

Creating a rainbow with sparkles in Photoshop

- 1 Start with a square document. I'm using 500 x 500 px. RGB. 300 dpi.
- 2 Create a new layer. Double click on the name 'Layer 1' and change to Rainbow



- 3 Use the Rectangular Marquee Tool on the Rainbow layer to select a long rectangle starting near the bottom of the document making sure it doesn't touch the edges.

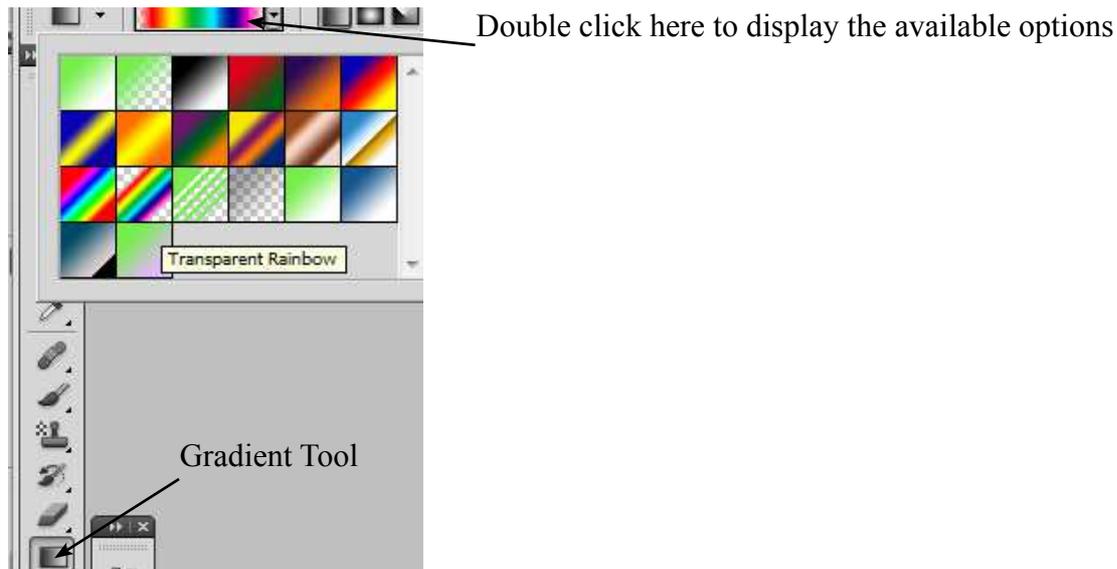


- 4 Select the Gradient tool

The Gradient tool may be hidden by the Bucket Fill tool. If the Bucket Tool is visible, just hold down the little black corner on the bottom right of the icon to display the Gradient tool.

5 Select Transparent or Spectrum Gradient from the gradient options

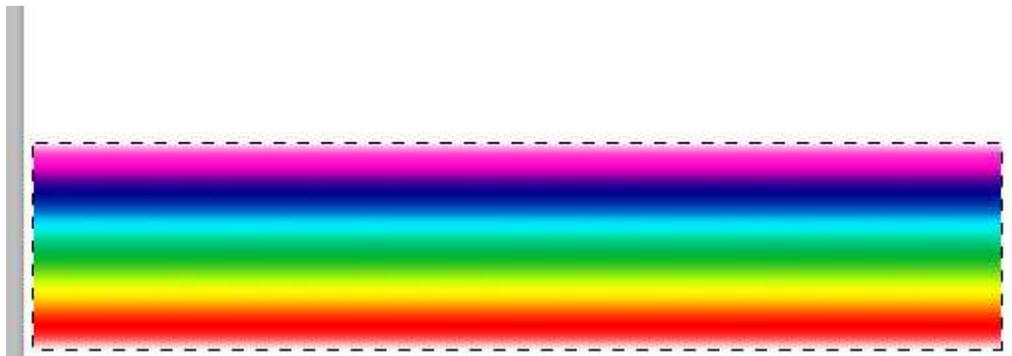
Double click on the gradient bar to open the palette of gradients available



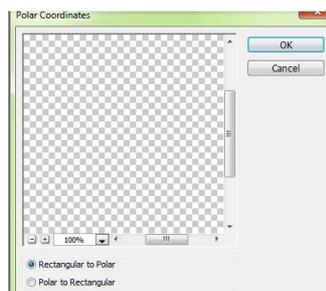
Click OK

6 Position the cursor on the bottom inner edge of the marquee, hold down Shift, hold down the left mouse button and drag to the top edge of the marquee then release.

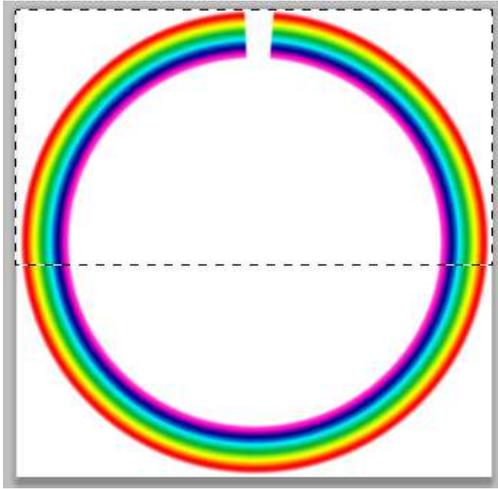
While you do this, all you will see is a straight line going from bottom to top but when you release Shift and Left Click button you should have a vertical rainbow.



7 **Deselect** (This is an important step!) then go to Filter > Distort > Polar Co-ordinates. Click on the Rectangular to Polar box check box



8



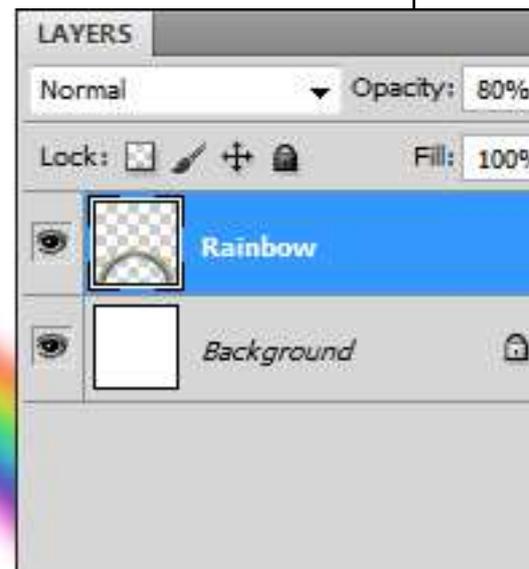
Draw a marquee across the top half where the rainbow doesn't join and hit Delete.

This will leave you with an upside down rainbow!

9 Go to Edit > Transform > Flip Vertical to get your rainbow the right way round.

10 Go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur and enter a value of around 3 to 4 pixels.

11 Reduce the layer opacity to around 80%. Check the preview till you're happy with the effect.

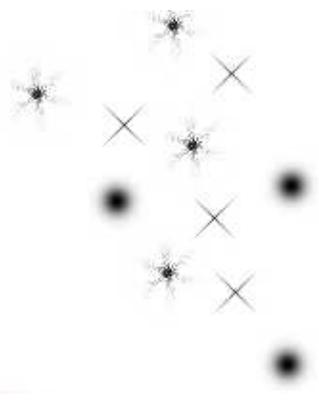


Lets add a few sparkles to make our rainbow a magical one.

12 Create a new layer above the rainbow. Name this layer Stars.

13 Set the foreground black (ie, you are working with a black brush) and pick a brush like Starburst 55 from the brush selection.

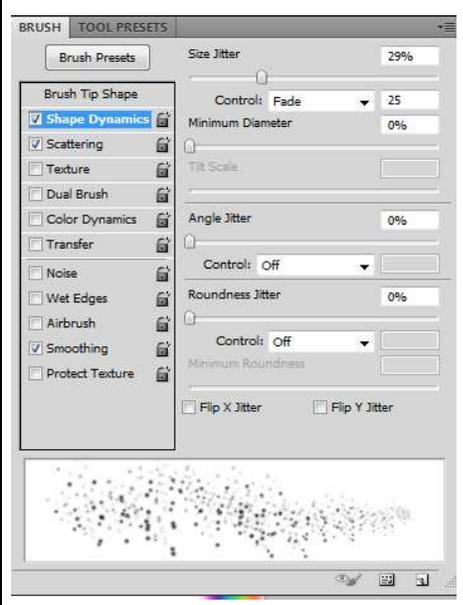
Click to make 3 or 4 stars, then change brush and select other star shaped brushes that are dissimilar enough to give a little variation to the sparkles and add a few more 'stars' to the layer. I used Crosshatch 50 px and a Soft Round 20 px to create the stars below.



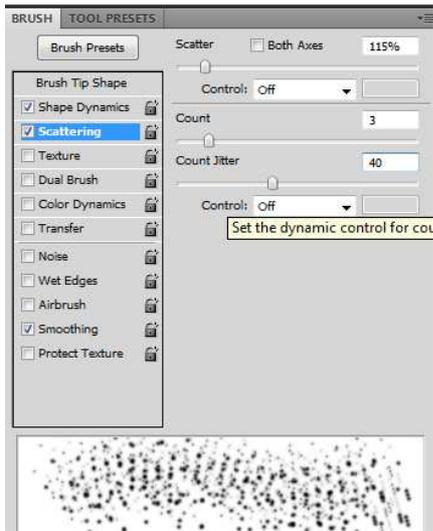
14 On the Stars layer, draw a lasso around the grouping of stars you have made. Go to Edit > Define Brush Preset and enter a name for your star brush. I called mine 'Sparkle Stars'.

15 You can delete the Stars layer now as we have no further need of it.

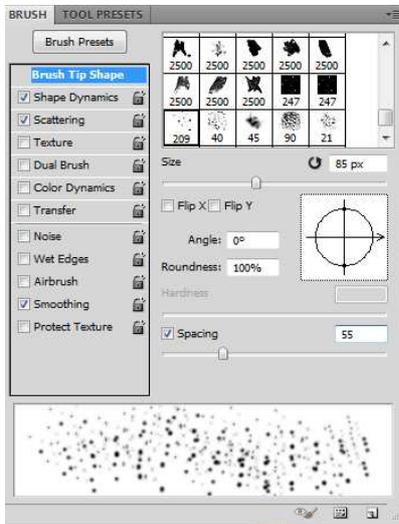
16 Select your new brush and Open the Brush settings (not Brush Presets). The important setting here is the Control - select Fade. You can leave the others as default or experiment as you wish.



17 Then click on Scattering and enter the values below:



18 Set Spacing to around 50%.

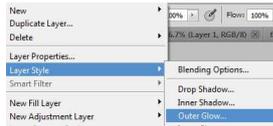


19 Use your new brush to draw a trail of stars, this time using a white brush set. Set the size of the brush according to the effect you want to achieve.

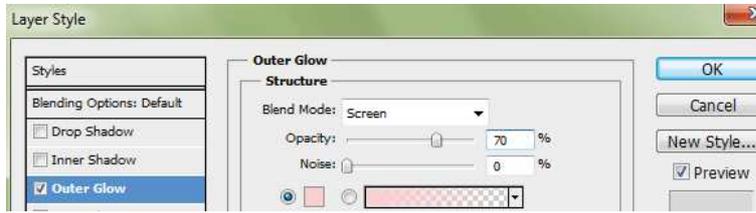
20 Duplicate the layer (Right-click on the highlighted layer and select Duplicate Layer from the drop-down list).

Go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur and set the radius to around 4 pixels.

21 Duplicate the new layer (the blurred layer) and this time go to Layer > Layer Styles> Outer Glow



Change the glow colour and transparency to suit yourself - I've gone for a soft pink.



There! Now it's over to you to save it and use it when ever you need a rainbow in your layouts or graphics!

