

Photoshop Elements 2.0: Interface explained

The latest version of Photoshop Elements offers far greater control over image editing than the rudimentary tools in iPhoto. Read on to discover how it can improve your digital photos...



Aim of this section
Learn to tweak photos in Photoshop Elements

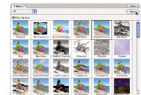
Difficulty: Beginner – intermediate

Time needed: 50 minutes

iPhoto is a great tool for managing digital camera snaps and performing perfunctory edits to raw image files, but we'd be lying if we said that it offered a comprehensive solution for digital imaging. If you want to do anything more ambitious than cropping and rotating or removing red-eye, you'll need to summon up a more sophisticated piece of software. And that's where Photoshop Elements comes in. Photoshop Elements is a slimmed down version of Adobe's professional image-editor, Photoshop 7.0, but it comes equipped with a dazzling array of features for digital photographers and imagers. Over the next few pages, we'll show you how to get started with the program. You'll also find a demo of the latest version on the CD inside the back cover of this magazine.

Using filters

Although Elements is essentially a stripped-down version of Photoshop 7.0, it still boasts a notable feature set and retains many of the ingredients found in its bigger brother, albeit in a slightly different format. 'Filters', for example, allow image editors to apply special effects to pictures or graphics and an impressive selection have been included for the more ambitious imager to tinker and experiment with.



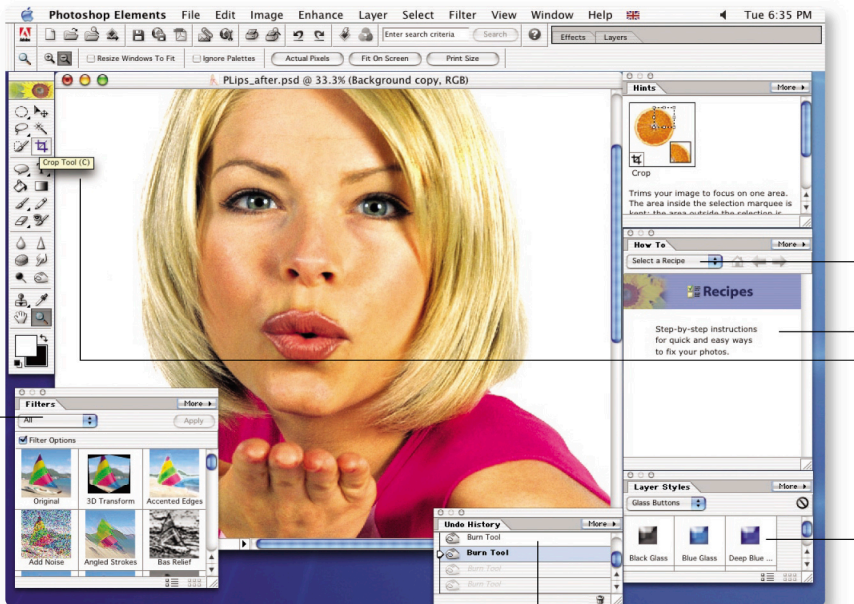
1 Click on the 'Window' menu and scroll down to 'Filters'. You should see a preview panel appear, with a list of available filters and thumbnails of the effect it gives. Click on one that you like and then hit the 'Apply' button.

2 We've chosen a hand-painted texture thanks to the 'Angled Strokes' filter. The dialog box that appears allows us to set criteria for how the filter is applied. Click 'OK' when you are happy with the results in the 'Preview' window.



Colour correction

You'll find a cornucopia of image wangling tools in Elements, offering you enormous control over everything from the brightness and saturation of your images to the removal of colour casts. While you can get Elements to automatically balance colour and adjust levels, manual adjustments are also available thanks to the 'Image' menu. Here we're monkeying around with the hue and saturation of an image.



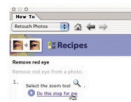
Tasty 'Recipies'

Adobe released Photoshop Elements to capitalise on the digital photography boom and because the program is geared towards home users, it's far more accessible than its more illustrious sibling, Photoshop. 'Recipies', which are a kind of glorified tutorial, are one of the best ways of getting up to scratch with the program. Here's how they work...



1 You'll find Photoshop Elements' 'Recipies' in the 'How To' panel on the left of the interface. Click on the 'Select a Recipe' drop-down menu and select a topic to get started.

2 We've chosen the recipe on Removing Red Eye and we've been given a simple step-by-step on how to do it. You can get Photoshop Elements to show you how this is done by clicking on the 'Do this step for me' link.



Basic image editing

Elements provides a full compliment of image-editing tools, many of which can be accessed directly from the program's toolbox. Here we're using the 'Crop' tool to improve the composition of our image. You can crop an image by dragging the 'Crop' tool across the area that you want to keep and then double-clicking on it.



The Knowledge Base: 'Layer styles'

One-click stylish graphics
To aid you in creating stylish and professional-looking images and graphics, Adobe has included a nifty little range of presets called 'Layer styles' with Photoshop Elements. 'Layer styles' are essentially a suite of special effects that can be instantly applied to your creations, saving you huge amounts of time spent editing your images and bringing professional results to your work. As the name suggests, 'Layer styles' are applied directly to the layers you have created in a Photoshop document, meaning that you can add subtle effects to the text in a logo, for example, and also apply special treatments to the graphical elements you're sitting on different layers. 'Layer styles' are particularly useful for Web designers who need to create cutting-edge logos in a short amount of time.



History

Those taking their first steps in digital imaging will undoubtedly make a few blunders along the way. To make sure your image isn't spoiled following a bout of harn-fisted editing, Elements sports an indispensable feature called the 'Undo History' palette. You can call this palette up from the 'Window' menu and click through the edits listed to undo or redo any changes made to an image. Neat, huh?