FLYING FINGERS
How to boost your creativity using keyboard shortcuts, p7

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PLUS: Creating Custom Borders • Dramatic Text Effects • More Restoration Techniques
As we start a new year of Photoshop Elements Techniques, we’d like to thank you for your support and encouragement. For many of you, it will soon be time to consider renewing your subscription, and I hope you will sign up for another year and continue to enjoy the newsletter and our website.

It’s also the start of 2006 and the time when many of us make New Year’s resolutions—lose some weight perhaps, or stop smoking. Trouble is, we tend to aim for goals that are pretty challenging. This year I encourage you to consider some other goals—at least when it comes to working with Photoshop Elements. Make it your resolution to try things you’ve never done before, to learn a few new keyboard shortcuts, or to post a few more messages in the forum.

Most importantly, be resolved in the goal of continuing to have fun using this great piece of software.

Until next time…

Dave Cross
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THE “INS AND OUTS” OF USING KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS
Welcome to the wonderful world of keyboard shortcuts. These little timesavers enable you to work faster inside of Photoshop Elements and will leave you with a lot more time to be creative instead of searching through menus for the right command.

SHARPENING IN ELEMENTS
Loss of sharpness is an expected result of the digital process. Shooting, scanning, resampling, and printing digital files naturally introduce softness. You can compensate for some of that softness by applying these sharpening techniques in Elements.

FINISHING TOUCHES: MAKE YOUR OWN BORDERS
A great way to add a “finishing touch” to an image is to create an interesting border. This simple technique is designed to get you started—once you see the basic idea, you can try all kinds of variations to create your own unique border.

CREATING DRAMATIC, COMPLEMENTARY COLOR TEXT EFFECTS
Adding text to your images can add a whole new dimension of interest. One critical decision to make is what colors to choose for your type? One way to nearly always pick complementary colors is to select colors directly from your image.

SCRAPBOOKERS’ WORKSHOP: TEMPLATE DESIGN
Here’s an easy way to speed up the process of creating your scrapbook pages—and it looks totally cool! The secret? Design your pages before you create them. Read this article to discover how easy it is to create scrapbook templates that you can use again and again.

RESTORATION STATION: REMOVING MOLD AND MILDEW
Before we knew any better, a lot of photos were stored in shoe or cigar boxes in garages, basements, and attics. The fluctuating temperature and humidity levels left many photos in damaged condition. One of the problems is mold or mildew. Here’s how to fix it in Elements.

Wherever you see the symbol at the end of an article, it means there’s additional material for that story at www.photoshopelementsuser.com.
**Step by Step**

**Finishing Touches**

BY DAVE CROSS

make your own borders

A GREAT WAY TO ADD A “FINISHING TOUCH” TO AN IMAGE IS TO CREATE AN INTERESTING BORDER. THIS SIMPLE TECHNIQUE IS DESIGNED TO GET YOU STARTED—ONCE YOU SEE THE BASIC IDEA, YOU CAN TRY ALL KINDS OF VARIATIONS TO CREATE YOUR OWN UNIQUE BORDER.

**STEP ONE:** Open the image and duplicate the Background layer by pressing Control-J (Mac: Command-J).

**STEP TWO:** From the Image menu choose Resize>Canvas Size. Turn on the Relative checkbox and enter a value of 1 inch for both Width and Height. This will give us a little extra room to add our border.
STEP THREE: Press-and-hold the Control key (Mac: Command key) and click on the top layer to load its contents as a selection (in Photoshop Elements 4, you have to Control-/Command-click on the layer thumbnail to load the selection).

STEP FOUR: Add a new layer by clicking on the Create a New Layer button in the top left of the Layers palette. From the Edit menu, choose Stroke (Outline) Selection. Enter a Width of 8–12 pixels, choose black as the Color, Center as the Location, and click OK.

STEP FIVE: Press Control-D (Mac: Command-D) to Deselect. From the Filter menu, choose Brush Strokes>Spatter. Experiment with the settings to get the effect you want, and click OK. Of course, you can use more than one filter at this step if you like.
**STEP SIX:** Now, change the Blend mode of the stroke layer to Multiply to make the white portions of the stroke “disappear.”

Needless to say, there are many possibilities with this simple idea: make the stroke thicker or a different color, apply more than one filter to the stroke, use Free Transform to tweak the size of the stroke, etc.
the “ins and outs” of using keyboard shortcuts

BY MATT KLOSKOWSKI

HAVE YOU EVER WATCHED SOMEONE ELSE AT THE COMPUTER AND BEEN AMAZED HOW QUICKLY THEY WORK OR MOVE AROUND THE INTERFACE? HOW DO THEY DO THIS? WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS. THESE LITTLE TIMESAVERS ENABLE YOU TO WORK FASTER IN PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS AND LEAVE YOU WITH MORE TIME TO BE CREATIVE.

If you find that you’re using a certain menu command a lot then by all means, see if there’s a keyboard shortcut for it.

THE CONTROL KEY (MAC: COMMAND KEY)
The Control (Mac: Command) key is the heart of many of the keyboard shortcuts. Think of it as the shortcut for actionable tasks such as Open, Save, Close, etc. It tends to be the key to turn to for opening dialogs for adjustments and image enhancements. You can fix red eye by pressing Control-R, which is the same as choosing Enhance>Auto Red Eye Fix. (Note: In version 3, Control-R [Mac: Command-R] brings up the rulers.) You can adjust the hue or saturation of an image by pressing Control-U (Mac: Command-U), which coincides with choosing Enhance>Adjust Color>Adjust Hue/Saturation.

The Control key is also your lifeline to many quick interface and window changes. For example, if you look under the View menu, you’ll see it allows you to quickly zoom in and out of your images without ever touching the Zoom tool. Inside the Organizer, it enables you to quickly Rotate, Fix, or Find your photos.

You’ll also find that some keyboard shortcuts in Elements actually coincide with keyboard shortcuts commonly used with your operating system. A great example of this is my favorite, and probably most used, key combinations of Control-X (Mac: Command-X), Control-C (Mac: Command-C), and Control-V (Mac: Command-V)—commonly referred to as Cut, Copy,
and Paste. These shortcuts work everywhere—Web browsers, Word, email, and just about any other software program you can think of. If you want to copy an object or group of words from one program, then you’d press Control-C. When you find where you’d like to paste it, just press Control-V. This saves you the hassle of recreating whatever it is you’re trying to move. The same holds true for Elements. Just cut/copy selected objects and paste them wherever you’d like so you don’t have to recreate them.

THE ALT KEY (MAC: OPTION KEY)
The Alt (Mac: Option) key is a little different from the Control (Mac: Command) key. Generally, it is not used to bring up a tool or function that performs a specific task. Instead, as my coworker Dave Cross says, think of it as the “Make Better key.” Now don’t necessarily take this to mean it makes the image look better, but think of it as making whatever settings you’re using better or more functional. It essentially gives you “alternative” choices and options. For example, if I were to open a photo and sharpen it by using the Unsharp Mask filter, I would choose Filter>Sharpen-Unsharp Mask. However, let’s say I wanted to apply this filter again to another photo. One keyboard shortcut tip for you is that I can just open the other photo and press Control-F (Mac: Command-F) to re-apply the Unsharp Mask filter with the same exact settings. However, if I press Control-Alt-F (Mac: Command-Option-F) then I get the dialog of the last filter I ran with the same settings in it. Now I can quickly make adjustments to apply the filter without resorting to using the mouse or the Filter menu.

It isn’t only good for keyboard shortcuts to menus, though. The Alt key does a lot more. If you’re creating a selection or shape, press-and-hold the Alt key to begin creating that object from the center point instead of the default corner point.

THE SHIFT KEY
Generally, the Shift key just adds functionality to other keyboard shortcuts. For example, if you wanted to run a Levels adjustment you would press Control-L (Mac: Command-L). If you wanted to run an Auto Levels adjustment then you’d press Control-Shift-L (Mac: Command-Shift-L). Similarly, the shortcut to Save an image is Control-S (Mac: Command-S) and the shortcut for the Save As command is Control-Shift-S (Mac: Command-Shift-S). As you can see, the Shift key tends to give another method of doing something in Elements.

That’s not to say this is the only use for the Shift key. We need to give it some credit because it can stand on its own at times. For example, if you’re creating a selection or shape, you can hold it down to keep that object perfectly proportional.
If you're using the Elliptical Marquee tool to create an ellipse, press-and-hold the Shift key to make it a perfect circle. The same holds true for the Rectangular Marquee tool—hold the Shift key down to make a perfect square. You can also use the same techniques when creating shapes. Finally, if you're using the Move tool to move an object and you find that it's difficult to align that object with something else on the canvas, press-and-hold the Shift key to constrain the movement to 45º angles. This makes it much easier to line things up.

SOME “NOT SO OBVIOUS” KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Unfortunately, some of the most useful keyboard shortcuts are not as obvious as those we've covered so far. Filling a layer or selection with a color is a common task. If you choose Edit>Fill Layer, you'll get the Fill Layer dialog. But, did you know you can press Shift-Backspace (Mac: Shift-Delete) and get that dialog too? Probably not, because it's not listed anywhere in the interface. Even better, wouldn't it be cool if you could bypass that dialog and fill a layer or selection with the Foreground color? Well you can. Just press Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete) and you'll automatically fill with the Foreground color. Or press Control-Backspace (Mac: Command-Delete) to fill with the Background color (you can see these colors by looking at the color swatches at the bottom of the Toolbox).

While we’re talking about colors, press the D key (for Default). This will set your Foreground and Background colors to the defaults (black Foreground, white Background). Press the X key to swap or reverse the colors. You could think of this one as X for “exchange.” If not, you'll just have to commit this one to memory.

Finally, I've got one more really cool shortcut for you. Duplicating a layer is a very common task in Elements. If you choose Layer>Duplicate Layer, you'll see you do indeed get a duplicate of the current layer. However, it's no fun to go to the menu command every time you want to duplicate a layer, so try pressing Control-J (Mac: Command-J). This actually is the same as choosing Layer>New>Layer via Copy. However, if you don't have anything selected, it duplicates the entire layer.

TAKING IT A STEP FURTHER

Now that you've seen what the main keyboard shortcut modifiers (Control/Command, Alt/Option, Shift) can do, we need to make the leap to some other keys that can be helpful. For instance, if you ever see a setting in the main interface or a dialog, such as Opacity in the Layers palette, you can click once on the setting to put your cursor inside the field. Then you can use the Up Arrow key to increase the setting and the Down Arrow key to decrease it by small increments. Add the Shift key to increase or decrease by increments of 10. This will work in almost any numeric setting in Elements. Another useful keyboard shortcut involves brushes. If you select one of the default brushes from the Brush Picker you'll see the Brush Size setting in the Options Bar. You can change the brush size by pressing the Left Bracket ([) and Right Bracket (]) keys.

KNOW WHEN TO SAY WHEN

I'd like to leave you with one final piece of advice. It's important to know when enough is enough. Keyboard shortcuts are great timesavers. However, there are hundreds of them in Elements and it's nearly impossible to learn them all. If you find that you're using a certain menu command a lot, then by all means, see if there's a keyboard shortcut for it. But don't try to learn them all. You don't want to spend more time trying to think of the shortcut than it would have taken to use the menu. It's all about saving time. Some keyboard shortcuts also require just as much effort to contort your fingers into the right positions as it does to use the menu. ■
Although many readers tell us they love how we write our tutorials—as step-by-step “recipes”—for this “Tool Time” series of beginners’ lessons, I’ve taken a different approach. If you understand all of the available tools, you’ll be able to use our tutorials as a starting point rather than just a fixed lesson. So instead of focusing on the result, each installment will explore the settings and capabilities of a particular tool (or group of tools). Each issue of the newsletter (and the website) will still contain our regular style tutorials, but understanding each tool is critical, so let’s jump into part one of our lesson on the Photoshop Elements selection tools.

**A LITTLE SELECTION PHILOSOPHY**

Selection tools are a critical part of photographic editing because they allow you to isolate a portion of your image for retouching without affecting any other part of your image. Selections are also required for cutting out part of an image to move it or combine it with other images.

Some selections can be time-consuming and tedious. If the portion of the image you’re selecting has a great deal of detail or if it’s poorly defined against a similarly colored background, making a good selection can be very challenging. If you take the time to make a selection, it’s usually a good idea to somehow save the selection so you can return to it later. One frequently used method for saving a selection is to put a copy of the selected part of your image on its own layer. With a selection in place, simply press Control-J (Mac: Command-J) to make a copy of just the selected area and place it on its own layer, all at once.

The section of the Toolbox just below the Eyedropper tool contains Elements’ four selection tools. (Versions 3 and 4 are similar, but Elements 4 added a Magic Selection Brush.) The top tool is the Rectangular Marquee tool, used for selecting rectangles and squares. You can simply press the letter M to choose it. If you click-and-hold on the tool in the Toolbox, you’ll spot an Elliptical Marquee tool option for selecting circles and ovals. Pressing the letter M repeatedly will toggle between the two tools.

Pressing-and-holding various keys while selecting can help you make far more accurate selections. For instance, while you’re using either Marquee tool, if you press-and-hold the Shift key, you constrain your selection to either a perfect square or circle. By default, these selection
tools originate from a corner point and dragging makes the selection larger. If you hold down the Alt key (Mac: Option key), your selection will originate from the center instead.

Finally, one of the most overlooked capabilities of the Marquee selection tools is that you can move your selection and still resize it if you press the Spacebar before you let go of your mouse button. Although you can move your selection after you make it, by clicking-and-dragging within the selected area, you can’t easily resize the selection at that time. If you press-and-hold the Spacebar during the selection process, making sure not to release the mouse button, you can move the selection on the fly and still retain the ability to resize it. This can be a big timesaver!

THE OPTIONS
When you select either Marquee tool you’ll notice that the Options Bar (across the top of your window) allows you some additional controls for the behavior of your selection tools. From left to right, your selection tools can be in New mode, Add mode, Subtract mode, or Intersect mode.

The default behavior of a Marquee selection tool is to make a new selection any time you click-and-drag outside a current selection. Add mode and Subtract mode don’t really need any explanation. Intersect mode means that if you make an initial selection, followed by a second overlapping selection, the overlap area is the only part that will remain selected. By the way, you can temporarily change modes by pressing-and-holding various keys while selecting. Shift puts the Marquee tool in Add mode, Alt (Mac: Option) switches to Subtract mode, and Alt-Shift (Mac: Option-Shift) converts the Marquee tool to Intersect mode.

Feather refers to the number of pixels that will be only partially selected along the edge of your marquee. In other words, a Feather value of zero means that each pixel will either be selected or it won’t. A Feather value of anything greater than zero means that there will be a degree of fading along the entire perimeter of your selection. This effect makes the edges of a selection fuzzy rather than sharp. Feathering is important, because any changes that you make inside the selection will be less obvious. If the selection had a sharp edge, it could be a dead giveaway that you altered the photo.

If you’re using the Elliptical Marquee tool, the Anti-alias option is turned on by default. Anti-alias adds a slight degree of feathering that keeps the appearance of your rounded selections smooth. Even
with a Feather value of zero, elliptical selections will still have a slight feather-like blending unless you turn off Anti-alias. Keep in mind, turning it off will cause rounded-edge selections to snap to a specific pixel, and if you’re working on a low-resolution image (72 ppi or lower) the effects of this setting can be especially dramatic. Your ovals may even appear to have rough edges.

The Mode pop-up menu on the Options Bar allows you to force your Marquee tool to be constrained to a particular aspect ratio or fixed size. By default, Fixed Size is expressed in terms of pixels rather than inches or centimeters. If you want to use inches, type in the number followed by a space and then type “in”. For centimeters, type “cm”.

**SELECTIONS HAVE THEIR OWN MENU**

In photo editing, making and manipulating selections is so important that Adobe has tried to give users as much control as possible. There’s an entire menu dedicated to modifying and saving selections. Amazingly, it’s called the Select menu. Unless you have an active selection in your image, all of the options in the Select menu are grayed out (inaccessible) except the one that lets you select your whole image (All). Once something is selected, the top portion of the Select menu allows you to Deselect, Reselect, or select the Inverse of your current selection.

So far, we’ve discussed selecting only a part of an image with a selection tool. When that part of your image is on a particular layer, that layer must be active or “selected.” To make a layer active, click on that layer in the Layers palette. You’ll notice that an active layer is highlighted in the Layers palette. If you want to move or modify everything on a layer, just make that layer active and you don’t have to use a specific tool to select it first.

The Select menu command All Layers (in Elements 4) selects every layer but the Background. I’m sure you can figure out the Deselect Layers command, but the Similar Layers command means that if you have one text layer selected, it will select all text layers; if you have a graphics layer selected, it will select all graphics layers; etc.

If you want a feathered selection but didn’t select the Feather amount in the Options Bar before you began selecting, you can choose the Feather menu command after the fact and enter an amount in the resulting dialog. The Modify command has a submenu option called Border that lets you turn your solid selection into a hollow, border-style selection. Smooth allows you to round the corners of your selections, and Expand and Contract allow you to shrink or enlarge your selections numerically.

The Grow command will select all nearby (contiguous) pixels that are similar to the color family that’s already selected. The Similar command does the same thing across the entire image, not just for contiguous pixels.

At the bottom of the Select menu are three items that allow you to Save, Load, and Delete selections. Each of these commands will bring up a dialog for you to name your new selection or look through your list of existing selections to load or delete each one. (The Load and Delete commands will be grayed out until you save at least one selection.)

Mastering the various selection tools and how they work is key to just about any kind of image manipulation. So far we’ve just covered the basics, but in Part 2 of the Selection tools article, we’ll break out of circles and squares and cover selection tools that allow you to grab just about any kind of shape you can imagine.
Before we get down to the nitty-gritty of sharpening, here are a few general principles to keep in mind:

**Sharpen copies, rather than your master file:** After you edit your master file, save it without sharpening. Make a copy, and sharpen the copy for output. This guarantees that each version will be sharpened with optimal settings for its destination. For example, a photograph destined for an inkjet printer is likely to need more sharpening than a copy of the same file you’re preparing for the Web.

**Sharpen just before output:** Complete all edits, including resizing, before sharpening. Otherwise, you may lose the full effect of sharpening. Edits that resample pixels, such as resizing and transforming, will soften an image.

**Resist Auto Sharpen:** Avoid using the Auto Sharpen feature in Elements’ Quick Fix interface (or the Auto Fix window in Elements 3 for Windows), because it takes control of the sharpening process out of your hands. For the same reason, pass over the first three options in the Filter>Sharpen menu—Sharpen, Sharpen Edges, and Sharpen More—which automatically apply presets.

**UNSHARP MASK**

The Unsharp Mask filter is the tool of choice for basic sharpening. Don’t be put off by its odd name, which comes from a darkroom technique that uses a blurred mask to detect edges for sharpening. Unsharp Mask creates the illusion of sharpness by making edges of items more distinct. It detects edges by looking for variations in brightness and darkness of neighboring pixels. Then it makes those transitions more pronounced by boosting contrast—brightening light pixels and darkening dark pixels—on either side of the edge.
Follow these guidelines to apply Unsharp Mask in Standard Edit mode:

1. Sharpening affects one layer at a time. So before sharpening a layered file, flatten its layers or create a merged copy layer. To flatten, click the Layers palette’s More button and choose Flatten Image. To create a merged copy of all visible layers, make a new layer at the top of the layer stack. With it selected, hold the Alt (Mac: Option) key, click the Layers palette’s More button, and choose Merge Visible. Alternatively, press-and-hold Control-Alt-Shift (Mac: Command-Option-Shift), press N to make a new layer, then E to Merge Visible.

2. Zoom to 100% to get an accurate preview of sharpening.

3. Choose Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask. In the Unsharp Mask dialog, make sure Preview is checked.

4. Manipulate the Amount, Radius, and Threshold sliders, evaluating the results in the document window or in the 100% preview in the Unsharp Mask dialog. Unfortunately, there are no magic numbers for these settings. They will vary depending on image content, resolution, output type, etc. Understanding what each setting does, knowing their typical range, and trusting your own eye are the best ways to choose appropriate settings for your image.

   - **Amount**: This setting controls how much contrast is added to the image edges. At higher settings, the pixels on one side of an edge become brighter and the pixels on the other side become darker than at lower settings. In most cases, an Amount between 50% and 150% will do. If you go much higher than 150%, your image may look too contrasty.

   - **Radius**: This critical setting determines how many pixels out from an edge are affected by the change in contrast produced by the Unsharp Mask filter. Keep the Radius setting low to avoid sharpening effects that look like glowing “halos” at image edges. Use a lower Radius setting—between about .5 and 1.5 pixels—on photos that have lots of fine detail, like grasses or fur, so the halos don’t obscure it. Photos with substantial open areas, like sand or sky, can take a slightly higher setting. The Radius and Amount settings affect one another. When the Amount setting is at the high end, an image will look best with a relatively low Radius setting, and vice versa.

   - **Threshold**: Threshold determines which pixels will receive the Unsharp Mask treatment. When Threshold is set to 0, everything is sharpened. You may find that this causes photographic grain, digital noise, or blemishes on a subject’s skin to become more obvious. In that case, try increasing Threshold to somewhere between about 2 and 12 levels until those flaws disappear. It may seem backwards, but the higher the Threshold setting, the fewer the number of pixels that are sharpened.

### MULTILAYER SHARPENING

Sometimes one area of an image needs more sharpening than the rest. You could make a feathered selection around that area and apply the Unsharp Mask filter again. Or you could brush over the area with the Sharpen tool, which is well-suited to sharpening small areas. However, both these methods are irreversible. A more flexible solution is to duplicate the image layer and apply Unsharp Mask to each layer with different settings, combining the layers with an editable faux layer mask.

#### STEP ONE

Start by duplicating the Background layer. Right-click (Mac: Control-click) it in the Layers palette, choose Duplicate Layer, and click OK. Select the Background Copy layer in the Layers palette and apply the Unsharp Mask filter to it, choosing Amount, Radius, and Threshold settings as you evaluate only the central motif in the image (in this case a boot).
STEP TWO: Make a rough selection around the boot. I used the Lasso tool (L), with Feather set to 3 pixels in the Options Bar.) You can get away with a rough selection because you’ll be able to fine-tune this area in the layer mask you’ll be adding shortly.

STEP THREE: Now you’ll create a neutral adjustment layer that has no effect on the image. You need this only for the layer mask, to compensate for the lack of a direct layer-masking feature in Elements. Select the Background layer in the Layers palette. With the boot selection still active, click the Create Adjustment Layer icon (the black and white circle) at the top of the Layers palette and choose Levels. In the Levels dialog, leave all the settings at their defaults, and click OK. In the Layers palette, you’ll see a Levels adjustment layer with a layer mask. The mask is white in the area that was selected (the boot) and black in the area that was not selected (the landscape).

STEP FOUR: Next you’ll clip the Background Copy layer to the Levels adjustment layer beneath it so that the layer mask on the Levels adjustment layer applies to the Background Copy layer. Press-and-hold the Alt (Mac: Option) key and move your mouse over the border between the Background Copy layer and the Levels 1 adjustment layer. When the cursor changes to a double circle icon, click once, causing the Background Copy layer to be indented and clipped to the Levels 1 layer. The mask on the Levels 1 layer now applies to the Background Copy layer. The boot appears sharp because the white area of the mask reveals the sharpening effect on the Background Copy layer. The rest of the image does not appear sharp because the black areas of the mask hide the sharpening effect on the Background Copy layer. You can see through those areas to the image on the unsharpened Background layer below.

The beauty of this technique is that this layer mask remains editable. You can adjust the area that is subject to this sharpening effect by clicking on the layer mask thumbnail on the Levels 1 adjustment layer to make it active, choosing the Brush tool (B), and painting with black in the image to subtract from the sharpened area or white to add to the sharpened area.

STEP FIVE: The last step is to apply a different level of sharpening to the Background layer. Select the Background layer in the Layers palette. Choose Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask, and choose lower Amount and Radius settings than those you applied to the Background Copy layer. This will sharpen the landscape slightly, focusing attention on the sharper central motif of the boot.

There are so many tips and tricks I’ve discovered in Photoshop Elements that I feel a little like a mosquito in a nudist colony—there’s so much here, I don’t know where to begin. So let’s start with some basics like general photo improvement.

The photo of this pirate is mildly underexposed. If you apply Auto Smart Fix, the result is a pirate with a burnt orange face (which, being the colors of the Texas Longhorns, is okay in this town but is generally unacceptable). Because as smart as Auto Smart Fix is, it hasn’t a clue that this is a photograph of a pirate (yar) and that it is not necessary to bring out every detail in the photograph. So rather than using Auto Smart Fix, try Adjust Smart Fix (Control-Shift-M [Mac: Command-Shift-M]) under the Enhance menu, and move the slider slowly to the right, until the image looks the way that you want it.

Shoot a photo on a bright sunny day and in almost all cases, you will end up with an image with a blue cast to it. Since I have my neighbor’s smiling face in this photo, I can use a new tool that was added to Version 4 of Elements—Adjust Color for Skin Tone.
If you have never used this jewel, you are in for a treat. Located in the Enhance menu, under Adjust Color, the Adjust Color for Skin Tone choice opens a pretty hefty dialog. The way it works, you just need to click your cursor (which is now an eyedropper) on the skin of the subject. Each time you sample a different area of the skin, Elements doesn’t replace the last sample; instead it combines it with the previous samples. So, if you are not getting the results you like, you can hit Reset to clear the previous sample(s) or (here is the undocumented trick) Control-click the sample area.

Once your color correction appears to be in the ballpark, experiment with the sliders to see if you can improve the color correction. Don’t be shy about moving the sliders around. As wide as the slider length appears, the tool only covers a narrow range of color adjustments. Here’s a tip: Did you know that this feature also works on images that don’t have people in them? Just click on a warm color in the photo, adjust the sliders, and it works nearly every time.

Elements has many of the tools found in Adobe Photoshop but there are a few tools that I love that are missing, and despite serious groveling and begging during beta testing, these very useful tools remain Photoshop-only. Since necessity is the mother of invention, here are some ways to recreate the functionality of my two favorite missing tools: the History Brush and layer masks.

**History Brush:** If you’re not familiar with the History Brush, it acts like a selective Undo feature. By that I mean it allows you to paint back part of a previous state in the History palette. Here is how to fake it in Elements:

1. In the Layers palette, create a new layer at the top of the layers stack. You can do this by selecting the top layer and clicking on the Create a New Layer icon at the upper-left of the Layers palette.
2. Use the keyboard shortcut Control-Alt-Shift-E (Mac: Command-Option-Shift-E) to make a merged copy of all the other visible layers onto the new layer.
3. Click on the Eye icon in the Layers palette to turn off visibility of the new merged layer. This layer now reflects what the entire image looked like at that moment.
4. Later, if you want to restore parts of the current version back to this older version, move the layer that contains the older version below the layer that you want to selectively restore. Turn visibility back on for the older version, and use either the Eraser tool on the current version or use a layer mask (see below). Whatever parts of the new version that you erase or hide with a layer mask will reveal the layer below that contains the older version.

**Layer Mask:** Elements doesn’t officially have a layer mask but since it’s derived from Photoshop, all of the tools are there; you just need to know how to put them together. A layer mask allows you to selectively remove or restore parts of a layer at any time by painting on the layer mask, making parts of the mask either opaque or transparent. The following procedure sounds complicated but it’s really simple once you get the hang of it. Here’s how it’s done:

1. Begin with an image that has multiple layers. In the Layers palette, select the layer below the layer you want the layer mask to control.
2. Create an adjustment layer. Pick Levels (Layer> New Adjustment Layer>Levels), but you can use any of the adjustment layers because we’re not using the designated features of the adjustment. When it asks you to name the layer, name it “Layer Mask” (this saves head scratching when you open the image again months from now and wonder what that adjustment layer was for). When the Levels dialog opens, just click OK without making any changes.
3. Select the layer to be controlled (should be directly above the Layer Mask layer) and group it (Control-G [Mac: Command-G]) with Layer Mask.
4. Now the fun part: In the adjustment layer, click on the layer mask thumbnail (the small white rectangle to the right of the layer thumbnail) to select it. Press D to set the default colors. (Note: When a layer mask is active, pressing D to set your default Foreground and Background colors will actually make the Foreground white and the Background black. This is the opposite of what you’re probably used to. Simply press the X key to quickly swap colors to make the Foreground black.) Pick the Brush tool and paint on your image. Everywhere that you paint black, the top layer disappears. Change the brush color to white and anywhere
that you paint now restores the top layer. Using any shade of gray introduces transparency of the layer where it's painted. You can look at the mess you're making in the layer mask at any time by Alt-clicking (Mac: Option-clicking) the layer mask thumbnail. When you do, the image is swapped with the contents of the layer mask. Alt-click it a second time to toggle it back to normal. One word of advice: When I teach this in class, I'll often have a student say it doesn't work only to discover that he made a copy of the Background layer to make the layered image, and even though the layer mask is working properly, the grouped layer above and the Background layer below are exactly the same so it appears nothing changes as he paints on the mask.

If you don't have Elements 4, here is a way to remove just about any color cast. The flower shown in the macro photo is very tiny, but more important it was taken on an overcast day.

Here is my secret recipe for making an overcast day into a sunny one.

1. Click on the Create Adjustment Layer icon at the top of the Layers palette, choose Levels, and then click the Auto button (the image may become a little bluer).

2. Select the Blue channel from the dialog's pop-up menu and move the left Input Levels slider to the right until the image becomes slightly green.

3. Select the Green channel and move the middle Input Levels slider slightly to the right (you are adding magenta), watching white or other neutral parts of the image. This is the most delicate part and usually only requires a slight tweak to change it a lot.

4. Click OK to apply the Levels adjustment layer, and in the Layers palette select the Background layer. Apply Auto Contrast from the Enhance menu (or press Control-Alt-Shift-L [Mac: Command-Option-Shift-L]) and you now have a sunny day.

5. Here are some of my favorite selection tips. Trick question: When is the Magnetic Lasso tool not a Magnetic Lasso?

Answer: When you use the Alt key (Mac: Option key). The Magnetic Lasso tool provides a fast way to make selections on regular edges. The problem occurs when you need to make a selection along a long straight line—like the edge of a photo. With the Magnetic Lasso tool selected (press L until you get it), you can switch between the other Lasso tools. To switch to the Polygonal Lasso tool so you can select a long edge quickly and easily, press-and-hold the Alt key and then release the mouse button. Then click the tool at a point along the long edge. The tool remains a Polygonal Lasso tool until you release the Alt key and click again. To switch to the Lasso tool, press-and-hold the Alt key while moving the tool.

Here is one that was a real timesaver for me. I always used to copy selected areas to the Clipboard and paste them back as a layer. Here is the easy way. After you have selected an object in a photo, press Control-J (Mac: Command-J) and the selected object becomes a layer while the selection disappears. What if you wanted to keep the selection? You could always save it, if you thought about it before you pressed Control-J, or you could use another one of the darling undocumented features in Elements. The layer you created using Control-J is composed of opaque and transparent pixels, right? Wouldn't it be nice if there were a way to make a selection of everything but the transparent pixels? There is. Just Control-click (Mac: Command-click) on the layer's thumbnail (or anywhere on the layer in Elements 3) and your selection reappears—like magic.

That's all for now. Hope you have fun with these jewels.
MAYBE I’M LAZY, BUT I’M ALWAYS READY TO LEARN EASY WAYS TO MAKE SCRAPBOOK PAGES, ESPECIALLY IF THE END RESULT LOOKS TOTALLY COOL! WANT TO LEARN ONE OF MY SECRETS FOR AN EASY PAGE? DESIGN IT BEFORE YOU MAKE IT. READ ON TO DISCOVER HOW EASY IT IS TO CREATE SCRAPBOOK TEMPLATES THAT YOU CAN USE AGAIN AND AGAIN.

STEP ONE: Create a new document the size you want for your scrapbook page. Turn on the grid by choosing View>Grid. Also, choose View>Snap to Grid if it isn’t already checked.

STEP TWO: Select the Rectangle tool (one of the Shape tools [U]) and click-and-drag a square or rectangle. Since you have Snap to Grid checked in the View menu, your edges will snap to the nearest line, making it easy to line up your shape. When you let go of your mouse, the shape will fill with your Foreground color.
STEP THREE: Continue to add color blocks with the Rectangle tool. If you need to adjust the size of a shape, press Control-T (Mac: Command-T) to bring up the Free Transform tool. Move the handles until you're satisfied with the size. (The snap feature works even when transforming.) Press Enter (Mac: Return) to accept it. When you're done, choose View>Grid to turn off the grid. Now choose File>Save As. Name the file, choose where you want to save it, and select Photoshop as the Format so the file maintains all of the shape layers that you've created. You can now open this template at any time in the future to create a quick scrapbook page as described in the following steps.

STEP FOUR: Now you're ready to add photos to your design. Select the layer of the rectangle you want to start with. Open the first photo and use the Move tool (V) to click-and-drag it onto your scrapbook page. Position it over a rectangle and choose Layer>Group with Previous to make it show up only inside the rectangular block.

STEP FIVE: Most of the time, you'll need to adjust your photo to fit better. With the photo layer selected, use Free Transform to resize it. (If you can't see the boundary edges well, choose View>Fit on Screen.) Click on a corner handle and press Alt-Shift (Mac: Option-Shift) as you drag to keep it centered and constrained proportionally.
STEP SIX: Follow the previous steps to add photos to each of the other blocks in your design. To add a drop shadow, click on the shape layer below a photo in the Layers palette. From the Styles and Effects palette, choose Layer Styles from the pop-up menu on the top left and Drop Shadows from the menu on the top right. Click on the shadow of your choice.

STEP SEVEN: Here’s my page after I added background paper and journaling. The beauty of designing a page like this is that you can make sure the design is perfectly balanced before you add your photos. After your page is finished, make sure that you save this file with a different name than the name of your template so the template is preserved for the next time you need it.

Here are some other examples of templates you could make and save for later use.
Before we knew any better, many photos were stored in shoe or cigar boxes in garages, basements, and attics. The fluctuating temperature and humidity levels left many photos in damaged condition. One of the problems is mold or mildew.

If we could go back in time, we could avoid the mold and mildew problem on our photos by storing them in a low-humidity environment. Because without the proper expertise, we can easily damage a mildewed photo beyond repair trying to clean it, and that type of restoration should only be attempted by a professional photo conservationist. Unfortunately, it’s too late for some photos, but fortunately, we can use Photoshop Elements to eliminate the mildew.

**STRAIGHTENING THE SCAN**

First of all, as you can see, the image not only has mildew, it wasn’t laid straight on the scanner bed. Photoshop Elements 4 has a new Straighten tool that will have this image straightened in a jiffy. The Straighten tool is in the Toolbox below the Cookie Cutter tool. Press D to set your Foreground and Background colors to the black and white defaults.

Once you choose the Straighten tool (P), the Options Bar will show several options in a pop-up menu for how the tool works. To make the Canvas Options menu available, turn on the Rotate All Layers checkbox. Choose one of three options:

- **Grow Canvas to Fit:** This resizes the canvas to fit the rotated image. Because the straightening will cause the corners of the image to fall beyond the boundaries of the canvas, the straightened image will contain areas of white that will need to be cropped or filled in with the Clone tool, but no pixels will be clipped.

- **Crop to Remove Background:** This option crops the image to remove any extra background area that became visible after straightening. Some pixels will be clipped.

- **Crop to Original Size:** Choosing this keeps the canvas the same size as the original image. The straightened image will
include areas of background and some pixels will be clipped.

I chose the first option, Grow Canvas to Fit, since there is some photographic border on the image I’d like to be able to crop manually. To use the tool, click-and-drag along the edge of something in the image that should be straight. In this image, I clicked on the right side of the top border of the photo, and then dragged to the left side, keeping the line along the main photo edge. When you release the mouse button, the image is rotated for you.

Use the Crop tool (C) to get rid of any border or visible background. Click the Commit button at the bottom of the crop area to set the crop. (In Elements 3, the Commit button is on the Options Bar at the far right side.) Next, we work on the mildew.

**REMOVING THE MILDEW**

If you want to make any exposure corrections to the photo, do it now. On this photo, I used the Shadows/Highlights filter (Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Shadows/Highlights) to lighten the shadows a little. This was a textured photo, so there is some texture I would also like to get rid of. Start by duplicating the Background layer of the photo (Layer>New>Layer Via Copy or Control-J [Mac: Command-J]).

On the new layer, with the photo at 100% view, go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Start at 1, and the photo will probably be somewhat blurred. The idea here is to smooth the image without removing too much detail. Move the slider slowly to the left decreasing the amount of blur until the texture reappears, then move it right one notch, and click OK. I ended up at 0.9. The only problem is that it also softens things like the brass ornament on the soldier’s hat.

To restore the detail, choose the Eraser tool (E) set to a soft-edged brush in the Brush Picker on the Options Bar. On the top layer, gently erase the areas in which you want to have the detail restored: the eyes, brass buttons, and the ornament. This photo had two small creases on the lower left and right sides, which I fixed with a combination of the Healing Brush and Spot Healing Brush (J). The first time I restored this photo was well before the
Healing tools existed, and I used the Clone Stamp tool. This time, I’m letting Elements do most of the work and using the Healing tools.

To use the Spot Healing Brush, simply click on imperfections, or click-and-drag. Use a brush size that is slightly larger than the area you want to fix to keep it as inconspicuous as possible. For the creases, I clicked-and-dragged short distances, fixing a bit of the crease at a time. On areas that had a high contrast, like the edge of the uniform against the background, I used the Healing Brush tool. To use this tool, hold down the Alt key (Mac: Option key) and click once to set the area you wish to heal from, then click or click-and-drag the area that needs healing.

**FIXING THE MILDEW**

Working on the new layer, use the Spot Healing Brush to remove the mildew spots. On most of them, you should be able to just click. Change the size of the brush as you work to make it slightly larger than the spot to heal by using the Left and Right Bracket keys to resize the brush on the fly. The Left Bracket (\[) makes the brush smaller, and the Right Bracket (\]) makes the brush size larger.

For the skin, you might want to try choosing Create Texture in the Options Bar.

When you are done, go to Layer>Flatten Image to merge the Background and Layer 1, and save the restored version of the photo.

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Text, Colors and Gradients

by Taz Tally

Creating dramatic, complementary color text effects

Adding text to your images can add a whole new dimension of interest. There are many ways to format and colorize your text. One critical decision to make is what colors to choose for the type? One way to nearly always pick complementary colors is to select colors directly from your image. It’s such a simple concept. And if you have a range of colors in an image, consider creating a gradient between two colors.

Step One: Open the image to which you want to add type. Here I’ll use an image of Mendenhall Glacier in June, Alaska. Make a copy so that you protect your original image by choosing File>Duplicate (I like to use the Duplicate function as it makes a quick copy and leaves my original up on screen as well for judging changes). Rename the image in the Duplicate Image dialog and click OK. I often add the word “type” to indicate that I have added type to this image—so “Mhall Type” for this example.

Select the Elements Standard Edit mode so that you can have access to all of Elements’ editing tools. Make sure you can see your entire image so you can position your type properly.

Step Two: Select your Type tool by either clicking on the Type tool in the Toolbox or simply hitting the T key. Click near the left edge of where you would like to position your type (left justified is the default setting). When you select the Type tool, the Type formatting controls appear in the Options Bar just above the image. In the left half of this palette select the font, font style, and a point size. Here I have selected Trajan Pro UltraBold 60pts.
STEP THREE: Now type in the copy you want (here “Alaska”) and hit the Enter key to apply the type. A new type layer, labeled with a “T” and showing the copy you have typed will appear in the layers palette. Note you can edit this type at any time by simply double-clicking on the “T” in the type layer. To reposition this layer, simply hold down the Control key (Mac: Command key) and click-and-drag your type to a new location.

STEP FOUR: To capture colors in this image to use for your type, select your Eyedropper tool (I). Click once near the top of the image in the blue sky. This blue color will appear in the Foreground color indicator located at the bottom of the Elements Toolbox. To capture the gold end of our gradient, hold down the Alt key (Mac: Option key) and click in the gold color near the bottom of the mountain. This gold color will be added to the Background color in the Elements Toolbox. (Elements always has the Foreground and Background colors indicated in this palette. The default colors are black and white.)

STEP FIVE: Before we apply our gradient we will need to simplify our type layer, that is, convert it to pixels. To simplify the type layer, Right-click (Mac: Control-click) on the right side of it in the Layers palette and select Simplify Layer. Note: The “T” will disappear from the type layer, indicating that the type is no longer editable. Tip: You might want to duplicate this layer (Control-J [Mac: Command-J]) prior to simplifying in case you want to edit your type. If you duplicate it, make sure to click on the Eye icon of the copied layer in the Layers palette to hide from view for now.

This part of the step is important: At the top of the Layers palette, click on the Lock Transparent Pixels symbol. Locking the transparency will ensure your gradient is applied to just the type in the next step.
STEP SIX: To apply a gold/blue gradient to your type, select the Gradient tool (G). Now drag the Gradient tool from the bottom of your type to the top of your type in the image. A gradient will be created from gold to blue across your image.

To set off the type, click on the Styles and Effect tab located above the Layers palette. Two pop-up menus appear. From the left side menu, select Layer Styles and from the right side menu select Drop shadows. Click on the drop shadow labeled Low. (Experiment with other drop shadow effects such as the Soft Edge effect!)

You have just created a dramatic text effect using colors provided to you by your image. Now you can add any other elements for your final image.
filter spotlight: cutout

Each issue we feature a little-known filter on the back cover. This is just a quick overview to show you what a filter can do. This time we’ll highlight what the Cutout filter produces. To access the filter, go to Filter>Artistic>Cutout.

The Cutout filter makes an image look as though it were made from roughly cut-out pieces of colored paper. High-contrast images appear as if they were silhouettes, while colored images are built up from several layers of colored paper.