GET THE RED OUT
Fix problematic portraits by quickly toning down flushed skin tones

BEAUTIFY YOUR PRESENTS
Add a fun touch to this year’s holiday gifts by turning favorite photos into personalized gift tags

STRESS-FREE FAMILY PHOTOS
Pro tips for capturing your family’s unique personality—without the fake smiles

PLUS
Meet Photoshop Elements 9
Design Storyboard Templates
Subscriber Showcase
Editor’s Note

Fall happens to be my favorite time of the year. The air turns crisp, the trees shower us with color, and pumpkin-filled desserts start filling up display cases at the local bakery—just thinking about it makes me hungry. As if that weren’t enough, it also happens to be a particularly good time to get out and take photos. With the sun sitting lower in the sky, fall tends to produce a warm light that cameras love. And good light should never be wasted!

With the holiday season right around the corner, this is also the time of year when many families have portraits taken—either to send off as holiday greetings or to commemorate special gatherings. If the task of organizing or shooting these annual photos tends to fall to you, you’ll want to check out this month’s collection of photo tips on page 23. In it, professional photographer Allison Tyler Jones offers up advice for getting great shots while making the whole process less stressful. I love the casual and intimate feel of her family shots.

For a fun way to use your family portraits this holiday, turn to page 7 and follow along as Liz Ness transforms photos into festive shapes for adorable gift tags. The project relies on clipping groups, which is one of those techniques you’ll find yourself using again and again for all sorts of projects. (Diana Day’s tutorial on page 27 also shows the utility of clipping groups, for creating reusable templates to display multiple photos.)

And finally, just in time for our holiday wish lists, Adobe has released Photoshop Elements 9. You can read about the most important new features on page 31; but for many of you, the biggest news will be the addition of layer masks. That’s right. Gone is the cumbersome adjustment-layer workaround we’ve had to put up with for so long.

Of course, you don’t have to upgrade to the new version of Elements to continue getting great tutorials and time-saving tips from us. We’ll keep covering recent versions of Elements both in the magazine and online.

This month’s cover photo—of the rotunda inside the Texas State Capitol in Austin—is by subscriber Marcela Daley, originally from Colombia, but who currently makes her home in Boca Raton, Florida. Marcela told us that, to her, “photography goes beyond simply capturing a wonderful picture. It is another way to fully appreciate my world.”

I hope you have a wonderful holiday and a joyous new year! The January/February 2011 issue will begin shipping to subscribers around January 12. In the meantime, be sure to visit our blog for the latest tutorials, Web finds, and photo news.

Kelly Turner
kelly@photoshopelementsuser.com

November/December 2010
Volume 7, Number 6

Published by
Photo One Media, Inc.
15333 SW Sequoia Parkway, Suite 150
Portland OR 97224
(503) 968-1813

President Craig LePage
General Manager Rick LePage
Online Marketing Stacey Atwell

Colophon
Produced using Adobe Photoshop Elements 7, 8, and 9, Adobe InDesign CS4, Adobe Photoshop CS4, and Adobe Illustrator CS4. Body copy is set in Mundo Sans Pro Regular. Headlines are set in Mundo Sans Pro Medium.

Subscriber Service Information
How do I change my email or mailing address? Log on to the Web site (www.photoshopelementsuser.com). At the top of the page you’ll see a link called “Profile”; clicking this link will take you to your account page. Here, you can change all aspects of your account, including your address, user name and password. To change your user name, email address or mailing address, just type the new info in the appropriate boxes, then click the “Update Me!” button at the bottom of the page. Change-of-address notifications need to be received six to eight weeks before effective date. (Note: The U.S. Postal Service forwards mail for only 60 days.)

How do I change my password? The Profile page has a “Change password” link underneath your email address. Simply click that link, enter your old password (for security reasons), the new password you want to use, and click the button at the bottom of the page.

How do I tell when my subscription expires? Your subscription expiration date is listed just under the email field on your Profile page.

I forgot my password or user name. What do I do? If you can’t log into the Web site, click on the “Lost your Login Info?” link on the login page, and enter your email address. We’ll send you an email that will contain a link to reset your password.

If you don’t get the email within a reasonable amount of time, you might have used a different address to create your account or your spam filter might have trapped the email. If all else fails, drop us a note at info@photoshopelementsuser.com, and we’ll do our best to help you out.

All contents ©COPYRIGHT 2010 Photo One Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Any use of the contents of this publication without the express written permission of the publisher is strictly prohibited. Adobe Photoshop Elements Techniques is an independent publication not affiliated in any way with Adobe Systems, Inc. Adobe, the Adobe logo, Premiere, and Photoshop are registered trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated in the United States and/or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Some of the views expressed by the contributors may not be the representative views of the publisher. Printed in USA. ISSN 1945-0427
4 Calm Red Skin
Whether it’s from a sunburn, exertion, or the room’s lighting, overly red skin tones can distract from an otherwise perfect shot. Here’s a quick way to tone down the red without losing the rest of your colors. By Matt Kloskowski

7 Picture-Perfect Gift Tags
Add a special touch to your presents—and show off your crafty side—by transforming favorite photos into personalized gift tags. By Liz Ness

FEATURE

13 Uncover Elements’ Best-Kept Secrets
Wish you could spend less time hunting through menus and dialog boxes and more time enjoying your photos? We’ve collected 50 of our favorite time-saving tricks to help you speed through everyday tasks like managing layers, styling text, setting up new documents, drawing selections, and more.

PHOTO TIPS

23 Take Better Family Photos
Follow these pro tips for planning, setting up, and shooting great family portraits without all the stress—or the forced smiles. By Allison Tyler Jones

27 Designing Storyboards
A single shot doesn’t always tell the whole story. Learn how to create reusable templates that combine multiple photos and text on a single page. By Diana Day

31 Meet Photoshop Elements 9
Adobe has released a new version of its low-cost editing suite. We take you on a tour of the most noteable new features—including the long awaited arrival of layer masks. By Mike Rodriguez

34 Subscriber Showcase
Presenting some of the best recent work created by our readers.

What’s Happening Online
Every month, in our exclusive subscriber-only area, we post new videos and tutorials from some of the top Photoshop Elements gurus. Here are the most recent postings:

NEW TUTORIALS
- Fixing Chromatic Aberration with Elements
- Get Grungy Portrait Effects with Camera Raw
- Faking the “Looking at the Past” Effect
- Create Your Own Swirls
- Defining Custom Brushes
- Elements 9: What’s New
- Elements 9: Quick Layer Masks
When fixing portraits, one of the problems you'll run into over and over again is a face that's too red. There are many things that can cause this. The culprit may be the room's lighting, for instance. Other sources are harder to control. For example, some people's faces turn red any time they get into bright sun—even if you move them out of it for the photo. Likewise, when shooting a family portrait, parents often end up running around trying to wrangle the kids to stay still, which can build up a rosy glow. Or it could simply be that the person has a naturally reddish complexion that you don't notice until you're looking at the portrait. Whatever the cause, flushed skin tones are simple to fix in Photoshop Elements. And once you've handled one image, you can easily apply the correction to others from the same shoot.

Open a photo that needs red removed from the flesh tones and duplicate the background layer by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). This will give us a safety net in case we don't like the results of our edit.
2 If the whole image appears too red, skip this step and move on to Step 3. However, if just the skin appears too red, grab the Quick Selection tool (A) and click on all the flesh-tone areas in your photo. If you accidentally select anything that you didn’t want, hold down the Alt key (Mac: Option key) and click again with the Quick Selection tool to deselect those areas. For example, it’s a good idea to deselect the person’s mouth so you don’t end up stripping color out of the lips.

3 Now choose Select>Feather. Enter a Feather Radius of about 3 pixels, then click OK. This will softening the edges of your selection and prevent a hard, visible edge from appearing around your adjustments.

4 Open the Hue/Saturation dialog by choosing Enhance>Adjust Color>Adjust Hue/Saturation—or use the shortcut Ctrl-U (Mac: Command-U).

5 You’d think that you could simply reduce the Saturation slider to take care of the problem; but while that does remove the red from the skin, it also reduces the saturation of everything else that was selected—including eyes, glasses, makeup, and so on. Instead, you’ll need to limit the scope of the adjustment. In the Hue/Saturation dialog, click the Edit pop-up menu and choose Reds (circled). This will ensure that you’re adjusting only the reds in your photo (or in the selected areas if you created a selection in Step 2).
The rest is easy. Simply reduce the amount of saturation so the skin tone appears more natural. Drag the Saturation slider to the left to reduce the amount of red (I moved mine to –20, but you may not need to go quite so far if the problem isn’t as severe). You can turn the Preview checkbox (circled) on and off to see before and after views and better judge the effectiveness of your edit.

Hide the Selection If you made a selection in Step 2, you might find it easier to see the effect of your edit if you hide the selection border by pressing Ctrl-H (Mac: Command-H) while the Hue/Saturation dialog is open.

When the skin tones look right, just click the OK button to lock in the change. If you made a selection in Step 2, press Ctrl-D (Mac: Command-D) to deselect it. Your portrait should now display a more natural complexion.

Applying the Edit to Similar Photos

What’s nice about this technique is that once you have the right settings for one photo, you can quickly pass them along to others in the same shoot.

1. Open the next photo that has red skin and repeat Steps 1 and 2—duplicating the layer and making a selection, if needed.

2. This time, hold down the Alt key (Mac: Option key) before going to Enhance>Adjust Color>Adjust Hue/Saturation. Better yet, use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl-Alt-U (Mac: Command-Option-U) to bring up the dialog. By holding the Alt/Option key you’re telling it to open the adjustment dialog with the same settings as the previous time. Now when you switch the Edit pop-up menu to Reds you’ll see it’s already set to -20 (or whatever setting you last used). You can tweak the Saturation setting if needed or just click OK to apply the change.

Picture-Perfect Gift Tags

Add a special touch to presents by crafting personalized labels

By Liz Ness When it comes to giving gifts, they say it’s the thought that counts. So why not put a little extra thought into your gift’s presentation by decorating it with a homemade gift tag? Custom gift tags are a fun way to share photos and add a personal touch to your presents. And by adding a photo of the intended recipient to your tag, you can easily include younger children (especially, those still learning to read) in your gift-giving traditions.

With the holidays right around the corner, I’ll show you how to create a wintery gift tag that incorporates a simple photo and the custom shapes built into Photoshop Elements. Once you get the basics, you can easily alter the design to match any occasion.

1. The hardest part of making a photo tag is deciding which image to use. While any photo will do, I recommend choosing one that complements the colors in your gift wrap and the tag you plan to create. It’s a good idea to select a few candidates for your project, as one photo may be a better fit for a given shape than another. For example, I’ve chosen an image with a lot of empty space around the subject, making it easier to center my subject within the snowflake shape I’ll be using.

2. In Elements, start a new blank document by pressing Ctrl-N (Mac: Command-N). To print the tag on standard-sized paper, select U.S. Paper (or International, if preferred) from the Preset menu and set the Background Contents menu to Transparent.

Go Black and White If you don’t have a photo with appropriate colors, another option is to strip out the color. Open your image in Elements and select Enhance>Convert To Black And White. Select a style from the list on the left and press OK. Then, save this file with a new name, so you don’t overwrite the original.
To draw the basic shape of the tag, select the Rectangle tool (U). From the Options Bar, open the Rectangle Options menu and select Fixed Size. Set the Width to 6 inches and the Height to 2.5 inches.

Click once in your document to draw the rectangle. Without releasing the mouse button, position the rectangle near the top of your page—leaving room for a margin when printing—and then release the mouse. Right-click on the rectangle’s layer in the Layers palette and choose Simplify Layer.

Next, we’ll define the base color for our tag. Click the Foreground Color swatch at the bottom of the toolbar and select a color from the Color Picker dialog. In keeping with our winter theme, I’ve chosen a light blue by entering #b9e5f5 into the bottom field (circled); however, you can use any color that makes sense for your own tag.

Next, we’ll create a thin border around the tag. Click the New Layer icon in the Layers palette and rename the layer “Border.” For a white border, press X to switch the background and foreground colors (or select a different color from the Color Picker).

Ctrl-click (Mac: Command-click) on the thumbnail of the rectangle layer (Shape 1) to place a selection around the shape (your Border layer should still be highlighted in the Layers palette). Now choose Edit>Stroke (Outline) Section. Set the Stroke Width to 20 px, the Location to Inside, and check that the Preserve Transparency option is not selected. Then, press OK.

Invisible Ink If your tag includes a white border like mine, it’ll disappear when printed. To give yourself a little guidance about where to cut once printed, follow the instructions in Step 5 again, but this time select 1 px for the line size and 50 percent gray for your line color. You’ll end up with a faint line you can follow when trimming your tag.
6 I also added a thinner stroke just inside the frame. To pull the current selection inward, choose Select>Modify>Contract and set Contract By to 50 pixels. Return to Edit>Stroke (Outline) Section and this time set the Stroke Width to 5 px. When satisfied, press Ctrl-D (Mac: Command-D) to deselect the layer.

7 We’re now ready to start adding our snowflake shapes. Click on the Foreground Color swatch again and set the color to #83d7f5 to get a darker blue. Then, select the Custom Shape tool (U), which resembles a heart. (You’ll find it nested with the Rectangle tool.) From the Options Bar, open the Shape Picker and choose the Snowflake 2 shape (if you don’t see it, click the chevron arrows to the right and select Nature from the pop-up menu). Shift-click and drag to draw a snowflake in the left half of your original rectangle. Finally, right-click on the layer and choose Simplify.

8 To add a second, slightly skewed snowflake above the first—which will ultimately hold the photo—press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) to duplicate the snowflake layer, and then Ctrl-I (Mac: Command-I) to change the color of the duplicate snowflake from blue to red. (This will make it easier to see.)

Give the red snowflake a twist by selecting the Move Tool (V) and clicking on a corner handle to select it. In the Options Bar, type 90 in the Set Rotation field (circled) to offset the snowflake from the underlying shape. Click the green check mark to finish.
Now, let's add a third snowflake off to the side for interest. Click on the **Foreground Color swatch** and set the color to #ffffff for white. Select the bottom layer (Shape 1) and click the New Layer icon to create a new blank layer above it. Using the **Custom Shape tool (U)**, draw a snowflake in the top-right corner of the tag. Right-click the new snowflake layer and select Simplify.

We'll also want an area for text. First, select the red snowflake layer at the top of the Layers palette (Shape 2 copy). Open the Color Picker and set the color to #83d7f5 (or whatever color you used for your original snowflake in Step 7). Select the **Rectangle tool (U)** again, and under Rectangle Options, select Unconstrained. Now draw a rectangle within the right half of your tag. Right-click on the new layer and select Simplify Layer. Position your shape where you want it, and then set the Opacity of that layer to 50 percent to blend it with the rest of the design.

To hide the part of the snowflake that extends beyond the tag, press **Ctrl-G (Mac: Command-G)**. This clips the snowflake to the layer below it. Rotate the layer by selecting the **Move Tool (V)** and clicking on a corner of the new snowflake. Type 20 in the Set Rotation field, and click the green check mark. Finally, set the Opacity of the snowflake layer to 50 percent.

To add your text, select the **Horizontal Type tool (T)** and choose a color and font that fits your theme. (I've chosen white and Amazone BT, for this example.) Then, starting near the top-left corner of the inner rectangle (Shape 4) and moving toward the bottom right, click and drag with your mouse to create a text box. Click once within the new text box and write your message.
Find More Holiday Projects Online!

Looking for ideas for fun holiday-themed projects? Over the years, we’ve created dozens of videos and tutorials covering everything from custom greeting cards to personalized candy wrappers.

For a list of all of our past holiday projects, go to the website (PhotoshopElementsUser.com), click on the Topics button at the top of the page, and select the Holiday Projects header in the resulting list (or just type “tinyurl.com/2flgnxc” into your Web browser).

Here’s a small sample of some of the tutorials you’ll find:

**Holiday Borders** Turn a snowflake into a custom brush and decorate the edges of your holiday cards.

**Custom Greeting Cards** See several examples of homemade cards, including some that incorporate a family photo.

**Calendar Templates** Download a variety of templates (recently updated for 2011) for designing your own calendars.

**Festive Holiday Objects** Learn how to create tree, ornament, Christmas lights, and stocking shapes for use in a wide variety of projects.

**Let It Snow** Add a wintry touch to photos by creating the illusion of falling snow.

---

### PICTURE-PERFECT GIFT TAGS

13 You’re now ready to add your photo. Press Ctrl-O (Mac: Command-O) and navigate to the photo you want to use. With the red snowflake layer (Shape 2 Copy) selected in the Layers palette, drag your photo from the Project Bin and drop it onto your open tag project. Using the Move tool (V) position the photo over the red snowflake. To resize it, click and drag a corner handle (make sure the Constrain Proportions option is checked in the Options Bar). When you’re done, click the green check mark.

---

14 Finally, press Ctrl-G (Mac: Command-G) to clip the photograph to the snowflake. Use the Move tool (V) to position the photograph as desired within the snowflake.
Now, it's time to print the tag. If you just need one, you're ready to go. But, let's say you need two or more. Select the top layer of the stack (in my example, the text layer) and press Ctrl-Alt-Shift-E (Mac: Command-Option-Shift-E). This will create a new, flattened layer containing your entire tag at the top of the list. Use the Move tool (V) to position it below your original tag. Repeat as necessary. Now you're ready to print, cut, and place it on your gift.

\[\text{Chevron Arrows}\]

Build Your Own Shapes

Sometimes, the shape you're looking for isn't included in the Shapes Picker. For example, I wanted an ornament shape for the following tag, but there wasn't one available. Thankfully, Photoshop Elements has so many shapes that it's easy to combine them to create just about any shape you want. Here's how to build your own ornament:

1. Select the Custom Shape tool (U). Open the Shape Picker from the Options Bar, click on the chevron arrows to the right, and select All Elements Shapes from the pop-up menu. Choose the Padlock shape and drag out the shape on your document. This will serve as the top of the ornament.

2. Next, select the Ellipse tool (U). In the Options Bar, click the down arrow next to the Ellipse icon and choose Circle from the Ellipse Options pane. Draw a circle that seems to be an appropriate size for the padlock. That's the ornament ball.

3. Finally, press Shift-Ctrl-E (Mac: Shift-Command-E) to merge visible layers and create a single ornament. You can now color it, copy it, or use it to create a clipping mask (see Steps 13 and 14).

Whatever the holiday or occasion, Photoshop Elements is likely to have the perfect shape (or combination of shapes) for making a keepsake photo tag like the one in our example. And once you've built one, it's simple to customize your design to change colors, write new text, and more. With gift tags as unique as they are personal, it's as if you're giving two presents for the price of one!

Liz Ness is a mixed-media artist and co-host of Illustrating Stories (http://illustratingstories.ning.com), a nurturing community of creatives with a passion for visual stories.
Between brushes, filters, shapes, and the like, Photoshop Elements is overflowing with tools for unleashing your creative vision. But working with these tools can be a decidedly uncreative process. Far too often we end up wasting time scrolling through menus, hunting down options, and repeating the same steps over and over again. Where’s the fun in that? Here’s a little secret: Elements is full of clever shortcuts that let you speed through tedious tasks. Our dedicated spies have spent years hunting down these helpful hints. And now we’ve collected 50 of their best discoveries to share with you—including tips for managing layers, making selections, and applying eye-popping effects—all of which lets you spend less time editing and more time showing off your photos.
Get a Flattened Layer Without Flattening

To apply some effects—such as a Texturizer or Liquify filter—to a multilayered document, you'll first need to flatten the layers. But by doing this, you lose a lot of flexibility should you decide you need to go back and change something later. Here's a better compromise: Instead of flattening the document, select the top layer and press Ctrl-Alt-Shift-E (Mac: Command-Option-Shift-E). This creates a composite of all your visible layers at the top of the Layers palette. You can then apply the effect to this layer without losing all of your hard work.—Kelly Turner

Liberate a Layer

Ever need to turn a layer into a separate document? Don't bother with copying and pasting. In the Layers palette, right-click on the layer you want and choose Duplicate Layer from the contextual menu that appears. In the Duplicate Layer dialog, set the Destination Document menu to New, name your new file, then click OK. Note that using the keyboard shortcut to duplicate the layer won't work in this case because it won't give you the Duplicate Layer dialog.—Dave Cross

Create a New Layer Below the Current One

By default, when you create a new layer, it's placed above the currently active layer in the Layers palette. If you need to create a new layer beneath your active layer, simply Ctrl-click (Mac: Command-click) on the New Layer icon (located at the top of the Layers palette in Elements 7 and earlier).—Corey Barker

Flatten Your Selection

What if you want to create a flattened layer of just a portion of your layered image? After making sure all the layers you want to include are visible, create a selection using one of your selection tools and go to Edit>Copy Merged. Click on the top layer and choose Edit>Paste. A new layer will be created that contains the selected area of all the visible layers.—DC
Boost the Size of Thumbnails

Is the size of those thumbnails in the Layers palette too small for you? They are for me. I wear glasses that are about as thick as Coke bottles and find the default size almost unreadable. If you want to make them larger, just click the little right-facing arrows (circled) at the top of the Layers palette and choose Palette Options from the pop-up menu. In the dialog box, pick the largest thumbnail size available. The only trade-off here is that you'll see fewer layers in the palette so you'll wind up scrolling up or down more if you have a lot of layers. However, I'll take it, since it makes me squint much less.—MK

Hide All Layers

You can temporarily hide any layer in your document by clicking on the eye icon next to the layer's name. But if you have a complex document and want to focus your attention on a single layer, doing this for every layer can be tedious. Instead, Alt-click (Mac: Option-click) on the eye icon next to the one layer you want to keep visible. All other layers will instantly disappear, letting you better focus on your work. When you're ready to see all of your layers again, just Alt/Option-click the eye icon again.—Matt Kloskowski

Hide an Adjustment Layer Mask

Let's say you've added a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer (Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue Saturation) to your image to turn it into a black-and-white photo, and then painted away some of the mask's effects. As you work, you decide you'd like to temporarily hide the mask but still see the effect of the adjustment layer so you can evaluate your progress. No problem. Shift-click on the layer mask's thumbnail in the Layers palette to disable the mask while still seeing the Adjustment Layer. You'll see a big red X appear over the mask icon in the Layers palette, letting you know the mask is still there but disabled. Shift-click on it again to enable it.—MK

Rearrange Layers Without the Mouse

You already know you can use the mouse to drag layers upward or downward to a new position in the layers stack. But did you know you can do this without taking your hands off the keyboard? Hold down the Ctrl (Mac: Command) key and press the right bracket (]) to move the layer upward or the left bracket ([) to move downward in the layers stack.—MK

3 to Remember

The next time you’re adding multiple layers to your document, you’ll be happy you committed these keyboard shortcuts to memory:

Get a Blank Layer Fast Tired of reaching for your mouse every time you need a new layer? Press Ctrl-Shift-N (Mac: Command-Shift-N) to bring up the New Layer dialog, where you can name the layer you’re about to create.

Get a Blank Layer Even Faster If you’re fine with Elements’ default names and just want to move getting, you can bypass the New Layer dialog completely and instantly create a new layer by pressing Ctrl-Shift-Alt-N (Mac: Command-Shift-Option-N).

Duplicate a Layer Press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) to duplicate the currently selected layer. Add the Alt (Mac: Option) key to the mix to rename the duplicate layer before adding it.—KT
**Track Your Letters**

You can change the amount of space between lines of text (called **leading**) in the Options Bar, but there’s no command to change the space between letters (known as **tracking**). You can, however, create a “fake” version of tracking using a Type preference called Asian Options. Open the Preferences dialog by pressing **Ctrl-K** (Mac: **Command-K**), choose the Type category, turn on Show Asian Text Options, and then click OK. Now use the **Horizontal Type tool (T)** to highlight the text you want to track and click the Asian Text Options icon in the Options Bar. A small dialog will pop up. Use the percentage menu (circled) to tighten the space between the letters of your selected text. The higher the value, the tighter your tracking will be.—DC

**Overlap Text Layers**

Ever tried adding a new text box very close to some existing text? If you have, you’ll know that Photoshop Elements “helps” by assuming that you want to edit the existing text rather than letting you add a new type layer. Of course, you could add a new type layer further away and then move it into place, but that’s not necessary thanks to the **Shift** key. Just hold down Shift as you click with the **Horizontal Type tool (T)** and you can place the new text exactly where you want it, even on top of the existing type layer.—DC

**Select All Type Layers at Once**

If you have a lot of text on the page and later decide you want to change your font, you don’t need to hunt down every text layer individually in the Layers palette. Click on one type layer and choose **Select>Similar Layers**. Elements will select every type layer in the document. Don’t want every layer? To deselect layers, **Ctrl-click** (Mac: **Command-click**) on the unwanted layers. Now simply choose a new font. —KT

**Make White Text Easier to See**

The default transparency grid is white and light gray, which can be a challenge if you’re trying to work with white text on a transparent background. But you can change the color of this grid—and make white text easier to spot—by going to **Edit>Preferences>Transparency** (Mac: **Photoshop Elements>Preferences>Transparency**). Click on the Grid Colors pull-down menu and choose Medium or Dark, or click on the color swatches below the menu to open the Color Picker and customize your colors.—DC

**Default Grid Colors**

Getting overlapping text like this can be difficult without the help of the Shift key.

**Medium Grid Colors**

Before

After

**Asian Text Options**

Get Onging Wild
TIPS AND TRICKS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2010

Measure Text Boxes with Precision

To make a text box a specific size, Alt-click (Mac: Option-click) anywhere in your document with the Horizontal Type tool (T), then set the Width and Height values in the Paragraph Text Size dialog. Note: The Width and Height values default to whatever units of measurement you’ve defined in your Units & Rulers preferences (accessible by pressing Ctrl-K [Mac: Command-K] and choosing the Units & Rulers category). However, you can override this default by typing in the measurement you want—for example, “3 in” for 3 inches. The dialog will then convert your custom measurement into the default units (so 3 inches would become 217.81 points).—DC

Position Warped Text

Sometimes when you’re using the Warp Text options (accessible by clicking the Create Warped Text icon in the Options Bar), it’s hard to know what settings to use because the warping causes the text to change positions in your document. If this happens, moving your mouse away from the Warp Text dialog will cause your cursor to change to the Move tool, allowing you to reposition the warped type.—DC

3 to Remember

Dragging with the Horizontal Type tool (T) will create a text box for multiple lines of type. You can easily change the size of the text box by dragging one of the corners or side handles. As you do, the text will reflow within the box. If that’s not what you want, you can modify the behavior of the text by holding down different keys:

**Shift**  This constrains the proportions of the text box as you drag; text will reflow accordingly. (Tip: Start dragging before pressing the Shift key.)

**Ctrl/Command**  Text gets larger (rather than reflowing within the box) and resizes non-proportionally, depending on which direction you drag the mouse.

**Ctrl/Command and Shift**  Holding down both keys as you drag the handles resizes the text proportionally; text does not reflow.—DC

Try out Different Fonts

Here’s a great way to quickly test different fonts to decide which one you want to use. With a Type layer active in the Layers palette (the text doesn’t need to be selected), click once in the Font field in the Options Bar so the font name is highlighted. Then press the up-arrow or down-arrow keys to move up or down in your list of fonts.—DC

Rotate Text as You Type

If you want your text to appear at an angle, begin typing with the Horizontal Type tool (T). Once you have at least part of the text written out, press the Ctrl (Mac: Command) key to make the transform handles appear. While still holding the Ctrl/Command key, move your cursor to just outside the transform box and then drag clockwise or counterclockwise to rotate the text. You can even turn it entirely upside down. When you release the Ctrl/Command key, you’ll be able to continue typing right where you left off.—KT
Tint Your Photo

For a simple—and fully editable—way to add a color tint to a photo, try this: Add a Solid Color adjustment layer by clicking the Add Adjustment Layer icon (circled) in the Layers palette and choosing Solid Color from the drop-down menu. Next, choose the Foreground color you want from the Color Picker and click OK. Now change the layer’s blend mode to Color (near the bottom of the drop-down menu) and your photo will be tinted. If it’s too intense, simply lower the Opacity in the Layers palette. To experiment with other colors, double-click the layer thumbnail (the one on the left) to reopen the Color Picker. As you drag the mouse over different colors, you’ll see a preview of your photo with the new tint.—DC

Quickly Rotate Images

Here’s a little trick for rotating your image 90 degrees without going into any menus. The Straighten tool (P) is normally used for straightening images that may be slightly tilted. However, if you hold down the Shift key and click-and-drag from top to bottom, the image will rotate 90 degrees clockwise. Conversely, if you click-and-drag upward, it will rotate 90 degrees counterclockwise.—CB

Don’t Cancel: Reset

If you’ve played around with a filter’s settings and think you’ve gone too far, you might be tempted to hit the Cancel button and start again. But there’s no need. In most dialogs that have a Cancel button, you can change Cancel to Reset by holding down the Alt (Mac: Option) key. Click on the Reset button to put all the settings back to their original values.—DC

Press the Alt/Option key to access a Reset button
**Change Camera Raw Buttons**

In the Camera Raw dialog you can use the Alt key (Mac: Option key) to change the behavior of the buttons at the bottom of the dialog. For example, the Cancel button will change to Reset. Press it and all of the changes and settings you’ve made so far in Camera Raw will revert back to their original settings. This is an easy way to reset things without leaving the dialog and coming back in. Also, the Open Image button will change to Open Copy. If you press Open Copy, the photo will open as a copy in Elements using whatever settings you changed it to in Camera Raw. However, those settings will not be saved to the raw file itself. That means if you were to go back to the original raw file and open it in Camera Raw again, it’ll still look like it did before you made any changes.—MK

**Scroll Through Gradients**

After clicking on the Gradient tool (G), you can scroll through the gradients in the Gradient picker without opening it. Just press > (greater than symbol) on your keyboard to go to the next gradient and < (less than symbol) to switch to the previous gradient. Press Shift-< to activate the first gradient in the Gradient picker or Shift-> to go to the last gradient.—DC

**Repeat that Filter**

If you’ve applied a filter and you’d like to reapply the same filter using exactly the same settings, press Ctrl-F (Mac: Command-F). To run the same filter but change the settings (in other words, to open the filter dialog you just used), press Ctrl-Alt-F (Mac: Command-Option-F).—DC

**3 to Remember**

To save some serious time when using a brush-based tool, skip the Options Bar and memorize these three handy shortcuts:

**Change Paint Colors** Want to quickly pick up a new color when working with any of the painting or drawing tools? Simply hold down the Alt key (Mac: Option key) and the eyedropper icon will appear as your cursor. Now just click on an area that contains the color you want to use and release the Alt/Option key. This will set the selected color as your foreground color.—Taz Tally

**Switch Brushes** To switch brushes without jumping to the top of your screen, just right-click anywhere in the document. The Brush Picker will pop up next to your cursor, letting you select a new brush without leaving the art area. Note: The only brush tool this doesn’t work with is the Color Replacement tool.—CB

**Set Brush Size/Hardness** You probably know you can increase or decrease the size of your brush by pressing the right bracket (]) and left bracket ([) keys, respectively. But did you know you can also change the hardness of your current brush—without changing its size—directly from the keyboard? Press Shift-] (right bracket) to increase the hardness of the current brush and Shift-[ (left bracket) to decrease the hardness of the brush.—MK

**Scroll Through Gradients**

After clicking on the Gradient tool (G), you can scroll through the gradients in the Gradient picker without opening it. Just press > (greater than symbol) on your keyboard to go to the next gradient and < (less than symbol) to switch to the previous gradient. Press Shift-< to activate the first gradient in the Gradient picker or Shift-> to go to the last gradient.—DC

**Repeat that Filter**

If you’ve applied a filter and you’d like to reapply the same filter using exactly the same settings, press Ctrl-F (Mac: Command-F). To run the same filter but change the settings (in other words, to open the filter dialog you just used), press Ctrl-Alt-F (Mac: Command-Option-F).—DC
**ADOBE PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS TECHNIQUES**

**A Smarter Way to Use Auto Levels**

Although the Auto Levels command (found under the Enhance menu) will adjust your photo quickly—often with very good results—it's not possible to edit the results after you've saved the image. Alternatively, try adding a Levels adjustment layer by clicking on the Create Adjustment Layer icon in the Layers palette and choosing Levels from the drop-down list. Instead of adjusting the histogram sliders, just click Auto in the Levels dialog. The resulting adjustment will be the same, but you'll have an editable adjustment layer if you want to tweak the results.—DC

---

**Fill a Selection Fast**

The Backspace key (Mac: Delete key) can be used as a quick way to fill a selection—or an entire layer if nothing is selected. To fill with the current foreground color, for example, press Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete). To fill with the current background color, press Ctrl-Backspace (Mac: Command-Delete). And to open the Fill Layer dialog and choose additional options, press Shift-Backspace (Mac: Shift-Delete).—DC

---

**Add Flare to Photos**

Want to add small star-shaped highlights to your images? Select the Brush tool (B), go to your Brush Picker in the Options Bar, and make sure the Assorted Brushes set is selected in the Brushes pop-up menu. Choose the 48-pixel Crosshatch brush. Create a new layer above your image—in case you want to delete the effect later or want to adjust the opacity. Click on the Foreground Color swatch in the toolbox and set the color to white or pale cream. Now increase the brush size until it's an appropriate size, and then click once to make your flare. If you want the flare to burn brighter, make the brush slightly smaller and click again in the same place. For a realistic effect, limit yourself to just a few flares and place them in areas where light would typically be reflected. It'll add a real sparkle to highlights.—Wendy Williams

---

**Emphasize the Eyes**

To quickly add some more interest to a subject's eyes, try this: Select the Dodge tool (O). In the Options Bar, change the Range to Highlights and set the Exposure to about 25 percent. Make the size of your brush just a bit larger than the iris. Click two to four times to dodge until the eyes have a little more pop and the color is more evident. Don't go too far though or the eyes will start to look a bit "funky."—MK

---

**Restore Camera Raw Defaults**

When you're working in Camera Raw, you'll often change a slider and then later decide that you don't really like what you did. To reset any slider back to its default position—where it was when you first opened the photo—just double-click directly on the little slider knob.—MK
Reposition While Using the Lasso

If you've zoomed in to use the Lasso tool (L) and you're nearing the edge of the window, you'll need to scroll over to continue. To do this, continue to press your mouse button (to keep the Lasso tool active) and press-and-hold the **spacebar**. This will temporarily activate the Hand tool, which will let you move the image to where you need it. Position your cursor where you left off with the Lasso tool and let go of the spacebar to continue.—MK

Crop to Fit Your Selection

Say you've made a selection that's not rectangular and you want to crop the document to the smallest size around your selection. After making a selection, choose **Image>Crop**, and the document will be cropped to the smallest rectangular size to fit your selected area. If this doesn't work, you probably have some renegade pixels selected elsewhere in your image—particularly if you used the **Magic Wand tool** (W). Remove them from your selection by pressing the **Alt (Mac: Option)** key with the selection tool of your choice.—DC

Change Lassos Mid-Selection

When you're working with the **Magnetic Lasso tool** (L) and need to briefly access the **Polygonal Lasso tool** (L) for a more difficult section, hold down the **Alt (Mac: Option)** key and click to switch the tools. To change back to the Magnetic Lasso tool, simply release the Alt/Option key and click again.—MK

3 to Remember

To add more power to the **Rectangular Marquee** or **Elliptical Marquee tools** (M), try these helpful keyboard shortcuts:

- **Make It Perfect**  Holding down the **Shift** key as you draw with the Rectangular or Elliptical Marquee tool will give you a perfect square or circle, respectively.

- **Center It**  By default, when you click and drag with a Marquee tool, the selection is anchored at the point of your initial click—so it only expands in one direction. To instead have your initial click mark the center of your selection—so it grows outward in all directions as you drag—hold down the **Alt (Mac: Option)** key.

- **Move It**  If you begin drawing your selection, then realize you started in the wrong place, you don't need to start over. Just press the **spacebar** without releasing the mouse button. You'll then be able to drag the unfinished selection to a new location.—KT

Reclaim a Lost Selection

If you've made a complex selection, it's a good idea to use the Save Selection command (**Select>Save Selection**), so you can access that selection at any time using **Select>Load Selection**. However, if you made a selection, forgot to save it, and deselected it, you may be able to get it back, depending on what you've done in the meantime. As long as you haven't used any other selection tools or closed the document, you should be able to go to **Select>Reselect** to get back the last selection you made. Then you can use the Save Selection command to make sure you have the selection stored for future use.—DC
Copy Settings from Another Document
To create a new document that has the same settings (Width, Height, Resolution, and Color Mode) as a document that you currently have open, start by choosing File> New> Blank File (or press Control-N [Mac: Command-N]). Then, look at the very bottom of the Preset pop-up menu and you’ll see a list of your open documents. Choose the document whose settings you want to “borrow” and all the settings will be changed in the New Document dialog to match.—DC

Get Two Views of the Same Image
When you zoom way in on your work, it’s easy to forget how the size you’re looking at relates to the finished size. It’s not uncommon to do some painting or cloning at a very high magnification and then not really see the effect when you view the image at 100 percent. One way to avoid this is to create two views of the same document. To do this, make sure your image is in Cascade view (Window> Images> Cascade) and then go to the View> New Window for your document name. Position the two windows so you can see them both, and use the Zoom tool (Z) to zoom in on the document you’ll be working on. Keep the second window at a magnification that simulates the printing size. Now, as you make a change to the zoomed-in window, it will be reflected in the normal view, allowing you to see your work in the context of the printing size.—DC

Scroll One Screen at a Time
If you’ve zoomed in on a photo, looking for specs of dust or other blemishes to retouch, here’s a great way to work through your image without missing anything. Rather than manually scrolling through your document (and risk passing some problem areas), use a keyboard shortcut to methodically move one screen view at a time. Page Up/Down moves the image up or down one full screen. Ctrl-Page Up/Down (Mac: Command- Page Up/Down) moves the image left or right one full screen.—DC

Use the Navigator
The Navigator palette (Window> Navigator) offers a one-stop shop for moving around in a zoomed document. The palette features a thumbnail version of your image with a small view box indicating which part of the larger image is currently visible. You can drag the view box around to change position. Want to quickly zoom in or out on a particular area? Hold down the Ctrl key (Mac: Command key) to change your pointer to a magnifying glass. Now you can click and drag within the view box to select as much or as little of the image as you want to see.—DC

Change Your Measurements
If you need to change the measurement unit in your document, your first thought may be to go to your Units & Rulers preferences to make those changes. But that can get annoying after a while if you need to change this setting often. A quicker option is to make the rulers visible (View> Rulers), then right-click directly on the ruler. A menu will pop out, allowing you to change the measurement unit on the fly.—CB

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS TECHNIQUES
By Allison Tyler Jones | While the family photo may be a time-honored tradition, it’s not without its perils; just ask any parent who has ever been tasked with getting everyone dressed, groomed, and in front of the camera. By the time the family finally sits down, Mom or Dad has usually threatened each kid with bodily harm at least once and everyone is stressed out—not exactly the ideal situation for snapping carefree, heartwarming moments between family members. But this is exactly what a family portrait photographer is asked to do: create a flattering, emotional family portrait that captures the relationship, yet looks candid and effortless. No pressure.

Whether you’re taking a portrait of your own family or photographing someone else’s, here are seven tips that will help you improve your odds of reaching that elusive goal.

**Reflect the Occasion**

When planning a family portrait, ask yourself, “Why is this photo being taken?” There are plenty of milestones that might prompt a family photo session, including a new baby or puppy, a new house, or having the oldest child leave for college. Use the occasion as inspiration for the shoot and incorporate this moment in time as part of the image. For example, rather than having everyone dressed in stuffy formal-wear perched on a sofa for a holiday-themed image, try capturing the family doing something fun like playing in the snow or baking cookies together. If there’s a new baby, make sure the baby is the focus of the attention. Years from now, you’ll be able to look at the photo and immediately know what was happening in your lives.
Watch the Light

The biggest difference between a seasoned photographer and a newbie is the attention paid to lighting. You don’t want some people in light and others in shadow, so be sure to take note of where the light is coming from and how you’re positioning your subjects. For a group, you generally want a large, diffused light source. Porches are often great places to shoot because they can block overhead sunlight while providing flattering, indirect light for multiple subjects. Open shade or overcast days can provide similar lighting benefits.

That said, you can sometimes get away with breaking these lighting rules and allowing your subjects to be backlit by a big window to provide a large, airy light source (see the image on page 23). If you try this, make sure you have white bedding or a white wall that allows some of that light to bounce back into your subjects’ faces. You’ll also need to make sure your exposure is set for your subject and not the window in the background. This will require you to use your in-camera meter to obtain the exposure setting and then switch to Manual mode to shoot (see the sidebar, “Master Tricky Lighting”).

Be Ready to Shoot

Nothing takes the energy out of a shoot like a photographer fiddling with her camera. You should have your equipment set up, the shooting area properly lit, and be ready to go before everyone arrives. The younger the children in the family, the more important this step becomes. Toddlers (and busy adults) will simply not wait around for you to get it together.

Master Tricky Lighting

When dealing with backlighting or other high-contrast scenes, your camera’s automatic controls may have trouble choosing the right exposure. If you’re not getting the results you want, try these steps to set it right:

- Set your camera to Auto mode.
- Fill the frame with the person you’re photographing—preferably his or her face.
- Press the shutter button halfway and take note of the shutter speed and aperture readings that appear on the screen.

Shutter Speed | Aperture
---|---
1/125 | F8.0

- Finally, set the camera to Manual mode and input the exposure settings you just recorded. Now you won’t have to worry about your camera metering incorrectly as long as you shoot in that same area of light.

Having a small bench or sofa to anchor the group can prevent the group from spreading out and help keep everyone in the good light.
Tone Down the Wardrobe

Give some thought to clothing options for the family. Since you want the focus of the image to be on the faces and expressions, not the clothing, it’s usually best to avoid loud stripes or plaids. For best results, go for coordinating rather than perfectly matching clothes. Consider having everyone dress in a similar family of tones, such as a range of dark grays and blues. This will look better than dressing some members in black and others in white. If you aren’t sure you have the right mix, lay out all the clothing on the bed and then squint while looking at the selection. If a piece of clothing jumps out at you, then switch it with another item that blends better.

With digital photography, it’s easy to blow out your highlights, so be wary of dressing everyone in white—especially if you’ll be shooting in direct sunlight. I also recommend layering your clothing. This gives you the option to keep a jacket on or off, or to switch up looks between shots.

Break the “Rules”

Where is it written that everyone in a family portrait has to be facing forward and smiling? Some of my favorite family portraits capture clients interacting with each other, giving the photos a natural, spontaneous feel. There are even times when I prefer to use parents as props and not show their faces at all.

To break out of the rut of standard family portraits, experiment with creative cropping or depth of field. For example, try focusing on the kids in the foreground while the parents are in the background, out of focus. Not everything you try will work, but by pushing the boundaries you’re sure to get something more creative than everyone in a stiff, unnatural pose.
Be Silly and Keep the Energy Up

I purposefully tell my clients not to admonish their children to “be good” or, heaven forbid, to “smile!” This is a sure way to kill any spontaneity during a family shoot. Once you know you have the “safe” shot captured, take some time to let everyone be a little bit silly. I sometimes say, “Everyone look at Mom!” or “Who is the biggest brat?” which makes everyone laugh (and point at one another). I’ve even resorted to snorting like a pig, perching stuffed animals on my lens, and generally acting like an idiot to get the expression I’m looking for. It’s also essential to keep the energy up during the shoot. I direct my subjects to do a lot of moving around, jumping, running, hugging, tickling; you get the idea. We start out slow with the standard family shots, and once they’ve warmed up I push them to the next level. Some families are more willing than others, but if you can encourage them to loosen up even just a little, you can count it as a success.

Don’t Try To Do It All

My final tip for keeping family portraits as stress-free as possible is to be realistic about what you can manage. It’s hard enough trying to corral the family together for a portrait without also having to act as official photographer. To take some of the stress off, see if you can trade photographer duties with another photo-savvy parent. In fact, many kids respond better to directions when they’re given by someone other than a parent—which means you might actually get more than a sullen smirk from your favorite teenager.

Allison Tyler Jones is a professional portrait photographer living in Mesa, Arizona. She’s the co-author of Designing with Photos (2005; Autumn Leaves), Expressions (2007; North Light Books), and Photographing Children: A Photography Workshop (2008; Wiley). She teaches online photo classes at www.bigpicturescrapbooking.com.
Instead of starting out cold turkey with a blank file in Elements, I’ve found it helps to first draw a rough sketch of my design on a sheet of graph paper. Using a scale of four grid squares to represent an inch, draw an outline of your template at the size you want. For my 8x10-inch template, for example, I’ve drawn an outline 40 squares high and 32 squares wide. Next, sketch in rectangles where the photos will be placed, being careful to leave some blank space between the individual images. If you intend to add text to your storyboard, be sure to account for that in your design, too.

**Download Graph Paper**

If you don’t have graph paper on hand, go to the Web and type “printable graph paper” into your favorite search engine.
To help position the photo boxes, turn on the grid by choosing View>Grid. Then select View>Snap To>Grid. We’ll need to set up the increments for our grid to match our sketch. Press Ctrl-K (Mac: Command-K) to open the Preferences pane and select the Guides & Grid option. Set the Gridline Every option to 1 inch, and then enter 4 into the Subdivisions field.

Since I’ll be inserting the photos into the template with clipping masks—a technique that uses an underlying shape to hide part of a larger image—I’ll refer to our blank photo boxes as “masks.” To add our first mask to the template, press D to set the foreground color to black, and then select the Rectangle tool (U). Drag out a square or rectangle (don’t worry about the size or placement for now). This will create a new layer with the shape on it.

Once you’ve dragged out the shape you want, the bounding box should be active, displaying small square handles at the corners and edges. Drag the handles to adjust the mask’s shape and size as needed. (If the bounding box isn’t active, press Ctrl-T [Mac: Command-T] to access the Free Transform command.) Then, using your sketch as a guide, click in the middle of the mask and drag it into the correct position on the grid. When you’re done, click the green arrow.

Experiment! For a less traditional shape, try using one of the other tools in the Shape toolset. Just keep in mind, if you choose a shape with the Custom Shape tool, make sure it’s predominantly black (as opposed to just having a black outline), as the black area is where your photo will appear when you use the shape as a mask.

If you want to edit your shape mask in any way, such as using a decorative Eraser brush on the edges, you’ll need to first simplify the shape. Right click on the shape layer and choose Simplify Layer from the contextual menu.
From here, it’s easy to create the remaining masks. Click on the layer with the mask shape, and then press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) to duplicate that layer. Press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) and then drag the copied mask to a new location, resize it, and position it to match your sketch. Repeat this process—duplicating a shape, then resizing and positioning it—for each image in your design. You might also want to add a text box in your template indicating where text would be added (just type a generic phrase such as “Space for Text”). When finished, turn off the grid by choosing View>Grid.

Your template is now complete. Choose File>Save As, give your template file a name and select Photoshop from the Format menu. Make sure the Save Layers option (circled) is turned on, and then click Save.

Now let’s bring our storyboard to life by adding photos. In the Layers palette, select a mask shape that you want to fill. Open the photo you plan to insert and arrange the windows so you can see both documents at once. (In Elements 7 and earlier, choose Window>Images>Tile to arrange the photo and template in the workspace together.)

Select the Move tool (V), make sure that Show Bounding Box option is checked in the Options Bar, and then drag the photo to the template, positioning it over the mask shape you want to fill. If the photo is exceptionally large, drag inward on one of the corner handles of the bounding box to reduce the size. Otherwise, don’t be too concerned about the exact size and position of the photo for now. Click the green check mark, and then close the original photo.

Break Free of the Box

Once you see how quick and easy it is to create storyboard templates, you may wish to make and save a variety of them for future use. Feel free to get creative with the mask shapes. Try using rounded corners, decorative swirls, or multiple strokes to frame the photos. In this storyboard, for example, I’ve used heart shapes which I then altered with a grungy edge (you can download a blank version of this template from the online extras and add your own photos and text). Likewise, there’s no need to limit yourself to using photos with your masks. You can clip a piece of digital scrapbook paper or background texture to the masks. Have fun!
9 To fit the photo to the shape, we’ll “clip” it to the mask. In Elements 8, choose **Layer>Creating Clipping Mask** (in Elements 7 and earlier, the menu command is **Layer>Group With Previous**). You can also use the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl-G** (Mac: **Command-G**). Any portion of the photo that doesn’t overlap with the underlying black shape will become invisible; however, you should still see the bounding box around the edges of the photo. Using the **Move tool (V)**, drag from a corner to resize, and then reposition the photo within the mask. Click the green check mark when you’re done.

10 Repeat Steps 8 and 9 to clip each additional photo to the appropriate mask in your template. Add any text that you planned for your design.

11 For a finished look, I like to add a narrow stroke around each photo. To make it easy, you can place the strokes for all of the photos on the same layer. Create a new blank layer at the very top of the layer stack. In the Layers palette, **Ctrl-click** (Mac: **Command-click**) on the thumbnail for one of the black mask layers. This will create a selection around the shape of the clipped photo. Then choose **Edit>Stroke (Outline) Selection**. In the Stroke dialog, enter the desired pixel width for the stroke (I’ve used 4 px here), select a color, set the Location to Inside, and then click the OK button. Repeat this step for each mask layer in your template.

---

**EXTRAS: GET MORE!**

To see more examples and ideas for creating storyboard templates—and get a few ready-made templates to download—go to the Magazine section of the website and click on the November/December 2010 issue. **PhotoshopElementsUser.com**

Diana Day, retired H.R. Manager and self-taught Elements user, hosts a PSE Users Group where she teaches Elements to members of her community. Diana also puts her skills with Elements to practical use administering her church’s Web page and public relations projects.
Meet Photoshop Elements 9

Newest version adds professional features and fun extras

By Mike Rodriguez | Cue the music and dim the lights as we welcome to the stage Adobe Photoshop Elements 9, the newest member of the Elements family. Available for both Windows and Mac, Elements 9 offers an updated look that is clean, crisp, and easier to navigate, as well as a variety of new features that aim to make common—and some not-so-common—editing tasks easier to achieve. The new version also represents an important milestone for Mac users, who for the first time will receive the Organizer, the same file manager that Windows users have had for years. Here's a look at some of the most notable new features.

Real Layer Masks

For years now, Elements users have been hoping for an easy, straightforward way to apply layer masks, which let you quickly hide or reveal parts of a layer in a non-destructive way. Previously, layer masks were available only on adjustment layers; to use them on other layers, you either had to install a third-party plug-in or perform a cumbersome workaround. With Elements 9, Adobe finally delivers. Adding a layer mask to a layer is now a simple matter of clicking the new Add A Layer Mask button at the bottom of the Layers panel. You can then selectively hide and/or reveal parts of the layer by simply painting on the mask with black, white, or a shade of gray. This should make complex tasks—such as combining images, selectively applying filters and effects, and retouching specific details in a portrait—much more accessible, and will open up a huge range of creative possibilities.

PhotoshopElementsUser.com
I've adopted some of the high-contrast style from the image on the left for my landscape shot on the right. To borrow a style from one of your own images, click on the green plus sign in the Style Bin.

Content Aware Healing

The Spot Healing Brush was already a pretty useful tool for fixing blemishes, removing small objects, and performing other minor retouching tasks. Elements 9 makes the tool even more powerful by adding a Content Aware option (a feature borrowed from Photoshop CS5). With this checkbox turned on in the Options Bar, the Spot Healing Brush uses a more intelligent and intuitive method for analyzing and filling in the healed area to blend with the surrounding image. The tool isn't perfect, and it works better in some situations than others. For example, if the area you're healing is surrounded by a lot of fine, intricate detail—such as a series of sharp, in-focus flowers—the match may not be exactly what you're looking for. But for areas that are less detailed, such as grass, water, or sections of the ground, the tool can produce absolutely amazing results.

Photomerge Style Match

If you have an image with a particularly appealing look or style, you can use the new Photomerge Style Match feature to apply that style to other photos. Elements comes with seven built-in sample images to use as the source of the applied style, including high-contrast black-and-whites, rich sepia tones, and a color-intensive sunset. Alternately, you can upload your own images and use those as inspiration. The Style Match interface offers three sliders that control which aspects and how much of the style is transferred. It's important to note that the Style Match feature doesn't always apply styles in the way you'd expect. Experimentation is definitely the name of the game.

The Details

Photoshop Elements 9 costs $100. Although there’s no upgrade discount, Adobe does offer a $20 mail-in rebate, cutting the price to $80. For $150, you can add Premiere Elements 9, Adobe’s consumer video-editing software (which is also making its debut on the Mac). Adobe offers a free 30-day trial of Elements if you want to take it for a spin before you buy. Users who often switch between a Mac and a Windows system, might want to consider getting the boxed version as it comes with discs for both platforms.
The Organizer for Mac

Adobe saved one of the biggest changes for Mac users. Elements 9 officially Bridge, the Mac version’s previous file-management software, with the Organizer—removing one of the major disparities between the two platforms. (Aside from Facebook support, the Organizer is largely unchanged for Windows users.)

Wrapped in a simplified interface, the Organizer can accomplish many of the file-management tasks Bridge excelled in, as well as offering a few features Bridge didn’t have. For example, in addition to letting you apply keyword tags and ratings to photos, as Bridge did, the Organizer also offers face recognition (it detects people in your images and lets you identify them by name) and Smart Tags, keywords based on the content, quality, and metadata in your photos that are applied automatically. The Organizer also gives you access to basic editing controls—so you can adjust lighting, color and sharpening without jumping to the Editor—as well as tools for sharing photos online and templates for photo projects such as calendars, cards, and books.

Fun Edits

For people who aren’t sure where to start when it comes to editing photos, Elements’ Guided Edit mode offers a logical workflow and includes helpful descriptions and tips for using the various tools and applying adjustments. Elements 9 expands this offering by introducing a new category called Fun Edits. The collection includes five projects. Some, such as Lomo Camera Effect and Pop Art, can be completed with just a few clicks of the mouse. Other projects, such as Out Of Bounds (which adds a frame to your image and then cuts out part of your image so it extends beyond the frame), Reflection, and Perfect Portrait, require multiple steps. The projects are fun to play with and offer some impressive results without requiring a big investment of time.

The Lomo Camera Effect relies on just two buttons, while other Fun Edits are a bit more complicated.

The Organizer’s full-screen mode gives you quick editing and tagging tools while letting you keep your focus on the image in front of you.

5 Smaller Changes

These smaller tweaks and additions may not grab headlines, but they offer some welcome changes:

Better Printing Elements 9 restores your ability to place an image anywhere on the page when printing. Now when you invoke the Print command from the Editor, you can specify exact coordinates for the image on the page—great for conserving paper and getting precise layouts.

Cleaner Interface If the tiny text in Elements 8 had you reaching for your magnifying glass, you’ll be happy to note that in Elements 9 sport a clean, crisp look—including a larger font size—that really improves the ability to focus on your images as you work.

Seamless Panoramas The Photomerge Panorama command also gets a lift from the new Content Aware option. When stitching together multiple image, the program will now attempt to fill in missing portions of the sky or ground.

Editable Projects If you decide a photo needs a little work while you’re building a book or other project, you can now get the job done without leaving your layout. Simply switch to Advanced mode to access any of Elements’ editing tools.

Facebook Connection Elements now makes it easy to quickly share photos with your Facebook account. Once you’ve authorized the connection, you can upload photos to a new or existing album and decide who can see them.

Mike Rodriguez holds a master’s degree in Educational Technology and is an Adobe Certified Expert in Photoshop. He has over 18 years of classroom experience, and teaches courses in photography and a variety of computer applications. He also sells stock photography through iStockphoto.com.
Here is a selection of some of the best recent work by subscribers, showcasing original photos and completed projects from magazine tutorials and videos on the website.

See the note on the opposite page for more information on how to submit your work for future issues.

**Victorian Maddie**

Nelda Agrusa  
MENIFEE, CALIFORNIA

This was created using the techniques in the article by Diana Day in the September/October issue of *Photoshop Elements Techniques*. I purchased the Victorian Vintage Children’s Photo disc from Lunagirl and found the perfect base picture for a photo I had taken of my favorite subject.

**Bavarian Church**

Linda Bell  
LITITZ, PENNSYLVANIA

This photo was taken on the Autobahn in Bavaria, Germany, during our vacation in June. I was looking for a peaceful photo to enlarge and frame for our family room and really liked the church with the mountains in the background. I started with Topaz Simplify to make the photo look more like a painting, and did the rest of the work in Elements. I heavily saturated it so some of the color would show through the sepia filter and finished with the Canvas Texturizer.

**Omaha Skyline**

Deborah Funk  
OMAHA, NEBRASKA

I found a thread in the Elements Village forum by Diana where this “fold technique” was discussed, and used Photoshopsusieq’s template to apply the technique to my photo of Omaha’s skyline. Very little processing was done, although I did paint in some clouds at the top of the page with Nancy’s cloud brushes.

*To find this project, search for “fold template” at ElementsVillage.com and click on the “Any ideas how this could be done?” thread; a link to the template is on the last page.*
6 Seconds to Go...
Richard Rohrdanz
TUCSON, ARIZONA

This is a telephoto shot from across the arena at the 2010 Tucson Rodeo (La Fiesta de los Vaqueros). I used Photoshop Elements to remove the logos from the rider’s vest, the legs of a second cowboy, and an advertising sign—all of which distracted from the intensity in Wes’ face.

In Loving Memory
Alberta Pugh
OGLESBY, OKLAHOMA

I made this memory page for Kandace, our 16-year-old daughter who was killed in a car accident on September 1, 2007. I had taken this picture of her and her barrel horse Hank in the pecan grove just north of the house. I used Elements 7 and a kit called “Painted on - layered template album” by TaylorMade Designs/Fei-Fei’s Stuff. I also used a sun-faded photo effect on the font, Rage Italic Let.

Korean Green Tea Farm
Kenn Tindall
YUKON, OKLAHOMA

I used the Orton effect on this image, as presented in Mike Rodriguez’s tutorial video, “Getting the Orton Effect.”

Mono Lake
Keith Evans
VICTORVILLE, CALIFORNIA

The picture was taken at Mono Lake, in 2008, in Lee Vining, California, using a Canon 50D. It wasn’t until recently, when I purchased Elements 8, that I could really appreciate this picture. I used Lynette Kent’s tips and tricks for getting rid of clutter and cropping (from Vol. 2 No. 5, downloadable in the Magazine section online). Also, the Custom Brushes article (Vol. 2 No. 1), showed me how to add a personal touch to the photo.

EXTRAS: SUBMIT YOUR WORK!

Go to the Magazine Subscriber Gallery section in the Elements Village forums and read the message, “How to Submit Images to the P.E.T. Subscriber Showcase,” which has the info you’ll need to upload your photos. The next deadline is Dec. 5. www.ElementsVillage.com