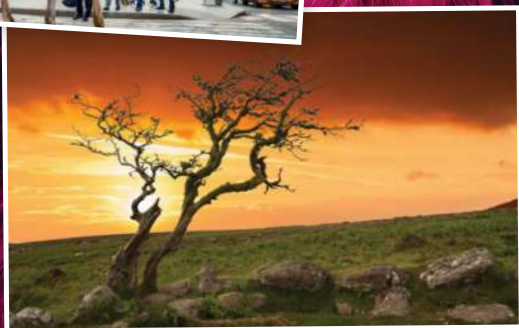


Teach yourself

# Photoshop Elements

Transform your snapshots into stunning artwork

Expert guides explaining every image-editing step



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Welcome to  
*Teach yourself*  
**Photoshop  
Elements**

While often regarded as the younger sibling to Adobe's flagship Photoshop CC software, Photoshop Elements is remarkably powerful, and offers photographers a phenomenal amount of control over the photo-editing process. As you will discover over the pages of this book, the in-depth guides will help you to master the latest version of the popular software. Including exciting new features, we will help you to get to grips with the essentials of this powerful program, whatever version of Photoshop Elements you happen to be using.

We start with introductions to Elements' different workspaces, then work through classic editing steps, advanced edits, essential tricks and guides on how to use Elements' Camera Raw editor, then we suggest a handful of fun photo projects that incorporate using what you've learnt in Elements. Also, don't forget to check out the FileSilo for start images, video guides and more.



┌ FUTURE ─┐  
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# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

**Future PLC** Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

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Compiled by **Katharine Marsh & Phil Martin**  
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# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

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# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

AN INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS







# An introduction to Photoshop Elements

Find out how the Elements tools and interface work, and learn how to import, tag and sort your photographs

## 10 Organise your images in Photoshop Elements

Discover how to quickly and easily sort and catalogue your photographs into a fully organised and easy-to-manage image library using the Organizer in Photoshop Elements

## 12 Introducing the Elements editing modes

Learn about the three modes for editing your photographs in Photoshop Elements: the Quick, Guided and Expert mode workspaces

## 14 An overview of the Toolbox and Tool Options

Find out how to use the Photoshop Elements Toolbox, and how to customise the powerful array of tools available using the Tool Options at the bottom of the workspace

## 16 The menu bar options in the Expert mode

Discover how the drop-down commands in the main menu bar at the top of the workspace, including filters, effects and more, work with the many other tools in Photoshop Elements

## 18 A simple workflow

Discover how to take your pictures from camera to finished image: the six stages of photo processing explained

# Organise your images in Elements

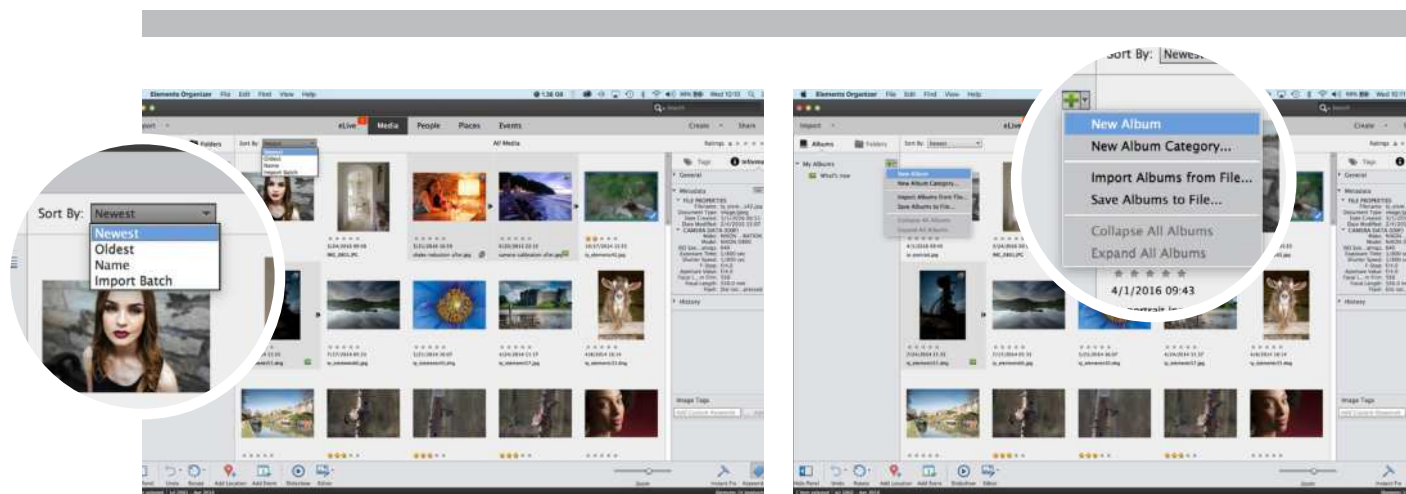
Discover how to sort and catalogue your shots into a fully organised image library using the Elements Organizer

**I**n the days of analogue film cameras we were limited to shooting batches of 24 or 36 photos, depending on the size of our film roll. All the photos tended to get printed and many would end up in easy-to-access photo albums.

In these digital days we have the problem of managing our ever-growing collection of digital photos, especially now that phones shoot high-quality shots. By default, digital photos that are imported to our computers tend to get stored chronologically in the Pictures directory. This means we can spend too much time scrolling through folders and sub-folders in search of a particular shot, especially if we're

unsure when it was captured. Photoshop Elements' Organizer offers a host of tools to help you find favourite photos with ease, and even fix common problems with colour and tone. As we work through this chapter you'll discover how to organise shots by placing them in virtual albums, adding star ratings so you can find favourite pictures with ease and even filtering your searches to find pictures containing specific people (or locations).

We'll kick off with a look at some of the key features of the Elements Organizer so you can get a flavour of what it has to offer. We'll then talk you through the import and organise options in more detail.



## 1 Media

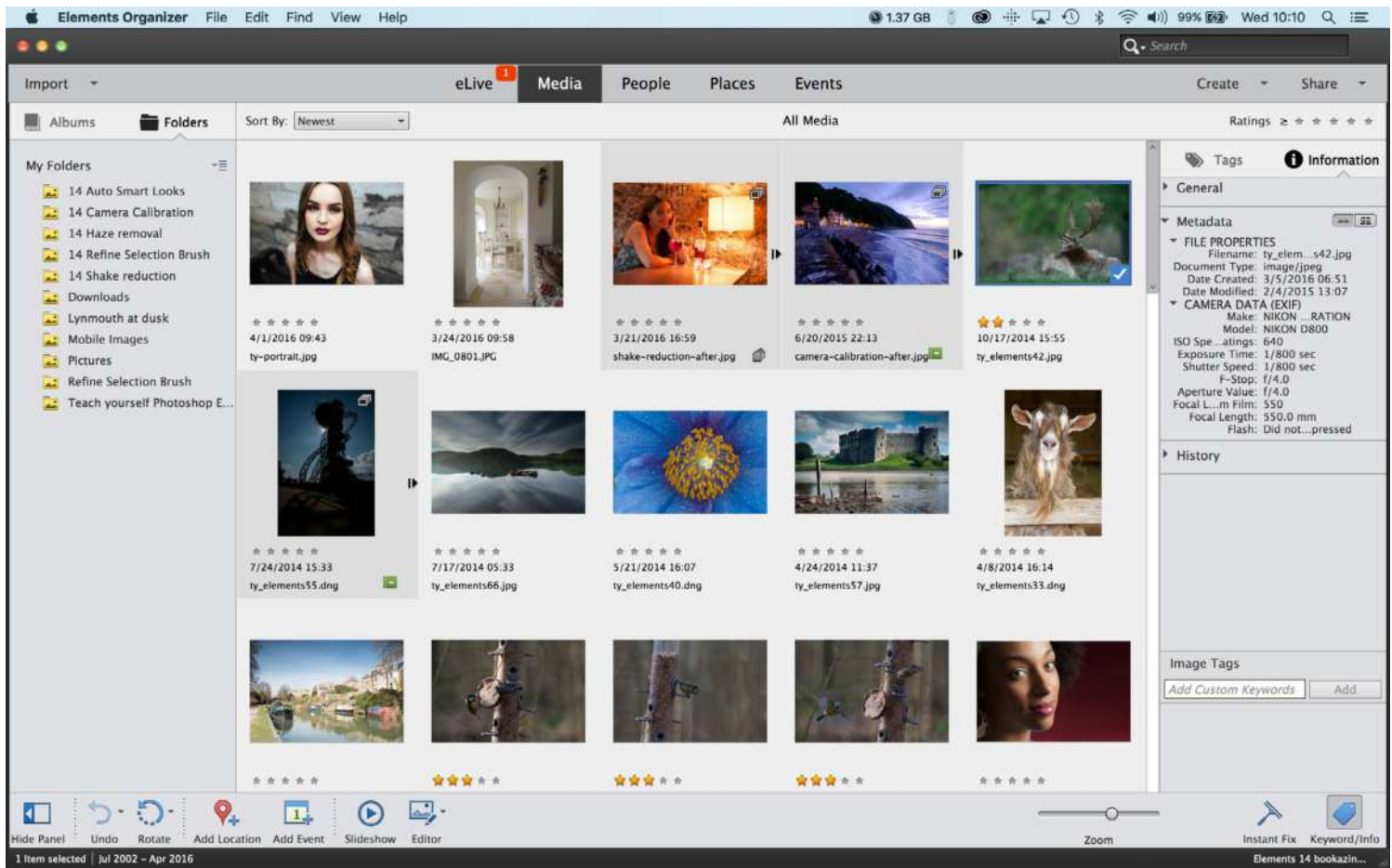
Imported photos and videos appear in the scrollable Media pane, with the most recent shots at the top. You can fine-tune the way shots are displayed by clicking the Sort By menu and choosing an option such as Oldest or Import Batch. You can also go to View and turn on Details.

## 2 Albums

You can organise your images by placing them in themed albums, such as Portraits. Click an album and its contents will appear in the Media tab. Click the + icon to create a new album, and add photos by dragging and dropping. Click a folder in My Folders to see the images it contains.

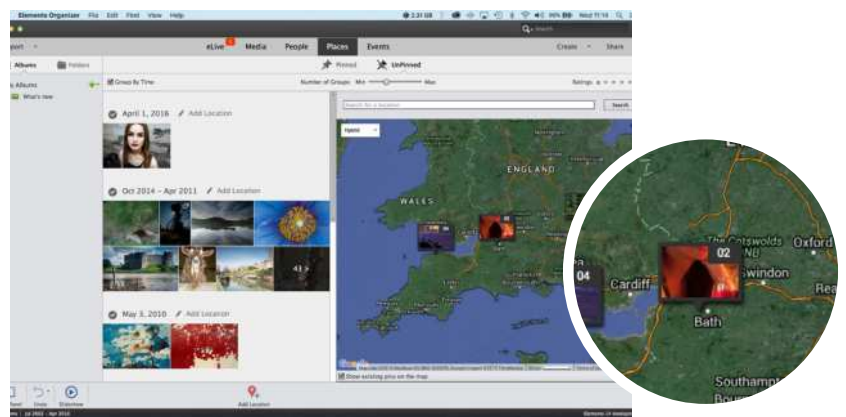
# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

AN INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS



## 3 People

You can use tools such as the Add People button to find and tag friends and family members in specific shots. You can then use the People panel to organise your pictures by Groups such as Colleagues, Friends and so on. We'll look at ways to tag people in more detail in Chapter 3.

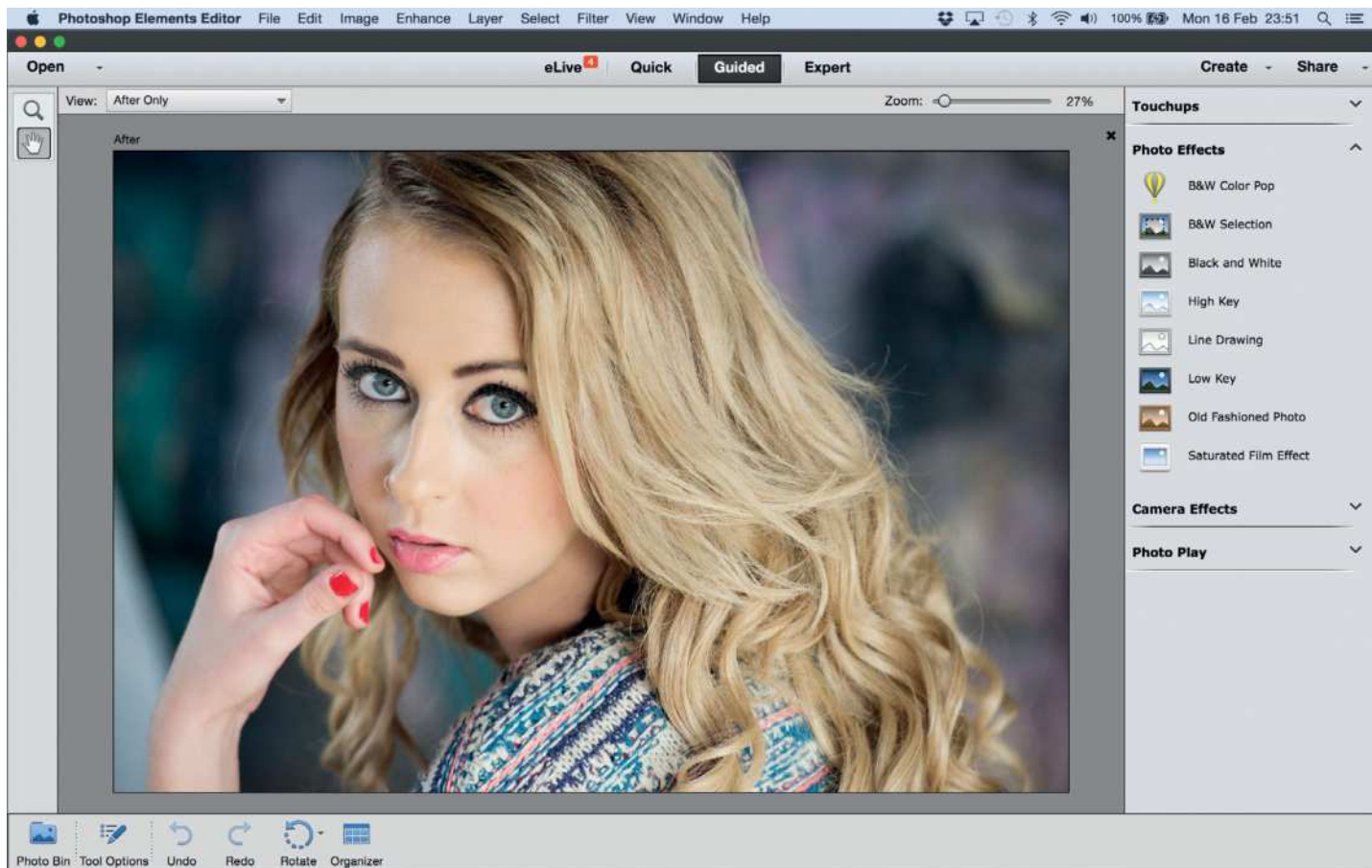


## 4 Places

If you import photos taken on your smartphone they will automatically appear in Places view, marked as pins on a map. Most regular cameras don't have GPS, so your photos won't have location data embedded in them automatically, but you can put them on the map manually.

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

AN INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS



## Introducing the Elements editing modes

Learn about the three modes for editing photos in Photoshop Elements

**W**hen you launch Photoshop Elements by clicking its icon you're presented with a welcome screen. One half of the screen gives you the option to jump to the Organizer, where you can import and organise your shots. The other half launches the Photo Editor. Don't worry too much about which option you choose, because you can switch between the Photo Editor and the Organizer by clicking the appropriate icon.

As its name suggests, the Photo Editor is designed to help you fix common picture

problems. Its tone-tweaking tools enable you to restore more detail to under- or over-exposed shots. Its colour-correction tools allow you to counteract colour casts caused by incorrect camera White Balance settings. You can also tackle lens-related problems such as vignetted or curved edges.

The Photo Editor also enables you to be creative. The menu contains a wide range of filters you can apply to create artistic effects. You can also access these filters from the Effects panel by clicking a filter preview icon. You can use selection tools to isolate people

or objects from one shot and place them in another, or swap a dull sky for something more interesting. We'll show you how to perform creative edits later in this book.

The Photo Editor is split into three editing modes: Quick, Guided and Expert. We'll explore these modes in more detail as we work through the book, but check out our annotated grab on the right to familiarise yourself with the layout of the Photo Editor's default Expert mode. In the next chapter, we'll show you how to customise the Expert mode to suit your own needs.

# Photoshop Anatomy Workspace features

Get to know the tools available in the Photoshop Elements workspace



### 01 EXPERT MODE

In this mode you'll find Element's most powerful image-editing tools. They enable you to take control of a photo's colours and tones, boost its colour saturation and even add text and special filter effects.

### 02 GUIDED MODE

This helpful mode takes you step-by-step through various photo-fixing and creative image-adjusting tasks, such as removing scratches and blemishes or adding photo effects such as tilt-shift. It uses the tools found in the Expert mode.

### 03 QUICK MODE

This mode enables you to perform common photo fixes (such as sharpening a soft image) by clicking preview thumbnails. You can also apply textures and effects to your shots with one click. It's well worth experimenting in this section.

### 04 TOOLBOX

The Toolbox is packed full of handy photo-fixing tools. Some compartments contain similar tools. You can see and select these tools in the Tool Options at the bottom of the workspace. The Quick editor has a cut-down Toolbox.

### 05 PANEL BIN

Here you can work with a variety of panels. By default the Layers panel is visible, because it's the one you'll use most often, but you can click the icons at the bottom to jump to other panels, such as Effects. Click More to access extra panels such as the Navigator.

### 06 CREATE AND SHARE

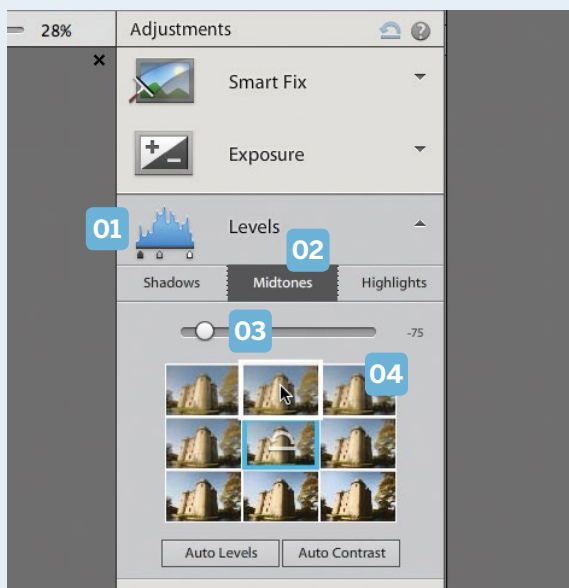
The Create and Share links aren't technically editing modes, but they do unleash a host of handy tools such as ways to share your edited photos on Facebook, or turn a selection of photos into a printable greetings card, for example.

## Understanding...

### THE QUICK EDITING MODE

The Quick editing mode has an adjustments panel that enables you to adjust colours and tones with ease. Click an option such as Levels [01] to tweak the tones in an image. You can target a specific range of tones by clicking an option such as Midtones [02]. The slider beneath [03] enables you to increase the strength

of the adjustment. Alternatively, you can preview tonal adjustments by looking at the thumbnails at the foot of the panel [04] and then click a thumbnail to adjust the slider. You also have the option of clicking the Auto Levels or Auto Contrast buttons to let Photoshop Elements decide the best results for you if you're unsure. ■

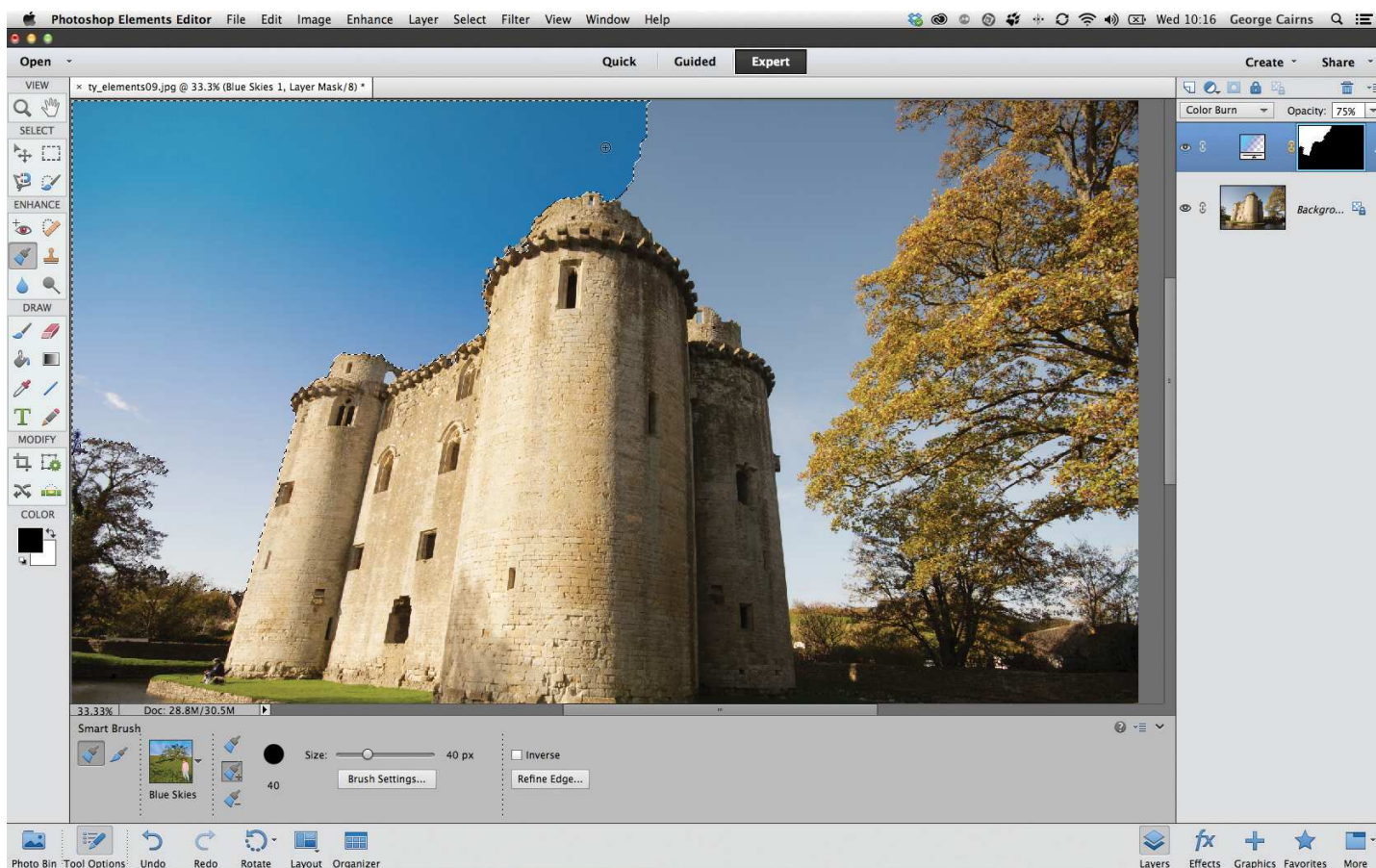


### THE PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS GUIDED EDITING MODE

If you're daunted by all the photo-fixing tools and commands in the Expert editing mode, then it may be better to kick off by exploring the many retouching options in the Guided editing mode. This editing mode provides you with a list of handy photo fixes (such as Remove a Color Cast). Each guided edit hands you the appropriate tool for the job, and if necessary breaks down the process into easy-to-manage steps. The creative guided edits show you a before-and-after example preview of an edited image, so you can see what you're working to produce, and change tack or start again from scratch if necessary.

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

AN INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS



## An overview of the Toolbox and Tool Options

Customise the powerful array of tools in Elements with Tool Options

**T**raditional film photographers could use a host of darkroom tools to develop their negatives into prints. Some of these tools enabled them to change contrast. By placing a piece of card over part of the print they could selectively lighten (dodge) tones in that part of the photo. By cutting holes in card they could mask most of an already exposed image and let more light hit certain areas to darken (burn) details. Photoshop Elements is your digital darkroom, with its own

collection of photo-fixing tools. Indeed, many of the tools in Elements share the names of their analogue predecessors, such as the Dodge and Burn tools.

Most of the tools can be found in the Toolbox, located at the left of the Expert Editor's workspace. These tools enable you to produce a wide range of photo-fixing tasks. You can give reality a nip and tuck by removing unwanted objects (or even people) from a scene by using tools such as the Clone Stamp, or perform a bit of cosmetic

enhancement by erasing a model's blemishes with the Spot Healing brush. Elements has a new Content-Aware Move tool that enables you to reposition a subject with ease (and automatically fill in the space that they occupied with appropriate pixels). We'll look at this new tool in more detail in Chapter 7.

Once you select a tool, you can modify the way it behaves using the Tool Options at the bottom of the workspace. The Toolbox and the Tool Options work together to help you make a wide range of image adjustments.

# Photoshop Anatomy Tools overview

Locate and recognise particular tools and modify the way they behave



### 01 LABELS

Labels break up the tools in the Toolbox into sections, enabling you to find appropriate tools more easily. The Enhance section includes retouching tools such as the Red Eye Removal tool, the Spot Healing brush and the Dodge and Burn tools.

### 02 TOOL TIPS

These handy pop-up labels enable you to identify a particular tool. Check out the quick tip below to find out how to turn these on (or off). Although one tool may appear in a compartment you can access its cousins in the Tool Options.

### 03 COLOUR SWATCHES

By default, the foreground colour swatch is black and the background colour swatch is white. Press D to set the default colours. Click a swatch to choose a new colour from the Color Picker. Press X to swap the foreground colour with the background one.

### 04 TOOL OPTIONS

When you select a tool, you can adjust the way it behaves by adjusting the controls in the Tool Options. Many tools are brush-based, so here you can adjust the Size of the tip, for example, or change properties such as Exposure.

### 05 OTHER TOOLS

The Dodge tool is visible in the Toolbox, but you can access related tools (such as the Burn tool) by clicking the icon revealed in the Tool Options. Compartments containing multiple tools feature a little fly-out icon in the top-right corner.

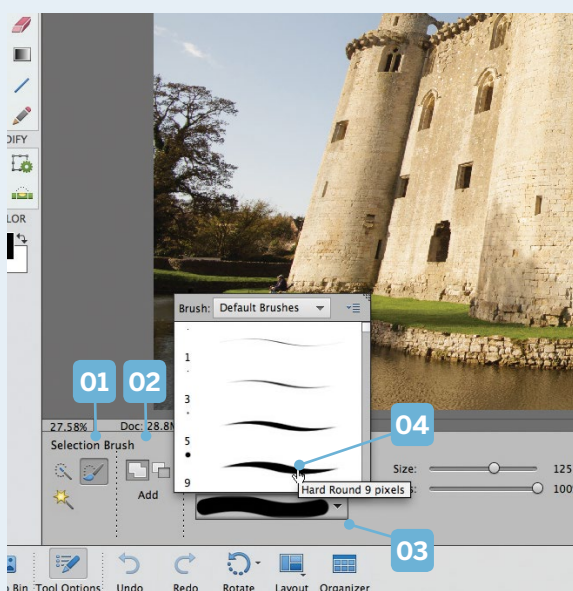
### 06 EXTRA OPTIONS

Different tools have different editable options. The Burn tool has a Range drop-down menu that enables you to darken specific tones. Here we've set it to darken the Shadows, so highlights will remain untouched when we use the tool on the photo.

## Understanding... BRUSH-BASED TOOLS

Many of the tools in the Toolbox are brush-based, such as the Selection Brush [01]. These brush-based tools have similar editable properties in the Tool Options, such as the size, opacity and so on. With the Selection Brush, you can click these icons [02] to make the tool add to or subtract from an initial selection marquee as you paint

on the image. This is useful when selecting a sky, for instance, and you select, say, a tree along with the sky by mistake – simply switch to the subtract mode, and paint over the tree. You can also change the shape and texture of a brush tip by clicking the Brush Preset picker [03]. Scroll down through the tips, and click a tip preview [04] to modify it. ■

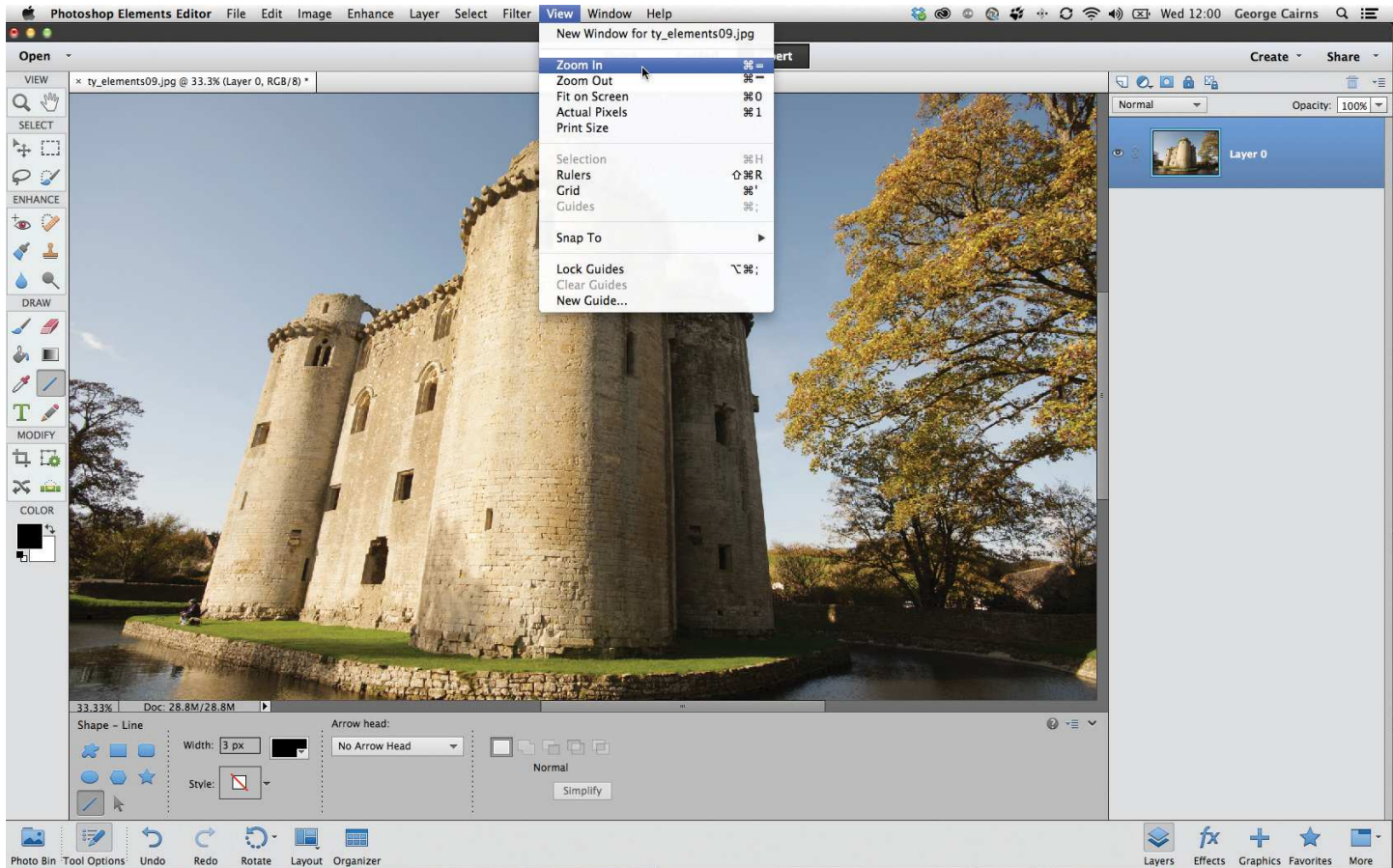


## DISCOVER HOW TO SWITCH ON THE TOOL TIPS

To help you identify each tool in the Toolbox you can set up Photoshop Elements to display a Tool Tip. This little rectangular label pops up when you place the mouse cursor over a particular compartment in the Toolbox, revealing the name of the tool. To make sure that the Tool tips are turned on, go to Photoshop Elements Editor>Preferences>General. In the Options section tick the Show Tool Tips box. Click OK. These pop-up Tool Tips also display the correct keyboard shortcut, so you can summon a particular tool with a tap of the appropriate key. You'll learn these over time thanks to the Tool Tips.

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

AN INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS



## The menu bar options in the Expert mode

Access filters, effects and more via the drop-down menu options

**O**n the previous two pages we looked at the various photo-fixing tools in the Expert mode's Toolbox and Tool Options. You can also edit a photo by combining various tools with the drop-down commands in the main menu bar at the top of the workspace. For example, you could use the Lasso tool to draw a selection marquee around a tree. You could then go to the Edit section of the main menu bar and click to open its options. By choosing the Copy option, you would copy the pixels within the selection marquee into

your PC's clipboard. You could then choose Edit>Paste to create a duplicate of the selected pixels on a new layer. This technique is very similar to copying and pasting words in a word-processing package, although in Photoshop's case you're copying and pasting pixels instead of text. You could then grab the Move tool from the Toolbox and drag the copied pixels into a new position, to extend the copied and pasted tree branches over more of the sky, for instance.

The commands in the main menu bar are grouped to help you find specific commands

more easily. For example, the File command enables you to open and save images, while Enhance allows you to improve contrast or colour. Many menus have a collection of sub-menus to explore, so you may need to dig a little deeper to access a particular tool. Some of the commands in menus and sub-menus can also be summoned by clicking icons. For example, you can create a new layer by choosing Layer>New>Layer, or you can click the Create a new layer icon in the Layers panel. Many commands can also be summoned with a keyboard shortcut.



# Photoshop Anatomy Menu bar overview

Get to know more about the main menu bar's commands



### 01 MENU BAR

The main menu bar at the top of the Expert mode workspace contains a range of themed commands such as File. Click a menu label to access drop-down menu options such as Open or Copy.

### 02 SUB-MENUS

Many menu commands have a sub-menu, so you can perform a range of additional edits. If a sub-menu is present you'll see a little triangle icon such as this one. Move the mouse over the icon to access the sub-menu.

### 03 COPY AND PASTE

Here we used the Edit>Copy and Edit>Paste menu commands to extend the tree's branches over the sky. You can see the pasted pixels in their own layer in the Layers panel.

### 04 SHORTCUTS

To save time rummaging around in the menu bar's sub-menus, you can summon specific commands by using keyboard shortcuts. You can see a command's available shortcuts here.

### 05 THE FILTER MENU

The Filter menu enables you to apply a variety of creative effects to your picture. We'll look at this command in more detail in chapter 8, where we turn photos into paintings.

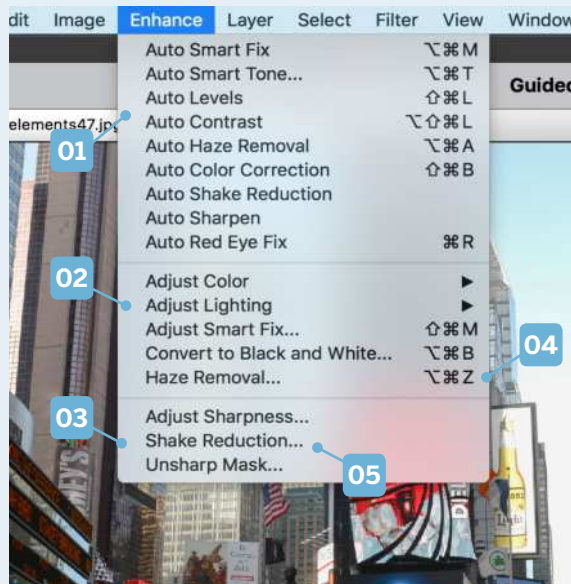
### 06 ICON ALTERNATIVES

You can summon powerful adjustment layers using the Layer>New Adjustment menu command. Alternatively, click the Create new adjustment layer icon at the top of the Layers panel.

## Understanding... THE ENHANCE MENU OPTIONS

The Enhance menu provides you with some of the most useful photo-fixing commands. These are split into a top section for Auto adjustments [01] which can provide a one-click fix, but may add undesired results such as shifts in colour or tone. This is why there's also a section for manual adjustments [02] to allow you more control over the results. A

third section right at the bottom [03] offers sharpening tools. Photoshop Elements 14 introduced a new Haze Removal tool [04] and a new Shake Reduction tool [05]. Both of these have Auto options in the top section of the menu too. Elements 13 users will note there's no longer a Photomerge option. This has now moved across to the Guided mode.



## WHERE TO FIND THE PHOTOMERGE TOOLS

Photomerge is a powerful set of tools for combining images in a variety of creative ways. In **Elements 13** these are displayed on the Enhance menu, but in **Elements 14** and **15** they've been moved across to the Guided mode – so don't panic, they haven't been taken away! Photomerge Panorama takes multiple shots from the Photo Bin and repositions them in a new canvas so that their overlapping edges are aligned. The edges are then blended seamlessly together to create a huge panoramic image. The Photomerge commands can save you lots of time and effort when retouching your photographs and you'll see them used in various ways throughout this guide.

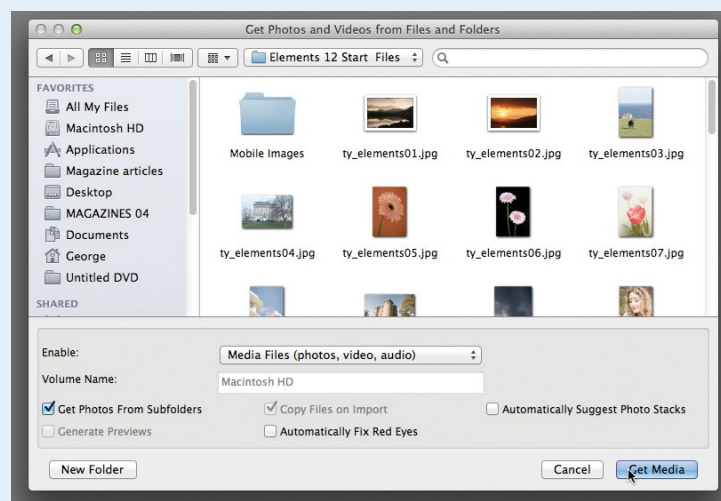
# A simple workflow

Take your pictures from camera to finished image:  
the six stages of photo processing explained



## 2 Organise your shots

The imported photos will be displayed in chronological order in a grid of thumbnails. To make specific images easier to find in the future, hold down Cmd/Ctrl and select their thumbnails. Click the green + icon in the Local Albums section to create a new album containing the selected images. Give it a name such as Landscapes. Click OK. You can now click an album's icon to display the shots within it. Click Back to see all the images in the Organizer.



## 1 Import your photos

Launch Photoshop Elements and click the Organizer section of the welcome screen. The Photoshop Elements Organizer will open. Go to the main menu bar and choose File > Get Photos and Videos. You can then choose an option such as From Files and Folders. Browse to the folder of photos that you want to import. Tick Get Photos From Subfolder, then click Get Media. This will import the selected photos into the Photoshop Elements Organizer.



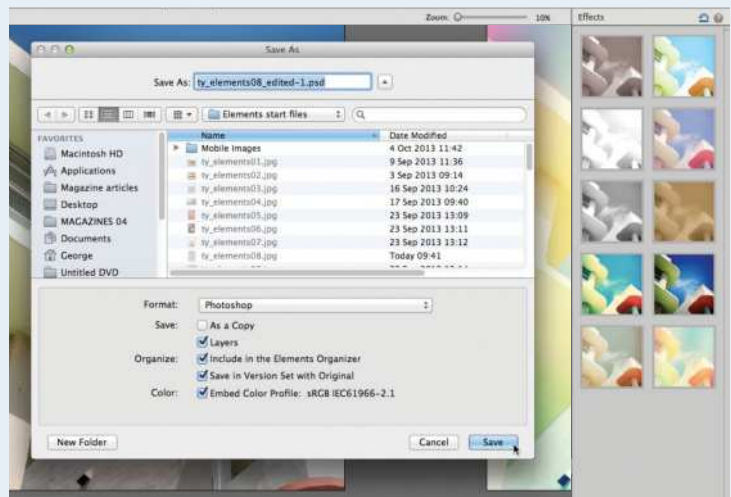
## 3 Add ratings to your pictures

You can create as many albums as you like, just as you would with traditional photo prints. If you go to View > Details you'll see five grey stars under each thumbnail. Click to assign specific star ratings to help you find favourite images. You can also organise photos according to where and when they were shot, as well as tag them with the names of the people who are in them. We'll look at ratings and tagging options in much more detail in chapter 3.



### 4 Improve your photos

If you see a shot that has problems with colour or tone, click its thumbnail, then click the Editor button. This takes the shot into the Photoshop Elements Expert editing mode. Here you can choose photo-fixing menu commands such as Enhance>Auto Smart Fix to try to boost colours and give an image a healthier spread of tones. In the following chapters we'll explore ways to improve colour, tone, composition and sharpness in the Elements editor.

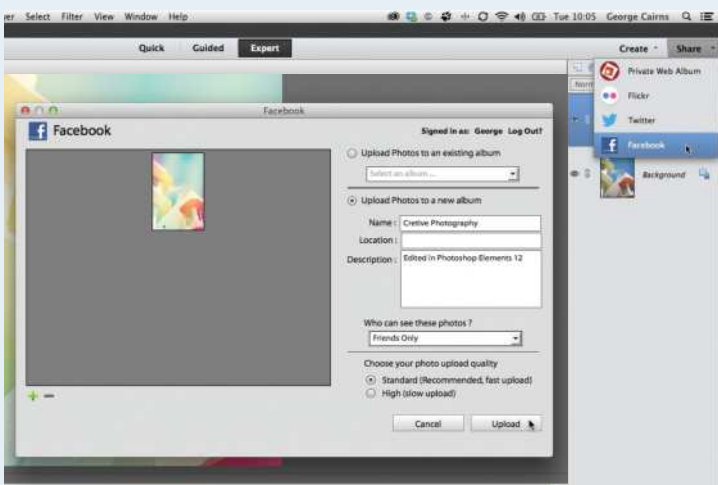


### 5 Make creative enhancements

Photoshop Elements has three editing modes – Expert, Quick and Guided. Each mode contains tools to help you overcome common picture problems. They also have tools that enable you to creatively process your shots. If you go to the Quick editing mode and click the fx icon, you can apply creative effects (such as Light Leak) to your photo with one click, for example.

### SHARPEN UP IN THE ORGANIZER

If you plan to print a physical copy of a photo then it's well worth applying a little post-production sharpening to the image to give it more impact. You can do this within the Photoshop Elements Organizer. Click a photo's thumbnail and click the Instant Fix button. Then click the Sharpen icon in the Photo Fix Options panel.



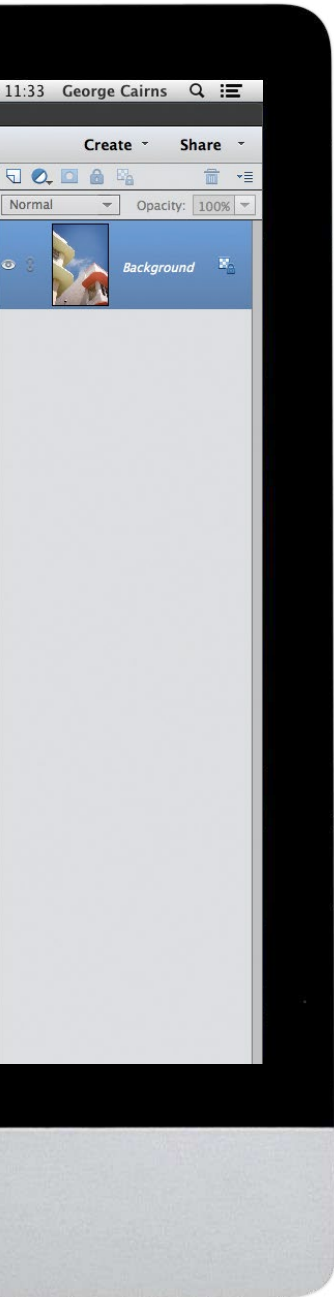
### 6 Share your images

Once you've edited and saved a version of your photo, you might want to share it with family and friends. Both the Quick and Expert editing modes have a Share tab that enables you to upload your shots directly from Photoshop Elements to popular image-sharing sites such as Facebook and Flickr. You can also create a private web album using the free Adobe Revel service. These sharing options automatically resize your photo to make it suitable for displaying online.

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

GET STARTED FAST IN PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS





# Get started fast in Photoshop Elements

Import your photos and make quick edits, or have Elements enhance them for you automatically

## 22 Apply quick fixes to your photos

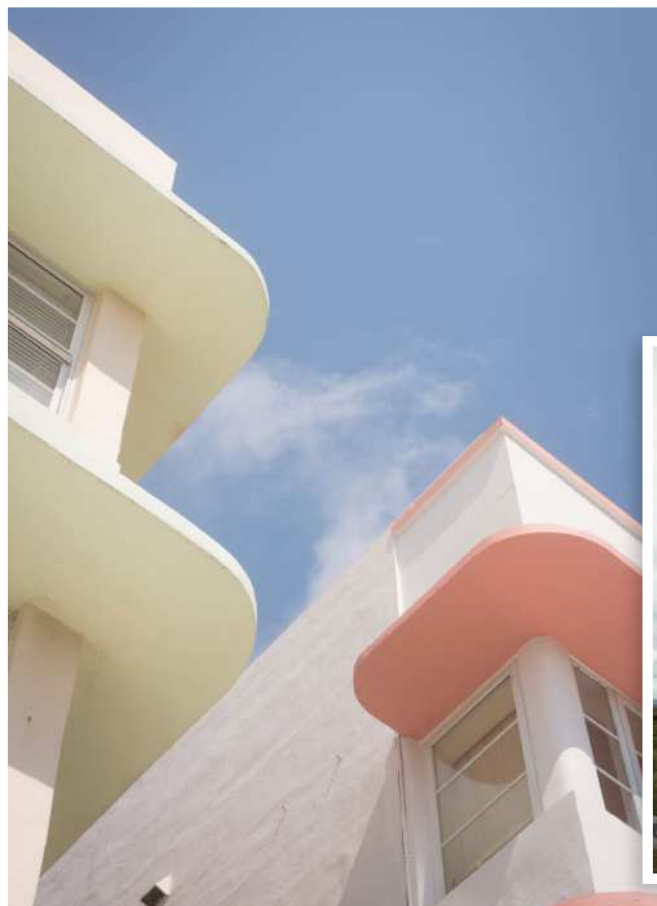
Identify and fix common photo problems with colours, tones and composition, courtesy of the Organizer's Instant Fix panel

## 24 How to set up your workspace in Expert mode

Work faster and smarter by customising Photoshop Elements' Expert editing mode workspace. Place popular panels closer to hand and much more

## 26 Enhance your images automatically

Correct common image problems such as colour casts and contrast issues quickly using automatic image enhancement tools



**ON  
FILESILO**

Start files are available on FileSilo

See page 194 for more



## Apply quick fixes to your photos

Fix common problems with colours, tones and composition, courtesy of the Organizer's Instant Fix panel

**I**t's likely that most of your photos will require a few post-production tweaks in Photoshop Elements to look their best, much as a traditional roll of film requires processing in a darkroom to get the most from the negatives. There are many reasons your shots may not turn out quite the way you hoped. Cameras struggle to reveal detail in contrasting lighting conditions, so some areas in a scene will be over- or under-exposed. Cameras also struggle to balance the colour temperatures produced by different lighting conditions, so your shots may suffer from warm orange or cold blue colour casts. You may not have composed our shots in the right way, or failed to spot a distracting object at the edge of the frame.

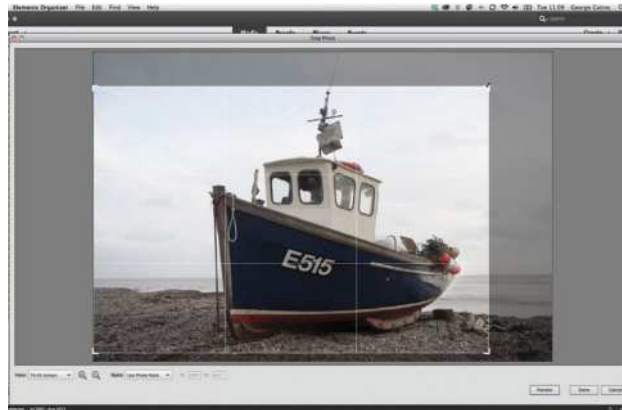
Photoshop Elements is packed with image-editing tools that are designed to help you tweak each photograph's colour, tone and composition. We'll explore these photo-fixing tools in more detail throughout this book, but we'll kick off by looking at some of the quick methods you can use to fix photographs using the Organizer.

Adobe recognises that you might prefer to spend more time shooting and less time editing, so it's placed the most useful and common photo-fixing tools in the Organizer. This handy Photo Fix Options panel means that you can overcome typical photo problems without needing to delve more deeply into other editing modes such as Expert, Quick or Guided. Check out some common fixes on the right.



### 1 Access the Photo Fix Options panel

Use the File>Get Photos and Videos>From Files and Folders command in order to import the start files. Click the boat shot (ty\_elements13.jpg). Next, click the Instant Fix icon that is at the bottom right-hand corner of the Organizer workspace.



### 2 Crop and recompose

The boat has lots of dead space around it. Click the Crop tool. Set the Ratio to Use Photo Ratio. This gives the cropped shot the same shape and proportions as other photos from your camera. Drag the corner handles to crop the edges. The boat is now off-centre and looks into the frame.



### 3 Stack the shot

Click Preview to see the new composition, then click Done to crop the shot. This creates a cropped copy of the image that's stacked with the un-edited version, so you don't need to worry about destroying the original. Click the triangular stack icon to toggle the stack open or closed.



### 4 Improve the tones

Some shots, such as our ty\_elements08.jpg low-angle building picture are over-exposed and lack strong shadows. Click the thumbnail in the Organizer, go to the Photo Fix Options panel, and click Levels. This command boosts the images's contrast and saturation.



### 5 Improve blown-out skies

Click the over-exposed standing stone (ty\_elements26g.jpg). When faced with blown-out highlights such as these, it's worth clicking the Smart Fix icon. This is designed to improve colours and tones. In this case it claws back cloud detail in the sky and cools down the colours.



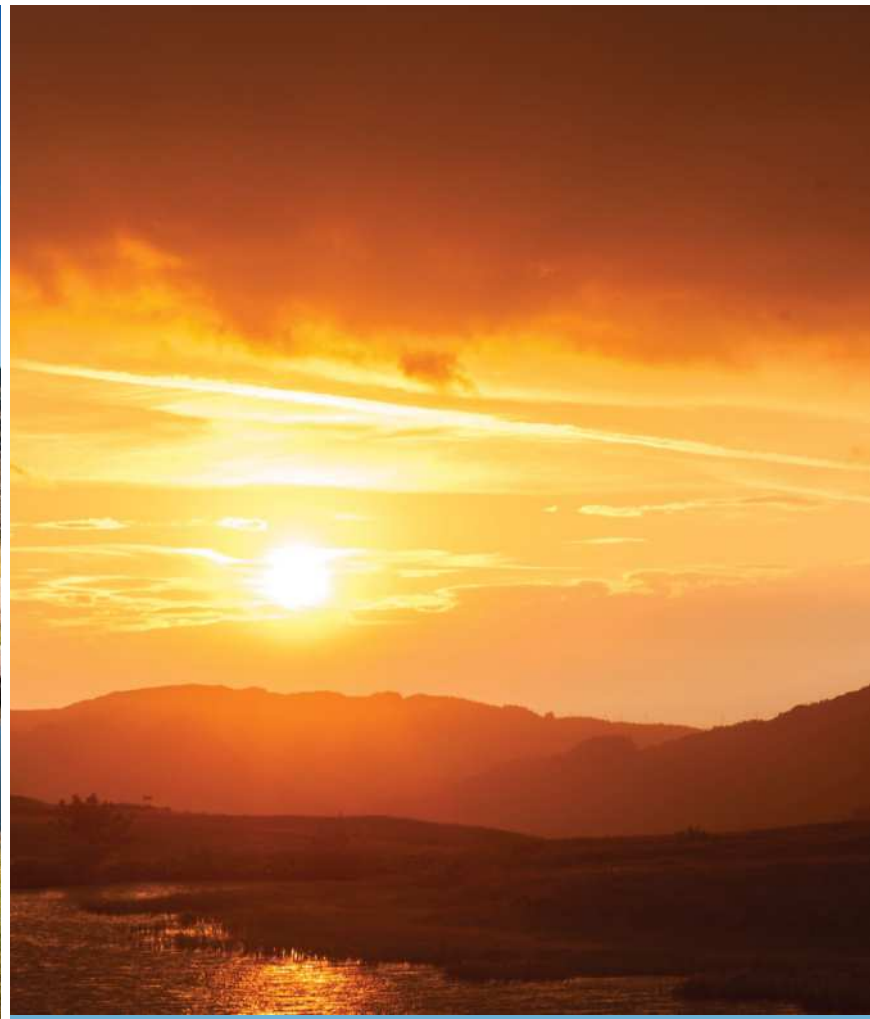
### 6 Sharpen the detail

If you plan to print a shot you'll get a print with more punch if you sharpen it a little. This reveals more texture and detail. Double click the tree on the moors shot (ty\_elements22.jpg). Click the Sharpen icon in the Photo Fix Options panel. We'll look at sharpening in detail later. ■

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for more



# Set up your workspace in Expert mode

Customise the Elements Expert editing mode workspace

**T**he Organizer enables you to perform common photo fixes with a couple of clicks, but these tools won't always get your shots looking their best. Automatic fixing tools such as Levels can end up changing an image's colour in unwanted ways, for instance. The Auto Sharpen command doesn't let you control the amount of contrast change around the edges of objects in the shot, so they may not look sharp enough. At some stage you'll need to take an ailing shot into the Expert mode to access its

more sophisticated (and creative) image-editing tools. We'll take a look at the Expert editing mode to help you find your way around it and make it work for your specific image-editing needs.

Kick off by holding down Shift and clicking a couple of shots in the Organizer (such as our `ty_elements02.jpg` and `ty_elements12.jpg` landscapes). Go to the main menu and choose `Edit > Edit with Photoshop Elements Editor`. Alternatively, click the Editor button at the bottom of the Organizer workspace. This will display your shots in

the Expert editing mode workspace. As its name suggests, the Expert mode workspace gives you access to the biggest collection of photo-fixing tools.

Each editing mode – Expert, Guided and Quick – has its own unique workspace, as you'll discover while working through this book. Here we'll focus on the Expert editing mode because this contains all the main tools and commands. You can also customise the Expert editing mode so that it suits your needs, such as placing popular panels like the Layers panel closer to hand, for example.



# Photoshop Anatomy Tweak the workspace

Change the layout of the Expert mode workspace to access useful tools more easily



### 01 CUSTOMISE THE WORKSPACE

Click the More fly-out icon and choose Custom Workspace. This enables you to drag panels such as the Layers panel out of the Panel Bin so that they float wherever you like. Tick any panels in the list to summon them.

### 02 DOCKED OR FLOATING

Here some panels are docked in the Panel Bin. You need to click the tab to see a particular docked panel. We've dragged the Layers, Histogram and Navigator panels out of the dock so that they're floating.

### 03 HISTOGRAM

The Histogram panel enables you to see the spread of shadows, midtones and highlights in the image. This helps you to diagnose problems with exposure. Set the Channel drop-down menu to RGB to see a mono version of the histogram.

### 04 MORE OR LESS

Click the More icon at the bottom right and tick a panel's label to hide or show it. This works with docked or floating panels.

### 05 LAYOUT

When working with multiple photos click the layout button to present them onscreen at the same time. Here we're looking at the All Column option. The Default layout places each shot in a tabbed window that fills the screen.

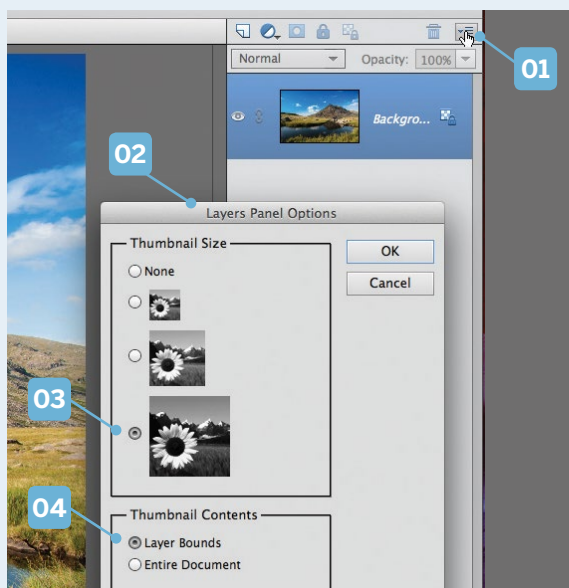
### 06 ALTERNATIVE MODES

Here we're looking at a customised version of the Expert editing mode. You can click to jump to the simpler Guided and Quick modes, but you can't customise either of those.

## Understanding... THE LAYERS PANEL OPTIONS

In its Default mode, the Layers panel displays small thumbnails. If you want a larger preview of the contents of a layer, click the little fly-out icon here [01] and scroll down to Panel Options. This opens the Layers Panel Options dialog [02]. You can now click the button by a specific Thumbnail Size [03] to change the size of the thumbnails.

If you paint a small brush stroke onto a new transparent layer, you won't see it very clearly. By clicking the Layer Bounds button [04] you'll see a relatively bigger preview of the brush stroke without displaying all the layer's unused transparent space. This is useful when you've made many small changes to a multi-layered image.



## KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Using keyboard shortcuts is a great way to speed up your image-editing workflow, not only when selecting tools and commands, but also when changing various features in the workspace. By tapping the Tab key, for instance, you can hide or show all floating or docked panels, enabling you to get on with the business of photo fixing in an uncluttered workspace. You can then summon panels (such as the Layers panel) as and when you need them. You can also press Cmd/Ctrl+Tab to cycle through all open images instead of clicking their tabs. Most tools can be summoned by a keyboard shortcut too. See the tip on page 15 to discover the best way to learn shortcuts for Toolbox tools.



## Enhance your images automatically

Correct common photo problems quickly using automatic enhancement tools such as the powerful Auto Smart Tone

**M**ost people would probably prefer to spend more time taking photographs than editing them. For this reason Photoshop Elements' editing modes are crammed full of menu commands that are designed to automatically enhance your shots with the minimum of time and effort on your part.

The automatic enhancement commands are designed to overcome common photo problems with a few clicks. For example, some shots will be over- or under-exposed, or simply suffer from flat contrast. Photoshop Elements can quickly analyse the tones (or 'levels') in a shot and then attempt to adjust them to create a healthier spread of shadows, midtones and highlights.

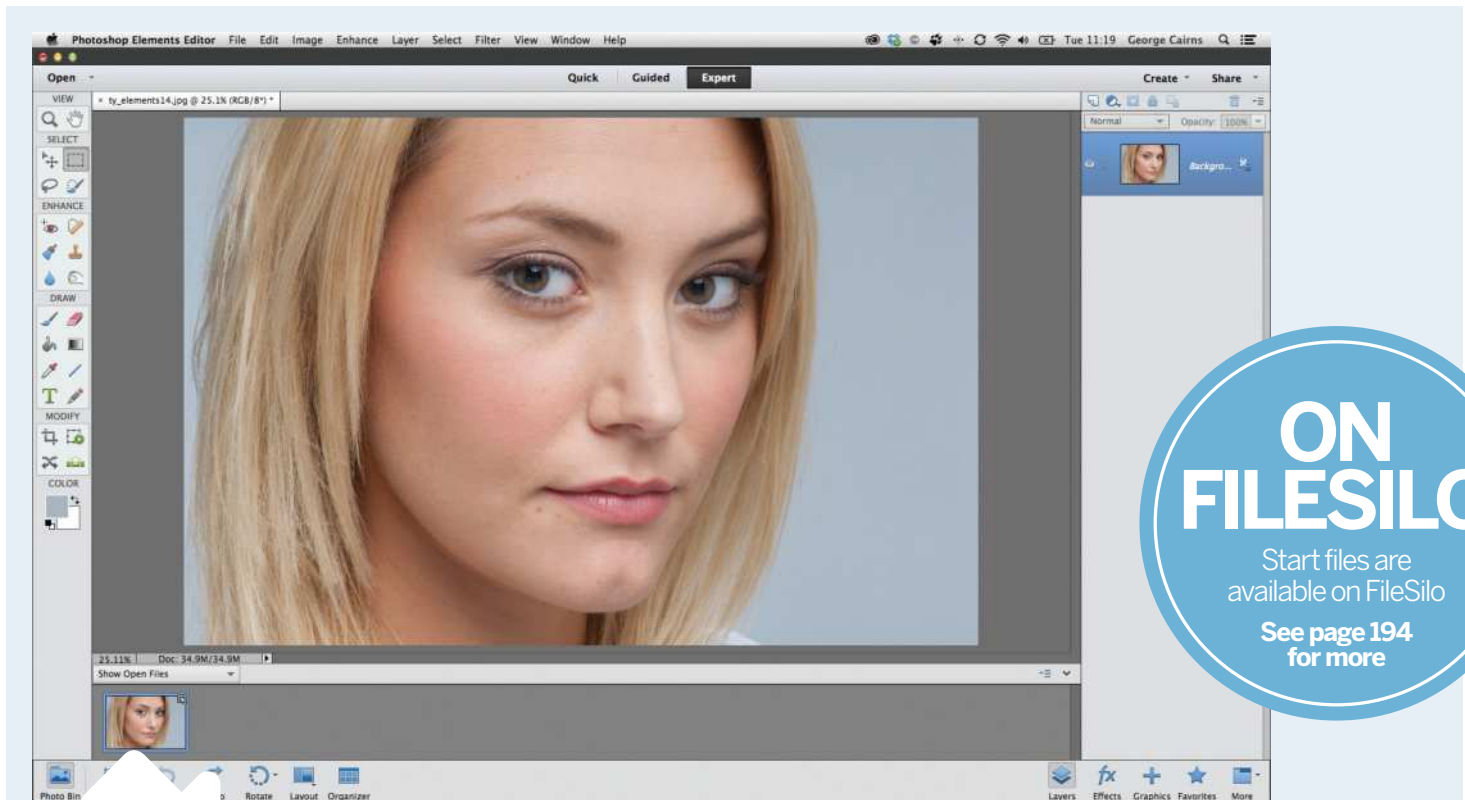
You're also likely to encounter problems with colour. You may have used an inappropriate Picture Style setting in your camera, resulting in drab, desaturated colours.

Your camera's Auto White Balance (AWB) feature may have failed to get whites looking white in a particular scene, resulting in a photo that suffers from cold (blue) or warm (orange) tints. Fortunately, you can apply an Auto Colour Correction command to warm up or cool down shots in an instant, producing more natural-looking colours.

Elements' automatic enhancement commands aren't magic bullets that will solve any photo's problems with a click. The Auto Smart Fix command may do a great job of improving flat contrast, but it can also add nasty colour casts to the image (such as tinting a white background blue). Fortunately, there's an Auto Contrast command that will change the image's tones without creating unwanted shifts in colour. Here we'll look at some of the most useful automatic enhancement commands, including the new and versatile Auto Smart Tone command.

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

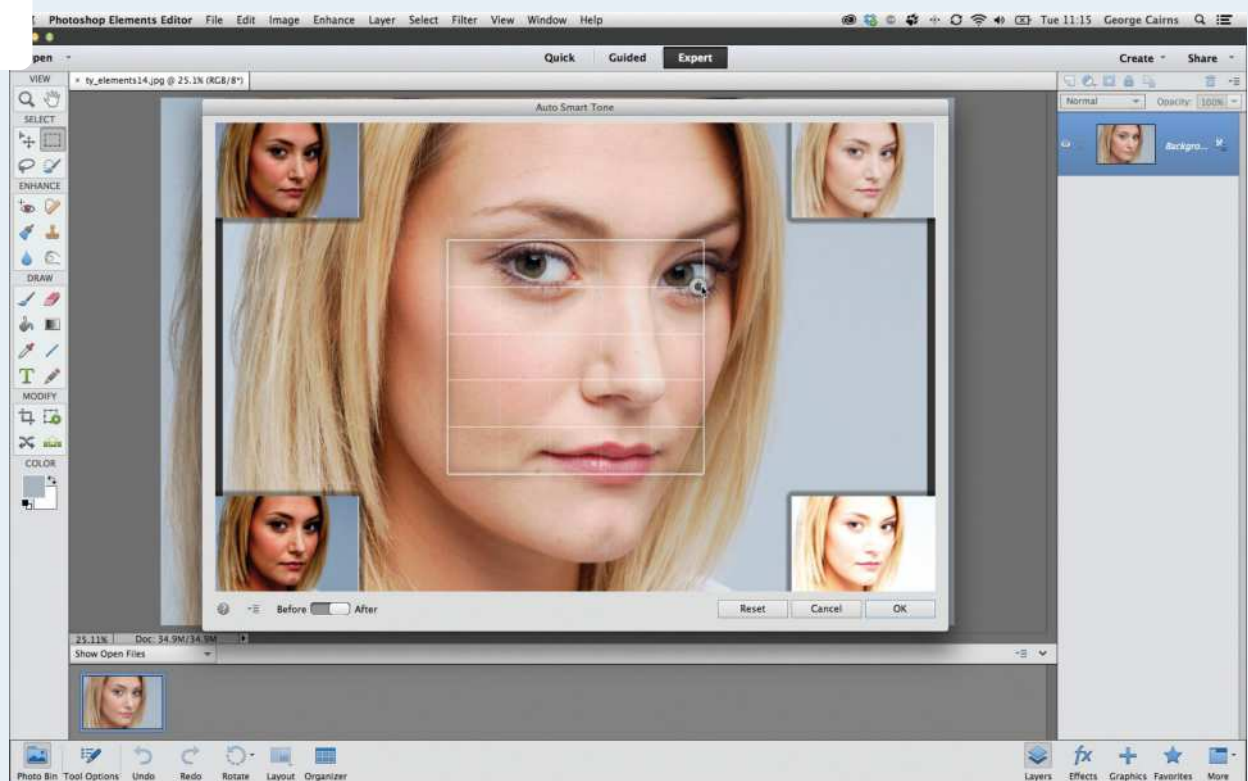
GET STARTED FAST IN PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS



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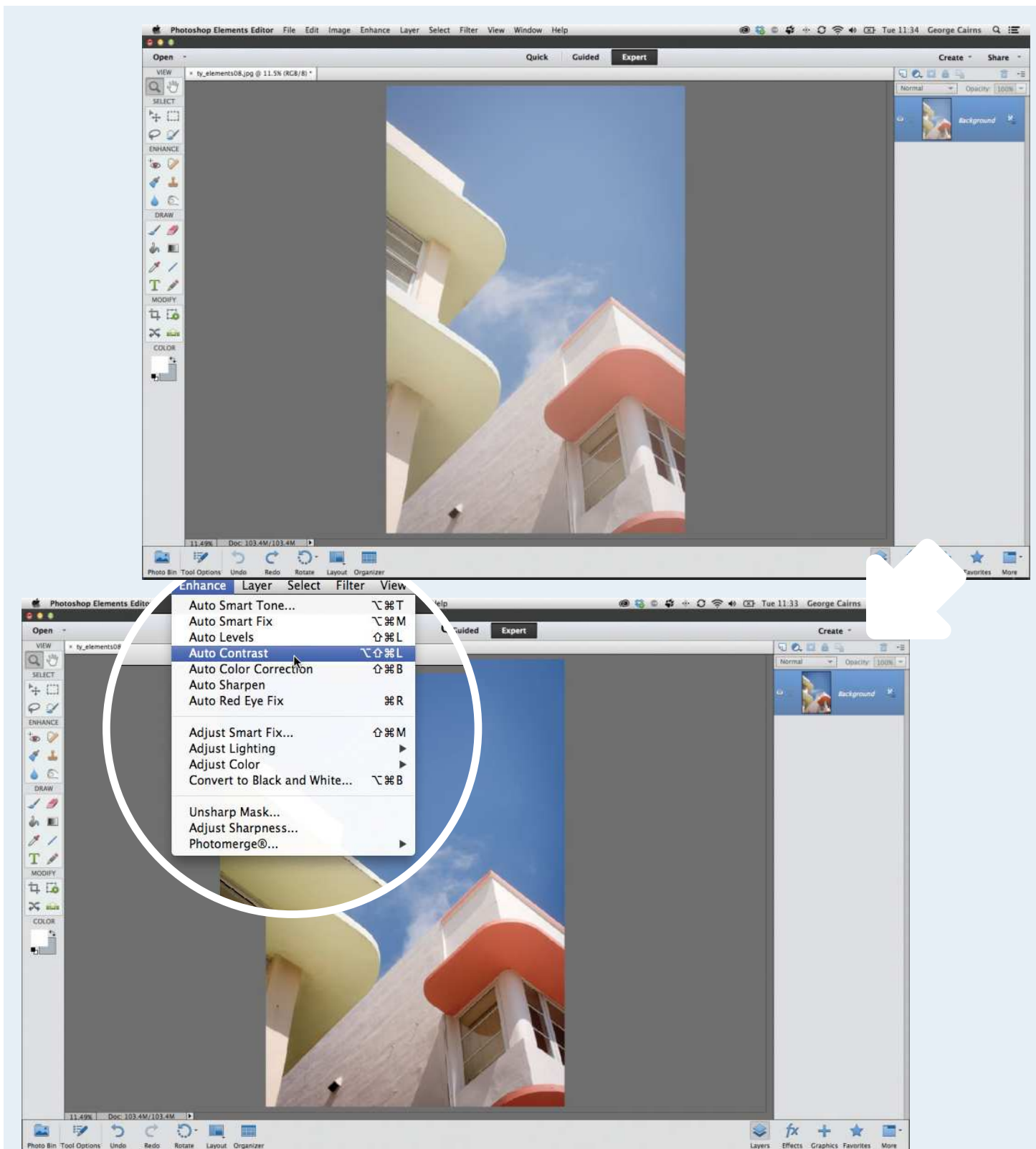


## 1 Improve contrast with Auto Smart Tone

Our ty\_elements14.jpg start image has flat contrast so it lacks impact. By choosing Enhance>Auto Smart Tone you can preview differently contrasting versions of the shot. You can then manually fine-tune the look of the tones in the image by dragging the cursor towards particular preview thumbnails. Here we've brightened the highlights and darkened the shadows. Click OK to apply the changes. The Auto Smart Tone command can also learn your preferences, which enables you to work more quickly in the future. ▶

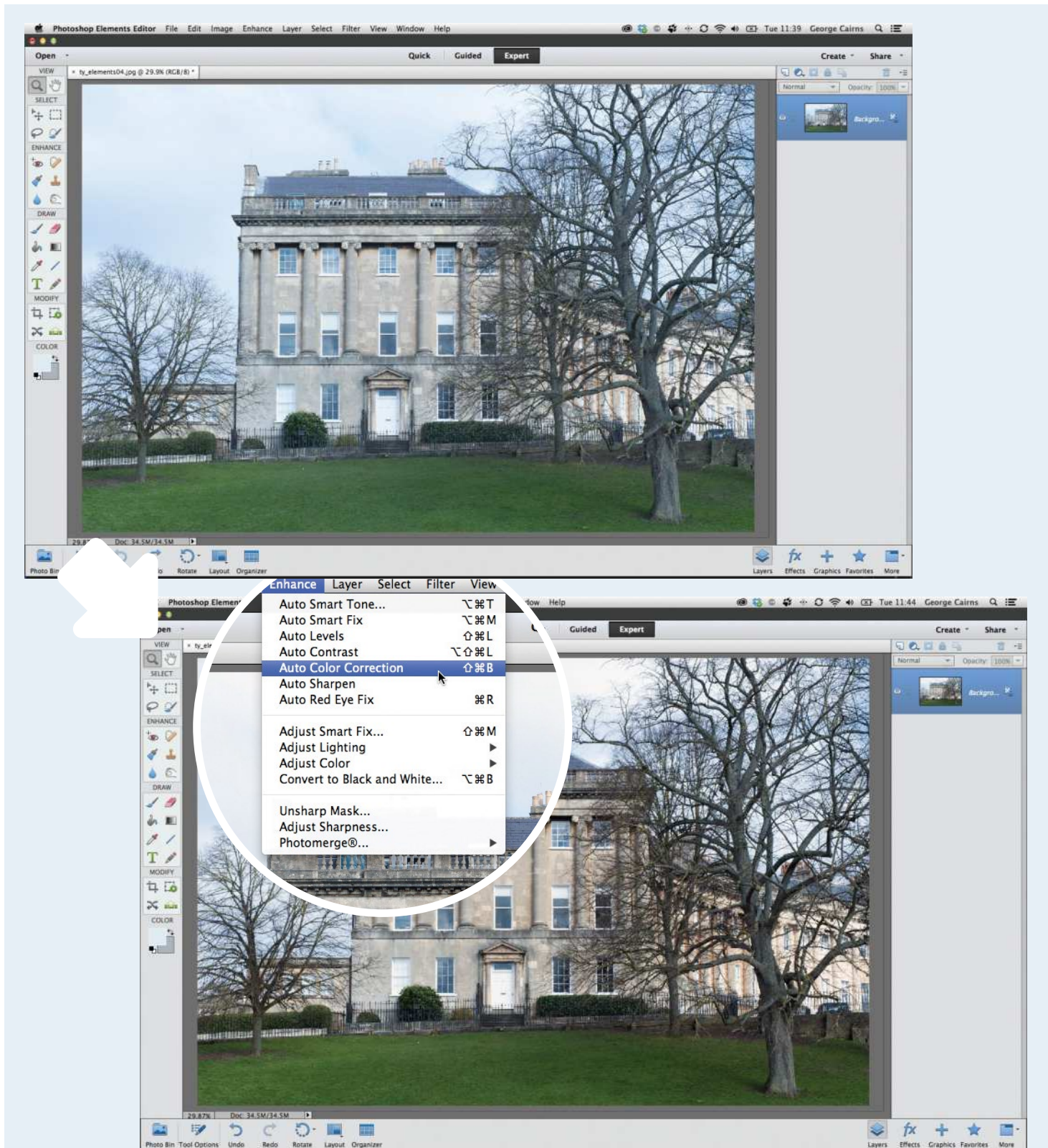
# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

GET STARTED FAST IN PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS



## 2 Avoid unwanted colour shifts

Our ty\_elements08.jpg starting image is over-exposed and lacks strong shadows. You could try using Enhance>Auto Levels to create stronger shadows and increase the midtone contrast, but this will make the building's yellow paintwork look a little green. By choosing Enhance>Auto Contrast you can make the shadows look darker and the highlights brighter without adding unwanted shifts in colour. If the automatic commands fail to do a good job you can adjust the tones manually, as we'll demonstrate in chapter 4.



### 3 Correct colour casts

Our `ty_elements04.jpg` starting image looks a little too cold, due to a slight blue colour cast. Choose `Enhance > Auto Color Correction`, and Photoshop Elements will analyse the whites in the shot. They suffer from a slight blue tint so it warms them up to make the whites appear a neutral white. This warms up the colours in the rest of the image, which brings out the oranges in the building's brickwork. This automatic command won't work on every problematic picture, so we'll show you how to correct colour casts manually in chapter 4. ■

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

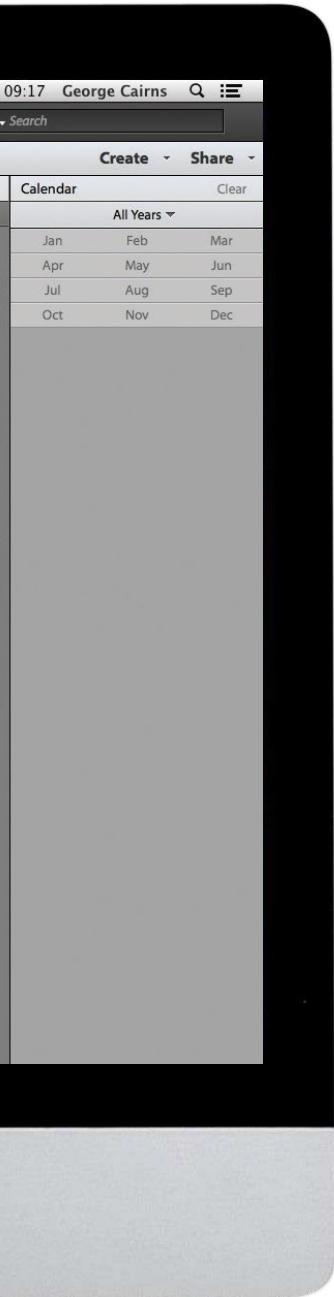
## ORGANISING PHOTOS



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# Organising photos

Find any photo in seconds by grouping your pictures according to who's in them and where they were shot

## 32 Sort your images by rating them

Rate your favourite images with stars and tag them according to who's in them or where they were shot, so you can find specific pictures easily in the future

## 34 Find and tag your people pictures

Use Elements' face-recognition feature to download your Facebook contacts, tag your portraits, and place them in Groups

## 36 Geo-tag your photographs

Organise your photos according to where they were captured so you can explore your photos using a map – see a flagged location and click to see any photographs captured there

## 38 Add keywords to your pictures

Set up the Photoshop Elements Organizer to automatically generate and assign tags to your whole image collection, courtesy of the Smart Tags function

## 40 How to create an Event

Group photographs according to when they were shot, then browse them via a handy calendar in the Events tab

# Sort your images by rating them

Find your favourite photos quickly by assigning star ratings in the Organizer

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**I**n the first two chapters we showed how to import photos from hard drive folders and memory cards into the Photoshop Elements Organizer. We touched on ways to start organising your images, such as placing them into themed albums.

An even quicker way to sort out the gems from the duds is to assign star ratings to your photos as soon as you've imported them. You can then use the Ratings filter to make the Elements Organizer display high-rated shots, or shots that fall between a certain range. Here, we'll show you how to rate your favourite shots quickly, and demonstrate how

the Ratings filter separates the wheat from the chaff. If you haven't already done so, you can copy our supplied project files into a folder on your computer's hard drive. Open the Organizer and choose File>Get Folders and Videos>From Files and Folders. You can then import our project files into the Organizer and follow our step-by-step organising and editing walkthroughs using the images featured in this book.

After showing you how to rate your shots, we'll move on to demonstrate how to tag shots according to who's in them or where they were shot, so you can find specific pictures easily.



## 1 Assign star ratings

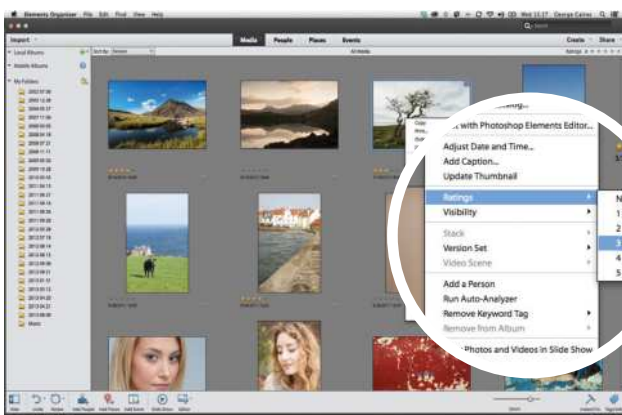
Choose View>Details. It can be a challenge to assess the merit of images from thumbnails, so drag the Zoom slider to the right to enlarge them. You can then move the cursor over the grey stars below each thumbnail and click to assign a rating of between one and five stars.



## 2 Take a closer look

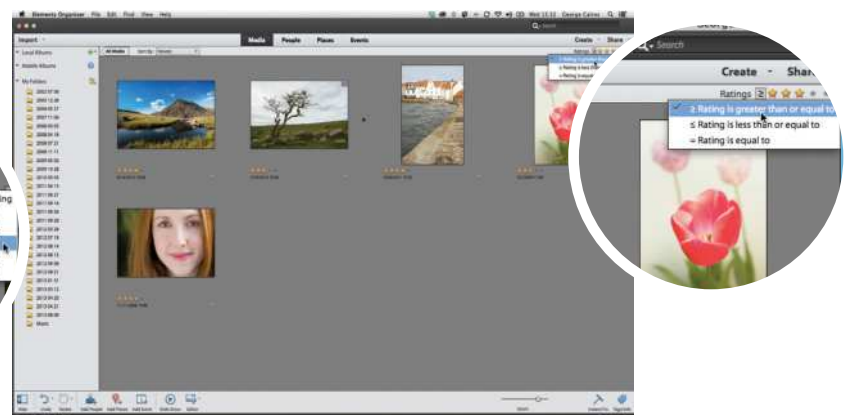
For a closer look at an image, double click it. The image will fill the Organizer workspace. You can then click the stars at the bottom left of the shot to rate it. You can also assign a rating to the selected image by tapping any of the number keys between one and five.





### 3 Rate more images

Click the Grid icon at the top to see all the thumbnails again. You can also rate an image by right clicking it and choosing from the Rating sub-menu. Rate some more shots – give some two stars and others five so that you have a bit of variety – so you can then filter the images.



### 4 Filter the images

Go to the Ratings filter at the top right. Click the symbol to refine the criteria for your search. Choose the Rating is greater than or equal to option for a range of results. If you then choose three stars, the Organizer will display all rated shots that match or exceed this rating.

# Find and tag your people pictures

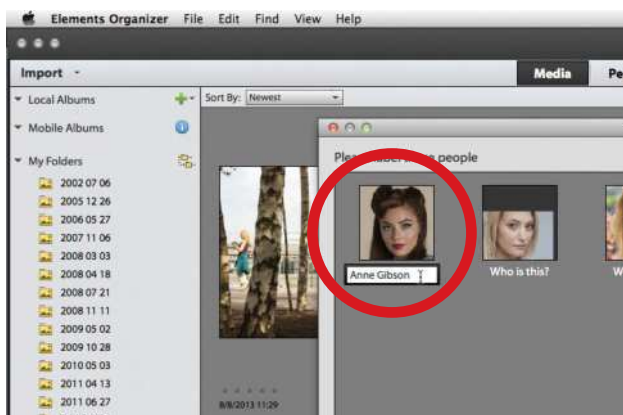
Use Photoshop Elements' face-recognition feature to tag your shots according to who's in them and then place them in Groups

**O**n the previous page we demonstrated how to find favourite files more easily by adding star ratings and then filtering the results. This is a fairly general way to organise your shots. You can organise your photos in a more specific way by tagging images according to who is in each picture. This is a particularly handy feature because many of your photos are likely to feature friends and family members.

To help you tag people in your images, Elements is capable of searching through its library of images and presenting you with any people pictures that it can find. You can then tell the software who each face belongs to, and it will create

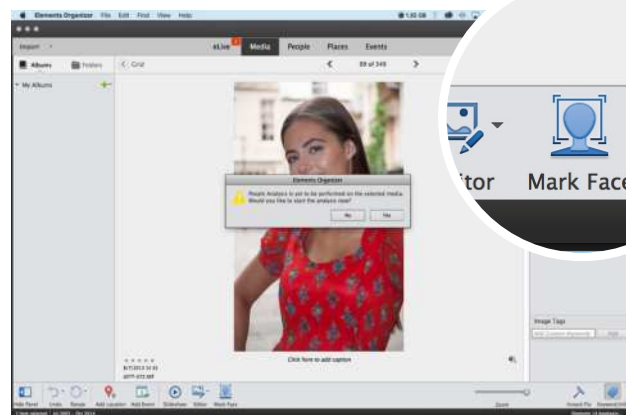
an appropriate people tag for that particular person. You can then sort your people tags into groups (such as Friends, Family and so on). Photoshop Elements' People Recognition window will even download your Facebook contacts, which will help you tag members of your social network more quickly and easily.

Elements' face-recognition feature can speed up your organising workflow, but of course, it's not infallible. Occasionally, it might suggest naming people when there aren't any people present in a shot. So we'll show you how to tell Elements to ignore unsuitable shots in future people searches.



## 1 Scan your images

In Elements 13 you can click the Add People button in the Organizer, and click Yes. Elements will scan your files to look for faces. The results will appear in a window and each thumbnail will have a message asking, 'Who is this?'. Click the text field and type a name.



## 2 Mark Face in Elements

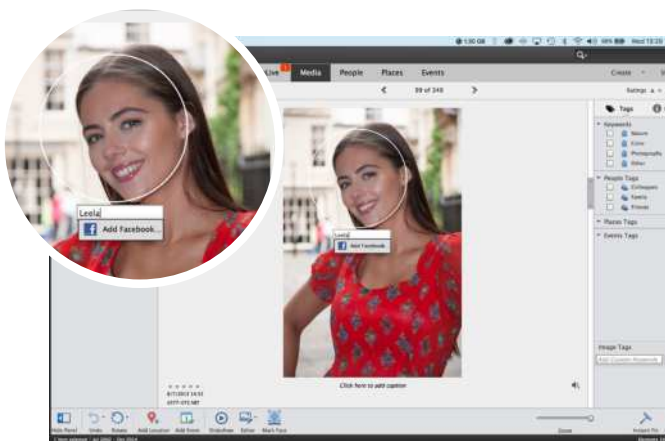
In principle, Elements 14 and 15 will work in a similar way, automatically analyzing images for faces as you import them into the catalog. For existing images, you can double-click them in the Media pane and click the Mark Face button. The Organizer will now offer to analyse your images.



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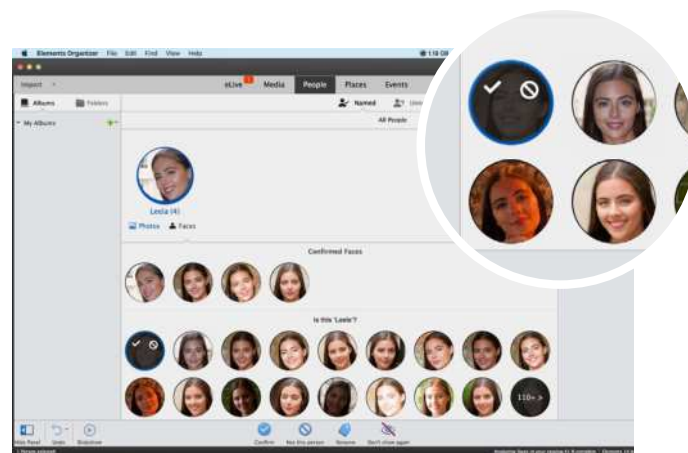
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### 3 Identify faces

When the Organizer identifies a face in the frame it will prompt you to enter a name for that person. You can type this in manually or, if they are a Facebook friend, you can add them from your friends list. The Organizer will now go through your other images to find matches.



### 4 Confirming faces

Elements 14 and 15 split the People panel into Named and Unnamed people. You'll find people you've already identified in the Named panel, together sections for confirmed matches and photos of people who might be the same person – you can confirm whether they are or not. ●

# Geo-tag your photographs

Discover how to organise your photos in Elements by where they were captured so you can explore your holiday snaps on a map

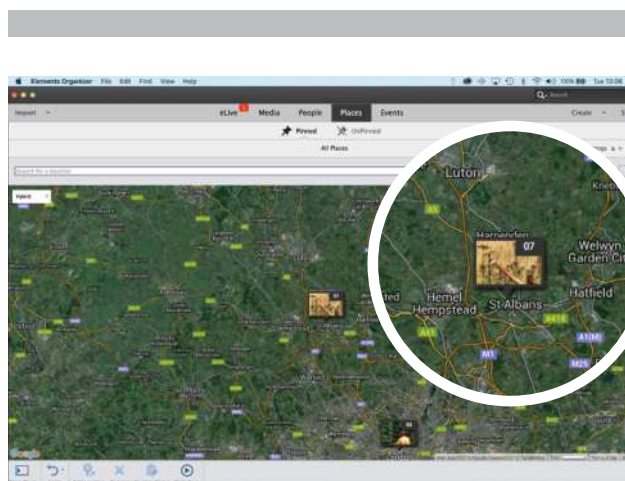
**A**fter travelling abroad it used to be traditional practice to print your holiday snaps and store them in an album. Indeed, you can create holiday albums in the Elements Organizer with ease, and browse through them at your leisure. The Organizer's Places panel provides you with a fun alternative way to see your pictures according to where they were shot.

When you shoot a snap on your smart phone, the software records the location of the shot using GPS (the satellite-based global positioning system). Then, when you import them into the Elements Organizer, it can show you their location

in the Places panel. You can see a map and flagged locations, and you can click to see any photos shot there. This is a useful new function in Photoshop Elements, especially if many of your shots are captured via a phone.

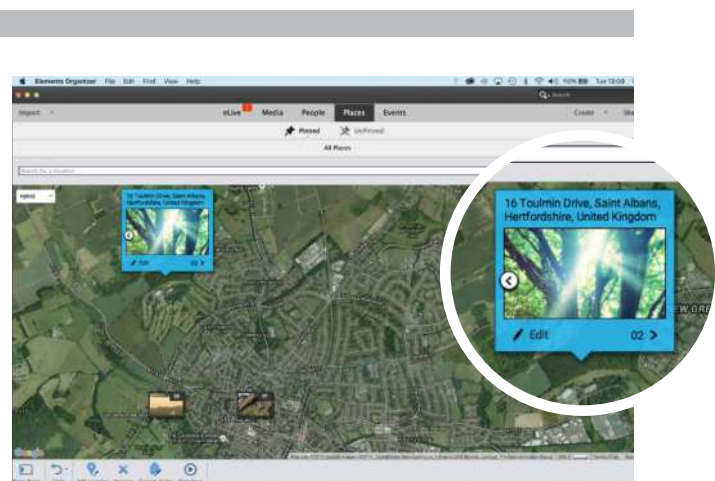
If your camera doesn't automatically geo-tag your shots you can still enjoy using the map-based Places panel to organise them. We'll demonstrate how you can manually add location data to a photo by dragging them to the appropriate location.

For the time being this is the only reasonably straightforward way to add location data to regular digital camera images, unless you own a model with a GPS receiver built in.



## 1 Import phone shots

Go to File>Get Photos>From Files and Folders. Browse to our mobile images collection. Click Get Media. The files will appear in the Organizer. Click the Places panel, then click the Pinned button at the top. You should see see a collection of little red flags clustered around the town of St. Albans.



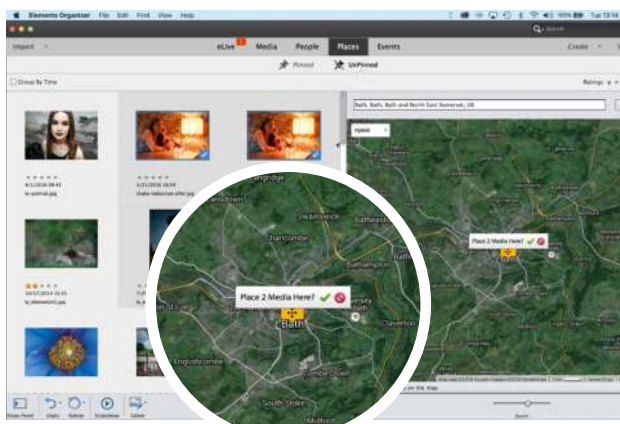
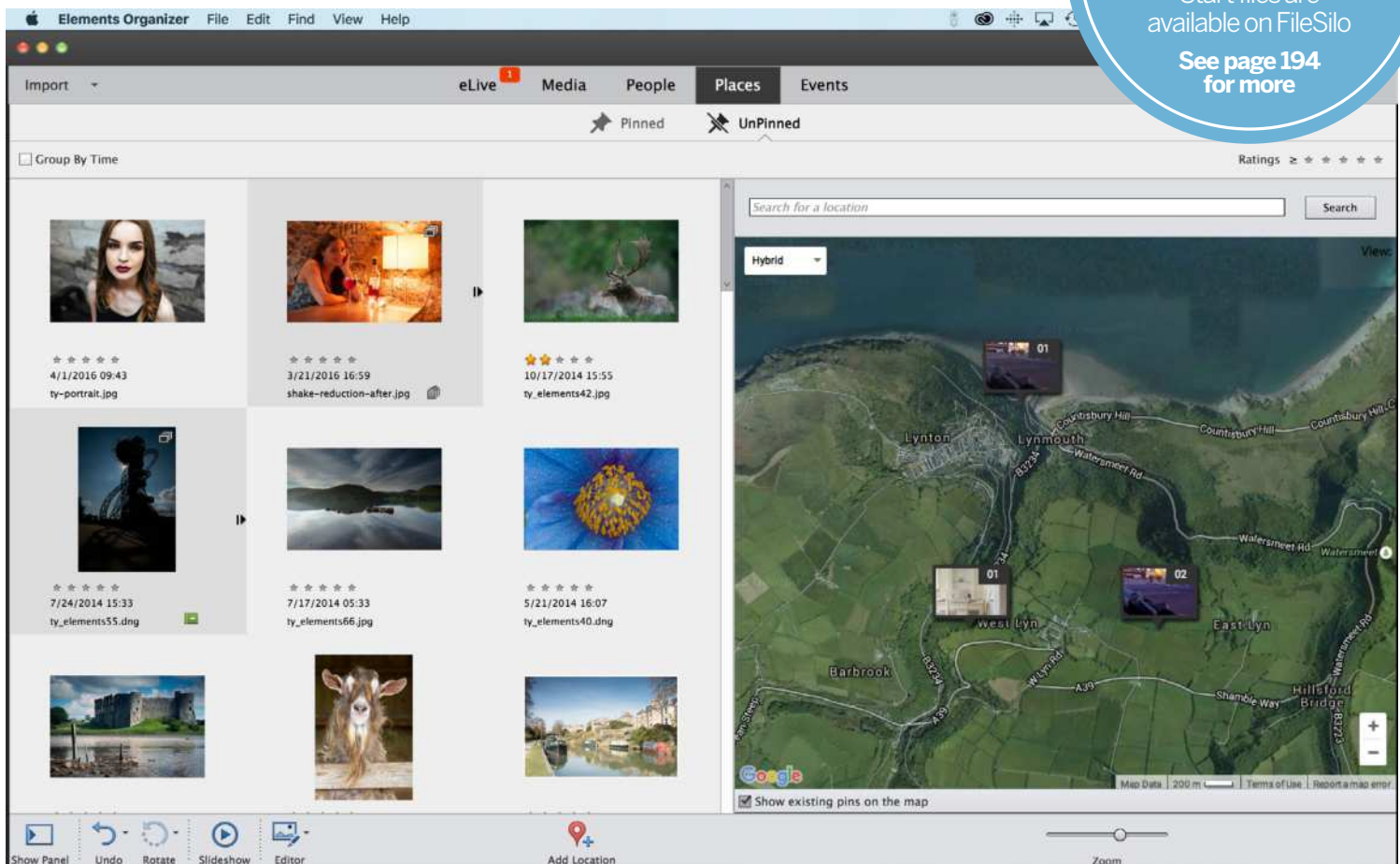
## 2 Zoom in for details

If you zoom in on the map using the buttons in the bottom right corner, your photos are split up into more and more detailed locations. If you move the mouse pointer over a location thumbnail it's enlarged and you can scroll through the pictures – or double-click to view them properly.

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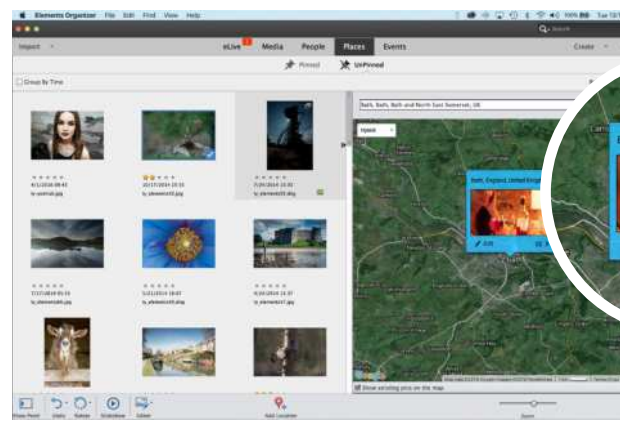
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### 3 Pin photos manually

To add locations manually, click the UnPinned button at the top. You'll now see all the photos that don't yet have location data. Select a photo or photos and type a location into the search box above the map. When Elements finds a match, it asks you if you want to 'Place Media Here?'



### 4 Browse your new location

When you click the green tick button to confirm the location, you'll see your photos are now displayed on the map in the same way as smartphone images with locations already embedded. You might not want to add location data to all photos, but it's great for travel shots.



## Keyword your images

Discover how to find any shot with ease in the future by adding keyword tags to the image metadata

Over the previous pages we demonstrated how to tag photos according to who is in them (Add People) or where they were captured (Add Places). These tags enable you to search for shots by browsing through the pictures in the People or Places panels. You can also type a person's name into the Search field at the top right of the Organizer's workspace and reveal all photos tagged with that name. By placing a shot in an Album you also add a tag to it.

The Organizer automatically attaches the People, Place and Album tags to a shot's metadata. This metadata also describes properties such as when the shot was taken, the camera model used and so on. When you share a photo

via email, any tags will remain attached, such as copyright information you might have assigned when importing the images with the Photo Downloader.

Up until Elements 12, you can get the Organizer to automatically generate and assign tags to your whole collection, courtesy of the Smart Tags function. Smart Tags can help you search for specific files more easily in the future – such as over-exposed or out-of-focus photos. This is no longer available from Elements 13 onwards, however.

As well as People, Places, Album and Smart Tags you can create customised keywords for any photo. For example, if a photo contains a cow you can assign the Cow keyword to it, enabling you find the image in seconds.



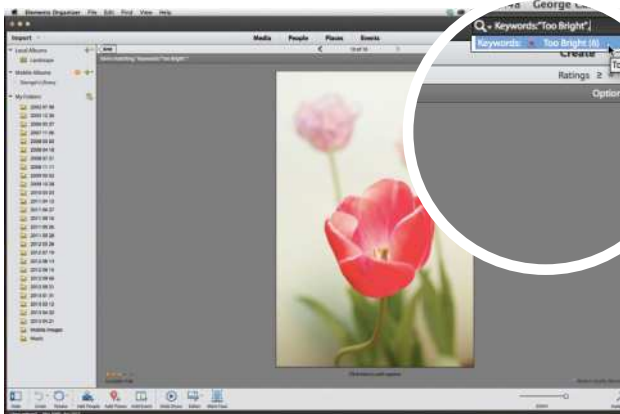
### 1 Identify your image tags

Go to View>Details. Attached tags are displayed as icons below thumbnails in the Organizer's Media panel. People tags are represented by blue head-and-shoulder icons. If a shot is in an Album it will feature a green photo-album icon as a tag. Hover over the tag to see its label.



### 2 Get smart

To assign Smart Tags in Elements 12 (not later versions), press Cmd/Ctrl+A in the Media panel. Choose File>Run Auto Analyzer. A purple Smart Tag icon will appear below each thumbnail. Move the cursor over it to see a Smart Tag keyword such as High Quality In Focus.



### 3 Find images with problems

Smart Tags indicate common picture problems such as Low Contrast or Too Bright. By typing problems into the keyword search field at the top right you can quickly discover photos that need work. You can then try using the tools in the Instant Fix panel to overcome these problems.



### 4 Tag new images

Click Clear or Back to see all the shots again. To assign more tags, click the Tags/Info panel icon. You'll see existing people tags, plus any Groups you've created. You can tag new people shots by dragging the appropriate tag onto a thumbnail. You can also drag and drop Places tags onto shots.



### 5 Assign preset tags

Click the Image Tags text field at the bottom of the Tags panel. A scrollable list will appear containing a range of preset tags such as Nature, One Face and so on. Click to choose a preset tag, then click a thumbnail and click Add to assign the tag to the photo.



### 6 Create new tags

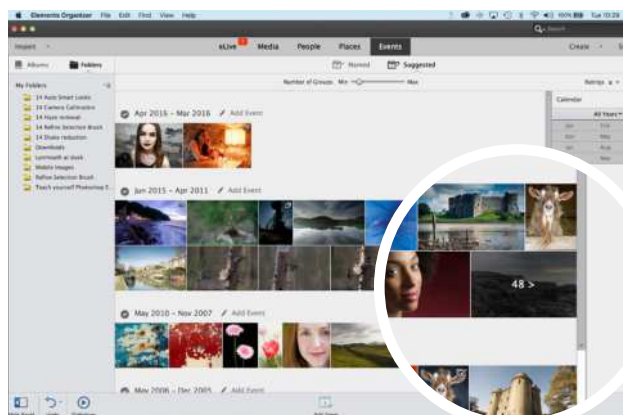
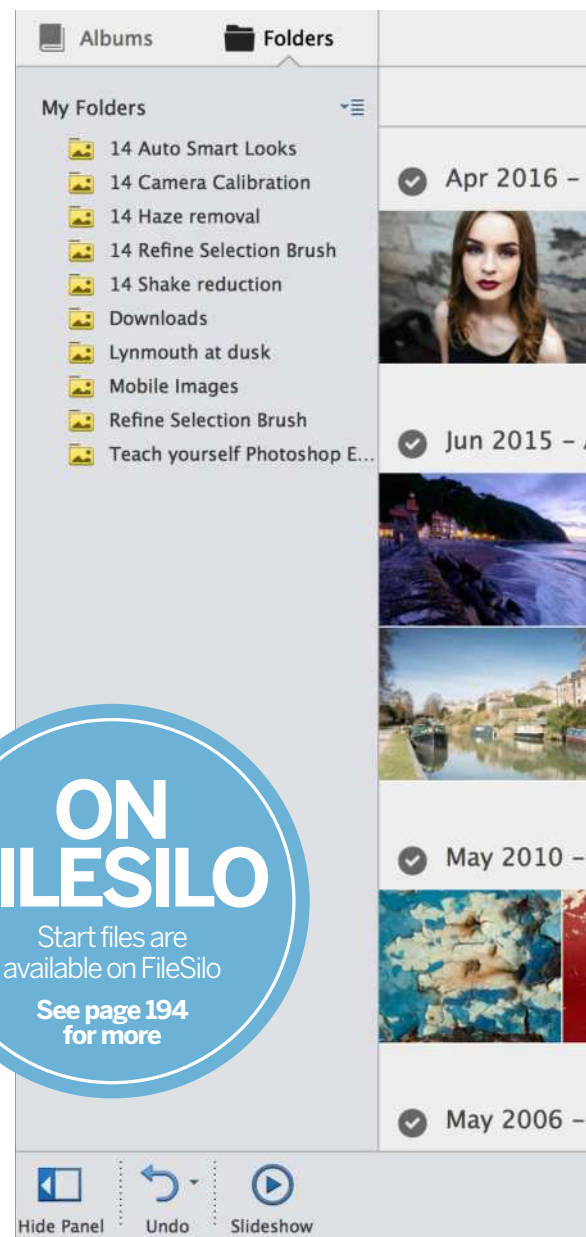
Double click the cow image. Any tags already assigned to the shot will be visible in the Tags panel. To add a new custom tag, click the text field and type the word Cow. Click the Add button. When you type cow into the search field at the top right, this shot will be found.

# Create a new Event

Elements 14 introduced a whole new way to browse and organise your images using Events. Here's how it works

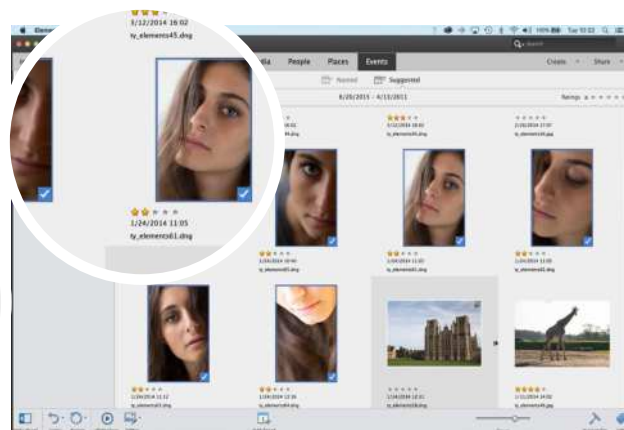
**W**hen you click on the Organizer's Media panel it displays your most recently shot photos at the top of the workspace, so you need to scroll down to find older photos. You can click the Sort By drop-down menu and get the oldest shots to appear at the top if you prefer. You can tag shots according to the place that they were captured or the people that they feature, but most of us are still likely to browse through our pictures according to when they were shot. To help us do this more effectively, the Organizer provides us with a time-based Events tab.

Elements knows when a shot has been snapped by reading that information in its metadata. This metadata can provide various ways to speed up your photo-organising workflow. The Events tab can also use image metadata to create Suggested Events, so that you can view photos captured on a particular day over over a particular time period without having to manually sort them. We'll show you how this time-saving feature works in our walkthrough. But this may not group photos in quite the way you want, so for this the Elements Organizer offer Named Events. This breaks out particular groups of photos in a way that helps you keep them separated and organised in a more logical way.



## 1 Explore Suggested Events

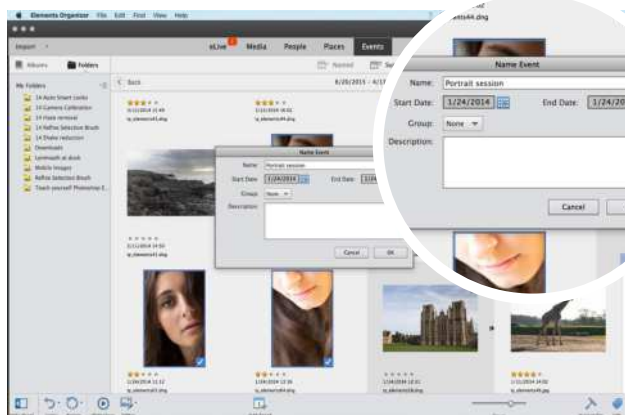
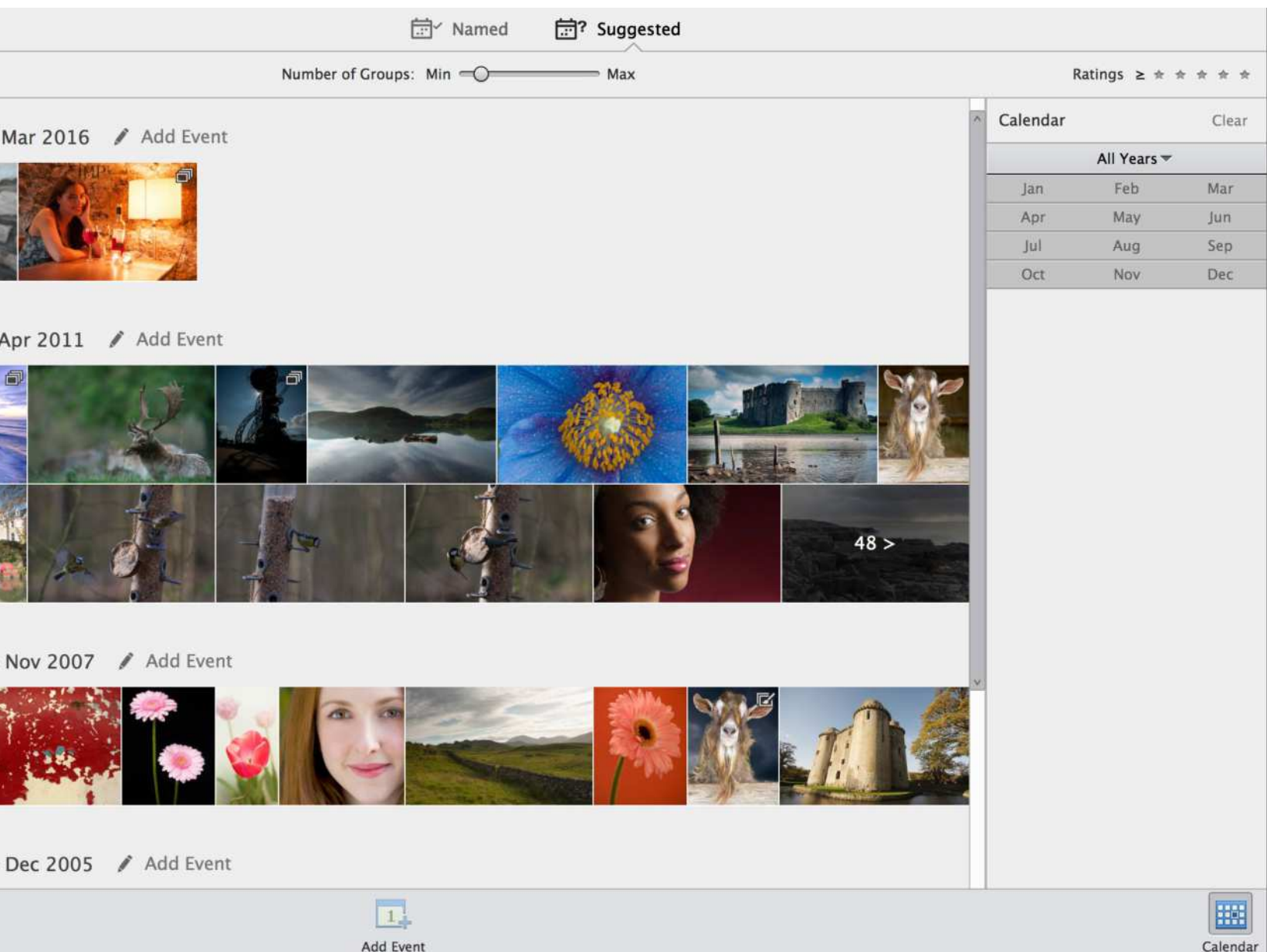
Suggested Events are grouped by date, with your most recent photo shoots at the top. Each event takes up a maximum of two rows, but those with lots of photos have a button to show more. You can change the Number of Groups (more or fewer) using the slider at the top.



## 2 Select photos for a Named Event

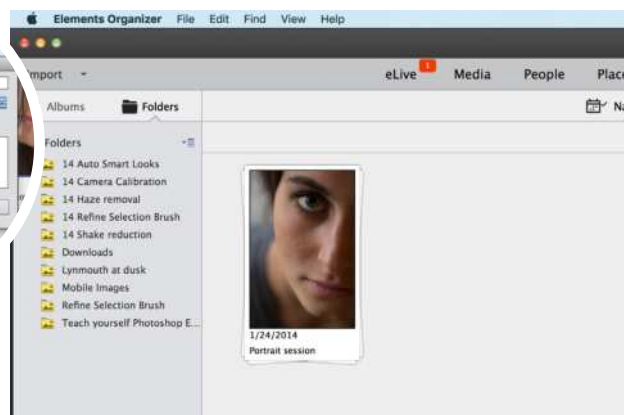
One of our events contains some portrait shots that really need to be pulled out as a separate, or 'Named' Event. Here, we've selected some portrait shots taken during a single sitting – to select a photo just click it, and to select more, command/ctrl-click to add them.





### 3 Add a new Event

Next, use the Add Event button at the bottom of the window. You'll be prompted to choose a name for the new event, and Elements fills in the date range using the data embedded in the photos. You can add a description if you want to, but it's not compulsory.



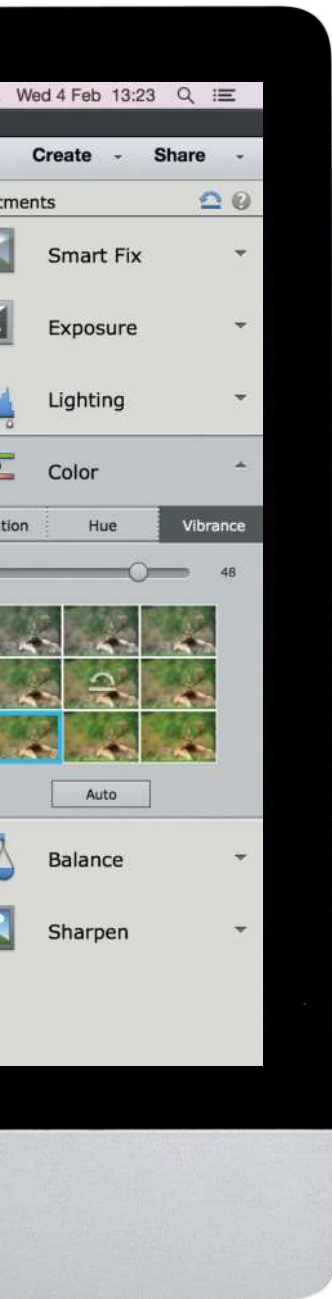
### 4 Browse Named Events

So now, at the top of the Events panel, click 'Named' rather than 'Suggested'. Here, our new Named Event has been created and we can 'skim' through the pictures in this event by moving the mouse pointer across its thumbnail and double-click to open it.

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU'LL EVER DO TO A PHOTO





# The most important things you'll ever do to a photo

Discover the best ways to fix exposure problems, colour casts, compositional errors and more

**44 How to fix exposure errors with more control**  
Make tonal adjustments using the shadow, midtone and highlight controlling sliders in a Levels adjustment layer to take total control over the tones in a photo

**48 How to get perfect colours**  
The Auto White Balance features on cameras aren't infallible, especially in unusual lighting conditions. Discover how to remove colour casts caused by an ineffective white balance

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Post-production sharpening helps to create a print with more punch. Discover how to use Elements to sharpen soft-looking details while keeping artefacts at bay

**56 How to improve a photo with a crop**  
Use the Crop tool to improve composition, resize photographs and convert vertical portrait-format images to horizontal landscape-oriented images

# Fix exposure errors

Fix over- or under-exposed images by adjusting their levels to create healthier looking histograms

**I**n chapter 2 we showed how Photoshop Elements' automatic enhancement commands enable you to fix exposure problems with a click. Commands such as Auto Levels work their tone-tweaking magic by reading and adjusting a photograph's histogram. A histogram is an undulating graph that shows the spread and strength of the shadows, midtones and highlights in a particular shot (much like a medical chart can tell a doctor

about the health of a patient). The histogram of a correctly exposed photo will display a graph that spreads from the far left (where the shadows are represented) to the far right (where the highlights are represented).

The concept of histograms may sound a bit daunting, but they're the key to overcoming exposure-related problems. We explain how to read histograms below, and then move on to adjusting them to fix exposure problems.



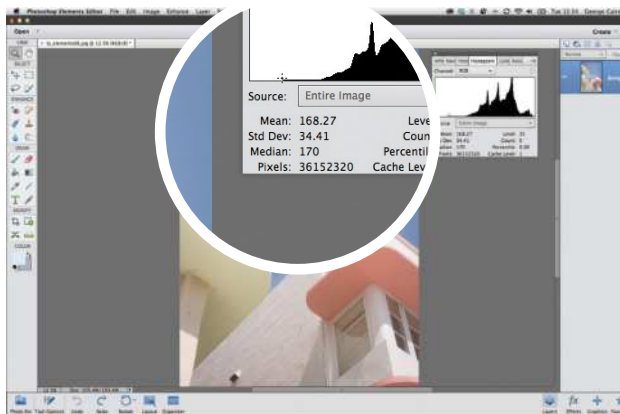
## 1 Open the histogram

Open `ty_elementso8.jpg`. We can see with the naked eye that the shot is over-exposed. To see the spread of tones in a more mathematical way, go to `Window > Histogram`. This displays the tones of each colour channel as a separate graph. To simplify it, set the Channel menu to RGB.



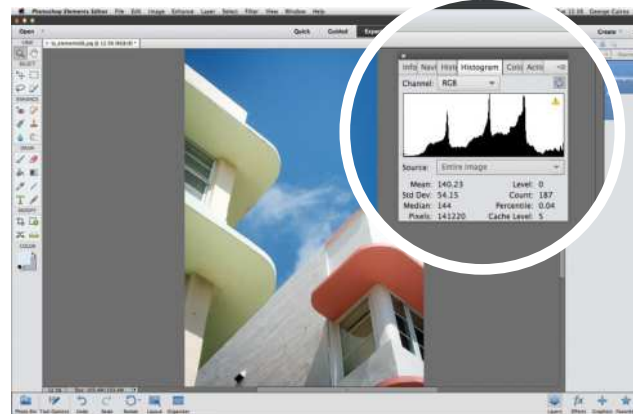
## 2 Analyse the tones

The histogram describes all the tones in the image. The graph for this over-exposed image is squashed towards the middle and right of the histogram, with no information on the left. This indicates that the photo consists mostly of midtones and highlights, and lacks shadows.



## 3 Look at the levels

Tones are described by levels. The darkest shadows should have a level of 0. The brightest highlights should have a level of 256. If you place the cursor at the left of the graph, you'll see that this photograph's darkest shadows have a level of 35 or so.



## 4 Fix automatically

Choose `Enhance > Auto Levels` and the histogram graph slides towards the left, turning some of the murky midtones into strong dark shadows. This creates a healthier histogram and a correctly exposed shot. On the following pages we'll show you how to manually adjust a histogram. [▶](#)

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

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AFTER

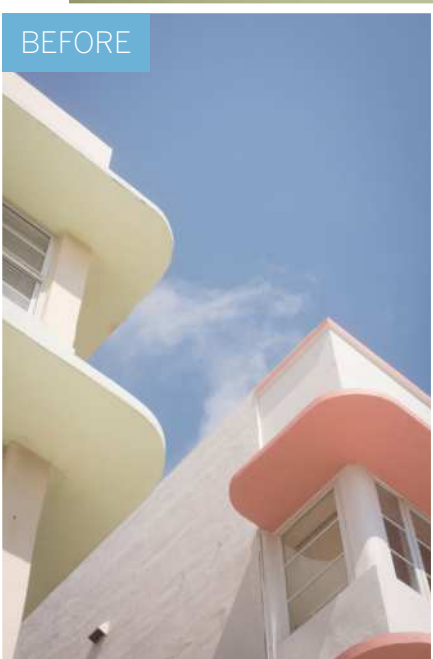


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BEFORE

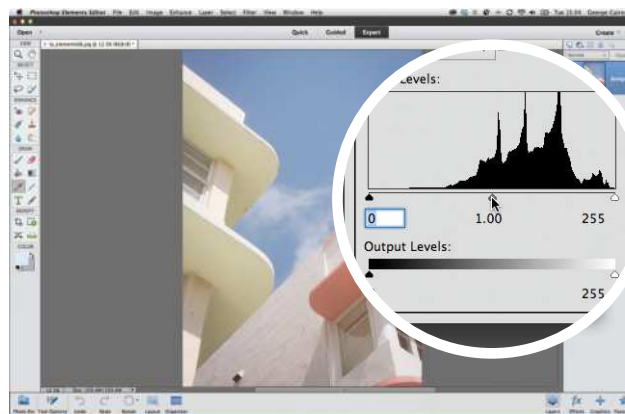
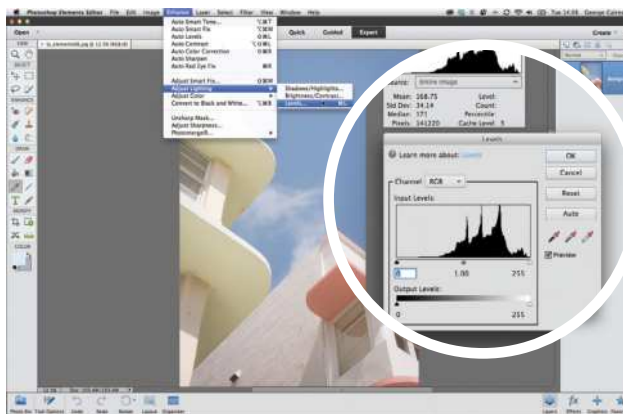


# Fix exposure errors with more control

Manually re-map the levels in a photograph to create a healthier spread of tones

**O**n the previous pages we demonstrated how a histogram displays the range of tones (or levels) in an image. We then used the Auto Levels command to remap the washed-out shadows of an over-exposed image to the darkest level of 0. This created a shot with a healthier spread of shadows, midtones and highlights.

Sometimes the Auto Levels command won't produce the desired results. You may want to see more midtone detail or create dramatic black shadows, for example. Here's how to manually make tonal adjustments using the shadow, midtone and highlight controlling sliders in the Levels dialog. You'll then be able to take total control over tones.

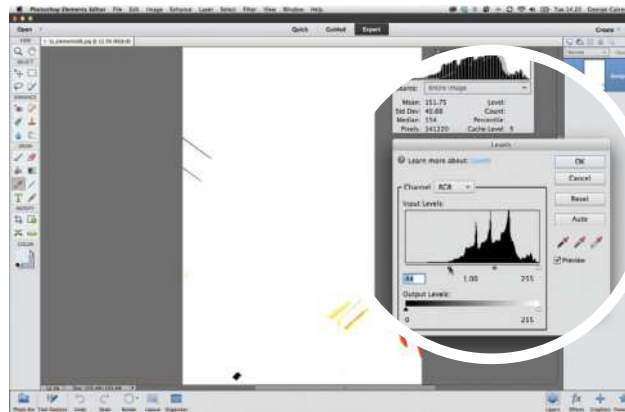


## 1 Open the Levels command

If you followed the steps on the previous spread, press **Cmd/Ctrl+Z** to undo the effects of the Auto Levels command. Otherwise, load `ty_elements08.jpg`. Go to **Enhance > Adjust Lighting > Levels**. This displays the histogram of our over-exposed shot.

## 2 Understanding Input Levels

The histogram has three Input Levels sliders below the graph. The black slider enables you to adjust the shadows. The grey slider lightens or darkens the midtones. The white slider enables you to adjust the highlights. As a rule, leave the Output Levels alone.



## 3 Darken the shadows

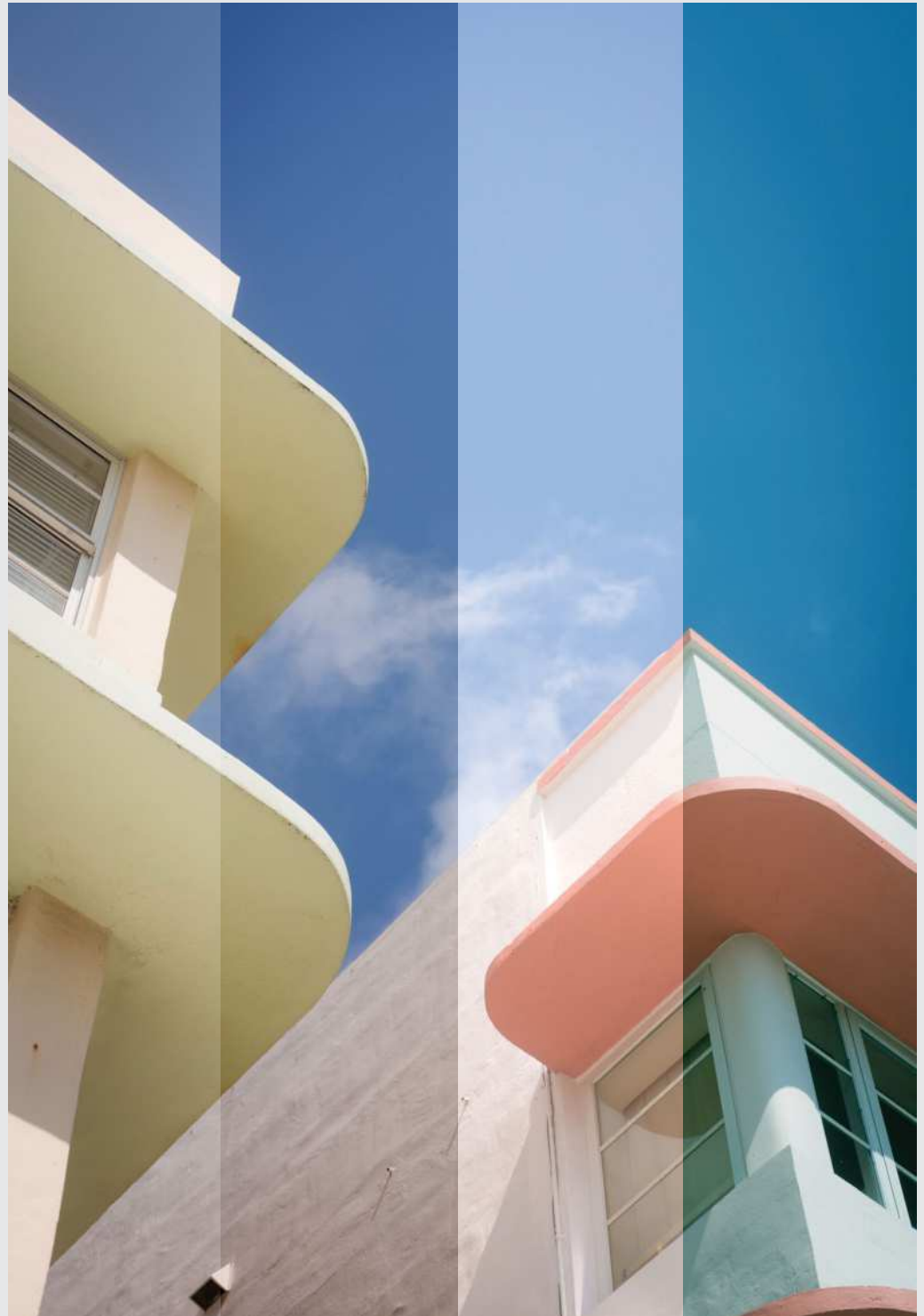
The three sliders take the original (input level) tones and give them stronger output levels. To darken the shadows, drag the black slider to the right until it touches the graph. Tick and untick the preview box to see a before and after version.

## 4 Clipping warnings

If you drag the black slider further right you risk creating clipped (under-exposed) shadows that feature no detail. To avoid clipping the shadows, hold down **Alt** as you drag the slider. If you go too far you'll see clipped areas as patches of colour. Click **OK**.

## Levels in action

Produce a wide range of results by adjusting the Input Levels sliders in the Levels command



### Correct exposure

Here we've dragged the black slider right until it just touches the graph (at the Input Level of 42). This gives the shadows in the original image a slightly darker value, while preserving tonal detail in the shadows.

### Darkened for impact

In this example we've dragged the black slider further to the right to an Input Level of 82. This creates much darker and more dramatic-looking shadows, although it loses some detail in the darkest tones.

### Original exposure

In this example we've reset the black and grey sliders to their original positions. The over-exposed shot already had strong highlights, so as we dragged the white slider left to 223 it has clipped the highlights.

### Creative interpretation

Here we set the black slider to 58 to darken the shadows. We then set the Channel menu to Red and dragged the grey slider to 0.62. By darkening the Red midtones we added a green cast to the shot. ■

# Get perfect colours

Reveal a scene's true colours by removing colour casts caused by an incorrect or ineffective white balance setting

**O**ne of the most effective ways to improve images straight out of the camera is to enhance the colour and tones. This might be because the colours recorded by your camera look slightly wrong, or it could be that you want to apply a visual effect.

When we look at a scene with the naked eye, we tend to perceive the correct colours in most lighting conditions. A camera, however, needs help to capture a subject's true colours. This is because different light sources have a different colour temperature. To your camera, daylight has a blue tint, while indoor light sources such as tungsten bulbs

have an orange tint. Cameras try to avoid capturing tints by using Auto White Balance (AWB). But sometimes the AWB function doesn't work effectively, so a little fine-tuning of its settings. This is easily done with the Elements Adjustments settings. Each offers a handy grid of variations to choose from, plus sliders that allow you to fine-tune your changes.

Once colours are fixed, if you like you can go on to apply a variety of speedy effects using the Effects panel in Quick mode, such as Cross Processing, Vintage, and Split Tone. Each of the 10 effects on offer has five variations, giving you a total of 50 one-click treatments. Here's how it works... ▶

BEFORE



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# Teach yourself **Photoshop Elements**

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU'LL EVER DO TO A PHOTO



# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU'LL EVER DO TO A PHOTO



## 1 Brighten the image

Open the deer image and click Quick mode. Our starting shot has a cold blue cast so it needs warming up. It's also slightly under-exposed. Click the Exposure button and click the variation box to the right of the centre. Once done, use the slider to fine-tune the exposure. Here we've set it to 0.9.



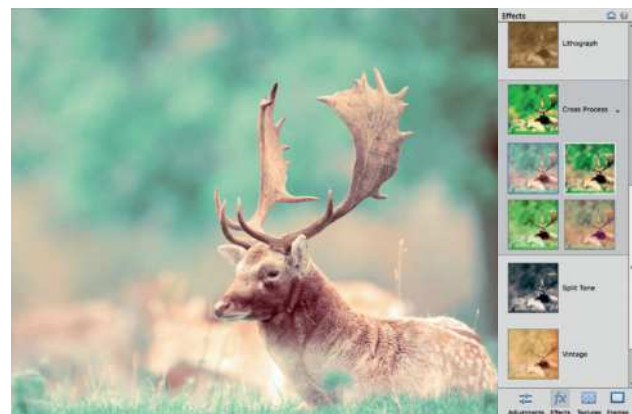
## 2 Add some warmth

Click the Balance section. There are two sections: Temperature and Tint. Temperature enables you to warm up or cool down the tones. Tint enables you to fix green or purple colour casts. Click Temperature and set the slider to 57, then set the Tint slider to -4.



## 3 Boost the saturation

Click the Color box. Set Saturation to about +11. Next click Vibrance. This enables you to boost the weaker colours in the scene, so in this instance it enables us to boost the oranges in the deer without affecting the yellows and greens in the trees. Set Vibrance to 48.



## 4 Experiment with effects

Once the colours and exposure are fixed, you can experiment with a range of effects. Click the Effects button at the bottom right. There are 10 themes, each with five variations. Click through to try out different treatments, and use the reset image icon at the top right to revert back.



## 5 Apply the Spring effect

Here we've opted to use the Spring effect, found within the Seasons set of effects. It enhances the colours and gives the image a fresher feel. However, it's slightly overpowering the colours in the trees, but we can tone it down by heading to the Expert mode.



## 6 Tone it down

Click the Expert mode at the top, then go the Layers panel. Note how there are two layers. The lower layer is the version of the image with the colours and exposure fixed. The upper layer is the Spring effect. We can tone down the effect simply by lowering the opacity of the top layer.

# FIND OUT HOW TO SHOOT YOUR BEST PORTRAITS YET

Whether you're an enthusiast or an expert, this brand-new title will help you to master every aspect of portrait photography, from kitbag essentials and core techniques, to how to get creative in your shoots



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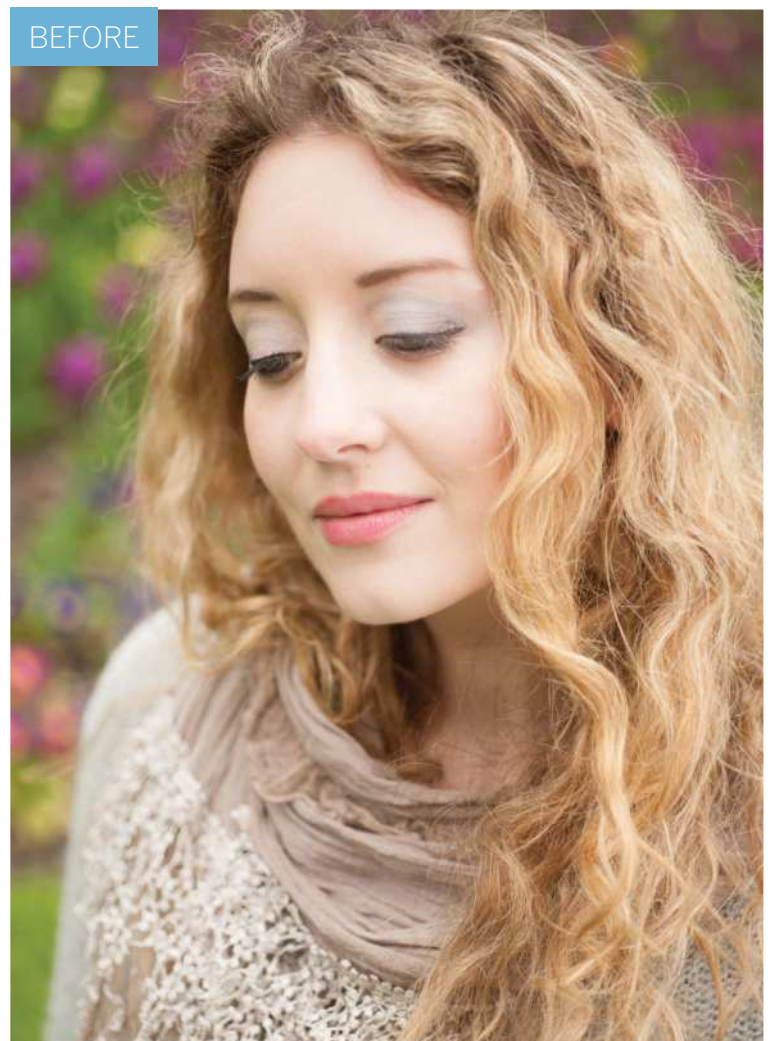
# Discover the best way to sharpen a photo

Use Photoshop Elements to sharpen soft-looking details while keeping artefacts at bay

**T**here are several reasons a photograph may look a little soft. For starters the camera's Auto Focus (AF) point may not have overlapped the key area of interest, causing it to blur. Or if you shoot with a wide aperture setting then you'll have a much narrower depth of field, so only a shallow area could be in focus. Our starting image was captured using a wide aperture of f/3.2, which creates an attractive blurred background. This blur (or bokeh) helps the model stand out in the image. We wouldn't want to sharpen a deliberately blurred background, but we can make fine details such as the model's eyes stand out more effectively with a little sharpening, courtesy of Photoshop Elements' collection of sharpening tools and commands.

Many photos will benefit from some sharpening. Even if your image looks relatively sharp on your computer display, it can still print out fairly fuzzily on a printer. A touch of post-production sharpening helps to create a print with more punch, especially if you use raw-format files.

Photoshop Elements makes soft objects in a photo look sharper by increasing the contrast around the edges of details in the image. This contrast change gives certain features more impact, making them appear sharper. Sharpening is a balancing act. If you increase the contrast around the edges by too large an amount, you can add sharpening artefacts such as haloes and noise. We'll show you how to recognise and therefore avoid adding artefacts while sharpening your own images. [▶](#)



# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU'LL EVER DO TO A PHOTO

AFTER



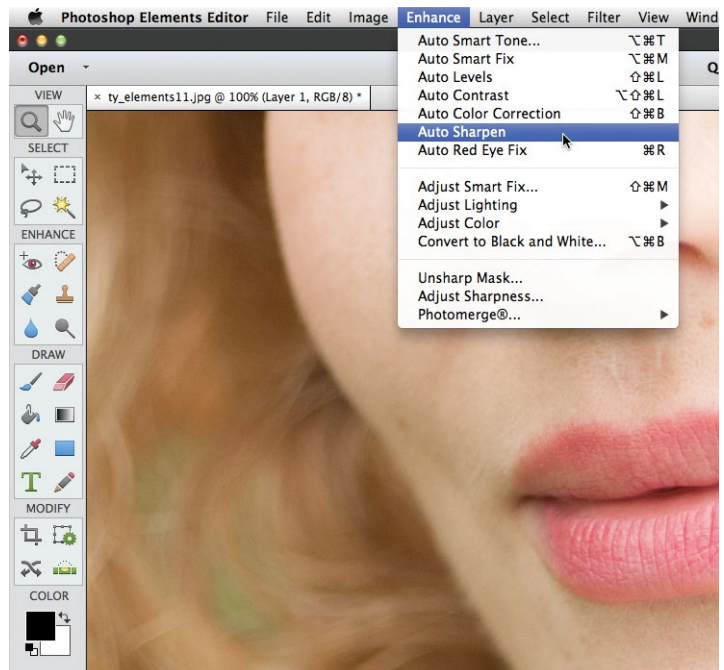
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# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU'LL EVER DO TO A PHOTO

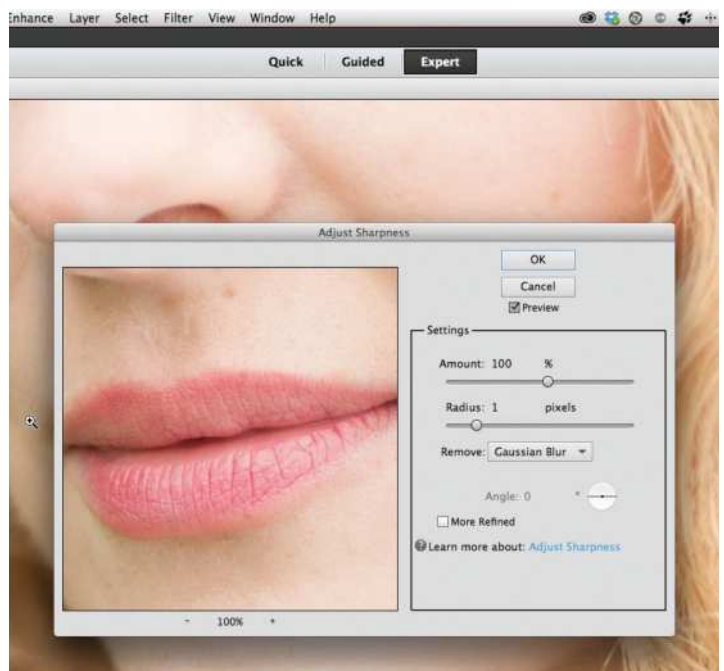
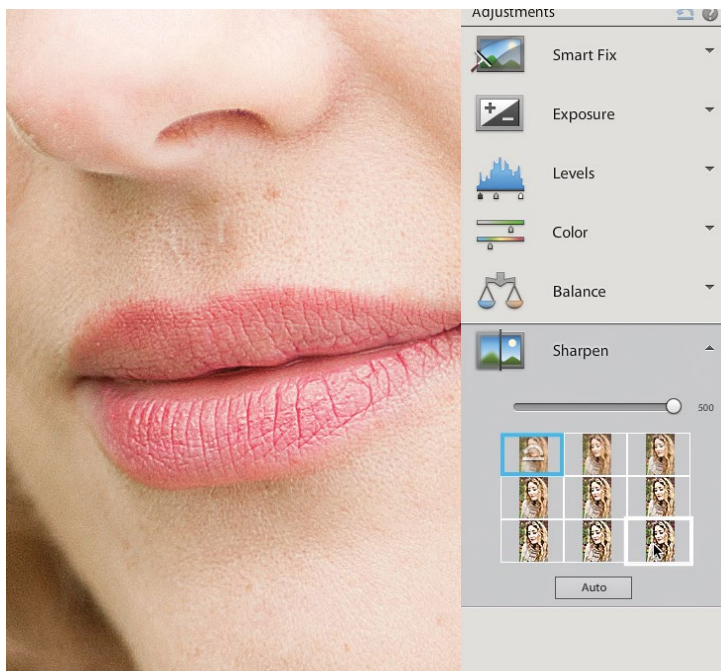


## 1 Examine the image at 100%

Go to File>Open and browse to our ty\_elements11.jpg start image. To accurately assess how sharp a photograph really is, you need to look at the pixels at 100%. Grab the Zoom tool from the Toolbox. Right click and choose Actual Pixels from the context-sensitive pop-up menu. Hold down the space bar to temporarily summon the Hand tool, and drag the image to reveal the model's mouth. The lips lack detail because they suffer from a slightly soft focus.

## 2 Try Auto Sharpen

Before sharpening a photo, click the Background layer's thumbnail in the Layers panel. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to make a duplicate layer. You can then sharpen this copy. If you're in a hurry you can go to Enhance>Auto Sharpen. This will sharpen the image and reveal more detail, but you can't change the strength of the operation. Click the top layer's eye icon to compare the two versions of the shot, then click the Undo button.



## 3 Sharpen incrementally

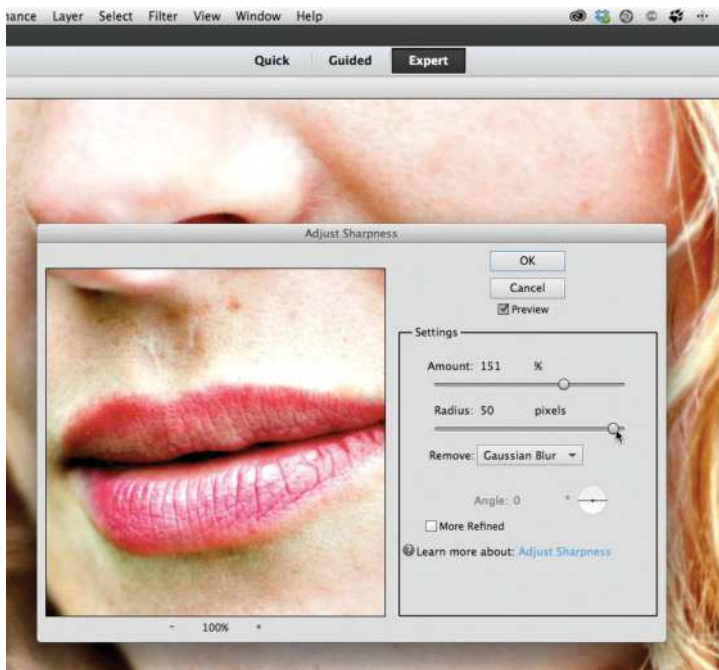
To sharpen an image quickly while retaining control over the sharpening amount, click the Quick editing tab. Click Adjustments, then click Sharpen. You can either drag the slider right to increase the sharpening, or click the preview thumbnail to increase the sharpening in incremental jumps. If you choose too high a setting you'll exaggerate unwanted details such as the facial hair and image noise in the blurred background.

## 4 Adjust the sharpness

The Quick adjustment option is fine for a bit of rough-and-ready sharpening, but it can add artefacts as you saw in the previous step. Click the top left thumbnail to reset the shot to its unsharpened state (or drag the slider to 0). Click back to the Expert editing tab to access a sharpening command that offers more editing choices. Go to Enhance and choose Adjust Sharpness. By default this displays the photo at 100% magnification.

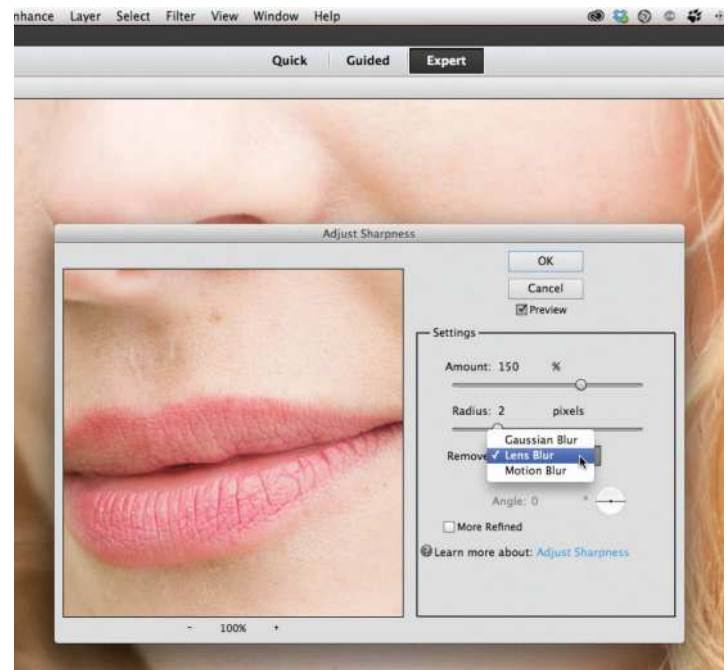
# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU'LL EVER DO TO A PHOTO



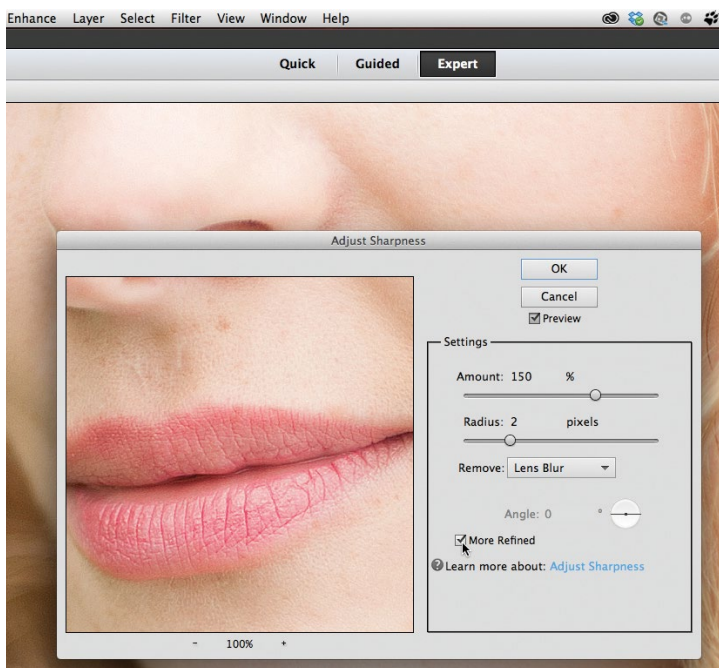
## 5 Recognise artefacts

To help you learn more about sharpening artefacts, push the Amount slider up to 150% to see a dramatic change in edge contrast. Increase the Radius to 50 pixels to increase the spread of the edge contrast change. This creates ugly artefacts such as blown-out highlights, dark clipped shadows and over-saturated colours. As a rule, don't exceed a Radius value of 2.0 to help avoid creating over-sharpening artefacts.



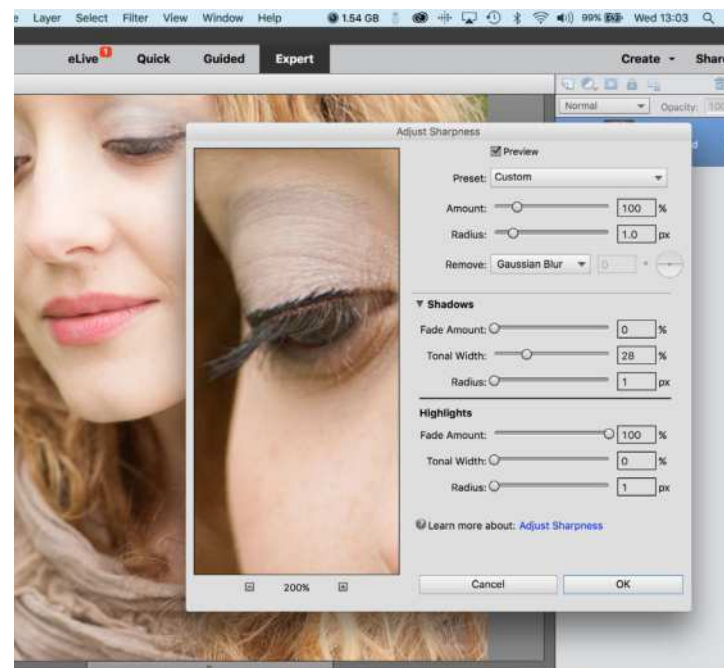
## 6 Remove lens blur

Drop the Radius slider to 2.0 pixels. Click and hold down the mouse button over the preview window to see the unsharpened version of the photograph, then release the mouse button to see how much the slider settings are sharpening it. For more subtle but effective sharpening, set the Remove drop-down menu to Lens Blur. This helps to reduce artefacts such as haloes (noticeable lines clinging to the edge of contrasting edges).



## 7 Extra options

If your photo suffers from shake-induced blur (due to a slow shutter speed) then you might want to try setting the Remove menu to Motion Blur. You can then drag the Angle wheel to try to counteract the direction of the blur. In practice this doesn't tend to work well. You may be tempted to tick the More Refined box, but this tends to add extra sharpening artefacts such as noise (especially if you've captured the shot using a high ISO setting), so just click OK.



## 8 Shadows/Highlights in Elements 14+

So far we've been using the standard sharpening tools in the Adjust Sharpening dialog. Elements 13 does have a More Refined box (see Step 7) which has questionable value, but in Elements 14 this was replaced by Shadows/Highlights options. If you expand this section of the dialog you'll see sliders for adjusting the strength of the sharpening in shadow and highlight areas. For most photographers, though, this degree of complexity is probably a step too far. ●

# Improve the composition of a photo with a crop

Use the Crop tool to improve composition and resize photographs to specific dimensions and ratios

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**I**t's best to get your framing right in-camera, but this is not always possible. You might have missed a distracting object on the edge of the frame, or perhaps a stray tourist has walked in to your scene at the decisive moment. And there are times when it's sensible to leave the framing loose in the knowledge that you'll crop in later, such as when your subject is moving too quickly to get the framing perfect, or if you want to add words or other elements to the image in post-production.

Thanks to Photoshop Elements' Crop tool, you can remove distracting objects at the edges of the image or tighten up your framing to improve your composition. Of course, the more you crop into an image, the more you eat away at the image size and resolution. But with current digital cameras producing files with large dimensions, you can afford to lose a few pixels and still produce images that are large enough to print.

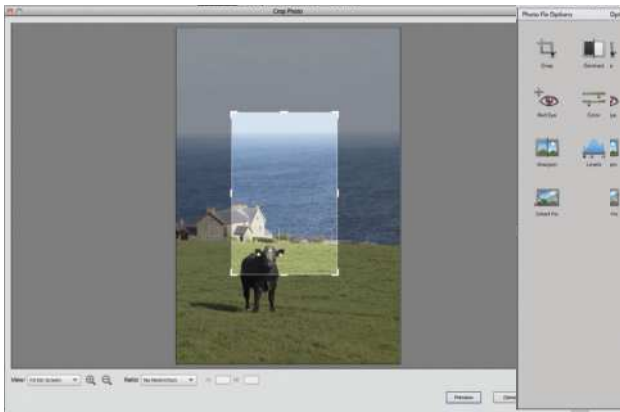
As well as cropping to improve the composition, you might want to try out an aspect ratio that differs from your camera's standard width and height, such as a square or a panoramic. Or perhaps you'd like to resize to a specific print size. All this is possible within the Crop tool settings. What's more, the Elements Crop tool comes with handy 'Crop Suggestions', which offer four ways of cropping your image based on classic compositional guides such as the rule of thirds. Elements also offers a tool that can alter the composition of a photo while preserving the shape of the subject. The Recompose tool enables you to make features that are separated by lots of space become closer together without squashing or stretching important parts of the photograph. Here's how it works.





# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU'LL EVER DO TO A PHOTO



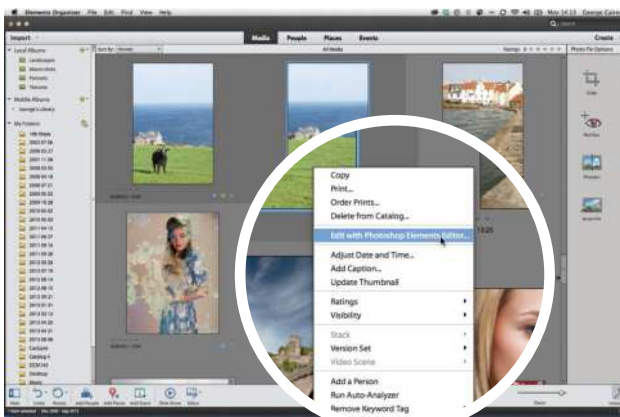
## 1 Crop in Organizer

Cropping is such a common photo-fixing task that Photoshop Elements enables you to perform it in the Organizer. Double click ty\_elements04.jpg to make the shot fill the screen. Click the Instant Fix icon, then click the Crop icon in the Photo Fix Options panel.



## 2 Preserve the shape

Drag the crop handles to change the shape of the crop. To keep it the same shape as the original photo, click the Ratio drop-down menu and choose Use Photo Ratio. You can now drag the corner handles to crop the shot while automatically preserving the shape of the original image.



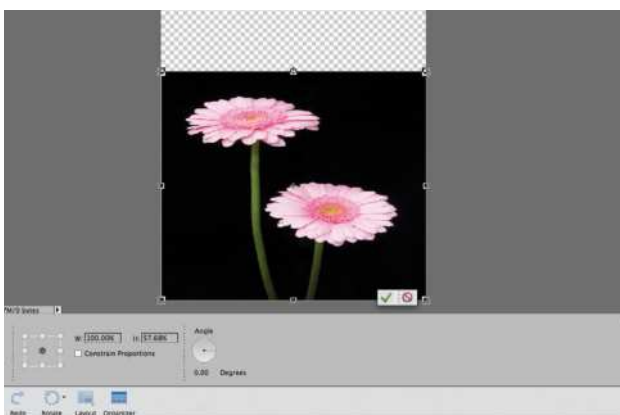
## 3 Apply the crop

Click Done to apply the crop. The cropped version of the photo will appear alongside the original image in a version set stack, so the original image is intact. You can also crop images in other modes. Click the original thumbnail and go to Edit>Edit with Photoshop Elements Editor.



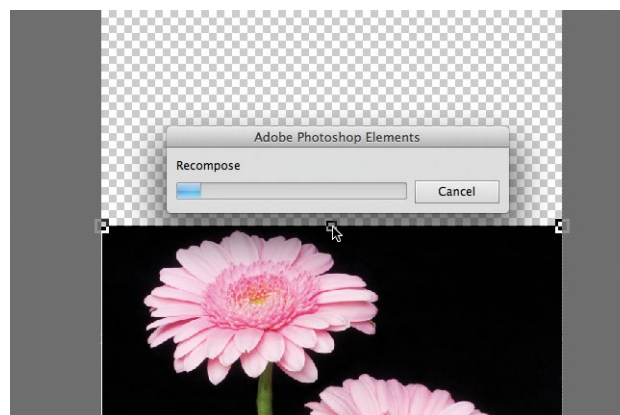
## 4 Crop and resize

Click the Crop tool in the Toolbox. In the Tool Options, set the drop-down menu to 8x10 inches. Choose an overlay such as the Rule of Thirds Grid. Click the arrows between W and H to swap width and height. Make the intersecting grid overlap the cow and click the tick.



## 5 Squash it

Go to File>Open and browse to ty\_elements06.jpg. You could recompose this shot by choosing Image>Transform>Free Transform. You could then drag the handle down to make the flower heads closer. However, this squashes them. Click Cancel, then select the Recompose tool.



## 6 Selective squash

In the Tool Options, click the Mark for Protection box, then scribble a rough brush stroke on each flower head. Drag the transform handle downwards to push the heads closer together. This time the flower heads retain their correct proportions, while the background is squashed.

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

ADVANCED IMAGE EDITING SKILLS





# Advanced image editing skills

Learn how to make an image composite by adding or removing elements from a scene without leaving traces

## 60 Make rough and ready selections

Discover how to select areas quickly by mastering the easy-to-use Elliptical and Rectangular Marquee tools, and the Lasso, Polygonal Lasso and Magnetic Lasso tools

## 64 How to use intelligent selection tools

Produce quicker and more accurate selections using the Magic Wand tool, the Quick Selection tool and the Selection Brush tool

## 68 Improve your selections with Refine Edge

Find out how to perfect your selection marquees, no matter how complicated the object, using the sophisticated Refine Edge tool to contract, expand, feather, smooth and more

## 72 Combine images with Photomerge Compose

Develop your selection and edge-refining skills by making a convincing composite photo using Elements' new Photomerge Compose feature

## 76 How to make non-destructive edits

Use versatile adjustment layers to selectively target and tweak the colours and tones of an image without affecting the original file

# Make rough and ready selections

Select areas quickly by mastering the Marquee and Lasso tools

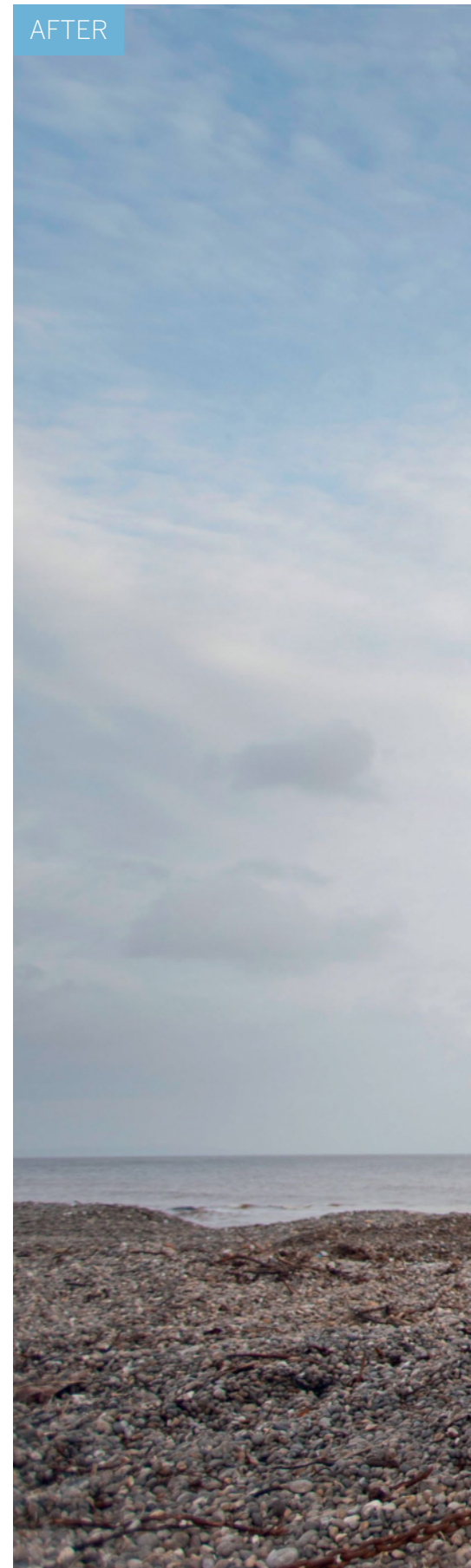
**M**ost of the tools and menu commands in Photoshop Elements change the colours and tones in the entire image, or enable you to copy and paste every pixel, for example. However, you may want to perform more selective adjustments on particular areas, and this calls for the services of the Marquee tools. A marquee is a straight or curved line made up of animated black and white dashes (which are often referred to as 'marching ants'). Think of a marquee as a fence that isolates the pixels within it from the rest of the image. You can copy the selected pixels or change their colour or tone, without altering pixels that fall outside the selection marquee.

The Elliptical and Rectangular Marquee tools share a compartment in the Select section of the Toolbox. You can use these tools to make quick and simple selections, or combine them to select more complex shapes.

The Lasso tools are also in the Select section of the Toolbox. These more versatile marquee-making tools enable you to select shapes that aren't rectangular or elliptical. The basic Lasso tool enables you to draw a quick freehand marquee, which is good for making rough-and-ready selections.

Some selection tasks require a tool with more control, such as the Polygonal Lasso. This variant enables you to make a quick selection by clicking to place anchor points around your subject. A straight marquee line is drawn between each point.

The Magnetic Lasso also creates anchor points while making a selection, but these are placed automatically as you draw around the object that you want to select. We'll put some of these simple selection tools through their paces in the steps overleaf, so you know which one to use for which task. ▶



# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

ADVANCED IMAGE EDITING SKILLS

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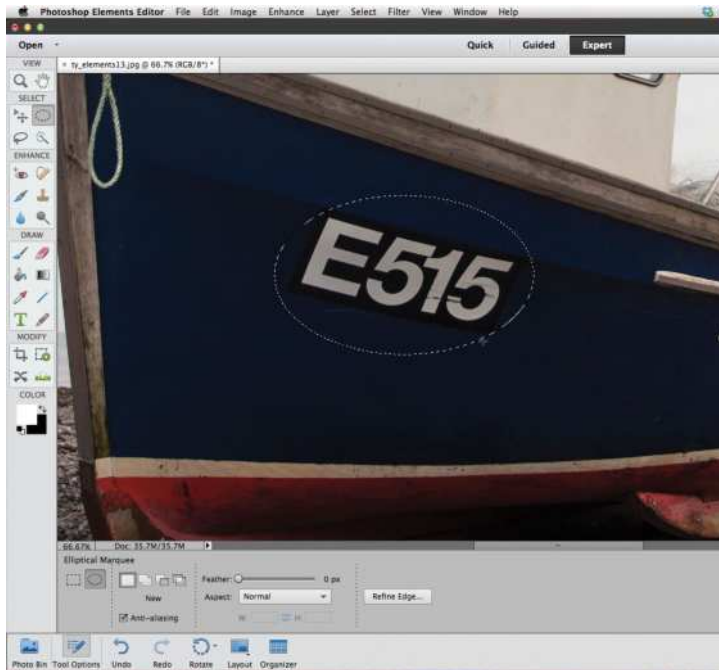
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# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

## ADVANCED IMAGE EDITING SKILLS



### 1 Make a selection

To practice making selection marquee, open the `ty_elements13.jpg` starting image. Grab the Elliptical Marquee tool in the Toolbox. If it's not visible, click its colleague – the Rectangular Marquee. You can then click the Elliptical Marquee icon in the Tool Options. You can also toggle between either version of the Marquee tool by pressing `M`. Click and drag to draw an elliptical marquee around the hull identification number on the boat.



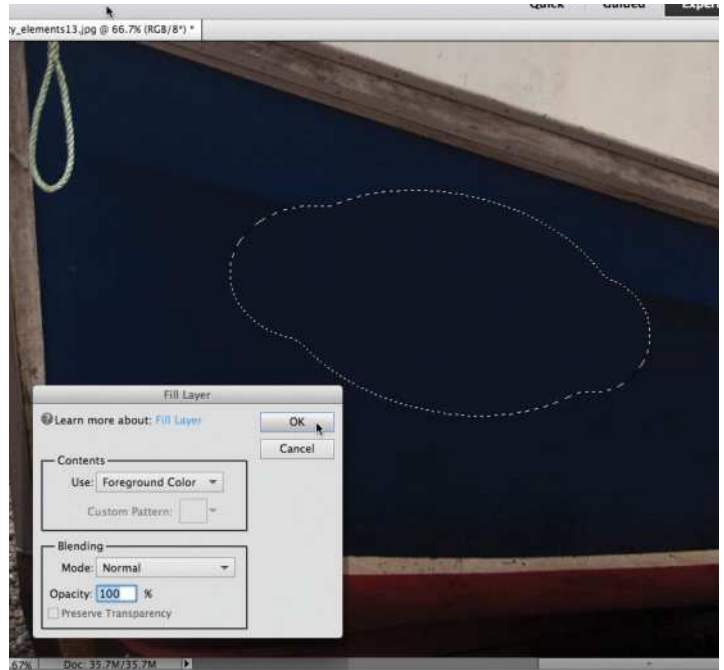
### 3 Add and subtract

You can modify your marquee selections with ease. If you click the Add to selection icon in the Tool Options, a plus sign will appear by the cursor. You can then click and drag the cursor to add to the existing marquee. Alternatively, you can click the Subtract from selection marquee icon and a minus icon will appear. You can use this option to trim away sections of the elliptical selection. These options can be applied with other selection tools.



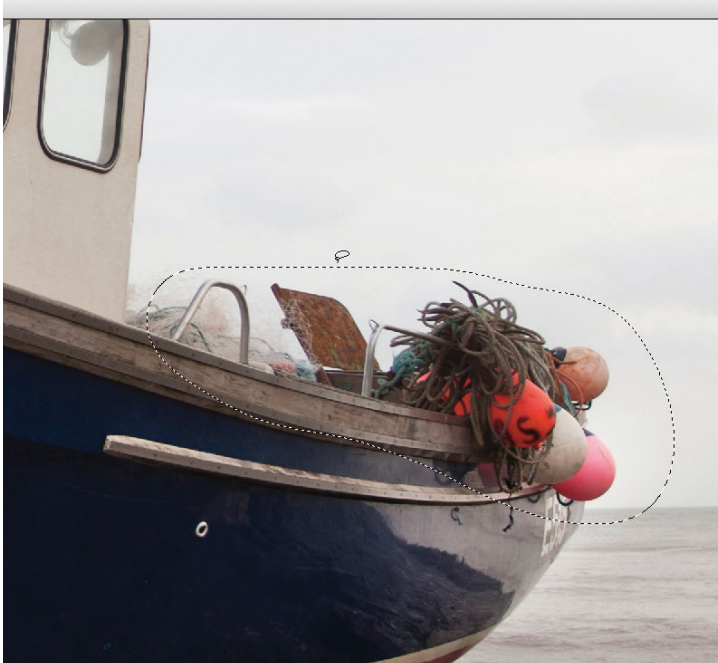
### 2 Transform the selection

You can use the cursor keys to nudge the marquee into a new position. To fine-tune the shape of the ellipse, go to `Select > Transform`. You can squash or stretch the selection marquee by dragging the bounding box handles. This doesn't change the selected pixels, just the marquee's shape. Drag outside the bounding box to rotate the elliptical marquee. When you're happy with the transformed shape, click the green tick.



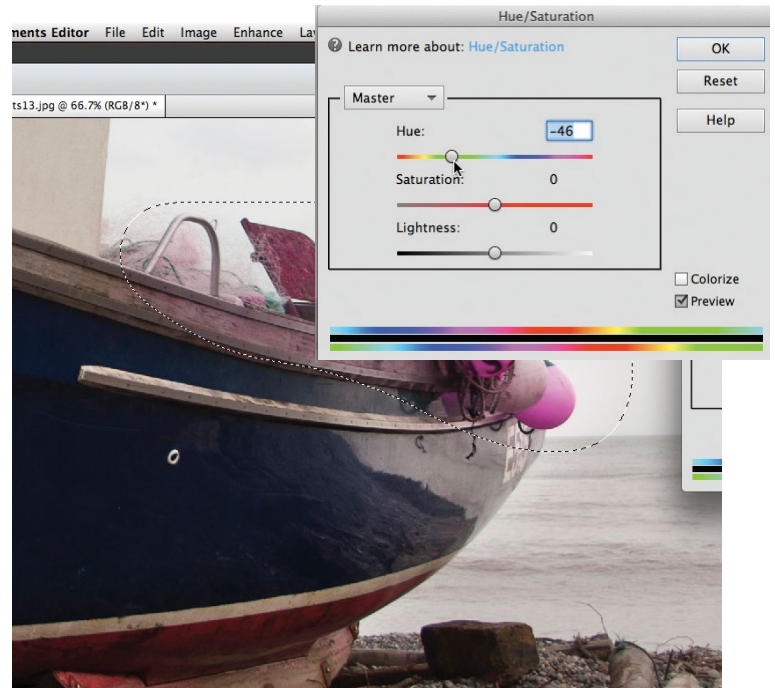
### 4 Feather the edge

By default every selection marquee tool produces a sharp edge. A softer edge helps to blend edited pixels inside the marquee with their neighbours. You can set the Feather option's slider to a desired value before drawing a marquee. Alternatively, go to `Select > Feather` and choose a Feather Radius such as 10 pixels. Click `OK`. Grab the Eyedropper tool and click to sample the boat's hull. Choose `Edit > Fill Selection`. Select `Use Foreground Color` and click `OK`.



### 5 Lasso a selection

Press **Cmd/Ctrl+D** to deselect the marquee once you've finished editing the selected area. The marching ants will vanish. Grab the Freehand Lasso tool from the Toolbox. We'll use this selection tool to isolate and adjust the colours in a particular area. In the Tool Options, set the Feather slider to 35 pixels for a nice soft edge to the selection. Drag the cursor around the coloured flotation buoys at the right to create a rough selection marquee.



### 6 Edit the selected area

Go to **Enhance>Adjust Color>Hue/Saturation**. By dragging the Master Hue slider to **-46** you change the colours within the selection marquee without altering other colours in the rest of the shot. Sometimes the selection marquee can be a bit distracting, so press **Cmd/Ctrl+H** to hide the marching ants without dismissing them. This makes it easier to see how the edited pixels are blending in with the unedited surroundings. Click **OK**.



### 7 Magnetic selection

To make more precise selections, click the Magnetic Lasso tool's icon in the Tool Options. Set **Width** to 10 pixels to help the tool stick close to the area that you draw around. A larger width will allow the tool to stray off course. Set **Contrast** to 10%. Click the boat's window and draw around it. The Magnetic Lasso will automatically add anchor points to help you draw an accurate selection marquee. Click the last point on the first to complete the selection.



### 8 Make selective tonal adjustments

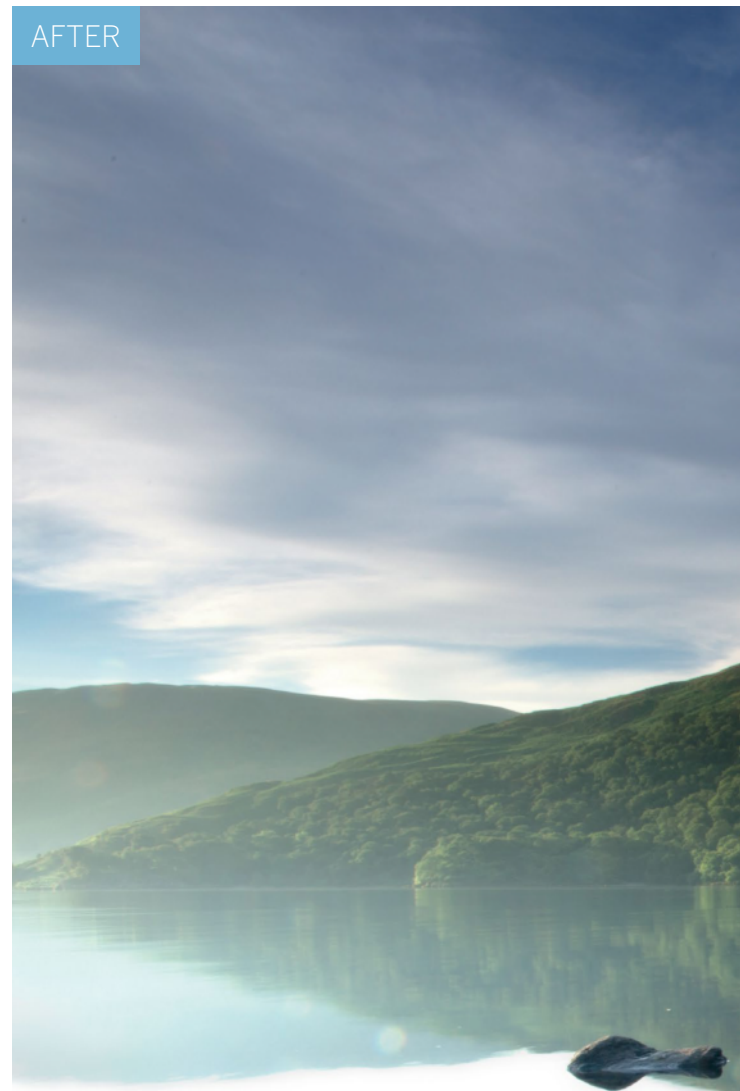
Now that you've made a precise window-shaped selection, you can tweak the selected area's washed-out tones to give them more contrast. Go to **Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Levels**. Drag the grey slider right to **0.52** to darken the midtones inside the selected area so that they match the darker tones in the windows on the left. Click **OK** to apply the selective tonal tweak. On the following pages we'll look at more intelligent selection tools. ■

# Use intelligent selection tools

Modify the shapes of selections to help the selected and adjusted pixels blend using Elements' selection tools

**S**elections allow us to isolate parts of our images, making it easier to target, adjust or cut out those areas. When working with photographs, these areas are usually quite complex, so attempting to select them with basic selection tools such as the Lasso would take ages. This is where Element's advanced selection tools – Quick Selection and the Magic Wand – show their worth. They work by making selections based on similarities in colour and tone, so they excel at selecting large areas such as skies in just a few clicks. Here we'll show you how to adjust the Magic Wand so that it will select a sky without selecting similar coloured or toned pixels in other parts of the image. You'll then be able to make a selective tonal adjustment to make the sky look more punchy and dramatic without changing the rest of the image.

The Magic Wand shares its compartment in the toolbox with two other selection tools – the Quick Selection tool and the Selection Brush tool. Like the Magic Wand, the Quick Selection tool recognises changes in colour and tone – but it works like a brush, allowing you to paint over areas while the tool seeks out the edges for you. Once you've made an intelligent selection with the Quick Selection tool, you can manually add to or subtract from it using the less intelligent Selection Brush tool. All these tools make a marching ants selection marquee that defines the shape of the selection. As well as modifying the marquee's shape, we'll show you how to change the softness of the edges to help the selected and adjusted pixels blend







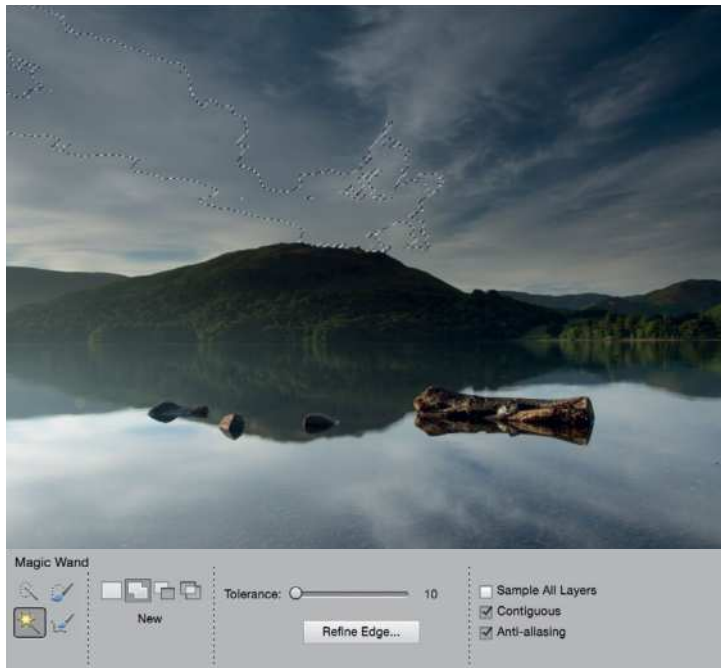
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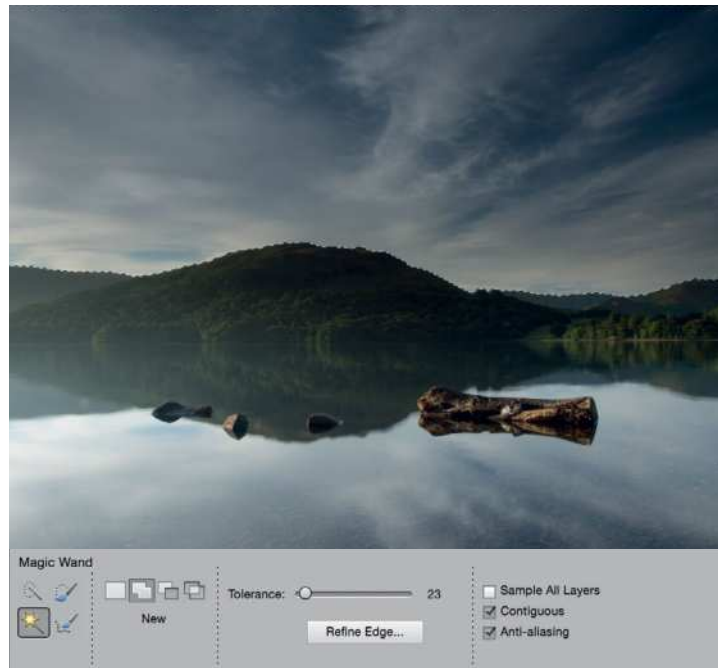
# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

## ADVANCED IMAGE EDITING SKILLS



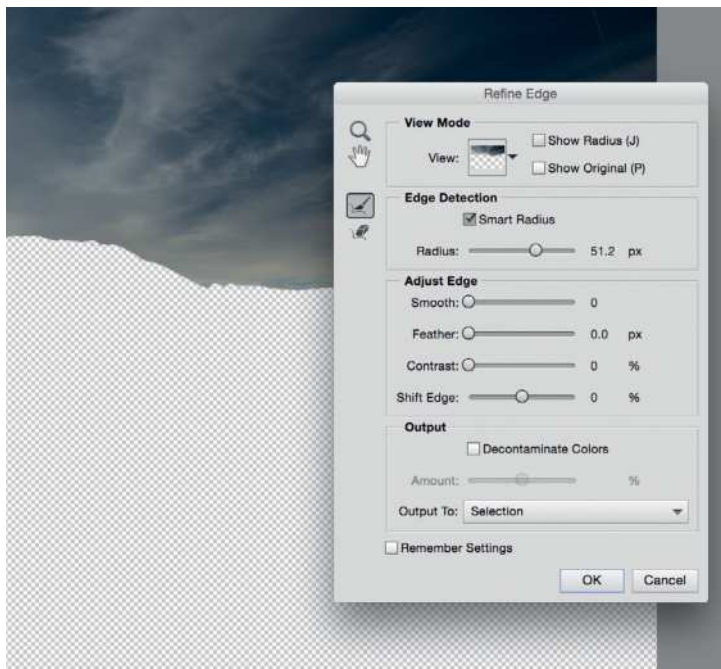
### 1 Change the Magic Wand settings

Open the image of the lake and go to the Expert mode. Choose the Magic Wand, then go to the Tool Options at the bottom. The Tolerance slider makes the Magic Wand tool more or less sensitive. The correct amount depends on the image. Too low and it won't pick up enough, too high and you'll include unwanted areas. To see how it works, set Tolerance 10 and click the clouds. Now set 50 and click the same area to see the difference.



### 2 Select the sky

Try making a selection first with Contiguous checked, then with it unchecked. Notice how, when checked, the selection is constrained to one area. If unchecked, the tool seeks out similar pixels over the entire image, not just those connected to the point you click. Set Tolerance 23, check Contiguous and click the clouds. Like any selection tool, you can hold Shift to add to the selection. So hold Shift and click until the entire sky is selected.



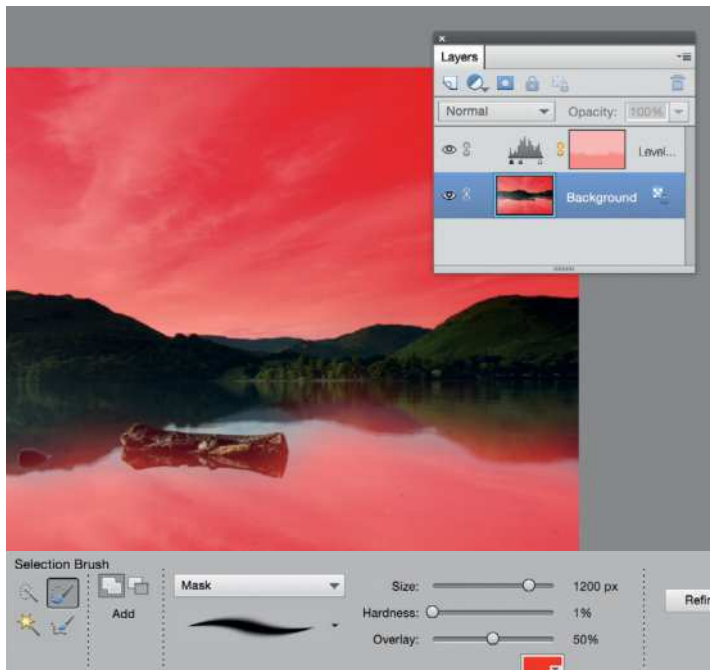
### 3 Improve the edges

Once the selection is made, the edges will typically be hard, so unless we improve them, any changes we make will look obvious. We can improve the edges with the Refine Edge command. Click the Refine Edge button in the Tool Options. As well as simple adjustments like Feather, which softens the edge, there's also more intelligent commands like Edge Detection. Check Smart Radius and drag the Radius to about 50px, set Output to: Selection and click OK.



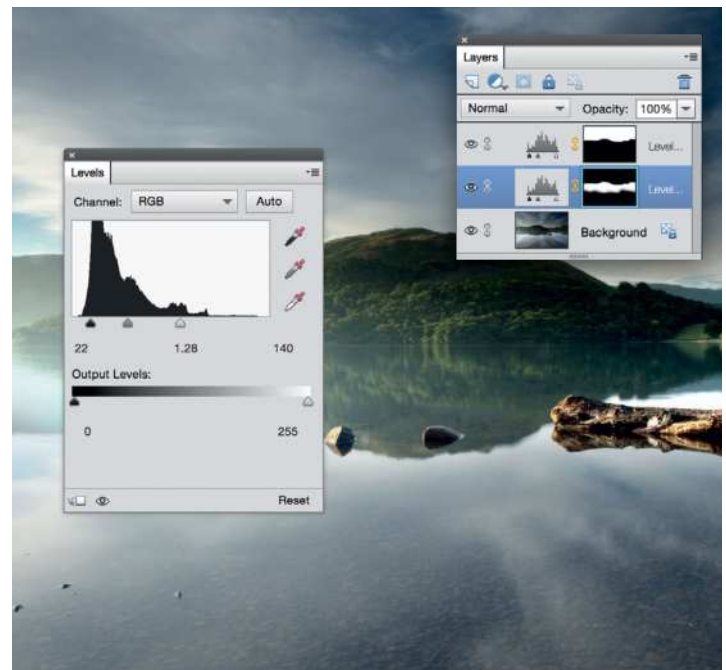
### 4 Adjust the tones

Now we've isolated the sky, we can improve the tones. There are several ways to do this. You could go to Enhance and experiment with the tonal commands, but for greater control, you can turn the selection into an adjustment layer. Go to the Layers panel (Window>Layers), click the Create adjustment layer icon and choose Levels. A Levels layer appears, with the selection now as a layer mask. Adjust Levels to improve the sky. Set black point 20, white point 189.



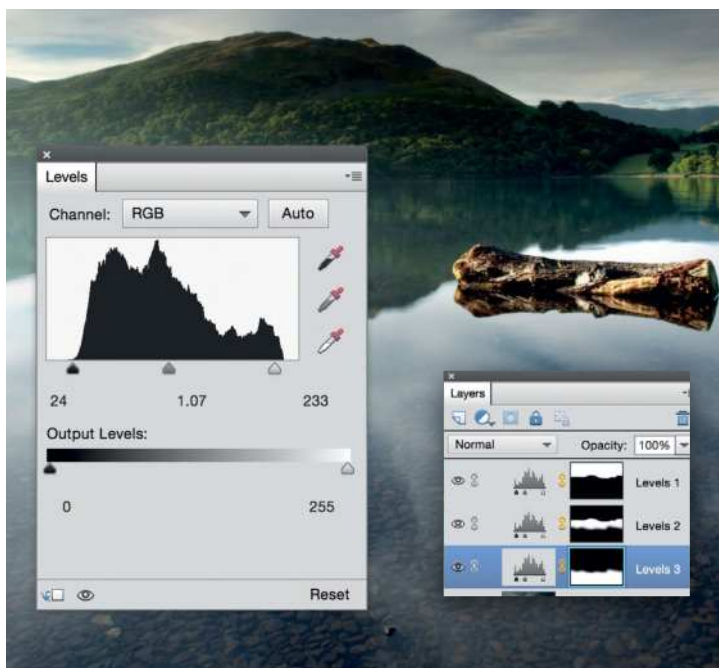
### 5 Select the land

Highlight the background layer, grab the Quick Selection tool, then paint over the land (and its reflection) to select the area (hold Alt to subtract if it goes wrong). Once done, click Refine Edge again. Set Radius 50, check Smart Radius, and click OK. The lower edge where the reflection meets the water is too hard-edged, so we'll soften it with the Selection Brush. Grab it and choose Mask in the menu, then set a large soft brush and paint over the edge to soften the transition.



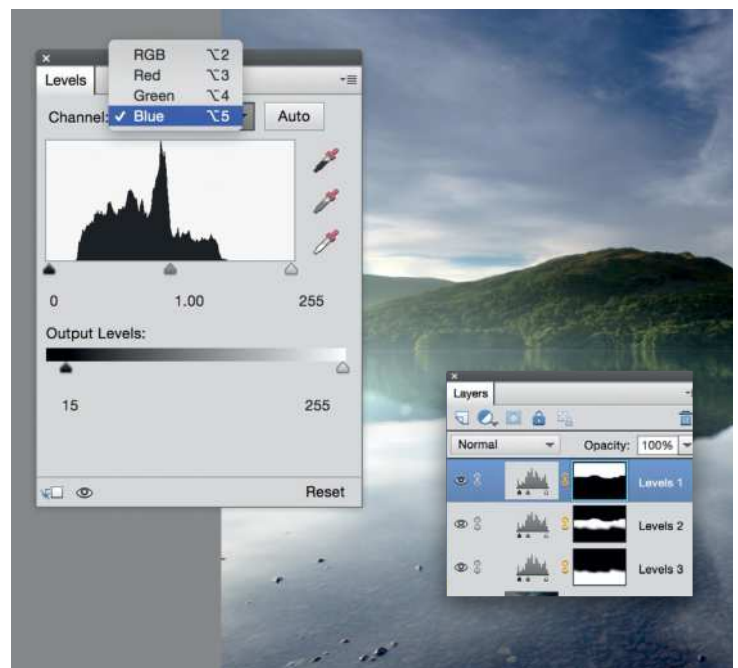
### 6 Lighten the area

Click the Create adjustment layer icon in the Layers panel and choose Levels. Use the Levels sliders to improve the land. Set black point 22, midpoint 1.28, white point 140. If the transition between the reflection and the water doesn't look right, adjust the layer mask to fine-tune which areas of the adjustment layer are visible. Highlight the mask thumbnail next to the Levels layer, then grab the Brush tool and paint with white to reveal, or black to hide the effect.



### 7 Select the foreground

We needn't bother selecting the foreground water. Instead, hold Cmd/Ctrl and click the mask thumbnail of the top Levels layer to load the white parts of the mask as a selection, then hold Cmd/Ctrl+Shift and click the other mask thumbnail to add it to the selection. Now we have everything but the foreground selected, so go to Select>Inverse to invert the selection. Add another Levels layer and set black point 23, midpoint 1.07, white point 233.



### 8 Make the sky more blue

Finally, we'll adjust the Levels layers to change the colours in the sky. Highlight the Levels layer that affects the sky, then double click the Levels icon on the layer to bring up the settings. Click the Channel menu at the top and choose Blue. Drag the left side of the Output Slider inwards to about 15 to add a touch of blue to the darkest parts of the sky. You can do the same with the Levels layer that adjusts the water. ●



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# Use Refine Edge to improve selections

Spruce up your selection edges with Refine Edge

**M**any photo-fixing tasks involve making selections. You may need to select a specific region such as a bland sky so that you can replace it with something more exciting, or simply adjust the sky's over-exposed tones without altering the correctly exposed landscape. Alternatively, you may want to select a person from one shot and composite them into another to produce more creative results.

As you've seen from this chapter, the Toolbox compartments are crammed full of selection tools, from the primitive Lasso to

the more intelligent Quick Selection tool. All of these tools produce a selection marquee — a line of animated dashes that defines the shape of the selected area. After making a selection you may find that the marquee doesn't include the entire subject, and it may also be a bit ragged around the edges.

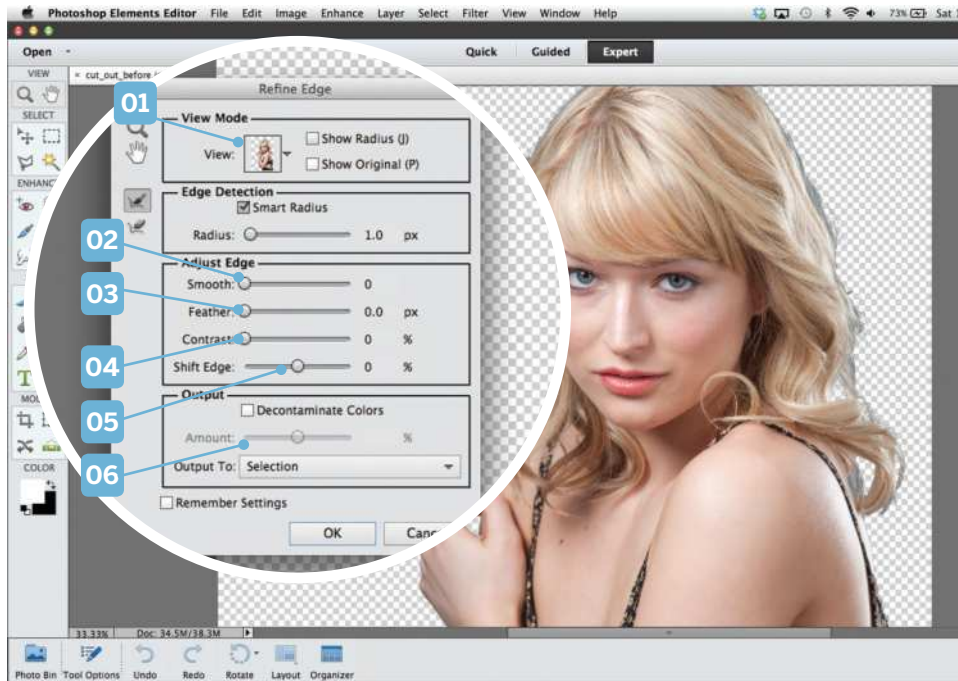
You can modify selection marquees using main menu commands. If you go to **Select>Modify** you can access commands such as **Contract**. This enables you to tighten the marquee around the edges of your subject to lose any background pixels

that are clinging to the outline. You can also use the **Smooth** command to create less jagged selection edges. These menu selection commands are a bit fiddly to use, so Elements also provides an easier and more effective way to alter selection marquees — the **Refine Edge** command.

When you make a selection, you'll notice the **Refine Edge** button in the **Tool Options**. As a rule, if a tool creates a selection, you'll be able to fine-tune it by clicking the **Refine Edge** button. The **Refine Edge** tool can also be summoned via **Select>Refine Edge**.

# Elements Anatomy Refine Edge options

Get to know the Refine Edge command's powerful collection of modifying tools



### 01 VIEW

After selecting light edges (such as the blonde hairs of this model), choose a contrasting On Black view from this pop-up thumbnail to display any unselected areas as black pixels. This makes it easier to see how your selection is shaping up.

### 02 SMOOTH

When you select your subject, its edges may include jagged or blocky clumps of unwanted background pixels. Drag this slider to the right to smooth out the marquee's edges and get a cleaner selection. This does a similar job to the Select>Modify>Smooth command.

### 03 FEATHER

Increase this value to soften the edges of the selection. This will blend the selected pixels more effectively with the new background. Feathered edges stop the selected subject from looking too 'cut-out'. This does the same job as the Select>Feather command.

### 04 CONTRAST

By adjusting the contrast you can add or subtract a range of pixels from the edge of a selection, depending on their tone. This helps you to remove bits of unwanted background.

### 05 SHIFT EDGE

This slider enables you to get a balance between revealing edge details while hiding fringes of unwanted background pixels. It does a similar job to the Select>Modify>Contract and Expand commands.

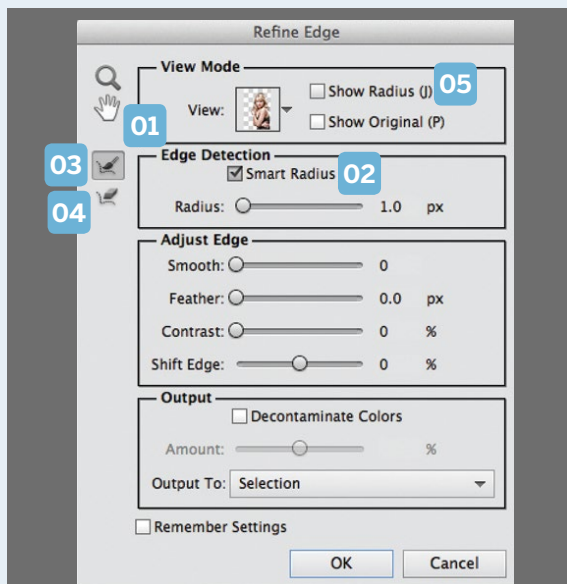
### 06 DECONTAMINATE

If any bits of unwanted background colour remain around the edges of your selection, click here to try to hide them. You can fine-tune the strength of the effect using the Amount slider.

## Understanding... EDGE DETECTION

Complex subjects such as people have edges that are a mix of hard and soft lines. The Edge Detection section [01] of the Refine Edge command enables you to select varying edges more effectively. The Smart Radius option [02] automatically increases the spread of the edge refinement where required. Click

here [03] to summon the Refine Radius tool. This enables you to manually extend the edge refinement function using a brush. If the Refine Radius tool reveals too many background pixels, use this version [04] to remove unwanted details. Click here [05] to preview how the edited Radius is shaping up. ▶



## LAYER MASKS

When you're ready to apply the Refine Edge command's adjustments to your selection marquee, click OK to apply them. However, if you want to continue modifying the selection, it's well worth setting the Refine Edge command's Output To drop-down menu to New Layer with Layer Mask. This creates a black-and-white mask created from your selection. The black sections on the mask hide bits of unwanted background. You can paint with a black brush on the mask to hide any remaining background pixels, should it be necessary. Or you can paint with white to reveal some of the missing subject. We'll demonstrate this mask-modification technique later in this chapter.

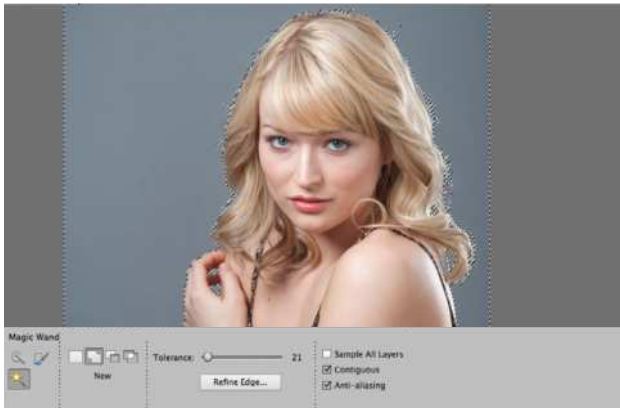


## Cut out like a professional

Discover the best way to cut out portraits and transport subjects seamlessly using the Refine Edge tool

**O**ne of the great things about digital imaging is the ability it gives you to combine several images. Master a few simple compositing skills and you can transport subjects to distant destinations or build a group photo from several people who've never met. But to make a composite look convincing you need accurate cutouts. When cutting out people, the most problematic part is usually the hair, where the background often shows through the gaps. Luckily, there are a couple of Photoshop

tools that can do much of the work for you. Introduced in Elements 11, Refine Edge is the most powerful tool for making cutouts that Adobe has ever produced. It's not a selection tool, but a command that enables you to improve an existing selection by, as the name suggests, refining its edges. If you're new to Refine Edge, the controls can seem complicated at first, but master a few fundamentals and it quickly becomes the go-to tool when you need to make a precise cutout.



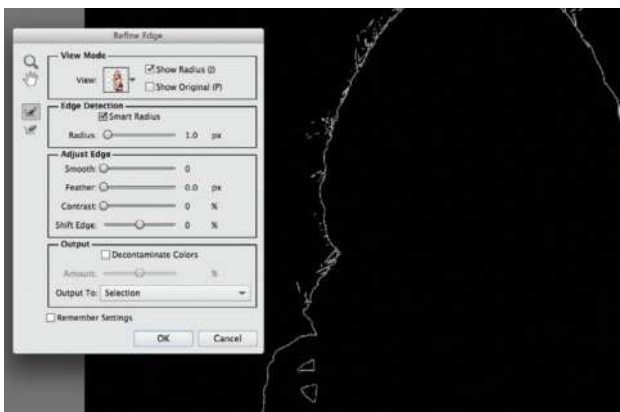
### 1 Select the background

Open the starting image. Grab the Magic Wand tool, check Contiguous and set Tolerance to about 21 in the Tool Options. Click the grey background to begin a selection. Hold Shift and click around the background to select it all. Include the gaps in the hair and hands.



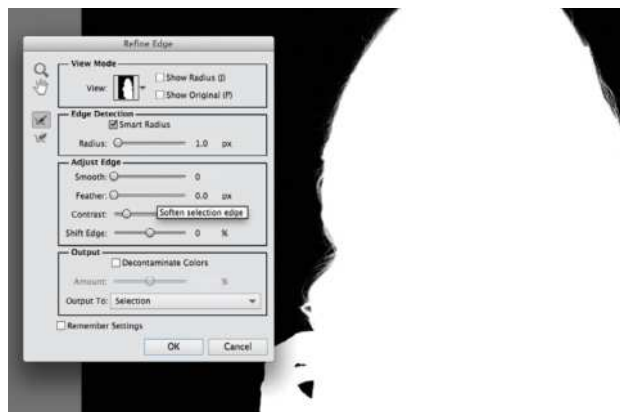
### 2 Open Refine Edge

Go to Select>Inverse to select the model instead of the background, then go to Select>Refine Edge. Hit F to toggle different view options within Refine Edge until you find one that gives the best view of the selection edge. Check Smart Radius and increase Radius to 1px.



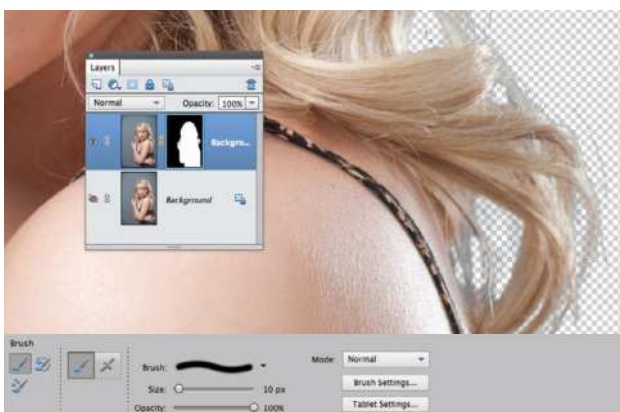
### 3 Adjust the radius

Check Show Radius, and experiment by dragging the Radius slider up and down, changing the size of the edge. The refinement occurs in this area; anywhere outside it is left untouched. Grab the Refine Radius tool and paint over the edges of the hair to increase the area of refinement.



### 4 Fine-tune the settings

Continue painting around the hair, covering the areas where the grey background shows through. If you need to erase parts, hold Alt and paint. When you're happy, hit F until you see the black on white view. Experiment with the Contrast and Shift Edge sliders to make the edge harder.



### 5 Tidy up the mask

Pick Output to: New Layer with Layer Mask and click OK. Go to the Layers panel and highlight the mask thumbnail. The cutout probably won't be perfect so you'll need to tidy it up. Grab the Brush tool, zoom in and paint with black to hide any remaining background areas.



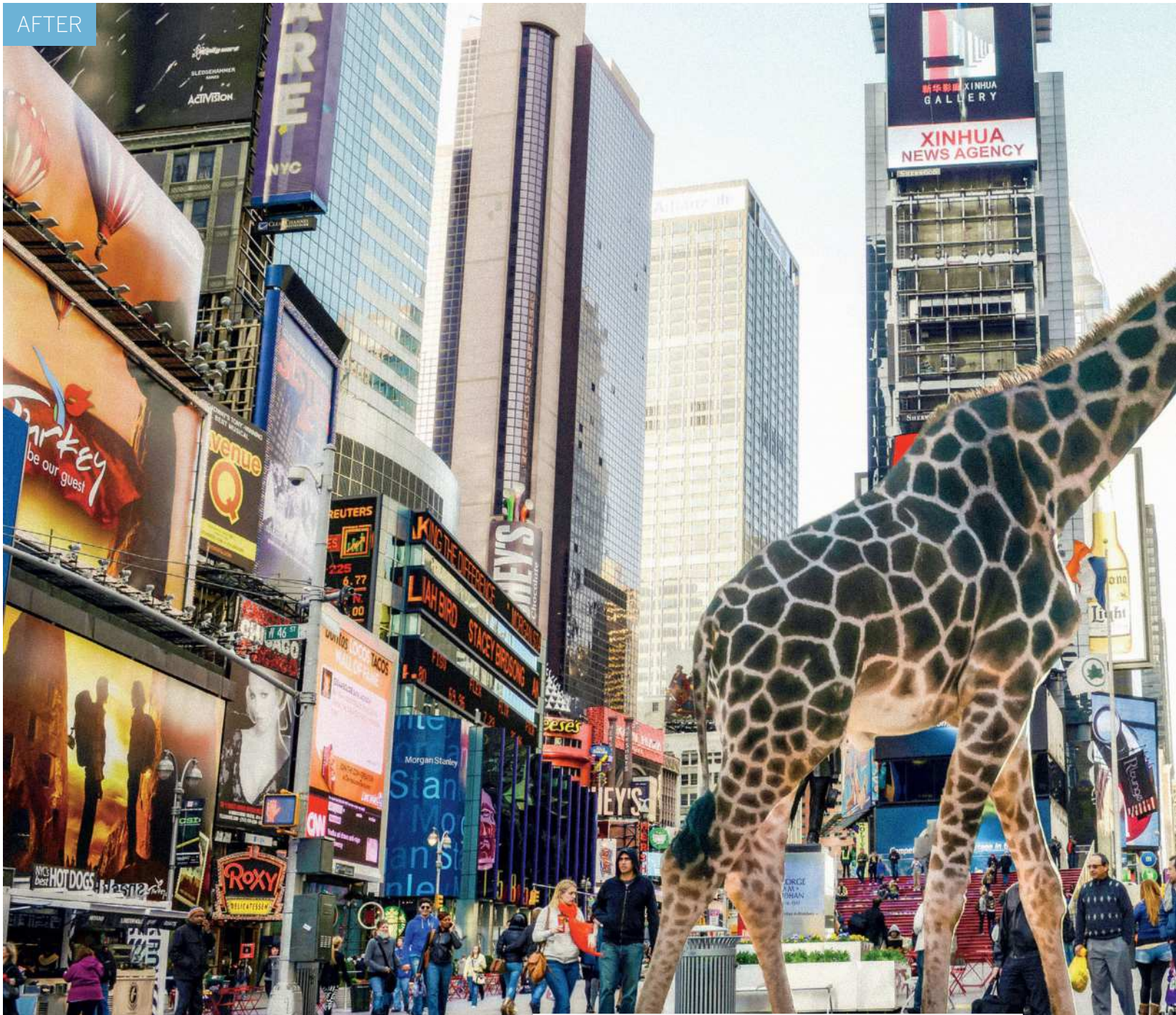
### 6 Drop in the background

Open the background and add it to the portrait image. Reapply Refine Edge: highlight the mask, go to Select>Refine Edge and repeat the process. Highlight the background layer. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J, go to Filter>Blur>Lens Blur, set Radius 35, and click OK. ■

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

ADVANCED IMAGE EDITING SKILLS

AFTER



BEFORE



BEFORE







# Combine images with Photomerge Compose

Make a convincing composite photo using Elements' clever Photomerge Compose feature

**E**lements' Photomerge Compose command provides a guided walkthrough that explains each stage of the photo-merging process. To begin with, we use Quick Selection to isolate the object we want to extract from its original background. Once the selection is done, the command places the object on another layer, allowing you to position it exactly where you'd like. It also offers a feature to Auto Match the tones, but don't bother using it. Apart from the fact that it doesn't do a very good job of matching tones, it also pixellates your cut-out image and severely lowers the quality. Luckily, colour matching is easily done once Photomerge Compose is complete, and other tools such as Levels offer greater control anyhow. Once the images are combined, it can help to add an effect over everything, so that the different elements look like they belong together. Here we've done this by saving a copy of the image, then taking it into the Camera Raw plugin to create an HDR-like effect.

The success of composites like this relies heavily on the lighting in the two images. If in one image the light is from the side, and in the other, the light is from the front, then it will be hard to combine the two convincingly. In our two starting images here, the lightest part of the scene is in the background, so the angle of light is coming from behind. This makes it much easier to blend the two images into one convincing whole. So when shooting or choosing images for your own composites, look to match the lighting. ▶

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# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

## ADVANCED IMAGE EDITING SKILLS



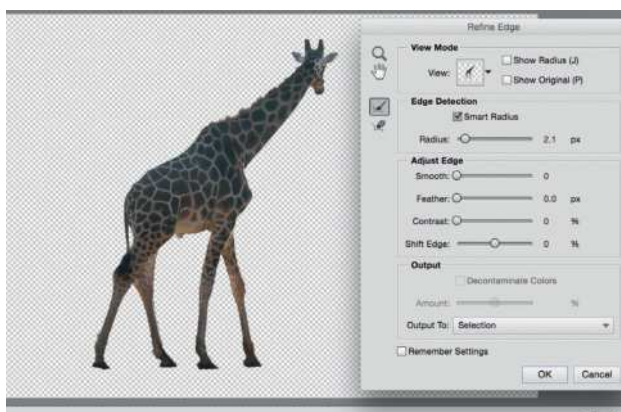
### 1 Start Photomerge Compose

Open the two images you'd like to combine. In Elements 13, use the Enhance>Photomerge>Photomerge Compose menu command. In Elements 14+, use Guided mode and choose the Photomerge panel. Now follow the guide and drag the image with the area you want to extract into the window.



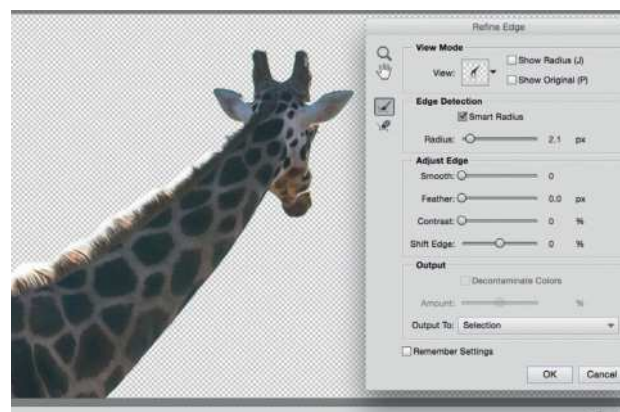
### 2 Paint a selection

Grab the Quick Selection brush from the options on the right. Paint over the subject with the brush to select the area. If the tool goes wrong, hold Alt and paint to subtract areas from the selection. Zoom in close to check the edges and take the time to make it as perfect as possible.



### 3 Refine the edges

Go to the Advanced Edge Refinement section and click the Refine Edge button. Refine Edge improves the selection over tricky areas like hair. Hit F to cycle View modes. Use the Radius slider to increase the area of refinement along the edges, and check Smart Radius.



### 4 Paint over the fur

We can also paint a radius along the edges using the Refine Radius tool, which works just like a paintbrush. Paint over furry edges to improve the selection. Check Show Radius to see where the refinement is occurring, and if you need to, hold Alt to erase parts of the radius.



### 5 Position the cutout

Set Shift Edge to -6 to squeeze the selection inwards. When you're happy with the selection, click OK, then Next, to move to the next stage in the walkthrough. The selection will be extracted to the other image. Drag the bounding box into position, and resize and rotate it.



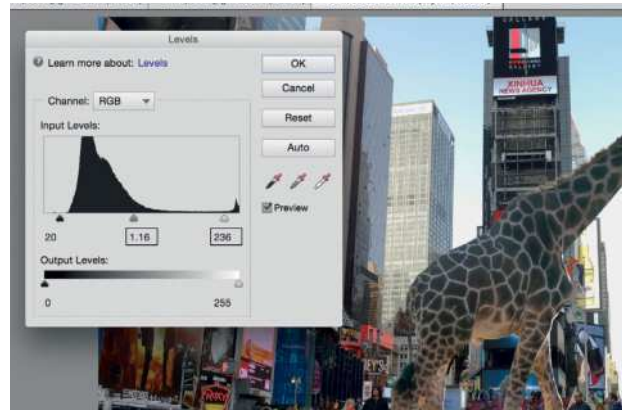
### 6 Reveal and hide

Zoom in close and check the edges one more time. If parts of the subject are missing, click the Reveal button and paint to bring them back, and if you need to hide areas, click Hide. Use the ] and [ keys to resize your brush tip as you paint.



### 7 Skip Auto Match

When you're happy, click Next. The final section offers tools to match the colours, but don't touch them. Due to a bug (present at the time of press), if you make any changes here, it severely degrades the quality of the cut-out image. So instead, skip it and click Done.



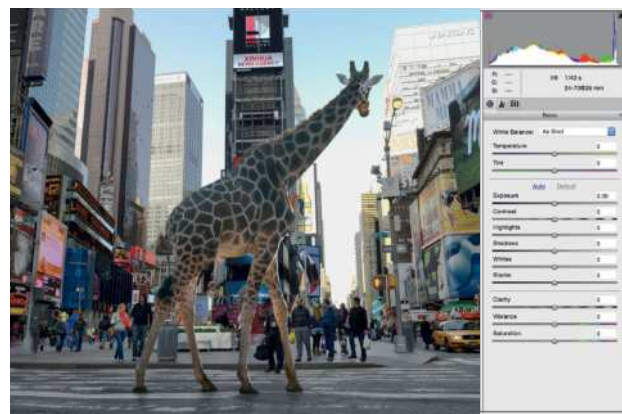
### 8 Match the tones with Levels

Go to the Layers panel (Window>Layers) and highlight the top layer. Go to Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Levels. Use the three sliders to try to match the brightness and contrast with the background scene. Set black point 20, midpoint 1.16, white point 236.



### 9 Paint soft shadows

Next we'll paint in a shadow for the feet. In Expert mode, go to the Layers panel, highlight the Background layer and click the New Layer icon at the top. Grab the Brush tool. Set the colour to black and press 3 for 30% brush opacity. Paint under the feet to add a soft shadow.



### 10 Open a copy in Camera Raw

To finish off the composite we'll add a tonal effect. To do so, we need to first save the image, then reopen it in Camera Raw. Go to File>Save and save it as a JPEG, then go to File>Open in Camera Raw to open it in the Camera Raw plugin.



### 11 Change the tones

Composites look more convincing if you apply tonal and colour effects once the images are merged. We can use Camera Raw to apply a faux HDR effect. Set Exposure +0.70, Contrast +10, Highlights -38, Shadows +48, Whites -21, Blacks -16, Clarity +59, Vibrance +41, Saturation -9.



### 12 Experiment with effects

Click Open Image. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the Background layer. To finish off, use the Dodge and Burn tools to lighten or darken areas of the image. Finally, go to Quick mode and experiment with the Effects panel. Here the Seasons effect works well. ●



## Non-destructive edits

Use versatile adjustment layers to selectively target and tweak the colours and tones of an image

**P**hotoshop Elements' image-adjusting tools and commands are great for overcoming camera-related problems, which is just as well, because most photos will benefit from a little post-production tweaking to improve colour and tone. Unlike the human eye, the camera isn't adept at dealing with high-contrast scenes. For example, when shooting a landscape, your camera may struggle to get a balanced exposure due to the contrast between the bright sky and the ground. Its auto metering mode may set the aperture and shutter speed to capture detail in the darker ground, but this will cause the highlights in the sky to over-expose and lose detail. If the camera tries to capture bright sky detail, it can turn the

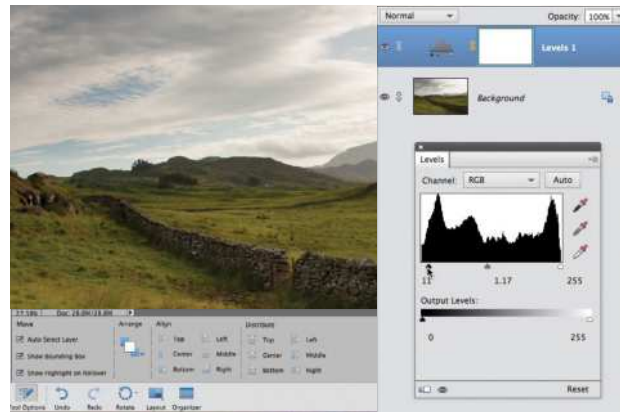
landscape into an under-exposed silhouette. Elements' main menu has a handy Enhance section that gives you access to tone-tweaking tools such as the Levels command. These commands can do a good job of clawing back missing shadow detail. However, once you've changed the colours and tones of an image then you're stuck with the results, especially if you replace the original file with the edited version when you save it.

Fortunately, you can apply many of the main menu commands as adjustment layers. These image-editing layers float above the original photo layer in the Layers panel. Adjustment layers are very versatile. You can turn them on and off to compare the edited shot with the original.



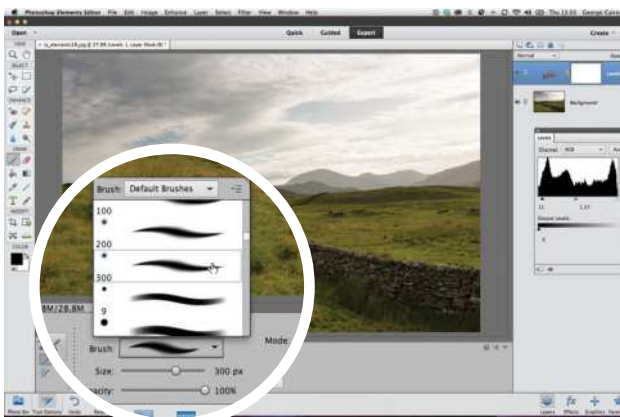
### 1 Add an adjustment layer

Open the ty\_elements18.jpg starting image in the Expert editing mode. The sky is over-exposed and lacks detail. The landscape is slightly under-exposed and suffers from drab colours. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels. Click OK.



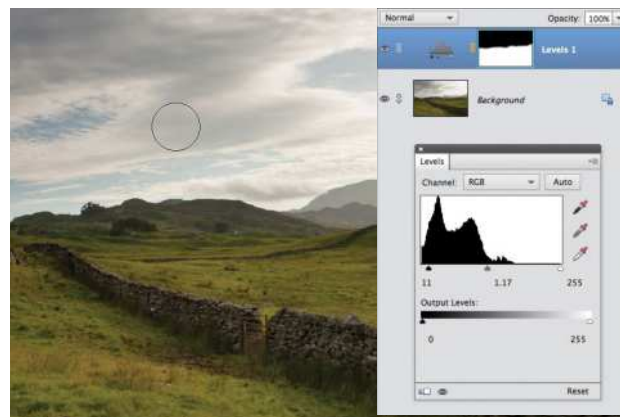
### 2 Adjust the contrast

To lighten the under-exposed midtones, drag the grey midtone slider to 1.17. We can now see more midtone detail, but the contrast in the landscape looks a little flat. Set the black shadow slider to 11. This creates darker shadows, which helps darker features to contrast with the moor.



### 3 Choose a brush tip

You'll notice that the midtone adjustment has caused the over-exposed sky to become even brighter. To stop this section of the image from being adjusted, grab the Brush tool. Click the Brush preset picker in the Tool Options and choose a soft round tip with a Size of 300.



### 4 Protect the sky

Click the Levels adjustment layer's mask. Set the Foreground colour to black. Paint on the mask to stop the corresponding sections of the adjustment layer from altering the sky's shadows and midtones. The white parts of the mask allow the landscape to be adjusted.



### 5 Selective colour adjustments

You can have multiple adjustment layers. Choose Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation. Click OK. Set the Channel menu to Yellows and set Saturation to +27 for more vibrant vegetation. Boost the Cyans Saturation to +34 and Blues to +57.



### 6 Adjust the sky

Create a new Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer. Drag the Brightness slider to -45 to darken the over-exposed sky and reveal more cloud detail. This makes the landscape look too dull, so grab the Brush tool, click the Brightness/Contrast mask and paint over the ground. ●

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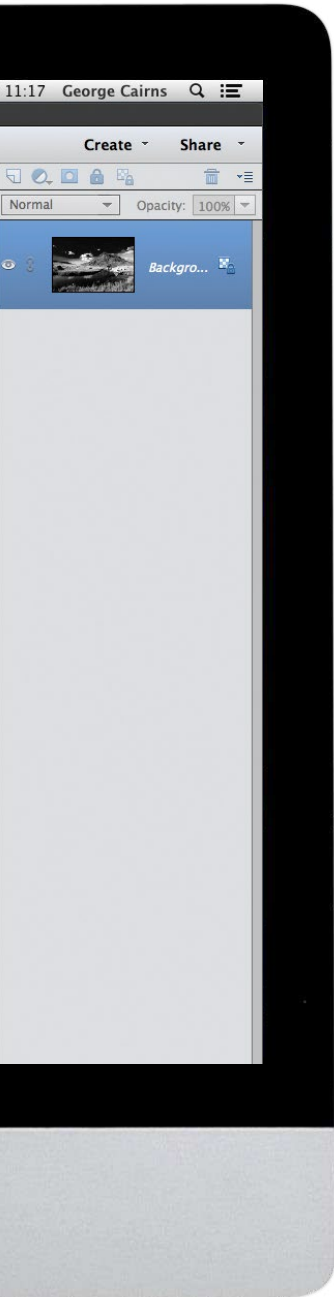
ESSENTIAL TRICKS



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# Essential tricks

Enhance your photographs using some of Photoshop Elements' most powerful tools and commands

**80 How to make quick adjustments using the Smart Brush**  
Discover how to work fast with a tool that combines intelligent selection features with useful preset image adjustments

**82 How to add text to your photos**  
Enrich your creative projects by adding text to your images. Make posters, postcards or book covers with eye-catching typography that matches the colours in the image

**86 Make selected colours in your portraits pop**  
Discover how to use guided edits to make a fun pop-colour effect in your black-and-white images

**88 How to remove elements from a scene**  
Create a composite image that's free from distractions such as tourists in a city scene using multiple images and the Photomerge Scene Cleaner feature

**90 Make stunning black and white images**  
Produce dramatic monochrome conversions of your photos using a range of commands and effects in Photoshop Elements

# Apply edits quickly using the Smart Brush

Work fast with a tool that combines intelligent selection features with useful preset image adjustments

**I**n the previous chapter we looked at how selection tools enable you to isolate parts of a picture so you can adjust colours and tones in the selected areas. Some tools (such as the Magic Wand tool) select similar pixels throughout the image. Others, such as the Quick Selection tool, enable you to select a subject as you paint over it. The Quick Selection tool is smart enough to

recognise the difference between an object and its background, which makes it more effective for certain selection challenges (such as removing a person from a scene). In the Enhance section of the Toolbox you'll find a tool that can speed up your image retouching by combining the intelligence of the Quick Selection tool with the power of layers and blend modes – the Smart Brush.

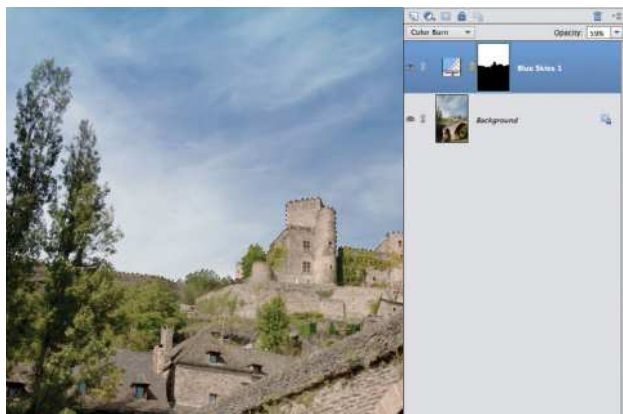


## 1 Pick a preset

Open `ty_elements20.jpg`. The sky is a little drab and desaturated. To quickly enhance it, choose the Smart Brush from the Enhance section of the Toolbox. Click the preview picker in the Tool Options. Choose the Make dull skies blue preset from the All Purpose collection.

## 2 Paint the sky

Set the Size option to 40 pixels. Paint the sky. The Smart Brush tool selects the sky pixels and then creates a new layer with a gradient in it. The gradient's layer's blend mode is set to Color Burn so that it enhances the colours, tones and detail of the original sky.



## 3 Fine-tune the effect

This Smart Brush preset automatically reduces the opacity of the sky layer to 75%. You can fine-tune the enhancement by setting it to 79%. This produces a more subtle result. The Smart Brush may not select the sky behind the tree, so paint to add that to the selected and adjusted area.



## 4 Whites of the eyes

There are dozens of useful Smart Brush presets. Open `ty_elements14.jpg`. Click the Smart Brush preset picker. Set the Preset to Portrait. Click Brighten Eyes. Paint on the eye whites to lighten them. Reduce the Opacity to 25% for a more subtle enhancement. ■

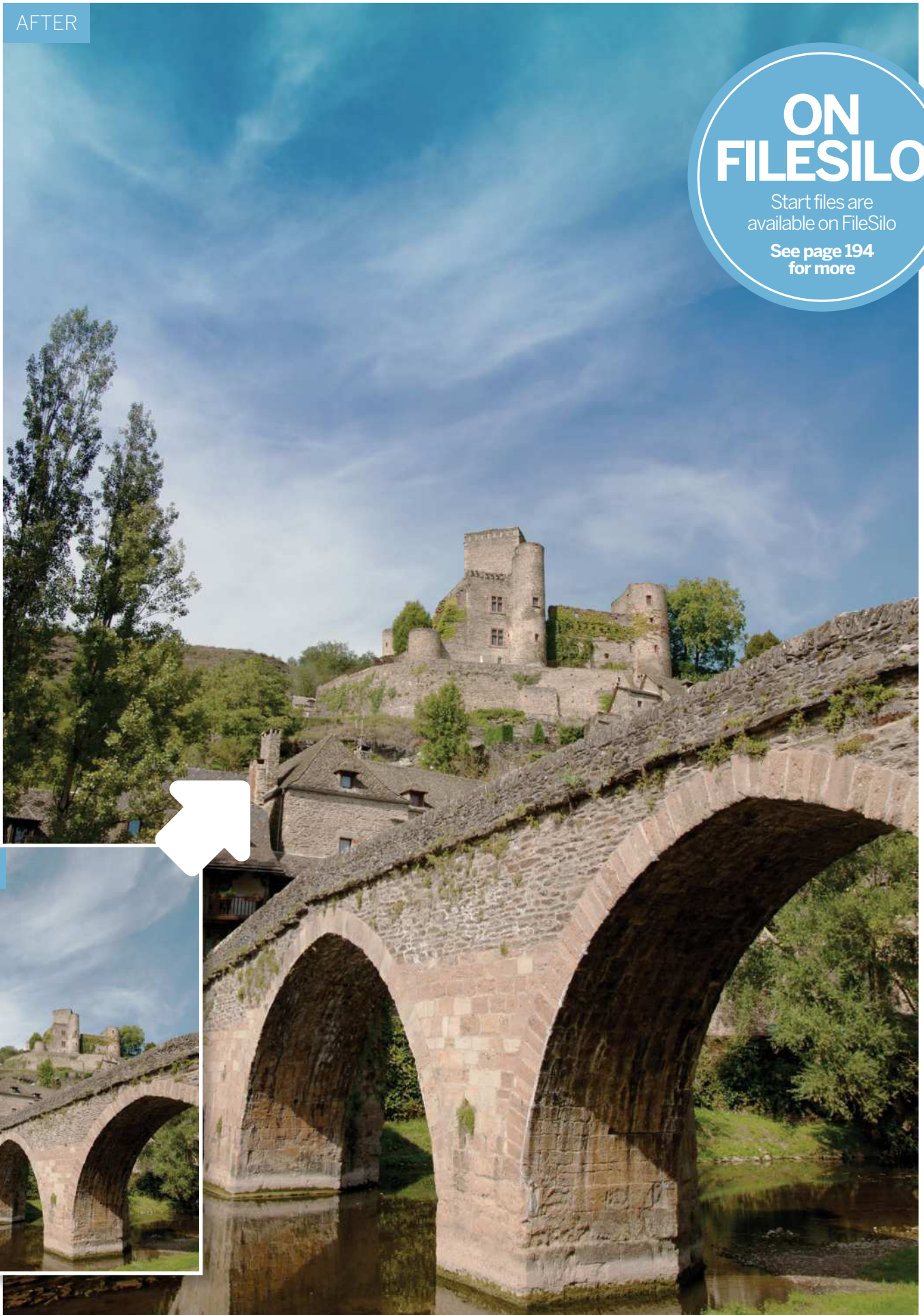


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for more



BEFORE



# Add text to your photos

Turn photographs into personalised postcards by adding and modifying text

**P**hotoshop Elements' Type tool enables you to enrich your creative projects in a variety of ways, such as providing your posters or book covers with eye-catching typography. In the following walkthrough we'll show you how to put the Type tool through its paces by personalising a picture with seaside postcard-style text that can be emailed to your family.

You'll find the Type tool in the Toolbox. It works in a similar way to those in word-processing programs such as TextEdit. When you move the mouse onto a Photoshop Elements document you'll see a text cursor. Click to place the cursor in a particular place and start typing. A new text layer will appear in the Layers panel. You can then use the Move tool to fine-tune the position in the design.

The Type tool creates vector-based shapes. Vector shapes use mathematics to describe their shape and size, so you can enlarge the text without it becoming fuzzy around the edges. You can also use the Create warped text command in the Tool Options to make words bend and curve, as you'll see in our walkthrough. And because the text is vector-based, you can still edit it after it's been warped (which is handy if you spot a spelling mistake.) After modifying the text you can make it stand out from the scene using Layer Styles. These cool features enable you to add 3D effects to your text, such as drop shadows and bevelled edges. We'll use the Horizontal Type tool in this walkthrough, but feel free to experiment with other variants such as the Vertical Type tool. You can also create text-shaped selection marquee's too, courtesy of the Type Mask Tool. ▶

**ON  
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See page 194 for more

BEFORE

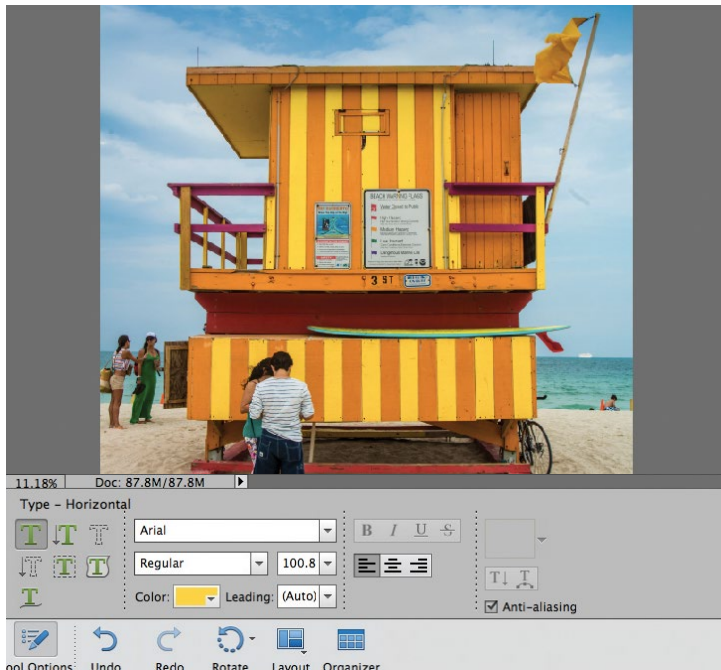


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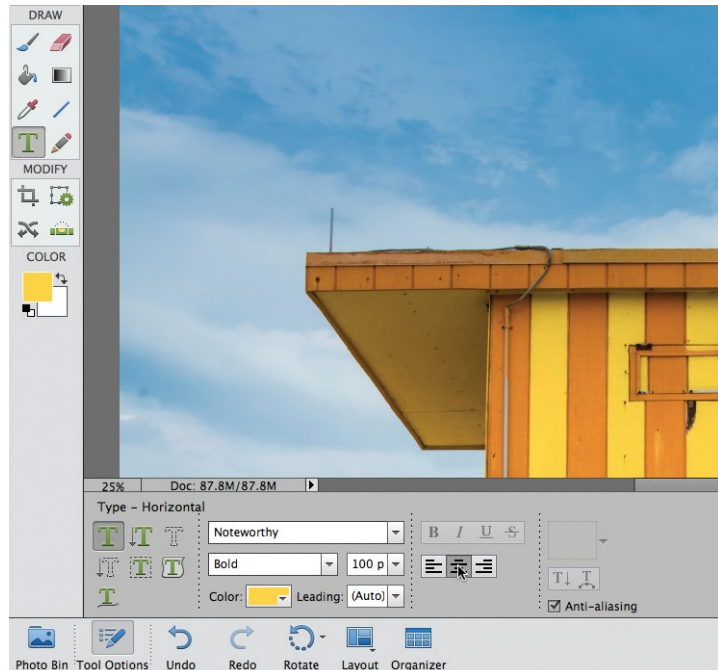
# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

## ESSENTIAL TRICKS



### 1 Sample a colour

Open ty\_elements16.jpg. To make our postcard style text complement the content of the image, grab the Eyedropper tool from the Toolbox. Click the bright yellow paintwork of the beach hut to sample it. The Foreground colour swatch in the Toolbox will turn yellow. Click the Horizontal Type tool (in the compartment below the Eyedropper). Press Cmd/Ctrl++ a couple of times to zoom into the image to get a closer look.



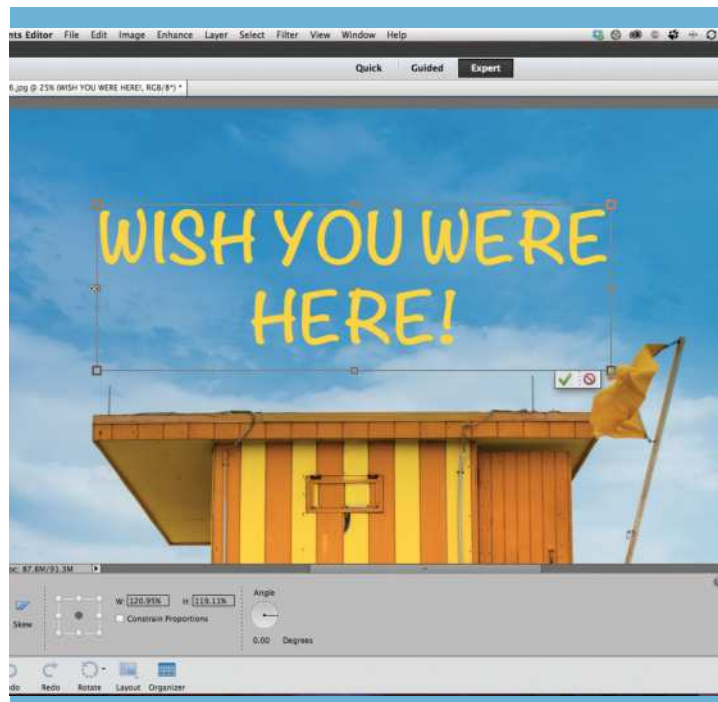
### 2 Adjust the text options

Click the Select Font Family drop-down menu in the Tool Options and choose a suitably cheesy seaside postcard-style font such as Noteworthy. Set the drop-down menu below to Bold. Type in a Size of 100 pt. Click the Center Text box. Make sure that the Anti-Aliasing box is ticked to give your text nice, smooth edges. You'll notice that the text swatch features the same colour that we sampled earlier.



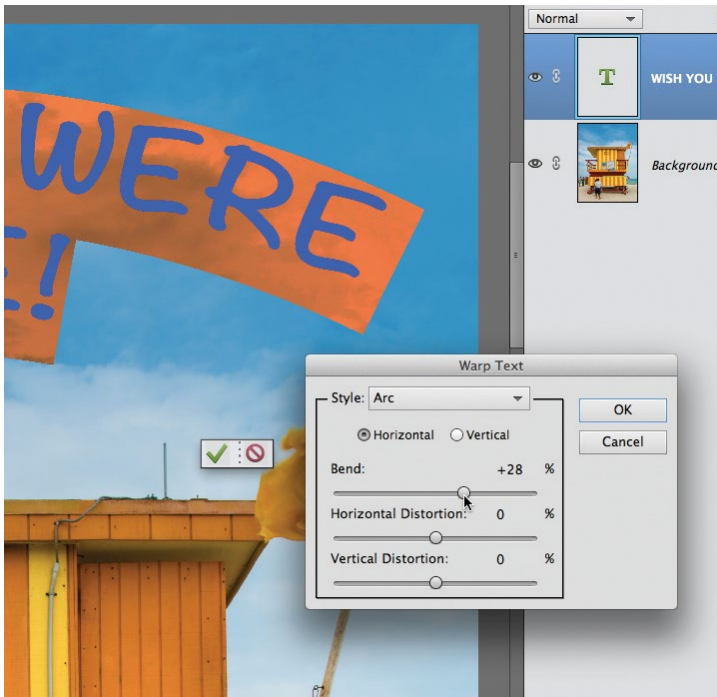
### 3 Type some text

Click the sky above the beach hut to place the cursor and type 'WISH YOU WERE'. Then hit Enter to start typing on a new line and type 'HERE!'. Thanks to the Center Text box in the Tool Options, the lower text is aligned in the middle of the upper text line. Place the cursor outside the text and it will turn into the Move tool. Drag the text into position above the beach hut.



### 4 Resize the text

A text layer will appear in the Layers panel. You'll notice a bounding box appears around the text. Drag the corner and edge handles of the box to make the text become larger and wider so that it matches the width of the beach hut. Drag inside the bounding box to reposition the text. The enlarged text looks as smooth and clean as the original. Click the tick to apply the change.



### 5 Warp the text

Double click the text layer thumbnail in the Layers panel to select it. Click the Create warped text icon in the Tool Options. Set the Style menu to Arc. Tick the Horizontal box. The default setting is too strong, so reduce the Bend slider to 28% to gently curve the text. You can experiment with a wide range of preset warp styles in future projects. Click OK to warp your text.



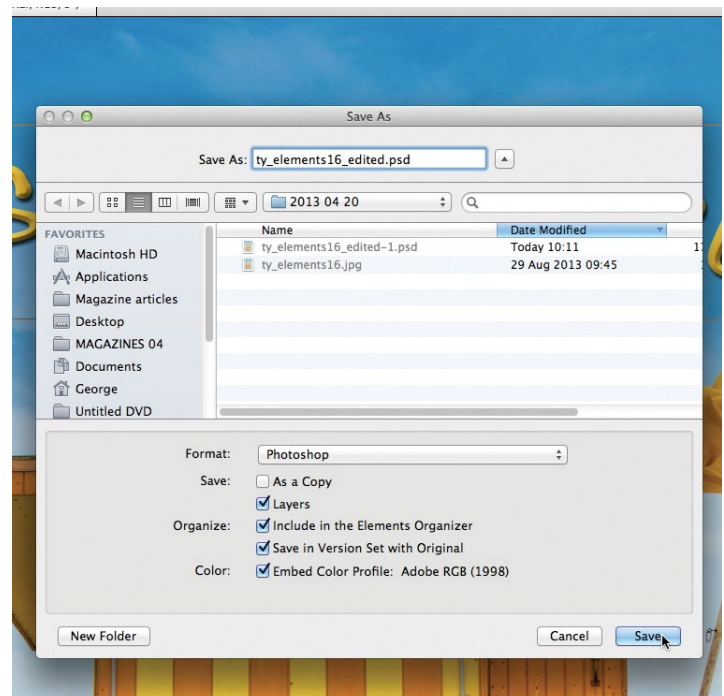
### 6 Add a Layer Style

Click the tick to apply the transformation. Drag inside the text box to bring the warped text closer to the hut. To give your text more impact click the fx icon at the bottom right of the workspace. Click the Styles panel and set the menu to Drop Shadows. If you hover over a drop shadow you'll see a little label. Drag the Low drop shadow onto the text to add the Layer Style.



### 7 Add a bevel

To give your 2D text a raised 3D look, set the menu to Bevels. Experiment by dragging a preset bevel effect onto the text in your design. We went for the Simple Sharp Inner bevel because this worked well with our drop shadow style. Go back to the Layers panel. The text is vector based so we can still edit it, despite all the Layer Styles and warp effects.



### 8 Save it

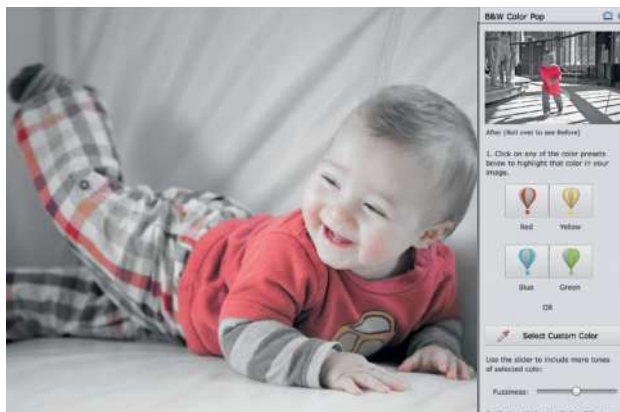
You can save your creative postcard project and preserve its Layer Styles and warp effects. This enables you to fine-tune any of its attributes at a later date (and even change the text). Go to File>Save. Set Format to Photoshop to preserve the layers. Tick layers and Include in the Elements Organizer. Click Save. This will save the layered version alongside the original image in a Version Set.

# Make photo colours pop!

Use new guided edits to give your images a fun pop colour effect



**E**lements 13+ have three guided edits that allow you to make all, or part of your image black and white. They're called 'B&W Colour Pop', 'Black and White Selection' and 'Black and White', and they're found within the Guided mode under the Photo Effects panel. The first option, B&W Colour Pop, enables you to leave part of an image colour while the rest is changed to black and white. It's ideal if you have a block of colour in your image that you want to preserve, such as the little boy's T-shirt here. However, it only lets you preserve a single colour. If you want to 'pop' more than one colour in the image, then the Black and White Selection edit is the better choice. It enables you to paint over the image to change areas to black and white. The clever thing is, the brush snaps to edges in your image as you paint, making it easy to isolate complex areas of the image. The third option, Black and White, offers a simple method for converting your images to mono, and gives you the option to add a dreamy glow.



## 1 Pop a colour

Open the image of the child. To begin, click the Guided mode at the top of the interface. Open the Photo Effects section to the right and choose B&W Colour Pop. Try clicking each colour box, or alternatively, use the Select Custom Color option and click over the T-shirt.



## 2 Paint in black and white

The red T-shirt is too close in colour to the face so it's picking up unwanted colour. Hit Cancel and go to the Black and White Selection effect. Click the Selection Brush button. The Add button enables you to paint over areas to add the effect, and Subtract enables you to preserve colour.

AFTER



### 3 Improve the edges

Click Refine Edge. Hit F to cycle through views to the pink overlay. Check Smart Radius and drag the radius up to about 20px, then paint along rough edges to expand the area of refinement. This works particularly well when trying to isolate soft edges such as with hair or fur.



### 4 Add the final touches

Click the BW detail brush. Zoom in close, click the Add or Subtract buttons and paint to tidy up any messy edges. Click Done, then go to the Touchups section above Photo Effects. Use Enhance Color to increase the saturation, and Brightness and Contrast to boost contrast. ●

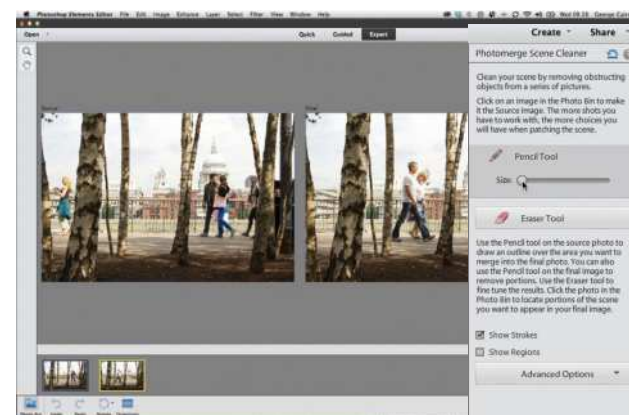
# Remove elements from a scene

Use the Scene Cleaner tool to remove distracting people from a busy location

**W**hen shooting popular landmarks such as St Paul's Cathedral in London, seen here, you're faced with the challenge of getting a clean photograph that's not partially obscured by passing tourists. You could try getting up early and heading to the location before the crowds start to throng, but that plan isn't always practical – especially if you fancy a lie in.

Thanks to Photoshop Elements' Photomerge Scene Cleaner feature, you can create a people-free landmark shot with a little preparation on location and some post-production retouching. By photographing several versions of the same scene over a short period of time, you should be able to capture a series of images in which sections of the landmark aren't obscured by people. You can then combine the clear sections of each photograph in Photoshop Elements to create a composite landmark scene that's free from distracting tourists.

If you shoot multiple images with the camera mounted on a tripod, then you could combine them in a layered Photoshop document and use the Eraser tool to mix the clear parts of each layer together. If you don't have a tripod and you shoot handheld, then Elements can align the shots automatically using its Photomerge Scene Cleaner. You can then erase people with a quick scribble, as you'll see from our walkthrough below.



## 1 Open Photomerge

Open our two starting images – ty\_elements27.jpg and ty\_elements28.jpg. In Elements 13, use the Expert editing mode and go to Enhance>Photomerge>Photomerge Scene Cleaner. In Elements 14+, you access the Photomerge options from the Guided mode instead, where it has its own section.

## 2 Grab the Pencil

Click Open All. Photomerge colour codes the borders of each shot and places the blue shot into the Source window. Drag the yellow shot into the Final window. Now go to the Panel on the right and click the Pencil tool icon. Drag the Size slider right to a value of 50 or so.



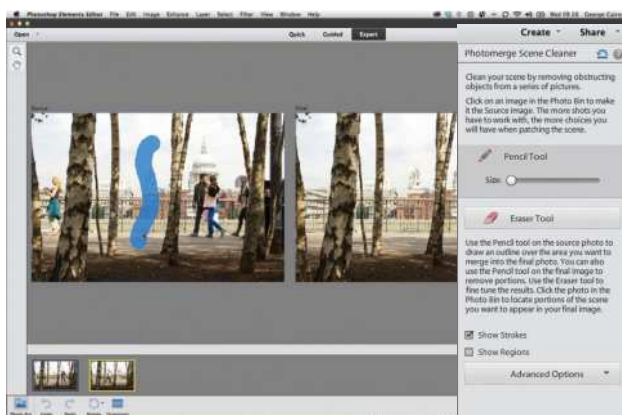
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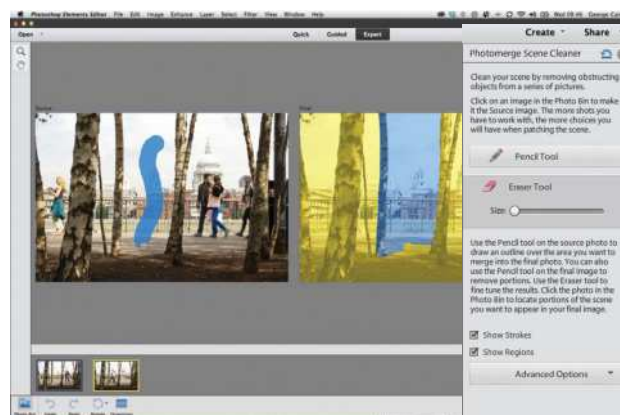
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for more



### 3 Transplant the pixels

Go to the Source window. Scribble the Pencil over the clear section of the shot. A blue stroke will appear. This tells Photomerge that you'd like to take this section of the Source image and transplant it over the Final image. In a second or two the unwanted people will be removed.



### 4 Fine-tune the sections

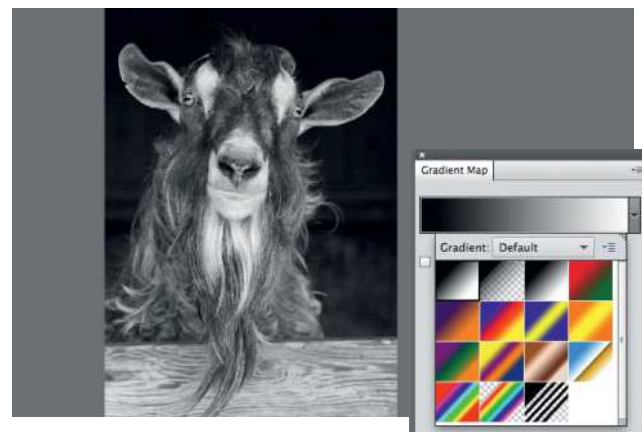
Click the Show Regions box. This enables you to see which sections of the Source image have been merged with the Final image. You can fine-tune the transplanted pixels by clicking the Eraser Tool button and then painting over some of the blue brush strokes in the Source image.

# Convert to mono

Try our advanced black-and-white conversion technique using adjustment layers in Photoshop Elements

**U**nlike Photoshop where you can convert your image to black and white using an adjustment layer or the Grayscale tab in Camera Raw, Photoshop Elements doesn't have these options. The biggest benefit of using an adjustment layer is that you can individually tweak the colours in the image, giving you far more control over the final outcome. Adjustment layers are also a useful non-destructive editing technique that you can return to later on, and keep adjusting.

The basic way to convert your image to black and white in Elements is to go to Enhance > Convert to Black and White. This is a good feature, but you're limited in what you can do. For starters the feature only works by applying the effect to a layer (not an adjustment layer), and in the pop-out box there are only three colour channels (red, green, and blue) to adjust. In this tutorial we've come up with a clever workaround technique using a Gradient Map and Hue/Saturation adjustment layers...

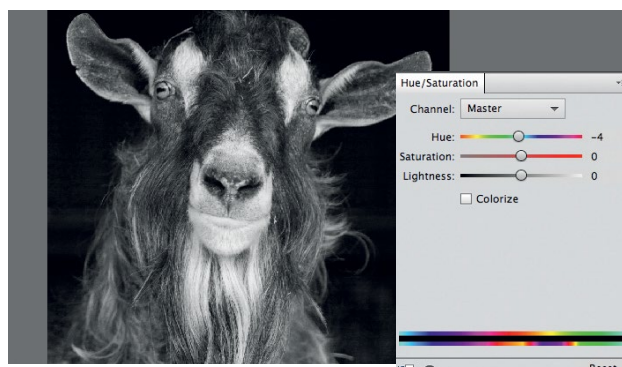


## 1 Tweak in Camera Raw

Open the starting image in Camera Raw to boost the tones and contrast. In our example we set the Exposure to +2.05 to bring out the detail, the Contrast to +27, the Shadows to -38, Whites to +25, Blacks to +33 and the Clarity to +25 to boost the midtone contrast. Finally, use the Crop tool to tidy up the composition.

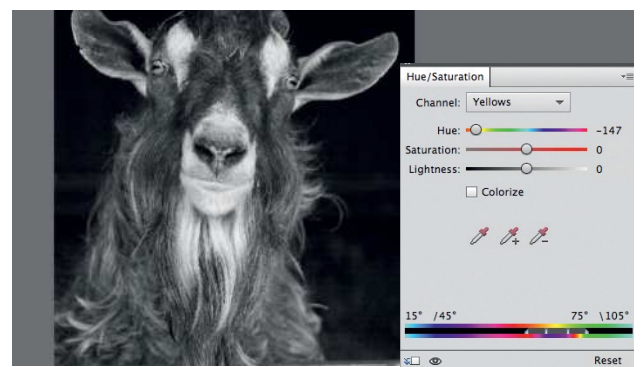
## 2 Add a gradient

In the main editor add a Gradient Map adjustment layer. In the pop-out box click the arrow to give you the menu options and pick the first preset from the list. You'll notice your image changes immediately to black and white. Now click back onto the Background layer in the Layers panel, ready for the next step.



## 3 Add a Hue/Saturation layer

Next add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. We can use the drop-down menu to adjust the colours individually, like you would when converting to mono in Photoshop CS and CC. Start by altering the Master setting. As you'll notice when you push the Hue slider up and down, it brings out different colours in the image.



## 4 Tweak the channels

Click the drop-down menu. From the list we can now tweak the Red, Yellow, Green, Cyan, Blue and Magenta channels individually. In our image the most prominent colours are Red and Yellow, so these are the two we will be using. Adjust the Hue slider in the Red channel to +36, and -147 in the Yellow channel. ■

AFTER



BEFORE



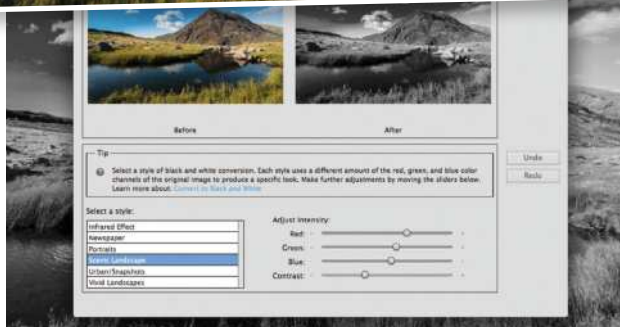
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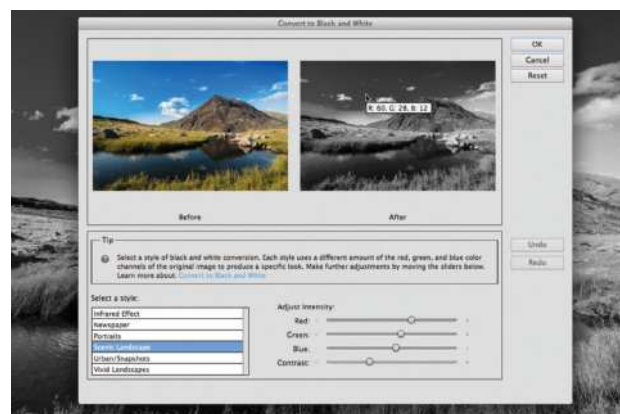
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for more

# Take control of tones

Create more effective monochrome images using the Convert to Black and White feature

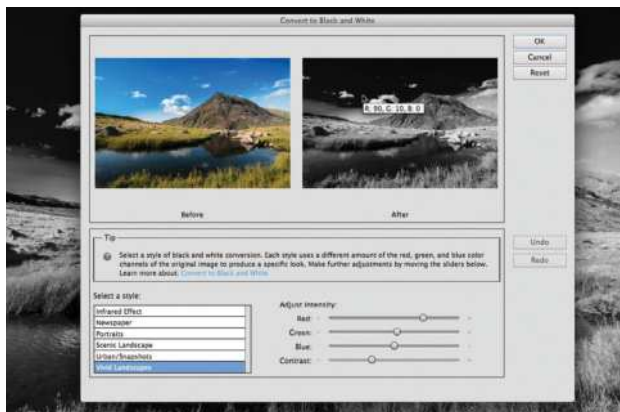


**O**n the previous pages we demonstrated how to create mono conversions quickly. Here we'll show you a powerful technique that enables you to lighten or darken specific greyscale tones to help particular features stand out more effectively in the black-and-white version of your photo. Traditional black-and-white film photographers could alter tones in a scene by placing coloured filters over the lens. A red filter would darken the greyscale tones of a blue sky and make clouds stand out, for example. We can produce similar selective greyscale tone adjustments using the following techniques...



## 1 Convert to black and white

Open ty\_elements12.jpg. Go to Enhance > Convert to Black and White. You'll see a handy before-and-after preview of your monochrome conversion. By default it uses a Scenic landscape style, which gives blue skies a dramatic dark tone.



## 3 Use the Vivid Landscape style

Click the Vivid Landscape style. The Red, Green and Blue sliders change to a value of R:90, G:10 and B:0. The combined value of these channels needs to add up to 100 to avoid blowing out highlights or clipping shadows. The blue sky looks darker, making the lighter landscape stand out.

## 2 Add up the numbers

The preset styles adjust the intensity of the red, green and blue channels to lighten or darken tones. If you move the cursor over the mono preview you'll see the settings that the Scenic Landscape style uses for each channel – R:60, G:28, B:12. These numbers add up to 100.



## 4 Adjust the contrast

You could drag the R, G, and B sliders manually, but you risk over-exposing highlights and under-exposing shadows if the numbers don't add up to 100. You can fine-tune the look by dragging the Contrast slider. Here a value of +16 helps the lighter vegetation stand out more.

## Styles in action

Produce a wide range of different results by applying different styles to your monochrome conversions



### Portraits style

The Portraits style sets the three colour channels to R:25, G:39 and B:36, producing a detail-preserving total of 100. This preset's mix of channels creates a much lighter sky than the one produced by the default Scenic Landscape style.



### Infrared Effect style

By using Infrared film, traditional photographers could make a black-and-white scene's vegetation look a contrasting white, which is a great way to make the grass stand out in an image. The Infrared Effect style sets the channels to R:40, G:140 and B:-80.



### Newspaper style

This over-the-top style creates a striking high contrast mono conversion by using a channel mix of R:40, G:34 and B:60. Unlike other styles these numbers total up to 134, which exceeds the 100 limit. As a result we're losing detail in the now over-exposed highlights.



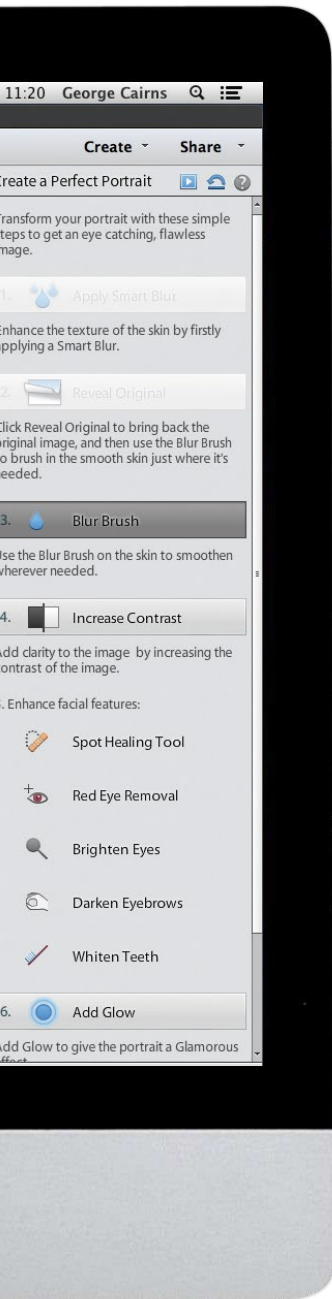
### Vivid Landscape style

The Vivid Landscape style works well for this particular image, because the striking dark sky contrasts with the lighter vegetation. Shots that feature a different range of colours will benefit from different black-and-white style presets, so feel free to experiment. ●

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

COMMON PHOTO PROBLEMS SOLVED





# Common photo problems solved

Improve portraits and landscape images with quick and easy-to-apply fixes in Photoshop Elements

**96 Shake Reduction**  
Camera shake can easily spoil atmospheric low-light photos, but this clever tool can improve your pictures much more effectively than regular sharpening can

**98 Improve skin tones in your portraits**  
Use the handy Perfect Portrait Touchup option in the Guided editing mode to create a more flattering portrait, with smooth, spot-free skin, bright eyes and more

**100 Straighten tilted horizons**  
Make a tilted horizon run parallel with the edge of the frame and then have Photoshop Elements fill in the missing edges automatically

**102 Replace dull skies**  
Select and remove a boring sky using the Magic Wand tool and replace it with something more exciting. We'll show you how to modify the initial selection to remove the ugly fringes

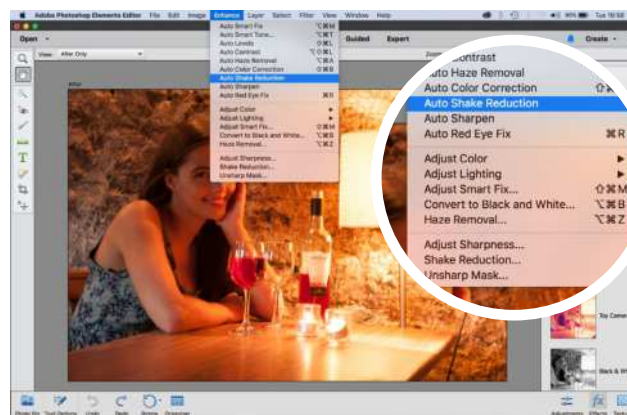
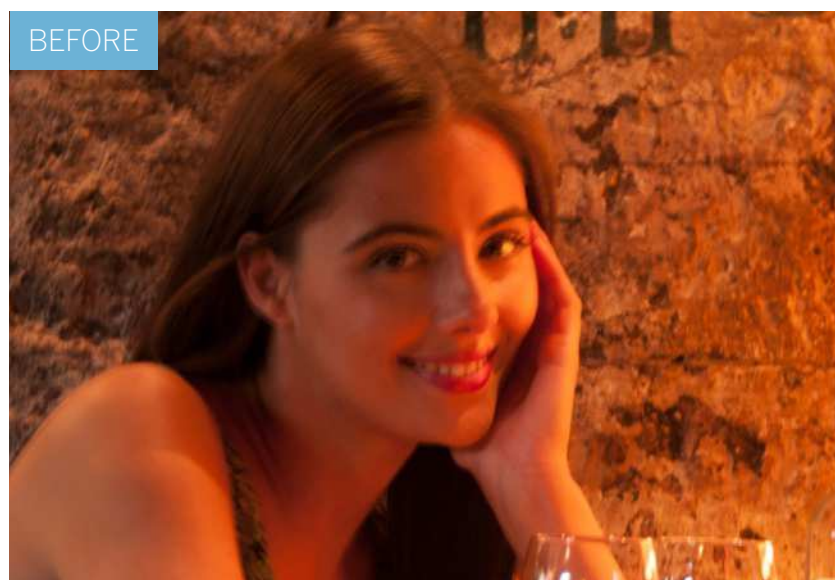
**106 Remove Haze**  
Landscapes can grow hazy with distance but this clever tool restores their colour and contrast. Our walkthrough will show you how it can work on dull skies too

# Reduce blur from camera shake

If you take a photo that's spoiled by camera shake, the Shake Reduction tool could fix it

**C**amera shake is one of the biggest bugbears for photographers. It happens when the camera moves during the exposure, so it is closely tied to shutter speed. The slower the shutter speed, the greater the danger of shake. It's also related to the focal length of your lens – telephoto lenses magnify any shake to make it appear a whole lot worse.

You need to watch out for camera shake when you're shooting indoors or in low light, because this is when the camera will have to use a slower shutter speed. Normally, you'd counteract this by increasing the camera's ISO setting to force the shutter speed back up again, and that's what we should have done here. Instead, we used a low ISO which gave a shutter speed of just 0.4 sec – no wonder the details are blurred!



## 1 Where to find Shake Reduction

The Shake Reduction tools are on the Enhance menu, and you can use them in both the Quick and Expert modes. The top section of this menu is where you'll find all the 'Auto' options, but you get much more control if you choose the manual Shake Reduction option further down.



## 2 Shake Regions explained

The first thing you'll notice is the default 'Shake Region', the area of the image analyzed for movement. This is used to work out the shake correction needed, which is then applied to the whole image. You move the Shake Region to a more suitable location by dragging the centre.



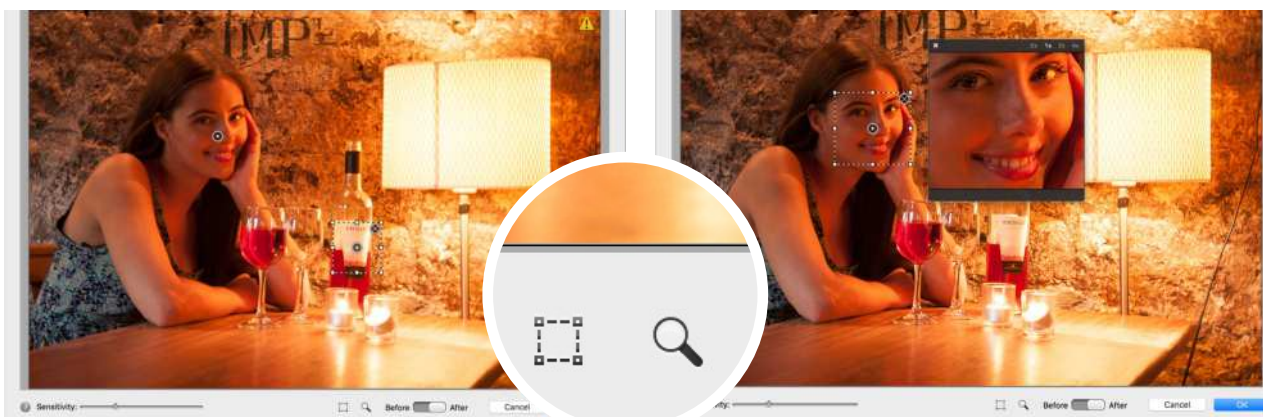
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### 3 More Shake Regions

Here, we've positioned the first Shake Region over our model's face, since this is where we want the best shake correction. But we can add another Shake Region for another key area by clicking the tool at the bottom of the window and dragging out another selection marquee.

### 4 Zoom in to check

You can check the effectiveness of the Shake Reduction tool before you commit to processing the image. If you click the zoom button at the bottom of the window, you'll get a square 'loupe' which you can drag around the picture to check how well the details are being rendered. ●

AFTER



BEFORE

## Improve skin tones in your portraits

Touch up your portraits and create perfect skin using Photoshop Elements' Guided editing mode

**B**efore they have a photograph taken, the subject of a portrait shoot will want to look her best. This may involve brushing her hair and applying make-up to create the appearance of healthier looking features. Despite the personal grooming, the end photographic result may be disappointing. Your model could be having a bad skin day and be unable to successfully conceal a spot, for example. A decent lens and flash lighting can reveal every skin pore, which may not be particularly flattering for your subject's complexion. Professional photographers can place filters over the camera's lens to add

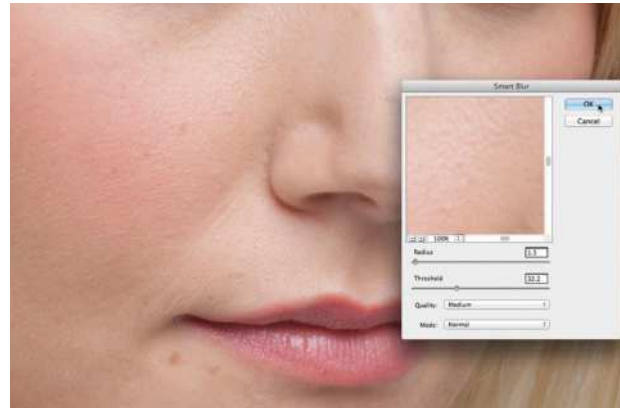
a healthy glow to the subject's skin and give it a smoother, more flattering appearance. We can produce similar results using a range of tools and commands in Photoshop Elements.

The Guided editing mode has a handy Perfect Portrait Touchup option that takes you through techniques that will create a more flattering portrait. It gathers the most useful retouching tools together in one place, and enables you to smooth skin, conceal spots and brighten the whites of your subject's eyes. The Guided edit mode also introduces you to useful filters such as Diffuse Glow. This enables you to fake the skin-flattering pro-mist filter technique used by pros.



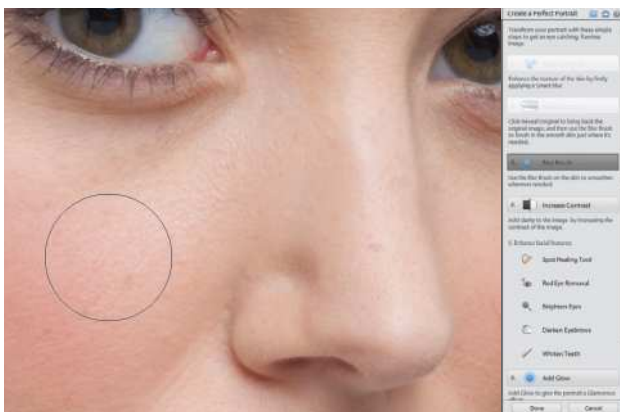
### 1 Start Perfect Portrait

Open ty\_elements14.jpg and switch to Guided mode so that you can open the Perfect Portrait guided edit. In Elements 13 you'll find this in the Touchups section, while in Elements 14+ you need the Special Edits section. You'll now see a series of touch-up steps on the right of the screen.



### 2 Blur the skin

Go to the Touchups section and click Perfect Portrait. To start enhancing the skin, click the Apply Smart Blur button. The default Radius of 1.5 and the Threshold of 32.2 are enough to soften the pores and make them less noticeable. Click OK to apply the blur.



### 3 Selective skin blur

The image is looking too soft, so click the Reveal Original button. Click the Blur Brush button and press [ or ] to resize the brush tip. Paint over the skin to selectively reintroduce the effect of the Smart Blur filter. Avoid painting over details such as the eyes and mouth.



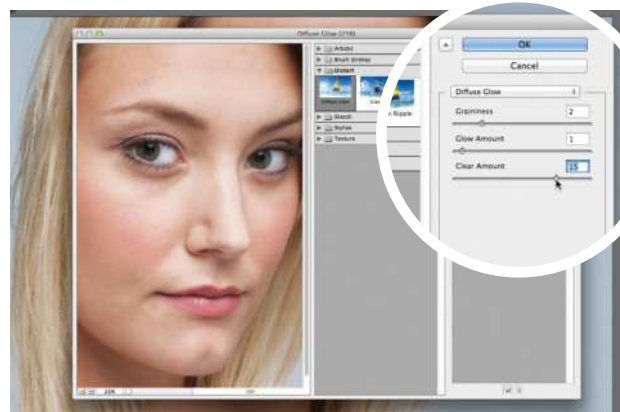
### 4 Reduce the facial hair

When selectively blurring the skin you may find it useful to press Cmd/Ctrl++ to zoom in for a closer look. Hold down the space bar to temporarily activate the Hand tool and drag the image around to discover new patches of skin to smooth. Blur the fine hairs around the mouth.



### 5 Remove spots

Click the Increase Contrast button to make the facial features stand out more against the skin. Click the Spot Healing tool button, then click unwanted spots with a brush tip just larger than the spot. Don't remove freckles because these give the model character.



### 6 Lighten the eyes

Click the Brighten Eyes button. This summons the Dodge tool and sets it to lighten highlights. Tap [ to shrink the brush to a suitable size, then paint over the whites of the eyes to lighten them. Click Add Glow, then click OK for a flattering pro-mist filter effect. Click Done to apply.



# Straighten tilted horizons

Make a slanted horizon run parallel with the edge of the frame, and fill in the edges automatically

**W**hen we take a photo, we may not realise that the camera was rotated at a slight angle until we look at the image on the computer screen. A rotated camera causes horizons to tilt. As you can see in the starting image, the horizon rises from left to right at a slight angle. Tilted horizons aren't so noticeable if you're shooting a landscape with rolling hills, but in the case of a seascape, any tilt on the horizon will stand out.

You could try capturing straight horizons by mounting the camera on a tripod, but this is time-consuming and still no guarantee that the shot will be tilt free, especially if the

tripod is resting on an uneven surface such as a pebble beach. Fortunately, Photoshop Elements enables you to counteract a tilted horizon so that it runs parallel with the frame's horizontal edges, without losing the edges of the image.

You can straighten a photo as you crop it with the Crop tool. After drawing a crop, place the cursor outside the crop window and a rotate icon will appear. Drag to rotate the shot so that its horizon is no longer tilted. Then you press Enter to crop and straighten. If you want to avoid cropping the image, the Crop tool has a cousin that's designed to straighten a shot while keeping the image intact...



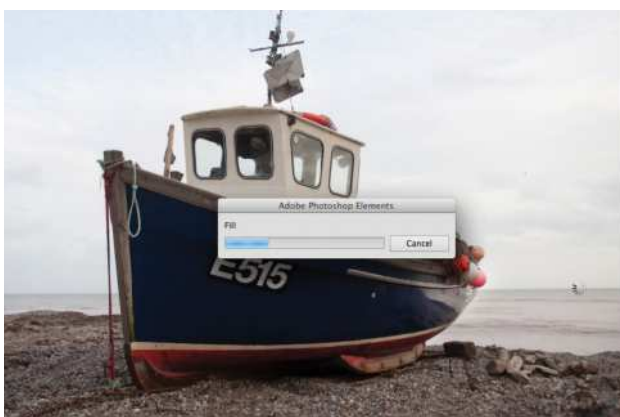
## 1 Straighten and grow

Open `ty_elements13.jpg` in the Expert editing mode. Click the Straighten tool in the Toolbox. The process can crop off the edges of a photo, so click the Grow or Shrink box in the Tool Options to protect the composition. Draw a line that follows the tilted horizon.



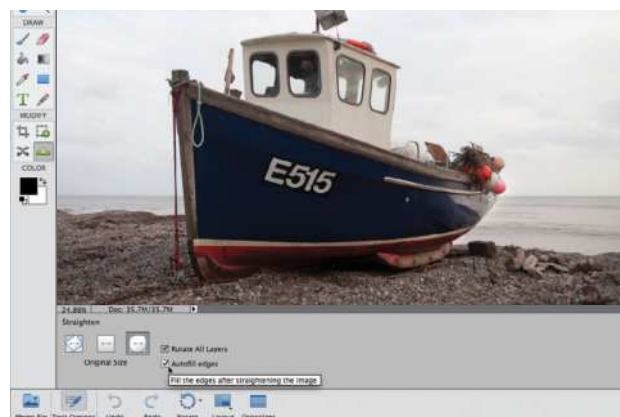
## 2 Enlarge to fit

The Straighten tool measures the angle of the tilted horizon and rotates the image to counteract the angle. Thanks to the Grow or Shrink option, the tool will increase the canvas size so that none of the shot is cropped. You'll still need to use the Crop tool to remove the edges, however.



### 3 Fill in the edges

If you'd prefer not to crop the shot at all then go to Edit>Revert to restore the shot to its original tilted state, then click the Original Size option, and tick the new Autofill edges box. Draw along the tilted horizon, and Content-Aware technology will fill in the edges of the frame.



### 4 Straight and intact

Instead of filling in the edges with white as it did in step 2, the tool creates new pixels based on the rest of the image. It will extend the sky and pebbles to fill in any gaps. You now have a straight horizon without losing any of your carefully composed shot. ●

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

COMMON PHOTO PROBLEMS SOLVED

AFTER



BEFORE



BEFORE





## Replace dull skies

Select and remove a boring sky and replace it with something more exciting!

**O**ne improvement that can be made to enhance a sky is to gradually darken the tones and saturate the colours towards the top of the frame. That technique works well if there are lots of colours and tones to work with, but if the sky of your photograph is simply a mass of overcast clouds then it will be too bland and featureless to enhance using a graduated adjustment layer. If an object such as a tall tree overlaps the sky in the top of the frame then the gradient layer will darken this also, which would spoil the image.

A cloudy sky can add mood and drama to a photo if it has enough variety and texture. However, when shooting landscapes, you may end up with blown-out skies that lack detail. If you shoot in the raw format then you may be able to claw back missing highlight detail, but with JPEGs you'll be stuck with an over-exposed cloudy sky. Fortunately, you can use Photoshop Elements' selection and masking tools to replace a bland or over-exposed sky with something more textured and colourful.

Our starting image has bits of sky trapped among its busy branches. This means we have the challenge of selecting and removing lots of fiddly sky sections. We'll show you how to set up the Magic Wand tool to hunt out all sky pixels in a few clicks. When removing sky from a finely textured area such as these tree branches, you risk leaving fringes of the original sky clinging to the edge of twigs. We'll show you how to modify the initial selection to remove these ugly fringes and then perform a complete sky transplant. ▶

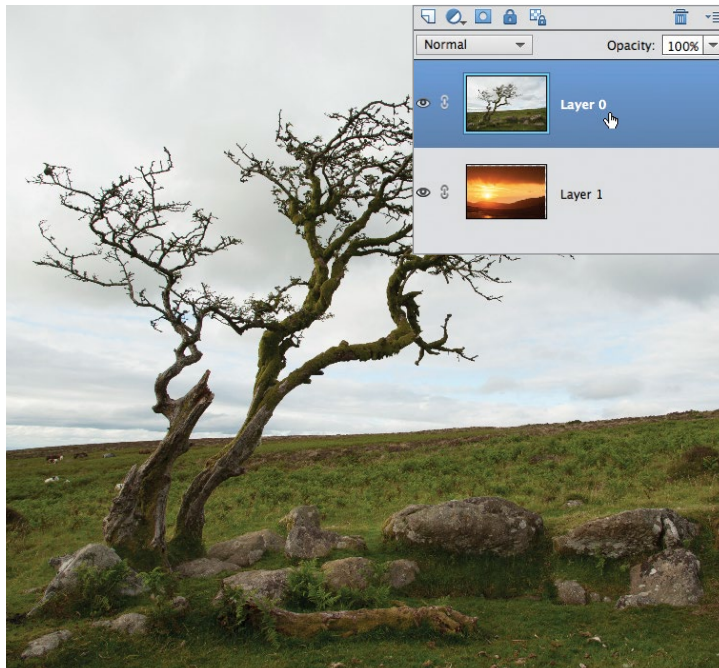
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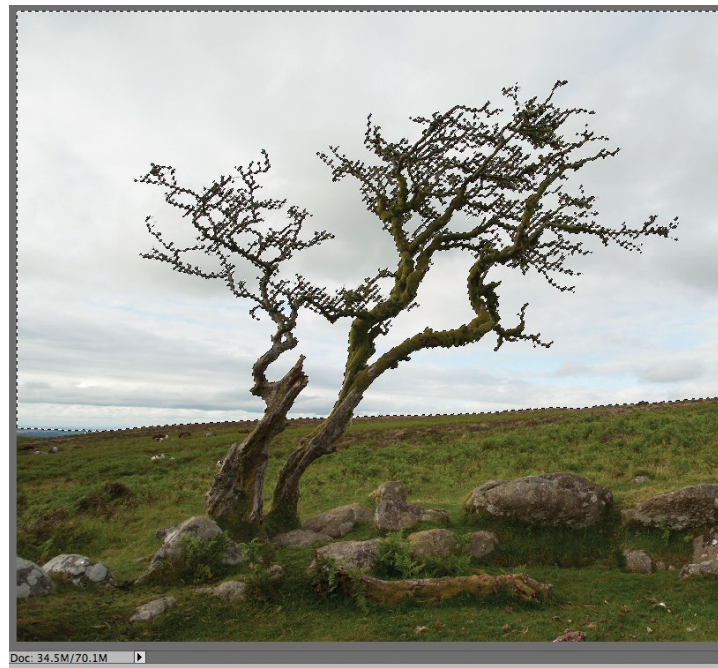
# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

## COMMON PHOTO PROBLEMS SOLVED



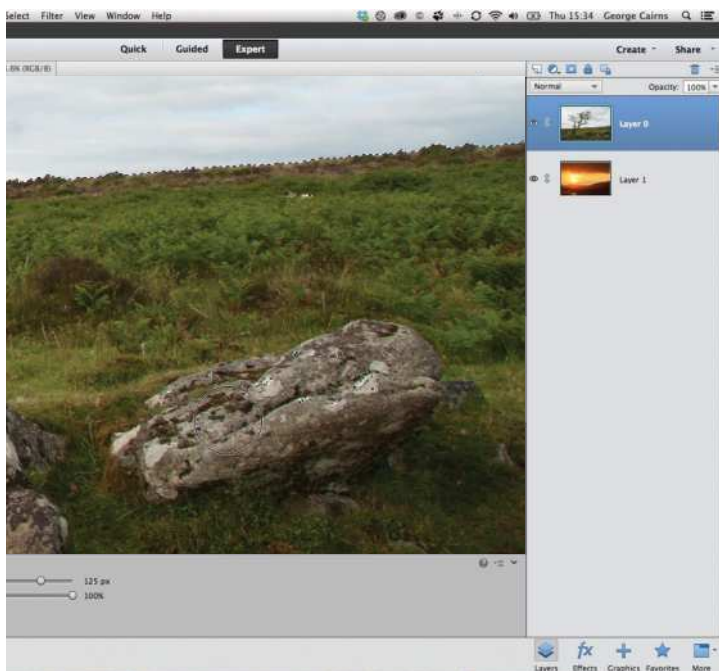
### 1 Paste the images together

Open our two starting images – ty\_elements22.jpg and ty\_elements02.jpg. Click the tab on the sunset image to bring this image into focus, then go to **Select>All**. Then choose **Edit>Copy**. Click the tab on the landscape photo and choose **Edit>Paste**. The sunset will appear as a separate layer called Layer 0. Double click the Background layer to unlock it. Click **OK**. Drag Layer 0 above Layer 1 in the Layers panel.



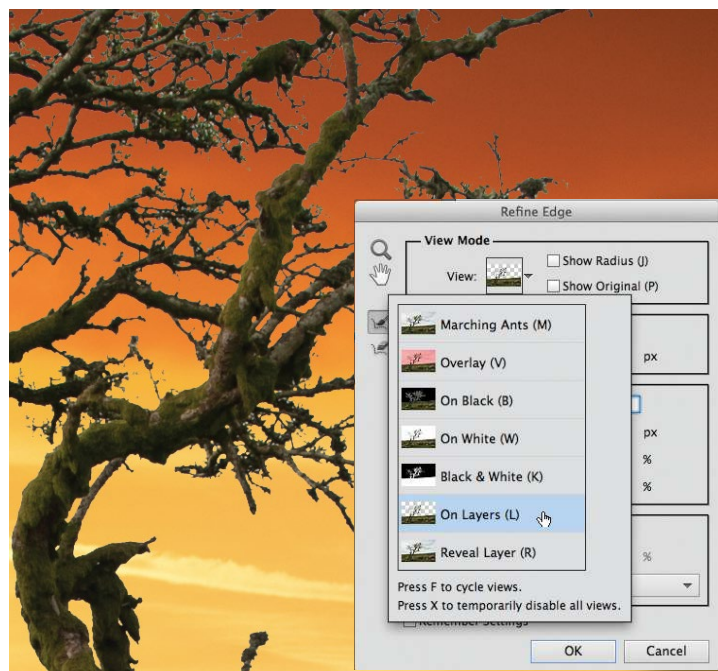
### 2 Select the sky

Grab the Magic Wand tool from the Select section of the Toolbox (or press **A** to cycle to it). In the Tool Options, increase Tolerance to 46 to make it more sensitive to changes in contrast and colour. Untick the Contiguous box so that the tool will select unconnected parts of sky hiding in the branches. Click to select the sky. Hold down **Shift** and click to add any missing clouds to the selection.



### 3 Tidy up the selection

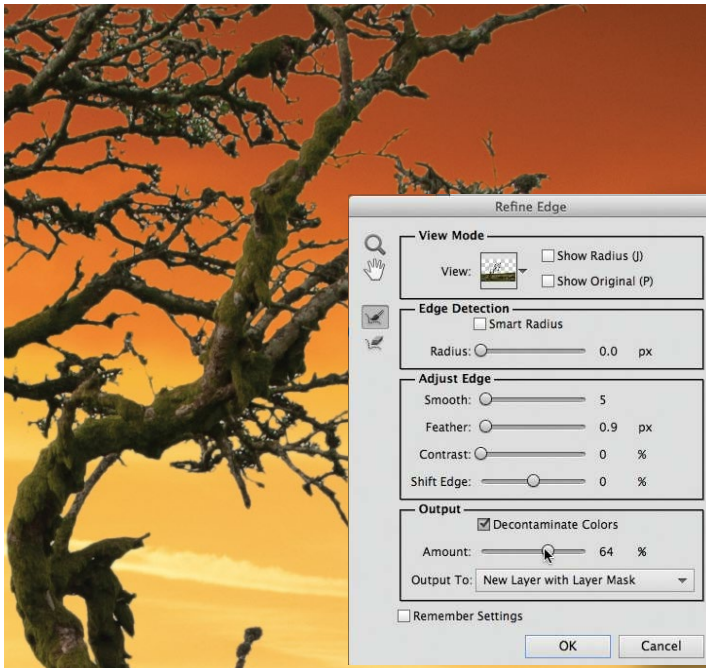
Along with the sky, the Magic Wand will have selected a few similarly coloured specks of grey on the foreground rocks. To remove them from the selection, choose the Selection Brush from the Tool Options. Click the Subtract from selection icon. Set the brush tip's Size to 125 pixels. Set Hardness to 100%. Paint over any traces of the 'marching ants' marquee on the rocks to remove them from the sky selection.



### 4 Zoom in close

Go to **Select>Inverse** to invert the selection so that the landscape is selected instead of the sky. To fine-tune the selection, choose **Select>Refine Edge**. To see how the selection is shaping up, click the View preview and double click the On Layers option. This enables you to see the tree on the top layer and the new background sunset image on the layer below. Press **Cmd/Ctrl++** to zoom in for a closer look at the branches.





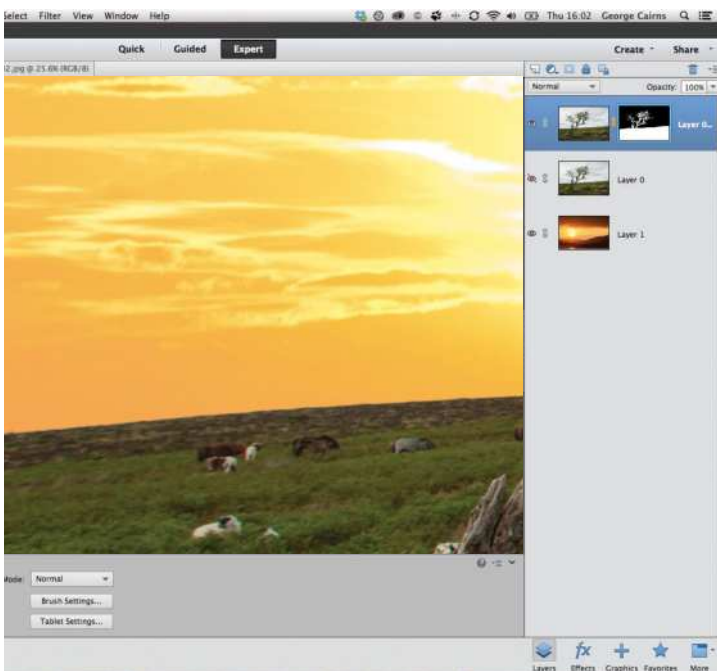
### 5 Refine the edges

The edges of the branches look a little too jagged and cut-out, so push the Smooth slider to 5 to soften them a little. Move Feather up to 0.9 too. We can still see some of the top layer's original white sky pixels clinging to the edge of the branches. To reduce their appearance, tick the Decontaminate Colors box. Push Amount up to 64%. Tick and untick the Show Original box to see how the selection has been improved.



### 6 Crop the border

Set the Output option to New Layer with Layer mask and click OK. The refined selection is converted into a layer mask. The black parts of the mask hide the unwanted sky on the top layer to reveal the sunset from the layer below. Grab the Zoom tool and right click. Choose Fit On Screen. You'll notice that the sunset image is slightly smaller than the landscape, so there are visible transparent edges. Grab the Crop tool and crop off the edges. Click the tick.



### 7 Modify the mask

Zoom in to the distant hill on the left. It has a hint of the original sky's overcast colour. Grab the Brush tool. Choose a hard round tip from the Brush Preset picker in the Tool Options. Set Size to 35 pixels. Click the mask on the top layer and set the Foreground colour to black by pressing D. Paint over the hill to hide the vestigial sky. If you need to restore any missing landscape press X to toggle to a white tip and spray on the mask.



### 8 Match the lighting

The light in the background is quite warm, while the light in the foreground is cool. To make the landscape look like it's part of the sunset scene, choose layer>New Adjustment Layer>Photo Filter. Click OK. Set the drop-down menu to Warming Filter (LBA) and push the Density up to 31%. This helps the lighting in both layers look more similar in colour, which creates a more convincing composite. ●

# Remove haze from your photos

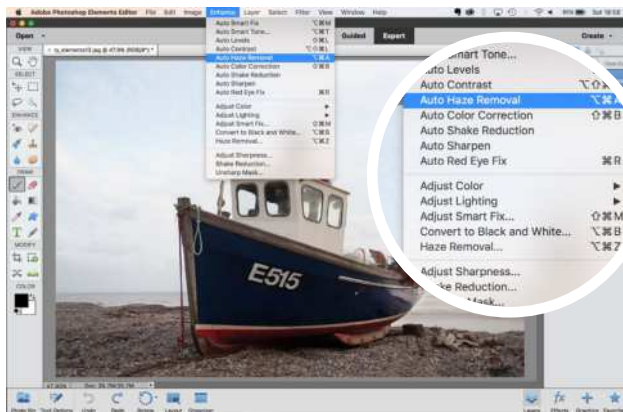
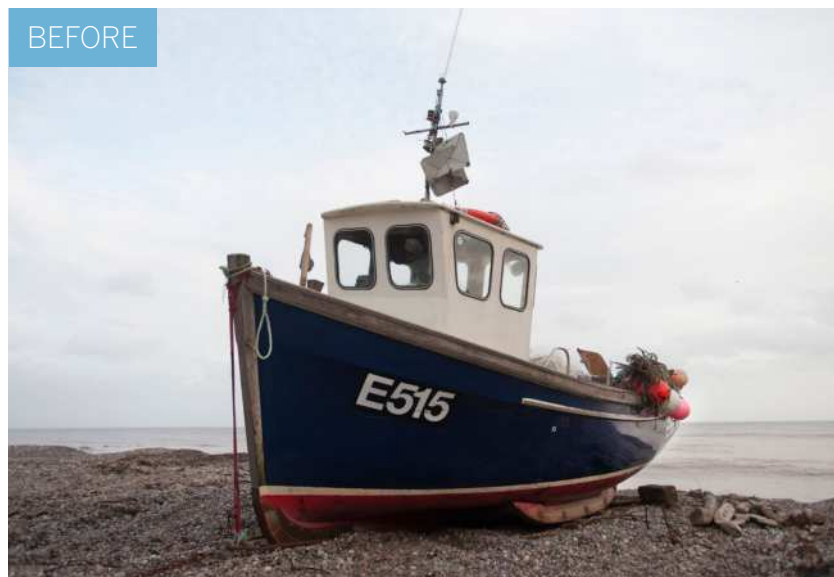
Hazy backdrops can spoil otherwise attractive landscape photos, so here is a tool that can help

**Y**ou often get distant haze in landscape shots. It happens when there's dust or moisture in the air, and increases with distance. It's sometimes called 'aerial perspective' and can be a useful creative effect, but much of the time it's an annoyance because the spectacular backdrop we thought we were going to get comes out looking unexpectedly flat.

This is where the Remove Haze option in Elements 14+ comes in. It's designed to restore contrast and colour to distant hazy views, but without affecting objects in the foreground.

It's billed as a tool for enhancing landscapes, because this is where you are most likely to notice the effects of haze on contrast, but we are using it here to restore detail to a weak and hazy sky.

BEFORE



## 1 Where to find Haze Removal

The Haze Removal options are on the Enhance menu, and this is available in both Quick and Expert modes. You can use the Auto Haze Removal option on the menu to get a quick result, though for maximum control you need to select the Haze Removal tool further down the menu.



## 2 Haze Removal controls

The key controls in this window are at the bottom. These are sliders for Haze Reduction and Sensitivity, and by default you should find the two sliders set to about two-thirds of their maximum travel – this corresponds roughly with the Auto Haze Removal settings.

AFTER

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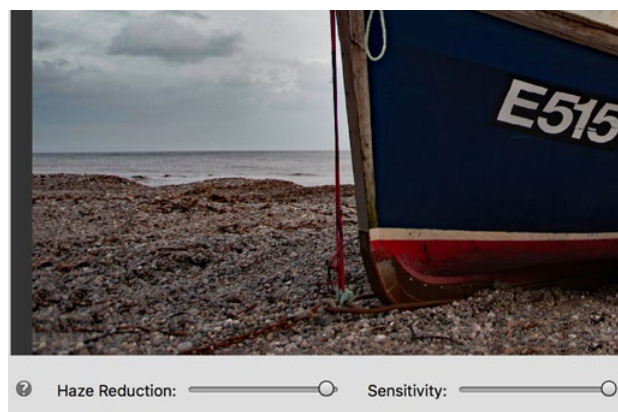
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### 3 Maxing out!

So let's see how far we can push our photo by setting both sliders to maximum. The amount of detail the Haze Removal tool has been able to extract from the sky is impressive, but as you can see here, it's a step too far, creating a nasty soot-and-whitewash effect in the clouds.



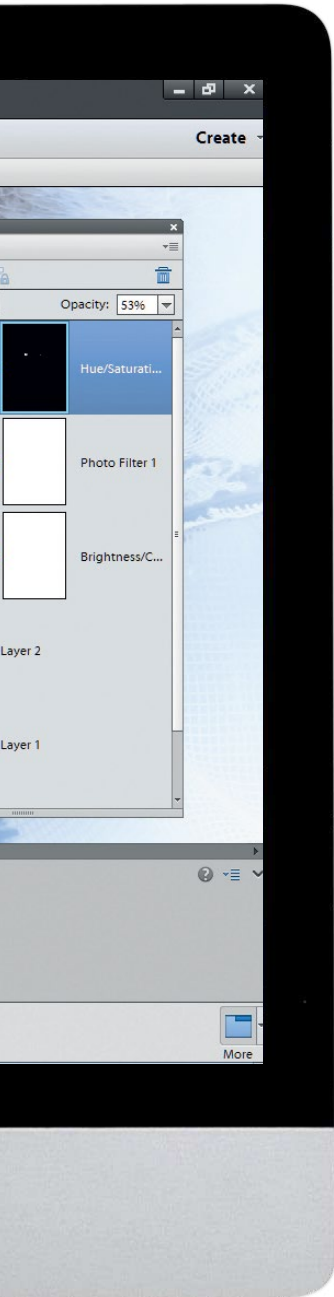
### 4 Which slider does what?

The Sensitivity slider seems to control the detail enhancement – higher settings bring out ever smaller details. We'll leave this set to maximum. The Haze Removal slider controls the strength of the correction, and we can get rid of those artefacts with just a small downward adjustment.

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

CREATIVE EFFECTS





# Creative effects

Make artworks from your photographs using filters and effects in Photoshop Elements

**110 Enhance photos with Auto Smart Looks**  
Elements will analyse your photo and come up with five different image effects designed to complement it perfectly

**112 Make a fantasy movie poster**  
Design a striking film poster with larger-than-life characters using simple pixel-bending techniques with the Liquify tool

**116 Create a neon light effect**  
Give your portraits a shot of electricity by creating glowing neon-like lines in Photoshop Elements

**118 Transform your photos into paintings**  
Love paintings but can't paint? We reveal how to turn your photos into realistic-looking watercolours

**120 Merge photos with graphics**  
Create fantastic special effects by merging your photos with graphics using blending modes and layers

**124 Enhance your photos by adding textures**  
Explore the Textures panel in the Quick editing mode and use it to combine your images with creative textures

# Try Auto Smart Looks

The Quick mode has a range of preset Effects, but Elements 14 introduced a feature for those who don't know where to start

Once you've opened the image you want to work on in Quick mode, select the Effects tab at the bottom of the tools sidebar on the right hand side of the screen. The top item in Elements 14+ is the Smart Looks category, and if you hover the mouse over this you'll see a disclosure arrow to the right – click this, and you'll see a selection of variations for that effect. All you have to do now is click on the one you like most and the

effect is applied – there's nothing else for you to do! Adobe says that Elements automatically analyses the photo and generates five different image effects to suit it. This means you should get some genuine and interesting variations for each image – the only downside is that you don't really know how the software did it!

So let's take a look at the five Auto Smart Looks Elements chooses for this male character portrait.



## 1 Auto Smart Look 1

In the original photo, our subject has a warm, ruddy complexion but the low-contrast lighting doesn't really bring out the creases and lines in the man's face. This Auto1 Smart Look, though, gives the contrast a real boost and the result is more striking, with an appealing 'vintage' look.

## 2 Auto Smart Look 2

The Auto1 Smart Look has a distinctly warm tone, but the Auto2 image is much lighter and more 'open', with a softer, cooler tone. This variation has a different feel about it, and these Auto Smart Looks do come up with variations in image treatment that you might not have thought of.



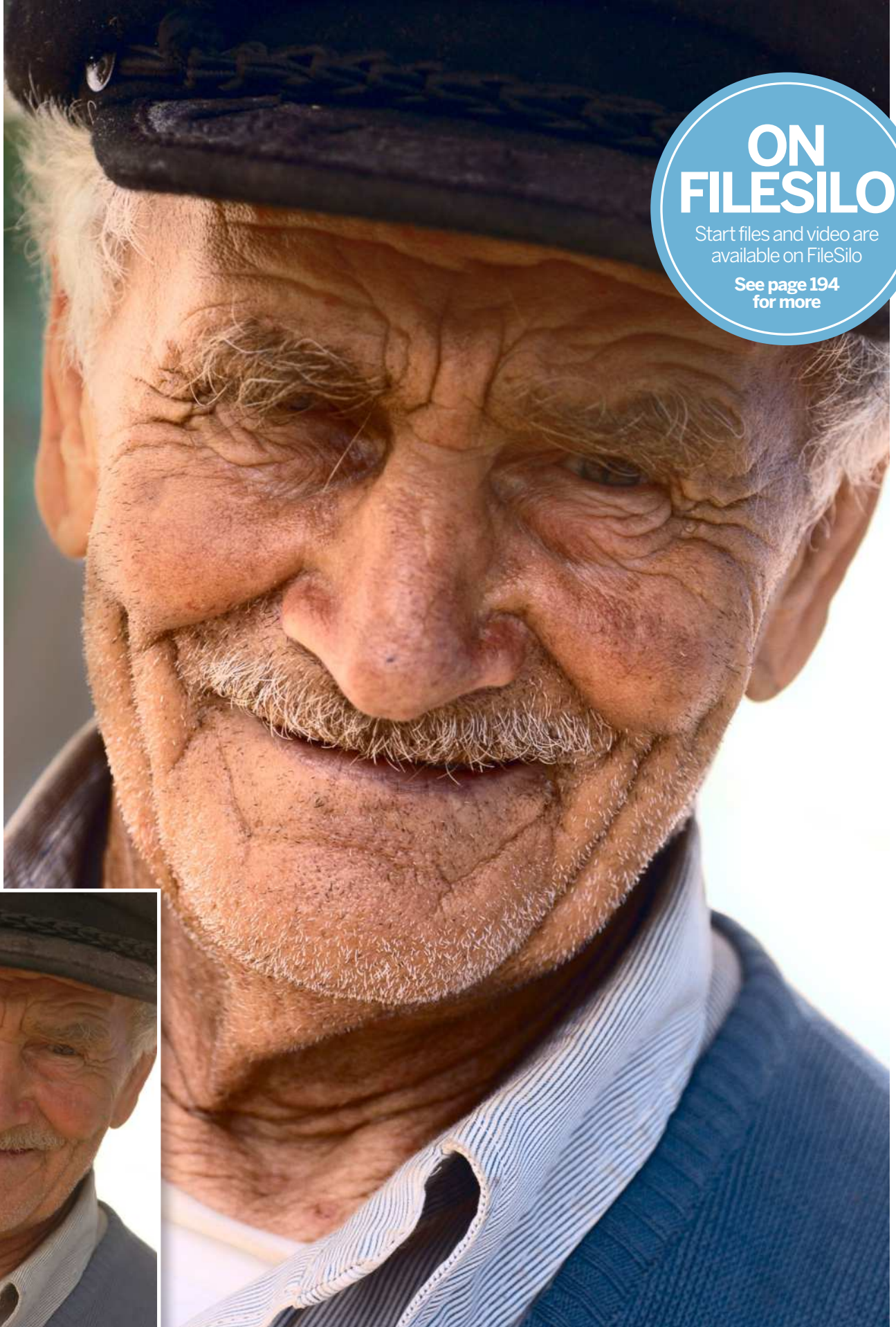
## 3 Auto Smart Look 5

The Auto5 Smart Look rings the changes once more, and keep in mind that these Auto Smart Looks will never be the same twice – the program will interpret and process each photo differently. You do, however, have some control over the results once they've been created.

## 4 Expert adjustments

You can now switch to Expert mode where you'll discover that the effect been added to your photo as a new layer, complete with layer mask, and the original photo is still there in the layer underneath. You can now paint on the layer mask to remove or tone down the effect. ●

AFTER



BEFORE



# Use filters to add creative effects

Learn how to apply different artistic filters to your photographs, and modify and combine them to produce unique looks

**F**or the majority of this book we've looked at how to use Photoshop Elements to enhance the colours and tones of photos, enabling you to produce natural colours and a healthy range of tones that feature detail in the shadows, midtones and highlights. Our earlier chapters focused on overcoming common problems such as colour casts, incorrect exposure

settings and poor composition. In this chapter we'll have a bit more fun by applying a host of creative effects to our photos. Thanks to Photoshop Elements' filters you can stylise the colours and tones of a photograph to produce a wide range of creative looks, from pencil sketches to oil paintings. To help you find suitable creative effects, the Filter menu groups filters in folders such as Artistic and

Brush Strokes. In Elements 14+, when you select a filter it's applied directly to the image, but you can also open the Filter Gallery window via the Filter menu to get handy previews of how the filtered image will look, as well as a host of editable attributes that will change the results. Here we'll introduce you to the key features of the Filter Gallery, as well as show you other ways to apply filters.

## How to apply Filter effects

Apply filters in a couple of clicks using the Expert editor's Effects panel



### 01 EFFECTS

If you want to quickly apply preset filters to an image without tinkering with the Filter Gallery settings, click the fx icon in the Expert editing mode, then click the Filters tab at the top to see preview thumbnails.

### 02 SHOW ALL

Filters in Photoshop Elements are grouped in categories such as Stylize and Texture. You can display every filter by choosing Show All. They are then listed alphabetically, kicking off with Accented Edges at the top left.

### 03 IDENTIFY FILTERS

Each thumbnail gives you a preview of the effect produced by each filter. Move the cursor over a thumbnail to read the filter's name. Turn on Tool Tips in the Preferences menu if the labels don't appear.

### 04 APPLY MULTIPLE FILTERS

Double click a preview thumbnail to apply a particular filter to the image. In this example we applied the Watercolor filter to start with. We then double clicked Cutout to stylise the image even more.

### 05 MAKING PROGRESS

Some filters take longer to apply than others because they have more work to do. Occasionally, you'll see a progress bar appear while a more complex filter works its magic.

### 06 SCROLL

Drag the scroll bar on the right to explore all the filter thumbnails in this collection. These fabulous creative filters are also accessible in the Filter Gallery, which we examine in detail on the following page.



# Photoshop Anatomy The Filter Gallery

Familiarise yourself with the Filter Gallery's key features



## 01 FILTER MENU

This menu command gathers filters into themed folders such as Artistic, Stylize and so on. Once you select a filter it will launch the Filter Gallery window. The Filter Gallery remembers the last filters and settings you used.

## 02 FOLDERS

You can browse for different types of filter by toggling opened themed folders such as Brush Strokes. Here you'll see thumbnails that preview the type of look produced by a particular filter.

## 03 FILTER LIST

You can replace a currently selected filter with something new by clicking this drop-down menu. You'll then see filters listed alphabetically, from Angled Strokes to Watercolor.


## 04 EDITABLE ATTRIBUTES

Once you select a filter by clicking its thumbnail, any editable properties such as the Stroke Length of a brush will appear in this section. This is the key to producing more convincing and unique art effects.

## 05 FILTER LAYERS

You can recreate artistic looks by combining multiple filters. Drag a filter up or down in the layer stack to change the art effect. Click the eye icon to turn it on or off.

## 06 ZOOM

It can be difficult to see the filter effect when looking at the entire picture. Click here to zoom in for a closer and clearer look at the filtered pixels. You can then adjust each filter's sliders more effectively. 

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for more

# Make a movie poster

Design a striking film poster with larger-than-life characters using these simple techniques in Photoshop Elements

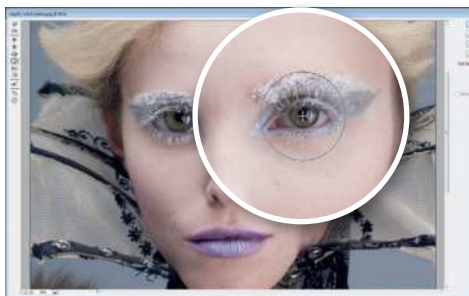
**I**f you're ever in need of inspiration for a Photoshop project, do a quick search for the latest film posters. They are often at the cutting edge of Photoshop design, merging photography with type, graphics and special effects. In this tutorial we'll show you how to get started with your own posters. As well as learning

how to position images and words for a striking design, we'll also show you how to turn people into larger-than-life CGI-like characters with the Liquify filter.

What's more, you'll learn how to use Layer Styles to give your type impact, and we'll even show you how to make a quick digital snowstorm. With these techniques you could

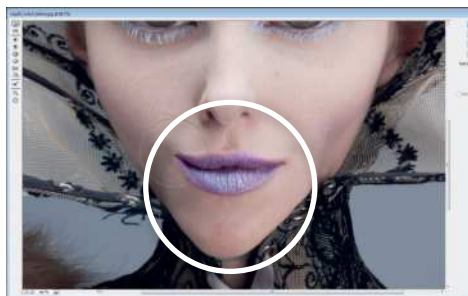
make your own spoof posters with friends and family in the leading roles, complete with your own comedy film titles and taglines. You could even make posters to go with a home movie you've shot on your camera.

These skills aren't just useful for posters; they come in handy for any design work that involves combining photography and type.



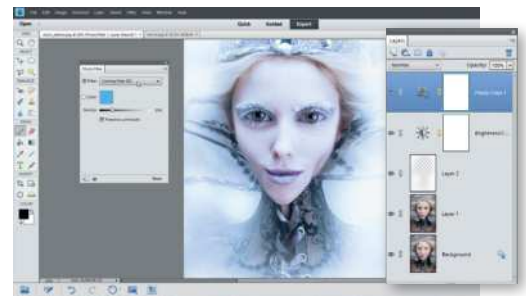
## 1 Enlarge the eyes

Open the starting image and press **Cmd/Ctrl+J**. Go to **Filter>Distort>Liquify**. Click the Bloat tool, then resize the brush until it's larger than the eyeball. Click each eye a few times to enlarge them, then switch to the Pucker tool and shrink the pupils.



## 2 Thin the chin

Use the Warp tool to push in the nose and chin so that they're small and pointy, and make the neck thinner. Push the mouth around to give it a slight smile. Click **OK**. Next, click the New Layer icon in the Layers panel and click the Brush tool.



## 3 Paint white edges

Set brush opacity to 30%, then paint with a large soft-edged brush around the edges to fade it. Create a new Brightness Contrast adjustment layer and set Contrast 21, Brightness 24. Add a Photo Filter adjustment layer – Cooling Filter (82).



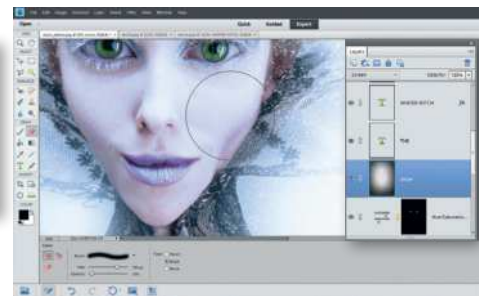
## 4 Add green eyes

Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Check **Colorize** and set Hue 120, Saturation 60. Press **Cmd/Ctrl+I**. Paint white over the irises. Next click the Type tool. Choose the 'Trajan Pro' font in black, then click the image and type a title.



## 5 Type the words

Grab the Move tool and check **Show Bounding Box**, then click the box to transform and resize the title. Go to **Layer>Layer Style>Style Settings** and check **Drop Shadow**. Set Angle 120, Size 5, Distance 16, Opacity 36. Add more words with new fonts.



## 6 Make the snow

Fill a new layer below the type with black, then go to **Filter>Noise>Add Noise**. Choose Amount 400, Type: Gaussian, Monochromatic. Then **Filter>Artistic>Dry Brush>OK**, then **Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur**. Set 1px. Set the blending mode to **Screen**.



There's a storm coming...



## THE WINTER WITCH

FEB 2014

HORSE'S MOUTH FILMS AND BEAJULAIS PRODUCTIONS PRESENT  
A FILM BY JOHN SUMMERS, PATRICIA HIGHPORT, REGGIE KESTREL, MABEL JONES, DESIYAH, ERIC GREY, SADIE BLACK, DESIREE DONALDSON  
CASTING BY DICK RICHARDS DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT LEIGH PRODUCED BY FOSTER KENNEDY AND DANDY SMITHSON DIRECTED BY JED NORRIS

AFTER



BEFORE



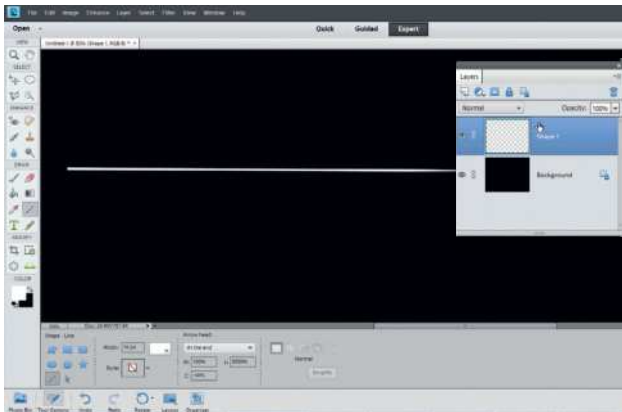
## Create a neon effect

Give your portraits a shot of electricity by creating glowing neon-like lines in Photoshop Elements

**S**ome Photoshop ‘special effects’ can look a little generic, particularly if, like filters, they’re simply slapped on top of an image. One way to make effects stand out from the crowd is to have them interact with the figures or objects in your image, like these fantastic glowing lines.

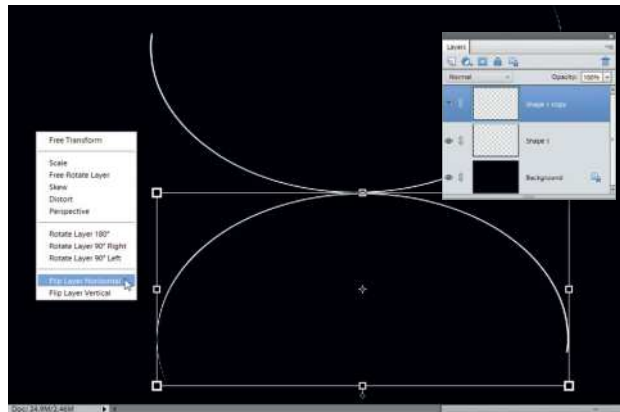
Curved lines aren’t the easiest of shapes to make. Unfortunately, Photoshop Elements lacks the Pen tool found in its bigger brother Photoshop CC, so to get the curling,

tapered line we’ll need to use a combination of tools and filters, then to make the line glow we’ll add a Layer Style effect. For simplicity, we’ll make the lines against a plain background. Once we have a couple of different lines, we can begin adding them to the portrait. We won’t need to make every line from scratch, because we can build up the effect by copying the same line again and again, then use Transform controls to skew them into a variety of shapes that wrap around the dancing figure.



### 1 Make a tapered line

Open the black starting image (or simply make a plain black image). Grab the Line tool from the Toolbox, then go to the Tool Options and set the colour to white, Width 10px, Arrow Head: At the End, W 100% L 5000%. Drag a line from left to right, then go to Layer>Simplify Layer.



### 2 Curl and copy

Go to Filter>Distort>Polar Coordinates, set Rectangular to Polar and click OK. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J, grab the Move tool and check Show Bounding Box. Click the box, right click and pick Flip Layer Vertical, then Flip Layer Horizontal. Drag it down so the two lines meet.



### 3 Add a glow

Use the Eraser tool to erase the half of the line you don't need. Highlight the layer below and do the same. Highlight the top layer and press Cmd/Ctrl+E to merge. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Style Settings. Check Glow, then Outer Glow. Pick a blue and set Size 13, Opacity 100. Click OK.



### 4 Copy and skew

Make two more lines, then open the portrait. Use the Move tool to drag the lines on to the portrait. Position the first line. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate it. Rotate and resize the second line so it looks different. Drag the corner points while holding Cmd/Ctrl to skew the shape.



### 5 Build it up

Continue building up the effect by duplicating the lines and transforming them in different ways, making the lines wrap around the dancer's arms and body. To make a glow more intense, duplicate the layer, then go to the Layers panel and change the blending mode to Linear Light.



### 6 Wrap around the arm

Once you have a series of lines that appear to wrap around the arm, highlight them and press Cmd/Ctrl+E to merge them. To make this wrap around the arm, simply switch to the Eraser and remove part of it. To vary the colours of the lines, press Cmd/Ctrl+U and adjust the Hue slider.

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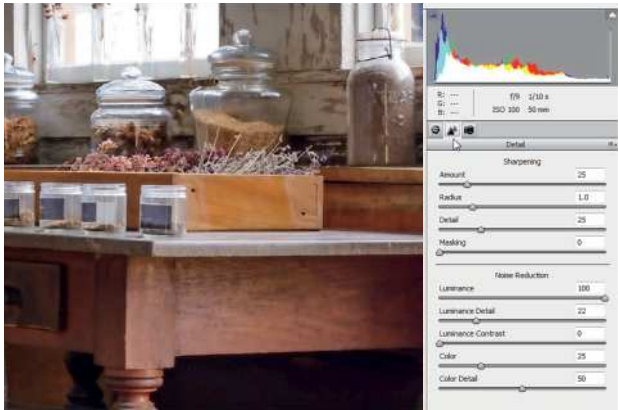
## Transform your photos into paintings

Love paintings but can't paint? We reveal how to turn your photos into watercolours

**W**e may think of watercolour painting as strictly for hobbyists and landscape enthusiasts with bags of hand-to-eye coordination, but before photography came along, watercolours were used for all kinds of practical tasks. The portability and relative speed of the painting made it useful for recording eyewitness likenesses, new specimens and even battle scenes.

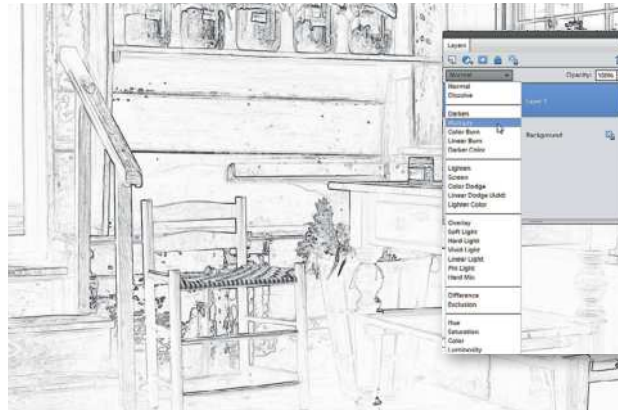
Watercolours are created with water-soluble pigment paints. These run into one another to create a mix of colours

and shapes. The effect is fairly easy to recreate in Photoshop Elements using Camera Raw, filters and some simple brushwork. We'll start with a novel use for Camera Raw's noise reduction controls to give our starting image a smooth, smudgy finish. Then we can use the Glowing Edges filter to add a faint pencil sketch effect. To give it a hand-made feel we'll get stuck in with the Brush tool and experiment with different Wet Media brushes, then add a textured paper finish to complete the effect.



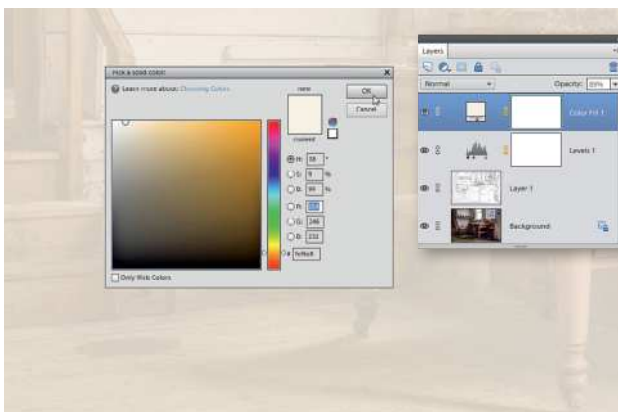
### 1 Edit the raw file

Open the starting image in the Elements Editor. In Camera Raw, set Exposure +0.45, Contrast +33, Shadows +58, Whites -50, Blacks +9, Clarity +20, Vibrance +25, Saturation +10. Next click the Detail Panel and set Luminance 100, Luminance Detail 22. Click Open Image.



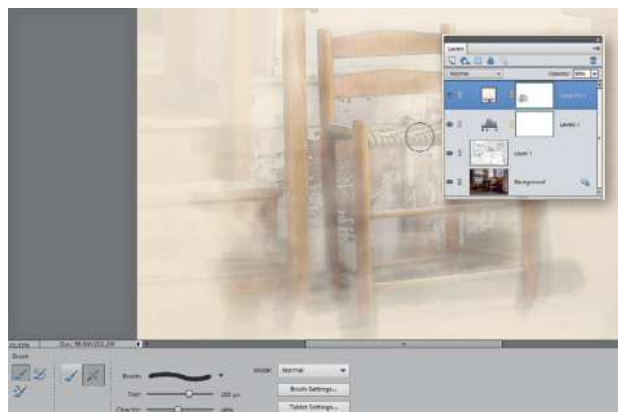
### 2 Make a pencil sketch

Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to copy the background, then go to Filter>Stylize>Glowing Edges. Set Edge Width 4, Edge Brightness 6, Smoothness 8 and click OK. Next press Cmd/Ctrl+I, then go to Enhance>Adjust Color>Remove Color. Change the blending mode to Multiply in the Layers panel.



### 3 Choose a paper colour

Click the Create adjustment layer icon in the Layers panel and choose Levels. Drag the middle slider to 1.56 to lighten the midtones. Click the adjustment layer icon again and choose Solid Color. Choose an off-white colour, then change the opacity of the layer to about 85%.



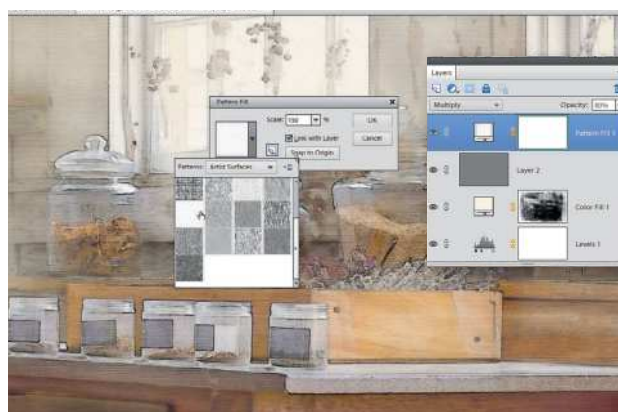
### 4 Load the Wet Media brushes

Grab the Brush tool and press D then X to set the colour to black. Go to the Brush options and set the opacity to about 30%. Click the Brush Picker and select the Wet Media brushes. Choose the Watercolor Heavy Medium tip, and begin painting over the chair to reveal it.



### 5 Paint in the detail

Continue painting and experimenting with different brushes, opacity settings and brush sizes as you paint. Leave messy borders and aim to follow the lines in the image, but be careful not to block in too much detail. If you go too far, press X and paint white to bring back the paper colour.



### 6 Add the paper texture

Hold down Alt and click the New layer icon. Set Mode: Overlay and check the Fill with... option. Go to Filter>Texture>Texturizer. Set Texture: Canvas, Scaling 200%, Relief 4. Add a Pattern adjustment layer. Choose Watercolor Light, Scaling 150%. Blend it with Multiply.

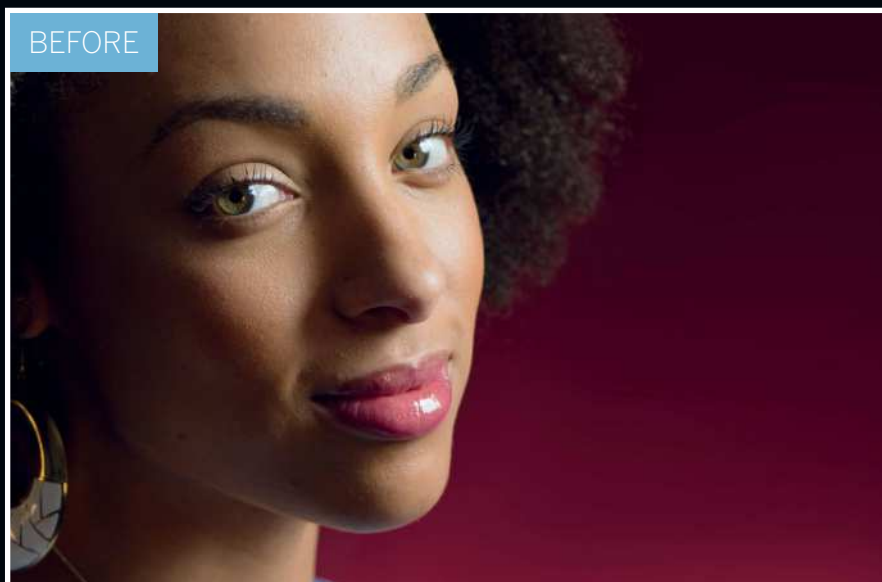
# Merge photos with graphics

Create fantastic effects by merging your photos with graphics using blending modes

**T**his surreal effect may look intricate and complicated, but merely by making use of the graphics and backgrounds that come with Elements, it's something that anybody can do, and on any portrait they like. We're using a simple graphic called Brass Leaves, which you'll find within the hundreds of graphics, frames and effects that come with Elements, in this tutorial. However, if you prefer, you could always use one of the other graphics.

By duplicating and reshaping the leaves in different ways you can build up an entire bush. Once that's been done, all you have to do is duplicate the cut-out face we've provided and 'clip' it to each layer, before applying a Drop Shadow Layer Style and changing the colours. To round things off, drop in a suitably green leafy background, also taken from the Elements graphics library.

Along the way we'll repeatedly use one of Photoshop's most useful and underused shortcuts – the humble Alt key. Let loose on the Layers panel, it enables you to make speedy copies of layers, styles, masks and adjustments. It also enables you to 'clip' a layer to the shape of the layer beneath. Here's how it works. ▶

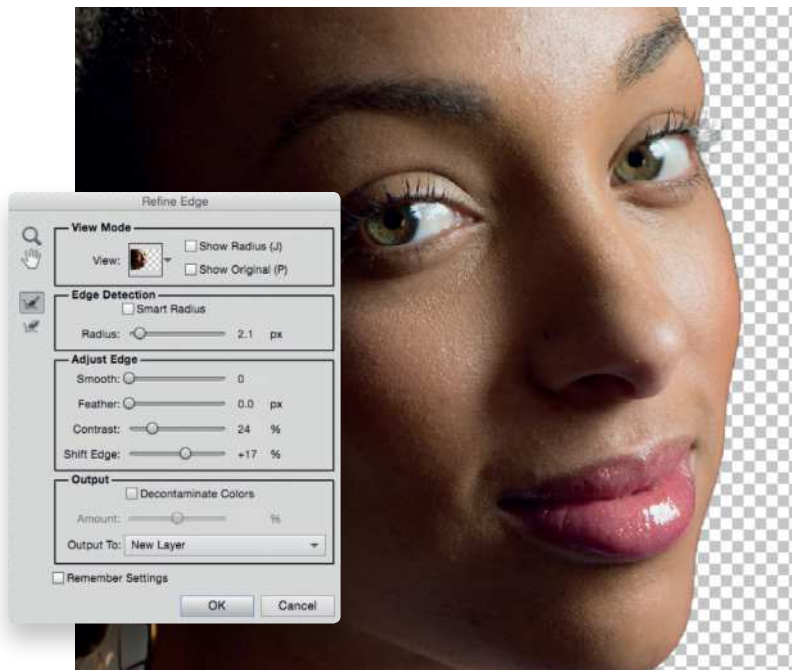






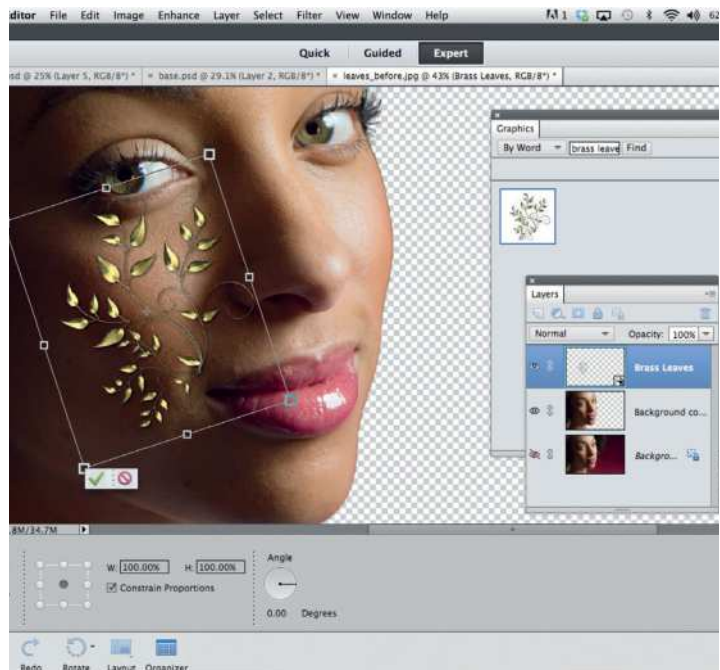
# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

## CREATIVE EFFECTS



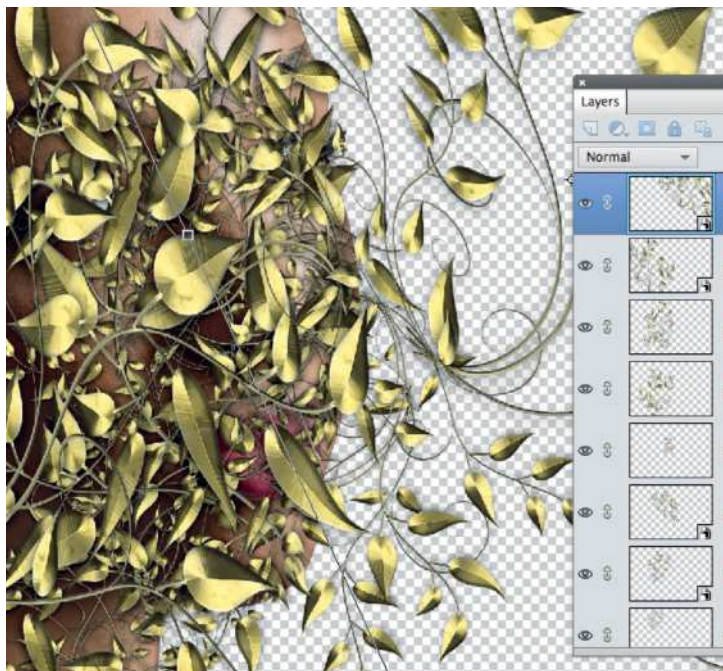
### 1 Cut out the portrait

Open the starting image. The first step is to cut out the portrait from its background. Grab the Quick Selection tool and paint to select the face and neck. If the tool goes wrong and picks up any areas you don't want, hold Alt and paint to subtract areas from the selection. When you're happy, go to Select>Refine Edge to improve the edges of the selection. Set Radius 2.1, Contrast 25%, Shift Edge +17. Set Output to: New Layer and click OK.



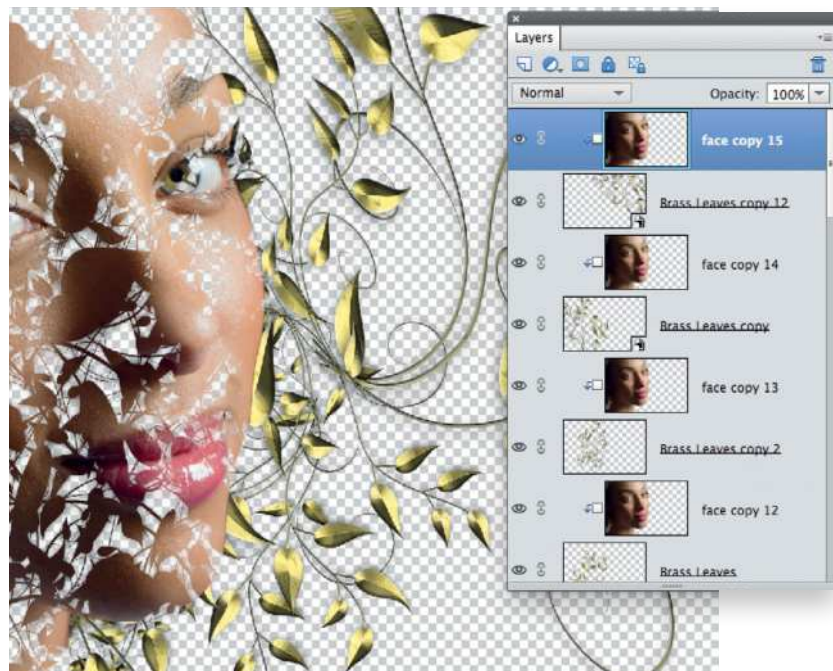
### 2 Add the brass leaves

Go to Window>Graphics to access the Graphic panel. Here you'll find all manner of different graphics and templates. You can search through the hundreds of items using the menu at the top. Set to filter 'By Word' and type 'Brass Leaves' in the search bar. Once you've found it, drag the leaves graphic into the image. The graphic is a Smart Object, which means it can be resized up or down without any loss in quality.



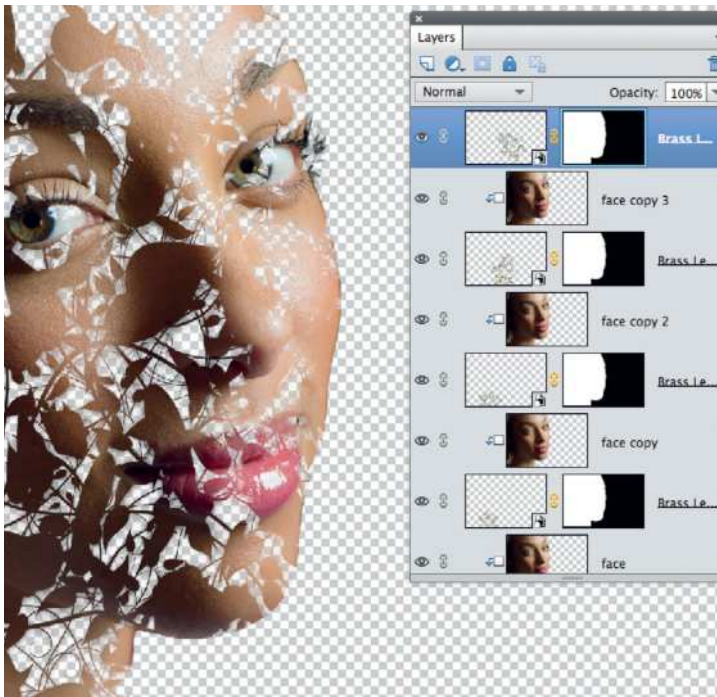
### 3 Build up the leaves

Grab the Move tool and check Show Bounding Box in the Tool Options. Click the bounding box to transform the shape of the leaves. Drag the corners to resize and position the leaves over the face. Next hit Cmd/Ctrl+J to copy the layer. Transform again, but in a different way so that it doesn't look too similar to the first copy (you can right click while transforming for more options, like Distort). Continue making more copies until the face is mostly covered.



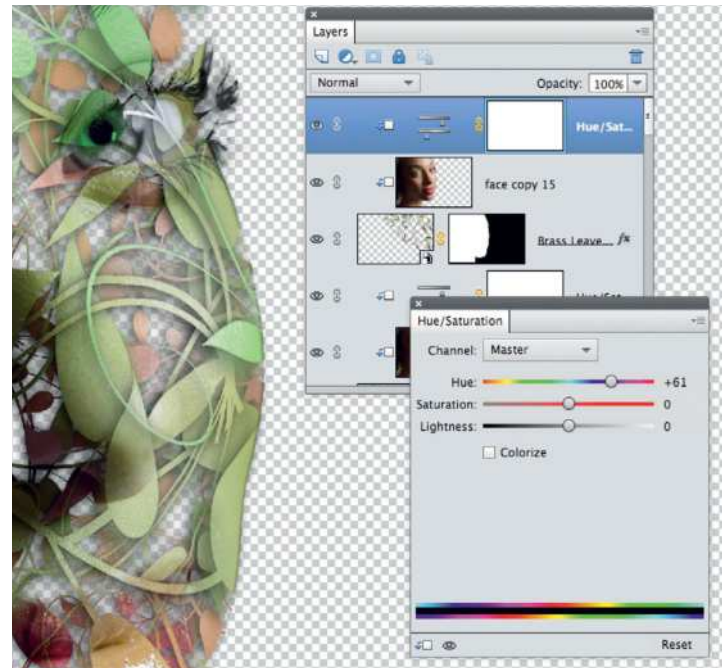
### 4 Copy and clip to the face

Rename the background copy layer (the one with the cut-out face) 'face', then drag it above the lowermost leaves layer. Hold down Alt and click the line between the two layers to clip the face to the leaves. Now hold down Alt and drag the face layer above the next leaves layer to make a copy, and Alt+click the line again. Repeat to make a copy of the cut-out face above every leaf layer, each clipped to the underlying leaves.



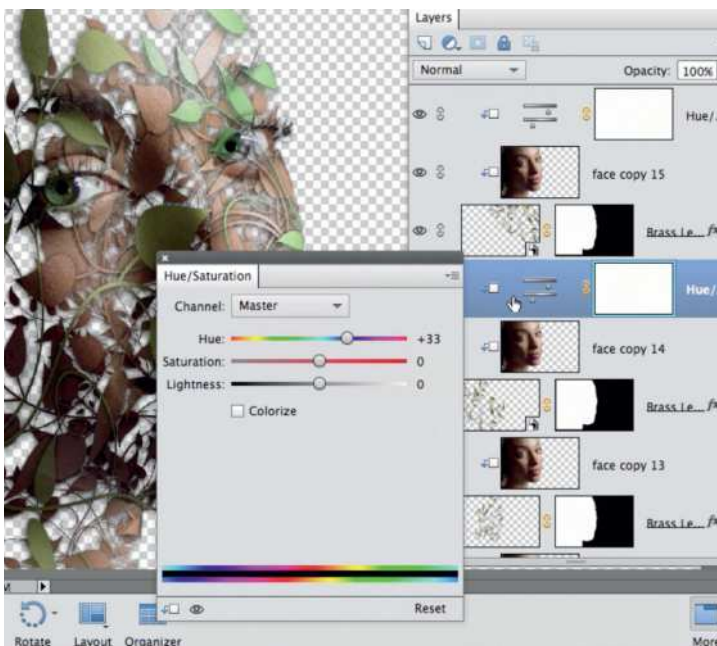
### 5 Mask the leaves

Hold down Cmd/Ctrl and click the image thumbnail on the uppermost face layer to load a selection of its shape. Highlight the leaves layer below, then click the Add layer mask icon to convert the selection to a mask. Next, hold Alt and drag the mask thumbnail to each of the other leaves layers to copy it over, so that every leaf layer has a mask attached to it that is the shape of the face.



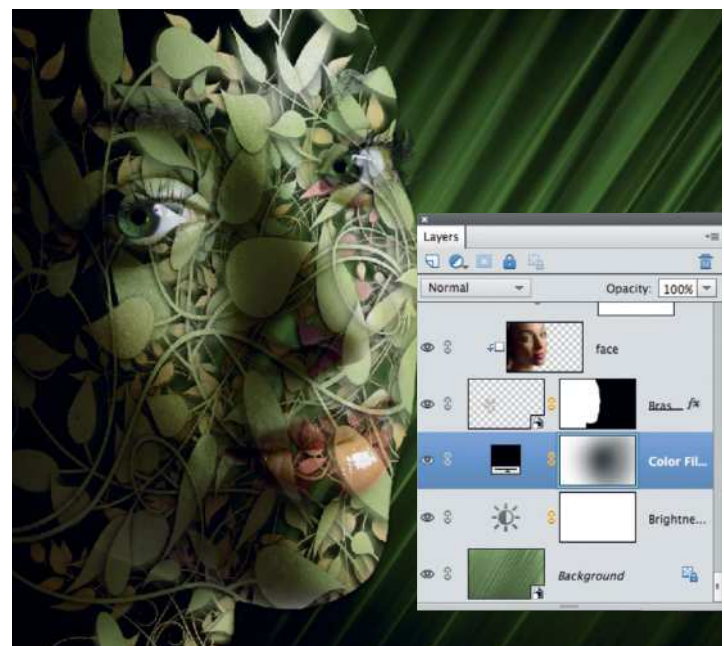
### 6 Add the drop shadows

Highlight any leaves layer and go to Layer > Layer Style > Style Settings. We can add depth to the effect with drop shadows. Check Drop Shadow and set Angle 40, Size 18, Distance 6, Opacity 90. Click OK. When you add any Layer Style effect such as a drop shadow, a little FX icon will appear on the highlighted layer in the Layers panel. Hold down Alt and drag the FX icon to another leaves layer to copy it, then copy it to every other leaves layer in the same way.



### 7 Colour the effect

Next we can add colour to the effect by turning each leaf layer a shade of green. First highlight the top face layer, then click the Create adjustment layer icon in the Layers panel. Set Hue +61, then hold Alt and click the line between the Hue/Saturation layer and the face layer below to clip the layer to the face. Hold down Alt and drag the Hue/Saturation layer above the next face layer to make a copy, then clip it again. Double click the layer thumbnail to change the Hue setting slightly for some subtle variation to the colours.



### 8 Drop in the background

Finally we'll drop in another graphic as a background for the effect. Go to the Graphics panel, search for 'leaves 02' and bring it in. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+T, right click and pick Flip Horizontal. Add a Brightness/Contrast layer set to 10, 100. Finally, darken the corners of the background. Add a Solid Color adjustment layer filled with black. Grab the Brush tool, set the colour to black and 30% opacity, then paint on the layer's mask to hide the black and reveal the green underneath.

# Enhance your photos by adding textures

Explore the Textures panel in the Quick editing mode

In this chapter we've looked at ways to produce more creative images by applying filters to photographs. This enables us to produce a wide range of looks, from sketches and paintings to in-camera effects such as zoom bursts. You can also change the mood and look of a photo by mixing it with a texture.

This combination of photo and texture can create a grungy poster look, or a stylised album cover effect. You can combine photographs of textures (such as peeling paint) with your shots in a host of creative ways, courtesy of a layer blending mode. We'll look at these in more detail overleaf, but we'll kick off by showing you quick ways to add creative textures.



## 1 Go to the Quick editing mode

Open ty\_elements15.jpg. The bland studio backdrop will benefit from some added texture, to enhance our retro model and change the mood of the shot. Click the Quick editing mode tab to jump to that workspace. Click the Textures icon at the bottom right.



## 2 Apply a texture

You'll see a collection of texture thumbnails in the Textures window on the right. Move the cursor over a thumbnail to see a descriptive label. To apply a texture, simply double click the preview. The Blue Grid texture complements the model without being too distracting.



## 3 Try different looks

You can experiment with different textured looks by double clicking the previews. The Blue Wash texture blends with the original image and distresses it, creating a peeling poster effect. Double click the Cracked Paint texture. At this stage it overlaps the background and her face.



## 4 Mask out the subject

Click the Expert editing mode tab. The texture has been applied as a Quick Edit Texture layer. Grab the Brush tool. Choose a soft tip sized 300. Set the Foreground colour to black. Click the white mask and paint over the model to stop the texture from overlapping her.

AFTER

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available on FileSilo

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for more

BEFORE

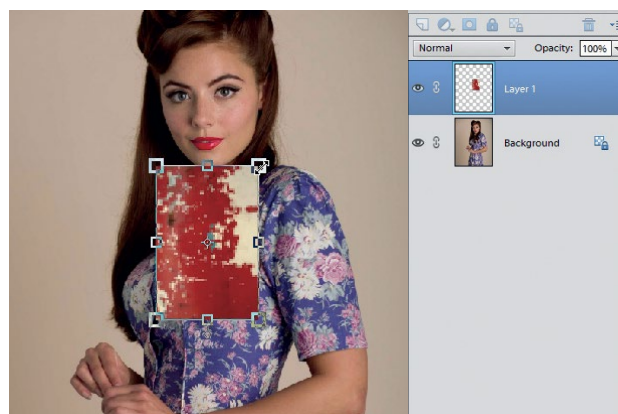
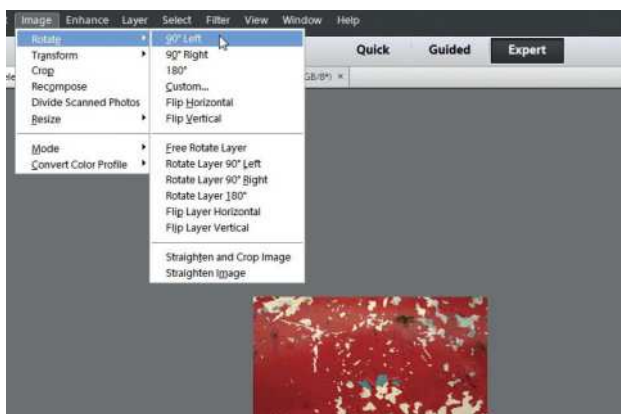


# Use advanced texture blending techniques

Combine your photographs with textures more creatively using layer masks and blending modes

**O**n the previous pages we explored the Quick editing mode's Textures panel. This creative new tool provides us with a quick way to mix photos and textures together, but it only has a few textures to play with. As a result these preset textures are likely to pop up in lots of people's work. To make your

textured images look more unique, capture your own textured surfaces such as peeling paintwork or crumbling brickwork. You can then use Photoshop Elements' Layers panel and its wide collection of blending modes to creatively combine your 'found' textures with photographs of people or places to enhance them artistically.

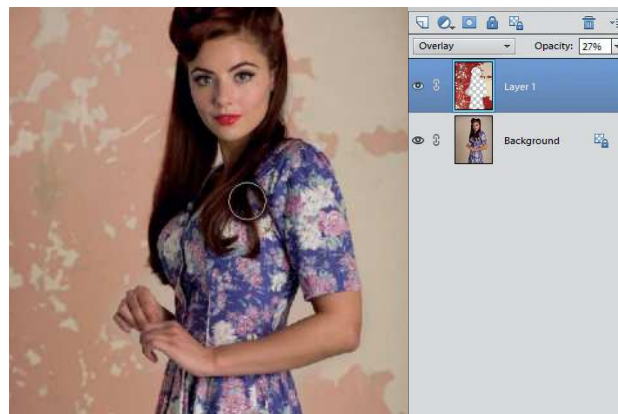
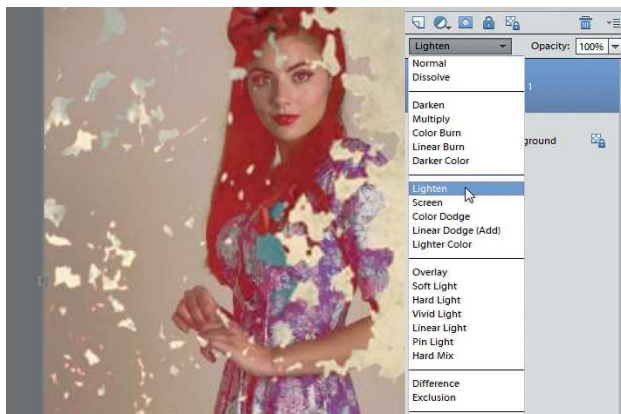


## 1 Open the source images

Open `ty_elements15.jpg` and `ty_elements30.jpg`. The shot of peeling paint has a lower resolution than our high-quality studio shot, so we'll need to enlarge it later. Click the Rotate icon to make the texture file match the studio shot's portrait orientation.

## 2 Enlarge the texture

When viewing the texture file, choose `Select > All` and then `Edit > Copy`. Go to the portrait and choose `Edit > Paste`. This adds the texture to a new layer. Click the Move tool, tick the Show Bounding Box option, and drag the texture's control handles to increase its size. Click the tick.



## 3 Blend the layers

You can mix the colours and tones of both layers in a variety of ways using blending modes. Set the texture layer's blending mode to Darken to make lighter colours on the top layer transparent, revealing detail from the layer below. Lighten makes the texture blend with the dark colours.

## 4 Fine-tune the blend

The Overlay blending mode mixes colours and tones from both layers to give the portrait a distressed look. You can make the blended effect look more subtle by reducing the texture layer's opacity to 27%. Grab the Eraser and paint over any parts of the texture layer that you want to remove.

## Blending modes in action

Produce a wide range of results by applying blending modes to texture layers



### Lighten

To create the looks above we replaced the red peeling paint texture with a blue one (ty\_elements31.jpg). By setting the blending mode to Lighten you erode the surface, creating a vintage effect.

### Hard light

By changing the blue peeling paint layer's blending mode to Hard Light, you combine the colours and tones in both layers to create a much grungier look. We dropped the texture layer's Opacity to 73%.

### Color Dodge

Here we've mixed both the red and blue peeling paint texture layers with the shot using the Color Dodge blending mode to create vivid colours and over-exposed random areas to mimic a vintage light-leak effect.

### Difference

This effect was created by double clicking to unlock the model's Background layer and then placing it at the top of the stack. We set the model's blending mode to Difference above the blue paint texture. ■

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

DO MORE WITH YOUR PHOTOS

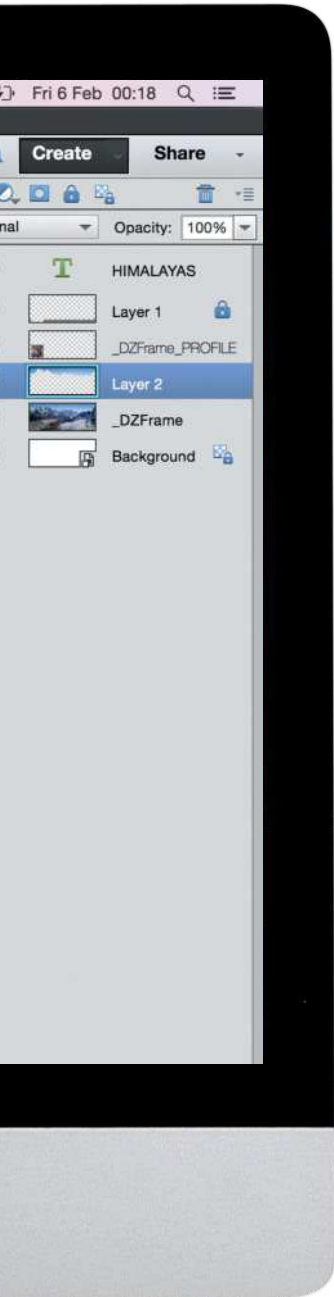


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## Do more with your photos

Finish off your images with decorative borders or fun effects, then share them online or print them

**130 Guided edits explained**  
Elements 14 brought a new look to the Guided mode and four new features. We show you how it all works

**132 Make greetings cards from your photos**  
Learn the different ways to set up Elements to get your printed shots looking their best, as well as producing a range of printed products

**136 How to upload to Facebook and Twitter**  
Get feedback on your photography skills by linking Elements' Organizer to social networking providers

**138 Create Facebook covers in seconds**  
Use the new Facebook themes to make your own cover pictures to upload to your Facebook page

## Try these Guided Edits

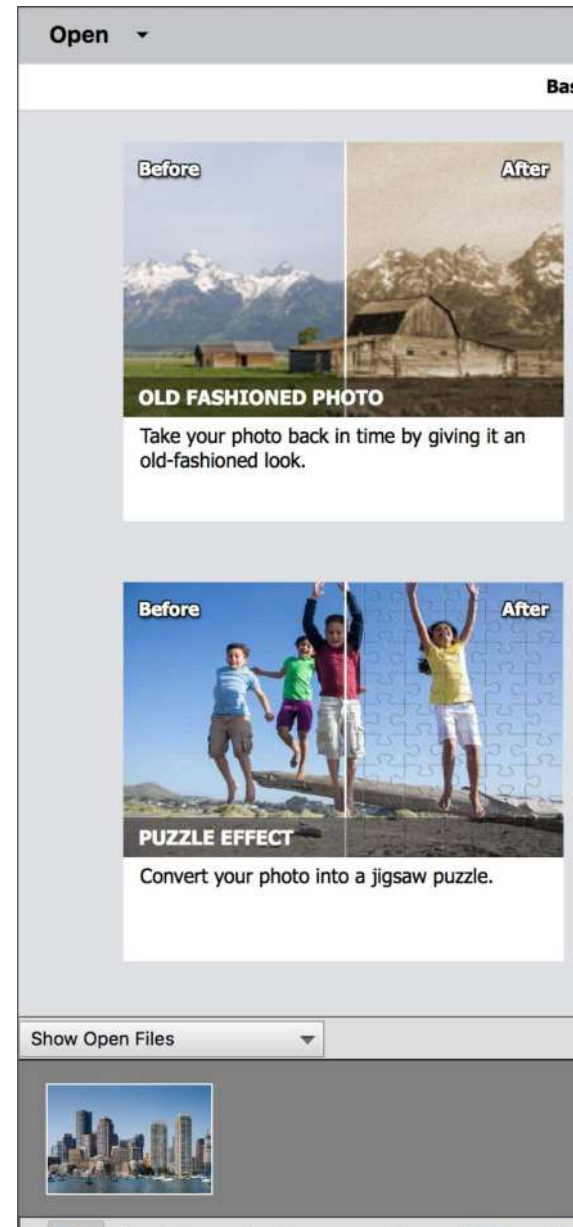
The Guided mode is a great way to learn new skills, and Elements 14 introduced a new look and four new options

**G**uided mode is one of the strongest features in Photoshop Elements because it guides you, step by step, through some of the tools you'll need to master in order to progress from a beginner to an image-editing expert. It fills the gap between novice and expert, and as you learn to create the different Guided image projects, you'll pick up key image-editing skills in a friendly, painless environment.

In Elements 14, though, Adobe redesigned the interface for the Guided mode. But although it looks very different at first, as soon as you've selected the Guided process you want to use, it reverts to the 'old' layout, with your image displayed in the main window and a set of simple step by step processed displayed and explained in a panel on the right.

First, though, that opening Guided screen. Now, Guided edits are sorted into categories, which you can see in a menu bar at the top of the window. They are: Basics, Color, Black & White, Fun Edits, Special Edits and Photomerge.

You pick the category you're interested in, and Elements displays the choices in the main window below. You click on a choice, and the familiar Guided Edit window opens up.



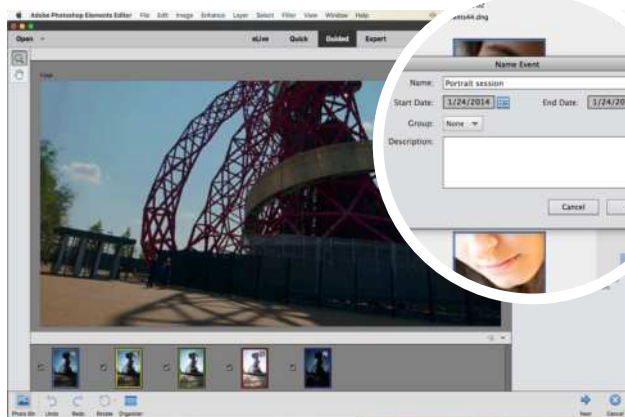
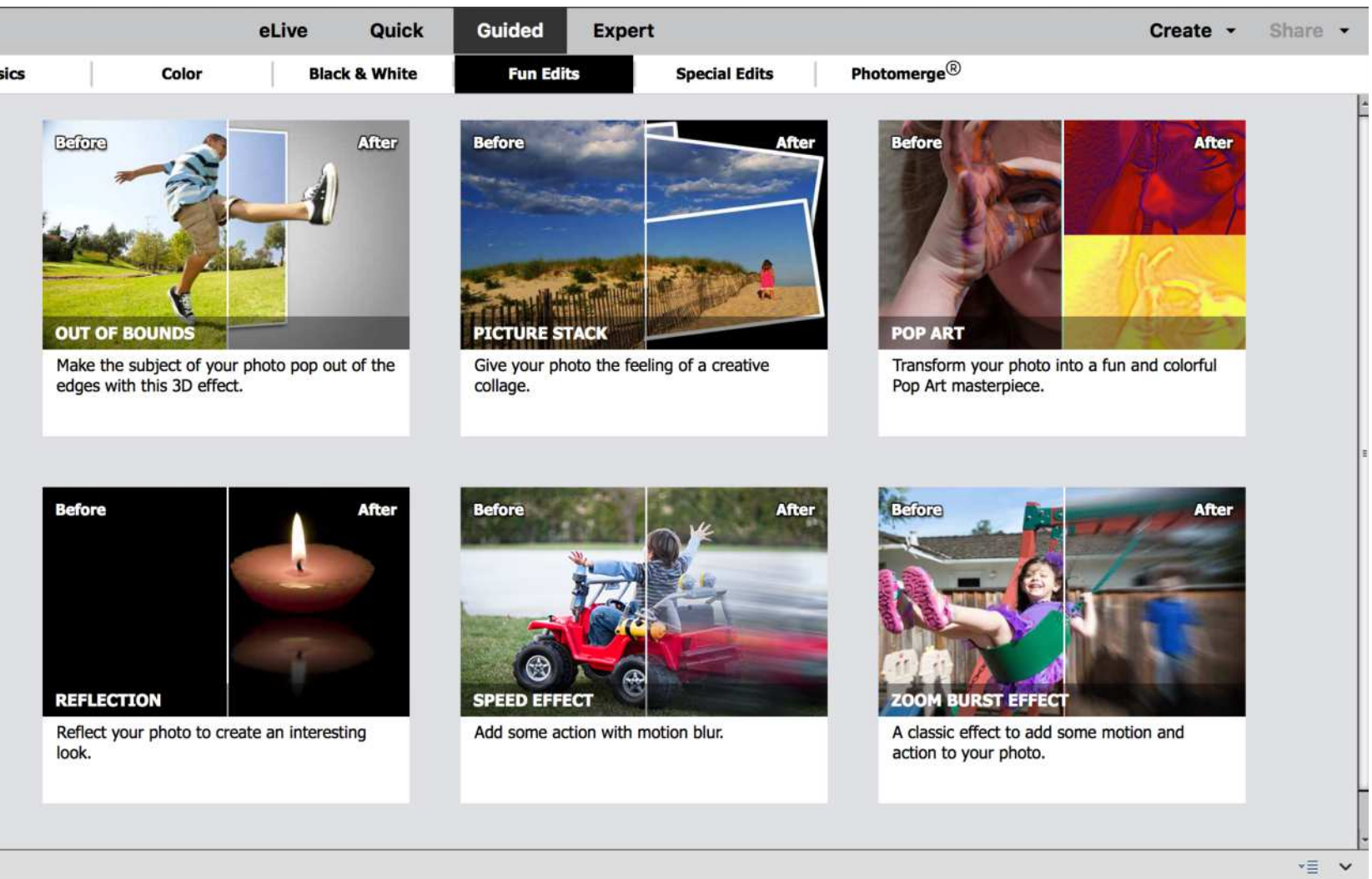
### 1 Resize your photos

The new Resize Your Photo guide aims to demystify the resizing process by splitting output options into Web images, where pixel dimensions are all you need to worry about, and Print, where you need to work with print dimensions in inches or centimetres instead.



### 2 Try this Speed Effect

The Speed Effect works especially well with subjects caught in the middle of some dynamic movement. You start by selecting the areas you want to add some motion blur to, choose the degree of blur and then protect the areas you want to keep sharp.



### 3 Photomerge has moved

In previous versions of Elements, the Photomerge options were accessed via the Enhance menu; in Elements 14+ you'll need to access them here instead. This is the Photomerge Exposure tool, used for combining a series of different exposures into one.



### 4 Sharing your results

At the end of every process, Elements 14+ now checks to see what you want to do next. You can save the image, continue editing it in either the Quick or Expert modes or share it via social media, with buttons for Facebook, Flickr and Twitter.

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Start files and video are available on FileSilo

See page 194 for more

## Make greetings cards from your photos

Produce perfect prints and turn your images into creative assets such as greetings cards

**I**n the days of film, you'd snap a series of shots and then send the roll off to be developed and printed. These days you can develop your shots at home using Photoshop Elements as your digital darkroom. You can then use Elements to share your photos as a variety of hard-copy products, such as traditional prints or creative personalised greetings cards.

Tweaking the colours and tones of an image in Photoshop Elements, then ending up with a print that looks nothing like the on-screen version of the photo can be frustrating. There are several reasons this problem might occur. Computer monitors produce millions of colours by mixing reds, greens and blues together, while printers combine cyan, magenta, black and yellow to create a narrower range of colours. Your monitor is also brightly lit, leading to vibrant colours that can look comparatively drab on paper.

If you're printing at home then make sure your printer is performing properly. Use your printer's utility software to check the cartridge's ink level. Do a test print to make sure that the print head is aligned. Clogged nozzles will ruin any print, so do a nozzle check too. Using the ink that the manufacturer recommends will prolong your printer's life and produce the best results.

Choose a heavyweight photo gloss inkjet paper that's designed for high-resolution prints. Cheap paper tends to absorb and spread the ink, leading to muddy-looking prints with washed-out colours and poor definition. We'll talk you through different ways to set up Elements to get your printed shots looking their best, as well as producing a range of printed products. [▶](#)



AFTER



**HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY**

FROM  
George and Claire

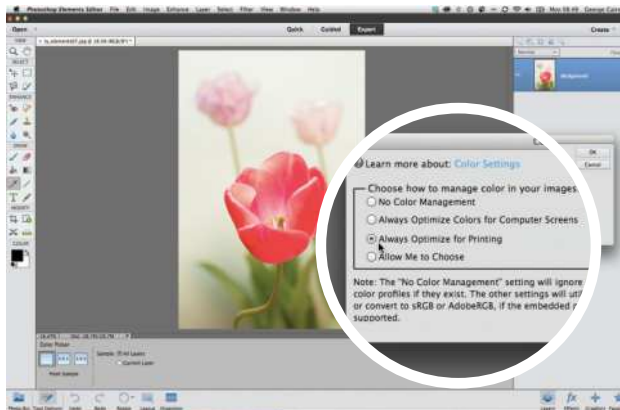
**ON  
FILESILO**

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available on FileSilo

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for more

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

DO MORE WITH YOUR PHOTOS



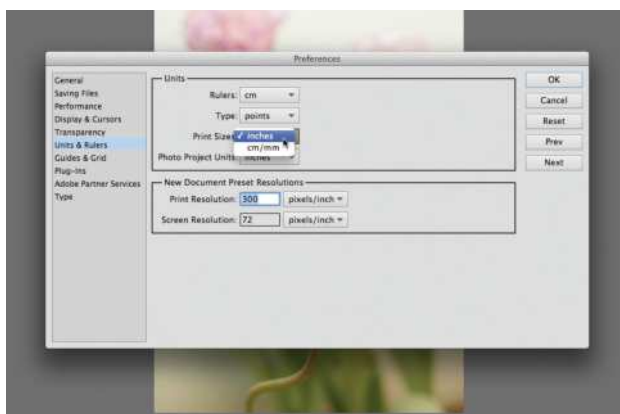
## 1 Set up the colour space

Open ty\_elements07.jpg. Go to Edit > Color Settings. If you plan to share your images online, tick Always Optimize Colors for Computer Screens. If you plan to print your images, choose Always Optimize for Printing. This helps to ensure that the colours of your images are printable.



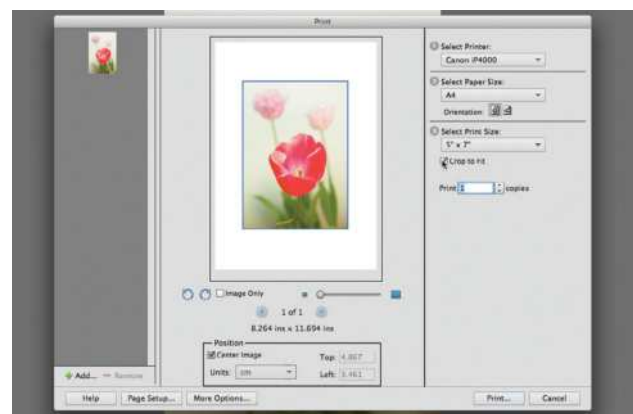
## 2 Choose your output

Enter the Expert editing mode and click the Create tab. In the Photo Prints panel, you can print a group of opened photos as a contact sheet. If you don't possess a printer, you can click the Order Prints button to get a third-party company to print your photos and post them to you.



## 3 Set measurement preferences

Photoshop Elements offers print sizes in centimetres and millimetres. If you prefer to measure your print sizes in inches, go to Preferences > Units & Rulers and set the Print Sizes menu to Inches. This enables you to set your printer to resize a shot to typical print sizes such as 4"x6".



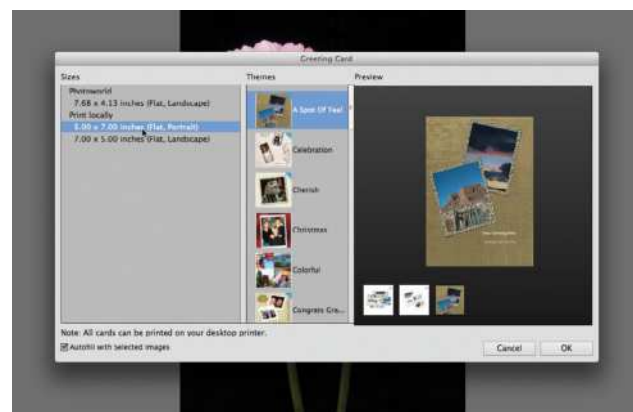
## 4 Choose a size

To print directly from your computer to a printer, click the Local printer option on the Photo Prints tab. A Print dialog will appear. Choose your printer from the Select Printer menu, set the Select Paper menu to A4, set the print size you want to use, and tick the Crop to Fit box.



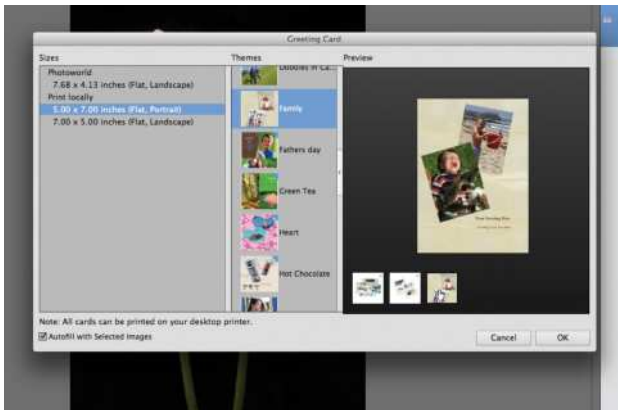
## 5 Set up your printer

Click the Page Set Up button, choose the Quality & Media option, and set Media Type to suit the paper you're using (such as Glossy Photo Paper). Set the Print Quality to High. These settings will make the printer take longer to print the image, but the results will be worth it.



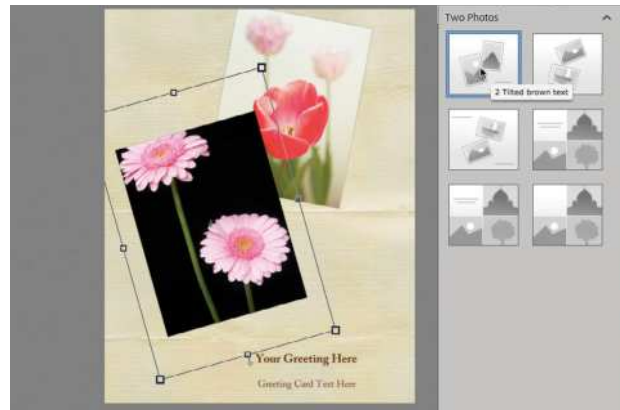
## 6 Make a greetings card

You can combine shots together in more creative ways to produce personalised printed calendars or greetings cards. Close ty\_elements07.jpg and open our other flower images – ty\_elements05.jpg and ty\_elements06.jpg. Go to the Create tab and choose Greeting Card.



## 7 Choose a theme

Go to the Themes section and scroll down to choose a theme for your design. There's a range to suit occasions such as Father's Day or Christmas. Here we've gone for the Family theme. Click the third icon in the Preview window and tick the Auto Fill with Selected Images box. Click OK.



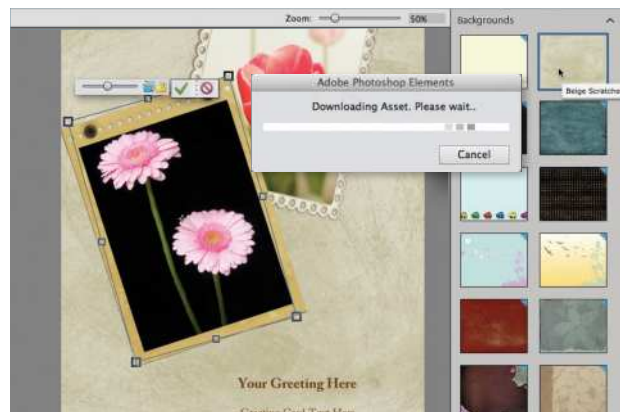
## 8 Choose a layout

Photoshop Elements will import your images into a new document, rotate and scale them, then add other assets such as a background texture and text fields. If you click the Layouts icon at the bottom right you can experiment with different photo and text arrangements.



## 9 Recompose the images

The scaled and rotated photos may not be displayed correctly, which will spoil their original composition. Double click a photo and a slider will appear at the top. Drag this slider to the left to scale down the image so that you can see more of its content. Click the tick when you're satisfied.



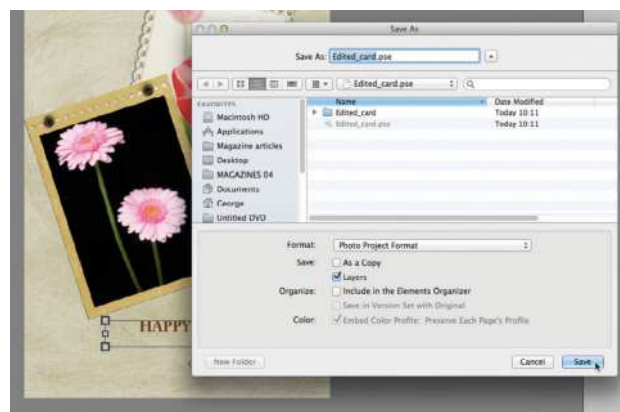
## 10 Customise the design

Click the Graphics icon at the bottom right. Here you can add extra assets such as frames and backgrounds. Click a photo and then choose a frame such as Scalloped Frame. We've also added the Old Frame to our foreground photo and added the Beige Scratched background.



## 11 Personalise the text

To add a message to your card, grab the Type tool, double click a text field and type your message. Click the tick to apply the change. You can reposition an edited text field by dragging its bounding box, or you can resize it by dragging one of the box handles.



## 12 Save the design

When you've finished customising your card, click Save. This will save the file as a Photo Project Format (.pse) file and continue modifying the text, layout, frames and background. This makes it easy to reuse good designs. ■

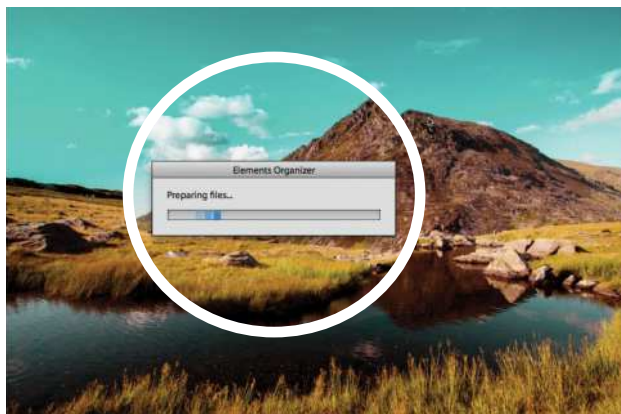
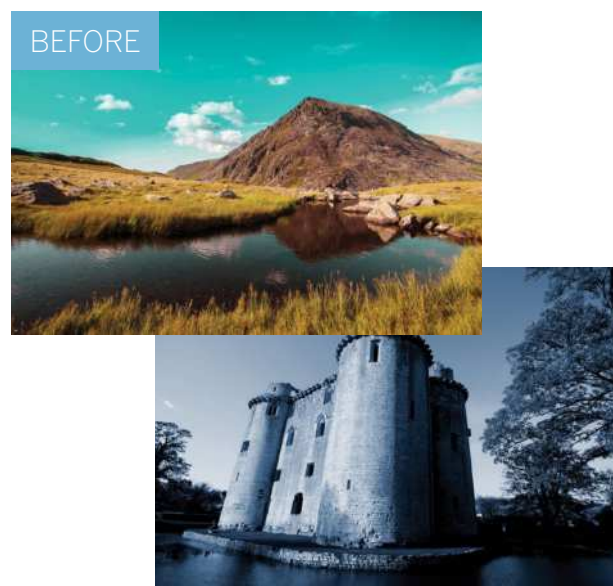
## Upload to Facebook and Twitter

Link Photoshop Elements' Organizer to popular social networking providers so you can share your photos

**B**ack in the days of film cameras, we'd need to send our negatives off to be developed and then wait a while for them to be processed, printed and then posted back for us to enjoy. We'd then be able to share our holiday adventures with family and friends by passing the physical prints around.

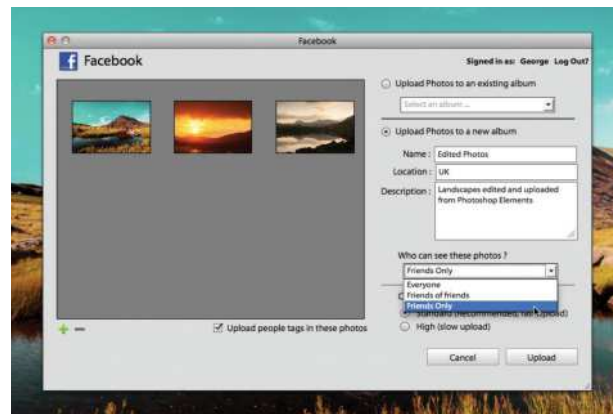
Thanks to digital cameras and camera phones we're shooting thousands more images than we did back in the days of analogue film. As a result we're less likely to share our photos as physical prints. Fortunately, Photoshop Elements provides a one-stop shop when it comes to organising, editing and sharing your images. The Share tab reflects the fact that in these digital days we're much more likely to share our photos electronically, via social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

In the following tutorial we'll demonstrate how to get Photoshop Elements to link with popular social networking sites such as Facebook, so you can export your images directly from the Organizer to online galleries. This improved sharing feature enables you to enjoy instant feedback on your photography skills from your friends, family, and even your Twitter followers.



### 1 Authorise Elements

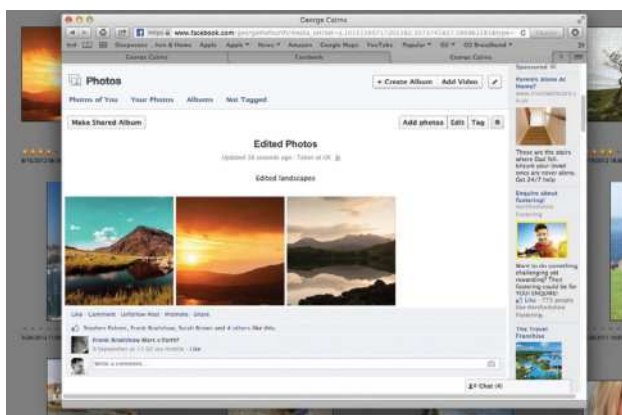
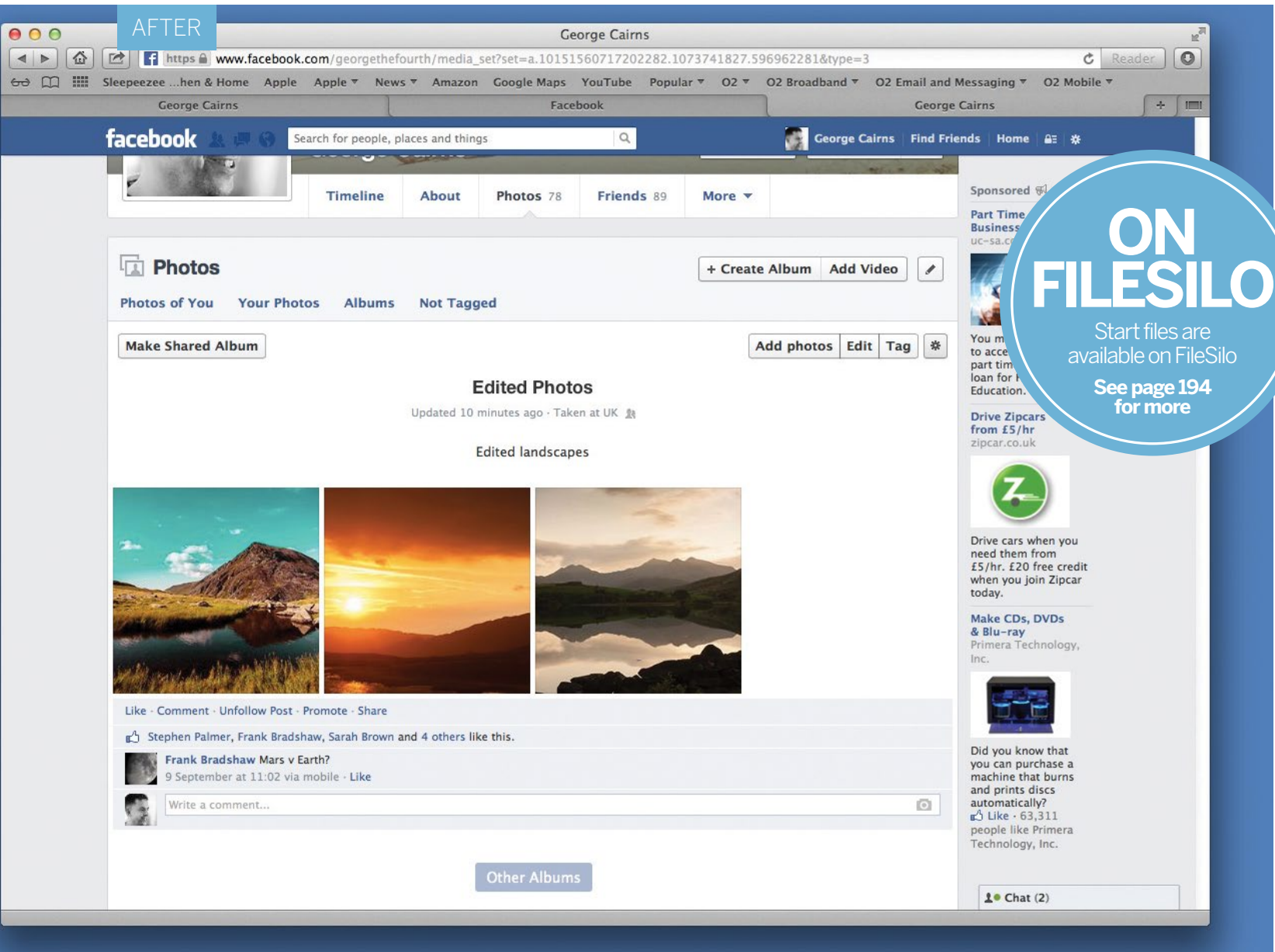
Open the Organizer and click the thumbnail of an image you want to share. Go to Share and click the Facebook icon. You'll be asked to authorise Organizer to upload images to your Facebook account. Photoshop Elements will then resize your image so that it's suitable for a Facebook gallery.



### 2 Create an album

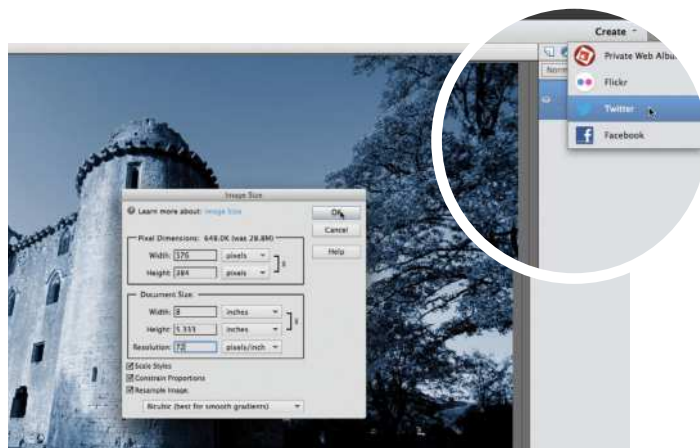
Click the green + icon to add more images. In the Add Media window, browse to a new image and click Add Selected Media. Click Done. Tick the Upload Photos to new album button. You can also choose whether to make the images viewable by Friends Only or Everyone. Click Upload.





### 3 Upload to Facebook

Once the images have been uploaded you'll get a message saying Upload Complete. You can either click Done or Visit Facebook. This will launch your browser and take you to the Facebook gallery you created in the previous step. The procedure for sharing to Flickr is very similar.



### 4 Resize for Twitter

To share an image via Twitter, it needs to be under 3MB. Open an image and choose Image>Resize>Image Size. Tick the Resample Image box. Set Resolution to 72. Set the Document Size menu to measure in Inches and set Width to 8. Click OK. Click Share and export the image to Twitter.

# Create Facebook covers in seconds

Use the new themes to make your own cover pictures for your Facebook page

**E**lements 13 introduced a new tool that makes it very easy to create Facebook cover layouts, simplifying the process of resizing images and fitting them into specific layouts. These can then be uploaded to your Facebook page with a couple of clicks. There are a range of themes to choose from, with options to add more or fewer images as well as graphics and type.

Here we'll show you how to create your own custom cover. If you want to make a layout like the one shown here then you'll need two images. Other themes will require more or fewer. We'll start by adding our images to the 'Clean' theme, then go on to add words to the design. And just for fun, we'll create a simple clipping mask by selecting and copying the sky to a new layer, so that we can constrain the word to the sky and thereby make it look as if it's tucked behind the mountains.



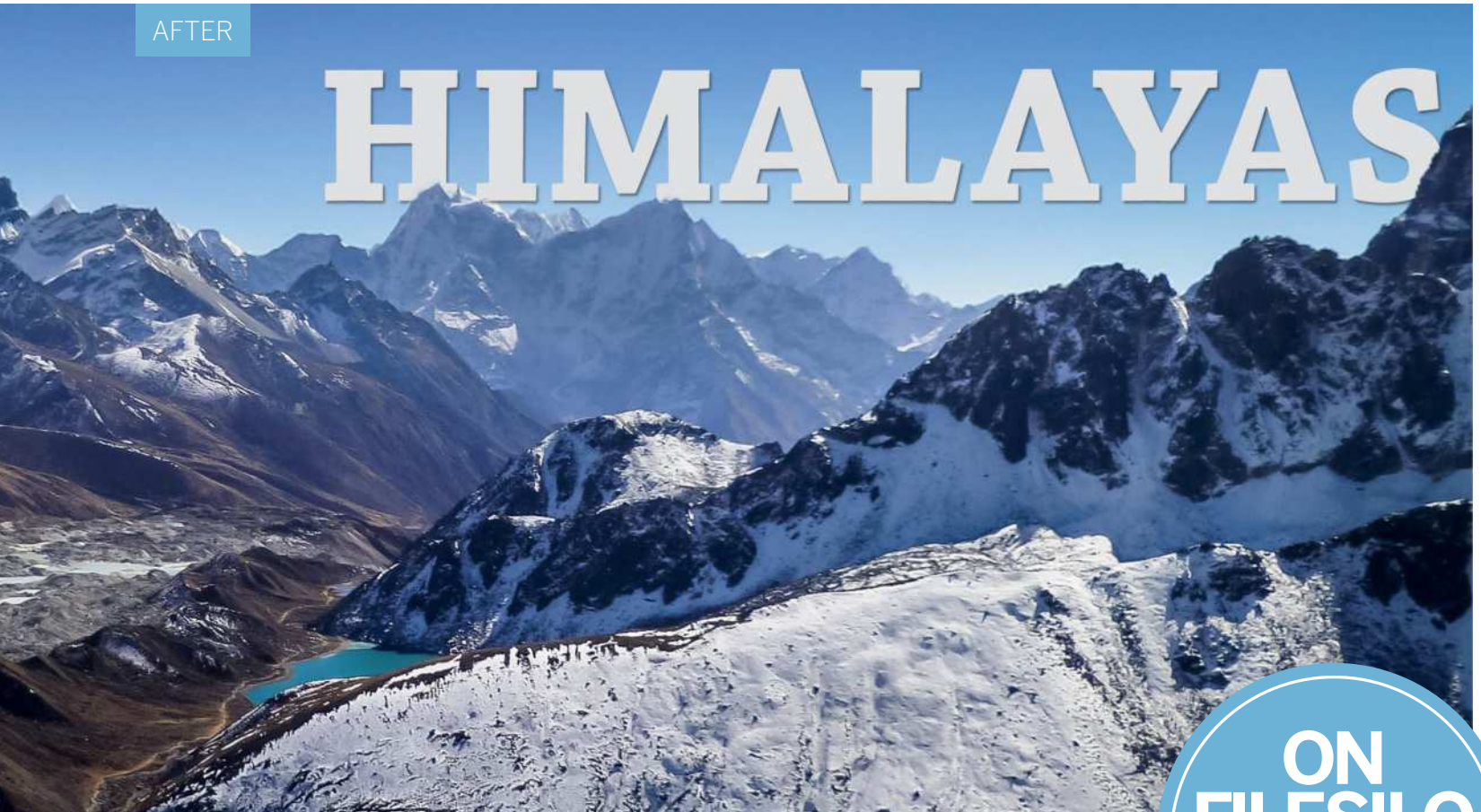
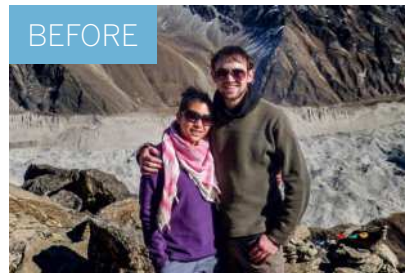
## 1 Choose a theme

Choose some suitable images that will fit within the layout. Open the images you intend to use, then click Create at the top right and choose Facebook Cover. We've chosen 'Clean' from the list of themes here. Uncheck the Auto-Fill box and click OK.



## 2 Position the images

Drag your images into the layout from the Photo Bin, then move it up or down to fine-tune the positioning. If you need to, adjust the bounding box to resize the image within the window. You can also add words with the Type tool. Grab it from the panel on the left and choose a font.



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See page 194 for more



### 3 Add the words

Type your word and use the Move tool to position it. Just for fun we'll tuck the words behind the mountain. Click the Advanced Mode button, then click Layers at the bottom right. Highlight the main image layer. Grab the Quick Selection tool and paint over the sky, then press Cmd/Ctrl+J.



### 4 Upload to Facebook

Drag the new sky layer below the type layer, then Alt-click the line between the two layers to clip the words to the sky. Grab the Move tool and drag the word down behind the mountains. Click Upload. If it's the first time you've accessed Facebook in Elements, you'll need to log in. ●

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

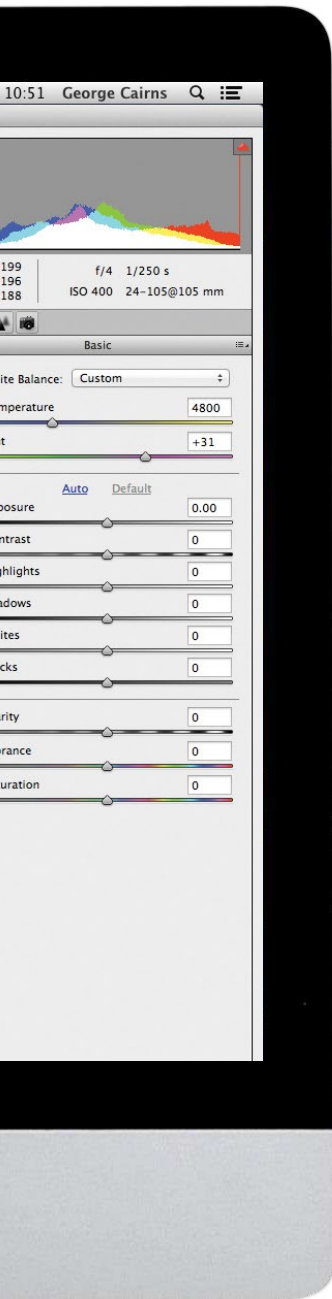
WORKING WITH RAW FILES



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# Working with raw files

Raw files are the format of choice for pro photographers. Discover how to edit them using Photoshop Elements

**142** **Introducing Adobe Camera Raw**  
Discover how to use the Camera Raw editor's suite of tools to reveal more colour and tonal detail in your raw files, and learn the optimum workflow for processing your digital negatives

**146** **Remove colour casts from raw files**  
Counteract an unwanted colour cast in a raw file using White Balance presets or the one-click White Balance tool

**148** **How to reduce image noise in your raw files**  
Find out how to use the Noise Reduction sliders in Camera Raw to reduce luminance and colour noise while preserving detail

**150** **Straighten and crop in Camera Raw**  
Find out how to counteract unwanted tilted horizons and improve the composition of your photos using overlays, plus how to resize an image to common print dimensions

**152** **Camera Calibration in Adobe Camera Raw**  
Ever wondered why your raw files don't quite look like your JPEGs? Here's the answer – and a really simple solution too

# Introducing Adobe Camera Raw

Learn how to use Photoshop Elements' pro-level image-processing digital darkroom, Camera Raw

**P**hotoshop Elements' Quick, Guided and Expert editing modes are designed to help you edit JPEG images. JPEGs are files that have been processed in a camera to change their colour and tones according to various preset shooting modes (such as Landscape).

By saving a photo as a JPEG your camera creates a small file that won't take up too

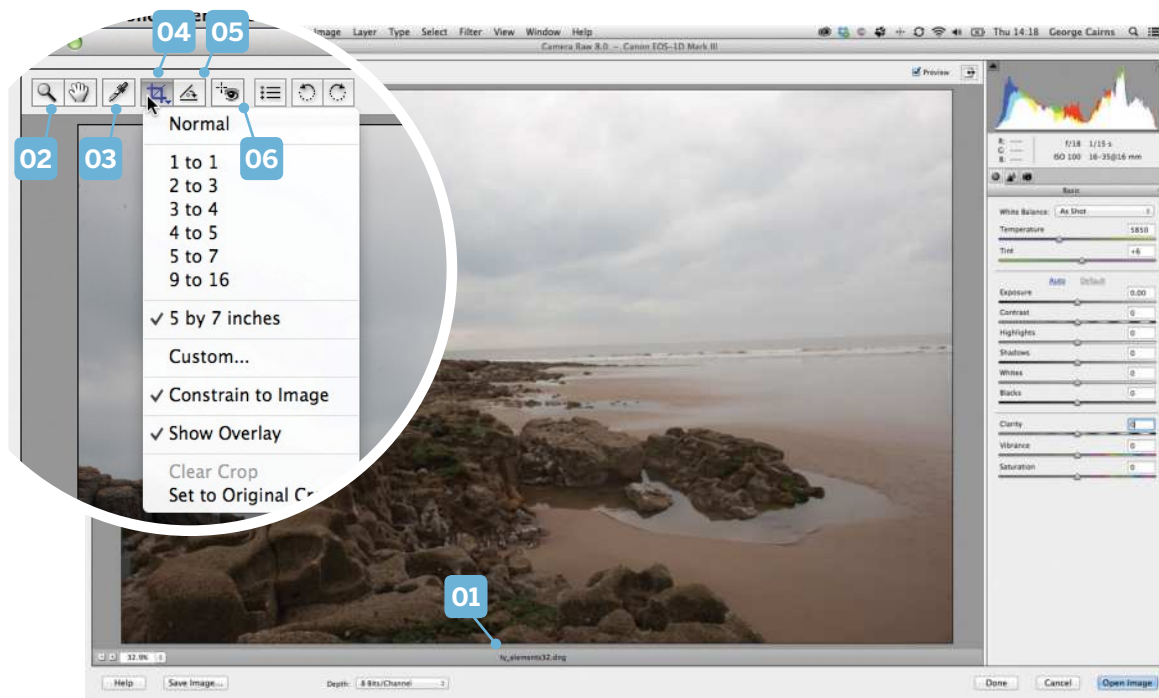
much space on your memory card (or PC's hard drive). However, the downside of the JPEG format is that it's compressed. Much of the information about the colour and tone in a photo is lost. All that remains is a shorthand description of the scene. If you want to restore missing highlight or colour detail to a JPEG you may end up revealing compression artefacts. A clear summer sky in a JPEG may

consist of jagged bands of colour instead of a smooth gradient, for example.

By shooting in a raw format (such as .CR2 or .NEF) you can capture much more information about the colours and tones in a scene. This gives Photoshop Elements more to work with. Here's how to use the Camera Raw editor's suite of tools to reveal more colour and tonal detail without adding artefacts...

## Overview The Raw editor's tool bar

Discover which tools to use to improve a raw file's composition and colour



### 04 CROP TOOL

This tool enables you to improve composition by removing frame edges. The raw editor's Crop tool is non-destructive, so you can restore missing edge details at any time in the future. Hold down the mouse button to modify the way the tool behaves.

### 05 STRAIGHTEN TOOL

The Straighten tool enables you to counteract tilted horizons quickly and effectively (such as the one in this beach photo) to make them run parallel with the edge of the frame. It can also correct slanting vertical lines.

### 06 RED EYE REMOVAL

Elements has Red Eye Removal tools in most editing modes, and the raw editor is no exception. Click this tool on any flash-induced glowing red pupils to turn them a healthy black.

### 01 RAW FILE

Our ty\_elements32.dng file has been saved as a digital negative. The raw format of the file means that the image will automatically open in the Photoshop Elements' Camera Raw editor. We can then apply a suite of tools to process the image.

### 02 ZOOM TOOL

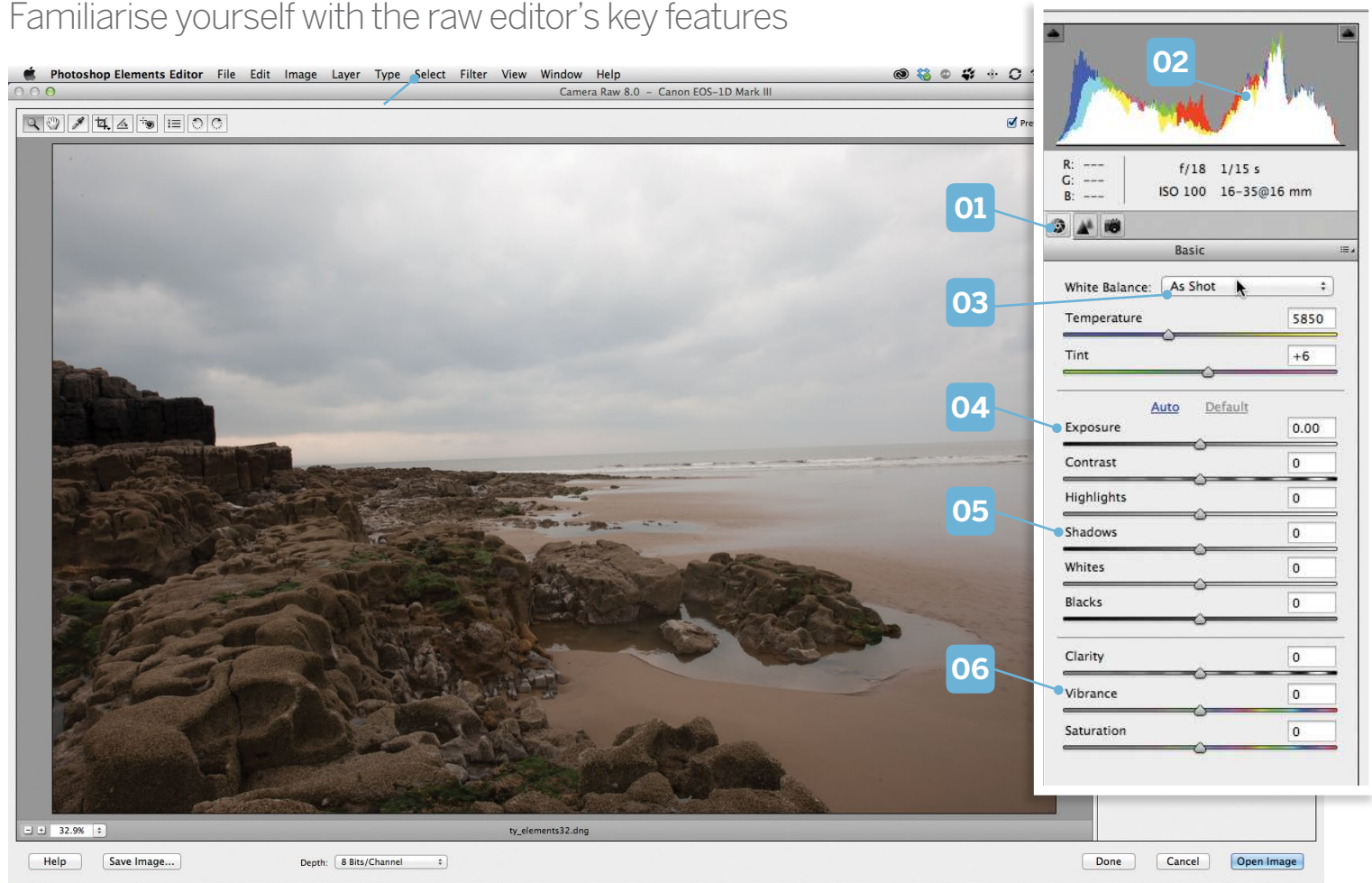
When processing a raw file to sharpen it you need to see the image's actual pixels. Right click with the Zoom tool and choose 100% from the pop-up menu. The adjacent Hand tool enables you to drag a zoomed shot around to examine different areas.

### 03 WHITE BALANCE

This tool enables you to fix a white balance problem by sampling something that should be white. If the sampled pixels are too warm, the tool will cool down the colours, removing any colour cast in the entire shot (as we'll demonstrate later in this chapter).

# Overview The Camera Raw editor

Familiarise yourself with the raw editor's key features



### 01 THE BASIC TAB

This tab contains most of Camera Raw's colour and tone correcting tools. The adjacent Detail tab enables you to sharpen your raw shots to create a print with more punch. It will also enable you to reduce picture noise.

### 02 THE HISTOGRAM

This graph shows you the spread and strength of tones in the image, with the shadows on the left, midtones in the middle and highlights on the right. This photo has a fairly healthy spread of tones, although it lacks detail and contrast in the midtones.

### 03 WHITE BALANCE

If your camera chooses the wrong Auto White Balance setting, click this drop-down menu to experiment with white balance presets such as Daylight or Tungsten. Drag the Temperature slider to manually warm or cool colours.

### 04 EXPOSURE

This collection of sliders enables you to target and tweak particular tones. The Exposure slider enables you to fix over- or under-exposed shots. Drag the Highlights slider left to restore missing highlight detail without altering the shadows.

### 05 SHADOWS

To create strong dark shadows without messing with the midtones or highlights, drag this slider to the left. Reveal missing shadow and midtone detail by sliding it to the right.

### 06 VIBRANCE

If you drag the Saturation slider right, it applies equal colour boosting adjustments to all the colours in the image. The Vibrance slider makes selective adjustments, boosting weaker colours more strongly than healthier ones. ▶



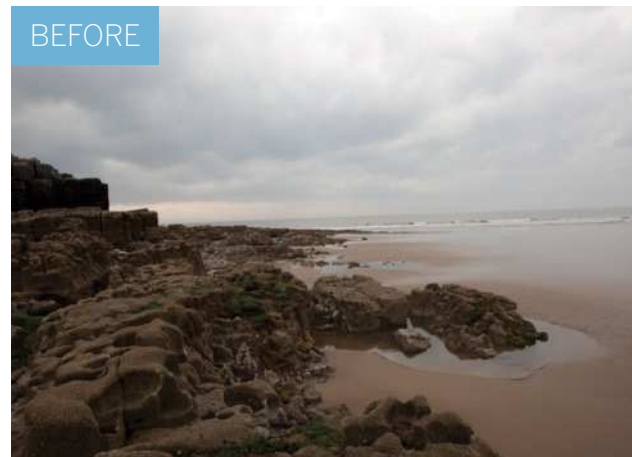
# Typical workflow in Adobe Camera Raw

Discover how to process your digital negatives

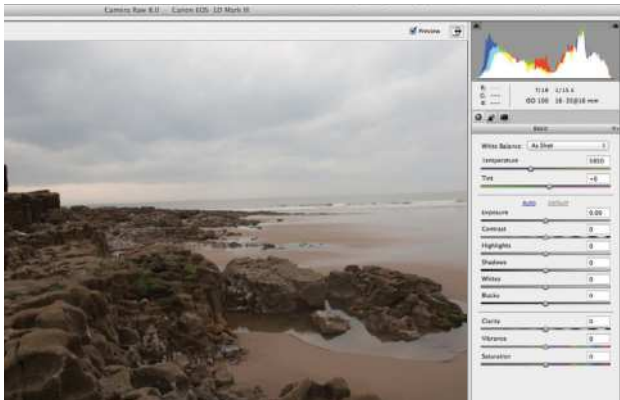
**N**ow that you've been introduced to many of the key components in the Camera Raw editor, you can begin to explore some of these tools and sliders in more detail. There are many good reasons to shoot and process raw files instead of JPEGs. For starters you can capture much more information about the colours and tones in a scene by shooting in raw, so this enables you to recover detail in blown-out highlights or under-exposed shadows. The raw editor also boasts the amazing Clarity slider, which can increase midtone contrast much more effectively than the standard editor's Levels command. This enables you to reveal delicate midtone details (and enhance what appear to be boring overcast clouds), as you'll see in this tutorial.

When you shoot and save in JPEG format, the camera will apply colour and tonal tweaks to the shot according to the Scene mode that it's set to. This can produce photos with garish colours, or dark under-exposed shadows. You can edit these colours and tones in the Expert editor, but you risk revealing compression artefacts. By shooting in raw you have much more colour and tonal information to plunder, enabling you to produce photos that feature more detail and have less unwanted artefacts. You may feel that to shoot and process raw files is an advanced skill, but this isn't the case. The raw

editor provides all the colour, composition and tone-tweaking tools close to hand, which removes the need to search around in menus and sub-menus. Best of all, the raw editor is non-destructive. You can't permanently change any of the original file's information, so it's easy to revert back to the original file if you make a mistake.







### 1 Open the image

Go to File>Open and browse to the ty\_elements32.dng starting image. The file is a .dng (digital negative), so it will open in the Camera Raw editor. There's no universal raw format, which is why Adobe invented .dng. Different camera manufacturers produce their own unique raw format files.



### 2 Crop the shot

The horizon is tilted. Grab the Crop tool and draw a crop box that's slightly smaller than the image. If you place the cursor outside the crop overlay, a rotate icon will appear. Drag this to rotate the crop box so that its top edge runs parallel with the tilted horizon. Click the Zoom tool.



### 3 Lighten the midtones

The shot lacks detail in the midtones, but it has plenty of shadow and highlight information. If we increased the Exposure value we'd brighten it up, but this would blow out detail in the highlights. To selectively lighten the midtones, drag the Shadows slider to +49.



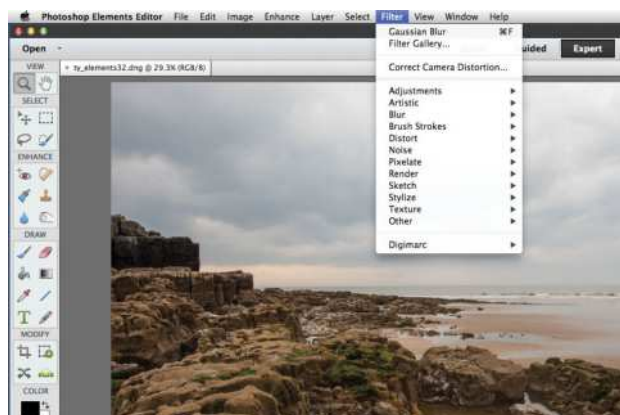
### 4 Increase midtone contrast

The clouds consist of fairly flat-lit midtones. Drag the Clarity slider to +41 to increase the contrast of the midtones. This teases out texture detail in the clouds. It also reveals more texture and detail in the sand and the rocks, which helps give the shot more impact.



### 5 Boost the colours

Boost the Vibrance to +54 to reveal the green vegetation on the rocks. The clouds look a little bluer too, which adds variety to the scene. Set Saturation to +10 for a gentle overall colour boost. Our digital negative is looking much better now that we've developed it in Camera Raw.



### 6 Close the file

After processing a raw file you can click Done. This will store all the settings and cropping information alongside the raw file, so that you can continue fine-tuning the image at a later date. If you click Open Image you take the processed shot into the main Photoshop Elements Editor.

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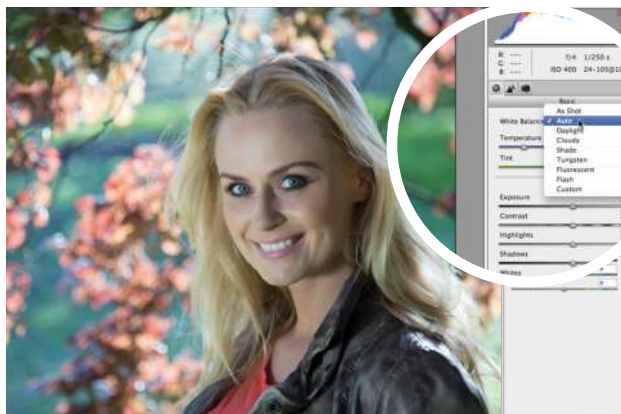
# Remove colour casts

Counteract a colour cast in a raw file using White Balance presets or the one-click White Balance tool

**T**o a camera, daylight is blue and indoor light is orange. When shooting in various lighting conditions a camera's Auto White balance (AWB) setting attempts to get white details in the scene looking white. If the camera balances the whites correctly then the resulting photograph will be tint-free and display the true colours of the scene. However, sometimes a photo will still look too cold or too warm (as is the case in the starting file for this tutorial).

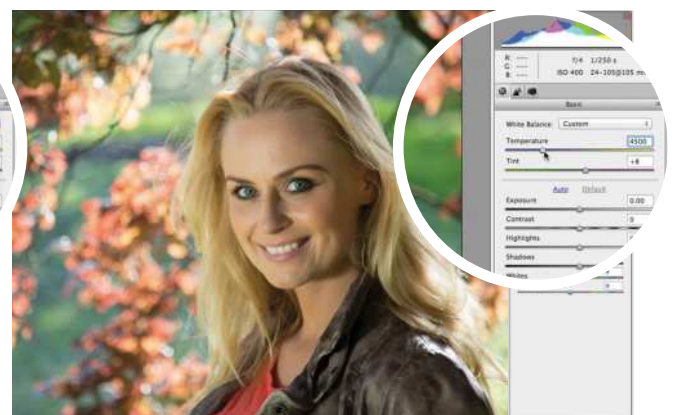
In chapter 4 we demonstrated how to correct colour casts in compressed JPEG files. This can involve using an eyedropper to sample areas that should be a neutral white. If the sampled white is tinted blue then the eyedropper will warm it up to make the white look white. This will correct the colours in the rest of the shot at the same time. You can perform the same colour-correction trick in the Camera Raw editor. The raw editor also enables you to step back in time and experiment with different in-camera white balance settings (such as Daylight) to produce more natural-looking

and tint-free colours. This enables you to overcome easy-to-make mistakes such as using the wrong white balance preset while on location, as you'll see in the steps below.



## 1 Auto White Balance

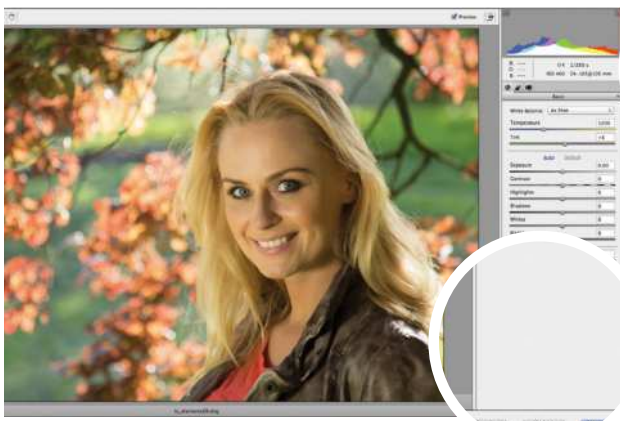
Open `ty_elements29.dng`. The raw file will open in the Camera Raw editor. The model's skin tones appear a bit too orange, so we'll need to cool down the colour a little for better skin tones. A good place to start is the White balance Presets menu. Set it to Auto. This removes the warm tint.



## 2 Fine-tune the temperature

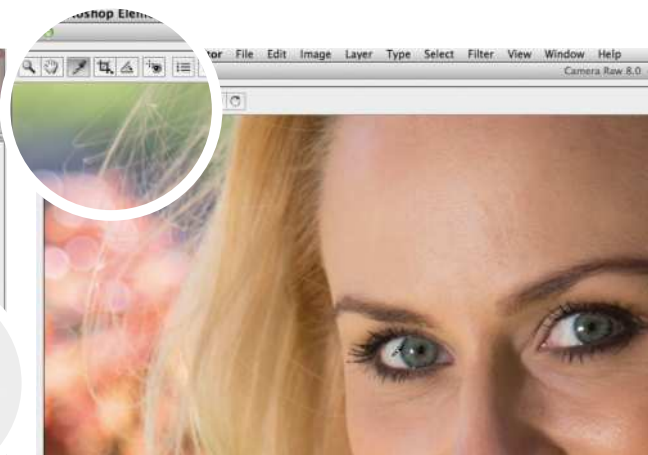
The Auto preset drops the colour temperature from 5200 to a cooler 3650 degrees Kelvin. The skin tones look more natural, but are now a little too cold. We can fine-tune the colour by manually increasing the Temperature slider to a slightly warmer 4500.

AFTER



### 3 Reset the colours

The White Balance presets are unique to the raw editor, but if they don't produce the desired results you can fix colours with a click. Hold down Alt and click Reset. This will restore the raw file to its original settings. Click the White Balance tool in the tool bar.



### 4 One-click fix

Click the eyedropper on the whites of the eyes. The tool will adjust the colour to make the eye whites look white, which removes the tint from the other colours in the image at the same time. You can drop the Temperature slider to 4450 to cool the shot a little. Click Done to finish. ●

# Reduce image noise in your raw files

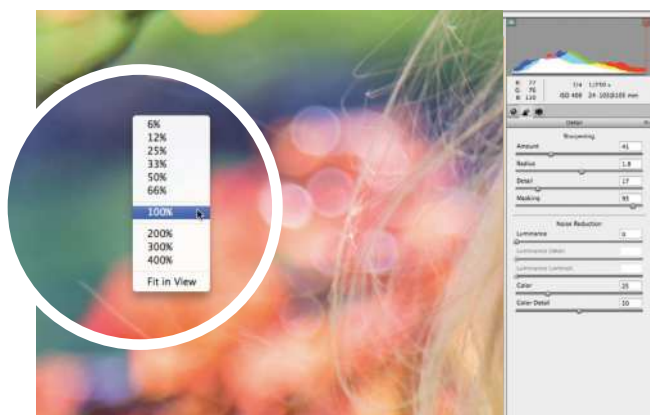
Use the Noise Reduction sliders to reduce grain while preserving detail throughout your picture

**W**hen shooting with a traditional analogue camera, you could use film with different ISO speeds to help you capture more detail in low-light conditions. The faster (higher) the film's ISO speed, the more sensitive it would be to available light. A fast film enabled you to avoid using slow shutter speeds in low light, so you could capture detail without the need for a tripod. However, fast ISO speed film would add grain to your negatives. The higher the ISO speed, the grainier the shots would be.

Digital cameras re-create the traditional ISO film speed effect to enable you to capture more detail in low light conditions. As with film, high ISO settings (such as 1600) are more sensitive to light, however, they will add more picture noise to your digital raw files. Digital noise is a bit like film grain, but it is sharper, uglier and more distracting. As well as luminance (greyscale) noise, your high ISO setting photos can suffer from rainbow speckles of colour noise.

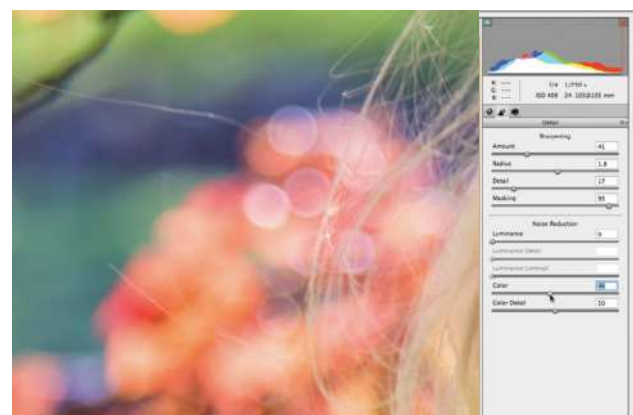
When reducing image noise we have to be very careful not to add blur to important details in the image. Fortunately,

the raw editor has a few handy tricks and techniques that will help you get a balance between removing noise and preserving detail.



## 1 View at 100%

This image was captured using an ISO of 400, so it shouldn't suffer from too much noise. Noise is more noticeable in smooth areas such as in the blurred background. To analyse these areas grab the Zoom tool, right click and choose 100%. Grab the Hand tool and drag around the image.



## 2 Reduce the colour noise

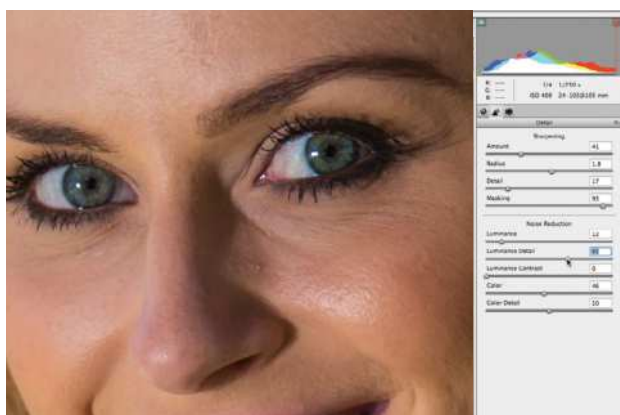
Some noise reduction is automatically applied to your photos. Drag the Color and Color Detail sliders to 0 to see the original patches of colour noise. Push Color to 46 to remove the rainbow speckles. Color Detail is designed to remove colour noise while preserving details on edges.

AFTER

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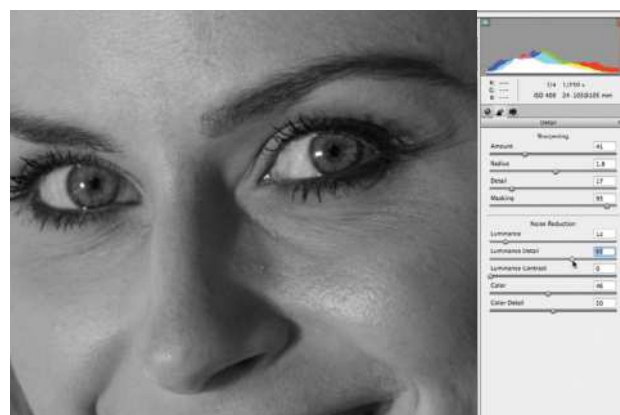
Start files are  
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for more



### 3 Reduce the luminance noise

Drag with the Hand tool to see a more detailed area such as the face. If you set a high Luminance value it will blur detail. You can restore some of the blurred detail by dragging the Luminance Detail slider to the right. Set Luminance to 12 and Luminance Detail to 65.



### 4 Use the greyscale preview

If you hold down Alt as you move the Luminance Detail slider you see the image as a greyscale preview. This hides the distracting colour information and enables you to see any luminance noise more clearly. You can then smooth it out more effectively. Click Done to finish. ■

# Straighten and crop in Camera Raw

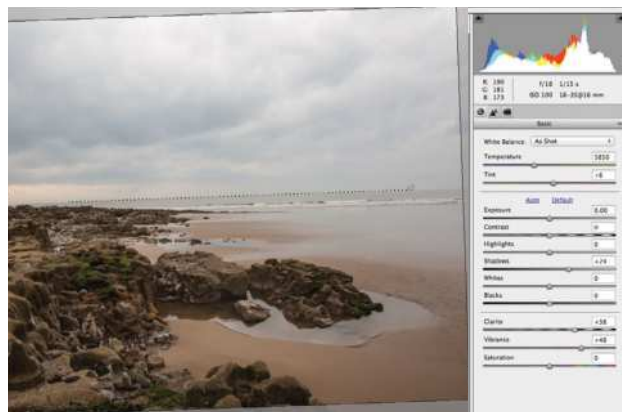
Counteract tilted horizons and improve the composition of your photos using overlays

**W**hen you're shooting a landscape with a handheld camera, it can be a challenge to get the horizon looking perfectly straight. This can result in a slightly tilted horizon (which can be as annoying as seeing a skewed picture frame hanging on a wall). If you're shooting with a tripod, but on a soft surface such as a sandy beach, then you may not notice the tilted horizon until you look at the image in the Camera Raw editor.

In this walkthrough we'll show you how to straighten an image to counteract tilted horizons and crop it to improve composition. Cropping and straightening are part of the same operation, because you'll need to crop off edges created when rotating an image to lose its tilt.

When you use the Crop tool to crop the shot then you can drag outside the crop window to rotate it. This enables you to counteract any tilt. We'll show you an easier and faster way to straighten the image by using the dedicated Straighten tool. We'll also demonstrate how to set the Crop tool to improve composition and resize an image to common print dimensions at the same time.

By editing in the raw format you can freely experiment with your crops, safe in the knowledge that you can reset the shot to its original size and shape at any time.



## 1 Straighten the horizon

Open `ty_elements32.dng`. The file will open in Camera Raw. Select the Straighten tool from the toolbar. Click and draw a line that follows the tilted horizon. A rotated crop window will automatically appear, counteracting the tilt. Edges that will be removed by the process will become faded.



## 2 Fine-tune the angle

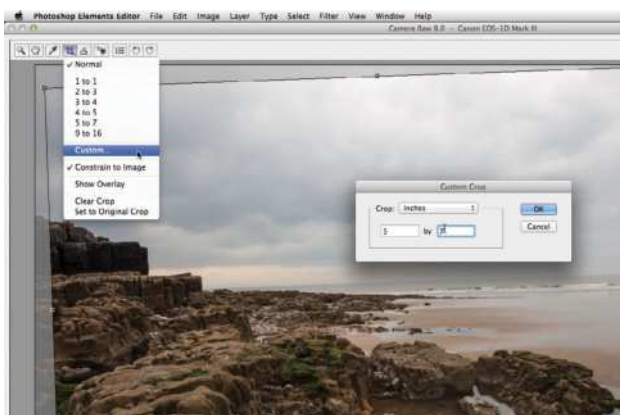
To see how effective the straightening procedure was, click the Zoom tool. The horizon will now appear straight. You can click the Crop tool icon at any time and fine-tune the rotation of the crop window to ensure the horizon is straight.

AFTER

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### 3 Crop and resize

Click the Crop tool and hold down the mouse button to activate crop-ratio options, such as 1 to 1 (a square crop). To resize an image to specific print dimensions click Custom. In the Custom Crop window, set the Crop menu to Inches and choose a size.



### 4 Change the composition

Click the Crop tool icon and choose Overlay. A Rule of Thirds grid will help you with your composition. Drag a corner handle to crop, or drag inside the crop window to reposition the composition. You could place the sky in the top row, with the landscape in the bottom two rows. ■

# Calibrate your Raw files

How to make sure Adobe Camera Raw matches the colours captured by your camera

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**S**hooting Raw files rather than JPEGs means you capture the image in its unprocessed state, so that instead of leaving the camera to carry out the processing you do the processing yourself later in Adobe Camera Raw.

But the initial results can sometimes look a little flat and disappointing. This is because when Adobe Camera Raw opens the image it ignores any picture styles used by the camera and applies a generic conversion profile with quite subdued colours and contrast.

The solution lies in the Camera Calibration tab in the tools panel. If you check its drop-down Camera Profile menu you often find it displays a list of the camera's own picture styles. You won't see this for every camera model, but it's becoming more and more common.

BEFORE



## 1 The camera's JPEG image

This picture was taken with a Fuji X-T1 camera using its Velvia film simulation mode. Velvia film is associated with rich contrast and strong, saturated colours. Other camera makers offer their own variations – on Canons, for example, you can choose 'Landscape', 'Portrait' and more.

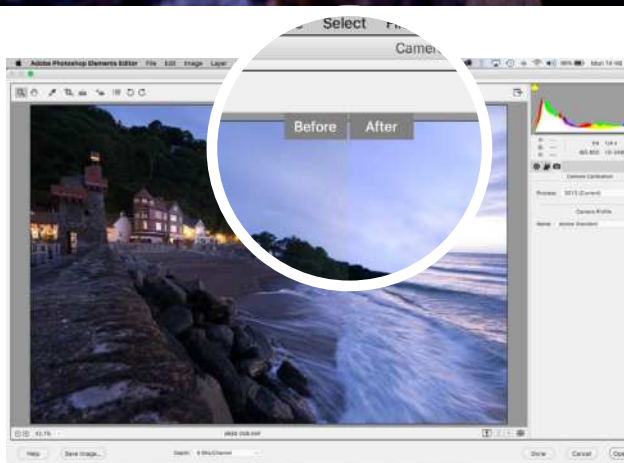


## 2 ACR's default conversion

But if we open up the RAW version we see a very different result. The colours are flatter and more muted, and the whole scene has lost those deep and intense twilight colours. It's rather disappointing, and a step back from the original JPEG photo rather than an improvement.



AFTER



### 3 The Camera Calibration tab

So now we'll switch to the Camera Calibration tab and use the controls just below the bottom right corner of the photo to choose the Before/After Left/Right Split display mode. At the moment, there's nothing to see because we haven't made any changes to the settings – that comes next.

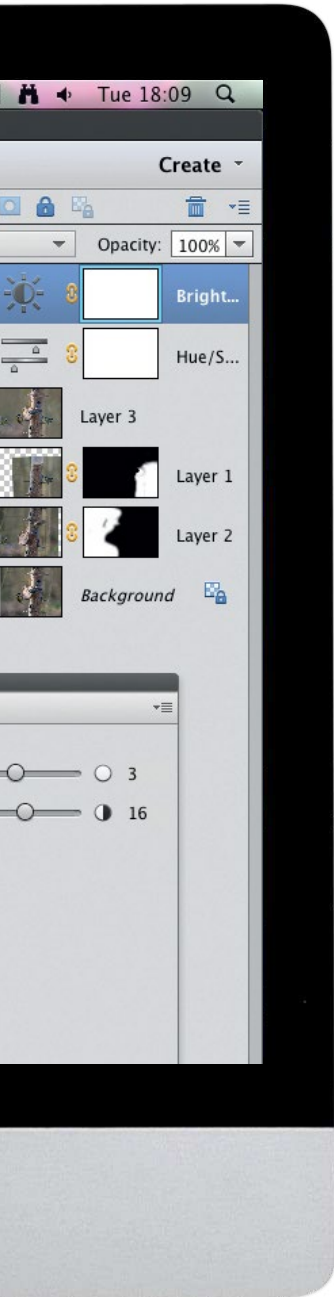
### 4 Choose a picture style

Over on the right you'll see a Camera Profile dropdown menu, with Adobe Standard selected as the default. If we open this menu will see all the picture profiles offered by our Fuji camera and choosing the Velvia option gives us back those beautiful colours in the original JPEG. ■

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

CREATIVE PROJECTS





# Creative projects

Take your editing skills further by shooting an image and manipulating it in Elements

**156 Boost washed-out skies with an ND grad**  
Use a graduated neutral density filter on your lens to improve detail and colour in skies

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Shoot great scenics, then convert to mono and blur the skies for a slow-shutter effect

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After a downpour, capture creative close-ups of gleaming raindrops

**168 Make a fun photocomposite**  
Get creative and have a laugh making this family-orientated image

**172 Use masks for creativity**  
Combine different techniques to select and mask multiple images

# Boost washed-out skies with an ND grad

Use a graduated neutral density filter on your lens to improve detail and colour in skies

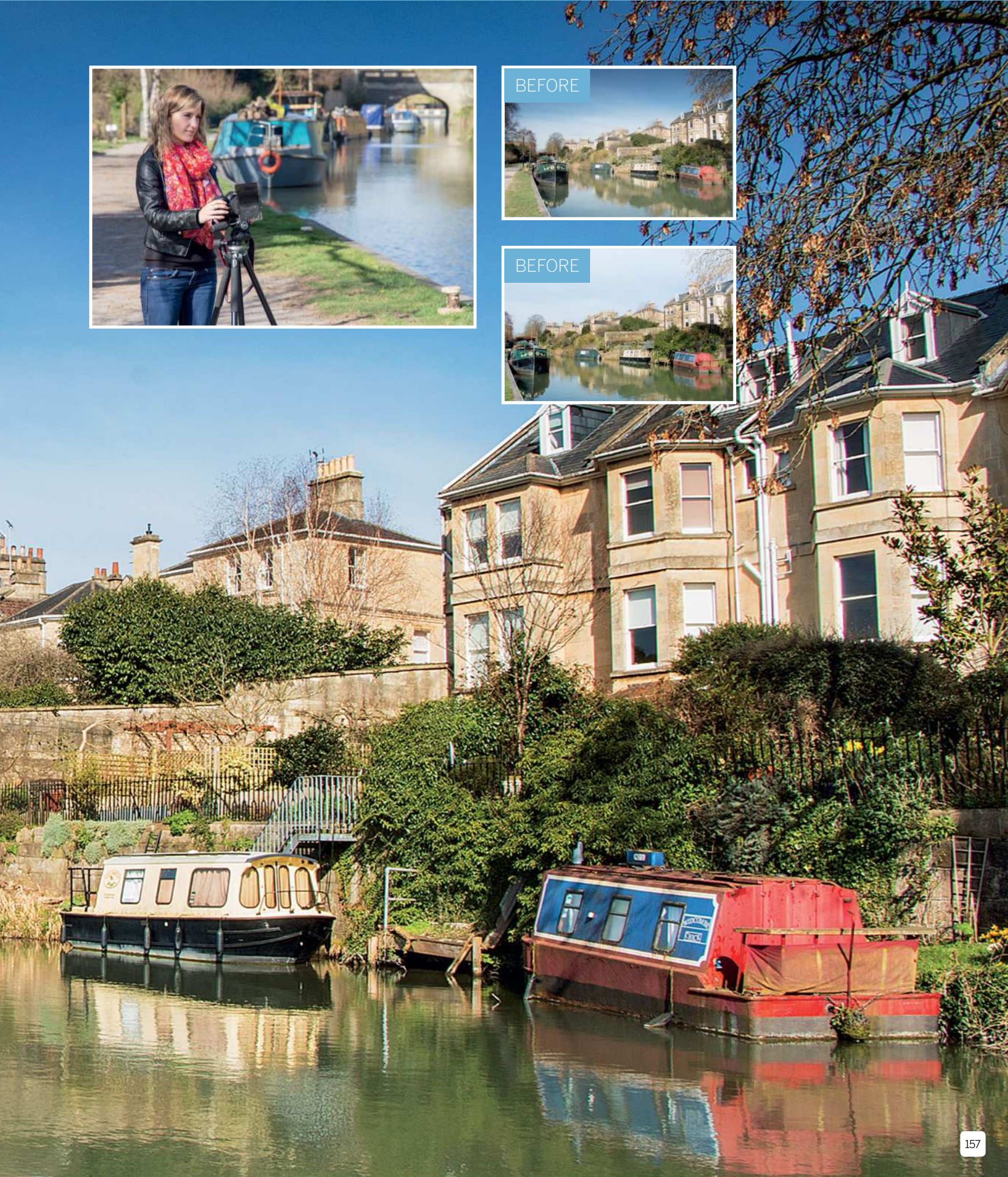
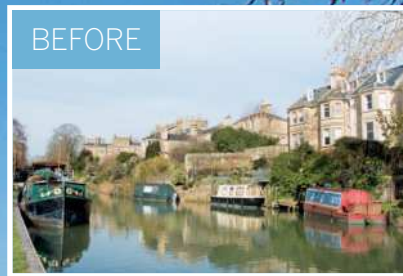
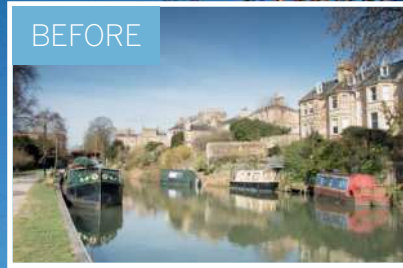
**I**n the second part of our series on using lens filters we're going to show you how you can boost washed-out skies with the aid of a graduated neutral density filter, or ND grad for short. When you shoot landscapes, scenes will often have a greater contrast range than the camera can record. Typically, if you meter for the foreground, a bright sky will be over-exposed, while if you meter for the sky, the darker foreground will be under-exposed, and

this is where a graduated neutral density filter comes in handy. These filters graduate from transparent neutral grey to clear, and by positioning the dark part of the filter over the brightest part of the scene – usually the sky – you can reduce the amount of light reaching the top of the frame to capture a balanced exposure.

There are couple of things to consider when choosing a filter. First, there are two types – the square slot-in filters and the circular screw-on variety. If you're

using square filters you'll need a filter holder, which attaches to your lens via an adaptor ring; these are available in different sizes. Second, filters come in a range of densities, typically offering one, two, three and sometimes four stops of reduction in light, in 'hard' or 'soft' transitions. In this project we'll show you how to fit a graduated neutral density filter, and how to work out which density of filter is required to get the perfect landscape shot. ▶







### 1 When to use an ND grad

ND grads are generally used to hold back the brightness of the sky so that you can capture a balanced exposure when shooting high-contrast scenes; they're a great addition to your kit bag because you can use them in a range of situations. We took a walk along the Kennet and Avon canal in Bath to capture some scenic shots on a sunny day.



### 3 Compose and focus

Compose your shot using the rule of thirds, keeping plenty of sky in the frame. You'll need to focus before fitting the filter, so zoom in using the 10x magnification view, switch your lens to manual and focus manually. Be careful not to knock the focus ring when you're attaching the filter.



### 5 Filter density

Now meter from a midtone in the sky – the difference in exposure between the sky and foreground readings determines the strength of filter required. For example, if the suggested reading is 1/60 sec at f/16 for the foreground, and 1/250 sec at f/16 for the sky, that's a difference of two stops, so a two-stop ND grad should be just right.



### 2 Get set up

The shutter speed will vary depending on the light conditions, so a tripod is essential for capturing pin-sharp shots. Screw the adaptor ring on to your lens and slot the filter holder on to it. For full control over the exposure set your D-SLR to manual mode, and enable Live View mode to help compose the shot, and also so that you can see the effect of the filter clearly.



### 4 Camera settings

Before you attach the filter you need to know your exposure settings. Set a narrow aperture of f/16 for a broad depth of field, and a low ISO for maximum quality. To determine what shutter speed you require, meter from a midtone in the foreground; the filter will prevent the sky from being over-exposed with the resulting shutter speed.



### 6 Fit the filter

If you're using slot-in filters, slot your required filter into the holder. There will be more than one slot, so start with the one nearest to the lens; the other slots enable you to stack filters. You can twist the holder to align the filter with the horizon, and use Live View to help you position the filter so that the gradient is on the desired area.



### 7 ACR adjustments

Open the starting image in Adobe Camera Raw in Elements. To enhance the colour and contrast set the Contrast slider to +23, and Clarity and Vibrance to +20. To reduce the clipped highlights set Highlights to -55 and Whites to -42, and set Shadows to +23 to add some fill light to the shadows. Click Open Image to open the image in Elements' Expert/Full Edit mode.



### 8 Crop and tidy up

Take the Crop tool and select Use Photo Ratio from the Crop Preset menu in the Options. Crop in on the image to exclude some of the towpath, and some of the water at the bottom of the frame. Press Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate the Background layer, then use the Clone Stamp tool to remove distractions such as the hose pipe and the person on the path, Alt-clicking to sample nearby areas of clean pixels.



### 9 Adjust the levels

The buildings look a bit washed out, so we'll selectively darken those areas. Add a Levels adjustment layer, and set the Midtones slider to 0.85 to darken the midtones. Target the attached layer mask by clicking its thumbnail, and paint with a black brush over the areas where you want to hide the adjustment, such as the sky and darker foreground objects.



### 10 Boost the colour and contrast

To boost the colours in the scene, add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and set the Master Saturation to +6. Next, add a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer, and set Brightness to 6 and Contrast to 12. Click the top layer, and press Cmd/Ctrl+Alt+Shift+E to create a merged layer. Go to Enhance>Adjust Sharpness and set Amount to 50% and Radius to 1.3 pixels.

## How ND grad filters are classified

STRENGTH (F-STOPS)	MANUFACTURER'S TERMINOLOGY	
	HOYA, B+W & COKIN	LEE, TIFFEN
1	ND2, ND2X	0.3 ND
2	ND4, ND4X	0.6 ND
3	ND8, ND8X	0.9 ND

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

CREATIVE PROJECTS

BEFORE





# Create dynamic mono landscapes with motion blur

Shoot great scenics – without a tripod – then convert to monochrome and blur the skies for a slow-shutter effect

**C**apturing successful landscapes with a great tonal range can be challenging. In tricky lighting conditions your camera simply can't record all the shadow and highlight detail the naked eye can see in a single exposure. A popular solution is to take several exposures using a tripod, then combine them at the processing stage to create an HDR (high dynamic range) image. However, this technique can be time-consuming and HDR software has a tendency to 'overcook' images – and we've all been guilty of leaving our tripods at home! So we're going to show you a simpler technique to make the whole process quicker. The secret is to process the same image twice to create two exposures that we can then combine in Photoshop using a combination of layers and layer masks to create natural-looking results. We're also going to convert the shot to black and white, and add some motion blur to the sky to help bring our dull landscape shot to life! ▶



### 1 Shoot in the raw format

It goes without saying that you need to shoot raw files to capture good-quality images; for this technique it's vital, because we'll be processing the image twice to ensure we've got a great range of highlight and shadow detail, which we'll then combine for the finished result. A JPEG won't cope with being over- or under-exposed to the same extent, and the image quality will suffer.



### 2 Don't shoot too slow

There are often situations when you don't have time to set up a tripod, or you may not even have one with you. But don't worry; you can shoot handheld as long as you shoot with a relatively fast shutter speed in order to avoid camera shake. When using a wide-angle lens, such as the EF 16-35mm f/2.8L II USM, a shutter speed of 1/50 sec will be sufficient to prevent shake.



### 3 Camera settings

Set your camera to manual mode and use a narrow f/11 aperture for a great depth of field to ensure everything in the scene is sharp from front to back. To capture a balanced exposure, half-press the shutter to meter the scene and scroll through the shutter speeds until the exposure level indicator is in the middle. If your shutter speed is too slow, increase the ISO.



### 4 Evaluate your exposure

It's not always easy to see if you've captured a balanced exposure from looking at the image on the LCD screen, so get into the habit of checking your histogram. Although you'll be processing your shot twice, you'll still need a consistent tonal range; any high peaks that go off either end of the graph means you'll have lost detail in the shadows or highlights.



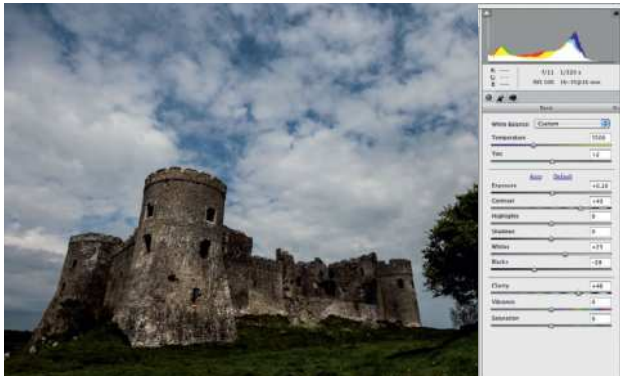
### 5 Stay focused

It's important to focus accurately when shooting scenics to ensure your image is sharp from front to back. If you focus on the horizon, you may find that your foreground is out of focus. Ensure the lens is switched to AF, focus on something about a third of the way into the scene by half-pressing the shutter, then recompose before fully pressing the shutter to take the shot.



### 6 Keep composed

The great thing about shooting handheld is the freedom to be more experimental with your compositions. You can scout out your location quickly to see what viewpoints will be more successful, and shoot from angles that would prove tricky with a tripod. And with this technique, you don't need to worry about taking several exposures from the exact same position.



### 7 ACR adjustments

Open the starting image in ACR. We'll start by working on the sky. Set Exposure to +0.10, Contrast to +49, Whites to +23, Blacks to -28 and Clarity to +46. Click Save Image, and save it as castle\_start\_1. Click the icon in the right-hand corner, next to where it says Basic, and select Camera Raw Defaults to reset these adjustments.



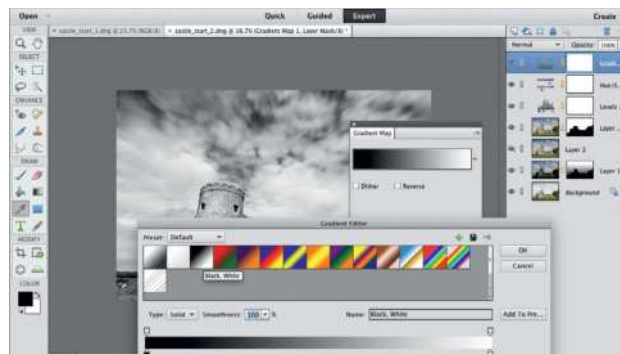
### 8 Combine the layers

Set Exposure to +1.30, Contrast to +40, Shadows to +30, Blacks to +20 and Clarity to +20. Click Open Image. Open the starting DNG as well. Add the two images to the same document so that they are on different layers. Add a layer mask and grab the Gradient tool, and select the Foreground to Transparent Linear option.



### 9 Reveal the background

Drag from the bottom to the top of the frame to reveal the lighter background layer. Grab a black brush at 100% opacity and paint over the castle to lighten it. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Alt+Shift+E to create a merged layer. Grab the Quick Selection tool and drag over the sky to select it. Click Refine Edge and set the Output To option to New Layer with Layer Mask, and click OK.



### 10 Blur the clouds

Go to Filter>Blur>Radial Blur. Select Zoom, set Amount to 13. Click OK. Highlight the mask, grab a black brush at 100% opacity and paint the edges of the selection. Add a Levels adjustment layer. Set Shadows to 5, Midtones to 1.10 and Highlights to 241. Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and a Gradient Map adjustment layer with a Black, White gradient.



### 11 Convert to Black and White

Double click the Hue/Saturation layer. In the Masters channel set Hue to +13 and Saturation to +39. In the Blue channel set Hue to +18 and Saturation to +16. In the Yellow channel set Hue to -12. In the Layers panel highlight the top layer. Create a merged layer. Grab the Dodge tool. Select a soft brush of 400px and set Range to Midtones and Exposure to 30%.



### 12 Dodge and burn

Paint the shadowed areas of the castle and tree to brighten them and increase the contrast. Grab the Burn tool. Increase the brush size to 900px and paint along the edges to create a vignette, gradually building up the effect. Add a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer and set the Contrast to 18 to give it a final boost. Go to Layer>Flatten Image to flatten the layers before saving.

BEFORE



## Marvellous flower macros

After a downpour, capture creative close-ups of flowers covered in gleaming raindrops

**W**ater drops are an excellent subject to shoot with a macro setup, and they look particularly attractive on flowers. For this photo shoot we visited the National Botanic Garden of Wales. It was a dry day, so in order to create the 'raindrops' we supplied our own water, using a fine mist spray bottle. This is a handy piece of kit to have for a macro shoot, because water droplets add a touch of sparkle to just about any subject, from insects and spiders' webs to abstract still-life subjects.

The secret to capturing successful shots like this is to find the right flower. The yellow-orange stamens against the blue petals of our subject created a striking effect. It also helps to shoot on a calm day with no breeze, to ensure that the petals are in sharp focus. For our shoot we used a 105mm macro lens that was capable of shooting at 1:1 reproduction ratio – this means that we can get in really close to the subject. If you don't have a macro lens you can use an extension tube with a regular lens. ▶





### 1 Choose a subject

Choose a flower that has a variety of colours, and some interesting detail, and ideally one that's positioned in partial shade to diffuse the sunlight; if your subject is in direct sunlight you can use the diffuser typically included in a five-in-one reflector kit to soften the light. Set your camera on a tripod.



### 3 Add the water

Spray your flower with a fine mist of water. You want to have water on all the parts of the flower that will be in shot, but don't add too much, otherwise it will start to run off, or the flower may become weighed down and droopy.



### 2 Camera settings

Set your camera to aperture priority mode, and set a narrow aperture of  $f/11$  to capture a good depth of field, so that most of the flower and water drops are in sharp focus. Set a low ISO of 100 to retain optimum image quality. Even though your camera is on a tripod, if it's a windy day you may need to increase the ISO to enable a fast enough shutter speed to compensate for any wind movement.



### 4 Manual focus

Switch your lens to manual so that you can focus your shot precisely. Enable Live View mode, and zoom in to 10x magnification. Scroll to the centre of the flower, and then adjust the focus until this area is sharp. Zoom out again and start shooting, using the two-second self-timer option or a remote release to avoid camera shake; the slightest vibration can completely ruin a macro shot.



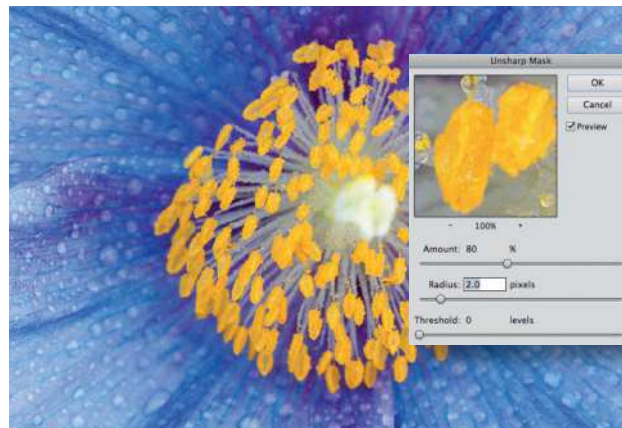
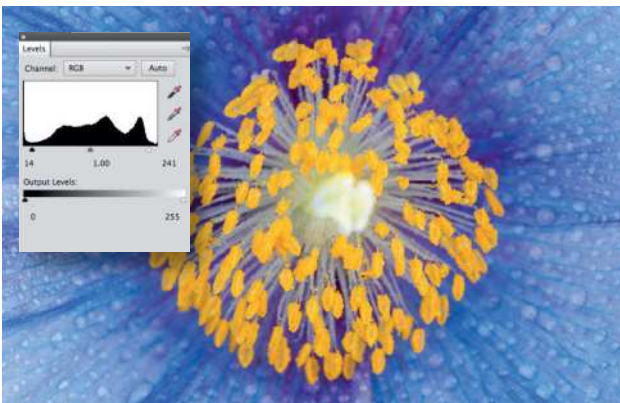
### 5 Crop for composition

Open the starting image in Adobe Camera Raw. Click and hold the Crop tool icon to display the crop options, and select the 2 to 3 ratio. Crop into the image to remove some of the empty space on the left-hand side, and to reposition the flower so that its centre sits in the middle of the frame.



### 6 Exposure tweaks

Set the Exposure slider to +0.95 to brighten the image, and set Contrast to +23. To reduce the slightly over-exposed highlights set Highlights to -55 and Whites to -48. Set Shadows to +23 to add some fill light, and set Blacks to +10. Finally, push the Clarity slider up to +23 to enhance the fine detail. Click Open Image.



### 7 Boost the contrast

In Elements, add a Levels adjustment layer, and set the Shadows slider to 14 and the Highlights slider to 241 to fine-tune the contrast. Next, make sure the top layer is selected and press Cmd/Ctrl+Alt+Shift+E to create a merged layer at the top of the stack.

### 8 Sharpen the image

To sharpen the image go to Enhance>Unsharp Mask. Set Amount to 80%, Radius to 2 pixels and Threshold to 0. Click OK to apply. Finally, go to Layer>Flatten Image and save the image as a JPEG. ■

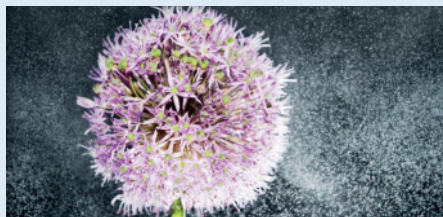
## More ideas for drop shots

You can combine flowers and water drops in lots of ways to create an array of effects



### DANDELION SEED

This dandelion seed head was photographed indoors, with an LED ring flash as the main light source. Spraying a fine misting of water over the delicate seeds helps to create an ethereal and abstract image.



### RAIN EFFECT

You can create spectacular effects with falling water. Here we backlit the drops with off-camera flash – you'll need to sync your camera's shutter speed to around 1/250 sec. A dark backdrop helps the illuminated drops stand out.



### PRETTY IN PINK

To get a close-up of this tiny flower we used a 68mm extension tube to boost the magnification of our macro lens. We used an LED ring flash to boost the colours, and in Elements we cloned out the most noticeable reflections in the drops. ■

**ON  
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Start files are  
available on FileSilo

See page 194  
for more



## Make a fun photocomposite

Get creative and have a laugh making this family-orientated image

**W**e may love our families, but sometimes they can really drive us mad! So why not vent your frustrations in a fun and creative way by digitally taping them to the wall? Yes, it sounds bizarre, but it does make for a very amusing picture. Obviously, this concept works brilliantly with young, noisy children. However, if you have other family members or friends with a good sense of humour, they'd be a great target too. Once you have a roll of a

duct tape and a willing 'victim' or two, you'll need to set up an area for a photo shoot. We'll take you through the process of getting the ideal shots, or you can use the photos provided.

To achieve the most realistic results, take your time when selecting and cutting out people and objects, and don't rush when painting in the shadows. It's worth spending a little longer on these stages, as they are crucial to the realism of the final artwork.



## Stage 1 Set the scene

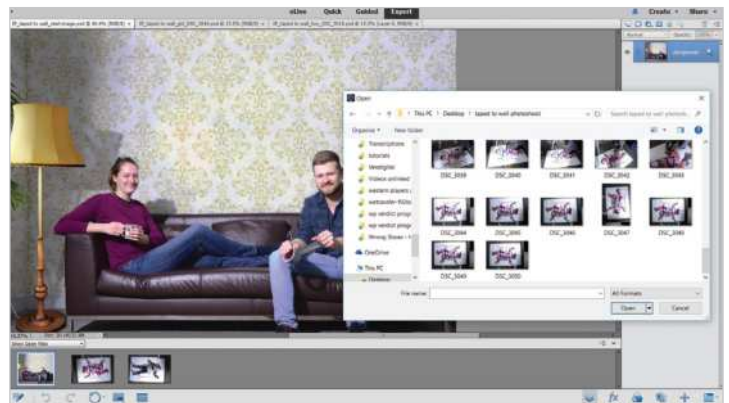
Grab some models, a roll of duct tape and your camera

**T**he first step in assembling a personalised photocomposite image is to create the photographs themselves. If you have access to professional lighting equipment, then that's great. But if not, finding a bright, well-lit environment will work well too. Try to keep the light source consistent for all of your photos, so that it matches in the background shot and the individual model shots (bearing in mind the angle you plan to position the models in the final image). This will make it much easier to create a realistic finish.



### 1 Tape your models

Get your models to lay on the floor, preferably on a solid white background (this will make selecting and cutting them out easier later on). Start to apply tape over their bodies, arms, wrists, ankles and anywhere else that you think is appropriate.



### 2 Take the shots

To take the photos, you'll need to get some height over the model. You could stand on a small ladder or chair, but be careful and make sure it is safe! Take a variety of shots, and encourage your model to pull some funny or angry faces

### 3 Photograph the background

Take the background photo straight on, so that the angle matches that of the taped models, with a blank area above the sofa so there's plenty of space to paste them in. Once you have selected the photos you'll be using, simply open them all up in Photoshop Elements.

#### 01 SETTING THE SCENE

The scene is looking a little empty, so we'll be scattering some toys on the floor to help create a story.

#### 02 CROPPING YOUR PHOTO

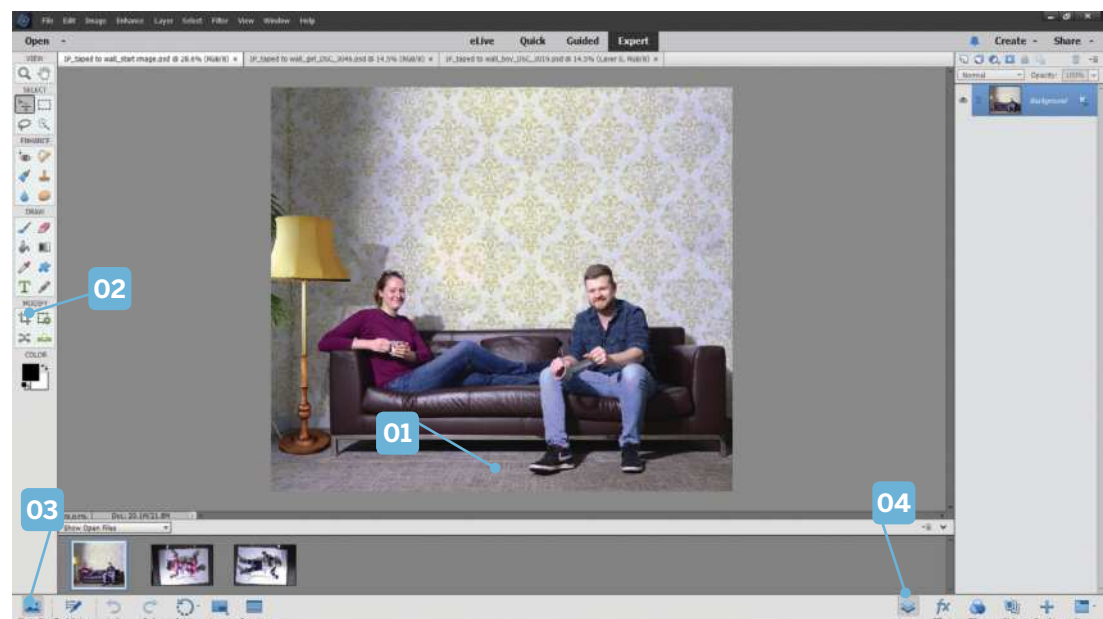
Use the Crop tool if necessary to create a size and composition that you are happy with.

#### 03 THE PHOTO BIN

Our three selected photographs can all be accessed quickly with a click of the mouse via the Photo Bin.

#### 04 LAYERS PANEL

We'll be building this image up using lots of layers, so have the Layers panel open.



### Stage 2 Select, cut and paste

Use Elements to combine your various shots into one scene

**W**ith the photos taken, we are ready to start piecing our image together. There are several selection tools in Photoshop Elements to choose from when cutting out your models. For subjects with simple outlines and a plain background, the Quick Selection tool works especially well. Combined with the various options in Refine Edge, we can quickly and easily get a neat and realistic finish. So open up your first taped model and press A to activate the Quick Selection tool.



#### 1 Select the subject

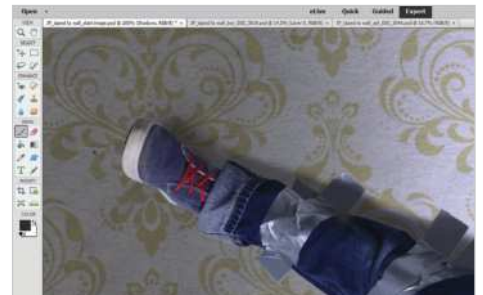
Use the Quick Selection tool to select the girl. Click and drag over the subject, holding Alt while using the tool to remove any areas from the selection if necessary. Zoom in close and check all around the edges, tidying it up with the Selection Brush (press A again).

#### 2 Refine the selection

Once the entire model is selected, click Refine Edge. Adjust Smoothness, Feather and Shift Edge. We used values of 6, 0.7 and -9 respectively, but this is dependent on your image and the selection you have made. Choose Output: Selection, click OK.

#### 3 Copy and paste

Copy (Cmd/Ctrl+C) and paste (Cmd/Ctrl+V) the selected model into your background. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T to resize and position them on the back wall. Repeat the process to select, copy and paste the second model onto your background.



#### 4 Make adjustments

You may need to make some adjustments depending on differences in lighting and colour tone. For example, on the Girl layer, press Cmd/Ctrl+L to adjust the Levels, and move the middle grey slider left to 1.16.

#### 5 Create a shadows layer

Add a new layer (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+N) below the Girl and Boy layers. Name it Shadows. Set its blend mode to Multiply, and Opacity to 80%. Use the Brush tool (press B) with a soft round brush and colour of R:40 G:40 B:42 to paint shadows around the children.

#### 6 Paint in the shadows

Use a small brush to create harder-edged shadows where the children are pressed closer to the wall (beneath their hands, for example), and a larger brush to create softer shadows where they're further from the wall (the ends of their feet).

## Stage 3 Build up the scene

Paste in extra elements and make the final adjustments

**I**t's now time to add some extra finishing touches. The toys on the floor help to create a story within the image, making the final result more engaging to the viewer. Some more practical finishing touches, such as extra shadows, Photo Filters and other adjustments, will bring the whole image together and give it a sense of realism. Feel free to elaborate with your image; add in photos of items around your own home that you think best represent you and your family.

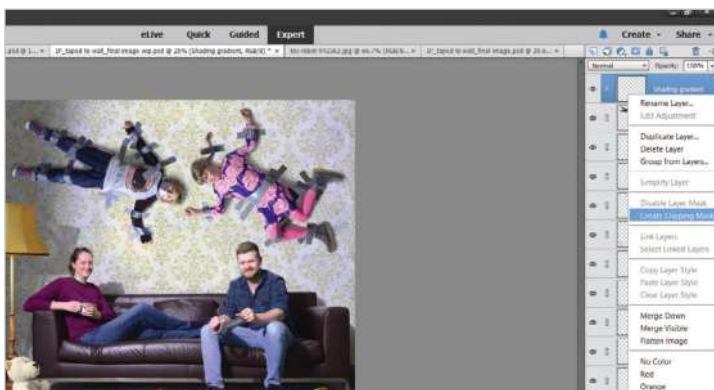


### 1 Paste in the toys

Open the various toy photos, and use the same methods as before to select them and copy and paste them into your artwork above the other layers. Press **Cmd/Ctrl+T** on each to resize and position them around the floor.

### 2 Give the toys shadows

On the Shadows layer, use the same brush as before to paint shadows for the toys. Make sure the direction of the shadows matches the other elements. Add a new layer above the Boy layer, and set it to **Multiply**.



### 3 Apply extra shading

**Ctrl/right-click** the new layer's name and choose **Create Clipping Mask**. Select the **Gradient tool** (press **G**), choose: **Linear**, **Foreground to Transparent, 30% Opacity**. Click and drag diagonally down and right from the top-left corner, to apply a shadow over the boy's feet and legs.

### 4 Add adjustment layers

To help unify all the elements, add a **Photo Filter** adjustment layer at the top of the layer stack, choose the **Deep Yellow** filter with **40% Density**. Add a **Levels** adjustment layer and drag the black-and-white sliders inwards slightly to give the image a boost.

# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

CREATIVE PROJECTS



**ON  
FILESILO**

Start files are  
available on FileSilo

See page 194  
for more

# Use masks for creativity

Combine different techniques to select and mask multiple images

**Y**ou will be surprised at how much you can do in Photoshop Elements. Here we're going to create a surreal composition using a wide range of tools and commands.

You'll start by using the Quick Selection tool to select a subject and then apply the Refine Edge command to modify the

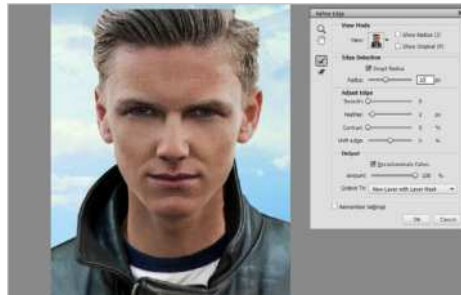
selection and create a mask. Then you will learn how to mask out the head and create a plain surface using a very simple technique. Next, you'll use a clipping mask to add a texture over the head, apply layer styles to add edges around the selection and then use the Clone Stamp Tool to add subtle details. Finally, you will combine different

techniques to mask the motorcycles, use adjustment layers to enhance the tones and colours, and custom brushes to add beautiful effects.

Creating a cohesive image can be a challenge, but with the right techniques you can produce a really nice composition. Download the files and let's get started.

## Quick selections

Select any image quickly and easily with the Quick Selection tool



### 1 Set up the stage

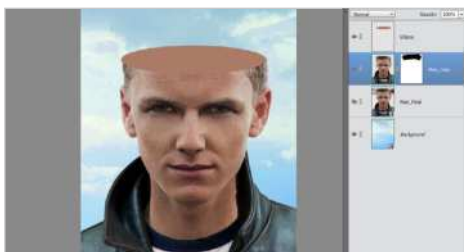
Launch Elements and enter Expert mode. Go to File>Open 'fo\_background.jpg' (Cmd/Ctrl+O). Go to File>Place 'pix\_945482\_man.jpg' and hit Return/Enter. Grab the Quick Selection tool (A). In the Tool Options, adjust the brush size to around 150 pixels and check Auto-Enhance. Now select the man.

### 2 Refine the edge

Let's refine the selection. In Options, click Refine Edge. Check Smart Radius and increase the Radius to 10 pixels. Set Feather to 2 pixels, check Decontaminate Colors and Amount: 100%, Output to: New Layer with Layer Mask and then click OK.

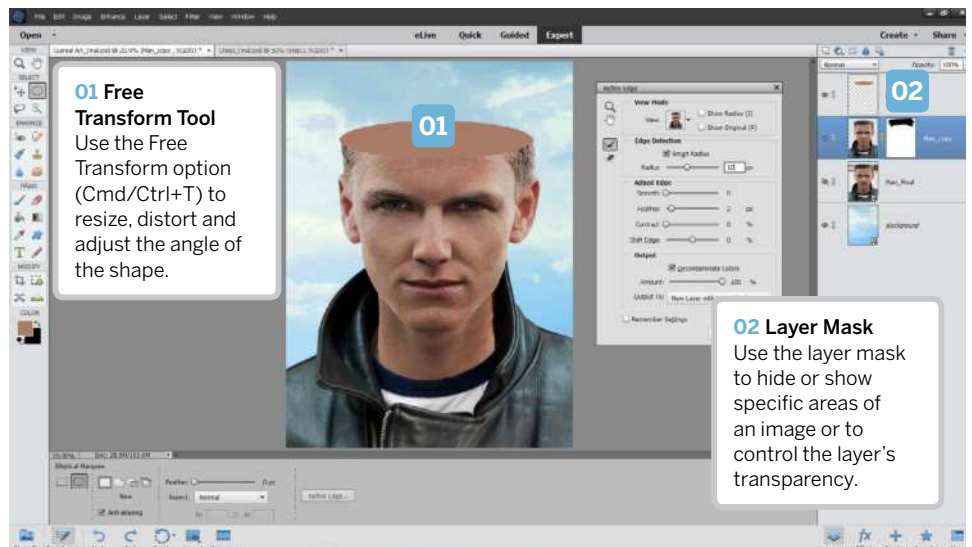
### 3 Replace the head

First, apply the mask by going to Layer>Layer Mask>Apply. Now create a new mask. Go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal All. Add a new layer (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+N) name it Ellipse. Grab the Elliptical Marquee Tool (M). Press Shift and create a circular selection. Fill it with colour #ab7b67.



### 4 Adjust the angle

Go to Select>Transform Selection. Drag the handles to adjust the size and angle and place it on the middle of the forehead. Now set the Foreground colour to black and grab the Brush tool (B). Click on the Man-Copy mask, and paint the extra hair to complete the effect.



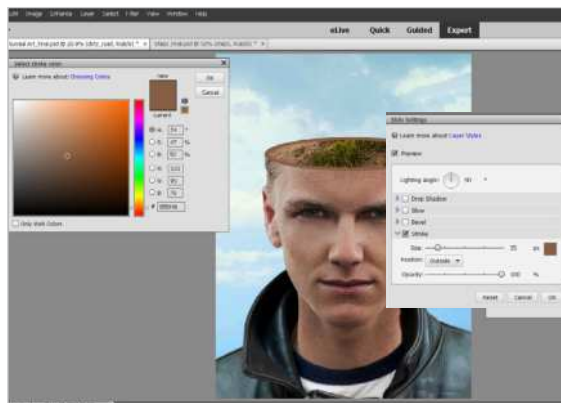
# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

## CREATIVE PROJECTS



### 5 Clip the layers

Place a new image on top of the layer stack. Go to File>Place 'pix\_407207\_dirty\_road.jpg' and press Return/Enter. Press Cmd/Ctrl+G to clip the layers. Drag the dirty\_road image to find the best angle.



### 6 Layer style border

Let's create a mask and add a border. Hold Shift and click on the Ellipse layer to select it. With the dirty\_road layer active, go to Layer>Layer Mask>Reveal Selection. Now, go to Layer>Layer Style>Style Settings. Check Stroke and set Size: 35 pixels, Position: Outside and choose colour #855f46. Click OK.

### GRAPHICS PANEL

In this tutorial, we used a pre-designed background image to create the sky. In the Graphics panel you will find a variety of preset graphics, frames, shapes, texts and backgrounds. To show the Graphics panel, go to Window>Graphics or press F7. Each section displays thumbnail examples of the artwork. To apply it, double-click, or drag the thumbnail over the canvas and Elements will automatically create a new layer with the image on. Then, you can boost the colours using adjustment layers. Explore each section to find interesting images.



### 7 Add details

Create a new layer on top of the layer stack (Shift>Cmd/Ctrl+N), name it Grass. Zoom in (Z). Grab the Clone Stamp Tool (S). In Options, open the Brush Preset Picker, click on Default Brushes and choose Dune Grass. Hold Opt/Alt and sample the grass, then start painting over the borders.



### 8 Place images

Go to File>Place 'pix\_1282673\_moto1.jpg', pick the Magic Wand tool (A). In Options, set Tolerance: 40 and uncheck Contiguous. Hold Shift and click around the sky to select it. To deselect unwanted selected areas, grab the Quick Selection tool, hold Opt/Alt and drag over the areas.



### 9 Create a mask

First, press Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert the selection. Now go to Select>Refine Edge. Check Smart Radius and set it to 3 pixels, then check Decontaminate Color, Amount: 100% and click OK. Press Cmd/Ctrl+T and resize the image.

### 01 BRUSH PRESET PICKER

Open the Brush Preset Picker from Tool Options to choose a variety of pre-designed brushes.

### 02 SAMPLE ALL LAYERS

In Options, check the Sample All Layers box to enable you to use the Clone Stamp Tool to sample any visible layer.

### 03 LAYER STYLING

Layer styles are great for adding effects to change an image. You can apply different styles to any layer.

### 04 CLIPPING LAYERS

When you clip the layers, the image within the layer only affects the layer directly below it.





### 10 Make adjustments

Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Brightness/Contrast. Check 'Use previous layer to create clipping mask' and press OK. Set Brightness to 15 and Contrast to -30. Now, make a quick colour correction. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Photo Filter. Choose Filter: Red and then clip the layers.



### 11 Bring in more images

Place more motorcycles, repeat steps 8 and 9 to select and mask each image, then use the adjustment layers to make quick colour and tonal corrections. Remember to use different settings to get better results.



### 12 Dirty face

Now, create a new layer (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+N) on top of the Man copy layer. Clip the layer (Cmd/Ctrl+G). Grab the Brush tool (B). In Options, open the Brush Preset Picker, click on Natural Brushes. Choose any one you like, vary the size and paint around the face.



### 13 Go 3D with layer styles

Let's apply the Bevel layer style to add a subtle 3D look to the brushes. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Style Settings. Check Bevel, keep the Lighting Angle at 90-degrees, set the Size to 4 pixels, Direction: Up and click OK.



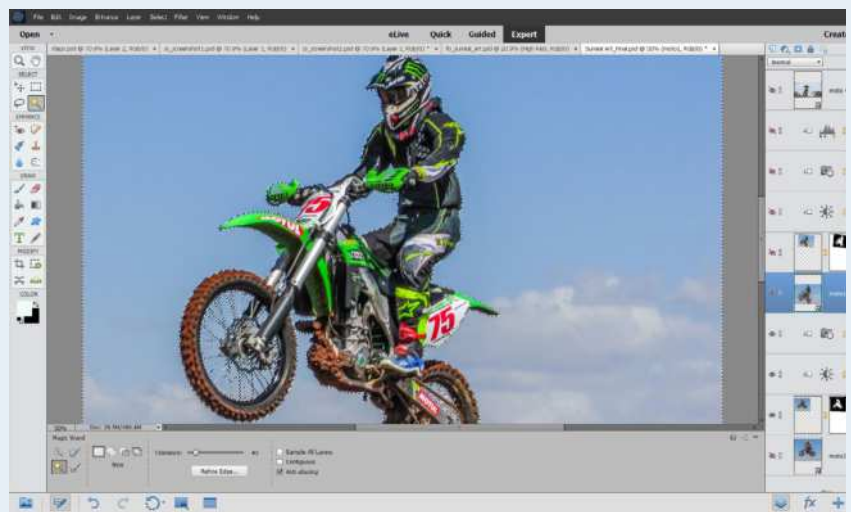
### 14 Custom brushes

Create a new layer (Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+N) on top of the layer stack. Go to Edit>Preset Manager. Click on Append, choose 'fo\_brushes\_elements.abr', then click Done. Grab the Brush tool (B), choose different brushes and start painting dust over the bikes.

## Understanding... SELECTIONS TOOLS

Deciding which selection tool it is the most appropriate for selecting certain types of images can be difficult. For example, the Quick Selection Tool automatically finds and follows defined edges, while the Magic Wand Tool selects pixels based on tones and colours. In step 8, the image has a defined edge but the wheel is hard to select using the Quick Selection

Tool. We therefore used the Magic Wand to select the blue areas and then the Quick Selection to clean up the extra selected areas. Hold Shift to add to a selection and press Opt/Alt to subtract from the selection. For the Magic Wand Tool, vary the Tolerance to limit the colour range and uncheck Contiguous to select all the same colours within the Tolerance range.



# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements

PHOTO CLINIC





## Photo clinic

Get professional feedback on enthusiasts' photos, with simple solutions you can use in Photoshop Elements

**178 Helsinki Busker**  
By Andy Hollingsbee  
Add contrast and vignetting

**180 Superbikes**  
By Dave MacLeod  
Composition and cloning

**182 Lake View**  
By Wayne Gibbons  
Improve the composition

**184 Apocalypse Now**  
By João Freire  
Brightness and contrast

**186 Woody**  
By Stephen Costigan  
Under-exposure

**188 Porth Colmon**  
By Alan Lodge  
Composition

**190 Tree Frog**  
By Paul Dixon  
Cloning unwanted detail

# Helsinki Busker

BY ANDY HOLLINGSBEE



Canon EOS 5D Mk II  
Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8L USM

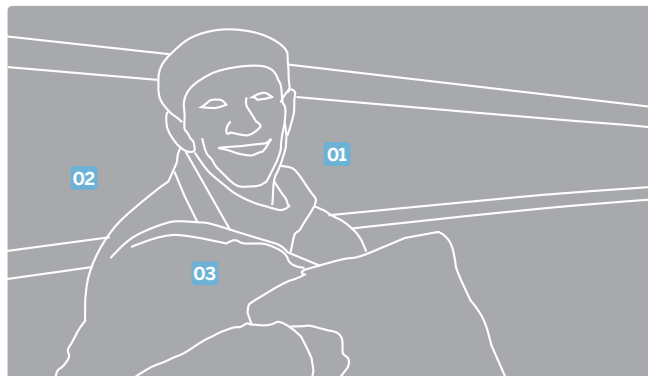
Aperture f/2.8  
Shutter speed 1/640 sec

**Andy says** “I took this shot in Helsinki in November. Photography in that part of the world late in the year can be quite challenging, as it starts to get dark by early afternoon, but one cloudy and miserable Sunday I decided to try my hand at some street photography. This accordion-playing busker caught my attention, because he was so cheerful despite the poor weather, and because I could see that there was bags of character in his weather-beaten face. I shot with my EF 24-70mm f/2.8L lens wide open and at 70mm, both to let in as much light as possible and also so that I could blur the background. This was my first serious attempt at converting a picture to black and white, which I did in Photoshop Elements, using the Urban Snapshots preset in Convert to Black and White. I also added a subtle vignette to focus attention on the subject. I’ve been meaning to start a portfolio for a while, and I thought this shot would be a good start. When I got the picture printed I ordered two copies, as I knew I would be in the same area again a week later, and you should have seen the busker’s face when I gave him a copy of the picture to keep – he really lit up!”

**We say** “This is a great street portrait Andy, and it looks all the better for being converted to black and white, which really brings out the subject’s character – and it also disguises the fact that the weather was lousy! The depth of field is perfect, as you’ve kept enough of the subject’s surroundings sharp to show the urban environment, while blurring the more distant detail so it doesn’t compete for our attention. However, the image lacks a little in terms of punch, because the tones are relatively flat; there are too many midtone greys in the scene, and not enough highlights to create strong contrast. Fortunately, we can add instant impact to the shot with a few simple edits in Elements.”



## PHOTO CRITIQUE



**01** Great composition, and a natural pose and expression, create an engaging street portrait

**02** Converting the image to mono suits both the subject and the weather

**03** The image lacks punch. Both the overall contrast and the fine detail need a boost



## STEP BY STEP

### Now try this...

How Andy can enhance his portrait in ACR and Elements



#### ACR adjustments

In Elements go to File>Open in Camera Raw. On the Basic tab set Exposure to +0.20, Contrast to +30, Highlights to +100 and Whites to -40. Set Clarity to +100 and click Open Image.



#### Selective contrast

Add a Levels adjustment layer. Set Shadows to 15 and Highlights to 235, then take a black brush, click the mask thumbnail and paint over areas where shadows are too dark or highlights too bright. Add a new layer, and label it 'vignette'.



#### Add a vignette

Take the Elliptical Marquee tool, and draw a vignette-shaped selection. Go to Select>Inverse, then go to Edit>Fill and choose Black. Go to Select>Deselect, then go to Filter>Gaussian Blur and enter 170 pixels. Reduce the layer's opacity to 30% and fine-tune the position and shape of the vignette with the Move tool. ●

# Superbikes

BY DAVE MACLEOD



Canon EOS 600D

Canon EF-S 55-250mm f/4-5.6 IS II

Aperture f/5.6

Shutter speed 1/640 sec

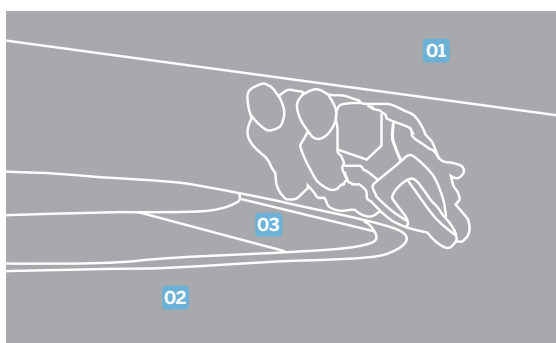
**Dave says** “I shot this at the Knockhill round of the British Superbikes Championship. It shows my two favourite riders in the Superbike class: Stuart Easton (No. 5), a local rider from Hawick, with Josh Brookes (No. 3) close behind him. The hairpin always offers a good opportunity for close-up action shots, as the bikes are going a bit slower before heading up to the start/finish line. However, I was standing in the spectator area, which is higher than the track, and so I was unable to get as low as I would’ve liked. I’ve cropped the image, but I haven’t done any other post-processing work on it. The sky was quite bright when I took this, with a little cloud cover.”

**We say** “Nice work, Dave – you’ve captured a strong superbikes action shot at a great moment during the race, with the riders pushing each other hard as they fight for the lead. It was a smart move to position yourself at the hairpin, as the riders are moving relatively slowly here, giving you more of a chance of grabbing a sharp shot, which you’ve managed thanks to your exposure of f/5.6 at 1/640 sec with your telephoto lens. However, this was taken at 170mm, and I think you could have zoomed in fully to 250mm for an even tighter shot.

I also think you’re right to crop the image, to remove the distracting advertising boards. But I also think that, having held back when you took the shot, you’ve then gone too far, cropping too tight on the riders and not giving them space to ride ‘out’ of the shot. So in Photoshop I’ve cropped your image less tightly, and I’ve also angled it for a more dynamic feel. I’ve then added a vignette to draw the eye in, boosted the contrast, cloned out the mark on the white race markings, and sharpened the shot.”



## PHOTO CRITIQUE



**01** Dave was right to crop out the advertising boards at the top of the image...

**02** ...but his crop was too tight, and the riders don't have any space

**03** We've also cloned out some distracting marks on the track markings



## STEP BY STEP

### Now try this...

How Dave can improve his results in Photoshop



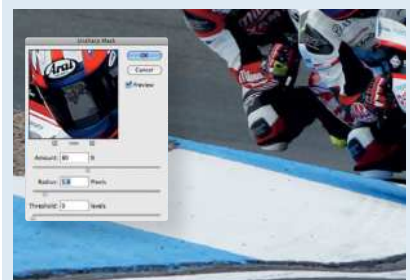
#### Cropping correctly

Dave was right to crop, but went too tight. Using the Crop tool in Photoshop, I've cropped in, just not as much, leaving space for the riders to move into. I also tilted the crop for a more aggressive angle. Using the rule of thirds overlay grid, the riders are positioned perfectly.



#### Vignette and contrast improvements

Adding subtle vignettes ensures the eye is drawn to the focal point. Go to Filter>Lens Correction (Correct Camera Distortion in Photoshop Elements), and set Vignette Amount to -50. Now use Brightness/Contrast and boost Contrast to +25.



#### Clone and sharpen

To remove a few distracting marks, I used a combination of the Clone Stamp tool and Spot Healing Brush tool, using small brushes, and zoomed in to 100%. As always, sharpen last – using Unsharp Mask, I've set Amount to 80% and Radius to 1.8 pixels. ●

ORIGINAL



DAVE'S CROP

### Lake View

BY WAYNE GIBBONS



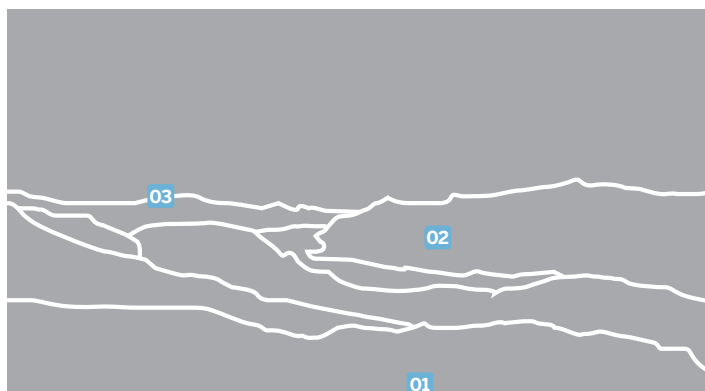
**Canon EOS 5D Mk II**  
**Canon EF 24-105mm f/4L IS USM**  
Aperture **f/13**  
Shutter speed **1/160 sec**

**Wayne says** “This was taken in the Lake District near Glenridding and Ullswater, which can be seen in the distance. I was about 1,400ft up with no tripod and just a polarising filter. I found some rocks to use as foreground interest, and included the water and mountains in the background to add some depth to the scene. I used a narrow aperture of f/13 to capture a broad depth of field and keep as much of the scene in focus as possible, and I set an ISO of 400 to ensure my shutter speed was fast enough for a handheld shot. In post-processing I tweaked the contrast using Curves, and applied a Black & White adjustment layer with a blending mode and layer mask to boost the colour and contrast. I also applied some noise reduction, and sharpened the image using the High Pass filter.”

**We say** “What a cracking shot, Wayne! It’s a shame you didn’t have a tripod, but well done for increasing your ISO to ensure your shutter speed was fast enough. Selecting a narrow aperture of f/13 was a good choice, as you’ve captured a broad depth of field, and I like how you’ve included foreground, midground and background detail to add depth to the image, capturing ‘layers’ of interest that lead the eye through the scene. I do think there’s a little too much foreground in the shot, however, so I’ve used the Recompose tool in Photoshop Elements to squash this area so that our main focus is on the hills, lake and sky. I’ve also boosted the colour and contrast even more, to really show off this spectacular landscape.”



### PHOTO CRITIQUE



**01** It’s good to include some foreground interest, but here we have too much, and it dominates the bottom half of the frame

**02** The scene contains plenty of ‘layers’ of detail, which lead the eye through the scene from the foreground to the distant background

**03** The shot’s colours and contrast are a little flat, and don’t do justice to the dramatic subject, so we need to give them a boost



## STEP BY STEP

### Now try this...

How Wayne can recompose and enhance his landscape scene using Elements



### Recompose tool

Select the Recompose tool, and paint over the foreground with the Mark for Removal tool. Click the bottom handle of the bounding box and drag it up to compress the foreground detail, then drag the top handle down to produce a more panoramic composition.



### Panoramic crop

Hit Enter or click the green tick to apply the transformation, and adjust the Threshold slider if required to reduce distortion. Next take the Crop tool, select 16x9in from the Crop Preset menu, and crop the image.



### Boost colours

Add a Levels adjustment layer, and set the Shadows slider to 27, Midtones to 1.10 and Highlights to 254. Add a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer, and set both Brightness and Contrast to +18. ●

# Apocalypse Now

BY JOÃO FREIRE



Canon EOS 5D Mk II

Canon EF 16-35mm f/2.8L II USM

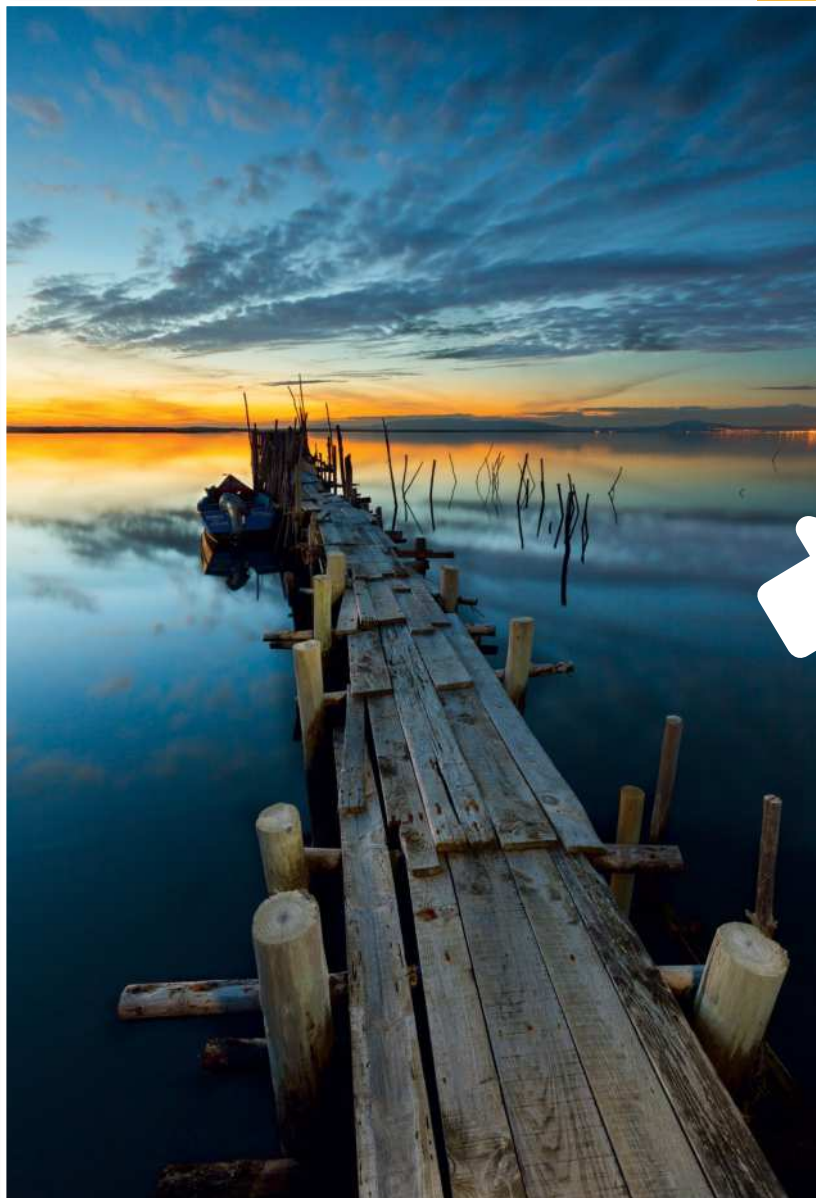
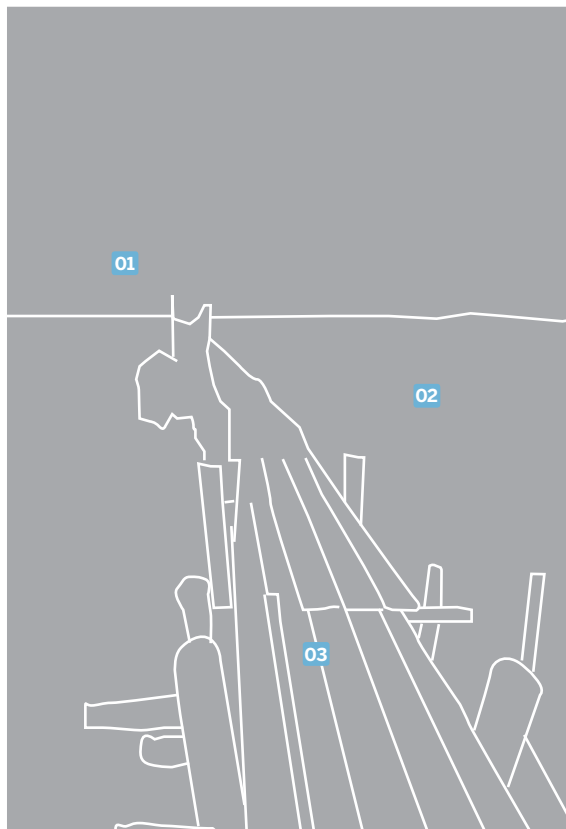
Aperture f/11

Shutter speed 30 secs

**João says** “This shot is of the palafitte (stilt) quay at Carrasqueira, a fishing village on the Sado Estuary in southern Portugal. The fishermen here still use traditional methods, and the network of jetties has been expanded over the years to enable them to get to and from their boats at low tide. The quay draws photographers from as far afield as the United States and Japan, and I must have taken more than 100 photos of it myself. On this day there wasn’t so much as a breeze. I mounted my 5D on a tripod and used my Lee ProGlass 0.9 ND filter to obtain a slow shutter speed, and an ND grad to hold back the sky.”

**We say** “This is a stunning shot of a striking subject, João. You obviously know the location well, and you’ve timed and composed the shot perfectly, so the lines of the jetty lead the eye to the sunset; the colours are beautiful, and the rugged detail of the pier contrasts nicely with the smooth water and sky. It must have been an incredibly still day, because despite the slow shutter speed the clouds aren’t ‘streaky’, and you can make out the writing on the boat. Our only concern is that the jetty itself is quite dark, and doesn’t stand out well enough against the dark water and sky, so we have done some selective tweaking. We’ve used Levels to lighten the jetty, and boosted the local contrast to really bring out the texture and detail in the timbers, masking both effects using three gradients, so that the sky and the water are unaffected.”

- 01** The curves of the jetty lead the eye towards the setting sun, which is nicely placed at the top-left intersection of the third lines
- 02** The dramatic sky is beautifully reflected in the glass-like water, and the lines of the clouds subtly mirror the lines of the jetty
- 03** The jetty is quite dark; lightening it and boosting its detail creates contrast, and makes the composition even more effective



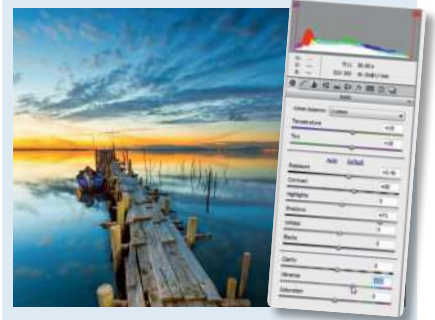




## STEP BY STEP

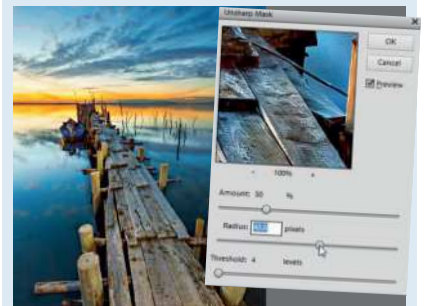
### Now try this...

How João can enhance his image in Elements



### ACR adjustments

Open the JPEG image in Camera Raw. Set Temperature and Tint to +10, Exposure to +0.25, Shadows to +60, Contrast to +20 and Vibrance to +20. Open the image in Elements and duplicate the background layer.



### Local contrast

Go to Enhance>Unsharp Mask and set Amount to 50% and Radius to 40 pixels. Add a mask to the layer, select the Gradient tool and set the foreground colour to black. In the Options panel tick Transparency and Linear, then click Edit and select Foreground to Transparent.



### Selective exposure

Draw one gradient to mask the effect from the sky, and two more to mask the water. Add a Levels adjustment layer, and Alt-drag the mask from Layer 1 to the Levels layer's mask to copy it. Set the Highlights to 220 and Midtones to 1.10 to lighten just the pier. ●

### Woody

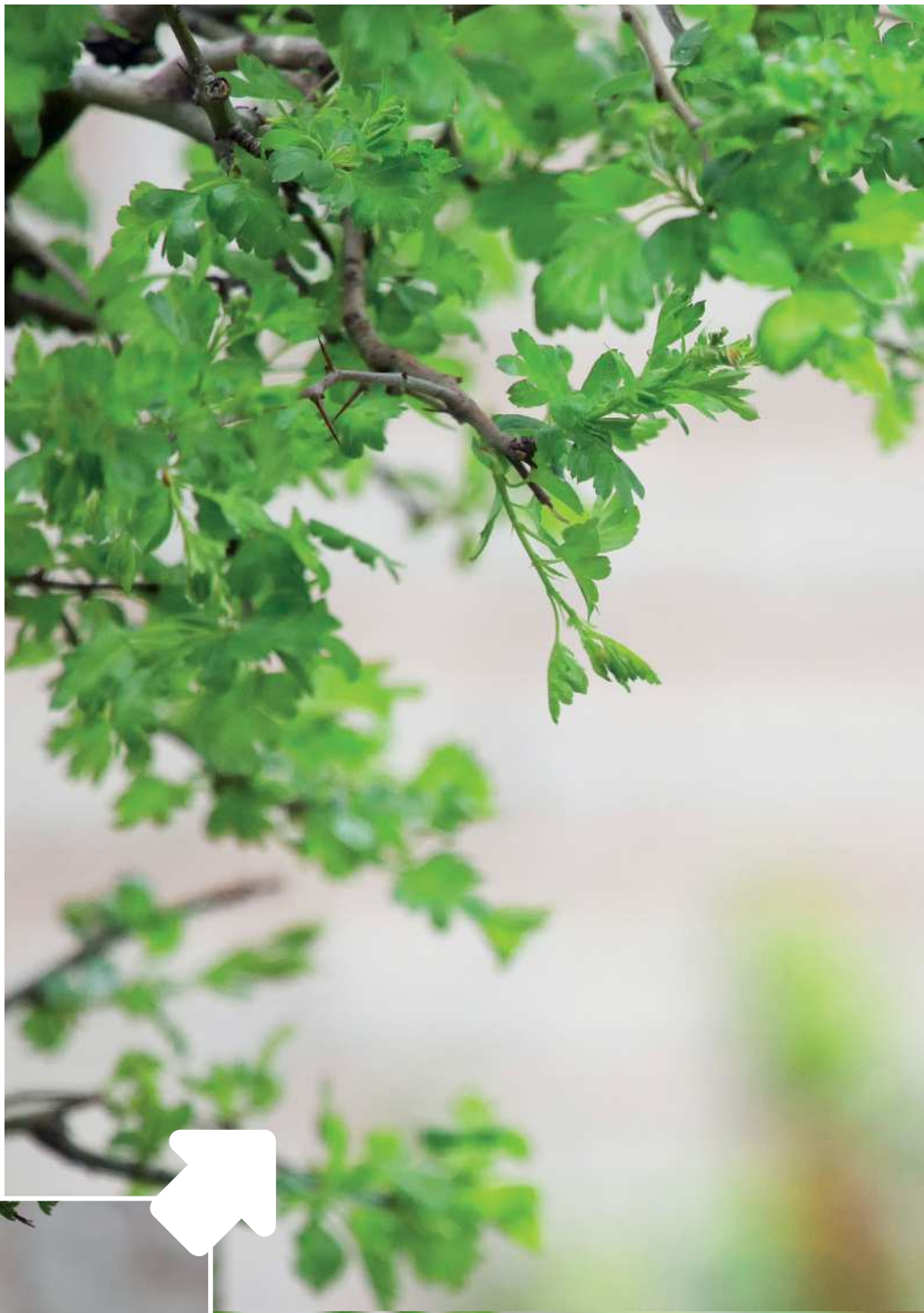
BY STEPHEN COSTIGAN



**Canon EOS 5D Mk III**  
**Canon EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS USM**  
Aperture **f/5.6**  
Shutter speed **1/1000 sec**

**Stephen says** “I’ve been trying to photograph this woodpecker in my garden for several weeks now, but it rarely settles for more than a few seconds before flying off, so eventually I decided that my best option was to set the camera up inside the house, and shoot through the French windows. I mounted my 5D Mk III with 100-400mm lens on my tripod and attached a cable release. To obtain the correct focusing distance, and to stop the autofocus system from ‘hunting’, I autofocused on the coconut shell and then switched to manual focus. The bird’s movements are extremely rapid, so to capture a sharp shot I selected a shutter speed of 1/1000 sec at f/5.6, which meant I had to bump up the ISO to 800, and used a focal length of 400mm. In post-processing I cropped the image at little, reduced the noise and sharpened it.”

**We say** “Well done, Stephen – you’ve done a really good job of photographing a notoriously shy and skittish bird. Your composition is strong, with the woodpecker placed on the right of the frame, and your aperture is ideal for this kind of shot – f/5.6 at 400mm is wide enough to blur the background, but with enough depth of field to keep all of the bird in sharp focus. Pre-focusing on the coconut shell was a good move too, as your focusing is spot on. My only criticism is that the shot looks too dark – it’s underexposed by about a stop, so increasing your ISO to 1600 would’ve fixed this. However, we can easily brighten things up in Elements! First, I’ve applied a slight crop, then I’ve brightened the image, and I’ve also boosted the colours both globally and selectively – see the walkthrough for the details.”



**01** Good use of technique means the bird’s whole body is in focus

**02** The aperture used is wide enough to suitably blur the background



## PHOTO CRITIQUE

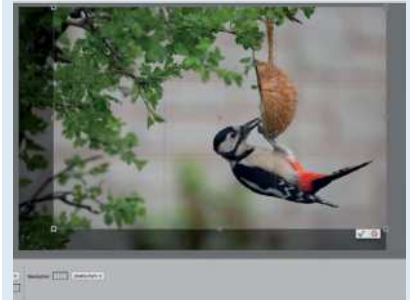
**03** The shot is under-exposed by about a stop, but this is easily fixed



### STEP BY STEP

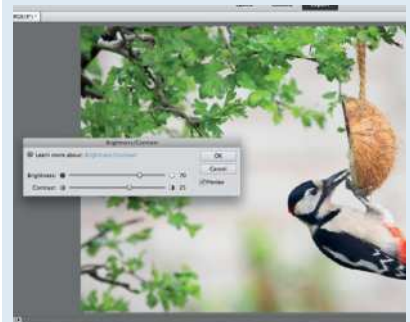
## Now try this...

How Stephen can improve his bird portrait in Elements



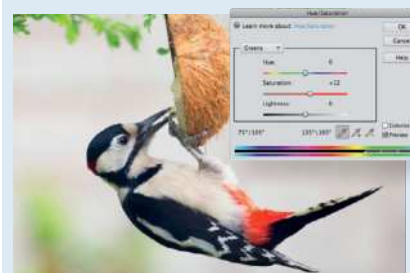
### Crop in

In Elements, I've used the Crop tool to crop the image at the same 3x2 (or 6x4) ratio of the original shot to lose the sharper foliage in the bottom-left corner. Using the rule of thirds grid I've placed the woodpecker on the right third line for a balanced composition.



### Brighten the image

A Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer offers a quick and simple way to fix under-exposed images. Here I've set Brightness to 70, which has lifted the image while retaining the detail in the lighter feathers on the woodpecker's chest, and I've also boosted the Contrast to 25.



### Tweak the colours

Next I've added a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer, and set Saturation to +15 to boost the overall colours. I then selected Greens from the menu and set Saturation to +12 to lift the foliage, and selected Reds and set Saturation to -8 to tone down the bird's feathers.

# Porth Colmon

BY ALAN LODGE



**Canon EOS 5D Mk II**  
**Canon EF 17-40mm f/4L USM**  
Aperture **f/16**  
Shutter speed **20 secs**

**Alan says** “This shot was taken at Porth Colmon – it’s my favourite spot on the North Wales coast, and I try to spend as much time as possible down on the rocks at sunset. This shot was taken in the evening after a hot sunny day with no cloud, but as the sun started to set, some clouds began to form on the horizon. I waited until the sun had gone down, and crossed my fingers that the clouds would light up – they did, and I was very happy that my wait had paid off. It’s always hard to expose the rocks properly, as they’re so dark. I shot in raw, and used a Lee 0.6 ND filter, which in tandem with the narrow aperture of f/16 gave me the long exposure I was after to smooth the sea. I also used a 0.9 ND grad to hold back the sky while bringing out as much detail in the rocks as possible. Apart from some sensor dust marks I’m happy with the shot, although I’d still like to have captured more detail in the rocks – I’ll try again next time!”

**We say** “This is a great long-exposure seascape, Alan. The sea and sky are well-exposed, and the colours of the sky and the reflection in the blurred water are spectacular. The rocks are a little under-exposed, as you say, but even shooting raw it’s hard to expose such a high-contrast scene, and if you’d exposed for that shadow detail you’d have clipped the colours in the sky; when we talk about clipping we’re often referring to pure white highlights, but if you’ve got strong, bright colours it’s possible to clip these too, so they become patches of flat orange or red, with no gradation in tone. I like how you’ve used the curve of the shoreline to frame the central rocks, although for me the composition is a little too simplistic with the horizon in the middle. I’ve applied a fairly radical crop, going from landscape format to portrait, and turning a conventional seascape into something that, without the context of the shoreline, is more abstract. It also puts the horizon on the top third line. With your large 21Mp raw image from your full-frame EOS 5D Mk II, we’re still left with a good-sized usable image. I’ve also lightened the water to bring it closer in tone to the sky and muted the sky colours a touch, so the central rocks become the main focus against a wash of colour; the blurred water adds to the abstract feel. Hope you like it!”



## PHOTO CRITIQUE



- 01** Well-exposed to capture the spectacular colours of the sky and its reflection
- 02** Nice use of the shoreline to frame the central cluster of rocks
- 03** The composition is a bit too symmetrical, and the foreground rocks are dark



## STEP BY STEP

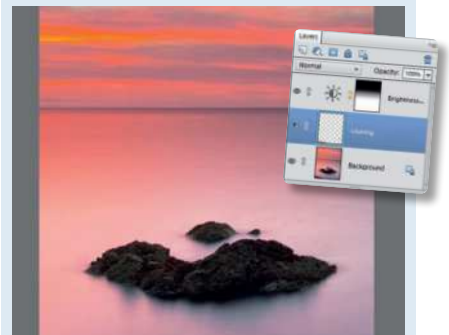
### Now try this...

How Alan can enhance his sunset seascape in Elements



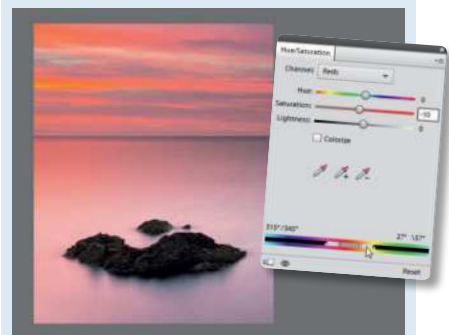
#### Portrait crop

Take the Crop tool, choose 8x10in from the crop preset menu and crop as shown, then use the Clone Stamp tool on a new layer to remove the bits of rock from the edges of the frame, and the dust spots.



#### Brighten the foreground

Add a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer and set Brightness to 20. Take the Gradient tool, and draw a black-to-white linear gradient on the mask so that just the foreground is lightened.

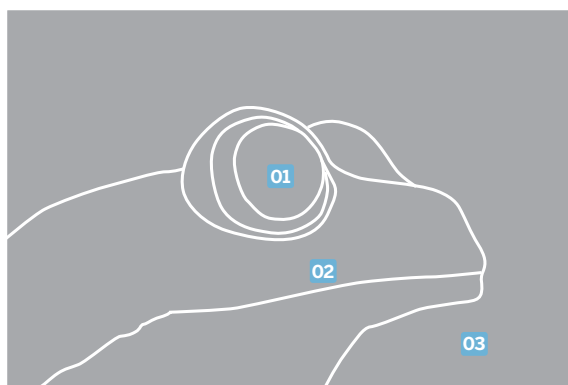


#### Tone down the reds

Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Choose Reds from the menu, set Saturation to -10, then drag the right-hand pair of markers at the foot of the panel right a touch, so that the oranges are desaturated, along with the reds.



### PHOTO CRITIQUE



**01** The image is nicely composed, and the all-important eye is perfectly sharp

**02** The shot is well-exposed to capture detail from the dark eye to the highlights

**03** The background object in the bottom-right of the frame is a little bit distracting

## Tree Frog

BY PAUL DIXON



**Canon EOS 7D**  
**Canon EF 100mm f/2.8L IS USM Macro**  
 Aperture **f/14**  
 Shutter speed **1/160 sec**

**Paul says** “I recently won a day-long photography workshop with Wild Arena at Knowsley Safari Park, near Liverpool. Canon made a range of equipment available for the winners to try, including the EOS 6D, 5D and 1D X. The morning was spent driving around the park using telephoto lenses, and I got to try out the EF 200-400mm f/4L IS USM Extender 1.4x and EF 500mm f/4L IS USM. In the afternoon we took macro shots in a small studio. This tree frog was placed on a twig positioned between two studio lights, and a fine water mist was sprayed onto it and into the air. I knelt down to take the picture from slightly below, focusing on the eye.”

**We say** “You were very lucky to get the chance to try out all that high-end kit, Paul, although of course, your 7D and 100mm f/2.8L are no slouches either, as this image shows. Amphibians and reptiles make great wildlife subjects, thanks to their colourful and intricately detailed skins, and tree frogs have the added appeal of those huge eyes. You’ve focused this shot nicely to ensure the eye is sharp, although the depth of field falls off a little too quickly for my liking because of the 100mm focal length – a slightly narrower aperture would have kept more of the head sharp. The frog is fairly well-positioned in the frame, but the object that looks like a piece of bark in the bottom-right corner is distracting, as it butts up against the frog’s chin and is similar in colour to the frog’s underside. I’ve cloned the object out; this is a relatively easy job, as the background has smoothly gradated and blurred tones, although it’s important to preserve the slightly out-of-focus edges of the frog’s head. With that done, I’ve made the frog stand out more from the background by lightening it, and boosting the colours and contrast with adjustment layers. Finally, I’ve cropped the image to make the frog a bit larger in the frame.”



### STEP BY STEP

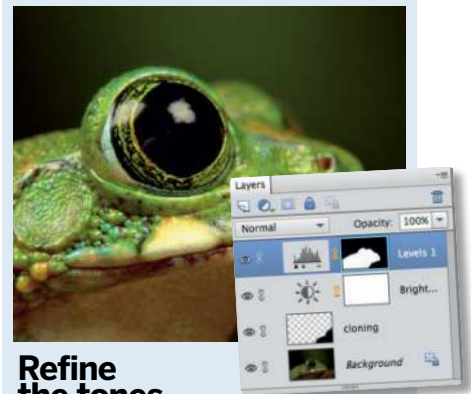
## Now try this...

How Paul can enhance his froggy close-up with Photoshop Elements



### Clone the background

Take the Clone Stamp tool and clone out the bark, Alt-clicking to sample suitable background pixels. Press Shift+[ to reduce the brush hardness when cloning close to the frog’s head.



### Refine the tones

Add a Brightness/Contrast layer, and set Brightness to 40. Add a Levels layer, set Midtones to 1.20 and Highlights to 230, then invert the mask and paint the effect into the frog.



### Boost the colours

Cmd/Ctrl-click the mask to load it as a selection. Add a Hue/Saturation layer – the attached mask will be identical to the Levels layer’s mask. Set Saturation to +15. Crop the image to finish. ●



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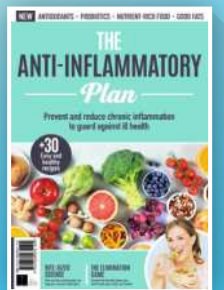
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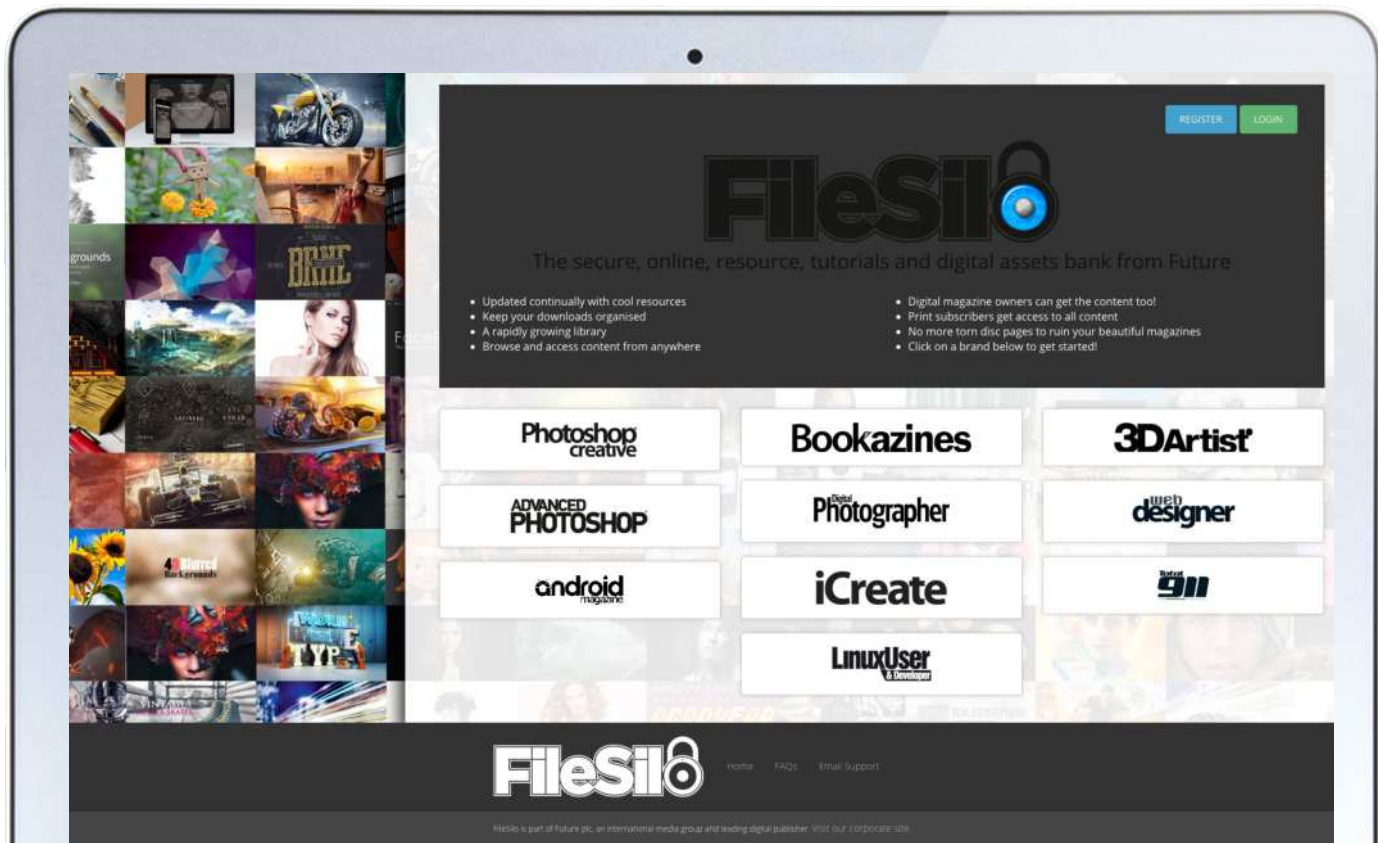
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# Teach yourself Photoshop Elements



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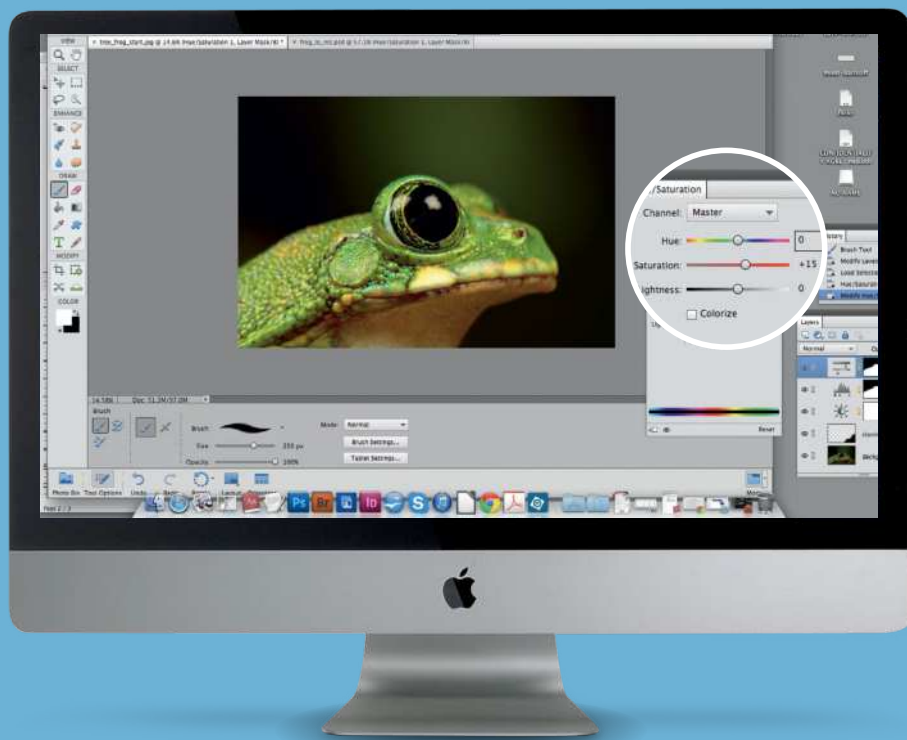
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