

# How to Use the Oil Paint Filter in Photoshop to Turn a Photo into a Painting

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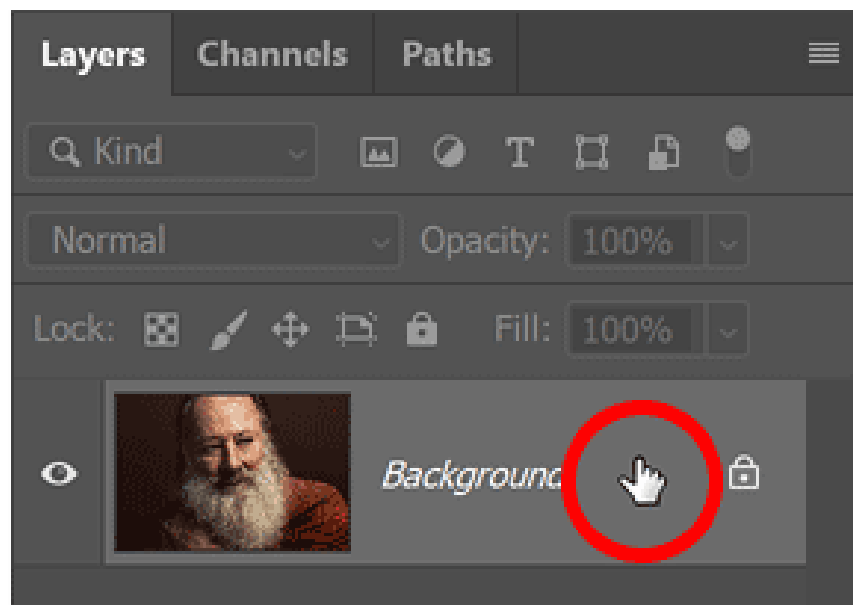
You'll even learn how to combine two Oil Paint filters on the same image, with different settings for different areas, for even better results.

## Step 1: Convert layer to smart object

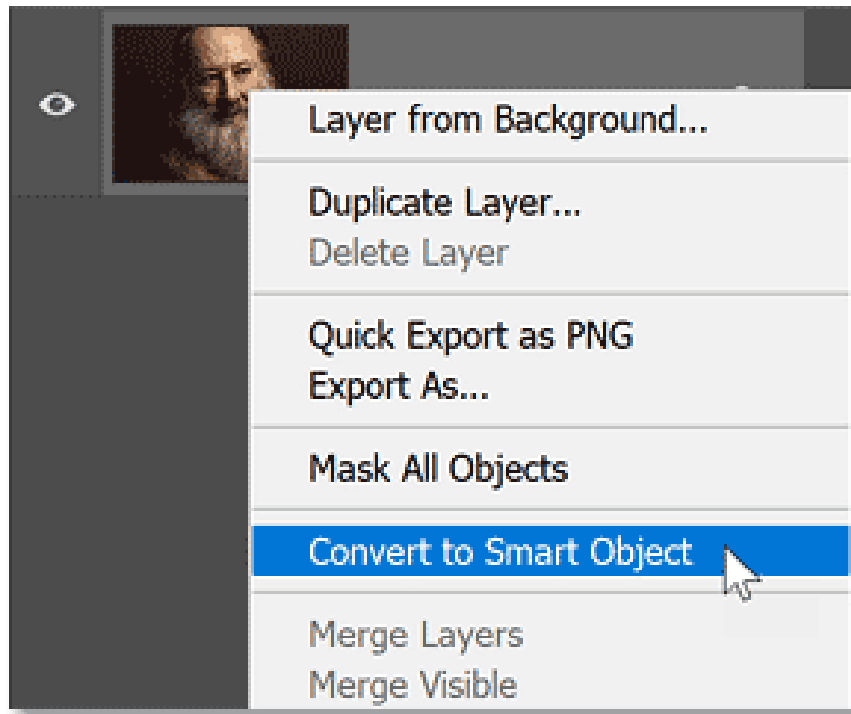
Before applying the Oil Paint filter, first convert the layer to a smart object. This will allow you to apply the Oil Paint as a smart filter, allowing you to edit the filter settings in case you want to go back and make changes.

This is especially useful if you need to apply two copies of the Oil Paint filter to the same image, as follows.

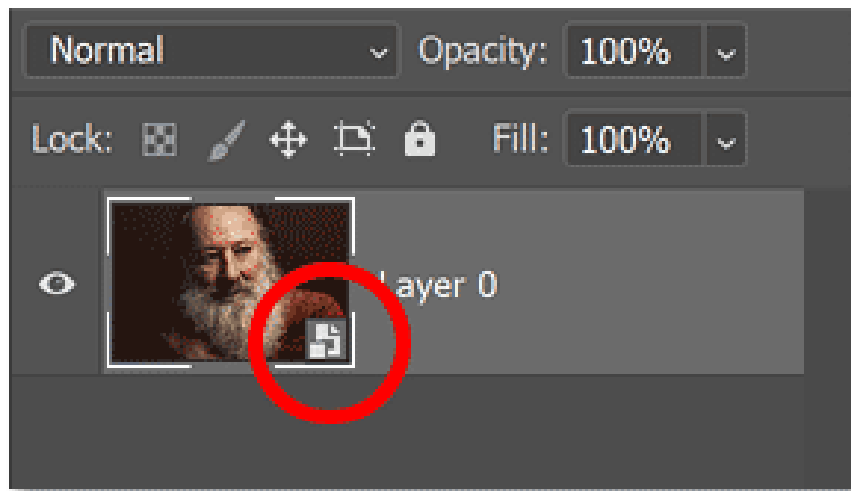
In the **Layers** panel , right-click on the empty gray part of the layer.



Then select **Convert to Smart Object** from the menu.

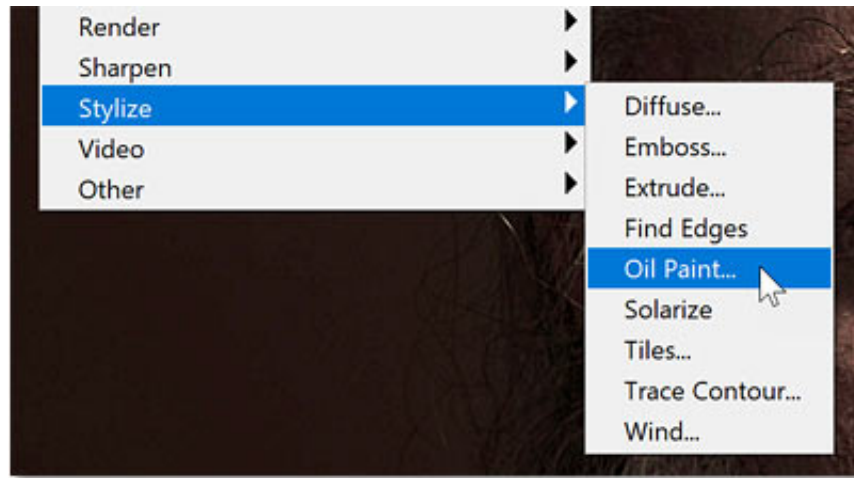


A smart object icon appears in the layer thumbnail, indicating that the layer is now a smart object.



## Step 2: Select the Oil Paint filter

Next, go to the **Filter** menu in the menu bar, select **Stylize** and then select **Oil Paint** .

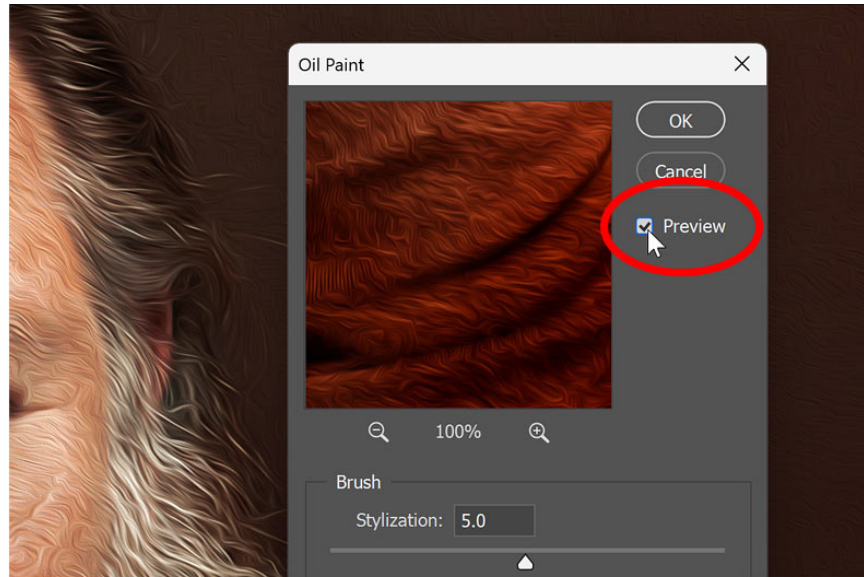


This will open the Oil Paint filter dialog box.



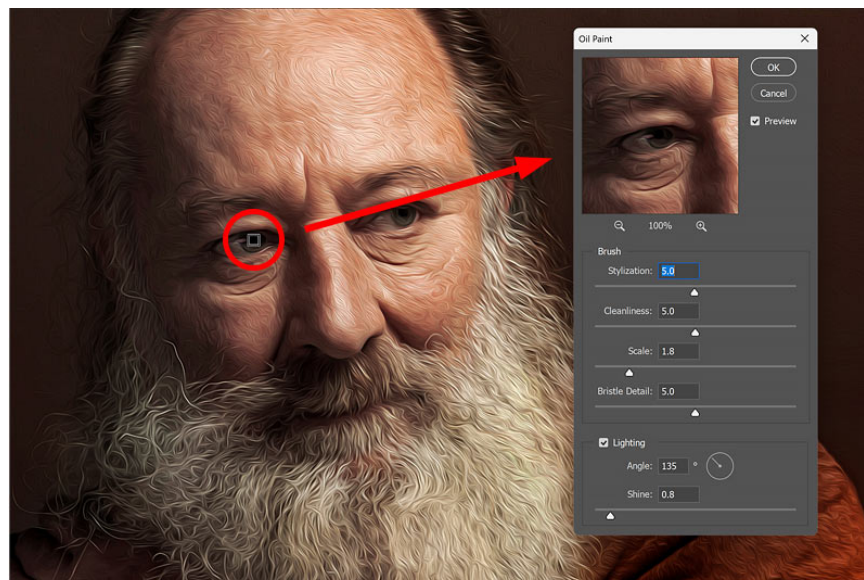
### Step 3: Make sure Preview is enabled

Make sure the **Preview** option in the dialog box is enabled. This will give you a live preview of the oil painting effect as you adjust the sliders.



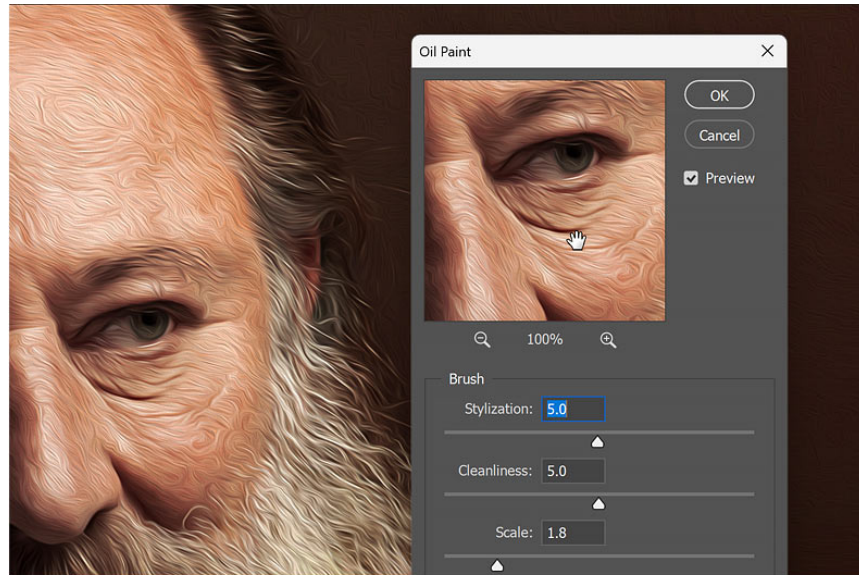
## Step 4: Center a portion of the image in the Preview window

Then, click on a part of the image to center inside the Preview window. For example, I'll click on the man's eye.



You can then examine that portion of the image in the Preview window at 100% zoom, while still zooming out far enough from the document to see what the oil painting effect looks like across the entire image.

And you can click and drag inside the Preview window to scroll the image around and examine different areas.

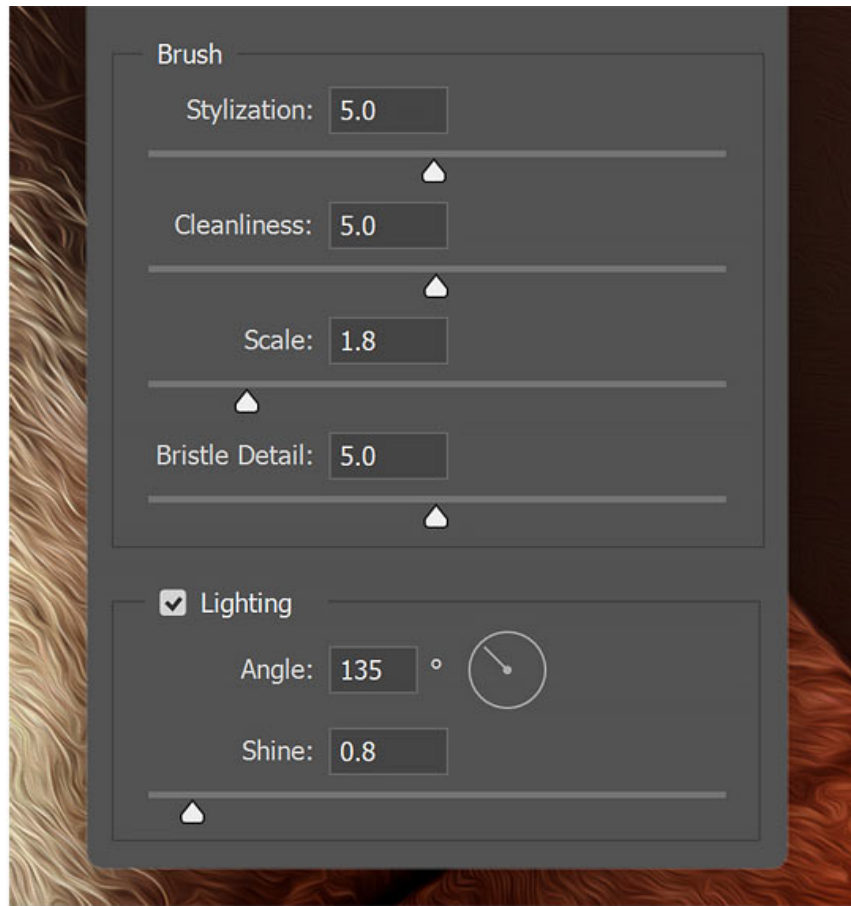


## Step 5: Drag the Brush slider to create an oil painting effect

The Oil Paint filter is very easy to use. The first 4 sliders from the top control different aspects of the brush. And the options at the bottom let you adjust the lighting.

We'll start with the brush options to create the main effect, then look at how the lighting options can change the intensity of the effect.

But one thing to note is that all of these sliders work together. So the result you get when you drag one slider will depend on the settings for the other sliders.

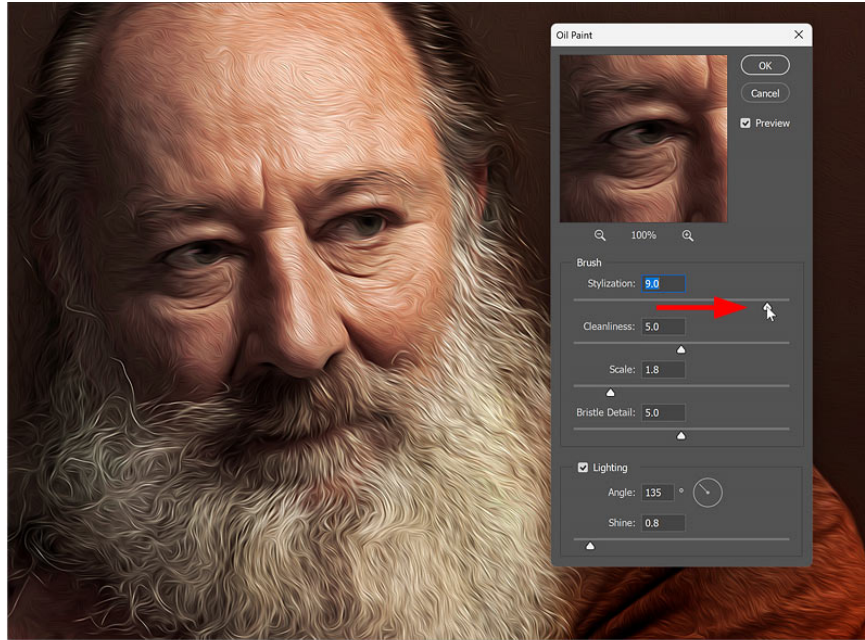


## Stylization

The Stylization slider at the top controls the length of the brush strokes. Drag to the left for shorter, more detailed brush strokes.



Or right for longer, smoother brush strokes.

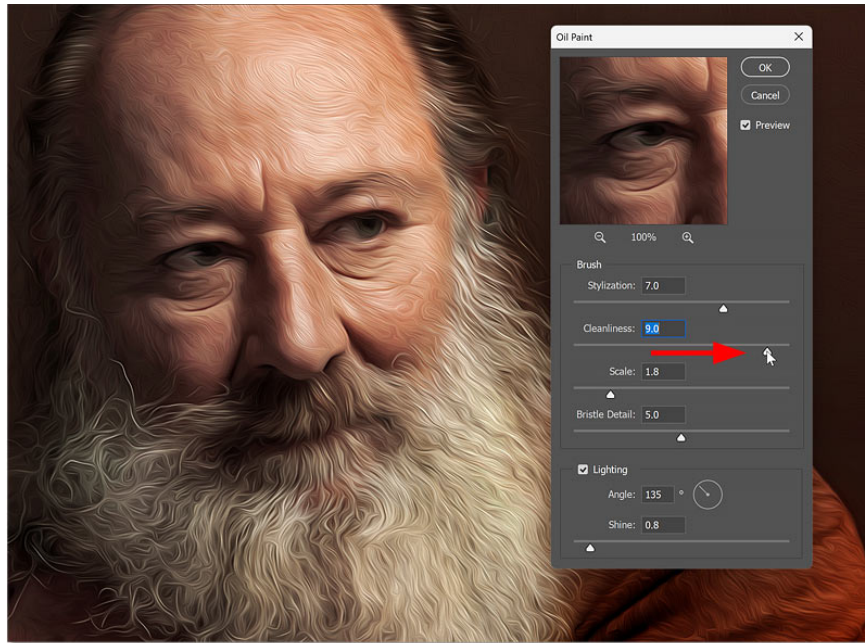


## Cleanliness

The Cleanliness slider controls the smoothness of the brush strokes. Dragging the slider to the left makes the painting look more textured and detailed.



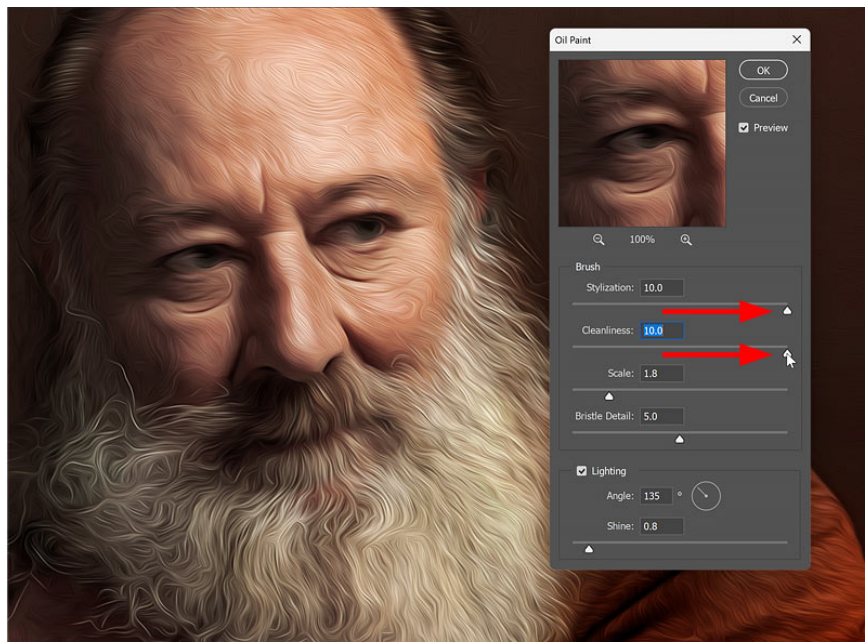
And drag to the right to make the picture look smoother and cleaner.



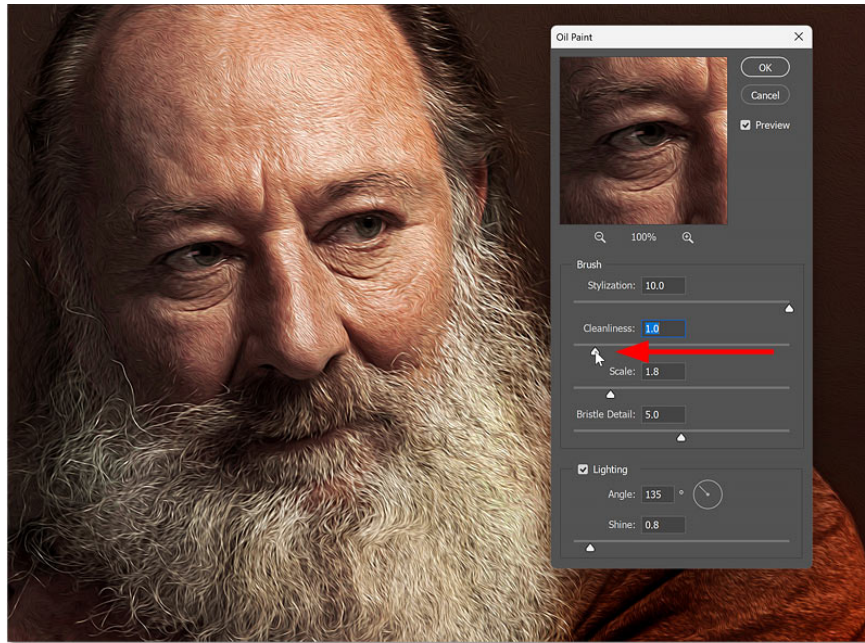
## Different slider combinations produce different results

All of these sliders work together to create the overall oil painting effect. And that's especially true of these first two sliders.

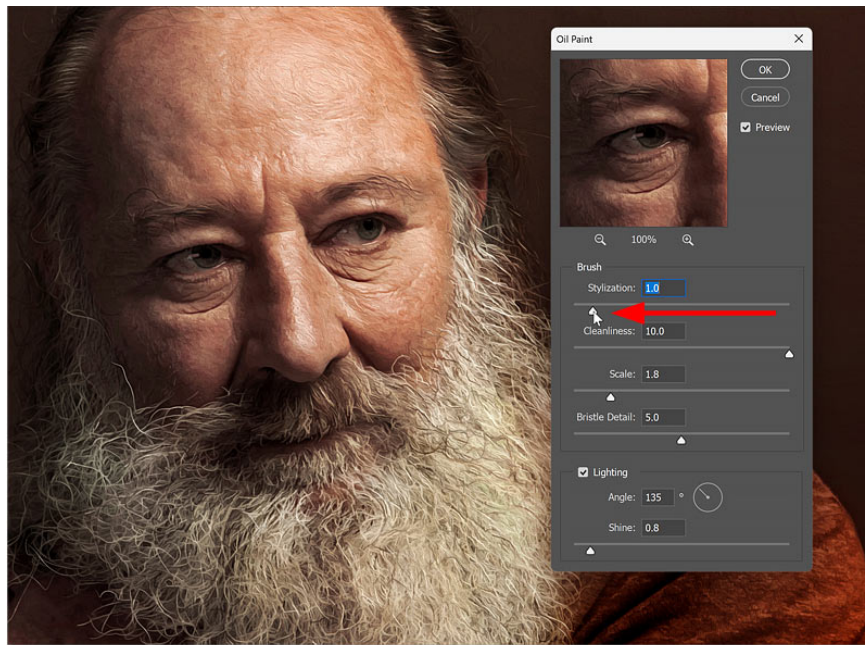
Drag both the Stylization slider and the Cleanliness slider all the way to their maximum values. This gives the painting the longest, smoothest lines possible.



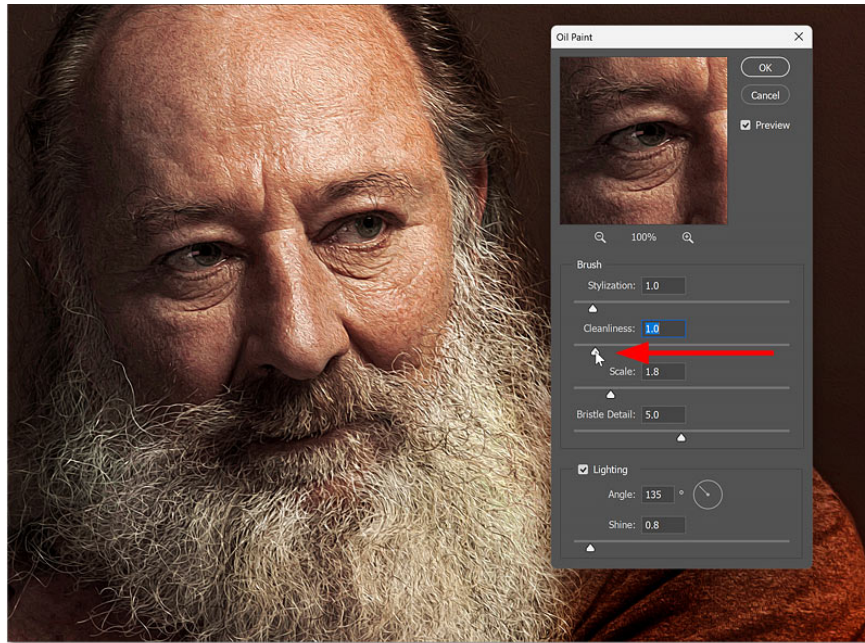
But if you reduce Cleanliness, notice how the brush strokes tend to look shorter even though the Stylization slider (which controls the length of the strokes) is still at its maximum value.



If you pull Cleanliness back to the right but reduce Stylization, the picture looks very detailed and textured even with Cleanliness at its highest setting.



And if you then reduce the Cleanliness value, the textures and details will be highlighted even more. So you will definitely need to experiment with the sliders to get the desired look.



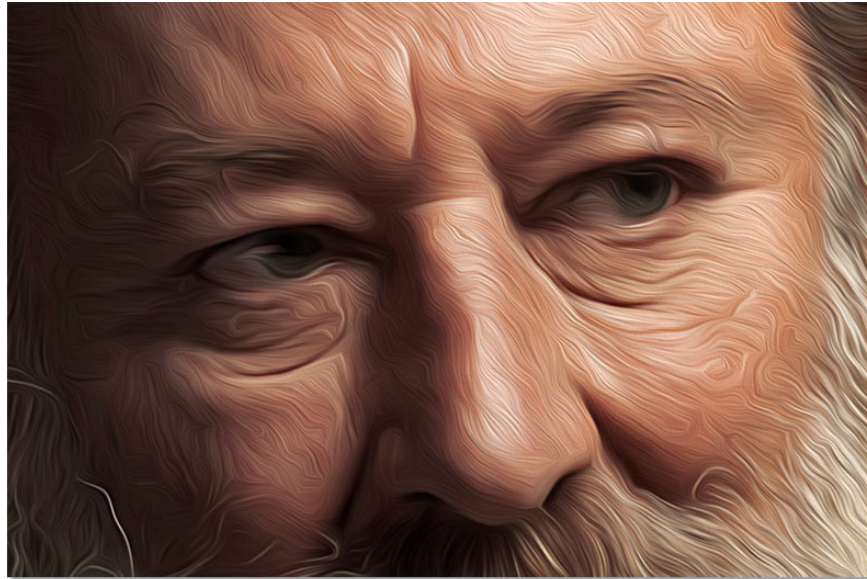
### **Some areas of the picture look better than others.**

Before moving on to the next slider, let's quickly review a problem you often encounter when trying to find the best Oil Paint filter settings for your image.

For example, set Stylization to 7 and Cleanliness to 8 for a smooth, wispy effect, especially in the man's hair and beard.



But those settings affect the subject's eyes, they are too blurry and distorted.

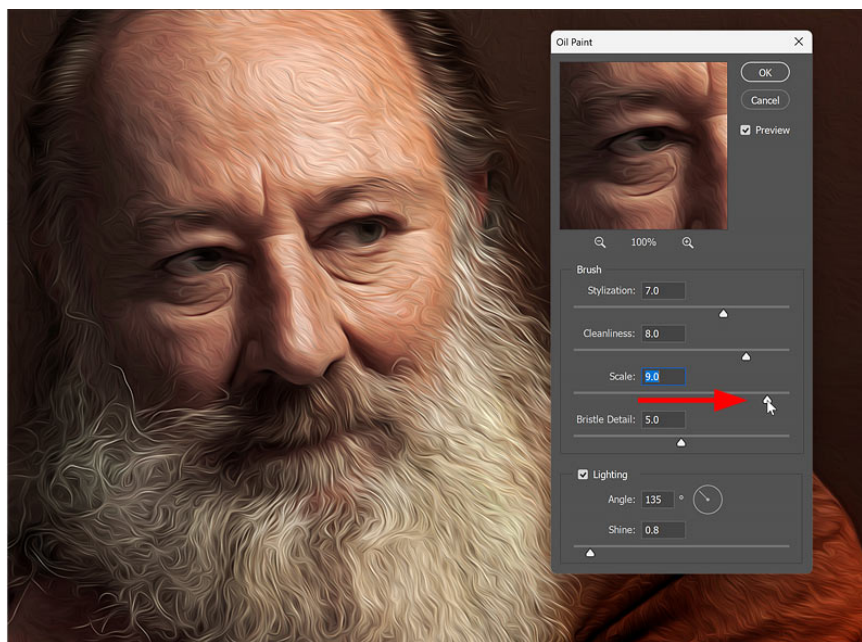


For now, the example will ignore the problem with the eyes and just focus on finding the best settings for the entire image.

Once you have the main effect, you can apply a second Oil Paint filter with different settings, then combine the two filters together using a layer mask.

## Scale

The Scale slider controls the thickness of the brush stroke. Larger values ??will give you a wider brush stroke.



And smaller values ??will give you a thinner brush stroke.

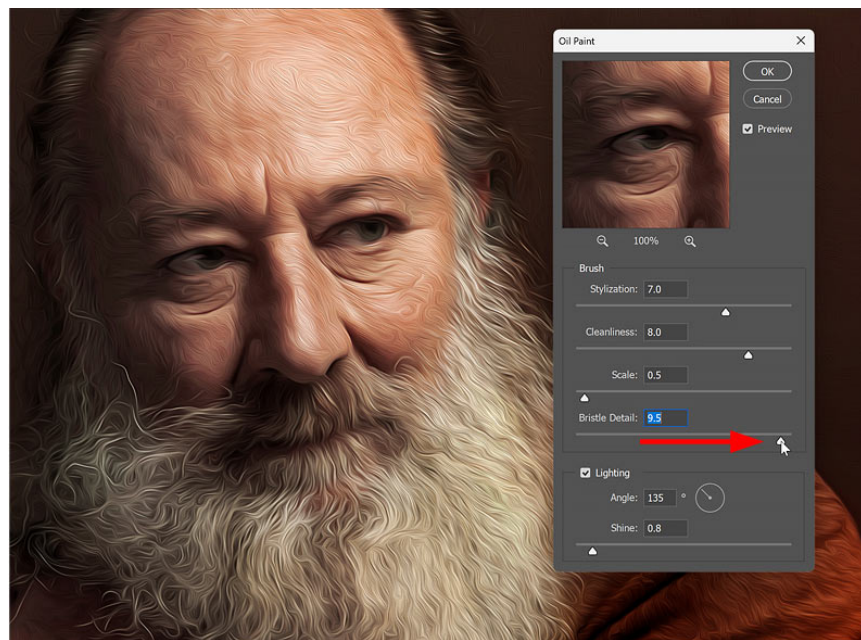
Larger Scale values ??tend to work better with high resolution images. But all of these sliders will give you different results depending on the size of your image. So if you're working with a smaller image, you'll need to dial back the settings to get the same effect.



## Bristle Detail

The final slider is Bristle Detail, which sharpens or softens brush strokes.

Lower values ??will give you a softer image and higher values ??will bring out more detail. But the effect is quite subtle even at higher settings.



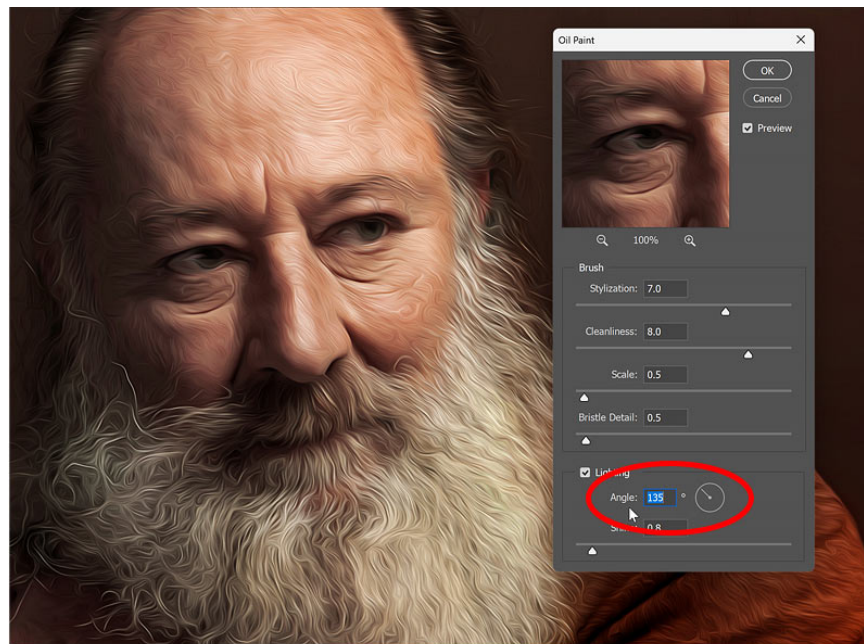
## Step 6: Adjust the light

Once you've used the brush sliders to create the main oil painting effect, use the **Lighting** options to control the direction and intensity of the imaginary light source shining on the painting.

### Angle

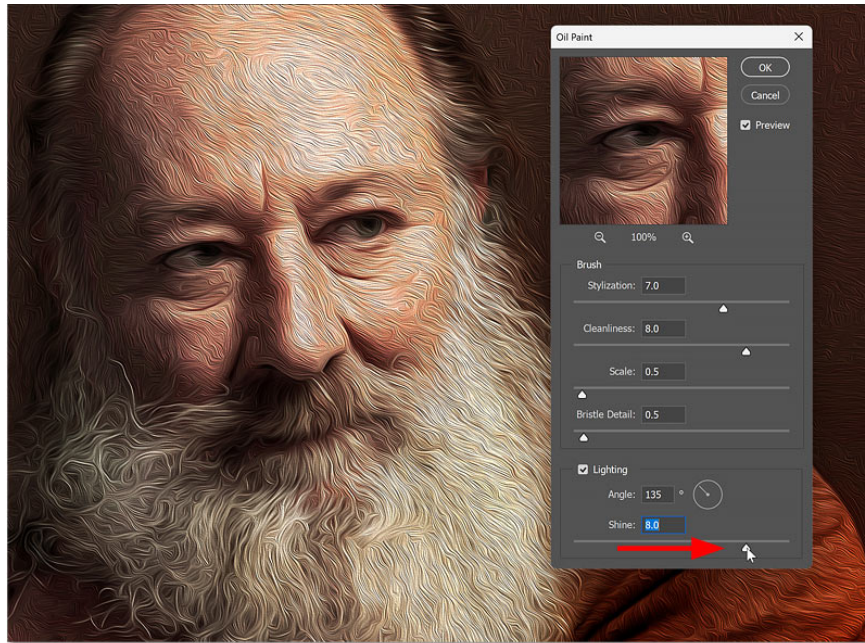
The Angle option sets the direction of the light source. Some angles will highlight details in the brush strokes more than others.

You can adjust the angle by dragging the rotation knob or by using the scrubby slider (click and drag over the word Angle).

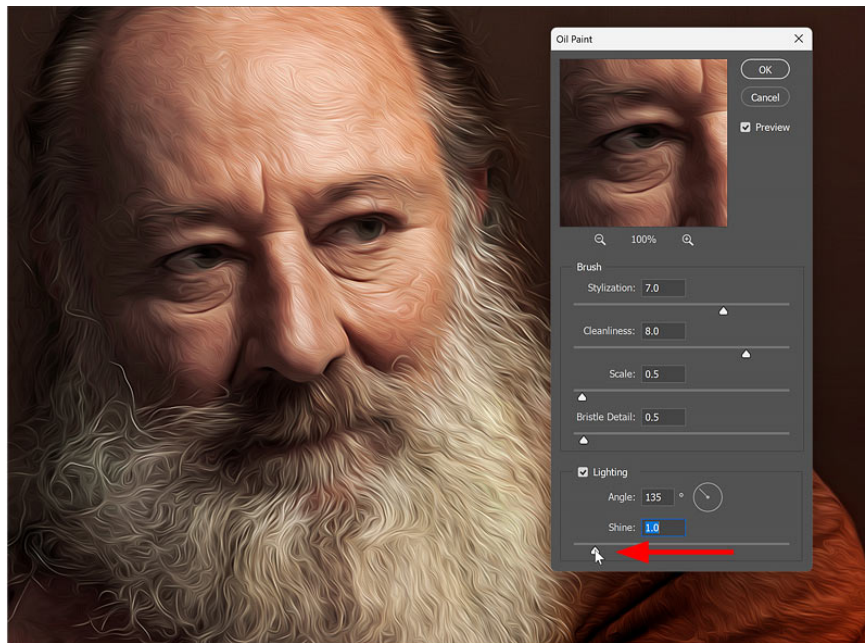


### Shine

Shine controls the intensity of the light. Higher values can make the painting look like it belongs in an art gallery.

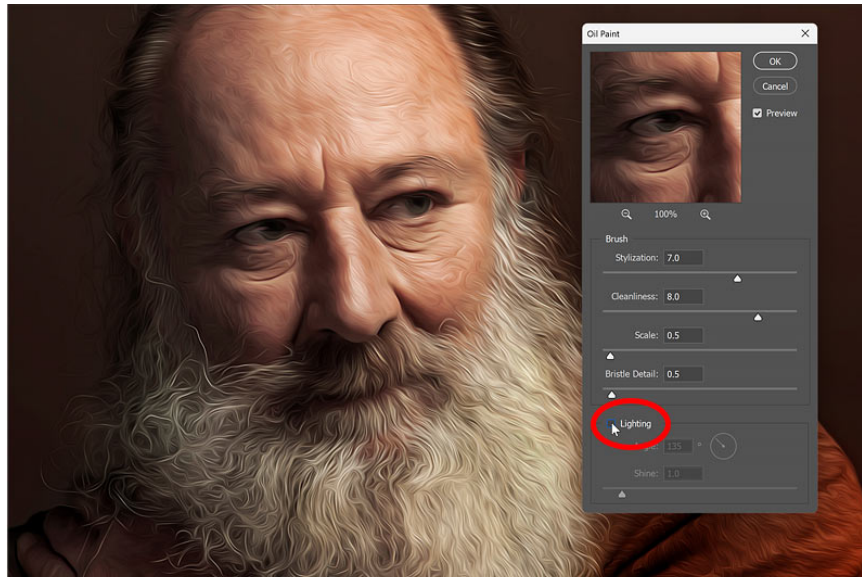


But lower values ??are more subtle and tend to look better.



## Turn off the light

You can uncheck the Lighting option to turn off the light source, which usually looks great. But I'll leave it on in the tutorial to make the brush strokes easier to see.



## Hide/show preview

To compare the effect of the Oil Paint filter with the original image, simply toggle the **Preview** option on and off using the checkbox. You can also toggle this option on by pressing the letter **P** on your keyboard.

On the left is the original image (cropped around the most detailed area). And on the right is the Oil Paint effect turned on. Aside from the eyes looking a bit too smudged, the overall effect is pretty good.



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