

Embossed Backgrounds

An embossed background can be very elegant, and quite effective. They are not particularly difficult to make either. All you need is a background graphic or text suitable for embossing and the technique. The one thing you need to remember is to keep the background light enough so that it does not interfere with the text. Embossing creates shadows and light areas. If you don't bring the colors down enough, the shadows will conflict with the text on your page. If you follow the steps below, you can create great embossed backgrounds!

1. Open a black and white image and reduce in size to 100 x 100 pixels or greyscale a colored image and bring the colors back to 16 million.
2. Open the layers palette and right click on the "Background" button, then choose "Promote to Layer".
3. Add a new layer, drag to the bottom and flood fill with white.
4. On the graphic layer, choose Image|Other|Emboss.



5. Soften the embossed image until all the sharp edges are gone (Image|Blur|Soften should do it).



6. Add a new layer. Flood fill this layer with a color of your choice.
7. Adjust the opacity layer on the color layer and the embossed file layer until you get the effect you want.
8. When you have created the effect you want, save the tile as a gif or jpg.
9. Create a new graphic 200x200.
10. Flood fill with a contrasting color to your tile color.

11. Open your new embossed tile and copy the tile (Ctrl A, Ctrl C).
12. Paste your tile in the upper left corner of your new graphic and then again in the lower right corner.
13. Click on the embossed tile color with the eye dropper tool (this will set the foreground color).
14. Select the two off-color squares with the magic wand tool (shift click on the second selection to add to the first).
15. Flood fill with the background color.
16. Save as a jpg or gif.

You can eliminate the steps that create the "alternating" effect, but I think that backgrounds that tile in a staggered manner are much more attractive and easier on the eye than tiles that repeat the same pattern in rows.

