

# FIX PHOTOS FAST



with  
ACTIONS



By Linda Sattgast

## BONUS! Editing Tools—Photoshop Elements

Actions can do a lot, but there are some photo fixes that can't be done automatically. That's when you need to use the tools available to you in your program.

In this module I'm going to share my most frequently used favorite tools and also a few tips for some specific effects.

### 07-01 Content Aware

**Photos used in this lesson:** content-aware-1.jpg, content-aware-2.jpg

Content Aware is amazing. It's used throughout Photoshop Elements in various tools, but there's one place where you can access it easily as a stand alone fix—in the Fill Dialog box.

Use Content Aware when you want to get rid of something in your photo:

- Get the Lasso tool. In Tool Options choose New Selection and a Feather of 0.
- Click and drag a loose outline around the object you want to remove.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Edit > Fill Selection.
- When the dialog box appears, choose Content Aware from the drop down menu. The Blending Mode should be Normal and the Opacity 100%. Click OK.
- Press Ctrl D (Mac: Cmd D) to deselect.

Often that's all you need to get rid of the unwanted object, but always check for unnatural repeating patterns that give away the fact that the photo has been cloned.



Content Aware doesn't always give you perfect results, but it will get you most of the way there. In my second example photo, the shadow in the lower left corner is easily fixed with Content Aware.

- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to duplicate the photo layer.
- Make a selection using any selection tool you want.

- In the Menu Bar, choose Edit > Fill Selection, or use the shortcut to get the Fill dialog box: Shift Backspace (Mac: Shift Delete). Keep the same settings as before and click OK.
- Press Ctrl D (Mac: Cmd D) to deselect.
- Repeat with the shadow of the person, making sure your selection doesn't overlap the shoes or pants but comes right up to them.
- If necessary use the keyboard shortcuts to add or subtract from your selection: Press Shift and draw with the Lasso tool to add to your selection. Press Alt (Mac: Opt) and draw with the Lasso tool to subtract from your selection.
- Apply Content Aware using Edit > Fill Selection and click OK using the same settings.
- If the fill isn't perfect, you can draw a new selection and try it again.
- When you get really close to an object you want to keep, however, it's usually better to use the Clone Stamp tool to finish it off. Since I teach cloning in a different video, I don't go over it in this lesson.

Once you've cloned around the image, here's how to bring back some of the shadow.

- In the Layers panel, click on the Add Layer Mask icon to get a white layer mask.
- Get the Brush tool. In Tool Options open the Brush Picker and choose a soft round brush. The Mode should be normal. Set the Opacity to 5% by pressing the numbers 0 and 5 in quick succession.
- Make sure the Foreground color is black. If it isn't, press the letter D and then the letter X.
- Brush over the shadow area to bring some of it back.



## 07-02 Spot Healing Brush

**Photos used in this lesson:** spot-healing-brush-1.jpg, spot-healing-brush-2.jpg

The Spot Healing Brush is great for getting rid of small unwanted objects on your photo.

- I always use a hard round brush with this tool, though you can experiment with different settings in the Brush Picker menu.
- In Tool Options, choose Content Aware. There are two other options, but I never use them.
- I don't check Sample All Layers. You won't get any effect if you stamp on a blank layer, so I simply use a layer copy or a merged layer.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to duplicate the original photo layer.
- If I'm doing a multi-step fix with actions and other tools, I double click on the name and change it to Spot Healing Brush.
- Adjust the size of your brush with the left or right Bracket key to make it a little bigger than the item you want to remove.
- Click over an item, and Photoshop Elements will remove it and fill it with content that is similar to its surroundings.
- You can also click and drag to brush over an item you want to remove.





The Spot Healing Brush is also good for removing lines. I often use it in heritage photos to get rid of scratches, but it also comes in handy at times with digital photos.

My photo example was of a house with some electrical or telephone lines that I wanted to remove.

- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to duplicate the photo.
- Double click on the name and change it to Spot Healing Brush.
- Click once and let go of the mouse at one end of the line.
- Press Shift and click once a little further down the line. The Spot Healing Brush will fill in the space with Content Aware Fill.
- Shift click further down the line to keep removing a line.
- In areas with little information, like the sky, you can get away with a bigger brush and longer spaces between Shift clicking.
- In areas with more information, make your brush barely bigger than the line and Shift click a shorter distance.
- When the line goes across an object, start on one side of the object and Shift click on the other side. Sometimes that works well, and other times you have to brush a shorter distance.
- If you don't like the result either undo and try it a slightly different angle or different brush size. I sometimes use small brush strokes across a line (perpendicular to the line) instead of along the line.



## 07-03 Other Healing Tools

**Photo used in this lesson:** healing-tools.jpg

In this video I demonstrated all of the Healing Tools with a photo of a lighthouse by the ocean.

**Content Aware Fill:** Remove a big rock on the left.

- Use the Lasso tool to make a selection outline around the rock.
- Choose Edit > Fill Selection > Content Aware. Leave the Mode normal and the Opacity 100% and click OK.

**Spot Healing Brush and Healing Brush:** Remove a smaller rock.

- Brush over the rock with the Spot Healing Brush.
- If the Spot Healing Brush chooses content you don't want, use the Healing Brush tool instead.
- Press Alt (Mac: Opt) and click where you want the source of the copied content to be.
- Brush over the object you want to remove.
- The Healing Brush tool is similar to the Clone Stamp tool. The difference is that the Healing Brush analyzes the color and luminosity of the area you're painting on and it automatically changes the cloned pixels to match.

**Content Aware Move Tool:** This tool removes an object from one location and blends it into another location of your choice.

- In Tool Options choose the New Selection icon, though notice that this also has the set of familiar selection icons.
- Set the Mode to Move and the Healing to Medium. If you don't get the result you want, you can try adjusting the slider, but Medium is a good starting point.



- Draw a loose selection outline around the object.
- Click inside the object and move it to a new spot. Photoshop Elements will fill in the original area with content.
- Press Ctrl D (Mac: Cmd D) to deselect.

So those are the Healing Tools and Content Aware Move tool that can help you do some extraordinary things with your photo to get it just as you like it.

## 07-04 Clone Stamp Tool

**Photos used in this lesson:** clone-stamp1.jpg

The Clone Stamp tool has a lot of potential for fixing photos, and it also some quirks that you should be aware of:

### Prepare to Clone

- Select the Clone Stamp tool.
- To use the Clone Stamp tool to its fullest potential, you need to understand how brushes work. If you don't feel really comfortable using brushes and brush shortcuts, please watch the pre-class brush videos before attempting to clone.
- In Tool Options, set the Mode to Normal and the Opacity and Flow to 100%.
- Check Aligned.
- In the Sample drop down menu choose Current and Below. I choose this because I almost always clone on a blank layer. This gives me a great amount of flexibility to adjust the cloning afterwards and to add a layer mask, if I need to. If you clone directly on the photo, you're stuck with what you get.
- In the Layers panel, click on the Create A New Layer icon.
- If you're keeping all your edits neat and tidy, double click on the name and change it to Clone. I even say where I'm cloning, e.g. Child's Face, because if I clone more than one area, I like to put each clone on a separate layer. Press Enter to commit the name change.

### Aligned Cloning

- The Clone Stamp Tool samples pixels from one area of your photo and paints them on another area. It does not blend them into the new area like the Healing Brush does. It just paints over the top of the existing pixels.
- To set the sample area, press Alt (Mac: Opt) and click on your photo. The cursor will change to a cross hair target when you press the Alt/Opt key. When you let go of the Alt/Opt key, it goes back to a brush.
- Move to another part of the photo and you'll see the area you sampled inside the brush outline.
- Click and drag to brush the sampled pixel area in the new spot.
- If you have Aligned checked in Tool Options, you can let go of the mouse, and then click and drag to brush some more, and your cloning brush will stay aligned to the same distance from the original spot.

### Cloning that is not Aligned

When you uncheck Aligned in Tool Options, you get a different result.

- Press Alt (Mac: Opt) and click to set your source.
- Move to a new spot and brush to paint the source pixels.
- If you let go of the mouse and start to paint again, your source will jump back to the original source and start cloning from the same starting point again.
- Every time you let go of the mouse and begin to paint again, you start painting from the original source point.
- Whether or not you should check Aligned depends very much on what you're trying to achieve. Either way can be very helpful in the right cloning situation.

## Brush Edge Hardness

- The hardness of your brush is very important. If you're cloning in an area where you want to blend in, use a soft brush.
- To make your brush softer, open the Brush Picker in Tool Options and choose a softer brush, or you can use the keyboard shortcut, Shift Left Bracket.
- If you're brushing close to an edge, a soft brush will spill over onto the edge, so in that case, a harder brush is desirable.
- Press Shift Right Bracket four times to take your brush to the maximum hardness. Then press Shift Left Bracket once to make the brush slightly softer, but still maintain a good edge

## Cloning Example

- Anything you want to get rid of that isn't touching something you want to keep can be removed with Content Aware.
- Anything you want to add in will need to be cloned. In the video I demonstrated by extending the ceiling and top of the wall so it went all the way to the left.
- In the Layers panel, click on the Create a New Layer icon.
- Use a soft brush.
- Make sure Aligned is checked in Tool Options.
- Alt click (Mac: Opt click) on the line far enough over that you won't be cloning part of the man's head later on.
- Zoom in and line up the image inside the brush with the line just before the area you want to clone.
- Click and make your first brush stroke and let go of the mouse.
- Zoom out a bit so you can see what you're doing and brush to finish cloning away the ducts.
- If you get your brush lined up correctly, the rest is easy.

## Clone Brush Opacity

- The opacity of your brush makes a lot of difference. Lower the opacity if you want a softer effect.
- To demonstrate, I cloned away the shiny spot on the man's forehead.
- Press the number 2 to get a 20% opacity brush.
- Adjust the size of your brush as needed.
- Make sure your brush is at 0% Hardness.
- If you don't have a lot of forehead available to sample, it would be better to uncheck Aligned in Tool Options.
- Alt click (Mac: Opt click) on the forehead to set a source.
- I don't usually brush in strokes when I work on shiny spots. I usually click and let go of the mouse and then click again until the shine is softened.
- Because Aligned isn't checked, each time I click, the Clone Stamp tool samples the original spot I selected as the source.
- You can adjust the cloning even more by changing the opacity of the clone layer. That's another reason why I like to clone on a separate layer and use a new layer for each area of the photo that I work on.





## 07-05 Clone Stamp Tool Tips

**Photos used in this lesson:** clone-stamp2.jpg, clone-stamp3.jpg, clone-stamp4.jpg

### Repeat Patterns

One of the biggest offenders in cloning is accidentally producing repeat patterns that tip everyone off that the photo is cloned.

- To avoid repeat patterns, sample a new cloning source frequently using the Alt key (Mac: Opt key).
- Adjust the size of your brush frequently. Use the brush shortcut of pressing the right or left bracket keys.
- When you see a repeat item, clone over it again.
- It's easy to create fake looking clones, so keep a sharp eye out for repeating patterns.



- Use short brush strokes. If you don't let go of the mouse frequently when cloning, you will "run into" the object you're trying to remove, and it will begin to reappear.



- Here's one more tip that will help you clone better: Use a selection outline to define a boundary for your cloning. I often start with the Quick Selection tool to select the object or person I don't want to clone over.
- Keep the selection simple. Only select the area next to where you want to clone.
- In the Menu Bar choose Select > Inverse. This will allow you to clone next to the object or person without spilling over.



## 07-06 Clone: Soften Dappled Light

**Photo used in this lesson:** clone-dappled-light.jpg

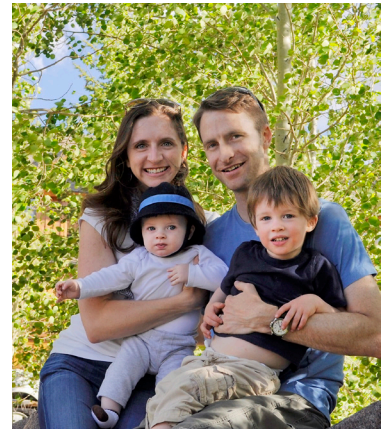
This student photo started out rather dark. Here are the actions I used to improve it:

Lighter: Less Contrast 2X  
Contrast-25% opacity  
Lighter: Screen 2X with a layer mask to brush it only where it was really needed.  
Merge Visible  
Unsharp Mask-medium  
High Pass Sharpen SOME  
Merge Visible  
Brush Away Blemishes to lighten some areas of the eyes and face  
Reduce Noise-minimum with a layer mask  
Merge Visible

This brought the photo to a much better level than where it started, but there were still some trace shadows of the dappled light, which will always be the case with dappled light. In areas you consider important, you can use cloning to soften the effect of the shadows.

- In the Layers panel, click on the Create a new Layer icon and change the name to Clone Shadows.
- Get the Clone Stamp tool.
- In Tool Options the Mode should be Normal. Reduce the Opacity to 20%. Uncheck Aligned and choose Sample All Layers.
- Make sure your brush is at 0% hardness.
- Alt click (Mac: Opt click) to set your source on either the dark area of the light area. I chose the light area.
- Brush with short strokes or simply click along the edge of the shadow. Repeat until the edge has become soft enough that it doesn't attract attention.
- I did the same thing with the boy's cheek and with the man's shoulder and the woman's forehead.

Don't do this on every single dappled shadow—just the ones that are distracting to the main focus of the photo. If all you do is soften the edge, that's enough. You don't need to eliminate the shadows entirely.



## 07-07 Clone: Remove Hot Spots

**Photo used in this lesson:** clone-hot-spot.jpg

A hot spot is an area of a photo that is so blown out that there is little or no information left to work with.

I started by adjusting the overall photo using the following actions:

- Lighter: Less Contrast
- Shadows/Highlights-mild
- Reduce Yellow set to 48% opacity
- Merge Visible
- Reduce Red
- High Key
- Contrast
- Reduce Red
- Unsharp Mask-medium
- Sharpen Some-High Pass
- Spot Healing Brush to remove the blue reflection

Here's how to fix the blown out spot:

- In the Layers panel, make the top layer the active layer.
- Click on the Create a New Layer icon.
- Double click on the name of the new layer and rename it Clone Arm. Press Enter to commit the change.
- Get the Clone Stamp tool. Check Sample All Layers but do not check Aligned. The Mode should be normal and set the Opacity at 30%.
- Alt click (Mac: Opt click) to set the clone source on a good part of the arm.
- Click over the hot spot repeatedly until it's covered.
- Change the Blend mode to Hue. The cloned area will now only affect the color of the arm, taking away the yellow and making it match the rest of the arm. However there's still an area that is so blown out that there isn't much color at all.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to duplicate the clone layer.
- Change the blend mode of the duplicate layer to Darken. This will make the cloning show up only on areas that are lighter than the clone color, so that keeps it from affecting the tattoo as much.
- Reduce the Opacity of the copied clone layer so you can see a little bit of shine coming through, which looks more natural. I used 80% opacity.

### **Optional:** Add Skin Texture

To make the arm more believable and appear more curved, I added skin texture from another section of the man's arm.

- In the Layers panel, click on a previous layer that is merged and shows the entire photo.
- Get the Lasso tool. In Tool Options click on the Add to Selection icon. Leave the Feather at 0.
- Click and drag a selection outline around part of the skin on his forearm.
- Right click (Mac: Ctrl click) on the selection and choose Feather. Enter 3 px and click OK.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to copy the selection to a new layer.





- Click and drag the new layer to the top of the Layers panel.
- Press Ctrl T (Mac: Cmd T) to get Transform options. Rotate and move the arm texture to fit above the cloned area, making sure the shadow is on the right side. Double click inside the outline to commit the change.
- Reduce the opacity until it looks good to you. I used 30%.
- Change the blend mode to Darker Color to make it blend in a little better.
- If you need to, get the Eraser tool and erase around the arm to make sure none of the texture is outside the arm edge.
- With the added skin texture, you may need to adjust the opacity of previous clone layers. I changed the Darken Mode clone layer to 60%.
- And finally, click on the top layer in the Layers panel and run Merge Visible.

## 07-08 Clone: Remove Shadows

**Photos used in this lesson:** clone-shadow.jpg

Using flash when taking photos often results in an ugly shadow. If a photo is important, you may want to clone away the shadow or minimize it so it looks more natural. It's actually easier than you might think.

- Use your favorite selection tool to create a selection outline around the person or object that has a harsh shadow. You don't have to select the entire area—just the part that is next to the shadow. I like to start with the Quick Selection tool and finish up with the Lasso tool.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Select > Modify > Feather. Enter .5 px and click OK.
- In the Menu Bar, choose Select > Inverse.
- In the Layers panel, click on the Create a New Layer icon.
- Double click on the name and change it to Clone Shadow. Click on the layer to commit the change.
- Get the Clone Stamp tool.
- In Tool Options open the Brush Picker and choose a soft round brush. The Mode should be Normal and the Opacity and Flow 100%. Check Aligned and choose Sample All Layers.
- Zoom in to an area and begin to clone over the shadow. I like to sample on a line to make it easier to line up the cloning.
- If you would prefer not to see the selection outline, press Ctrl H (Mac: Cmd H) to temporarily hide the outline.
- If you've done a good job on the selection outline, you'll have a much easier time cloning.
- When you're finished, adjust the opacity of the clone layer to give a hint of a shadow without a harsh edge. I used 80% opacity. Be sure to deselect by pressing Ctrl D (Mac: Cmd D) when you're finished cloning.

## Chin Shadows

Here's how to minimize harsh chin shadows.

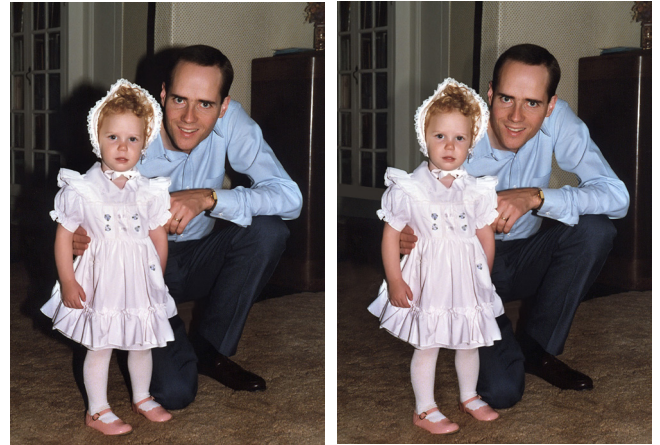
- In the Layers panel, click on the original photo layer.
- Run the Brush Away Blemishes action.
- In Tool Options, set the Opacity at 30%.
- Brush away some of the dark shadow.
- Finish the action.

In my photo example, the shadow was so black that the resulting chin shadow color was a little gray. Here's how to correct the color:

- Keep your Brush opacity at 30%.
- In Tool Options, change the Mode to Color.

- Press Alt (Mac: Opt) to get the Brush Picker icon and click on a more natural skin color to sample the color.
- Brush over the shadow area to make it browner. The more you brush over an area, the more color you'll add until it is as saturated as the original sampled color. Don't make the color too bright, since it's a shadow area.

Get in the habit of turning off your flash, but if you do get a special photo with an ugly flash shadow, try cloning to turn it into a keeper!



## 07-09 Dodge & Burn Tools

**Photos used in this lesson:** dodge-burn1.jpg

The Dodge and Burn tools are great to use for a quick fix when you want to adjust the lighting. On my demo photo I used the Dodge & Burn tools to add a bit of drama.

- The Dodge tool makes pixels lighter.
- In Tool Options, choose a soft brush from the Brush Picker. If you don't see a soft brush, open the menu at the top of the Brush Picker and choose Default Brushes.
- You can choose which range of pixels you want the Dodge tool to affect: Shadows, Midtones, or Highlights. Most of the time I use Midtones.
- Keep the Exposure low. Use 10 or 20% at the most for general use.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to duplicate the layer and change the name to Dodge & Burn.
- Brush over the area that needs to be lightened.
- Sometimes it helps to simply click on an area that needs to be lightened. Be careful not to lighten too much.
- The Burn tool does just the opposite. It darkens pixels.
- Use a soft brush.
- Most of the time you'll use Midtones for the Range.
- Keep the exposure low, 10 to 20% or sometimes less.



I often use the Burn tool to darken the edges of my photo and create a hint of a vignette. I finished up by running the Contrast action and clicking Continue to apply the effect.

## 07-10 Cropping Best Practices

**Photos used in this lesson:** crop.jpg

Cropping is one of the basic things we do with our photos, so this lesson is an overview of how to use the Crop tool.

Starting with Photoshop Elements 13 you have a feature called Crop Suggestions.

- Mouse over a thumbnail in Tool Options to see a preview of a crop suggestion.
- Click on a thumbnail to retain it as the active crop outline, which you can still adjust.

- Press Shift and click and drag from a corner handle if you want to maintain the proportions of the crop.
- Click and drag from any anchor point without pressing the Shift key to resize and change the proportions of the crop.
- Click and drag inside the crop outline to move it around.
- Click on the green check mark to commit the crop or click the cancel icon to cancel the crop.
- If you would rather create your own crop outline, or if you have an earlier version, simply click and drag with the Crop tool.

Here's a simple trick I use fairly often:

- If you want to maintain the proportions of the original photo, click and drag with the Crop tool from just outside one corner of the photo to just outside the opposite corner to place a crop outline around the entire photo. Then press Shift and click and drag from a corner handle to maintain the original proportions.

### Rule of Thirds Principle

In Tool Options you have a choice of grid overlays—None, Rule of Thirds, and regular Grid. I find the Rule of Thirds grid to be the most helpful. This puts two horizontal lines and two vertical lines at equal distances on your photo, creating a grid pattern with lines that intersect in four places.

The Rule of Thirds states that if you put the area of interest over any one of the intersecting points, your photo will have a more pleasing composition.

Note that you can also choose Pixels/Inch or Pixels/Centimeter from the menu. There's also a field for resolution. For the time being, I won't do anything to the Resolution field.

- Click on the check mark to commit the crop.
- Now let's check the resolution: Choose Image > Resize > Image Size or use the keyboard shortcut, Ctrl Alt I (Mac: Cmd Opt I). The original resolution of this photo as it came from my camera was 350 ppi, so you can see that cropping freehand, without entering anything into the Resolution field, maintains the same resolution.
- Click OK or Cancel to close the Image Size dialog box.
- I'll undo by pressing Ctrl Z (Mac: Cmd Z).

### Choosing a Particular Aspect Ratio

When scrapbooking I rarely crop a photo to a particular size. I might crop it to create a better composition before I put it on my scrapbook page, but I don't try to create a specific size until after it's on my page, and then I use the Transform tool to resize.

If I'm planning to print a photo, however, I need to choose an appropriate printing size. Open the Crop menu to see standard sizes. I'll choose 4 x 6.

- The size I choose is entered in the Width and Height boxes.
- Click on the double arrows between the Width and Height fields to switch the dimensions if you want a portrait orientation instead of landscape orientation.
- I get new crop suggestions based on the new aspect ratio I chose. I can also simply click and drag to create a crop outline.
- I can resize the crop outline, but I cannot change the aspect ratio.
- Click on the check mark to commit the crop.

When I check the Resolution by pressing Ctrl Alt I (Mac: Cmd Opt I), I see that Photoshop Elements created my crop by packing more pixels together per inch. There's nothing inherently wrong with that, but you really don't need more than 300 ppi to print a photo. Anything more is overkill and simply adds to the file size unnecessarily.

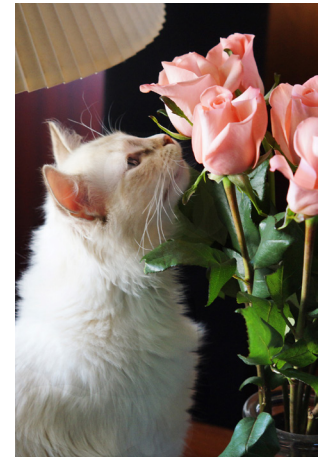


- Click Cancel.
- Undo the Crop (Windows: Ctrl Z, Mac: Cmd Z).
- Enter 300 in the Resolution field.
- Click and drag a crop outline and adjust it as necessary.
- Click on the check mark to commit the change.
- My viewing image gets smaller after cropping. That's because Photoshop Elements threw away some pixels in the process of cropping. Since I had more than enough pixels to begin with, that's not a problem.
- Press Ctrl 0 (Mac: Cmd 0) to return to full viewing size.

If you check the image size (Windows: Ctrl Alt I, Mac: Cmd Opt I), you'll see 4x6 inches at 300 ppi resolution, and that's what you need for printing.

In summary, don't worry about resolution if you're cropping to create a better composition for your photo before you move it onto your scrapbook page—unless you actually want a particular size on your scrapbook page.

If you plan to print a photo, however, enter 300 ppi in the Resolution field.



## 07-11 Straighten Crooked Photos

**Photos used in this lesson:** straighten1.jpg and straighten2.jpg

Straightening crooked photos in Photoshop Elements is very simple.

- Get the Straighten Tool.
- In Tool Options choose which way you want to straighten. I recommend the middle option that straightens and crops.
- Leave Rotate All Layers checked and choose the middle icon, Remove Background.
- Click and drag a line that indicates where a straight horizontal line should be. I'll drew a line along the pier.
- Let go of the mouse and the photo will straighten and crop the photo into a rectangular shape.

It works a little differently when you drag a vertical line.

- Click and hold with the Straighten tool, then press the Ctrl key (Mac: Cmd key), and then drag out a line along an edge that should be vertical.
- When you let go of the mouse, the photo will straighten and crop and stay vertical.
- If you press the Ctrl key (Mac: Cmd key) before clicking with the Straighten tool, you'll just get the Move tool symbol, since that's the keyboard shortcut for temporarily accessing the Move tool. So always click with the Straighten tool first before pressing Ctrl or Cmd.

In some earlier versions of Photoshop Elements the Straighten tool will have a different icon and you'll need to access the three cropping options from a menu in the Options Bar.



## 07-12 Replace Sky

**Photos used in this lesson:** sky-1.jpg and sky-2.jpg

- With the Move tool, click and drag a photo of a good sky onto your image that has a blah sky.
- At the top of the Layers panel, change the blend mode from Normal to Darken.
- If you see the sky over areas where it doesn't belong, press Alt (Mac: Opt) and click on the Add Layer Mask icon on the Layers panel to get a black mask that hides the sky.
- Get the Brush tool. In Tool Options open the Brush Picker and choose a soft round brush. If you don't see a soft round brush, open the menu at the top of the Brush Picker and choose Default Brushes. Make sure the Blend Mode is Normal and the Opacity is 100%.
- Make sure the Foreground Color Chip is white. If it isn't, press the letter D.
- Brush on your photo to bring in the sky. You don't have to be super careful because the blend mode will only allow the sky to show over areas that are lighter than the sky.
- It helps sometimes to select part of your photo for better precision as you brush.
- Click on the visibility icon of the sky layer to hide the layer temporarily.
- Click on your photo layer to make it the active layer.
- Get the Quick Selection tool. On your document, click and drag over an area of your photo that you want to select.
- In the Layers panel, click on the visibility icon of the sky layer to make it visible again.
- Click on the sky mask thumbnail to make it active.
- Brush on your document to hide or show the sky pixels.
- To invert the selection outline, in the Menu Bar choose Select > Inverse.

### Make the Sky and Photo Match

The sky you import must match your photo. If it doesn't you'll need to adjust either the sky or the photo. Here are the adjustments I made:

- Reduce the opacity of the sky layer to 50%.
- In the Layers panel, click on the photo layer and run the action Color: Warmer.
- Run the action Color: Contrast.
- Run the action Color: Lighter: SCREEN.
- If you want to move the sky to a different location, make the sky layer the active layer and click on the link icon between the sky layer thumbnail and the mask thumbnail. This will unlink the mask. Now you can use the Move tool to click and drag the sky to a new location, and the mask will stay in place. Re-link the mask, if you wish, by clicking between the thumbnails.



## 07-13 Glasses Glare Part 1

**Photos used in this lesson:** glasses-glare-1.jpg

Glasses glare can be a real problem. Most of the time you'll need to use a combination of cloning and copying parts of eyes. I like to work on one eye at a time:

- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to duplicate the photo layer.
- If you see some small imperfections, use the Spot Healing Brush to get rid of them. I removed several dots of glasses glare on the right side of the glasses.
- If you see an area that would cover up glasses glare on the opposite eye, get the Lasso tool. In Tool Options choose

the Add to Selection icon and set the Feather to 0.

- Click and drag to create a selection outline around the clear section of one eye.
- Right click (Mac: Ctrl click) and choose Feather. When the dialog box comes up, enter an amount of feathering appropriate for your photo. With a small or low resolution photo, 1 pixel is good. If you're working on a close up face in a higher resolution photo, you can use 3 to 5 pixels. Click OK.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to copy the selection to a new layer.
- Press the number 7 to reduce the opacity of this layer to 70%.
- Press Ctrl T (Mac: Cmd T) to get Transform options. Right click (Mac: Ctrl click) and choose Flip Horizontal.
- Click inside the outline and move the eye to the woman's left side. Line it up with her other eye. Keep in mind that the initial eye placement is for the outer eye. We'll deal with the direction of the iris and pupil later, but the outside of the eye has to match first. When you're satisfied, click on the check mark to commit the change.
- Press the number 0 to return to 100% opacity.
- In the Layers panel, click on the Add Layer Mask icon to get a white mask.
- Get the Brush tool. In Tool Options open the Brush Picker and choose a soft round brush. If you don't see a soft round brush, open the menu at the top of the Brush Picker and choose Default Brushes. Make sure the Mode is Normal. Set the Opacity to 20% by pressing the number 2.
- Make sure the Foreground Color Chip is black. If it isn't, press the letter D and then the letter X.
- Brush over areas you want to soften or remove, especially around the edges. Because your brush is at a low opacity, you will need to brush over an area several times to get the exact effect you want.

### Fix the Eye Focus

The woman's left eye is now slightly off focus, appearing to drift to her left. Often this is too minor to even notice, but you can adjust it if you want to.

- On the top layer, click on the eye thumbnail instead of the mask thumbnail.
- Get the Lasso tool and draw a selection outline around the iris and the white part of the eye in the outer corner of the woman's left eye.
- Right click (Mac: Ctrl click) and choose Feather. Enter 1 pixel and click OK.
- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to copy the iris to a new layer.
- Get the Move tool and press the left arrow key until the iris and pupil are lined up properly to match the right eye.
- You may need to add a layer mask to hide the edge of the eye.

Use similar steps to adjust the woman's right eye. I copied the inside corner of her left eye to use on her right eye, and I did a little bit of cloning to cover up the area that didn't get covered.

Remember that every glasses glare situation will be slightly different, so learn to think like a detective to create the best result!



### 07-14 Glasses Glare Part 2

**Photos used in this lesson:** glasses-glare-2.jpg, glasses-glare-3.jpg

Sometimes you can repair glasses glare by using eyes from a different photo.

- Get the Lasso tool. In Tool Options choose the Add to Selection icon and set the Feather to 0.



- Make a selection around one eye from a good photo and all the area inside the rim of the glasses.
- Right click (Mac: Ctrl click) and choose Feather. Enter 3 pixels and click OK.
- Press Ctrl C (Mac: Cmd C) to copy the selection.
- Click on the original photo to make it the active photo and press Ctrl V (Mac: Cmd V) to paste.
- Press Ctrl T (Mac: Cmd T) to get Transform options.
- Press Shift and click and drag from a corner handle to maintain proportions.
- If you need to change the proportion of the eye, click and drag from a side handle. For my photo I made the eye a little taller to mimic her wide open surprised eyes. Click on the check mark to commit the change.
- Click on the Add Layer Mask icon to get a white mask.
- Get the Brush tool. In Tool Options open the Brush Picker and choose a soft round brush. The Blend Mode should be normal and the Opacity and Flow should be 100%.
- Make sure the Foreground Color Chip is black. If it isn't, press the letter D and then the letter X.
- Brush away any part of the eye layer that you don't want.
- Follow the same steps to switch out the opposite eye.

### Match Lighting

When you use this method, sometimes the lighting from one photo won't match the other photo. In my example there was an area that was lighter than the rest of her skin. Here's how to fix lighting issues:

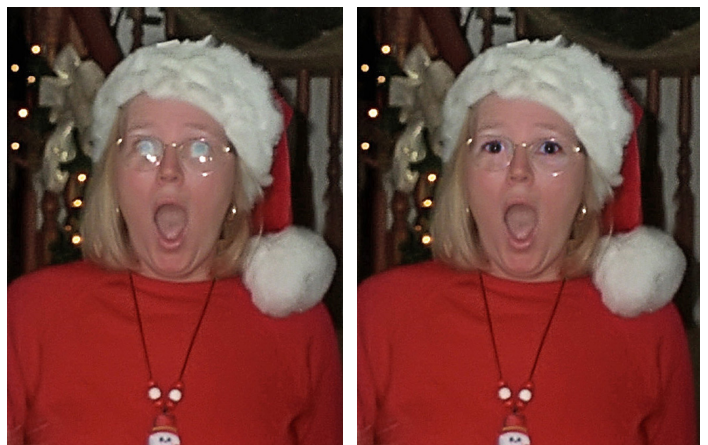
- In the Menu Bar, choose Layer > New Adjustment Layer > Levels. When the dialog box comes up, check Use Previous layer to Create Clipping Mask, and click OK.
- When the Levels dialog box comes up, move the middle slider under the histogram, or graph, to the left or right to adjust the lighting. Moving the slider slightly to the right will make this a little darker. I could also move the right Output Levels slider slightly to the left to darken the skin a little.
- You may need to paint on the Levels mask with the Brush tool to remove some of the effect where it isn't needed.

### Match Skin Coloring

Check the skin coloring to make sure it matches. My example had a slightly purple cast to it, so here's how to fix color problems:

- Click on the Create a New Layer icon.
- Change the Blend Mode at the top of the Layers panel from Normal to Color.
- With the Brush tool selected, press 5 to get 50% opacity.
- Make sure you're using a soft brush and the Blend Mode is Normal.
- Press Alt (Mac: Opt) to temporarily get the Color Picker tool. Click somewhere on the skin to select the color of skin you want.
- On your document, brush over any area that doesn't match the skin color.

So get creative when you need to fix glasses glare. Sometimes using eyes from another similar photo will do the trick!



## 07-15 Perspective Distortion

**Photos used in this lesson:** perspective-01.jpg, perspective-02.jpg, perspective-03.jpg

It's not uncommon for photos to be skewed when it comes to perspective. Sometimes that's perfectly fine, but other times you may want to eliminate or reduce the amount of distortion. I've already done a video on straightening photos, so this one will focus more on removing distortion.

Photoshop Elements has a filter for removing distortion, and it works especially well on barrel distortion, where the camera lens has made the straight lines of the stained glass window appear to be curved out on the sides.

- In the Menu Bar, choose Filter > Correct Camera Distortion.
- Under Remove Distortion, move the slider to fix the barrel distortion.
- The other slider that's good for distortion is Perspective Control. Move the Vertical or Horizontal Perspective sliders to adjust the perspective.
- You may not be able to get it perfectly lined up. If that's the case, you can always use a manual method that I use almost exclusively for perspective adjustments other than barrel distortion.

### Manual Adjustment

My preference is to adjust most photos manually, using the Transform tool, but only adjusting one corner at a time. Here's why:

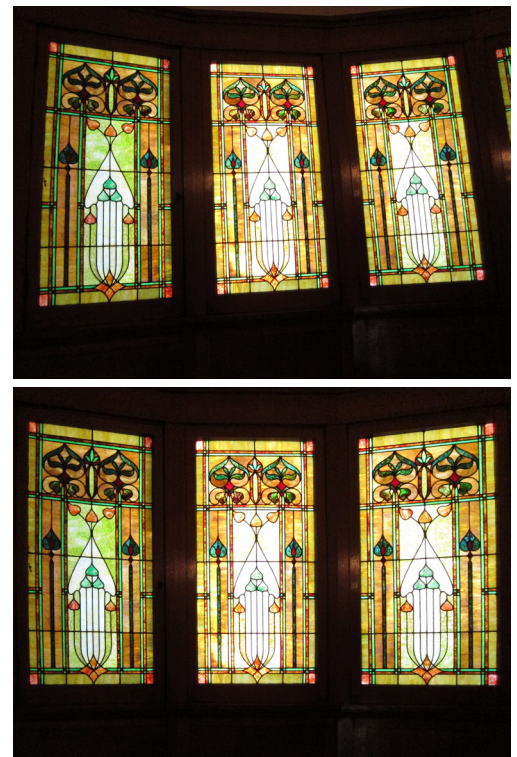
- If I press Ctrl T (Mac: Cmd T) to get a Transform outline and click and drag from the lower right corner handle, it affects two other corners and moves them as well. The only corner that isn't moving is the upper left corner.
- But if I press and hold the Ctrl key (Mac: Cmd key) as I click and drag from a corner, only that corner moves and the two sides attached to it. We can use that trick to our advantage when adjusting the perspective on photos.

### Set your Guides

- In the Menu Bar, choose View Rulers.
- Click on the rulers to drag out guides to mark all four sides that you are targeting.
- You'll end up with a square of guides. This will define where the outer-most corners are going to be.

### Transform the Photo

- Press Ctrl J (Mac: Cmd J) to copy the photo to a new layer.
- If you're in the floating window view, click and drag from the lower right corner of the window to expand your view beyond the image, so you have space around the image.
- Press Ctrl T (Mac: Cmd T) to get Transform options.
- Press and hold the Ctrl key (Mac: Cmd key) and click and drag from any corner to adjust the perspective.
- Place each corner so it lines up with one of the guide intersections.
- As you adjust different corners, the first corners you adjusted may move a little, so you'll need to double check each one.
- Keep holding the Ctrl/Cmd key the entire time until you're done adjusting the corners.
- You may need to adjust either the horizontal or vertical sides, if the proportions don't seem quite right.



- When you're satisfied, double click inside the Transform outline to commit the change.
- To get rid of the guides, in the Menu Bar choose View > Clear Guides.
- You won't always need to use guides. Sometimes you can eyeball a photo and quickly fix the perspective using the Transform tool.

### You May Need to Crop

- Some photos will need to be cropped so you don't see any of the original image.
- Get the Crop tool.
- You can freehand crop or, if you want a specific size, you can enter the Width and Height and Resolution in Tool Options.
- Click and drag a crop outline.
- Crop away any part of the original image that shows below the adjusted layer.
- Double click inside the crop outline to commit the change.

