SAY GOODBYE TO BORING SKIES
Add stunning backdrops to your shots with this selection trick.

THE SKETCH ARTIST
Turn photos into line drawings for a fresh new look.

TAKE COMMAND OF COLOR
3 simple ways to change any object’s hue.

PLUS
Blend Multiple Exposures
Shooting in the Dark
Subscriber Showcase

GIVE OLD PRINTS NEW LIFE
Preserve aging photos before it’s too late with these smart scanning strategies.
Editor’s Note

Last Christmas, my mother surprised me with a wonderful calendar she'd created using old snapshots from my grandmother's life. Flipping through the months, you can watch my grandmother change from fearless young woman to exhausted new mother to proud matriarch of a close-knit family.

Interspersed with these old photos are scans of some of my grandmother’s handwritten recipe cards. My grandmother was a wonderful and creative cook with a penchant for improvising, and seeing some of her classic dishes carefully written out in her narrow sloping script is like having a piece of her there on the page. There's the Lemon Sunshine Mold—a dish that somehow involves both pineapples and celery—Preacher’s Sweet Potatoes; and her outrageously delicious Bacardi Rum Cake—a boozy, sugar-laced treat that would singe your eyebrows when the cover was lifted.

It was truly a special gift—made even more so by the fact that several of the photos were images I’d never seen before.

Do you have old prints and mementos lying around waiting for a second life? Author Liz Ness recently embarked on her own quest to digitize her family’s large collection of heirloom photographs stretching back to the Civil War. Starting on page 15, she shares some of the lessons she learned while developing a scanning workflow that would help her speed through the big project. I hope her advice will inspire some of you to pull out your own photo albums and start preserving those special shots. (And stay tuned: A future installment will look at how to solve some of the retouching problems common to old prints.)

The current issue also includes some great tutorials for getting creative with your digital images. On page 4, for example, you'll learn how to replace a dull, gray sky with something more dramatic. And for anyone who has ever wished that the bright yellow car in their shot was a less distracting hue, we'll show you not one but three ways to recolor it in Elements (page 21).

You'll notice that several of the tutorials rely on layer masks to achieve their effect. This is a testament to the power and flexibility of this very handy feature, which was first introduced in Elements 9. But if you're using an older version of Elements, don’t worry. We haven’t forgotten you. You'll find alternate instructions for each tutorial—either in a sidebar within the tutorial or online.

Until next time, happy shooting!

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kelly@photoshopelementsuser.com
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- Creating Distressed Type
- Top Ten Elements Shortcuts
- A Simple Wedding Announcement
- Cloud Sharpening
Banish Boring Skies

The simple way to replace washed-out skies when trees and other foliage get in the way

By Diana Day | It would be nice if every landscape shot could be graced with bright blue skies and dramatic clouds, but Mother Nature isn’t always so accommodating. Often, we’re left instead with a featureless white expanse that does little to enhance the surrounding scenery. When this happens, you can use Photoshop Elements to swap your boring sky with something more pleasing.

When replacing a sky, you’ll typically start by making a selection around the unwanted sky. Elements offers a number of ways to go about this (see “Selections Made Simple” in the May/June 2012 issue for a good primer), but things can get tricky fast when trees and foliage are involved. No matter how careful you are, it’s almost impossible to accurately select around small leaves and branches.

Recently, a friend introduced me to an alternative method for getting a precise selection around complicated foliage. The secret lies in using the color channels in the Hue/Saturation dialog to separate the trees from the sky, and then turning the resulting grayscale image into a layer mask. I’ve found it very helpful in reducing the cleanup work often involved in replacing skies. (If you use Elements 8 or earlier, go online for a solution that doesn’t require making a mask.)
1 Open an image with a washed-out sky that you’d like to replace. (You can download the shot I’m using from the subscriber website.) Duplicate the background layer by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J).

2 To make a mask of the sky, we’ll first create a black-and-white version of the photo. The goal is to clearly separate the sky from the landscape by making the sky as bright as possible and the other elements as dark as possible.

   Go to Enhance>Adjust Color>Adjust Hue/Saturation or use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl-U (Mac: Command-U). Make sure the Preview box is checked. In the menu labeled Master, click the drop-down arrow and choose Blues. Drag the Saturation slider all the way to the left and the Lightness slider all the way to the right.

   Now switch to the Cyans channel and repeat these settings.

3 Once you’ve desaturated the Blue and Cyan channels, select each of the remaining color channels (Greens, Yellows, Reds, and Magentas) one by one. For each, drag the Saturation slider all the way to the left as you did for the Blues and Cyans, but then drag the Lightness slider all the way to the left. This should darken the foreground details so they stand out against the sky. Click OK when finished.

   I’ve brightened the sky while darkening the tones in the landscape.

Select the Blues channel before adjusting the Saturation and Lightness sliders.
Next, we’ll convert the grayscale layer to black and white. Press Ctrl-L (Mac: Command-L) to open the Levels dialog (or select Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Levels). Here again, make sure the Preview box is checked. Drag the right (white) slider to the left until the light areas turn pure white, and the left (black) slider to the right until the dark areas turn solid black. Since the sky in my example image was so light to begin with, the white slider doesn’t need much adjustment.

Drag the black and white sliders (circled) inward until the foreground is completely black and the sky is completely white.

Getting a Good Black and White

Since we’ll be using our black-and-white image from Step 4 to create a mask of the sky, it’s important to get good definition between the foliage and the sky. Keep these tips in mind when adjusting the Levels sliders:

- The distance you drag the Levels sliders will be different for every photo. Preview the image in the workspace as you move the sliders and stop when you see the tones turn predominantly black and white. The black leaves in the treetops should be well-defined and the white gaps between the leaves should be visible.

- Zoom in on the image to get a good look at the edges of the foliage and other details. Toggle the Preview box on and off to see a “before” and “after” image and make sure the black areas match the grayscale shapes.

- Keep in mind that when you add in your new sky, it will be visible in all the white areas. If there are any grayscale pixels left in the sky (from clouds, for example) or in the landscape (from light-colored objects or foliage) you may need to manually select those areas with the Lasso tool (L) and fill them with white or black, respectively.

With the black-and-white layer (Layer 1) active in the Layers panel, press Ctrl-A (Mac: Command-A) to select the entire layer, and then Ctrl-C (Mac: Command-C) to copy it. We’re now finished with the black-and-white layer. Click the eye icon beside it to turn off its visibility.

We’re now ready to create a layer mask that we can use to add the new sky. If you’re using Elements 9 or later, click the Background layer in the Layers panel and duplicate it by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). Add a layer mask to the new layer (Layer 2) by clicking the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the layers panel. (If you’re using an earlier version of Elements, see sidebar “Where’s My Layer Mask?”)
7 Alt-click (Mac: Option-click) on the white layer-mask thumbnail to bring the mask into the workspace (which will turn white). Then press Ctrl-V (Mac: Command-V) to paste the black-and-white image into the mask. Alt/Opt-click on the layer mask again to toggle it out of the workspace. Press Ctrl-D (Mac: Command-D) to deselect.

8 When using layer masks, it’s helpful to remember the phrase “White reveals and black conceals.” This means that to “conceal” the old sky (so our new sky will be visible) we need to invert the mask so the sky is black. With the mask still active in the Layers panel, press Ctrl-I (Mac: Command-I) to invert the colors.

9 Now we finally get to the exciting part—bringing in our new sky. Click on the Background layer in the Layers panel to ensure the new sky will appear below the masked layer. Then choose File>Place. In the Place dialog, navigate to the location of the sky photo and then click the Place button. Elements will import the photo on its own layer and automatically resize it to fit within the boundaries of the document.

To resize and/or reposition the sky photo, make sure the Constrain Proportions option is checked in the Options Bar. Drag the corners to resize the image or drag from the center to reposition it. Click the green check mark to apply the changes.

Where’s My Layer Mask?

If you’re using Elements 8 or earlier, you won’t find a Layer Mask button in the Layers panel. In these versions, you’ll need to take a different approach.

Once you’ve created your black-and-white layer in Step 4, you’ll use the Magic Wand tool (W) to select all of the white pixels in the image, and then use that selection to delete the sky from your original Background layer. I’ve included step-by-step instructions in the online extras for this article. To find it, go to www.PhotoshopElementsUser.com, click the Magazine link at the top of the page, and choose the September/October 2012 issue.
In Elements 8 and higher, the Place command imports the image as a smart object. Because there are limitations as to how you can edit a smart object, once the new sky has been resized and positioned, you should simplify it. Right-click on the sky layer in the Layers panel and select Simplify from the pop-up menu.

You now have your new sky. But if you zoom in to 100 percent, you may notice an unsightly halo around the edges of the foliage and branches. To solve this, change the blending mode of the mask layer (Layer 2) to Darken; any halos will then magically disappear.

Changing the blending mode may cause problems elsewhere in your image. If there are any areas in the photo lighter than the sky—such as the yellow flowers in my image—the color of the sky layer may bleed through. If this happens, add a layer mask to the sky layer, and with the Brush tool (B) set to black, paint over the areas where the sky bleeds through.

Changing the blend mode to Darken removed the white halos around the leaves.

I've used a second mask on the sky layer to erase the portion of the sky discoloring the yellow flowers.

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 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.
Turn Photos to Sketches
Emphasize architectural details by turning your photo into line art

By Larry Becker  I love the artistry of architectural drawings, with lines and shapes intersecting in interesting ways. So I found a great way to incorporate this look into my own photos. I start by converting the image into a line drawing in Elements and then I blend the original photograph back in.

While you can use this technique with any photo, I’ve found it works best with subjects that have well-defined edges and lines, like buildings and cars. Subjects with softer details—such as people, pets, and sunsets—don’t translate as well.
With your photo open in Elements, drag the Background layer onto the New Layer icon in the Layers panel to make a copy. Then repeat the process a second time so you end up with three layers. Turn off the visibility of the top layer by clicking on the little eyeball icon to the left of the layer, and then select the middle layer to work on.

To create the line-drawing effect, choose Filter>Blur>Smart Blur. In the Smart Blur dialog, open the Mode menu and select Edge Only. Then adjust the Radius and Threshold sliders so the image is reduced to lines without too much detail. For this image, I chose a Radius of 5.2 and a Threshold of 37.7. Click OK to apply the change.

Your photo should now look like an illustration of white lines on a black background. To invert the colors—so the background is white—choose Filter>Adjustments>Invert.

Next, we want to get rid of the white background. Select the Magic Wand tool (W). In the Options Bar, set the Tolerance to 32 (this is the default and works well), turn the Anti-aliasing option on, and the Contiguous option off. Sample All Layers should be off, as well. Using the Magic Wand tool, click on the white background to select everything but the black lines. Then delete the selection by pressing the Backspace (Mac: Delete) key. Finally, change the blending mode of the line-drawing layer to Overlay.
Select the Background layer in the Layers panel and then click the New Layer icon. This will create a new blank layer above the Background layer and below the line-drawing layer.

Click on the Foreground Color swatch in the toolbar and choose a neutral tan color from the Color Picker (I used #bdb16e). Now go to Edit>Fill Layer. From the Contents Use menu, choose Foreground Color and click OK.

I like to give the tan layer a light sandstone texture so it looks like parchment paper. To do this, go to Filter>Texture>Texturizer. Choose Sandstone from the Texture menu and adjust the Scaling and Relief settings to get the effect you want.

Select the Gradient tool (G). In the Options Bar, open the Gradient Picker and choose Foreground To Transparent (the second one). Since painting on a layer mask with black reveals the underlying layer, we’ll use this gradient to hide portions of the photo and reveal the line-drawing layers below.

Select the top layer in the Layers panel and turn on its visibility. Now, click the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel. Press the X key to swap your foreground and background colors so black is your foreground color.

We’re now ready to blend the two versions of our image. The easiest way to do this is to create a layer mask—available in version 9 and later. (For a way to add a layer mask in earlier versions of Elements, see the sidebar on page 13.)

Select the top layer in the Layers panel and turn on its visibility. Now, click the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel. Press the X key to swap your foreground and background colors so black is your foreground color.

Now all you have to do is decide which part of the image you want to look like a line drawing on parchment paper. For my example, I created several gradients around the outside edges. With the Gradient tool, click-and-drag your mouse from the outside edge inward. Shorter drags will result in a quicker transition from drawing to photograph. Longer drags will give you a much softer transition. Repeat as often as necessary.

Feel free to experiment here. Maybe you would prefer the right half of your image to be an illustration and the left half to be a photograph. If you change your mind, just paint over the mask with white and then try something else.

Larry Becker is a photographer and an instructor. He has taught Photoshop at the college level and conducted Photoshop Elements seminars for Adobe. His work has appeared on the sites of many major technology training companies.
Get subtle shadows and balanced highlights by combining two exposures of the same scene.

By Matt Kloskowski | I love shooting landscape and travel photos. But because it’s nearly impossible for a camera to capture all of the detail we see with our eyes, we often have to make some difficult choices when setting up these types of shots. If we expose for the shadows, details in the sky and other high-light areas can become washed out. If we expose for the bright areas of the image, we’re often left with dark, murky shadows in other areas.

The answer is to take two shots with different settings—one for the highlights and one for the shadows—and then merge the two in Photoshop Elements, taking the best of each. The technique of combining two versions of the same image with different exposures is one of those tried-and-true editing tricks that I still use on nearly every one of my photos. And it’s surprisingly easy to do.
The success of this technique hinges on you taking multiple exposures of a photo. Usually, I take two. In this image, for example, I realized that my first shot, in which I exposed for the trees in the background, made the water look too dark and choppy.

Since I was using a tripod, it was easy enough to take another photo. This time, I used the exposure compensation setting on my camera to overexpose by 1.5 to 2 stops. In the resulting image, the water is much brighter and smoother—you can see some of the motion in the river now—but the rest of the photo is too bright.

Now that we have the two photos, we just need to merge them. To start, open both images in Elements. With one of the images open in the workspace (it doesn’t matter which), choose Select> All, and then press Ctrl-C (Mac: Command-C) to copy the photo.

Switch to the second version of the photo, and choose Edit>Paste. This will create a second layer above the Background layer with the copied image. For this project, I pasted the image where the trees look good above the image where the water looks nice and smooth.

At this point, you could always take the Eraser tool and simply brush over the portion of the top layer that you don’t want (the water and rocks in this case) to reveal the underlying layer. But if you later decide you erased too much, you’ll have to start over from scratch.

A more flexible option is to use a layer mask. In Elements 9 and higher, you can add a layer mask to the top layer by clicking the Create Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel. (For previous versions of Elements, see the sidebar “Layer Mask Workaround.”)

Layer Mask Workaround

In Elements 8 and earlier, you’ll have to take a different route to get a layer mask.

- Once you’ve finished Step 2, select the layer one level down in the Layers panel (the Background layer, in this example).

- Choose Layer> New Adjustment Layer> Hue/Saturation to add an adjustment layer between the two image layers. Do not adjust any settings.

- Select the top image layer (Layer 1) and then press Ctrl-G (Mac: Command-G) to create a clipping group. A small downward arrow will appear to the left of the layer’s thumbnail, indicating that it is clipped to the Hue/Saturation layer.

- Finally, click the layer-mask thumbnail in the Hue Saturation layer to target it and continue to Step 4.
4 Notice that the layer-mask thumbnail is white. To conceal part of the layer, we need to paint on the mask with the opposite color. Select the Brush tool (B). Set your foreground color to black and choose a soft-edged brush from the Brush Picker in the Options Bar. Now start painting over the areas of the top layer that you want to remove. In this case, that’s the dark, choppy water and the rocks. As you paint, the well-exposed water will be revealed from the underlying layer.

5 If you remove too much of the top layer, simply switch the foreground color to white and paint back over those areas. You can even create a compromise between the tones in the two images. For example, I’d like the rock on the right side of the image to be a little darker than the rest of the flowing water. To do this, I’d set the foreground color to a medium gray color and paint over the rocks. It’s like using a low-opacity brush; it blends the darker and lighter images together.

6 When you’re done, you’ll need to merge the two layers together so you can finish off the image (retouching, sharpening, etc.). Here’s a great little shortcut. Press Ctrl-Alt-Shift-E (Mac: Command-Option-Shift-E). Elements will merge the two layers into one brand new layer at the top of the layer stack. That way, the originals are still there—in case you ever want to adjust the layer mask—but you have one layer to retouch, clone, heal or sharpen on.

The final image looks more balanced and better reflects what I saw when I was there.

Tone it Down If the merged image looks too obvious, reduce the opacity of the top layer to help blend it into the layer below it.

By Liz Ness  My family possesses an amazing collection of studio and candid photographs dating from the mid-1800s to the present. It's truly a treasure. But until recently, it was a disorganized, unmanageable mess of a treasure. For starters, the collection was scattered between antique albums, boxes, frames, and more. This made it difficult to find a given photograph when we needed it. Also, while many pieces of the collection were well archived, others were not—resulting in faded and damaged prints. To complicate matters, we had more than 30 family members interested in photographs from the collection. Clearly, it was time to move these wonderful family heirlooms into the digital age.

There are many online scanning services that can make quick work of digitizing a large collection of prints and negatives. But sending family heirlooms through the mail—sometimes overseas—can be a stressful proposition. Doing the job yourself will put you in the driver’s seat when making decisions about scan quality and organization. It’ll also give you the opportunity to become better acquainted with your images.

Scanning your old photos may seem like a daunting task, but it doesn’t have to be. The biggest part of the challenge is coming up with a workflow that speeds you through the process and ensures that you’ll be able to find your photos later. I’ll share some of the secrets we learned during our own archival project and guide you through the decisions you’ll need to set up your own system.
Getting Prepped

Before scanning, check your photograph and scanner for dirt and smudges. To remove particles from the photograph, use a clean soft-bristled brush—the wider and softer the better—then brush gently across the photo. For stubborn dust or dirt, a gentle burst of air mixed with brushing can help. If cleaning it might harm the photo—particularly delicate antique photos—bypass this step. You can always manage the cleanup later via Photoshop Elements.

For the scanner, you should ensure that the glass is clean. If it’s not, unplug the scanner and use a soft, lint-free microfiber cloth to remove the dust. For tougher smudges, refer to your scanner manual for the types of cleaners to use. Some cleaners can damage the glass. Likewise, check your scanner manual for tips on how to remove dirt and smudges from the inner side of the glass. Scanner glass and assemblage varies from scanner to scanner.

Getting a Good Scan

Once the scanner bed is clean, you’re ready to scan.

ACCESSING THE SCANNER

You have two main options for accessing your scanner: You can use the software supplied with your scanner, or you can connect through Photoshop Elements/ Organizer. Personally, I prefer to scan through Elements so I can jump right into cropping and editing my images.

If you’re using Elements 8 or earlier, you can access your scanner by choosing File> Import. You should see the name of your scanner listed in the submenu (if you don’t, make sure it’s turned on and the software is up-to-date).

In Elements 9 and 10, things are a little more complicated. In these versions, Adobe disabled support for TWAIN scanners, which means your scanner won’t appear in the File> Import list. The good news is that you can restore this functionality fairly easily (see “Restore a Scanner to Elements 9 and 10”). Alternatively, Windows users can scan directly from the Organizer by choosing File> Get Photos And Videos> From Scanner.

Restore a Scanner to Elements 9 and 10

If you’re using Elements 9 or 10, you may find that your scanner no longer appears in the Import menu. This is by design from Adobe. However, you can restore this feature by moving Adobe’s TWAIN plug-in file. (These file paths may differ slightly, depending on your system, version of Windows, and version of Photoshop Elements.)

In Windows, navigate to C:\Program Files (x86)\Adobe\Photoshop Elements 9\ Optional Plug-Ins\Import-Export.

Then, move the twain_32.8BA file to C:\Program Files (x86)\Adobe\Photoshop Elements 9\Locales\en_US\Plug-Ins\Import-Export.

On the Mac, move the TWAIN plug-in file from Applications/Adobe Photoshop Elements 9/Optional Plug-Ins/Import-Modules to Applications/Adobe Photoshop Elements 9/Plug-Ins/ImportModules.
CHOOSING RESOLUTION

The most important setting in the scanning dialog is Output Resolution. This setting (measured in dots per inch) determines how much data is captured by the scanner. You may be tempted to automatically choose the highest resolution available here (after all, these are precious photos!), but remember that higher resolutions produce larger, more memory-intensive files. For example, an image that takes up 6MB when scanned at 300 DPI can balloon to 22MB when the resolution is increased to 600 DPI. This translates to longer waits when editing and cramped hard drives. Besides, there’s a point where our printers just can’t keep up with all of the data in the scan anyway.

So how do you find the right balance? For images you plan to print at the same size or smaller than the original photograph, an Output Resolution of 300 DPI is a good choice. If you think you’ll want to double the size (in inches) of the original print, use an Output Resolution of 600 DPI. And if you’re scanning slides or negatives, which start out fairly small, you’ll want even more resolution—1200 DPI or higher—to get a full-sized print.

CHOOSING OPTIONS

Depending on your scanner, you may have a few more options with which to manipulate the scanned image. For example, my scanner software also provides the options to sharpen and correct tone.

In general, I tend to stick with the defaults. Most scanners are already optimized to capture the best scan they can. After I’ve gotten a basic scan, I may experiment with one or two other settings if I think it can solve a specific problem in the image, then I’ll choose the best version for my collection.

The one scanning option I always select is Color for the Color Mode—even when scanning black-and-white photos. Color scans provide more working data than monochrome scans and give me more options when editing the image in Elements.
Organizing the Digital Scans

Once you’re happy with your scan, you’re ready to save your first image. It’s worth giving some thought at this point to how you’ll organize and protect your new scans.

The guiding principle in my own scanning efforts is that my original digital scans are sacred—I do nothing to the original other than name it. Technology—software and hardware—and my own photo-editing skills constantly evolve. By leaving my original scans untouched, I ensure that I can go back to them at any point and post-process original copies again and again—all without degrading or losing the information collected by that first scan.

With this principle in mind, I recommend making two copies of your files: one that gets stored away as your source material and one that you use as your working copy. Let’s take a look at my workflow.

STEP 1
SAVE THE ORIGINAL

If you accessed your scanner through Photoshop Elements, choose File>Save As to save your scanned image. Here are a few things to keep in mind when saving:

Use TIFF  I always save my original scanned file as a TIFF. While this takes up more room than a JPEG, the JPEG format is lossy, meaning it can degrade over time with each successive save of the file. The TIFF format, however, is lossless. This means I can open the file—to alter metadata information for example—and resave the file as many times as I need to without worrying that I’m degrading the quality of the original.
Be Strategic  When saving the file, I try to give it a name that will make it easier to remember later. Humans are great sequencers. While we may forget specific dates, we usually remember that one moment came before or after another. Likewise, we’re pretty good at remembering content in terms of place and subject. For this reason, my filenames always follow the format: date + subject. (That’s the estimated date the image was captured—not the date it was scanned.) Some examples might include 1800s_ElizabethAnneButler.tif or 1970_01_23_LizAndHeatherInSnow.tif. Note that I always put the year first (followed by the month, if I know it) so images will appear in chronological order. Most importantly, try to keep it simple.

Stay Shallow  Store your originals in a separate location from the rest of your image library. This will ensure that you don’t accidentally access them when editing. I recommend keeping the folder structure fairly simple, too. For example, I keep all of mine in a folder called Photo Archive, which has a single level of subfolders, such as 1800s Wedertz Old Albums. Every scan lives in one of these subfolders.

STEP 2  MAKE WORKING COPIES

You’ve now saved your original scan—but don’t close the file yet. In order to preserve those originals, I recommend making a second copy. This is the file you’ll use to make edits, print, e-mail, and include in other projects. Having this working copy ensures that you don’t accidentally overwrite your original scan at any point.

With the file still open in Elements, choose File>Save As again. Save your working copy as a JPEG at the highest quality setting. Because it’s a different file format, you don’t have to worry about giving it a new name—and using the same name will make it easier to track down the original later if needed.

If you plan to manage your working files with the Organizer—to add keywords, identify people and places, and so on—be sure to also turn on the Include In The Elements Organizer option. This will add the working copy to your Organizer catalog. (You can do this later, too.)

If you have more images to scan, you can close this file now and begin scanning the next image. Or, with your image already open in Elements, you can begin editing (be sure you are working with your JPEG copy and not the original scan).

Finally, if I perform any significant edits to my working copy, I save the processed file a third time as a derivative, typically with a name that indicates what was done—1860s_CivilWar_SepiaToned.jpg, for example. This gives me an extra layer of protection and the freedom to experiment with different approaches. You can store derivatives in the same location as your working copies.

If You Prefer Fewer Files...

The approach we’ve taken to organizing our scanned files means we’ll end up with at least two versions of every image: the original and a working copy. Since I tend to err on the side of caution, I think this is a good way to ensure you don’t accidentally degrade your original scan. But if you don’t plan to spend a lot of time working with your collection, it may make more sense to skip Step 2 and only make derivatives of your original scans when you need them. This will leave you with fewer files to manage.

The drawback is that the edit isn’t as far removed from the original file as it is in the first approach. If you accidentally choose Save after editing (rather than Save As), you will lose the original and end up with a processed Tiff file. Determining the right approach comes down to personal preference.
STEP 3
 ADD METADATA

Sometimes, a filename alone may not be enough to help you quickly track down the file you want. If you think you’ll regularly go digging through your scanned collection, it may be worth the effort to add more details about the moment captured in a photograph, such as the location, the people, and the event.

If you opted to include your working copies in the Organizer when you saved the files in Step 2, you can take advantage of the program’s keyword and organization tools. (If you didn’t, you can add them now by choosing File>Get Photos and Videos>From Files And Folders.)

Personally, I recommend adding as many keywords as make sense—this includes adding a “scan” keyword. The Organizer also lets you tag faces and collect your scans into different albums. (For an overview of using the Organizer’s keywords and other features, see “Find Photo Fast with the Organizer” from the January/February 2011 issue.)

Even if you don’t use the Organizer, there are many ways to add keywords to your metadata. Programs such as iPhoto on the Mac and Adobe Lightroom offer their own extensive keywording tools. You can also apply keywords right from your operating system. On a PC, right-click on a file and select Properties from the contextual menu. In the File Properties dialog, select the Details tab. You can add comments, keywords (or tags), rate the file, and enter a variety of other properties/data for your file. On the Mac, right-click on a file and select Get Info to add searchable comments.

Now You See Them, Now You Don’t

If you don’t often access your scanned files and don’t want them cluttering up the rest of your photo collection, you can create a separate image catalog for them in the Organizer. With the Organizer open, choose File>Catalog. Click the New button and give it a name, such as “Scans.” Add your scanned images to this new catalog. To switch between catalogs in the future, choose File>Catalog again and select the catalog you want from the list at the bottom.
STEP 4
BACK IT UP

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, make sure you protect the work you’ve done by backing up your scans—especially your originals. I personally store my images on two external hard drives—one onsite and one offsite. This is in addition to the local storage on my PC. The redundancy may seem a little much, but if there is a PC failure or a failure in one of the external drives, I'm covered. There are many backup options available, including cloud services, CDs/DVDs, and USB drives, so you should find a system that works best for you. Having an offsite backup is a great way to prevent loss from a catastrophe, too.

This is also a great opportunity to ensure your original prints are protected for the future. When you're done scanning, place them in archival-safe page protectors within archival-safe albums. Give each album a unique identifier, such as a volume number, which you write on the spine. Then, you can add the volume number to the scanned image’s keywords, making it easy to locate both the digital and printed versions of the image.

Retouching the Scanned Images

Unless your old photo collection was meticulously archived and carefully stored, you’ll probably have some repair work to do on many of your scanned images, including fixing tears, spots, and color issues. While some of these problems can be tricky to solve, the two tools I find myself reaching for most often are the Healing Brush and Spot Healing Brush. They’re especially handy for common tasks like removing scratches and dust spots. Let’s take a quick look at how to use each.

1 To get started, open up a copy of your scanned image in Elements and duplicate the Background layer by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). Select the Healing Brush tool (J). In the Options Bar, open the Brush Picker and set Hardness to 100% and Spacing to 1%. In addition, adjust the size of the brush to be slightly smaller than the blemish you wish to remove. Select Sampled for the Source, and then leave the Aligned and Sample All Layers options unchecked.
Next, **Alt-click** (Mac: **Option-click**) on an area that is just outside the blemish. Elements will use the pixels from this area as a reference as you paint over the blemish.

Then, paint over the blemish, holding the mouse button as you paint to lay down the cloned selection. Select new areas to draw from as appropriate.

After we’ve used the Healing Brush on our photograph, we’re ready to go after spots in the image. Select the **Spot Healing Brush tool** (J). Choose a soft brush for this tool that is slightly larger than the original blemish. In addition, select **Content Aware** (introduced in Photoshop Elements 9) and ensure that **Sample All Layers** is not selected.

Center the brush over a spot and click the mouse to spot heal the mark on the image. If the spot doesn’t disappear with the first click, center over the spot and click again. Sometimes, it can take several clicks to remove the spot completely.

After scanning and organizing my own family’s collection of prints, I now have a wonderful digital library of historic photos that I can share with friends and family online. And there’s no more need to hunt through dusty albums and old boxes looking for a special photo. Who knew a scanner could be such a great friend?

**Stay Tuned for More**

Getting your old photos scanned and into a file system in the first step in preserving these priceless images. The next is learning to undo the many signs of wear and tear. We’ll be covering more retouching topics—including how to fix bad color and faded tones—in the November/December 2012 issue of Photoshop Elements Techniques.

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.LizNess.com.
Color Your World
Three techniques for quickly changing an object’s hue

By Lesa Snider | Do you wish that bright red car in your landscape shot was a more subtle hue? Want to experiment with different paint colors before heading to the hardware store? Good thing you already have the ultimate colorization tool at your disposal: Photoshop Elements.

Elements gives you the power to put a fresh coat of paint on just about anything that already contains color (repainting black and white objects is another story). You can repaint your car, change the color of your cabinets, and even recolor your hair without stepping foot on the beauty salon. In this tutorial, I’ll show you three different ways to change color non-destructively using Elements’ Full Edit mode.

EXTRAS: TRY IT OUT
To download all of the images Lesa uses in her tutorial and follow along, go to the website, click on the Magazine link at the top of the page, and select the September/October 2012 issue. PhotoshopElementsUser.com
METHOD 1

Use the Replace Color Command

The Replace Color command lets you pick one color in your photo and replace it with another. It works extremely well if the color you want to change is concentrated in one area—such as on a car or a flower—and is fairly high in contrast compared with the color of nearby objects. The downside is that there’s no easy way to go back and edit your new color once you’ve made your change.

1. Open an image and make sure you’re in Full Edit mode. Next, duplicate the image layer by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J). This lets you do the repainting on a separate layer to protect your original image.

2. Choose Enhance>Adjust Color>Replace Color. Use the resulting dialog box to identify the color you want to replace. Move your cursor over to your image—the cursor will become an eyedropper—and then click the unwanted color. It will appear in the Color square (circled) in the Selection area of the dialog box. If the color you want to change is mostly concentrated in one spot and not scattered throughout the image, turn on the Localized Color Clusters checkbox.
You typically won’t get all of the color with a single click. To refine the selection, use the + and – Eyedropper tools to add to or subtract from the range of colors you want to change. For example, clicking with the + Eyedropper on the car’s hood adds it to the range of colors that will be changed. Keep clicking with the eyedroppers until the object you want to change appears mostly white in the preview box.

You’re now ready to pick your new color. In the Replacement area toward the bottom of the dialog, click the color square above the word Result to open the Color Picker. Use the rainbow Hue slider in the center to choose a range of colors and then use the larger box to the left to tell Elements how light or dark the color should be. Click OK when you’re finished to close the Color Picker.

If you need to tweak the new color further, you can use the Hue, Saturation, and Lightness sliders at the bottom of the Replace Color dialog box. Drag the Fuzziness slider (circled) to the right to fine-tune the areas to which the new paint is applied. When you’re completely satisfied, click OK. Note: Once you click OK, you won’t be able to go back and make further changes.

If you altered more of the color than you intended, you can hide the new paint job from those areas by adding a layer mask to the duplicate layer. Click the Add Layer Mask icon (found in Elements 9 and 10) at the bottom of your Layers panel and then set your Foreground Color chip to black. Activate the Brush tool (B) and brush across the areas that you didn’t mean to repaint. (In prior versions of Elements, you can use the Eraser tool (E) to erase portions of the top layer that you don’t want.)
METHOD 2

**Fill a Selection with Color**

You can also repaint an object by selecting it and then filling the selection with color. If you do the fill on a new layer, you won’t harm your original image. And by changing the new layer’s blend mode, which controls how color on one layer interacts with color on another layer, the change looks realistic even on a reflective surface such as metal. (This method is similar to using Elements’ Smart Brush tool to colorize an object, but is a little quicker.) It’s a good choice if you want to tweak an object’s hue while preserving the original color’s lightness and saturation.

1. Open an image and create a new blank layer by choosing **Layer>New>Layer**. In the New Layer dialog, type **Paint** into the Name field and then change the Mode pop-up menu to **Hue**. This particular blend mode preserves the lightness and saturation values of the underlying color, while adding the hue of the new blend color.

2. With the new Paint layer selected in the Layers panel, activate the **Quick Selection tool** (A). In the Options Bar, choose a soft-edge brush from the Brush Picker and then turn on the Sample All Layers checkbox so Elements can see through the active layer to the layer that contains the pixels underneath. Also turn on the Auto Enhance checkbox and Elements will smooth the edges of your selection so they’re not quite so blocky.

3. Brush across the object you want to recolor to create a selection. As you drag, Elements will snap the selection to the nearest edge. Because the size of the area Elements selects is directly proportionate to the size of your brush cursor, you’ll need to regularly resize your brush to get an accurate selection. Press the **left bracket key** ([]) to decrease brush size or the **right bracket key** (]) to increase it.
4 If you select more than you meant to, put the brush in Subtract mode by pressing and holding Alt (Mac: Option). Brush back across that area to remove it from the selection.

5 When you get the selection just right, you’re ready to fill it with color. Click the Foreground Color chip at the bottom of your Tools panel to open the Color Picker. Choose a new paint color and then click OK to close the dialog box.

6 Fill the selection with color by choosing Edit>Fill Selection. In the resulting dialog box, choose Foreground Color from the Use pop-up menu and click OK; Elements immediately fills your selection with color.

7 Get rid of the selection by choosing Select>Deselect or with the keyboard shortcut Ctrl-D (Mac: Command-D). Take a close look at your image for any details that may have been missed. If necessary, you can touch up the new paint with the Brush tool (B). Brush across any areas in your image that need additional color. To remove color, activate the Eraser tool (E), and in the Options Bar, set the Mode pop-up menu to Brush. Then brush across that area to erase the new color.
METHOD 3

Repaint by Hand

If you enjoy detail work, or you have a Wacom graphics tablet, you might enjoy repainting the object by hand. This technique is similar to the previous one, but you don’t have to create an initial selection—making it a good option when you have an object that doesn’t have high-contrast edges.

1. Open an image and create a new layer by pressing Shift-Ctrl-N (Mac: Shift-Command-N). In the resulting New Layer dialog, enter Paint into the Name field and then change the Mode pop-up menu to Hue.

2. Activate the Brush tool (B) and choose a soft-edge brush from the Brush Preset Picker in the Options Bar (just pick one that looks like it has fuzzy edges).

3. Click the Foreground Color chip at the bottom of the Tools panel to open the Color Picker and pick a new color. Click OK to close the dialog box.
With the new layer active in the Layers panel, mouse over to the image and start painting over the object. If the area you want to repaint has a lot of black, white, and gray around it, you can paint right over those areas—they won’t change a bit (that’s because, in Hue blend mode, the new paint affects only areas that previously contained color).

If you end up painting too much color, switch to the Eraser tool (E). In the Options Bar, change the Mode pop-up menu to Brush, and then brush back across the area you didn’t mean to recolor.

When you’re done. Choose File>Save As. From the Format pop-up menu, choose Photoshop so your layers—and your original image—are safe and sound.

As you can see, there are several ways to change the color of an object, though they all take a little time and patience.

Lesa Snider, founder of PhotoLesa.com, is on a mission to teach folks to create better graphics. She’s the author of Photoshop CS6: The Missing Manual, coauthor of iPhoto ’11: The Missing Manual, and author of several video workshops (lesa.in/clvideos). Lesa is a long-time member of the Photoshop World Dream Team of instructors, the Advanced Photoshop professor for Sessions.edu, and a stock photographer. Twitter: @PhotoLesa.
Controlling Blur

Most of the time, your biggest challenge when shooting in low light is getting a sharp image.

Your camera controls the brightness of an image by altering two different mechanisms: It can open or close the aperture in your lens to let in more or less light, or it can speed up or slow down how long the shutter is open. Since the aperture of your lens can only go so wide, your camera has no choice but to keep the shutter open longer in dim lighting—putting you at greater risk for blurred images.

So how can you tell if you’re at risk? Every time you half-press the shutter button to autofocus, the built-in light meter measures the light in your scene and chooses an aperture and shutter speed that will give you a good overall level of brightness. It then displays its choice in the viewfinder.

Get in the habit of monitoring this readout—especially in low light. The general rule of thumb is that once you’re below 1/60th of a second, you’re at risk of handheld shake. A more exacting rule is to look at

Keep an eye on your shutter speed.
the focal length of your lens. If you’re using a 100mm lens (or a zoom lens set to 100mm), for example, then any shutter speed below 1/100th of a second will risk handheld shake.

If light levels have pushed your shutter speed too low, then you need to take some action to try to stabilize your camera:

**In-Camera Stabilization**
First, if your camera has an image-stabilization feature on its lens or in its body, make sure it’s turned on. These features can go a long way toward smoothing out a shaky camera.

**Keep Still**
If you suspect ahead of time that you’ll be in a low-light situation, take a tripod or monopod to lock down your camera. If you don’t have one on hand, keep your elbows at your side, your feet shoulder width apart, and don’t hold your breath while pushing the shutter button.

**Adjust ISO**
When you increase your ISO, you effectively make the camera more light-sensitive. This means you’ll be able to use shorter shutter speeds to capture the light in your scene. For example, assume your camera’s light meter says it needs 1/15th of a second at ISO 100. If you increase ISO to 200, then the camera will only need 1/30th of a second. Bump it to 400, and the shutter speed will quicken to 1/60th of a second. Now you’re well in the range of sharp handheld shooting.

The downside to high ISO, and the reason you don’t simply leave your camera set on a high ISO all the time, is that as ISO increases, so does the noise in your image. Noise is that speckly stuff that sometimes looks like film grain or as colored splotches, usually magenta or green.

It’s very difficult to remove noise from an image in Elements so you want to avoid it if you can. Different cameras produce different amounts of noise, and some noise is uglier than others. I recommend experimenting with your camera to see how it performs. Set up a still life in low light, and take a shot at every ISO your camera offers, then examine the results in Elements. Find the point at which your camera becomes too noisy for your particular taste and make certain you don’t go beyond that when shooting. If your final goal is to print your images, then print your test shots and use those to assess your camera’s noise levels. Often, noise that appears on screen won’t show up in print.

**Check Your Lens**
If you have multiple lenses, make sure you’re using the fastest one. Every lens has a maximum aperture (which is usually printed on the front of the lens). An f/2.8 lens opens wider—allowing you to use a faster shutter speed—than an f/4 lens, for example. This makes the “faster” f/2.8 lens a better choice for low-light shooting. Keep in mind that the maximum aperture of a zoom lens changes as you zoom in. For example, the maximum aperture of a 28-135mm zoom lens may be f/3.5 at its widest angle but drops to f/5.6 when zoomed all the way in.

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**Take Advantage of Auto ISO**
Many cameras now offer an Auto ISO setting, which tells the camera to automatically select a faster ISO if it needs to. If yours does, check whether it lets you specify an ISO cutoff to ensure that your ISO doesn’t inadvertently move beyond your comfort zone. Many Auto ISO features also allow you to select a minimum shutter speed. So, if you don’t feel confident shooting below 1/30th of a second, you can tell Auto ISO to always raise ISO if shutter speed needs to drop below 1/30.
Finding Your Focus

Just like your eye, your camera needs a certain amount of light to be able to focus. Therefore, when shooting in very low light, you might find yourself unable to autofocus.

If you’re photographing a person, and they have a cell phone, ask them to turn it on and hold it up next to their face. It should be bright enough that the camera can focus. You can use a similar trick if you have a flashlight with you. Shine it on your subject, use your camera’s autofocus to focus on the illuminated area, then switch to manual focus and shut off the flashlight or cell phone. As long as you don’t change the distance to your subject, your focus will be accurate.

Balancing Color

Low light often brings white-balance troubles, as well. If you find that your images come out very red or orange (especially typical when shooting on city streets), then you’ll need to consider manually white balancing. This usually involves setting your camera to Manual white-balance mode and taking a photo of something you know to be white. Check your manual for specifics of how to do this with your camera.

An easier approach—and the one I tend to opt for—is to shoot in Raw mode. In this mode, your camera doesn’t apply any white-balance setting while shooting, leaving you free to set the white balance later in Adobe Camera Raw. For an extra leg up, I carry a WhiBal card (Michael Tapes Design; www.whibal.com) with me when shooting at night. This is a simple gray card that I can take a picture of and then use as a white-balance reference later when editing my photos. In Camera Raw, you can either manually copy the white-balance settings from one image to another, or use the Synchronize feature to apply a White Balance Adjustment to multiple images at the same time.


Shooting Performances

Shooting stage performances, such as concerts and plays, can be particularly tricky because you’ll have pools of very bright light against dark backgrounds as well as moving subjects.

In these situations, I start by taking a few test shots to see what typical shutter speeds will be like at different ISOs. Then I set my camera to Shutter Priority mode and choose a shutter speed that will be fast enough to stop the action on stage. If the resulting images are too dark, I raise my ISO.

To increase my chances of getting a good shot, I also bracket my exposure. I shoot some images with a fast shutter speed to guarantee motion stopping. (These almost always have to be brightened in Elements, which means I risk noise.) I then shoot some images with a slower speed to get a better exposure and accept that I will probably get motion blur.
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.

ARCHITECTURE CHALLENGE WINNER

Helsingin Luonnontieteellinen Museo

Rik Stavale | Helsinki, Finland. This is a photo of the main staircase in the Helsinki Natural History Museum. I used a Nikon d90 to take this photo. I had to take a number of photos because I wasn’t able to directly see the image when I took the photo. I relied on the LiveView feature to estimate what the composition would look like, then reached out over the railing. I also used two video tutorials by Matt Kloskowski: “How to Edit a Photo, Start to Finish” and “Removing Dust Spots from Your Photos.”

PORTRAIT CHALLENGE WINNER

Wheee!

Christell Faul | Southwest Louisiana. We were having as much fun watching our grandson, Kayden, play on the slip-n-slide for the first time as he was. His smile says it all. I first edited the photo in Lightroom using a preset called Dark Horse 1. Then I used Elements 8 to finish it off with sharpening, Levels adjustments, and contrast.
ARCHITECTURE CHALLENGE

St. Peter’s Sunbeam

Don Johnson | Gaithersburg, Maryland. I shot this photo when my wife and I took a trip to Rome to celebrate our anniversary. We visited the Vatican and found St. Peter’s Cathedral amazing. And when I looked up toward the dome and saw that wonderful sunbeam, I knew I had to take a number of photos. This was my best. I did not have much retouching to do—just tweaked the Levels command, the contrast, and the hue and saturation a little. I also added a very small amount of sepia using the Photo Filter.

Tracks in IR

Madelaine Cappuccio | Ridgefield Park, New Jersey. I had a point-and-shoot camera converted to infrared this past winter but hadn’t had the opportunity to use it. When the July/August 2012 issue came out and I saw the article on IR photography (“Photograph the Invisible”), I decided to give it a try. This is the result.

Agricultural Architecture

Karen Smith | Hamlin County, South Dakota. This is a view from below an 80-foot cobalt blue silo that is a landmark on our farm in Hamlin County, on the now drought-stricken Dakota prairie. I was fascinated by the patterns of bolts and steel elements, and the way it seems to stretch forever into the heavens. I’m very leery of heights, so this is the view that is accessible to me. I imagined climbing into the cloudscape.

PORTRAIT CHALLENGE

Dave (in B/W)

Susan Berger | Bensalem, Pennsylvania. I used a YouTube tutorial “Metallic BW Portrait Toning.” First I duplicated the photo, changed the blend mode to Overlay, and then sharpened it using the High Pass filter. Next I added a Gradient Map layer. I played with the sliders until I liked the look. I also slid the midtone until I got the metallic effect I wanted. Then I made a composite layer of the file, changed the mode to Overlay, and once again used the High Pass filter.
Photo Shoot 3-Year-Old Style
CarolAnn Gary | Portland, Oregon. I wanted to try the “Stack ‘Em High” tutorial by Liz Ness (July/August 2012). I had this series of photos I took of my granddaughter, Brianna. She was “posing” for me and I was experimenting with natural-light photography. I loved all her different expressions. The look of snapshots scattered on a page worked well to show these off.

2012 Fireworks Harrison Hot Springs
Ed McGorman | Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada. The background (taken earlier in the evening) and the fireworks were taken with a Canon 60D. The four photos were blended using Elements 10 following Matt Kloskowski’s “Place a Subject Seamlessly on a New Background” tutorial. Thanks Matt! I reduced the image noise and sharpened it with the Neat Image plug-in, and then finished with a small border thanks to Dave Cross and his “Reusable Border Effects” tutorial.

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 September 23, 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
September: Water
October: Fresh Perspective

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