Create a Brick Wall in Photoshop

Read our instructions on how to be a digital bricklayer.

By Bert Monroy

A brick wall is a collection of small rectangular stone-textured shapes, usually fairly symmetrical in placement. You can build a brick wall by creating the shape for the wall and filling it with a pattern. With a little further modification you can add a sense of randomness to the bricks. It's easy to create the basic pattern. I'll show you how it's done on today's show.

1. Make the grid visible (View > Show > Grid).

2. Go to the Preferences dialog box for the Grid.

   > Click Edit > Preferences > Guides, Grid & Slices under Windows or Mac OS 9.1 and later.
   > Click Photoshop > Preferences > Guides, Grid & Slices under Mac OS X.

   Set the grid subdivisions to 11.

   In order to make it easy to create and select, I changed the grid subdivisions in the Preferences dialog to an uneven number. The odd-numbered square in the grid creates the space necessary for the grout between the bricks. The high number makes the subdivisions small enough for the size of the grout.

3. Create a new layer. Zoom in so that one grid section takes up the entire screen. This will make it easier to see what you're doing.

4. With the rectangle selection tool, select a rectangular shape that takes up four subdivisions down and 11 across.

5. Fill the selection with a color similar to that of a brick.

6. Clone the brick over to the right and then down to form the pattern. Make sure that the spacing between each brick is one grid subdivision. Place the brick on the second row so that it's centered below the two bricks above.

7. Make sure the background is transparent by clicking off the eye icon in the background layer. Now return to the top layer and use the

Rectangular Marquee tool to select the bricks. Turn them into a pattern by selecting the Define Pattern option in the Edit menu (Edit > Define Pattern). Take note of the specific area being selected in the figure shown here. This will ensure that the pattern will be accurate. The excess grid area selected to the left and below the bottom brick will create the grout area on the opposite side of the brick. Where one edge of the pattern ends, the other picks up. This is called step and repeat.

8. Once the pattern is created you can deselect (Command-D on a Mac, Control-D on a PC).

9. Zoom back out to 100 percent view and turn off the eye icon for the layer where you created the pattern. Turn back on the eye icon for the Background layer.

10. Create a new layer and fill it with the pattern of bricks. You can do this by pressing Shift + Delete or by choosing Fill from the Edit menu. In the Use section of the dialog box, choose Pattern and, in the Custom Pattern window, select the bricks pattern.

11. A layer for the wall itself is created behind the area with the bricks. This layer is filled with the color you want for the grout. Apply the Add Noise filter with an amount adequate for simulating the rough quality of grout.

12. Now you need to add texture to the bricks. The Add Noise filter does the trick. The amount is less than the amount given to the grout and it's put in Monochrome mode.

13. Select the layer with the brick pattern. Double-click it in the layer's palette to bring up its Layer Style. Apply Bevel and Emboss. Choose Outer Bevel for the Style. This adds dimensionality to the bricks and makes them look like they're protruding from the wall.

14. You need to attain the random nature of a brick wall. With the Dodge and Burn tools, you dab random bricks with the brush set to the size of the height of a brick. Randomly darkening and lightening individual bricks will give the wall a more realistic look.

Adding an occasional crack here and there adds even more realism. By using a tiny paintbrush set to a dark color, you can create little cracks. For added wear and tear, use a small Eraser tool and hit the edges of the bricks to take away the hard edges.

Bert Monroy is the author of "Photoshop Studio with Bert Monroy," which is available at Amazon.com.

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