LOOK SHARP!
Banish blurry details once and for all with our sharpening guide

CREATIVE COLLAGE
Design a unique portrait using scattered snapshots

SHOW OFF YOUR SHOTS
Turn your desktop into a virtual photo frame

INVISIBLE BEAUTY
Discover the magic of infrared photography

PLUS
The Tilt-Shift Effect
Subscriber Showcase
Tips and Tricks
Editor’s Note

At the beginning of 2012, I announced to my husband that this was going to be our year to take it easy—or as easy as you can with two young kids. We had just wrapped up a hectic 12 months that involved a new home in a new town with a new baby, and I was ready to finally catch my breath and really settle in.

Clearly this is not the sort of thing you should ever say out loud. Now, just six months later, here I am unpacking moving boxes in a new apartment in the hustle and bustle of New York City. So much for taking it easy!

Change is hard, whether you’re moving one town over or landing on a whole new coast as we are. But it’s also thrilling—especially when looking through the lens of a camera. Suddenly I’m surrounded by rich new photographic material: soaring skyscrapers, beautiful bridges, and a wonderful jumble of cultures and traditions all trying to coexist on one small island. I can’t wait to explore it all—just as soon as I remember which box has my camera charger.

Here at Photoshop Elements Techniques, there are a few topics we find ourselves covering again and again because they’re so vital to the editing process. One of them is sharpening. Almost every photo that comes out of a digital camera benefits from at least a little sharpening. But should you use Unsharp Mask? The High Pass filter? The Sharpen tool? Something else? Elements offers so many different ways to get the job done, it’s hard to know where to start. So we asked Lesa Snider, Elements teacher extraordinaire, to help break down the differences between the various sharpening options and to show how to put them to work (page 13). Be sure to check out her handy cheat sheet listing common sharpening settings for different types of images.

If you’re looking for a creative photo project to explore while the weather is warm, be sure to read Ben Long’s article on infrared photography (page 27). It’s not for everyone, but if you have the patience and a compatible camera, you can create some truly beautiful and unique images. Also don’t forget about our monthly themed photo challenges, which are a great way to hone your camera skills. The last few challenges have produced some particularly inspiring images (see Subscriber Showcase on page 33).

The theme for August is “Landscapes.” I hope you’ll join us for some of the latest winners. The theme for July is “Food.” The last few challenges have produced some particularly inspiring images (see Subscriber Showcase on page 33). The theme for July is “Food.” The theme for August is “Landscapes.” I hope you’ll join us.

Happy shooting!

Kelly Turner
kelly@photoshopelementsuser.com
4 It’s a Small World
Make landscapes and cityscapes look like miniature-scale models with this selective-blur technique. By Matt Kloskowski

7 Customize Your Desktop
Beautify your computer screen while still leaving room for your desktop icons with a custom wallpaper template. By Diana Day

FEATURE
13 Look Sharp
Confused about which of Elements’ many sharpening tools to use on your photo? We explain the differences and show you how to get the best results from each tool for crisp, clear details every time. By Lesa Snider

22 Stack ‘Em High
Create a playful picture-stack collage that makes it look like your photo was created from scattered snapshots. By Liz Ness

PHOTO TIPS
27 Photograph the Invisible
Teach your camera how to see infrared light and discover a beautiful world of bright white leaves and dark gray skies. By Ben Long

31 Elements Tips and Tricks
Learn how to erase a drop shadow, stamp out dark undereye circles, speed up Elements, change the default background color, and more.

33 Subscriber Showcase
Presenting some of the best recent work by our readers, including a selection of winners from the March and April photo challenges.

EXTRAS: LOG ON AT PHOTOSHOPELEMENTSUSER.COM

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 VIDEOS, TUTORIALS & BLOG POSTS
- Quicker Panoramas
- How to Create a Page Curl Effect
- Adding Borders Using a Pattern Fill Layer
- Creating Threshold Art
- Reusable Photo Effects
It’s a Small World

Use selective focus to simulate tilt-shift photography

By Matt Kloskowski | Tilt-shift lenses are used by a lot of architectural photographers to help control focus when shooting large buildings. But the technique has also become popular as a way of creating images with a very selective focus. When done well, the technique makes normal landscapes and city scenes look like detailed miniature models. Here’s the thing, though: Tilt-shift lenses are expensive. Rather than plunking down $2,000 on a new lens, you can use this cool technique that lets you come pretty close to creating the same effect.

The key to success with this technique is choosing the right photo. The tilt-shift effect aims to give you the feeling that you’re looking at a miniature-scale model. Since models are usually viewed from above, you’ll have the best luck with photos that were taken at an elevated level—such as from a tall building, hill, or bridge. Photos with people or cars or some sort of street below often work well.

To download Matt’s city image, go to the Magazine section of the website and click on the July/August 2012 issue. PhotoshopElementsUser.com
Once your photo is open in Elements, press Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) to duplicate the Background layer. That way you’ll always have your original, untouched photo on a layer below.

The tilt-shift effect is all about blur. Click on the top layer in the Layers panel to target it, then choose Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. It’s hard to give an exact setting here. I usually use a Radius of 5 to 6 pixels for high-resolution photos (images that are at least 2,000 pixels wide). Stick with a lower number for smaller images. You want to keep the blur at a setting where the image is definitely fuzzy, but not so bad that you can’t tell what the image is. Click OK to apply the Gaussian Blur.

Next, we’ll remove the blur from a portion of the image. In Elements 9 or higher, click the Add Layer Mask button (circled) at the bottom of the Layers panel to add a mask.

For Elements 8 or earlier, you’ll need to follow a few extra steps to create a layer mask. See “Layer Mask Workaround.”
Press G to select the Gradient tool. In the Options Bar at the top, you’ll need to make a few changes. First, click on the Gradient Picker and choose the default Black, White gradient (it’s third from the left). Then choose the Reflected gradient preset from the Gradient Style icons (it’s the fourth one).

Pinpointing the right part of your image for the tilt-shift effect can take some practice. To change where the band of focus appears, simply make sure the layer mask is selected (look for the black brackets around the mask thumbnail) and re-drag your Gradient cursor over the image. You can do this as many times as you want and at any point in the editing process.

Tilt-shift images often have very saturated and bright colors. But blurring the photo like we did tends to desaturate and make the image look flatter. To fix this, go to Enhance>Adjust Color>Adjust Color Curves. (If it’s grayed out, the problem is likely that the layer mask is still selected. Click on the layer’s name in the Layers panel to deselect it.) Choose the Increase Contrast preset on the bottom left. You might also want to drag the Highlights slider to the right and Shadows slider to the left a little. Then click OK.

Customize Your Desktop
Display favorite photos on your computer’s wallpaper

By Diana Day | If you’ve ever tried using a photo as your computer’s desktop background (also called wallpaper), you may have found that many images are so busy your desktop icons become lost in the details. But there is a way to get the best of both worlds. By creating a plain border around the photo, icons can be arranged within this space and remain very much visible. As an added bonus, the border makes an attractive frame for your photograph. I’ll show you how to create a simple, reusable template that makes it easy to frame photos for your desktop.

For more wallpaper template examples and ideas, go to the Magazine section of the website and click on the July/August 2012 issue. PhotoshopElementsUser.com
1. Computer screens differ in size and aspect ratio, so it's important to match your wallpaper template to your display. Check the resolution of your monitor to find the pixel dimensions to use.

   In Windows, right-click on a blank spot on your desktop and select Screen Resolution from the contextual menu.

   On a Mac, open your System Preferences, click on Displays, and note the resolution highlighted in the list.

   ![In Windows, you can find your screen resolution in the Display settings.](image)

   ![In OS X, you'll find your resolution in the Display preferences.](image)

2. Open Photoshop Elements and choose File> New > Blank File. In the New dialog, enter your screen’s pixel dimensions in the Width and Height fields. Make the Resolution 72 pixels/inch, and set Color Mode to RGB.

   ![My monitor is 1280 x 1024 pixels, so that's what I've used for this example.](image)

3. Add a blank layer on top of your Background layer by clicking the Create A New Layer icon in the Layers Panel, or by selecting Layer > New > Layer.

4. To make centering a photo on the template easier, we'll create a placeholder box. Press Ctrl-K (Mac: Command-K) to open your Elements preferences and choose Guides & Grid from the menu on the left. Make sure it has a setting of Gridline Every 1 Inches, with 4 Subdivisions. Then, to make the grid visible, go to View > Grid. Also in the View menu, go to Snap To > Grid and make sure it's enabled with a check mark.

   ![Turn on the Grid and Snap To Grid options.](image)

   **tip** Now You See It... You can quickly toggle the grid on and off by pressing Ctrl-' (Mac: Command-').
Select the **Rectangular Marquee tool** (M). In the Options Bar, choose Fixed Ratio from the Mode drop-down menu, then enter the aspect ratio of the photo you’ll be using. Most cameras shoot with a 3:2 or 4:3 aspect ratio. If you’re not sure which your camera uses, or if you’ve cropped the image, open the image in Elements, choose **Image>Resize/Image Size**, and use the Document Size dimensions.

You can use your photo’s document Width and Height if you don’t know its aspect ratio.

Drag out a selection on your canvas, leaving a wide border around it. Use the grid to keep it centered vertically and horizontally.

Quick Moves To quickly repurpose the selection while dragging out the shape, press the spacebar (but don’t release the mouse button).

Making sure the blank layer is selected in the Layers panel, fill the selection with gray. Go to **Edit-Fill Selection**. Under the Contents drop-down menu, select 50% Gray. Press Ctrl-D (Mac: Command-D) to deselect the newly gray area, then turn the Grid off by clicking **View>Grid**.

Think Outside the Box

A landscape-oriented photo usually works best for wallpaper; however, you don’t have to use a single photo. You can combine portrait-oriented photos—such as a triptych of three vertical photos—or use multiple photos arranged into a collage. You may even wish to use a favorite scrapbook page for your desktop background.
Before going any further, save your template. Go to File>Save As and give it a name such as "Desktop Template." Set the Format to Photoshop. Now you can use this same template whenever you wish to create a new desktop wallpaper.

Now we'll add a photo to the template. Don't open the photo from the Organizer or by using the File>Open menu command. Instead, select File>Place. In the Place dialog, navigate to where your photo is saved, select it, and then click the Place button. The photo will be imported and automatically resized to fit within your canvas, with a bounding box around it. Click the green check mark to accept the transformation.

To non-destructively crop and reposition the photo, we are going to "clip" the image to the placeholder box. Press Ctrl-G (Mac: Command-G) to create a clipping mask. The photo should take on the shape of the placeholder box. Don't worry if you can't see the whole image.

Why Place?
When you select an image from the Place dialog, Elements puts the imported photo on its own layer and automatically resizes it to fit within the boundaries of the open document. This can be a real timesaver when adding an image that's larger than your canvas, as you won't have to zoom out and hunt for the edges of the photo. If you're using Elements 8 or higher, there's another advantage to the Place command. The resulting image is imported as a smart object. This lets you resize it as often as needed without losing resolution and degrading the image. However, if you use Place in a project where you wish to apply a filter or effect on it, you'll first need to simplify the smart object by right-clicking on the layer and choosing Simplify from the menu that appears.
Now we need to fit the photo to the placeholder. Press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) to activate the Free Transform and the bounding box. In the Options Bar at the top, make sure the Constrain Proportions option is checked. Now drag the corner handles of the bounding box inward or outward to resize the photo until the portion of the photo you want is visible. Drag the center of the photo to reposition it. When you get the photo sized and placed to your liking, click the green check mark.

Next, we’ll add some color to the border around the photo. In the Layers panel, click on the white Background layer to make it the active layer. Select Edit>Fill Layer. From the Contents drop-down menu, select Color to open the Color Picker. I usually like to use a color from my photo. To do this, move your cursor over to your photo. It will turn into an eyedropper. Click an area in the photo to sample the color. For my example, I picked #abc7ba. When you find a color you like, click OK to close the Color Picker, and then click OK again to fill the background layer with that color.

There are a variety of filters and effects you can experiment with to add more interest to the border. One of my favorites is to make the photo look like it’s mounted in a textured mat. From the Filter menu, select Texture>Texturizer. In the right-hand panel of the Texturizer dialog, click the Texture drop-down arrow to select a texture (I chose Sandstone), and then drag the sliders to adjust the Scaling and Relief to your liking. I set Scaling to 55% and Relief to 1. Click OK to apply the texture.

I’ve applied a textured green border.
Save your wallpaper image (File>Save As). I have a sub-folder in my Documents folder where I save my custom wallpaper files. I save each file first as a Photoshop (.PSD) file with the layers intact (in case I want to edit it in the future or change the photo). Then I save it again as a JPEG file, which is the version I use on my desktop.

Apply your new wallpaper to your desktop.

**In Windows** The easiest way to set your wallpaper in Windows is to open it in a photo viewer—such as the built-in photo viewer in Vista, XP, and Win7; Photoshop Elements Organizer; or the free FastStone Viewer. Once the image is open, right-click on it, and from the contextual menu select Set As Desktop Wallpaper.

**Mac OS X** Right-click on your desktop background. This will open your Desktop preferences. Click on the plus-sign icon in the lower-left corner and use the resulting dialog to navigate to your new image. Click Choose and then close System Preferences.

Diana Day, retired H.R. Manager and self-taught Elements user, teaches Elements to members of her community by hosting a PSE Users Group, and by tutoring Elements users one-on-one in their homes. Diana also puts her skills with Elements to practical use administering her church’s web page and public relations projects.
Our eyes are naturally drawn to sharp details in an image. This is why photos with a shallow depth of field work so well at directing our attention to the subject. Unfortunately, our cameras aren’t always so great at delivering the sharp details we’re seeking. Whether through camera shake, subject movement, or just the camera’s natural inclination, you’ll find that many of your photos need a little sharpening help.

The good news is that Elements is packed with tools that can help make your images appear sharper. The bad news? With so many options at your fingertips, finding the right tool and the best settings can be a challenge. But it doesn’t have to be. There are some simple sharpening guidelines that can help keep your images looking their best. Let’s take a look at the different sharpening options in Elements and how to put each to use. By Lesa Snider
How Does Sharpening Work?

Sharpening is one of the least understood processes in Elements. But really it’s not much different than sharpening a kitchen knife. In both instances, you’re refining and emphasizing edges. On a knife, it’s easy to identify the edge because it’s the part that can cut you (ouch!). In a digital image, the edges are areas of high contrast where light and dark pixels meet—for example, where a dark tree branch meets a blue sky or where an iris meets the white of an eye.

Sharpening in Elements involves identifying those edges and then exaggerating the contrast by lightening the light pixels and darkening the dark pixels. This makes the image look sharper, even though it’s technically not any sharper than it was captured in-camera.

Sharpening is a bit of an art: If you don’t sharpen enough (or at all), your image looks unnaturally soft and slightly blurred. If you sharpen too much, you get a nasty sharpening halo—a white gap between light and dark pixels. The goal then is to apply just enough sharpening that the details look crisp without it being obvious that you did anything at all.

When you sharpen too much, your edges can develop an unattractive halo.
Always Sharpen on a New Layer

No matter which technique you use, there’s one important step you should take before applying any sharpening: Create a layer specifically for that purpose. Sharpening is an incredibly destructive process. Creating a new layer not only ensures that you don’t permanently alter your underlying image, but also gives you the flexibility to decrease the opacity of the sharpened layer if you go a little overboard.

Single-Layer Files
If your Elements document consists of just one layer, you can simply duplicate it to create your sharpening layer. Press Ctrl-Alt-J (Mac: Command-Option-J). In the resulting dialog box, type “Sharpen” into the Name field and press OK. You’re now ready to skip ahead to the sharpening method of your choice.

Multi-Layered Files
Things get a little trickier when your image is made up of more than one layer. When you run a sharpening filter, it affects only the active layer—not all the layers in a document. This means you’ll need to merge all those layers into a brand-new layer for sharpening.

1. In the Layers panel, click the topmost layer to activate it. This will ensure that the new sharpening layer is the top layer in the stack. Check that all the layers you want to merge are visible (they should have an eye icon next to them). If there are layers you want to skip (like a Type layer), click the eye icon to turn it off. When you’re finished sharpening, you can turn the hidden layers back on, though you may need to rearrange their stacking order so they’re above the sharpening layer.

2. Open the Layers panel fly-out menu and then Alt-click (Mac: Option-click) on the Merge Visible menu item. When you do, Elements compresses your layers into a completely new layer at the top of your layer stack. You can also use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl-Shift-Alt-E (Mac: Command-Shift-Option-E).

3. Double-click the new layer’s name in the Layers panel and rename it “Sharpen.” At this point you’re all set—simply pick one of the sharpening methods and then choose File>Save As. From the Format pop-up menu, choose Photoshop so your layers remain intact, and then click the Save button.

Don’t Sharpen Noise! One of the downsides to sharpening is that it also emphasizes any kind of noise—graininess or color specks—in your image. You can counter that by reducing noise before you sharpen. Just choose Filter>Noise>Reduce Noise.

Use the new merged layer to apply sharpening.
Choosing a Sharpening Method

One of the most confusing parts of sharpening in Elements is that there are so many ways to go about it. Let's look at the main options and how to get the best results.

One-Click Sharpening

If you're not particular about sharpening and you just want Elements to do what it thinks is best, the Auto Sharpen feature is certainly the easiest way to go. Simply prepare a new layer for sharpening as described previously and then choose Enhance>Auto Sharpen. When you do, Elements applies a round of sharpening to the active layer. You don't get a dialog box with this method, meaning you have absolutely no control over how much sharpening is applied or which pixels in your image get sharpened. I almost never recommend this approach.

Easy Sharpening with the High Pass Filter

When you want more control over sharpening but don't want to fiddle with a lot of different settings, give the High Pass filter a spin. The High Pass filter detects the highest-contrast edges in the image (the ones with the biggest difference between colors) and turns everything else in your image temporarily gray. This makes it easy to see which parts of your image will be sharpened and which areas will remain untouched—helpful if you have areas such as skin that you don't want to be sharpened.

Best of all, the High Pass filter is quick. Once you've created a new layer for sharpening, follow these steps:

1. With the new "Sharpen" layer active in your Layers panel, choose Filter>Other>High Pass. In the resulting dialog box, enter a Radius setting between 1–4 pixels (use a lower number for low-resolution images and a higher number for high-resolution images). You should just see a thin outline of your edges while the rest of the image turns gray. Those outlines will be the parts that get sharpened. Then press OK.
Precise Sharpening with Unsharp Mask

The Unsharp Mask filter is many people’s favored sharpening method because it gives you nice control over which pixels are sharpened through three handy sliders. Its odd name comes from a darkroom technique involving the use of a blurred version of an image to produce a sharper one.

1. Create a layer for sharpening as described earlier. Using the pop-up menu at the top of the Layers panel, change the “Sharpen” layer’s blend mode to Luminosity. This prevents the sharpening from affecting the color info in your image.

2. Using the pop-up menu at the top of the Layers panel, change the layer’s blend mode to Overlay. The neutral color in this mode is 50-percent gray, meaning that particular color completely disappears, leaving only your newly accentuated edges.

3. If necessary, you can make the effect more subtle by lowering the layer’s Opacity at the top right of the Layers panel (I used a setting of 80% here).

Precise Sharpening with Unsharp Mask

The Unsharp Mask filter is many people’s favored sharpening method because it gives you nice control over which pixels are sharpened through three handy sliders. Its odd name comes from a darkroom technique involving the use of a blurred version of an image to produce a sharper one.

1. Create a layer for sharpening as described earlier. Using the pop-up menu at the top of the Layers panel, change the “Sharpen” layer’s blend mode to Luminosity. This prevents the sharpening from affecting the color info in your image.

The grass and facial features are much crisper after performing a High Pass filter.

In Elements, the Unsharp Mask filter studies each pixel, looks at the contrast of nearby pixels, and decides whether they’re different enough to be considered an edge (you control how picky the filter is using the Threshold setting). If they are, Elements increases contrast by lightening the light pixels and darkening the dark pixels.

Here’s how to use it to sharpen your image:
2 Choose **Enhance>Unsharp Mask**. In the dialog that appears, you'll use the sliders to control **Amount**, **Radius**, and **Threshold**. Here's what those settings do:

**Amount**
This setting controls the sharpening intensity. The higher the setting, the lighter Elements makes the light pixels and the darker it makes the dark pixels. If you set it to 500%, Elements makes all the light pixels pure white and the dark ones pure black, giving your image a sharpening halo you can see from outer space. For best results, keep this setting between 50% and 150%.

**Radius**
This slider controls the width of the sharpening halo or, rather, how many pixels on either side of the edge pixels Elements changes. Typically, when you increase this setting you need to reduce the Amount setting to avoid creating a Grand Canyon–sized sharpening halo. For best results, try not to set the Radius higher than 4.

**Threshold**
This slider controls how different neighboring pixels have to be before Elements considers them an edge. It works the opposite of how you might expect: Setting it to 0 sharpens *every* pixel in your image. For best results, keep it between 3 and 20.

3 Once you've adjusted the **Amount**, **Radius**, and **Threshold** settings to your liking, click OK. Elements will sharpen the active layer.

---

**Sharpening by the Numbers**
You'll need to experiment with the Unsharp Mask settings to find the right numbers for your image, but here are some useful guidelines to point you in the right direction. (The numbers are listed as Amount/Radius/Threshold.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Image Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Portraits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Soft stuff like flowers and babies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fur, objects, landscapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>General sharpening, regardless of what your image contains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Images you're posting on the Web</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*tip* **Pump It Up for Printing** The printing process tends to soften pixels a little. Be sure to experiment with different Unsharp Mask settings and your printer to see which combinations give you the best results. It may be that something that looks too sharp onscreen turns out just right once printed.

*Keep in mind that these numbers are merely guidelines—they're not absolute rules. The most important variable is image resolution: Higher-resolution images have smaller pixels and thus require more sharpening than low-resolution images.*
Ultimate Control with Adjust Sharpness

The Adjust Sharpness filter gives you more options than Unsharp Mask, so it offers a slightly better chance of saving an out-of-focus image. The downside? It’s not as easy to use as Unsharp Mask, and it can take longer to run if you have a slow computer or very little memory (RAM).

To give it a spin, create a new sharpening layer as described earlier and set the blend mode once again to Luminosity. Then choose Enhance>Adjust Sharpness. Elements opens a large dialog box containing a big image preview on the left and a slew of settings on the right. Along with the Amount and Radius settings discussed in the previous section, you also get these controls:

Remove
This menu is where you pick what kind of blur you want Photoshop to reduce. Your choices are:

Gaussian Blur Think of this as the basic mode; it’s the same one that the Unsharp Mask filter uses.

Lens Blur This setting attempts to detect the detail or edges in your image and then make the sharpening halos smaller. Pick this setting if your image has a lot of details and/or noise.

Motion Blur If your image is blurry because the camera or subject moved, you can use this setting to make Elements try to fix it (though your success will vary).

Since choosing Gaussian Blur basically makes this filter work like Unsharp Mask (in which case you could just use Unsharp Mask instead) and Motion Blur is only for when your picture is blurry, you should select Lens Blur for most photos.

Angle
If you choose Motion Blur from the Remove menu, use this dial to identify the angle of the blur you’re dealing with. For example, if the subject is moving diagonally across the shot from the lower-left corner to the upper-right corner, set this field to 45 degrees.

More Refined
If you turn on this checkbox, Elements thinks long and hard before it does any sharpening. With this setting turned on, you’ll get more precise results, but the sharpening won’t be as strong. Leave it off if you have a slow computer or you’re working with a huge file.
Selective Sharpening

So far, we’ve addressed sharpening that applies to your whole image. But some areas may need a little extra punch—for example, applying a bit more sharpening to eyes and lips in portraits can help them stand out. This is called **selective sharpening**. Here are two easy ways to apply additional sharpening to just an area or two.

**Using a Layer Mask**

If you have Elements 9 or later, you can use a layer mask to quickly apply sharpening to just a few important spots. Before you start, apply global sharpening using one of the techniques mentioned earlier. Then follow these steps:

1. **Duplicate the “Sharpen” layer and name it “Selective Sharpen.”** Choose **Enhance>Unsharp Mask**. Adjust the settings in the dialog box to produce an extreme degree of sharpening and then click OK.

2. **Alt-click (Mac: Option-click) the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of your Layers panel.** This adds a new layer mask and fills it with black. In the realm of the layer mask, painting with black conceals the layer while painting with white reveals it. By filling the layer mask with black, the extra sharpening is completely hidden from the image.

3. **Activate the Brush tool (B).** Press **D** to set the foreground and background colors to their defaults. White should be on top. (If it isn’t, press **X** to switch them.) Carefully paint over your subject’s irises, eyelashes, eyebrows, lips, and hair to reveal the extra sharpening. If you mess up and reveal too much sharpening, press **X** to flip-flop your colors so black is on top and then paint back across that area.

4. **Finally, lower the strength of the “Selective Sharpen” layer by reducing the Opacity setting at the top of the Layers panel (I used 40%).**

Here I’ve painted over the lips and eyes to apply the extra sharpening.
With the Sharpen tool selected, just paint the areas you want to sharpen and, well, that’s it. Up in the Options Bar, you can adjust the following settings:

**Brush** This menu lets you pick from a bunch of brush presets of varying hardness and size. Make sure you pick a brush with a soft edge.

**Size** You can use this field to change brush size, though it’s easier done with a keyboard shortcut: press the left bracket key ( [ ) repeatedly to decrease brush size and the right bracket key ( ] ) to increase the brush size.

**Mode** In this pop-up menu, you can change the tool’s blend mode. Luminosity is a good choice as it makes the tool affect only the lightness info in your image, which prevents any weird shifts in color.

**Strength** This field is automatically set to 50%. But unless you want to over-sharpen your image, lower this setting to no more than 25% before you begin painting. That way, you apply reasonable amounts of sharpening and can brush over areas repeatedly to apply more.

**Sample All Layers** Elements assumes you want to sharpen only the active layer. If the active layer is partially transparent and you want your sharpening to affect the layers you can see below the active layer, turn on this checkbox.

As you can see, sharpening applies a nice finishing touch to your image. And by using a layer made just for sharpening, you don’t have to worry about harming your original image.

Lesa Snider, chief evangelist of iStockphoto (lesa.in/istockdeal), is the author of Photoshop CS6: The Missing Manual, coauthor of iPhoto ’11: The Missing Manual, and author of several video workshops (lesa.in/clvideos). She’s a long-time member of the Photoshop World Dream Team of instructors, the Advanced Photoshop professor for Sessions.edu, and founder of PhotoLesa.com. Download a free Elements cheatsheet at Facebook.com/PhotoLesa. Twitter: @PhotoLesa.
Stack ‘Em High

Turn a single image into a picture-stack collage

I love the look of a stack of photos loosely scattered around the table. It always makes me think of afternoons spent with family going through treasured snapshots and telling stories. If you want to get this same effect with your digital images, you can create a picture-stack collage. Used with multiple photos, a picture-stack collage is a great way to tell a visual story that’s both intimate and casual. Don’t want to go digging through your library? The effect is also a fun and creative way to present a single photo so it appears to be comprised of many different close-up shots.

In Elements 10, you can create a picture-stack collage using the Guided Edit mode (see the sidebar “Automate Your Picture Stack”), but the process doesn’t offer a lot of flexibility. For a truly customized collage—or to get the same effect in previous versions of Elements—the best option is to build it yourself.

By Liz Ness

EXTRAS: FREE TEMPLATE ONLINE

To download the collage template created by Liz in this tutorial, go to the Magazine section of the website and click on the July/August 2012 issue. PhotoshopElementsUser.com
1 Open a new blank document by pressing Ctrl-N (Mac: Command-N). From the Preset menu, select U.S. Paper and then enter the size you want your final image to be. For this example, we’ll use the dimensions for a standard 8x10-inch photo. Then click OK.

2 We’ll start our collage by creating one of the individual photo frames. Press D to set the background and foreground colors to their defaults, and then press X to swap them so that white is the foreground color.

   Select the Rectangle Shape tool (U). In the Options Bar, click on the down arrow (circled) to the right of the rectangle icon to open the Rectangle Options menu and choose Fixed Size. Set the width to 3.25 inches and the height to 2.25 inches. Now click once with your mouse anywhere within the document to draw a rectangle. Finally, simplify the layer (Layer>Simplify Layer). Don’t worry if the rectangle disappears against the white background.

3 To help the white frame pop off the page a bit, let’s add a drop shadow. In the Effects panel (if you don’t see it, choose Window>Effects) select the Layer Style icon and choose Drop Shadows from the pull-down menu. Double-click on the Soft Edge drop shadow (the last in the default list) to apply it to the shape layer.

4 Press X to swap the background and foreground colors so that black is on top. With the Rectangle Shape tool (U) still selected, return to the Rectangle Options menu in the Options Bar and set the Fixed Size width to 3 inches and the height to 2 inches. Click once to draw a black rectangle inside the space of the white one. Then, select the Move tool (V) and using the keyboard’s arrow keys, center the black rectangle within the white one. Finally, simplify the layer (Layer>Simplify Layer).

Our white frame with a drop shadow applied.

Center the black rectangle within the white one.
In the Layers panel, **Shift-click** on the Shape 1 and Shape 2 layers to select them both, and then click the Link Layers button in the Layers panel to link the two. You can now use the **Move tool (V)** to move them anywhere you wish.

Now we’re ready to add our photo. Go to **File>Open**. In the Open dialog, select the photo you’d like to use in your collage. Once it’s open in Elements, select the whole image by pressing **Ctrl-A** (Mac: **Command-A**) and then copy it by pressing **Ctrl-C** (Mac: **Command-C**).

Switch back to your collage project (double-click the appropriate thumbnail in the Project Bin). Go to **Edit>Paste** to paste your image into the project. If you need to resize your image, press **Ctrl-T** (Mac: **Command-T**) to activate the **Free Transform** command and use the corner handles to resize it so that it fits the dimensions of the working document—**not** just the frame you created in the previous steps. Drag from the center to reposition it. Click on the green check mark when finished.

**Automate Your Picture Stack**

If you like the picture-stack effect, but don’t have time to do it yourself, Elements can do the work for you. Elements 10 added a Guided Edit mode that create a 4-, 8-, or 12-image picture stack. To access it, click the Guided Edit tab, scroll down to Photo Play, and choose Picture Stack. Once you click Done, return to Full Edit mode. There, you’ll be able to drag individual frames around the image to customize the layout.
Next, we’ll clip the image to the black portion of the frame we just created. Press Ctrl-G (Mac: Command-G) to create a clipping mask. Now you should only see the portion of the image that appears through the frame “window.”

Once clipped, the image only appears within the black rectangle.

With the image layer (Layer 1) selected in the Layers panel, click on the Lock All icon at the bottom of the panel. This will prevent the clipped image from moving around when you adjust the position of the image frame. Now, you can click on either of the linked Shape layers to position the frame where you want on the image.

When you duplicate layers, Elements places the new layers right on top of the original ones. To relocate the duplicate frame, click one of the shape layers in the new frame set in the Layers panel to select it and then use the Move tool (V) to drag the top frame to a new spot on the canvas. Your clipped image should remain locked so it appears you’re just moving around a transparent frame.

Now that you’ve built one frame, it’s a fairly easy task to build the rest of your collage. In the Layers panel, hold down the Shift key as you click on the three layers that comprise your image frame (the two shape layers and the clipped image). Go to Layer>Duplicate Layers to duplicate all three layers. In the Duplicate Set dialog box, click OK.

Now that you’ve built one frame, it’s a fairly easy task to build the rest of your collage. In the Layers panel, hold down the Shift key as you click on the three layers that comprise your image frame (the two shape layers and the clipped image). Go to Layer>Duplicate Layers to duplicate all three layers. In the Duplicate Set dialog box, click OK.
To get that “scattered” look, you’ll want to vary the angle of your different collage frames. With one of the shape layers selected, go to **Image>Rotate>Free Rotate Layer**. Position your cursor just outside of the bounding box to get the double-headed arrow. Click and drag your mouse up or down to rotate the image. When you’re done, click on the green check mark.

Repeat Steps 10 through 13 to build your collage using as many frames as you’d like. To rearrange the stacking order of your frames, **Shift-click** on all three layers that make up that frame (the two linked shape layers and the clipped photo layer) in the Layers panel and then drag them higher in the layer hierarchy.

Mixed-media artist Liz Ness loves telling stories through imagery and words. She’s also crazy about photography, photo editing, and modern memory-keeping—subjects she discusses on her blog at www.LizNessStudio.com.

Variation

**Many Photos Stacked**

This collage also looks great with many different photos stacked together—particularly if those photos are related thematically. To use this technique with a collection of photos, you’ll need to make a few changes.

- Follow Steps 1 through 7 in the main tutorial. In Step 7, resize the image so it’s just barely larger than the black rectangle it’ll be clipped to.
- Press **Ctrl-G** (Mac: **Command-G**) to create a clipping mask. In this case, you should see most, if not all, of the image within the frame.
- In the Layers panel, **Shift-click** on the photo layer and the underlying shape layer to select them both and then click the Link Layers button (circled) to link them. This will ensure that all three layers stick together. You can now use the **Move Tool** (V) to drag the image to a new location or choose **Image>Rotate>Free Rotate Layer** to rotate the image.
- Repeat this process (starting at Step 2) for each image you want to add to your collage.
By Ben Long | Most of us are guilty of a profound form of chauvinism. When it comes to the electromagnetic spectrum, we humans are overtly biased toward visible light. That’s understandable given that our eyes can only see the visible light part of that spectrum (hence the name), but it’s still only a narrow slice of the broad range out there. Some cameras, however, are capable of seeing a little bit more.

With the right gear and some patience, you may be able to use your camera to capture images in the near-infrared spectrum. The results can yield a very different and dramatic view of a scene—green plants can appear almost white, while daytime skies get much darker.

Infrared shooting is a stylized look, but it’s one that’s hard to accurately replicate through post-production tricks. I’ll show you how to figure out if your camera is up to the task and help you get started.
What You Need
To shoot in infrared, you’ll need some special gear, a camera capable of detecting infrared light, and an adventurous spirit.

The Right Camera
There’s a filter in front of your camera’s image sensor which, among other things, filters out infrared (IR) light. Your camera’s ability to capture IR images is largely dependent on how much light that filter blocks. Unfortunately, the best way to figure this out is to actually try some IR shooting. You can also use Google to search for your camera model plus the term “infrared” to find examples of what others have accomplished with your camera.

IR Filter
Once you’ve found a compatible camera, you’ll also need an infrared lens filter. This is a round piece of glass that screws onto the end of your lens and filters out everything but the infrared light. Hoya and B+W both make good filters and are easy to find. (The Hoya R72 filter is particularly popular.) IR filters can run anywhere from $20 to $200, depending on the size and the quality you want. This is another good time to poke around online and see what filters other IR shooters use with your camera. You’ll need to decide in advance what lens you plan to use with the filter as you’ll have to match the size of the filter to your lens. Since plants and skies fare best under IR, I recommend picking a wide-angle lens so you can shoot landscapes.

Manual Control
The IR filter is going to cut a lot of light out of your exposure. This means you’ll also need a camera with manual exposure controls and a tripod.

Managing Lens Filters
Many digital shooters are not accustomed to working with lens filters. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- A lens filter is like any other optical element—you want to keep it clean and free of scratches.
- If you keep a Skylight or UV filter on your lens for protection, the IR filter can go on top of it.
- When adding an IR filter, be careful to place it perfectly flat against the lens, and screw it on slowly to ensure it’s being threaded straight. If it becomes crooked, it can be difficult to remove. (If it does become stuck, you can purchase inexpensive lens-filter wrenches to help loosen it.)

Finding Subject Matter
With the gear packed, it’s time to hit the road. Here are a few of the best subjects for IR experimentation:

Trees and Plants
One of the things that makes IR photography so arresting is the bright white appearance of many types of trees and plants. Not all vegetation renders the same way, and light can have a big impact on the tone of your IR subjects. It’s worth experimenting with different types of foliage—dark leaves, light ones, trees with big leaves, conifers, and so on.

Skies
In IR shots, blues skies often turn a dramatic dark gray. When contrasted against fluffy clouds or silverly treetops, the effect is stunning.

Portraits
Skin tones can also be interesting in infrared, often appearing ghostly white, or revealing underlying veins and arteries. Keep in mind that you’ll need long exposure times, so find a subject who can sit very still.
Framing and Focusing

When you put an IR filter on your camera, you probably won’t be able to see through the viewfinder because the filter is so dark.

If your camera offers a Live View mode, try turning it on—you may be able to see an image on the LCD. Unfortunately, this doesn’t work for every camera. For example, I can’t see anything through the viewfinder or in Live View on my Canon 5D Mark III SLR. But on my Panasonic DMC-GF1, I can see an image on the LCD screen. If you can see an image, proceed with framing and focusing as usual.

If you don’t see an image, you’ll need to first set up your shot without the infrared filter. Put your camera on your tripod and make sure it is locked down tight. If you’re using an SLR, half-press the shutter button to lock in your focus, and then move the autofocus switch on the lens to manual. If you’re using a point-and-shoot camera, switch the camera to manual focus and focus by hand or, if it doesn’t have manual focus, autofocus right before installing the filter. When you’re done, carefully attach the IR filter.

Choosing Exposure Settings

If you can see an image on your camera’s LCD screen, that means the camera should be able to see well enough to meter and you can shoot as normal. If you can’t see an image, you’ll have to set your exposure parameters by hand. This is largely a process of trial and error:

Aperture
Start by putting your camera in manual mode and setting your aperture to f8. This will give you enough depth of field to compensate for any focus troubles while limiting extremely long exposure times.

ISO
Now bump up your ISO. As ISO goes higher, you’ll get a noisier image, so your setting will depend on your camera’s capability. On my newer camera, I know I can shoot on ISO 3200 without suffering too great a noise penalty. With older cameras, you may want to limit your ISO to 800.

Shutter Speed
Finally, set the shutter speed. Start at 15 seconds and take a shot. Review the image and its histogram. If the histogram indicates a very dark image, lengthen the exposure time. You can also adjust ISO to adjust the brightness and noise levels.

Images will have a strong red cast straight out of the camera (left). You’ll need to convert it to black and white to get the traditional IR look (right).
Processing Infrared Images

In infrared photos, your camera captures a limited amount of color information, so the ultimate goal will be a black-and-white image. Convert your images to black and white in Elements by choosing **Enhance>Convert To Black And White**. There’s an Infrared Effect style listed on the left that offers a good starting point. Then adjust the contrast to taste.

Try Something New

If you tend to shoot a lot of foliage, or if you simply like the look, infrared can be a fun technology to experiment with. But you might also want to give it a try if you’re feeling stuck or want to try something different. Like working in black-and-white images, shooting in infrared helps you look at the world in a very different way, and that can lead to new and interesting subject matter.

Modified IR Cameras

If you enjoy infrared shooting and would like greater IR sensitivity, take your shots to the next level by modifying an old camera. (You won’t want to modify your everyday camera, because there are some tradeoffs in image quality.) There are several companies that will disassemble your camera and remove the filter in front of the sensor, greatly increasing your camera’s infrared sensitivity. Keep in mind that you’ll still need a filter on your lens.

If you’re extremely brave and have good fine-motor control, you can try doing the tricky modification operation yourself. You can find tutorials at www.lifepixel.com/tutorials/infrared-diy-tutorials.

Lifepixel.com will show you how to convert your camera yourself.

Elements Tips and Tricks

Change the Background Color

By default Elements places a gray background behind your photos. If you want to change that background color, then right-click anywhere in the gray area outside the boundaries of your image. The pop-up menu lets you choose from Black, Gray or Custom. Personally, I like black, but if you want a darker gray, for example, then choose Select Custom Color, find the color in the Color Picker, and then click OK. —Matt Kloskowski

Erase a Drop Shadow

Drop shadows are a great way to make text or other elements stand out against a background. One of the easiest ways to apply a drop shadow is with a layer style from the Effects panel. But what if you then want to erase the drop shadow from part of the underlying image? The only way to do this is to choose Layer>Simplify Layer. The problem is it puts the drop shadow on the same layer as the object that’s casting it—making it all too easy to erase that part, too.

Here’s the solution. Before simplifying the layer, put a selection around the text or image creating the drop shadow by Ctrl-clicking (Mac: Command-clicking) on the layer’s thumbnail. Then choose Layer>Simplify Layer. Now all you need to do is choose Select>Inverse, grab the Eraser tool (E) and erase away. You’ll only wipe away the drop shadow. —MK

Stamp Out Dark Circles Under Eyes

Here’s a really neat trick I use all the time for removing those dark circles under people’s eyes. First press S to get to the Clone Stamp tool. In the Options Bar, set the Mode pull-down menu to Lighten and the Opacity setting to 20%. You should also make sure the Sample All Layers option is enabled. Finally, create a new layer (Layer>New>Layer) to do your work on. Now, Alt-click (Mac: Option-click) on a patch of skin below the dark circle to set your sample point. As you paint over the dark circles with the Clone Stamp tool, you’ll only be affecting the darker parts of what you brush over. It’s a great way to lessen the impact of those dark circles without making the eyes look smooth and fake. —MK

Thanks to my selection, I can erase the drop shadow from the sky without erasing the letters.
Better Hue/Saturation

You may already know that you can use a Hue/Saturation adjustment (Enhance>Adjust Color>Hue/Saturation) to target a specific color in your image rather than changing all of the colors at once. That’s useful if you want to pump up the color in the green grass, but don’t want to oversaturate the red flowers. But did you know you can get even more selective by limiting the effect to only certain shades of green? Once you’ve chosen a color from the pull-down menu at the top of the Hue/Saturation dialog (Greens in this example), you can click on the little sliders at the bottom of the dialog to widen or narrow the range of greens that Photoshop will use when making changes with Hue/Saturation. —MK

Adding a Quick Vignette

Darkening the edges around your photos is a great way to draw attention to the subject. Everyone seems to have their own favorite way to get a vignette—and we’ve covered quite a few in recent columns—but here’s a particularly quick one I like. Go to Filter>Correct Camera Distortion. Under the Vignette settings, drag the Amount slider toward the left to darken the edges. Then drag the Midpoint slider left as well to bring the edges of the vignette closer toward the center. And you’re done! —MK

Don’t Limit Your Colors

Under its color-management settings (Edit>Color Settings), Elements gives you the option of optimizing all of your images for printing or for viewing on the screen. If you don’t do a lot of printing, you may be tempted to choose the screen option. But the better approach is print. That’s because the AdobeRGB color space used for printing supports more colors than the sRGB color space used for screens. If you start out by optimizing it for the computer screen (less colors), you can’t decide later you want to optimize it for print and get more color information. So it’s best to start with more than you need. You won’t notice a change on your computer screen because your screen won’t show that many colors. However, you will notice it in print. And you can always optimize it for the computer screen later when you choose File>Save For Web. —MK

Use Adjustment Layers to Speed up Elements

When seeking to darken or lighten an image, we’re often told to duplicate the image layer and change the new layer’s blend mode to Multiply (to darken) or Screen (to brighten). Sometimes we’ll even add a layer mask to apply the effect to only certain areas of the new layer. The only problem with that technique is that each time you duplicate your background layer, you double the size of the Photoshop document you’re working on. This means it takes longer for filters to complete and for images to save. Here’s a little secret that’ll accomplish the same thing, but keep Photoshop running faster. Instead of duplicating the layer, just click the Create New Adjustment Layer icon in the Layers panel and add a Levels adjustment. Don’t make any changes to the Levels dialog, though. Instead, just change the blend mode of the layer. It’ll give you exactly the same results as if you duplicated the layer, but with a fraction of the file size. —MK

Use Adjustment Layers to Speed up Elements

When seeking to darken or lighten an image, we’re often told to duplicate the image layer and change the new layer’s blend mode to Multiply (to darken) or Screen (to brighten). Sometimes we’ll even add a layer mask to apply the effect to only certain areas of the new layer. The only problem with that technique is that each time you duplicate your background layer, you double the size of the Photoshop document you’re working on. This means it takes longer for filters to complete and for images to save. Here’s a little secret that’ll accomplish the same thing, but keep Photoshop running faster. Instead of duplicating the layer, just click the Create New Adjustment Layer icon in the Layers panel and add a Levels adjustment. Don’t make any changes to the Levels dialog, though. Instead, just change the blend mode of the layer. It’ll give you exactly the same results as if you duplicated the layer, but with a fraction of the file size. —MK
Subscriber Showcase

Here is a selection of some of the best recent work by subscribers, showcasing original photos and completed projects from PET tutorials and videos, as well as finalists from our monthly Photo Challenge.

See Page 35 for information on how to submit your work for the next issue.

CLOSE-UP CHALLENGE WINNER
Barbed Wire
Lori Ziegenhagen | Burns, Oregon. I used the digital macro setting on my Canon PowerShot and steadied my hand against the barbed wire. I then used Photoshop Elements 10 to edit the photo. I added clarity to the rusty barb with Paint the Moon’s Super Sharp action layer. Then I applied a pink photo texture called Favorite Apron from Coffee Shop Blog and used the Soft Light blend mode to blend it into the photo.

Rain on Leaf
Paulette Geiger | Milan, Ohio. The true beauty of this leaf came out when I used the adjustment layers and lighting effects in Elements 9. I also applied a vignette with the Lomo Camera Effect in Guided Edit mode and the Burn tool.

CLOSE-UP CHALLENGE
Baseballs
Doris Pacheco | Madera, California. I noticed the texture of these baseballs sitting on my husband’s baseball gear. Just a touch of sharpening in Photoshop Elements 6 was all it needed.
ANIMAL CHALLENGE WINNER

**Best Friends**

Tammy McChesney | Omaha, Nebraska. I took this picture of the new baby giraffes at the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha. I used the Magnetic Lasso to select the giraffes and then copied the selection to a white background. I then used the Eraser tool to clean up the selection. Next I applied the Topaz Adjust plug-in. I finished by increasing the saturation and adjusting the levels and brightness.

---

**Kathmandu Sunrise**

Hilma Anderson | Franklin, Michigan. I created this using two separate photos: one of the sunrise on the Ganges at Varanasi, India, and the other of the Taleju bell in Patan Durbar Square in Kathmandu, Nepal. I followed Diana Day’s “Creating Silhouettes in Elements” tutorial (May/June 2012). There was a lot of cleanup work to be done in the bell photo; it’s a bustling square with many other buildings.

---

**Memories of the Beach**

Maureen Terrien | The Villages, Florida. I needed a still life image for my photo club meeting, so I took my dining room table centerpiece and placed it on the floor in front of the glass patio doors and shot the image in natural light on automatic mode using my new Canon Rebel T2i and telephoto lens. Processing included cropping and Auto Smart Fix in Photoshop Elements 9. Then I brought up the detail in the shells using Topaz Adjust 5 and finished off with a grunge texture lowered to 50% opacity.

---

**Hole in One**

Mary-Lynne Alberry | Omaha, Nebraska. I made this for my sweetheart’s first hole-in-one this past April. I used the Out of Bounds effect in Guided Edit mode with some additional selecting and cleaning up. The frame is a photo of the actual ball he shot. I used Matt Kloskowski’s “Using Displacement Maps” online tutorial to get the text on the ball to “dimple” in the right places.
**ANIMAL CHALLENGE**

**Iced Cactus**

Brian Phillips | Citrus Heights, CA. While on vacation in Sedona, Arizona, in March, we were caught by surprise when a large snowstorm came through, causing us to cancel our hiking plans. Instead, I ventured around the neighborhood taking macro photos of the snow and ice on the prickly pear cactus. How often do you see ice on cactus? I shot this with a Canon 7D and a F2.8 100mm macro lens.

**ANIMAL CHALLENGE**

**Holiday Local**

Alan Sanders | Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, England. The photo was taken during a visit to Fuerteventura. The local chipmunks living wild among the rocks enjoy a feed from the tourists. I thought I would give the Out of Bounds technique a try after seeing Elizabeth LePage’s tutorial “Polaroid-Style Out of Bounds Effect” on the website.

**CLOSE-UP CHALLENGE**

**Iced Cactus**

Brian Phillips | Citrus Heights, CA. While on vacation in Sedona, Arizona, in March, we were caught by surprise when a large snowstorm came through, causing us to cancel our hiking plans. Instead, I ventured around the neighborhood taking macro photos of the snow and ice on the prickly pear cactus. How often do you see ice on cactus? I shot this with a Canon 7D and a F2.8 100mm macro lens.

**ANIMAL CHALLENGE**

**What You Looking At?**

Doug Conrad | Sioux City, Iowa. I love shooting wildlife in the wild, but I also can’t pass up an opportunity for a photo shoot at a local zoo. While visiting the St. Louis Zoo in Missouri, I shot this western lowland gorilla through glass at f4.8, 1/125 second, with ISO 1400. I used Photoshop Elements 9 for a little sharpening and some Levels adjustments, and then finished it off with the Topaz Adjust plug-in.

---

**Submit to Subscriber Showcase**

Want to see your photo in print? Show us how you’ve put our tutorials to work in your images. To submit your recent work to Subscriber Showcase, go to this link and follow the instructions:

www.PhotoshopElementsUser.com/contests

The next deadline for submission to Subscriber Showcase is July 22, 2012.

**Take the PET Photo Challenge**

Each month we give you a new photo assignment. Winners are announced online. A few may also get selected to appear in print. To enter the Photo Challenge, go to this link and follow the instructions:

www.PhotoshopElementsUser.com/contests

Entries must be submitted within the challenge month.

**Upcoming Challenge Themes**

July: Food
August: Landscapes

**More Top Picks**

To see more winners, go to: PhotoshopElementsUser.com/blog