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Give your images an antiqued, vintage look, p07

MAKIN’ WAVES
Create ripples, waves, and other aquatic effects, p28

Get More Online at photoshopelementuser.com
Believe it or not, we've just finished our fourth year of *Adobe Photoshop Elements Techniques*. It's hard to fathom that another year has fled by. As I looked back, it occurred to me that one of the main perks of the whole newsletter and website has consistently been the forum. It's become an invaluable resource for thousands of people.

If you haven't made visiting the forum a part of your Elements growing experience, you've been missing out on a wealth of knowledge. It's not only a great place to learn more about Elements, you can now also get answers to your questions about digital photography techniques and equipment. Photography guru Laurie Excell moderates the "Take Better Pictures" sub-forum and has graciously made herself available to answer every question you ever had about digital photography but were afraid to ask.

Laurie spent the first 25 years of her career in photographic sales, helping pros and hobbyists alike decide which photographic equipment best suited their needs. All the while, she was an avid photographer. In 2000, she left sales to become a full-time, professional wildlife and nature photographer. She has been published in *Outdoor Photographer*, *Outdoor Photography*, *Photoshop User*, and *Layers* magazines. You'll also find her photography on Audubon calendars, as well as postcards, posters, and calendars for the National Park Service. So if you haven't been to the forum lately, make sure you pay it a visit. Happy New Year everyone! Until next time....

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YOUR LEARNING DOESN’T STOP HERE!
It continues online, where you get exclusive access to print and video tutorials, discussion forums, downloads, and a personal user gallery. It’s all part of the value-added benefits of being an Adobe Photoshop Elements Techniques newsletter and website subscriber. Wherever you see the symbol at the end of an article, it means there’s additional material for that story at www.photoshopelementsuser.com/subscriber/printextras.php.

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split toning in elements

SPLIT TONING IS A CLASSIC EFFECT THAT PHOTOGRAPHERS USE TO TINT THE HIGHLIGHTS AND SHADOWS IN THE PHOTO SEPARATELY. IT’S A GREAT WAY TO TAKE A BLACK-AND-WHITE CONVERSION A STEP FURTHER AND ADD AN ELEGANT TOUCH TO IT.

STEP ONE: Open a photo that’ll make a good candidate to convert to black and white. The photo has to be something you’d like to see in black and white. Usually, color photos with a lot of contrast make really good candidates.

STEP TWO: From the Enhance menu, choose Convert to Black and White. In the Convert to Black and White dialog, you can select a style for your photo, as well as a few other adjustments (we just used the default settings). Then click OK to close the dialog.

Note: If you’re working on a version of Elements prior to 5, choose Enhance>Adjust Color>Remove Color and go to Step Three.
STEP THREE: Now we'll start the color-tinting process. The split-tone effect involves tinting the highlights in the photo one color and the shadows another color, thus “splitting” the tones. To attack the shadows and highlights separately, we're going to use the Color Variations adjustment. To do this, go to Enhance>Adjust Color>Color Variations.

STEP FOUR: You'll need to decide where you want to start: highlights or shadows. There's no rule, but I generally pick highlights first. So under Step 1 on the left side of the dialog, click on Highlights. Then decide what color you want to tint those highlights. Once again, there are no rules here, just guidelines. For an elegant look, I've found that tinting the highlights a yellowish color can help. But you'll notice there's no yellow option here, right? No problem. If you've ever seen a color wheel, you know that yellow is on the opposite side of the wheel from blue. So if you click the Decrease Blue thumbnail, you'll essentially be adding more yellow. Go ahead and give it a click. You'll see the effect in the After preview in the top-right corner of the dialog.

STEP FIVE: Each time you click, you'll add to the adjustment. For the highlights I went ahead and clicked Decrease Blue a second time for this photo. If you don't like the effect, you can always click the Undo button on the right side to remove the previous adjustment.
STEP SIX: Now click on Shadows under Step 1 on the left side of the dialog. This time we’re going to apply color to the shadowy areas in the photo instead of the highlights. I’ve found that a nice complement to the yellows here is a reddish color. This one’s easier than the last one though because there’s no color theory involved. To add red, just click the Increase Red thumbnail a couple times.

STEP SEVEN: When you’re finished, just click OK to close the dialog, and you have a nice split-tone effect. It’s kind of like black and white but with a twist. I think it adds a touch of elegance to a photo. Also, don’t forget that the colors I used here aren’t written in stone. Feel free to change it up as there’s no official formula. If it looks good, go with it.

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reverse the aging process

InSTEAD OF EDITING YOUR PHOTOS TO LOOK SPARKLING AND NEW, YOU CAN USE THE FILTERS FOUND IN PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS TO MAKE THEM LOOK VINTAGE AND ANTIQUE. WE’LL COVER THREE TECHNIQUES THAT WILL HELP YOU TAKE YOUR PHOTOS FROM NEW TO OLD IN MINUTES!

STEP ONE: The first thing we'll do is add a sepia tone to our image for an early photography look. To do this, open a photo and duplicate the Background layer by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). Turn off the visibility of the Background layer by clicking the Eye icon as we're just taking this step to preserve a copy. To convert the photo from color to grayscale, click the Quick icon just below the Create tab at the top-right corner of your workspace (Elements 5: the Quick Fix tab in the top-left corner of the workspace; Elements 4: the Quick Fix button in the top-right corner of the workspace).

In the Color palette, drag the Saturation slider all the way to the left to create a grayscale image. Then tweak the sliders in the Lighting palette to create maximum contrast. Note: As soon as you adjust the Lighting sliders, the Saturation slider pops back to its midpoint position (odd, but true).

[To follow along, download the image shown here by navigating to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementsuser.com.]

STEP TWO: Click the Full icon just below the Edit tab (Elements 5: The Full Edit tab; Elements 4: the Standard Edit button) to go back into the regular Editor. With the grayscale layer selected, trot up to the Filter menu and choose Adjustments>Photo Filter. Choose Sepia from the Filter drop-down menu, set Density to 75%, then click OK.
STEP THREE: Now we’ll add some streaks to the image to rough it up a bit. In the Toolbox, click the Foreground swatch, then choose a nice brown from the Select Foreground color dialog and click OK. Next, set the Background color to white. Create a new layer in the Layers palette by clicking the Create a New Layer icon at the top of the Layers palette and then choose Filter>Render Clouds. You’ll see fluffy brownish-white clouds appear in your document. Press Ctrl-F (Mac: Command-F) a few times to run the filter multiple times, thus intensifying the effect.

STEP FOUR: Hop back up to the Filter menu and choose Blur>Motion Blur. Enter 90 in the Angle box and push the Distance slider all the way to the right, then click OK. This is going to make the clouds look like vertical streaks.

STEP FIVE: Back in the Layers palette, change the blend mode of the cloud layer to Hard Light, then lower the Opacity to 85%. The reason we’re using the Hard Light blend mode is that it will accentuate both the highlights and shadows by combining the functionality of the Multiply and Screen blend modes. Pixels that are darker than midgray (50% gray) on the layer below are “multiplied”—or darkened—and pixels lighter than midgray are “screened”—or lightened. We’re doing this to replicate the aging effect on older photos.
STEP SIX: Now we’re going to apply some spots with a white brush and call it a day. First, create another new layer, then press X to switch the Foreground and Background colors and make white our Foreground color. With the Brush tool (B) selected, go up to the Options Bar at the top of your screen, click the down-facing triangle next to the Brush Picker, and choose Thick Heavy Brushes from the Brushes drop-down menu. Double-click the Rough Round Bristle brush (last one in the list) to select it and close the Brush Picker.

STEP SEVEN: Mouse over the photo and increase the brush size by pressing the Right Bracket key (]) repeatedly. (We made our brush about half the size of our photo.) Click to apply age spots anywhere you’d like. Then decrease the Opacity of the spots layer to reduce their effect.

As you can see, these three quick techniques made a huge difference and successfully transported a photo back in time. And by creating a new layer for each level of aging, you can toggle them off and on to your liking and adjust their Opacity to suit.
add drama to black-and-white photos

BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY HAS MADE A BIG COMEBACK IN RECENT YEARS BECAUSE OF THE STUNNING EFFECT IT CAN BRING TO AN ORDINARY COLOR PHOTO. YOU’LL LEARN HERE AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD FOR CONVERTING IMAGES TO BLACK AND WHITE, AS WELL AS HOW TO PAINT EXTRA OOMPH INTO ONLY THE AREAS YOU WANT TO LIGHTEN OR DARKEN.

STEP ONE: With your photo open in Photoshop Elements, create a copy by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). You should now have two layers in your Layers palette: a Background layer and Layer 1, the duplicate of your picture.

[To follow along, download the image shown here by navigating to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementsuser.com.]

STEP TWO: Next, we’ll need to convert the photo to black and white. One of my favorite methods is to use a Gradient Map. To do this, first press D to set your Foreground and Background colors to their defaults (black and white, respectively). With the top layer selected in the Layers palette, choose Filter>Adjustments>Gradient Map, then click OK to close the Gradient Map dialog.
STEP THREE: Let’s try to bump up the contrast a little more by playing with the blend modes. Copy your black-and-white layer as you did in Step One, then experiment with different blend modes and Opacity settings for this Layer 1 copy in the Layers palette. (We used the Multiply blend mode to darken the image and dialed back the Opacity to 60%.)

STEP FOUR: Merge the two black-and-white layers by selecting the top layer and pressing Ctrl-E (Mac: Command-E). Then duplicate this newly merged black-and-white layer again as you did before. (You should be a regular pro at this by now.) This is the layer where we’ll do our selective dodging and burning.

STEP FIVE: Let’s start with the Dodge tool, which is nested under the Sponge tool (O). The Dodge tool allows you to lighten the pixels you click-and-drag over. In the Options Bar, set Range to Midtones (or whatever tones you want to lighten—it could be your highlights). You’ll also want to set Exposure pretty low (we set ours to 15%). It’s better to start lower because you can always intensify the effect by dragging over the area again, and you don’t want your edits to be conspicuous. Next, choose a soft-edged brush from the Default Brush set and set its Size to fit your image (we set ours to 60 px).
STEP SIX: Look for buildings you want to lighten and brush over them with the Dodge tool, zooming in if necessary. (Tip: To zoom in on the fly, press-and-hold the Ctrl key [Mac: Command key] and Spacebar and either click or marquee over an area. You can zoom back out by adding the Alt key [Mac: Option key] into the mix.) With this building that has dark windows, we want to lighten the building but keep some shadows in the windows. Zooming in and decreasing your brush size will help you with some of the finer details. To adjust your brush size on the fly, use the Bracket keys ( /[ ]). And turning off the visibility of the top layer (by clicking the Eye icon next to the thumbnail in the Layers palette) can help you see changes to your image.

STEP SEVEN: Now grab the Burn tool, which is also nested under the Sponge tool, to darken areas of your photo. Make any changes you want to its properties in the Options Bar and click-and-drag over the areas of the picture you want to darken, zooming in as needed. For a stronger effect, change your Range to Highlights and raise your Exposure. And there you go: a black-and-white version of your color image with a splash of drama added.

Chris Beasley (“Seebee”) is an avid digital scrapbook designer who jokes that she has an unnatural love of Adobe Photoshop and Photoshop Elements. You can check out more of her work at http://seebeesfreebies.blogspot.com.
 BACKING UP YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS IS ESSENTIAL BECAUSE PRECIOUS MEMORIES NEED TO BE PROTECTED. BUT JUST BECAUSE ARCHIVING PHOTOS TO A DVD OR CD CAN BE A UTILITARIAN CHORE, YOUR CASES DON’T HAVE TO REFLECT THE TEDIUM OF THE TASK. INSTEAD, WHY NOT SPICE UP YOUR JACKET WITH PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS—AND EVEN ADD A MATCHING LABEL?

Whether you’re backing up your digital negatives or making a CD or DVD to share photos with friends and family, Photoshop Elements has lots of ways to dress up the case using backgrounds, frames, and special effects.

[Note: This article uses Elements 5. For the sake of simplicity, we won’t be able to provide all of the workarounds in Elements 4 and 6. —Ed.]

First, choose several photos from the Organizer. I used images from a family vacation to South Dakota. I wanted one main image for the front of the DVD jacket and four others to illustrate the contents of the DVD for the back of the DVD jacket. To select multiple photos from the Organizer, press-and-hold the Ctrl key (Mac: Command key) and click each photo you want to use, then choose Edit>Go to Full Edit to open your photos in the Editor.

Because you’ll need to see more than one photo at a time, make sure you aren’t viewing your images in Maximize Mode. From the Window menu, choose Images. If there’s a check by Maximize Mode, click on it to remove it. Also, make any corrections to the photos before you go any further, then send all of your open photos to the Photo Bin by clicking the Minimize button on each image window.

**PICK A JACKET DESIGN TEMPLATE**

Now we’re going to get knee deep in the creative process. First, go to File>Create>DVD Jacket or CD Jacket (whichever you’re creating). Because I created a DVD jacket, I’ll be demonstrating that process, but the process is the same for creating a CD jacket. Inside the New DVD Jacket dialog, select a size (we stayed with the default 11” x 7.5”). Next, choose a layout under the Select a Layout preview. There are several choices for layout here; select one that you like (we used the simple 1 Full Right layout). We didn’t Select a Theme because we’ll be adding these elements on our own for maximum creative latitude, nor did we choose any...
Click here to add photo
Drag photo here

of the Additional Options. Click OK to accept the layout.

Drag the image you want for the front cover of the jacket from the Photo Bin and drop it on top of the template. Then use the slider at the top of the image window to adjust the size of the photo and click-and-drag the photo to reposition it in the template. When you're satisfied, click the green checkmark to accept the changes. This creates a frame layer in your document as is indicated by the small plus sign in the bottom-right corner of the layer thumbnail inside the Layers palette.

ADD A BACKGROUND
Open the Artwork and Effects palette and choose Backgrounds from the left drop-down menu. Which background you choose depends on the “mood” of your design. Browse through the subcategories and look over the thumbnails to find one that suits your design (we used Motion from the Textures subcategory). Double-click the background thumbnail to apply it to the image. Elements automatically adds your custom background to the Background layer under the image layer.

You can also add a nice frame effect to blend the image into the background more. To do this, select the image you chose for the front of the DVD jacket by clicking it, then click on the Artwork icon at the top of the Artwork and Effects palette (the one on the far left). Choose Frames from the left drop-down menu and browse through the various subcategories to find one you like. (Note: We added the Fade In Left frame from the Soft Edges subcategory, but the Soft Edges subcategory is very “buggy" and caused the photo to fade in from the top—which is what we wanted. So if you choose a frame from here, go by what you see, not what you read!)

SPICE UP THE BACK OF THE JACKET
By now, you should have an idea for the layout of the back of the jacket. I wanted four photos lined up along the left side of the jacket back, with each one illustrating the contents of one chapter of the DVD. I also wanted a similar soft edge to the one I added to the image on the front of the DVD jacket on each of these photos.

To add images with the effects applied ahead of time, deselect the image on the front of the DVD jacket by clicking off of it, then double-click the effect you want. This will add an empty frame to the template with the effect applied (we used Rectangle
Blurry from the Soft Edges Frames).

If the frame is too large for your design, you can resize it by dragging inward on any corner handle until the desired size is attained. (Note: If you’re using Elements 4 or earlier, hold the Shift key as you drag to constrain the photo to its original proportions.) Click the Commit checkmark at the bottom of the image window to accept the new size, then drag the image to where you want it on the page. (We positioned ours in the upper-left corner about 0.5” from the top-left corner of the page.) If you’re lining up your images, as we’ll be doing here, you may want to view the grid by choosing View>Grid.

Next, drag the photo you want from the Photo Bin and drop it on top of the frame. If the image you want isn’t open, simply click the frame to browse for your image, then just double-click the image inside the Open dialog to insert it into the frame. Because the frame was resized before the photo was added, Elements will automatically resize the photo to fit the frame. Use the slider to resize the image and click-and-drag the image in the frame to reposition it. When you’re satisfied with both the size and placement within the frame, commit the change.

To make sure the next frame is exactly the same size as the first one, we’ll use the Alt-drag technique to spawn off copies. Just press-and-hold the Alt and Shift keys (Mac: Option and Shift keys) and drag the frame straight down. Holding the Alt key as you drag an image creates a duplicate when you release the mouse button, and holding the Shift key constrains the drag to a straight line. Repeat two more times so you have four frames.

Finally, drag the desired images from the Photo Bin one at a time onto a frame to replace the current photo, using the slider and Hand tool to reposition and resize as you did before.

If you’re using Elements 5 or later, you can use the Align and Distribute features, which appear on the Options Bar when you select an image. First, make sure the top and bottom framed images are about 0.5” from the top and bottom of the page, respectively, then select all four framed image layers in the Layers palette by Shift-clicking the top and bottom layers (as shown).
By holding Shift as we duplicated the frames, we already aligned them; but to distribute them evenly, choose Distribute Vertical Centers from the Distribute drop-down menu in the Options Bar. The frames will now shift into position.

ADD FINISHING TOUCHES
At this point, you’ll want to add your text and touch it up with layer styles from the Artwork and Effects palette. You can experiment with the text styles that ship with Elements by clicking on the T icon at the top of the Artwork and Effects palette. Or you can access layer styles by clicking the middle icon at the top of the Artwork and Effects palette and choosing Layer Styles from the drop-down menu. Browse through the subcategories from the right drop-down menu and add the layer styles by selecting your text and double-clicking the style thumbnail.

To edit the style, double-click the Layer Style icon to the right of the layer (it looks like a sunburst) and make modifications to the Style Settings menu.

MAKE A MATCHING DVD LABEL
But why stop at just a jacket? You could really impress friends and family with a matching CD/DVD label. Just go to File> Create>CD/DVD Label. Inside the New CD/DVD Label dialog, set all of your label’s parameters, then click OK. We chose the settings shown here.

You’ll use the same techniques we used for the DVD jacket. Add photos, background, and text to match the jacket. Then print to your favorite brand of labels and apply to the DVD using the system of your choice.

(Note: Be aware that these are very difficult to apply sans wrinkles without some kind of specialized applicator and there’s some evidence that gummed labels can damage CDs—especially if you have a slot-loading CD drive.)

The Artwork and Effects palette contains a wealth of fast and easy special effects to let you create one-of-a-kind designs. With hundreds of effects, frames, and backgrounds—as well as pre-drawn graphics—you’ll find a myriad of ideas to decorate your CDs and DVDs and their jackets. So whether you create jackets and labels for your backups or just dress up the DVDs you share with family and friends, let your imagination run wild.

DIGITAL NEGATIVES
In this digital age, we no longer have envelopes of negatives to put in a safe place, but you still need backups. As soon as you download your images from your digital camera, burn them to a CD or DVD. These unaltered images will serve as your “digital negatives” in case of disaster. An alternative is to copy the unedited images to an external hard drive.

Sara Froelich teaches online classes at Eclectic Academy (www.eclecticacademy.com) in Adobe Photoshop Elements and Illustrator and also teaches Photoshop Special F/X at LVS Online (www.lvsonline.com). Additionally, she’s the Editor for Designorati’s illustration area (http://designorati.com). For more information on classes, go to www.northlite.net.

All images by Sara Froelich unless otherwise noted.
lights out: transform a daytime image into nighttime

SOMETIMES IT’S FUN TO TAKE A LITTLE ARTISTIC LICENSE WITH OUR PHOTOS TO GIVE THEM MORE SIZZLE. IN THIS PROJECT, WE’LL COMBINE TWO IMAGES TOGETHER TO CHANGE THE DAY INTO NIGHT, THEN SPRINKLE IT WITH A DASH OF NOSTALGIA FOR A NICE AFTERGLOW.

STEP ONE: Open the two images you want to use, so both images are in the Photo Bin. If you’re following along with the images here, open the sunset image into your work area first. Select the entire image by pressing Ctrl-A (Mac: Command-A), then press Ctrl-C (Mac: Command-C) to copy the image. Open your main image (the house image, if you’re following along) and press Ctrl-V (Mac: Command-V) to paste the image in a new layer. You can close the sunset image now.

[To follow along, download the images shown here by navigating to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementsuser.com.]

STEP TWO: We want to clip the new sky to the original one, so we’ll use a layer mask by creating a clipping group. To do this, target the Background layer by clicking on it, then click the Create Adjustment Layer icon at the top of the Layers Palette and select Levels from the drop-down menu. When the Levels dialog opens, click OK. (We’re only doing this to get the layer mask.) Then target the top layer and press Ctrl-G (Mac: Command-G) to group your layer with the Levels adjustment layer. Select the mask by clicking it and set your Foreground color to black by clicking on the Foreground swatch and choosing black from the Color Picker. Fill the layer mask with black by pressing Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete).
STEP THREE: With your Background layer targeted, grab the Magic Wand tool (W). Click the Add to Selection icon on the far-left side of the Options Bar (second option from the left), set Tolerance to 32, and check Contiguous. Then keep clicking on the sky until you have selected all of it.

STEP FOUR: Now go to Select>Modify>Expand. In the Expand Selection dialog, enter 2 px and click OK. Choose Select>Feather, enter 2 px, and click OK. With your Foreground color set to white, target your layer mask by clicking on the thumbnail and fill it with white by pressing Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete). This will punch a hole through your black mask, allowing the top layer to peek through your selected area.

Then deselect by pressing Ctrl-D (Mac: Command-D). To clean up any missed areas, use your Brush tool (B) and paint with white, adjusting its size on the fly with the Left and Right Bracket keys. Black will hide the sunset and white will reveal it. Some white areas may remain in the trees, which we’ll deal with later.

STEP FIVE: Our house is now too cool for the sky, so let’s add a Photo Filter Adjustment Layer above our Background layer to warm it up. With the Background layer targeted, choose Layer-New Adjustment Layer>Photo filter. In the New Layer dialog that pops up, check Group with Previous Layer, then click OK. This will summon the Photo Filter dialog to open. Choose Warming Filter (85), increase the Density to 81, and click OK.
**STEP SIX:** Create a new layer at the top of the Layers palette by targeting the top layer and clicking the Create a New Layer icon. Fill this layer with black, then change the layer’s blend mode to Soft Light. The Soft Light blend mode either lightens or darkens the image, depending on the color of the top layer. In this case, it darkens the image because the top layer is filled with black. If the effect is too intense, you can reduce the layer’s Opacity in the Layers palette.

**STEP SEVEN:** Create two new layers at the top of your Layers Palette and fill one with white and one with black. Label the white layer Burn by double-clicking the layer name and change the blend mode to Color Burn. Label the new black layer Dodge and change the blend mode to Color Dodge.

**STEP EIGHT:** With the Burn layer selected and black as your Foreground color, pick a soft brush and set its Opacity to 10% in the Options Bar. Paint away the detail on the sides of the café and any white spots in the trees. Increase your brush size to about 500 px and use half of the brush to go around the edges in one fluid motion to darken the edges of your image (as shown).

Now set your Foreground color to white, then target your Dodge layer and paint in the areas below the lights to accent their glow. Notice you’re painting with the opposite color of the layer to isolate the effect of the blend modes to those painted areas.
STEP NINE: To add a glow and some moodiness, create a flattened copy of your image on top of your layer stack by pressing Alt-Shift-Ctrl-E (Mac: Option-Shift-Command-E), then duplicate this layer by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). With your top copy selected, choose Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. In the Gaussian Blur dialog, set Radius at 30 px, then click OK. Next, we’ll do a Hue/Saturation adjustment so press Ctrl-U (Mac: Command-U). In the Hue/Saturation dialog, check Colorize and dial down the Hue and Saturation (we set Hue to 45, Saturation to 25, and kept Lightness set to 0). Click OK to close the dialog.

STEP TEN: Change the blend mode of this layer to Multiply to darken the darker pixels on the layer below, then merge this layer with the copy below by pressing Ctrl-E (Mac: Command-E). Duplicate the layer once again and change the blend mode to Screen to lighten the lighter pixels. Then merge down again. Reduce the Opacity of this layer to taste (we set ours to 76%). This will bring back some detail in the dark areas.

STEP ELEVEN: Now just add embellishments to your heart’s content or use it as the front of a card. We added a mat and title to ours to give it enough finesse to warrant a frame.

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1. If you think there’s a possibility of using more than one of the three lasso tools to make a selection (Lasso, Magnetic Lasso, and Polygonal Lasso), start with the Magnetic Lasso tool. With a couple of little tricks, you can switch back and forth among all three tools on the fly. First, select the Magnetic Lasso tool, which is nested under the Lasso tool (L), and click-and-drag as normal. If you want to switch to the Polygonal Lasso tool to select some straight edges, press-and-hold the Alt key (Mac: Option key) and click once. When you move your mouse, you’ll see the Polygonal Lasso tool. To switch to the Lasso tool, just click-and-drag (while still holding down the Alt key). To return to the Magnetic Lasso tool, simply let go of the Alt key (Mac: Option key). It takes a bit of practice, but it’s a great way to toggle from one lasso tool to another.

A very practical use for adjustment layers is to have the adjustment affect only a certain area by filling the layer mask with black and then painting with white over the areas where you want the adjustment to be visible. The problem comes into play if you’re making subtle changes. When the before and after pictures aren’t dramatically different, it can be hard to see if you’re doing a good job painting the mask. So, to see your mask better, try this little trick: When you first add the adjustment layer by clicking the Create Adjustment Layer icon in the Layers palette, deliberately overdo the effect. In this case, using Hue/Saturation, we pushed both the Hue and Saturation higher than we ultimately wanted. With the adjustment cranked way up, it’s much easier to see if the mask is accurate. Once the mask is finished, double-click the adjustment layer thumbnail to reopen its menu and move the sliders to a more appropriate setting.

Sometimes we need to be willing to look past the name of a function or command and try it for other uses. For example, the Adjust Color for Skin Tone command (found under Enhance>Adjust Color) can be useful for more than just skin tones. Any photo that should have the same basic color tone as skin tones is a candidate for this command. Here we opened a photo that had a slight color cast to it when the wood should look, well, more like skin tone. So we chose Adjust Color for Skin Tone, made our adjustments, and our problem was fixed. The moral of this story? Sometimes you have to try things that aren’t obvious to come up with a quicker way to do things in Photoshop Elements.

If you ever need a striped background...
4 for a project, the Halftone Pattern filter provides a simple way to create one. It will use your Foreground and Background colors to create the “stripes,” so you’ll want to choose those first. Then go to Filter>Sketch>Halftone Pattern. In the Halftone Pattern dialog, set Pattern Type to Line and tweak your settings. Size will determine the thickness of the stripes, and Contrast will affect the sharpness of the lines’ edges. For crisper edges, simply bump up the Contrast setting, then click OK.

5 But what if you forgot to choose the color first, and you end up with black-and-white stripes when you really wanted red-and-white? No reason to start over, just choose red as your Foreground color and go to Edit>Fill Layer. Since you want to change the black stripes to red, you need to make the black stripes “lighter.” Ergo, change the blend mode in the dialog to Lighten, and the Fill Layer command will only fill those areas that the color red can make lighter—

6 in this case, the black stripes. Another way you can use a variation of the previous tip is to change the color of a black-and-white logo. In this example, we’ll change a black-and-white logo into a two-color design. First, choose a Foreground color to replace the white (we used yellow) and go to Edit>Fill Layer. This time, set the blend mode to Darken. Since no color can darken black, only the white areas will be filled. Next, choose a darker Foreground color to replace the black and fill the black areas using the Lighten blend mode, as previously described. In two quick steps—without having to make a selection—we colorized the logo.

7 Here’s a quick way to add an extra color “punch” to your photo. First press D to set your Foreground and Background colors to their defaults (black and white, respectively), then add a Gradient Map adjustment layer (don’t change anything, just click OK). Next, change the blend mode of the adjustment layer in the Layers palette to either Soft Light or Luminosity—whichever looks best with your photograph. If the effect is a little too much, lower the Opacity of the adjustment layer until you get the look you want.
turning the page on curls

A POPULAR EFFECT YOU SEE WITH A LOT OF SCRAPBOOK PAGE TEMPLATES AND KITS IS THE PAGE CURL. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE AS MANY VARIATIONS ON THIS TECHNIQUE AS THERE ARE DESIGNERS, ONCE YOU UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLES OF WORKING WITH CLIPPING GROUPS AND ORGANIZING YOUR LAYERS, YOU’LL BE AN OL’ PRO IN NO TIME.

STEP ONE: Create a new document (File> New>Blank File). In the New dialog, set your document’s parameters. (We set Width to 12”, Height to 12”, and Resolution to 300 px, but you can use any size if you won’t be following along with the downloads.) In either case, you need to set Background Contents to Transparent, then click OK. Next, create a new layer above the transparent layer by clicking the Create a New Layer icon at the top of the Layers palette. Fill it with white by going to Edit>Fill Layer and choosing White from the Use drop-down menu. Make sure Preserve Transparency is checked and click OK.

[To follow along, download the images used in this tutorial—as well as some embellishments—by navigating to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementsuser.com.]

STEP TWO: Target Layer 2 by clicking on it, then grab your Polygonal Lasso tool, which is nested under the Lasso tool (L). Starting from the top-left corner of Layer 2, make a triangular selection like the one shown here. You can make it any size you’d like. Put this selection on its own layer by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). You’ll still need that selection to remain active, so Ctrl-click (Mac: Command-click) the Layer 3 thumbnail to get the marching ants back.
STEP THREE: Target Layer 2 again and press Backspace (Mac: Delete) to remove that selection from the white layer. Doing this will provide a little window, which will reveal the background paper you’ll add in Step Seven. Now target Layer 3. We’re going to rotate this corner to create the first curl, so press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) to summon Free Transform and go to Image>Rotate>Selection 180°. Once your selection is rotated, press Enter (Mac: Return) to commit the change, then Ctrl-D (Mac: Command-D) to deselect.

STEP FOUR: Now we’ll add our background paper. Open your background paper (File>Open) and go to Window>Images>Tile to see both files side by side. With your background paper file active, go to Select>All and copy it to the Clipboard (Edit>Copy). Now click on your original document, target Layer 2, and paste the background paper (Edit>Paste). Your paper should now appear over Layer 2 in its own layer (Layer 4). Deselect your background paper and close it. (Tip: You’ll need to make sure your background paper matches the Height, Width, and Resolution of the scrapbook page you’re creating.)

STEP FIVE: We only want the calendar to appear over the white areas in Layer 2, so we’ll create a clipping group between those two layers. To do this, target Layer 4 (which should have your background paper) and press Ctrl-G (Mac: Command-G) to group both layers. Your Layers palette should now look like this.

Note: Don’t be spooked by the term clipping group. With a clipping group (also called a clipping mask), the layer(s) grouped with the base image below are seen only through the active pixels of that layer. Hence, the base layer uses its transparency information as the mask, which in this case is the transparent triangle.
Suzanne is a Photoshop Elements Techniques Gallery member with a passion for pictures. She loves learning all she can about Photoshop Elements and applying that knowledge to create lasting memories for her family.

STEP SIX: That was so much fun, let’s make a second fold. With Layer 3 targeted, use the Polygonal Lasso tool to make a new selection, this time starting at the lower-right corner of your white triangle. Then copy your selection on its own layer as you did in Step Two, Ctrl-click (Mac: Command-click) the Layer 5 thumbnail to get the marching ants back, target Layer 3, and press Backspace (Mac: Delete) to carve it out of this layer. (This layer will provide a clipping mask for one of your background papers.) Next, target Layer 5 again and rotate your selection as you did in Step Three to create your top page curl. Press Enter (Mac: Return) and deselect.

STEP SEVEN: Duplicate your background paper layer (Layer 4), click-and-drag this new layer to the top of your Layers palette, and group it with Layer 5 as you did in Step Five. This will clip it to the top page curl. With the top layer still targeted, select the Move tool (V) and uncheck Auto Select Layer in the Options Bar. Then click-and-drag the top layer so that the top-left corner of the calendar aligns with the top-left corner of the triangle on Layer 5. Now open your other background papers. Copy-and-paste one of them into Layer 1. Then create a new layer just above Layer 3, copy-and-paste another background paper into it, and clip this background paper with Layer 3 below.

STEP EIGHT: Now you’ll just want to add drop shadows to add some depth (we added a Low drop shadow to Layers 3 and 5). I also like to use the Burn and Dodge tools (nested under the Sponge tool [O]) to add even more realism to my folds. [To learn more about how to use the Dodge and Burn tools, check out Chris Beasley’s tutorial on p. 10.] Just use your imagination, experiment, and have fun creating a background that will stand the test of time.
STEP ONE: Create a new document by choosing File>New>Blank File or pressing Ctrl-N (Mac: Command-N). In the New dialog that pops up, set Preset to Custom, Width to 1024 px, Height to 768 px, Resolution to 72 ppi (or 300 ppi if you’re creating yours for print), Color Mode to RGB, and Background Contents to Transparent. Click OK to close the dialog. Press D on your keyboard to set your Foreground and Background colors to their default colors (black and white, respectively).

STEP TWO: Go to Filter>Render>Clouds. You’ll see a bunch of dark storm clouds gather on your document, but don’t worry—brighter skies are just ahead. Now go to Filter>Blur>Radial Blur. In the Radial Blur dialog, set Amount to 38, Blur Method to Spin, and Quality to Good. If you’d like, you can move the Blur Center by clicking-and-dragging inside the Blur Center preview area.
STEP THREE: Just a few more filters to go… We’re going to add a bit of a 3D, sculpted effect to our water by using the Bas Relief filter. Simply Go to Filter > Sketch > Bas Relief. In the Bas Relief dialog, set Detail to 13, Smoothness to 3, Light to Bottom, and click OK. For optimal results, you usually want to go with a higher Detail than Smoothness setting when working with this filter. We’re already starting to see a little wave forming.

STEP FOUR: Now we’re—oddly enough—going to add some chrome to our embryonic wave. Simply go to (you guessed it!) Filter > Sketch > Chrome. In the Chrome dialog, set Detail to 4 and Smoothness to 7. The Chrome filter adds a touch of fluidity to our design.

STEP FIVE: Believe it or not, we’re actually finished with filters. Next, we’ll add some color with a Saturation adjustment. Press Ctrl-U (Mac: Command-U) to bring up the Hue/Saturation dialog. Check Colorize in the bottom-right corner of the dialog and set Hue to 223, Saturation to 24, and Lightness to –4. Click OK.

STEP SIX: To create more realism, we’ll darken the edges a bit. First, create a new layer by clicking the Create a New Layer icon in the Layers palette and fill it with black by pressing Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete). Using your Elliptical Marquee tool, which is nested under the Rectangular Marquee tool (M), click-and-drag out an oval in your image. Go to Select > Feather and set the Feather Radius to 50 px, then click OK. Now hit Backspace (Mac: Delete), reduce the Opacity of your top layer to about 55%, and deselect. Save your image and you have a pretty cool water ripple effect to use as a background or for whatever you like.

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IS THERE A FASTER WAY TO MODIFY MY BRUSHES OTHER THAN GOING TO THE MORE BRUSH OPTIONS MENU EVERY TIME?

There’s not a specific command or keyboard shortcut for this, but here’s a workaround that may save you some time and provide a versatile set of brushes. To start, select the Brush tool (B), click the down-facing triangle next to the brush preview to open the Brush Picker, and choose a brush. Next, click the Brush icon to the far-right side of the Options Bar to open the More Options menu and make your changes. Before you use the brush, reopen the Brush Picker and click on the flyout menu in the top-right corner to open it. Choose Save Brush, type in a logical name for the brush in the Brush Name dialog, and click OK. If you need to make more changes, repeat this process, saving another new brush. You can do this as many times as necessary.

Once you’ve created all the brushes you need, open the Brush Picker’s flyout menu again and choose Preset Manager (or go to File>Preset Manager). Make sure the Preset Type menu is set to Brushes, then Ctrl-click (Mac: Command-click) all the brushes you created to select them and click the Save Set button. In the Save dialog, enter a name for your brush set and click OK. (Elements will save them as an ABR file.) Then click Done to close the Preset Manager.

You have just created a set of brushes that you can call up any time you need them. All you have to do is choose Load Brushes from the Brush Picker’s flyout menu and navigate to your set. These brushes will work in any tool that uses a brush. This can be particularly useful with a tool like the Eraser tool (E), which uses a brush but doesn’t offer the More Brush Options menu.

[To see this technique in action, check out Mike Rodriguez’s video tutorial by navigating to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementsuser.com and clicking on Tutorials.]

I ADD THE SAME METADATA TO MOST OF MY IMAGES, AND I’M GETTING WEARY OF TYPING THE SAME INFORMATION FOR EACH FILE. IS IT POSSIBLE TO AUTOMATE THIS PROCESS?

It sure is—as long as you don’t mind a little work initially. First, open an image in the Editor, go to File>File Info, and enter all of your copyright information in the IPTC Contact dialog. When you’re finished, click the flyout menu in the top-right corner of the dialog and choose Save Metadata Template. Enter a name for the template and click Save, then click OK to close the File Info dialog. This will add the metadata to the image.

Now open a new image that needs the same metadata, go to File>File Info, choose the template you saved from the flyout menu, then click OK. Just save the image and you’re finished!

IS THERE A SIMPLE WAY TO REARRANGE THE LISTING ORDER OF THE KEYWORD TAGS IN THE ORGANIZER?

There is—and after you know what to look for, it’s a snap. Simply click-and-drag the tag you want to move to its new position in the list. The trick is to watch for a thin, gray line (Elements 5: a blue line). It should appear in the new location as you hover over the border. For example, to move the People category below the Places category, click-and-drag it below Places until you see that thin, light-gray line appear under Places. Let go and the People category should now have a new home!

(Tip: If you’re not seeing the sometimes elusive gray or blue line, try overshooting your mark and then dragging it back into place. Don’t ask me why but this works every time!)
Learn how to design an edgy cover using simple layer blend modes. You’ll be surprised at just how easy it is! To view this video tutorial, navigate to the subscriber area of www.photoshopelementsuser.com and click on Videos.

You’ll find tons of useful resources online at the Adobe® Photoshop® Elements Techniques subscriber area:

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• Online Gallery to share your images