

FND-Photos-Lighten-el-manual

Lighten Dark Photos for Photoshop Elements

by Linda Sattgast

Dark photos are a fact of life, but we don't have to put up with them. Let me show you a quick and easy way to fix a dark photo.

Use Levels To Lighten

- In Photoshop Elements click on Expert mode and open the Layers panel. If you don't see the Layers panel, in the Menu Bar choose Window > Layers.
- Click on the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer icon and choose Levels.
- The sliders under the Histogram represent the dark tones, the midtones, and the light tones of your photo. Move the sliders to adjust the lighting.
- To make a dark photo lighter, move the middle and/or right sliders to the left.
- To get more contrast, move the right and left sliders toward the center slightly.

Use The Mask To Adjust The Effect

Because a Levels Adjustment Layer has a mask, you can make adjustments.

- Make sure the mask thumbnail is active. It will have an outline around it when it's active. If it isn't active, click on it.
- Look at the Color Chips and make sure the Foreground Color Chip is black. If it isn't, click on the curved double arrow icon to switch Color Chips.
- Get the Brush tool. In Tool Options open the Brush Picker and choose a large soft round brush from the Default set of brushes. The Mode should be Normal and adjust the Opacity as needed. I used 50%.
- Adjust the size of your brush by pressing the right or left Bracket key.
- On your document brush where you want to remove the effect of the Levels Adjustment layer.
- Once you finish the masking you can tweak the Levels Adjustment if you need to. Click on the Levels thumbnail to access the histogram again.

So if you have a dark photo you plan to print or share online, use a Levels Adjustment Layer to lighten it first.

If you enjoyed this tutorial, check out my class [Fix Photos FAST!](#) where I provide one-click actions that fix many common photo problems.