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Why not? Harness all the power of your digital camera, p10

SCRAPBOOKERS’ WORKSHOP
Let tags liven up your layouts, p30

RETOUCH LIKE THE PROS
Add dimension to your portraits by focusing on the eyes, p19
If you read Matt Kloskowski’s Editor’s Note last month, you’ll know that he has passed the reins of editor-in-chief on to me. In this first note, I wanted to say hello, and let you know how excited I am about the opportunity to run this great newsletter. Over the past few months, I have been working with Matt, Annie, Dave and many of the writers to make sure that we continue to provide you with the best tutorials, tips, tricks and advice for Adobe Photoshop Elements.

Matt especially has been an inspiration, and although he has set the bar pretty high for me, it is a challenge I relish. We’re not planning any big changes to the newsletter, although I welcome any comments you might have about the things you like best (or least) about it. We do plan to update the Web site so that it’s easier for you to find what you need among the more than 400 tutorials, videos, tips and tricks posted on the site. That’s a big project, one that we’ll be working on through the end of this year, and I’m looking forward to getting started on it.

And, while I know that Matt has mentioned this in the past, I thought I would toss out another plug for our Elements Village forums, which you can find at www.photoshopelementsuser.com/forum. I am regularly amazed at the depth of knowledge and creativity shown by the members there, as well as their helpfulness and patience when dealing with newcomers looking for a bit of Elements guidance. It’s one of the best communities I’ve encountered in my years on the Web, and I strongly urge you to visit it regularly, become a member, and ask questions when you’re looking for help.

Until next time,

Rick LePage

rick@photoshopelementsuser.com
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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 Web site subscriber. And don’t forget to look in the Extras section online for free downloads and sample photos for many of the stories in each issue at www.photoshopelementsuser.com/subscriber/printextras.php.
hdr made easy

THE HDR CRAZE HAS LATELY CREATED QUITE A BUZZ IN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC COMMUNITY. I’LL SHOW YOU A WAY TO SIMULATE THE EFFECT OF AN HDR PHOTO—WITHOUT ALL OF THE TIME AND EXTRA SOFTWARE IT USUALLY TAKES TO CREATE ONE.

If you’re unfamiliar with the topic, HDR stands for high dynamic range. It’s a unique, highly stylized look, and when done well, it can really make a photo pop. Creating an HDR image involves taking several exposures of the same scene; usually three or five bracketed images, captured using a tripod. The exposures range from very overexposed to underexposed and everything in between. The individual images are then blended together on the computer to create one photo with an extremely wide range of intensity levels in it. In a final HDR image, you can see all of the detail in the bright areas and in the dark areas, something impossible to accomplish with a single exposure. Here, we’ll try to approximate the HDR look with a single photo.

STEP ONE: First open the photo on which you want to apply this technique. Photos of cityscapes, cars, planes, statues, sunsets, and other urban scenes usually make a good candidate. Photos of people really don’t work well: the HDR effect on skin tones can be quite distracting.

STEP TWO: One of the first things I’m going to do is create a copy of the layer, which will help us dial back the intensity in case the final effect is too strong. Press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) to duplicate the Background layer in the Layers palette and create another copy of it on top. Then click once on that new layer to target it for the adjustments we’re about to do.
STEP THREE: Next, click on the Image menu and choose Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Shadows/Highlights. That opens the Shadows/Highlights dialog box. The first thing you want to do is take the Lighten Shadows slider and crank it up to 100%. This brings out the details in all of the shadowy areas. This should already start creating some interesting effects on your photo. (Don’t click OK, though; we're not done with this dialog box yet.)

STEP FOUR: Take the Darken Highlights setting and move it to the right until things start to get little more “dramatic” (65-75% often works well). This gets really cool if you’re working on a photo with sky in it, but either way, the bright areas of the photo will now become darker.

STEP FIVE: Up until this point we've changed a couple of settings that have drastically reduced the contrast: it's time to get it back. Go down to the bottom of the Shadows/Highlights dialog and increase the Midtone Contrast slider. Sometimes I drag this one all the way up to 100%, but that may not work for all photos. Something pretty high—between 70% and 80%—should do.
STEP SIX: Now we're at the point where you'll have to start making some creative decisions. The formula works pretty well up to here, but you'll need to decide if your photo appears too dark or too light.

If it appears too light, then start tweaking the Lighten Shadows or Darken Highlights sliders. The Lighten Shadows slider controls how much of the darker areas of the photo we'll see. The Darken Highlights setting will make the whole photo darker by toning down the bright areas. The more you drag each slider to the right, the more fantasy-like and surreal the photo will look. This is where it gets to be a creative choice on your part. With this photo, I'll pull back on the Darken Highlights slider just a bit.

When you're done click OK and close the dialog.

STEP SEVEN: Now you're back in the main interface with your new photo in front. If it looks like the effect is too much, then just try decreasing the Opacity slider for the top layer (the one we created in Step 2) to show some of the original photo below it. Here's a before and after of the photo we've been working on.

The two photos on the right show another before and after example of the same settings applied to a totally different photo. Cool huh?

In the end, it's not exact, there's very little theory involved, and there's no science behind it. But you gotta admit, it just looks cool and it sure beats buying another program to get a similar effect.
creating textured text in a mask

Most folks don’t think about using filters in conjunction with text, but they are a great way to “texturize” your prose. And with a layer mask, you can create beautifully distressed text that remains editable.

**Step One:** First, let’s prepare the text. Open the image in which you would like to place your “distressed” type (or create a new file). Press T to grab the Type tool and create some text. Be sure to pick a font with nice fat letters, so there is maximum surface area on which to run a filter.

**Tip:** To resize and move text while you’re typing it, just press and hold the Ctrl key (Mac: Command) and drag any resulting resizing handle. Hold the Shift key to resize the text proportionately. If you want to move the text around on the page, click and drag from within the resizing box.

**Step Two:** Over in the Layers palette, create a selection of the text by holding down the Ctrl key (Mac: Command) while clicking on the type layer’s thumbnail (not the name of the layer, but its thumbnail). Marching ants should dutifully surround the text.
STEP THREE: Now, we’ll add a layer mask. Press the half-black/half-white circle at the top of the Layers palette to create an adjustment layer. Choose Levels and immediately dismiss the dialog by pressing OK. By creating the text selection beforehand, we automatically created a mask.

STEP FOUR: To have the filters applied properly to our text, we’ll have to rearrange and group the layers. First, drag the Levels adjustment layer below the text. Then, click once to select the type layer and choose Layers > Group with Previous. In the Layers palette, the type layer will scoot slightly to the right and you’ll see a downward pointing arrow appear to its left. This is your clue that it’s now grouped to the layer below.

STEP FIVE: Now, we’re all set to run a filter... or two or three. Click in the layer mask’s thumbnail (it should have a tiny hairline rule around it) and choose Filter > Distort > Ocean Ripple. Enter 8 for Ripple Size and 4 for Ripple Magnitude. Press OK.

Run the same filter twice more (or as many times as you’d like) by pressing Ctrl-F (Mac: Command-F). If you want to run a different filter, trot back up to the Filter menu and choose something else. And, as long as you run the filter on the layer mask, the text remains editable.
Here’s the final result after placing the text on top of a photo. For extra pizzazz, I added a drop shadow to the text and used the Cookie Cutter for a creative photo edge.

**NOTES:** You can also just apply a filter to a text layer, but Elements will ask you if you want to Simplify the layer, which will make the text completely non-editable. To do anything to the text at all, you will have to retype it. However, by creating a selection of the text and then placing it in a layer mask you retain the capability to edit the text.

With this method you can easily change the color of the font on the fly to see what looks best: simply double-click the type layer to select the text and click the color well in the Options bar. Choose another color from the Color Picker and press OK.

To do more than just change color you’d need to go back a few steps but you still wouldn’t have to retype the text. To change the text font or point size, drag the Levels adjustment layer to the Trash and make your changes to the text. Start with Step Two, load your new text as a selection, create another Levels adjustment layer, and proceed from there.

Filters that work the best include anything from the Artistic and Distort sets, along with Sketch > Torn Edges. The key, as usual, is to experiment. For a truly enjoyable Friday evening, might I suggest running through each and every filter while enjoying a lovely beverage and listening to your favorite CD?

Until next time, happy filtering!
If you’ve spent much time in the digital photography world—or recently bought a digital SLR—you’ve probably heard about the RAW image format. While it’s not quite the latest thing, it is still relatively new to most of us, and it’s still seen by many people as something that only professionals use. However, with the strong RAW support provided right in Photoshop Elements, there’s no reason for anyone with a RAW-capable camera not to give it a try. Whether it’s right for you depends largely on the types of images you shoot and how much you like to edit, but it’s worth looking into.

WHAT IS RAW?
To understand what RAW is, and why you might want to use it, you need to understand a little bit about how your camera makes an image. While the lens, shutter, aperture, and all of the physics of light are exactly the same in a digital camera as they are in a film camera, there’s one major difference: instead of a piece of film sitting in the back of the camera, there’s a digital image sensor.

An image sensor is composed of a piece of light-sensitive metal that’s divided into a grid, with one cell representing a single pixel. When light strikes a pixel, the metal there emits a number of electrons that is directly proportional to the amount of light that hit. By reading the voltage at each pixel, the image sensor can build up a very accurate grayscale image.

With RAW images, you can often recover detail in highlight areas that have been overexposed. If you look at the image on the right, you can see how much detail in the clouds has been recovered. If it had been shot in JPEG format, the detail would have been lost.
To get from this brightness-based grayscale image to full color, some tricky computing is required. As you might already know, red, green, and blue light can be combined to make every other color. When you mix red, green, and blue—the primary colors of light—the resulting color gets brighter, until it ultimately becomes white.

On your image sensor, there is either a red, green, or blue filter over each pixel. With these filters, the sensor knows exactly how red some pixels are, how blue others are, and how green the remaining pixels are. Using some very complicated mathematical operations, the image sensor can calculate the exact color of each pixel by examining the values of the pixels around it. (Some cameras use filters other than red, green, and blue, but the underlying theory is the same.)

If this sounds complicated, that’s because it is, and these interpolation algorithms are closely guarded by the camera companies as trade secrets.

When you’re shooting in JPEG mode, the first thing the camera does after you take a picture is to read all of the data off of the sensor. It then interpolates the color, a process called demosaicing. Next, it must make some adjustments to the color of the image to correct it for the specific color of the filters on the sensor, and then it applies your white balance setting. After that, it applies any contrast, saturation, tone or sharpening settings that you’ve specified in the camera, and then it converts the image to the JPEG format—using compression algorithms to save space—and stores it.

As you can see, there’s a lot of processing that goes on in a very short amount of time onboard the computer inside your camera, and all of this is required to turn the captured data into a finished image.

When you shoot in RAW mode, however, the process is much simpler: the camera reads the data off of the sensor, and writes it to the memory card. That’s it. No color interpolation, no image processing, nothing. All of that happens later in your computer, using special software, and therein lies the advantage of shooting RAW.
WHAT RAW WON’T DO

There are many advantages to shooting RAW and they’re all related to the fact that when working with RAW, all of that processing that normally happens in the camera (when you shoot JPEG) happens in your computer, under your control, using software of your choosing. Whether you need this control depends on the type of editing you do. However, it’s important to understand what RAW is not.

Shooting in RAW will not get you better detail or sharpness, nor will it get you more colors than what you’ll get shooting JPEG. If you shoot the same scene twice, save one as RAW and the other as JPEG, and simply print them both out without any editing, you’ll be hard-pressed to see any difference at all. What RAW gets you is more editing power, and the ability to preserve image quality as you edit your photos.

RAW-ONLY EDITS

There are two types of edits that you can make to a RAW file that you can’t make to a JPEG file. The first is white balance correction. White balance is the process of calibrating your camera to the type of light that you’re shooting in, so that colors appear accurate. This calibration process is simply a mathematical function that’s applied to your image data. As you saw earlier, when you shoot in JPEG mode, the adjustment is applied in the camera.

Because no white balance adjustment is applied to a RAW file by the camera, you can adjust white balance later, while editing. This gives you a level of color correction and adjustment that simply doesn’t exist when editing JPEG files.

The other great editing advantage of RAW files is the ability to recover overexposed highlights. With JPEG, if you overexpose part of an image it “blows out” to complete white. No matter how you adjust the image, there’s simply no way to recover the data in those overblown areas.

However, when you overexpose an image, you’re don’t always overexpose all three color channels. Sometimes when you overexpose, you only overexpose one or two
of the channels—say the red and the green. In these instances, your RAW conversion software can use the surviving channels to reconstruct the overexposed channel, allowing you to restore detail to areas that initially appear completely overexposed. (See the images on Page 10 to get an idea of what I’m talking about.)

While this might seem unbelievable, it’s quite real. The ability to recover clipped highlights is such a powerful feature, and it’s one of the best reasons to shoot RAW.

**RAW GIVES YOU MORE TO WORK WITH**

Your camera probably captures 10 to 12 bits of information per pixel. If you have a newer camera, it might even capture as much as 14 bits per pixel. “Bits per pixel” simply means that there are more possible colors that a given pixel can be.

Unfortunately, JPEG files can only store 8 bits per pixel. This means that when you shoot in JPEG format, your camera has to throw out a lot of color information. This doesn’t mean that the camera has a narrower range of colors, just that it doesn’t have as many intermediate tones to work with. With fewer tones, you’ll be less capable of preserving smooth gradients when you’re editing.

Skies, for example, are very dependent on smooth gradients to look realistic. While a JPEG file can produce a great-looking sky, once you start editing that sky, the JPEG file’s lower bit depth means you’ll more quickly run into banding and stair-stepping. (See the photo on Page 12 for an illustration of this problem.)

So, if you tend to edit a lot, and want the capability to make more extreme edits along the way—by bringing out detail in the shadows, for example—then RAW will give you much more editing “latitude.”

**THERE’S NO COMPRESSION WITH RAW**

JPEG files are compressed so that they don’t take up as much space on your camera’s memory card. This is the format’s biggest strength, letting you store lots of images in a small space. However, JPEG uses a compression process known as lossy, which means that, when your image is decompressed (which happens when you open it in Elements, for example), not all the original image data is present.

While this compression may not be visible straight out of the camera, if you take a JPEG image and re-save it a few times (as a JPEG) you can quickly get visible artifacts. RAW files have no compression applied, so you can preserve a completely uncompressed image throughout your workflow. (If you choose to shoot in JPEG, you should make sure you save any file you’re working on in Elements’ PSD format or the TIF format, which don’t use lossy compression methods.)

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

While “shooting RAW” might seem intimidating, it really isn’t, and, if you are the type of photographer who likes to edit your images to perfection, then RAW is the way to go. And even if you think you’re a simple snapshot kind of shooter, capturing RAW can save your images when the conditions aren’t perfect—you don’t have to use all of RAW’s power to edit every picture you take.

In the next issue, we’ll look at getting started with editing RAW images, and we’ll offer some techniques for getting the most out of your RAW images.

Ben Long is a photographer, freelance writer and trainer based in San Francisco. He is the author of Complete Digital Photography (Charles River Media) and Getting Started With Camera RAW (Peachpit Press).
Photographers are seekers of light. We leave our warm, cozy beds at the crack of dawn to go in search of the warm glow of that first light kissing the landscape. We find ourselves the last to pack up after photographing the golden rays of sunset, staying out long after regular folks have gone home for dinner. We are out in the worst weather conditions because we know that some of the best light happens just before or after a storm. And it all comes down to light.

Light has quality and quantity; it has direction. There is the warm glow you find from early morning or late evening hours, or the cool tones of an overcast or shady day. The light that casts long, deep shadows. And, whether it is flat light, back light, side light, overcast light or daylight, we seek it out. We fill our compact...
flash cards with the same beauty that fills our hearts to try to capture the moment we are witnessing. This is so that we can share our experience with others, stirring their emotions as ours did we stirred when we clicked the shutter.

When you bought your first camera, it probably came with the clichéd advice to “photograph one hour before and after sunrise and again at sunset”—otherwise known as the “golden” hours. Yes, you can use this expensive new toy for exactly four hours per day, no more, no less. And that’s assuming there is going to be a sunrise or sunset. On overcast days, should you go ahead and stay snuggled up in bed while images of amazing photographs dance in your head? I think not.

There’s no denying the beauty of first light as the sun crests the horizon, bathing the world in a warm glow (as seen in the photo of the lighthouse above). However, if I only shot when I found that light, I might get to shoot a total of 45 days in a good year, living in the Pacific Northwest like I do. I have learned to embrace those overcast days for the quality of light they provide for a number of subjects. Those days can be great for shooting waterfalls, flowers (like the calla lily below), people, birds and mammals. Under these conditions, the sky becomes a big softbox spreading a soft light across the landscape, diffusing harsh shadows and revealing details.

If you’re willing to brave the elements on a stormy December day on the Oregon coast, you may be rewarded with crashing waves against the sea stacks. When the image below was taken, there was torrential rain and winds strong enough to nearly knock me to the ground, but I simply covered my camera with a Shutter Hat and braced myself against the wind.

Side light—shown in the shot below of the American Alligator—gives our subject shape and texture, hiding as much as it reveals. There is drama to side lighting, where long shadows contrast with highlights, and add an aura of mystery to our images. I typically dial in minus compensation in these situations to increase contrast for even more impact.
When mid-morning light enters through a doorway and bounces off the walls of an abandoned old building, it reflects light into the nooks and crannies, creating a glowing quality that reveals a hint of the beauty and grace of times long gone. It was light that drew me to the window, but looking in I found the green door bathed in that beautiful light that was the real scene for me.

Backlight hides our subjects beneath a cloak of black, their shape a silhouette against the late afternoon background. Backlight reveals what we may not notice in overcast light: the guard hairs and beard of a grizzly rim, lighting his undeniable shape. Once I’m sure I’ve got the composition, I dial in minus exposure compensation to increase the drama of a backlit scene.

Moisture, in combination with the right angle of light, will produce wonderful shafts of light—“godbeams” if you will—of the sun streaking through the fog, spotlighting the forest’s beauty.

A clearing snowstorm throws the world into a monochromatic wonderland that just screams out for black and white photography. Don’t sit out the storm in your warm hotel room: jump feet first into the fray and capture the calm, quiet solitude of an untracked snow scene, with the sky dark and overcast. Toughing out the storm reaps rewards that might otherwise be mere memories. A few minutes after capturing the quietude of...
the snowy scene, its tranquility was disrupted with the lingering noise created by many footprints running carefree through the snow. There is never another right now, so capture the moment as it unfolds in front of you and your camera.

At the end of the day, as the sun begins its decent towards night, a shadow creeps up the sheer rock wall cloaking it in darkness, the last rays of golden light bounce across the canyon to brush across Horsetails Falls in Yosemite National Park, creating a “firefall” of beauty that only nature can produce when all the conditions are perfect.

As the last light of the day fades from the sky other, manmade lights begin to come on, lighting the Golden Gate Bridge, its warm red colors contrasting beautifully against the deep blue of a twilight sky.

Light truly is the primary subject in our images. Finding interesting things for the light to drape across is what drives us in our quest. Whether it’s that golden light of sunrise or sunset, the overcast of a Pacific Northwest day, strong shadows of a sidelit landscape or the dramatic light of an approaching storm, we are photographers, seekers of light! Go out and search for your perfect light whenever you can.

Laurie leads wildlife photography safaris in North America and is an instructor with the Digital Landscape Workshop Series, Photoshop World, and Cruising Through Life training extravaganzas. She is also the Photo Equipment Advice Desk Guru for NAPP. Check out her website, www.laurieexcell.com.
**Feature**

the eyes have it

**BY SYNDEE HOLT**

ONE OF THE KEYS TO A GREAT PORTRAIT IS THE EYES, WHICH ARE OFTEN DESCRIBED AS THE WINDOWS TO THE SOUL. IF THAT TRULY IS THE CASE, THEN IT'S OUR JOB TO MAKE THOSE WINDOWS CRYSTAL CLEAR AND SPARKLING. LET'S SEE HOW.

I spent many years working in commercial color labs as a print retoucher. One of the advantages of having retouched so many hardcopy portraits is that I have been able to translate many of the retouching rules and tricks to the digital darkroom. Here are a few of my top “eye tricks” to create expressive eyes with a little extra dimension; ones that draw you into a portrait. To make the lesson more challenging, we are going to work on children’s eyes. We’ll start with Dominick, the grandson of my good friend Julie.

![Before](image1.png) ![After](image2.png)

**STEP ONE:** Open your file and hold down Ctrl (Mac: Command) and hit the ‘+’ key to enlarge the image so that the eyes are front and center. This will make working on the details much easier.

For the lines and darkened areas of flesh under the eyes, we’ll use the Clone Stamp tool (S) with a soft brush. In the Options bar at the top of the screen, set the Opacity between 25% and 34%, and choose the Stipple Dense 21-pixel brush from the Brush Presets.

Make the clone tool sample from the skin directly below the eye area by holding down the Alt (Mac: Option) key. Then, sweep the brush slowly underneath the eye, starting at the bottom of the eye area and moving up to under the lashes. This will soften the wrinkles, and lighten the area under the eye, but it won’t make it look plastic.

You do not want to completely remove the shadow area, or you will flatten the face unnaturally (take a look at any fashion magazine cover to see what I mean). You also do not want to completely remove any lines or wrinkles around the eyes, as these are “character” for the portrait. Soften them, but don’t remove them. The exception to this is any vertical lines on the forehead between the eyes—theese lines are an indicator of stress and should be completely removed.
STEP TWO: Now we are going to use one of my favorite tools, the Brush tool (B). Set the Brush Mode from Normal to Soft Light. Set the Opacity at 14%, and Black as your foreground color (if you have changed the default foreground and background colors, press D to select the default of black and white). Select a brush size just about the diameter of the bottom lashes and sweep it across the bottom eye lashes, and then down each individual clump of lashes.

STEP THREE: Next, we need to get rid of the catchlights—those bright spots of light “caught” in the eyes—at the center of the pupil. This is the most common place you’ll see catchlights when you use a flash, but it can cause a distracting, staring effect. Use the Ctrl-+ (Mac: Command-+) shortcut to enlarge your image to include only the right eye. Select your Clone tool and a brush size that fits just in the black area of the pupil below the catchlight. Once again, hold down the Alt (Mac: Option) key to sample the black area and then carefully move up through the pupil cloning this area in single clicks. Do not sweep.

Once you have the pupil complete, you should also remove the soft reflection to the left of the pupil, and the highlight area at the bottom of the eye. As before, don’t stroke the area when you’re cloning; make a series of clicks with the tool to complete this clean-up. (Remember the location of that reflection near the pupil—we’ll re-add the catchlights there in Step Five.)

STEP FOUR: The reason I don’t just paint the pupil black is that pupils are not opaque, and you will lose a little of the “window to the soul” effect if you block it completely. I do often darken the pupil after I’ve cleaned it up, however.

Select the Brush tool and position the brush over the pupil and adjust the size so that it fits the pupil. Set the Brush Mode to Soft Light, the Opacity to 14%, and make sure that Black is the foreground color. Then click two to three times to darken the pupil area slightly. This step may not be necessary on eyes of lighter color, but is almost always necessary on dark brown eyes.
STEP FIVE: We will now add the catchlights back, but in a better place. Moving catchlights isn’t hard once you get the hang of it, but you must make sure that you put the catchlight in the corner of the eye nearest the light source. Remember those reflections we cloned out of the left side of the iris? This is a telltale hint about the direction of the light source. So, let’s go back to that area and start with the Brush tool, set to a size of 10, and the Mode to Soft Light. Then, press the X key to toggle the foreground color to White.

Click the brush about seven times to add a white circle to the iris. Now click the right bracket (‘]’) key to make your brush one size larger and then click about four more times. Notice how this gives the catchlight a soft, rounded look? This helps sculpt that flat eye into a rounded, dimensional image. The rule for sizing the catchlights is the further away the light source, the smaller the catchlight. This image was taken outdoors, so I want a smaller size for my catchlight.

To complete the catchlight replacement, we’ll add a reflection in the iris directly opposite the catchlight corresponding to the angle of the light. Use the same tool setup as for the catchlight, but set the brush size to 10. Stroke lightly between the darker lines of the iris, at approximately the 4 o’clock position, with smaller length strokes at each end of the reflection. This is a subtle step, so don’t go overboard here.

STEP SIX: Now, we’ll lighten the whites of the eyes. We’ll use a soft triangular area to accomplish this, to help erase signs of aging and redness. It will even make the eye look larger! In the shot below, I have drawn the approximate area and shape we will work on.

Select your brush with the Mode set on Soft Light and the Opacity set at 14%, and make sure your foreground color is white. Brush in that triangular area. This time you can use sweeping strokes in the area. I try to have the top portion of the a little lighter than the bottom portion. Because Dom has slightly redder eyes, I’ll even do a quick sweep outside the triangle area right along the lids. Repeat this on the inner corner of the eye also.
STEP SEVEN: Next, we’ll work a bit more on the iris. Select the Eye Dropper (I) and click in the golden portion of his irises next to the pupil. This will make that color the new foreground color. Then, switch back to the Brush tool, using the same settings you used in the last step. Brush lightly in and around the bottom part of the iris to enhance its color slightly.

Then, set your foreground and background colors back to default by pressing D. Keeping the same settings, use the brush and stroke a line around the outside edge of the iris to help define it. Dom already has a naturally dark area there, but we can help define it a little more with a couple strokes of black.

Hold down the Ctrl (Mac: Command) key and the minus key (‘-’) to zoom back out and admire the results compared to the unretouched eye. Take a look at the image of both eyes (shown on the left). See how the right eye now looks more round and dimensional?

Now comes the hard part: You still have one more eye to work on! So, repeat Steps Three through Seven on the left eye. Periodically, you might want to zoom out to make sure that you are balancing the work on the two eyes.

STEP EIGHT: Before we complete our work on the eyes, let’s try one more retoucher’s trick, this time on the teeth. Click on your brush tool, then click on the foreground color at the bottom of the Tool palette (to bring up the Color Picker dialog box) and select a light lavender color. If you want to use the same color I used here, type f0ccf7 in the ‘#’ field of the dialog box.

With the brush on Soft Light mode and at an Opacity of 16%, lightly brush each individual tooth with the lavender. This will both lighten the teeth and diminish any yellow discolorations. That’s right, for whiter teeth, use lavender, not white: it gives the teeth a more realistic look.
STEP NINE: Next, we’ll “burn in” the edges of the photo to put more focus on the face—and our retouched eyes. Press D to reset the foreground color to black and increase the brush size considerably (you might also want to use a softer brush, depending upon your image). Sweep around the corners of the image to “burn” in the edges slightly. Here, I’m paying special attention to the top of Dom’s hand and diverting around the shadow area of the hand. You can even use this technique to soften things like the highlight on the tip of his nose.

STEP TEN: Now we’ll have some layer fun. Make two duplicate layers by selecting Layer > Duplicate Layer twice. Name the new layers Layer 1 and Layer 2.

Click on Layer 1, the middle layer, on the Layer palette to select it. Go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur and type 33.5 into the radius selection. This will really blur the layer.

Hide Layer 2 by clicking on the eye to the left of the layer name on the Layers palette.

STEP ELEVEN: Click on Layer 1 and choose the Eraser tool (E). Set the Eraser’s opacity to about 53%. Select the Stipple Dense brush again and enlarge it to about 70 pixels. Carefully erase the blur in the eye areas with the tool.

Turn Layer 2 back on and then select it. Reduce the layer’s Opacity slowly to select the amount of “glow” you want for the skin. As you reduce the opacity, the skin softens, but the eyes soften at a much slower rate because we erased much of the softness from the blurred layer. I set it here at about 60%, but the amount will vary with the look you want.

If you compare the before and after versions of Dom (on Page 19), you can see just how much those amazing eyes capture you—all with only a little bit of detail work!

Go to the Subscriber area at photoshopelementsuser.com for a second “Eyes have it” tutorial from Syndee.

Syndee Holt is an independent designer for Jacquard Products, Polyform Products, and Savage Universal. Her work can be found in many arts and craft magazines, as well as on numerous television shows. Check her out on the Web at www.synspage.com.
Customizing the Info palette▼

Did you know you can customize the information that’s displayed in the Info palette (Window > Info)? Just select the palette’s More menu (in the upper right corner) and choose Palette Options. In this dialog box you can determine what information you want the Info palette to display. The most useful items you can change are the ruler units, which by default is set to inches, but if you’re working on an image for the Web, you might prefer to see the possible crop information in pixels (as in the image on the left). You can also add lines to the palette that include the current file’s dimensions, size, and color profile. Some of the other options—Efficiency, Scratch Sizes and Timing—can be helpful if you’re trying to troubleshoot performance issues with your computer, but they aren’t necessary for everyday work.

Keyboard shortcuts for making quick fills

If you’ve been using Elements for a while, you know there are a ton of keyboard shortcuts designed to help you get things done faster. Most of them can be found next to the menu item that they’re applicable to, but there are a few really useful ones that you won’t find easily. For example, we’re constantly filling selections and layers with colors: Instead of using the Paint Bucket tool, you can quickly fill a layer or selection with the Foreground color by pressing Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Backspace). If you want to fill something with the current Background color, press Ctrl-Backspace (Mac: Command-Backspace).

Easier alignment when dragging layers between two different files

If you’re dragging layers between two open documents in Elements, you may find that it’s difficult to determine where the layer will be placed in the window that you are dragging it to.
To get around this, hold down the Shift key when dragging the layer, and Elements will automatically place the contents of the layer in the center of the document when you release the mouse button.

**Saving a mouse click during filter previews**

Many of Elements’ filters let you preview the effect while you have the dialog box on-screen, so you can see the before and after view of your image. While you can click the Preview check box with your mouse, you can also press the P key to turn it on and off.

**Setting brush hardness via the keyboard**

You can increase or decrease the hardness of your current brush—without changing its size—directly from the keyboard. Press Shift-] (Right Bracket) to increase the hardness (or decrease the softness) of the current brush, and Shift-[ (Left Bracket) to decrease the hardness of the brush.

▲ Using the ultra-secret Elements Arrow tool

A lot of folks don’t know that there’s a built-in arrow tool in Elements, most likely because it’s not actually called the Arrow tool. Here’s how to draw one:

Select the Line tool, but before you use it, look in the Options Bar at the top of the screen and click on the Geometry Options menu (at the end of the shape icons). There, you’ll see options for creating and adjusting arrowheads at both ends of the line (see above right). The Width option goes from 10% to 1000%, while Length goes from 10% to 5000%, where the percentage is related to the thickness of the line. The Concavity option goes from -50% to 50% and sets the curvature of the widest part of the arrowhead. Then choose the weight of the line in the Options Bar and click-and-drag with the Line tool to create your arrow.

There is one drawback: you cannot adjust the arrowhead after the line has been drawn. You must change the settings in the Options Bar and redraw the line. The image above shows an example of the types of arrows that can be created.

**Geometry Options for other shape tools**

There are Geometry Options also available with the other shape tools. Click on the Rectangle tool, Rounded Rectangle tool, or Ellipse tool and the options include setting the shape to a Fixed Size or making it Proportional (using a ratio—like 1:1—instead of specific measurements), and drawing from the center outwards. Switch to the Polygon tool and you’ll get options that include Radius, Smooth Corners, or the ability to create a star.
get a little glow on

THERE’S SOMETHING ALMOST MAGICAL ABOUT LIGHT. IT ATTRACTS OUR EYE, DRAWS US IN, AND HEIGHTENS OUR SENSE OF WONDER. ADDING A SIMPLE GLOW TO YOUR PHOTOS CAN CREATE THIS MAGICAL, MYSTERIOUS QUALITY AND CAPTURE THE IMAGINATION.

STEP ONE: Our first challenge is to get anything that will be in front of or not illuminated by our glowing light on its own layer. In our example, this will be the small chest and a portion of the boy’s arm. Using your preferred selection tools and methods, make your selection and press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) to put the selection on its own layer.

TIP: If you need a refresher on making selections, go to the Video Tips section of the Photoshop Elements Techniques Web site and search for “selections.”

STEP TWO: Make a new layer and draw an oval selection with the Elliptical Marquee tool (M) that extends a bit beyond the edges of the chest. This will be the “throw area” of the glowing light. Click on the Foreground color square in the Color Picker and select a color for your mysterious “glow.” (We used R 255 G 252 B 148.) Making sure the new layer is selected, press Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete) to fill the selection with the color. Then deselect by pressing Ctrl-D (Mac: Command-D).
STEP THREE: Before going further, let’s rename the layers (by double-clicking on the layer). Starting at the top, ours are Glow-Box, Chest, and Background. Now we’ll add the glowing effect. Click on the Glow-Box layer, go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur, and add a fairly high blur to the layer, to create a nice, diffused glow. The radius amount will need to be larger for high-resolution images. Experiment with the amount until you achieve the desired effect. In our example, we used a radius setting of 55.

STEP FOUR: Now we’ll fine-tune the location of the glow. Press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) to bring up Free Transform. Using the handles on the bounding box, resize, rotate, and position the glow to create the desired throw of light. Press Enter (Mac: Return) when you’re finished.

STEP FIVE: The boy will also be affected by the light, so select the Glow-Box layer and duplicate it by going to Layer > Duplicate Layer. On the Layers palette, double-click the name of this new layer and change it to Glow-Face. Switch to the Move tool (V) and position the duplicated glow around his face and shoulders. Like you did with the first glow layer, use Free Transform to position and resize the area of the glow. Then, lower the layer’s opacity to lessen the intensity of the light on his face (we used 65%).
STEP SIX: Move over to the Layers palette, target the Chest layer, and drag it above the two glow layers. If either glow is too intense, you can select the layer and lower its opacity until you’re happy with the effect.

STEP SEVEN: To heighten the sense of mystery, let’s darken the image. Hide the Chest and two Glow layers by clicking on the eye icon for each layer. Then click on the Background layer to select it. Click the Create Adjustment Layer icon at the top of the Layers palette, and choose Levels. Making sure the Preview box is checked, drag the black input slider to the right to darken the image.
STEP EIGHT: When you’re happy with the look, click OK, and drag that Levels adjustment layer to the top of the Layers stack. Make the other layers visible again (by clicking on the eye icon), and you’re ready for the final step.

STEP NINE: Let’s use the adjustment layer’s mask to paint back some light. Select the Brush tool (B) and choose a soft, round, medium-sized brush. In the options bar, lower the Brush Opacity (we started with 50%), and, with black set as your foreground color, click the layer mask on the adjustment layer and paint black on the areas that should be brighter (to hide the darkening effect). Continue to lower the Brush Opacity as you move further from the light’s epicenter. If you need to bring back some of the darkening effects, switch your foreground color to white and paint on the mask. When you’re happy with the look, put your brush down. Your ethereal glow is complete, and, completely editable!
tag, you’re it!

TAGS ARE A GREAT WAY TO EMBELLISH YOUR SCRAPBOOK LAYOUTS. THEY OFFER FUN AND SIMPLE WAYS TO SAY SOMETHING WITHOUT A LOT OF THE SAPPY JOURNALING THAT MANY PEOPLE CITE AS A TURN-OFF TO SCRAPBOOKING. THE EXAMPLES SHOWN HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE WAYS YOU CAN ADD A LITTLE MORE POP TO YOUR PAGES.

THE TAG FRAME
This frame is a lovely way to add a smaller photo to enhance the main photo that is the focus of your page. You can add text or elements to the frame to dress it up or just keep it simple. Your photos will need to be resized and cropped to fit a smaller frame, but this is a great way to combine your favorite images. Tack them along the edge of the frame on a larger photo or hang them along a wire or ribbon.

THE LAYERED TAG
Tags turn into miniature collages simply by layering multiple items on one tag. This gives the tag much more appeal and interest on a page. When layering items you can add torn edges, more tags and flowers and other embellishments. Too much will cause chaos and clutter, though, so try to keep your designs simple.
THE WORD ART TAG
This type of tag can be used to say just want you want and nothing more. It is simple, effective and very eye-catching. You can make your word art simple or full of flourish, but always keep in mind the size of your tag and the ability to read the wording on a finished project.

THE ELEMENT TAG
Often you can use an element from a scrapbook kit to create a tag. Tags of this nature generally do not include word art as it tends to get lost in the image. This type of tag adds dimension and interest to a layout and allows the use of elements in a more creative way. In this instance a lace heart was turned into a tag by cutting a hole in the heart and intertwining it with another element to create a tag hanger.

THE TAG COLLAGE
This is a collection of tags all tied together in a single theme. You can use them to display alphas (standalone letters and numbers) or to create word art. Try creating a collage and saving it as a “garden” of tags to drop onto a page and have a very impressive page with little effort. You can reuse it over and over, and the hard work on the page is already done. Just add a photo and your own text.

THE TAG ALPHA
This example shows how you can use tags to display your alphas with a little more pizzazz. You can include other page elements or just keep it simple. Try tying them together—as I’ve shown here—or string them along a ribbon or wire. Either way, they give the page a more professional look.

No matter how you use it, the tag is one of the most versatile elements in scrapbook layouts. There are no rules, no special techniques, no right or wrong. There is just your imagination and creativity. Experiment with your own ideas and be sure to add some layouts to the gallery at elementsvillage.com, so everyone can see your creative ideas!

EXTRAS
Visit the forums at DigitalDesignDen.com to learn how to make a version of the photo tag and the layered collage tag. The site also has lots of other tutorials on making scrapbook items.

Nancy Marti is a designer at www.digitaldesignden.com. She serves as a forum moderator at ElementsVillage.com and works full-time for a legal consulting firm.
Why do I sometimes get a little yellow triangle in the top right corner of the Histogram palette—and what does it mean?

That icon means the histogram is not reflecting the latest change (i.e. adjustment) made to the image. To update the Histogram palette (found under Window > Histogram), simply click on the yellow triangle or the blue refresh symbol just above the triangle, and the histogram will redraw to reflect the changes made to the image. If this becomes a bit tedious, there is a way to have the histogram more accurately reflect these changes without you having to refresh it every time you make an alteration. Go to Edit > Preferences (Mac: Photoshop Elements > Preferences) and choose Performance from the list on the left side of the dialog. You should see something called Cache Level under the History & Cache section on the right side of the dialog. Lowering this number will cause Elements to draw an accurate Histogram as changes are made. In most cases, though, your system won’t be noticeably slower. If it is—if you don’t have enough RAM, or you tend to work with lots of large-size images—you might want to play around with the setting to get the best combination of performance and efficiency.

I recently processed some JPEG images for posting on my Web site. When I looked at the images, I noticed that some of the camera information was missing. How come?

My guess is that you used the Save for Web under the File menu to make your JPEG. One feature of Save for Web is that it strips the metadata—that extra “stuff” that gets stored with a photo, like camera name, shutter speed, aperture setting, captions, keywords and more—out of an image. If you want to keep that information, use the Save As... command from the File menu. In that dialog box, select JPEG (not JPEG 2000) from the Format pop-up, which is right below the File Name field. When you click Save, you’ll get a new dialog box allowing you to choose a quality setting between 0 and 12, with 0 being a small-size file, and 12 being a larger file, but with the highest possible quality. Make your choices and click OK. This JPEG file should now include all of the metadata that was previously associated with the image.
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