

How to Use the background tool

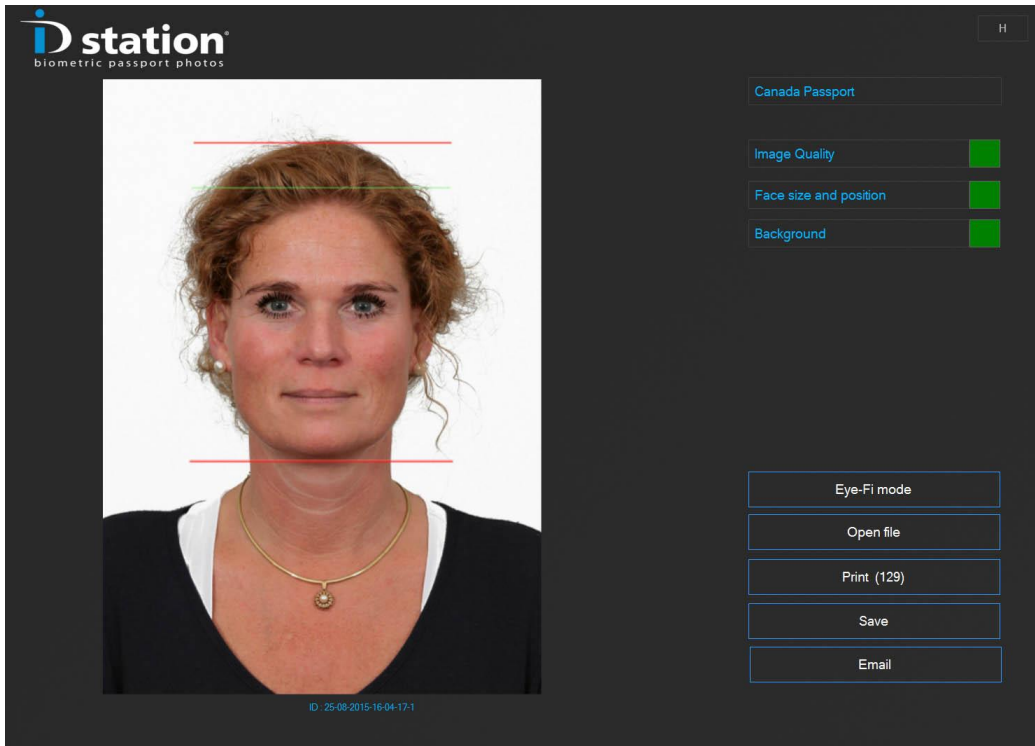
Passport photos require a background of a certain color. Many countries require a white or almost white background. Others require a light-gray, blue or off-white background color. Also the background should be free from shadows. Photomatic software automatically checks every passport photo if the background is acceptable for the selected country. If the background is NOT acceptable you may use the Background Tool to edit and improve the background.

This How to manual will explain how to use the Background tool. Please make sure that for your default setup you don't need this tool because it is not designed to be used for every passport photo you'll make. Just use this tool if you need to make a passport or VISA photo for another country that requires a background color that differs from you standard setup and for which you do not have a suitable backdrop.

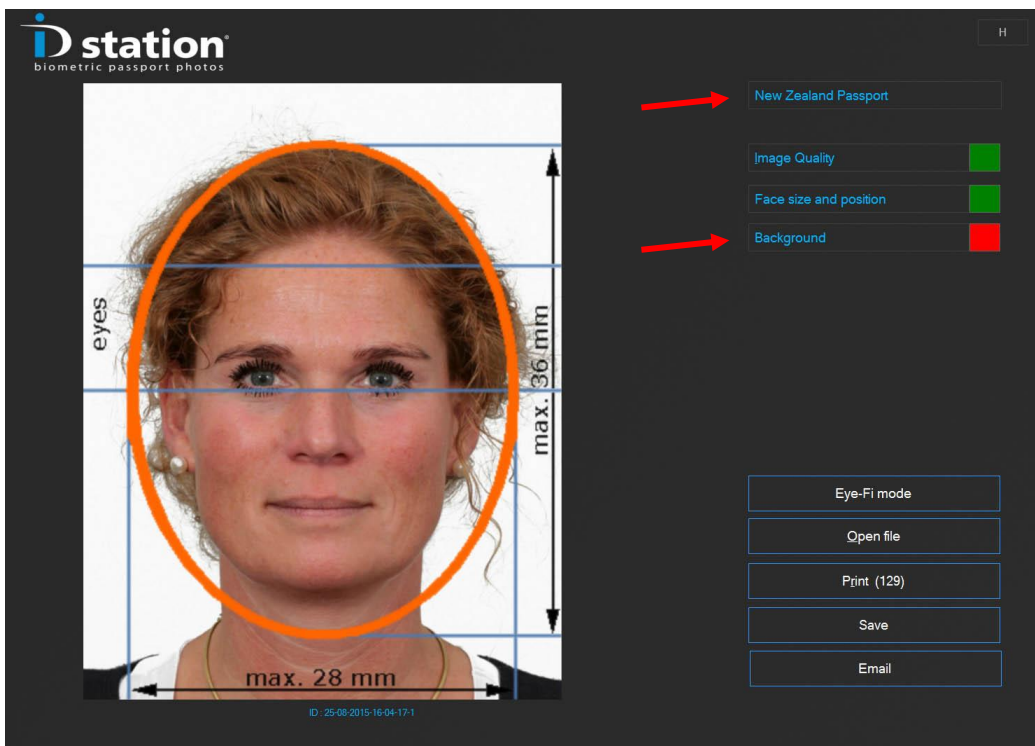
How does the Background Tool work?

If the automatic quality test reports an error on the background you could try to improve the passport photo using the background tool. Usually this will occur when your default background is different from the required background color for the selected country.

Example : usually you take passport photos for Canada. The requirements for a Canadian passport photos include a completely white background. Now there's a customer needing a passport photo for New Zealand. A passport photo for New Zealand requires a gray background. So the picture you take is fine for Canada but will be rejected when you switch Countries to German Passport. See example below:

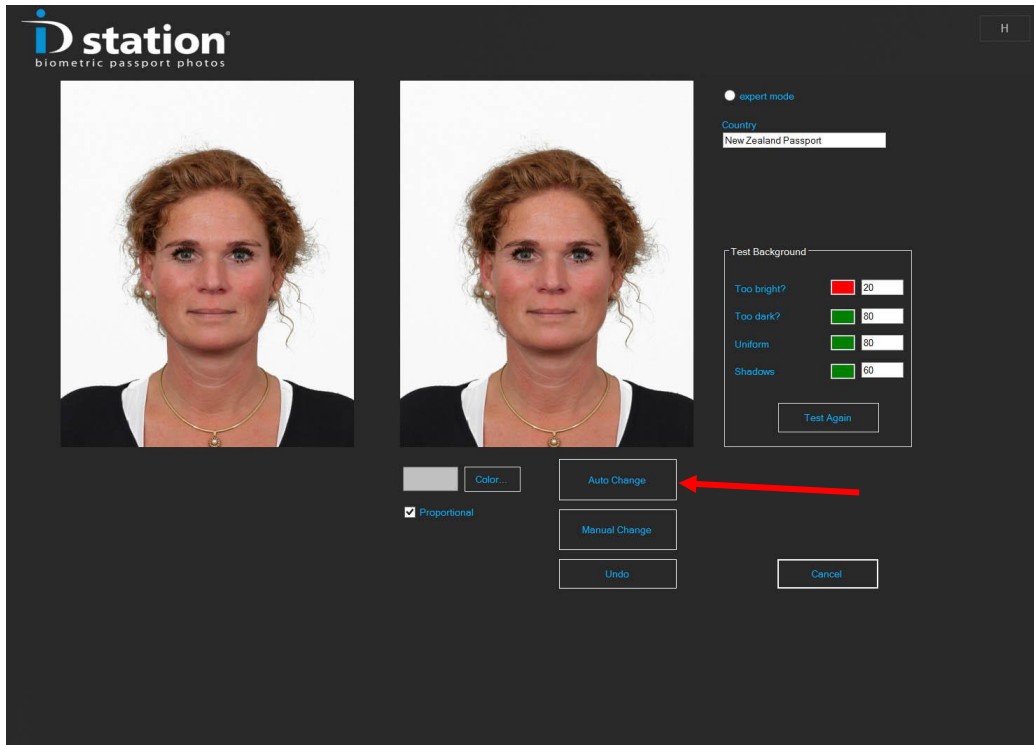


For Canada the picture is perfect, but for New Zealand it's rejected:



To solve this you can retake the picture with a proper gray background. Or you can start the background tool and try to edit the background color to gray:

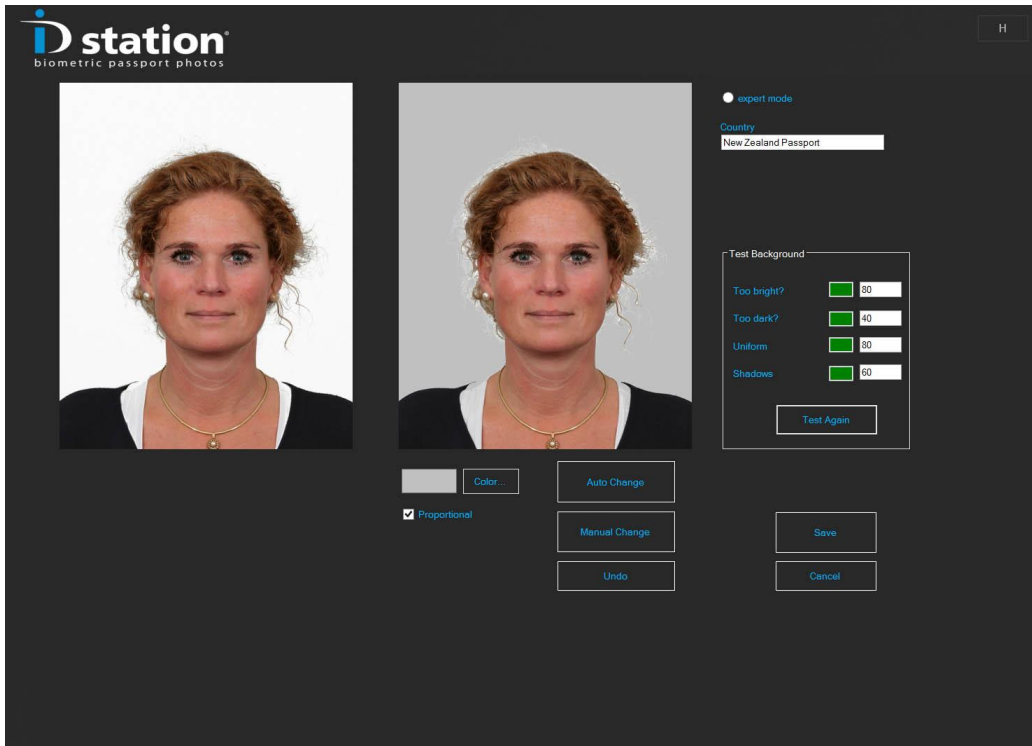
Click on the "Background" button. The tool will start:



There are two previews: left is the original and the right one will be modified.

The reason why the photo is rejected is shown too: in this case it's too bright. Now we can edit the background manually or automatically. Let's start with Automatic: click on the button "Auto Change". The software will start to change the background into a gray color (as required by the selected country).

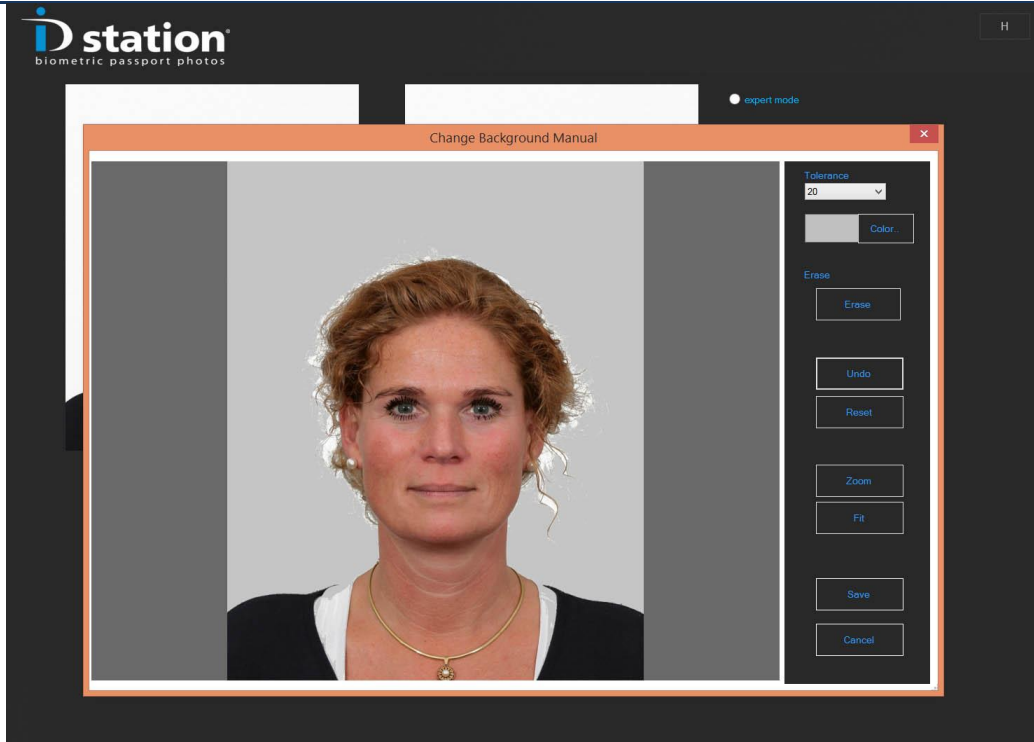
When the Auto Change function has finished the result is shown in the right preview box:



The Background Tool has changed the background color for New Zealand. When you run the test again (click on "Test Again") the result is OK!

If the first run isn't completely satisfactory you can always do it a second time (click on Auto Change again). If the result isn't any good, press "Undo" to restore the original picture and do it manually. To manually change the background click on the button "Manual Change".

Now a new window will open (see below).



Now click somewhere in the background area. The tool will start replacing the pixels in that area with the preferred background color (as shown in the color select box in the top right part of the window).

Keep on clicking in areas of the background until the entire background is changed. You can also change small parts by clicking in that part..... You can even erase certain parts with the Eraser tool.

Anyway, with a couple of clicks you'll probably cover the entire background. Is the result is satisfactory click on Save and you'll return to the tool window where you can compare the result with the original picture. If OK press save.

Some pictures may be hard to edit. For example if the hair color is almost identical to the background color. Or if parts of the clothes have the same color as the background. Then these will be edited too.

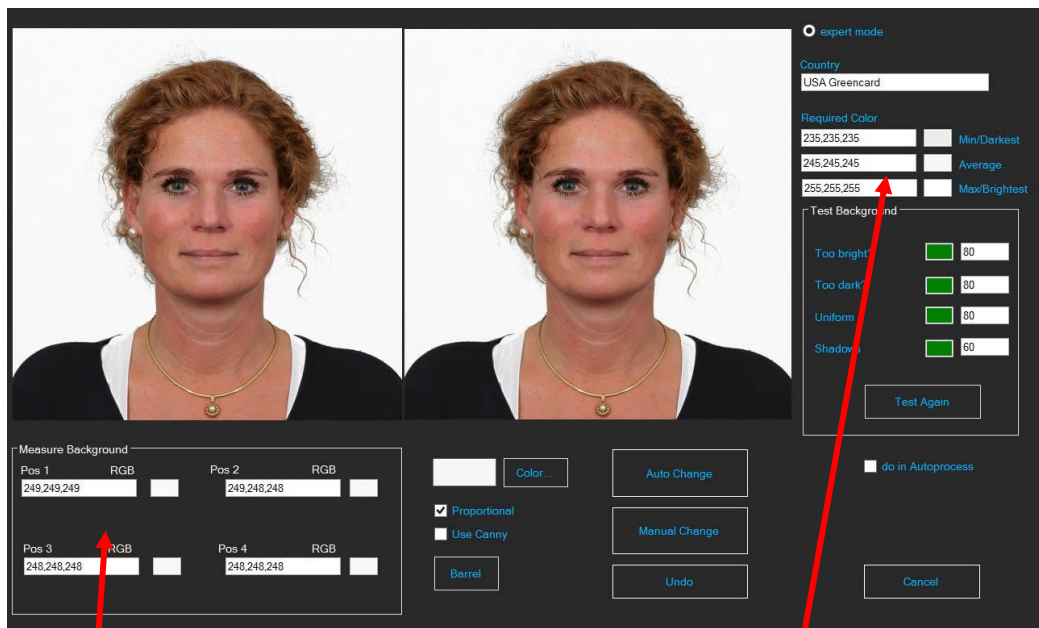
If the tool doesn't seem to be helpful in those cases the best solution is always to re-take the picture with the proper background.

Expert mode

If you're really into pixels and filtering you might want to use the tool in expert mode: click on the button "Expert Mode" and the tool will show additional information and options.

Information about the measured colors

The background tool measures the background in 4 areas (upper left, lower left, upper right, lower right) around the face. The measured colors are an average of these quadrants. The measured colors are shown on the left. The preferred colors (for the selected country) are shown on the right.



The measured background colors.

The preferred colors.

The background tool will try to replace the measured colors with the preferred colors.

You can override these with the color picker (button Color). Select "Canny" to apply a Canny filter during the processing.

If you want the background tool to automatically edit the background of every passport photo you should select the "do in Autoprocess" option. Please first ask yourself why this would be necessary though.