Blemish Color** eyedropper to choose a color most representative of the blemishes to be erased.



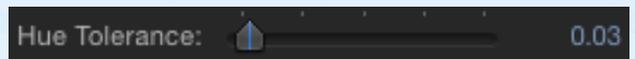
Change **Show** to **Mask** and set all **Threshold** and **Tolerance** sliders to zero. This should turn your entire image white to indicate that repair will take place over the entire image.

To see what that might look like, change **Show** to **Final** and you'll see what the "fill" will look like.

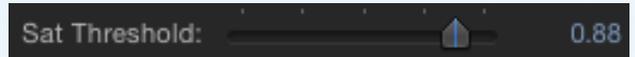
Change it back to **Mask** to continue.



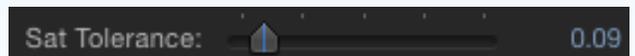
Begin bringing the **Hue Threshold** slider up until it just starts eating into areas you'd like to be smoothed.



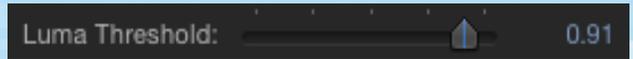
Then bring up the **Hue Tolerance** slider until it adds back most of the edges that were eaten away where you want smoothing.



Do the same for the **Sat Threshold** - bringing it up until it starts eating away at areas you'd like to keep.



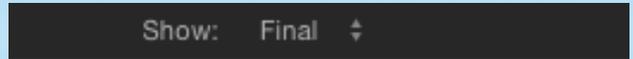
Again, bring them back by sliding up the **Sat Tolerance**...



Finally, repeat the process with the Luma Threshold slider...



...and the Luma Tolerance.



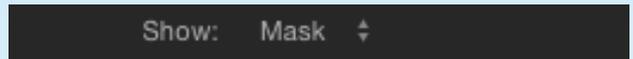
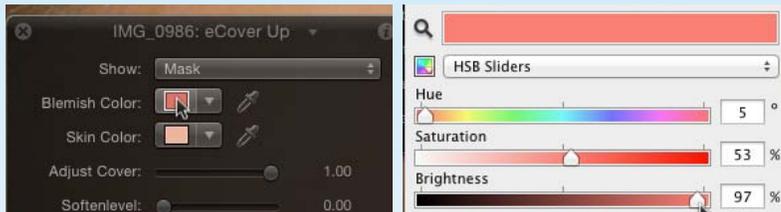
Now if you switch back to Show: Final, you'll see the results of your efforts...

Tips for best results



Sometimes you can inadvertently get areas of your image selected and end up with results like flesh colored lips, etc... that you can't seem to lose because tightening the controls on the key means you lose the fix on blemish areas you wish to retain.

When this is the case, often you can alter the **Blemish Color** values slightly to fine tune the key.



With Show set to Mask, click on the Blemish Color box to bring up the color selector and switch to HSB Sliders.



Then try adjusting the Hue/Saturation/Brightness to see if you can reduce the selection on the lips, but maintain sufficient coverage of the blemish.

Repairing Red or Blotchy skin



Often when shooting interviews, there either isn't enough time or budget or the subject rejects the use of makeup. This can lead to capturing them with red, blotchy and/or shiny skin.

Use Cover Up as a makeup foundation to bring the problem areas back to normal skin tones.



Use the Blemish Color Eyedropper to choose an area of red skin that is representative of the color you wish to correct.

Do the same to select the desired skin color.



Change **Show** to **Mask** and use the procedure outlined above for adjusting the skintone keyer to ensure you have the area of redness you wish to fix selected.

Switch to **Show: Final** to see the results and alter the **Skin Color** and/or the **Cover Adjust** if necessary to achieve a natural looking coloration. We can take down the forehead shine with a second application of the eCoverup plugin.



Adjust your key carefully to isolate only the shiny skin, including tweaking your Blemish Color.



For fixing shiny skin, it's best to slide the **Cover Adjust** to 0 to make the "thickest" layer of coverup.

With careful tuning, results similar to makeup can be achieved.