

Substance 3D Painter Basics | How to Highlight Material Details with the Sharpen Filter

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video version: <https://youtu.be/EVCrQDc3nqs>

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Hello everyone! In this brief basic videotutorial about Substance 3D Painter, we will learn how to highlight material details using the Sharpen filter.

On screen, I'm showing rendering examples created in Blender using textures exported from Substance Painter. These examples show the effects of this filter.



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As you can see, this filter is particularly useful for materials with fibers and streaks, such as wood, or materials with imperfections, scratches, dents, and other similar details, like the worn metal on the barrel model of the barrel currently shown on screen.

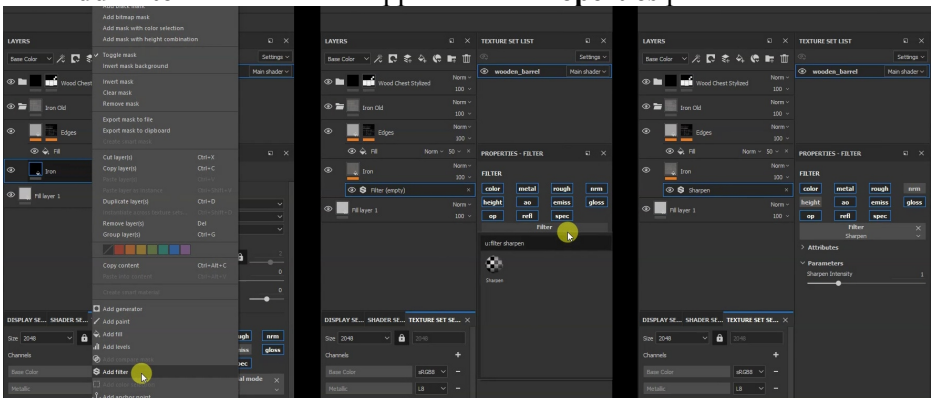


We will specifically look at two methods of applying the filter: to a single layer and to the entire stack of layers, using the Passthrough mode in the latter case.

The tutorial was recorded with a slightly older version of Substance Painter, but the steps are still valid for the more recent versions of 3D Painter.

The first application method we need to explore is for individual layers.

Adding the Sharpen filter to a selected layer is very simple. Just right-click on the layer, select **Add Filter** from the layer menu, and then specify the **Sharpen** filter in the **Add Filter** menu that will appear in the **Properties** panel.



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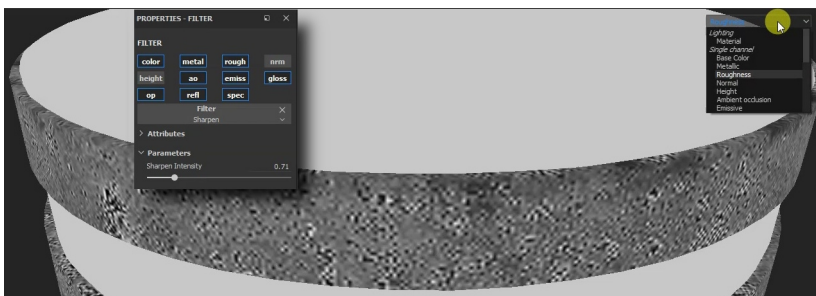
As you can see, the only parameter available for the filter is **Intensity**, which is self-explanatory. Generally, it is not recommended to set a value higher than 1 for this parameter, as the final effect might become overly noisy.



To determine the appropriate intensity for the effect, try experimenting by adjusting both the lighting orientation and the camera distance from the object.

In the **Properties** panel, you can select or deselect the channels on which the effect will be applied. When testing, it may be useful to toggle channels on or off one at a time and change the viewport display mode in the 3D view to isolate and examine the differences channel by channel.

For example, the filter might work well on the **Base Color** channel but appear too strong on **Roughness**, or vice versa.



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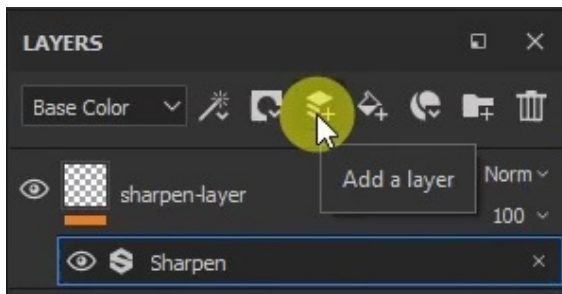
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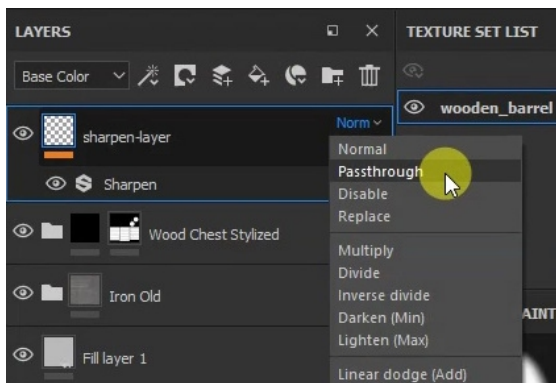
Remember that, in general, **Roughness** and **Glossiness** should either both be enabled or both be disabled to avoid inconsistencies in the exported textures for the **Metallic** and **Specular** workflows.

We've seen how to apply the Sharpen filter to a single layer, but how can we apply it to all the layers of a material or, at least, to a subset of them?

The solution is to position an empty layer above all the layers that need the Sharpen filter and apply the filter to this empty layer. Be careful to add an **empty layer**, not a **fill layer**!



However, after applying the Sharpen filter to the new layer, you won't see any effect in the scene. This happens because the blending mode of this layer needs to be changed from the default **Normal** to **Passthrough**, which applies the filters and tools of the layer to all the layers below it.

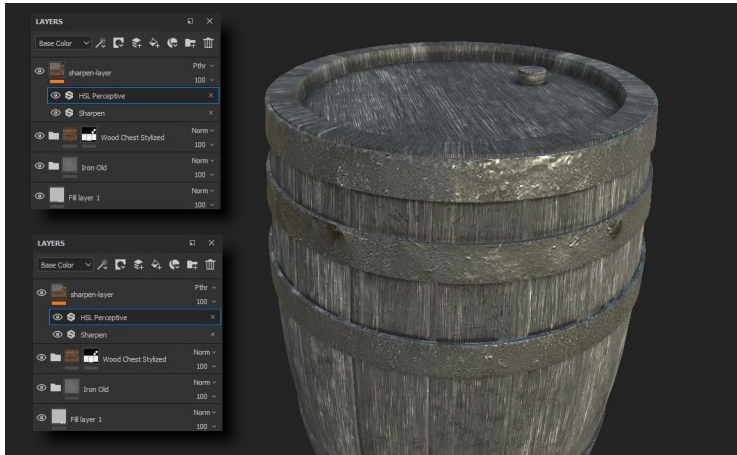


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Using an empty layer in **Passthrough** mode also works for other filters, so keep this in mind if you want to apply another filter to multiple layers of a material!



That's it for this very short video tutorial! I hope you found it helpful! See you soon!