

VISUAL **QUICKSTART** GUIDE

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*Full-color, with 20
downloadable images!*

Photoshop Elements **10**

for Windows and Mac OS X

JEFF CARLSON

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VISUAL QUICKSTART GUIDE

Photoshop Elements 10

FOR WINDOWS AND MAC OS X

JEFF CARLSON

Photoshop Elements 10 for Windows and Mac OS X: Visual QuickStart Guide

Jeff Carlson

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To report errors, please send a note to errata@peachpit.com

Peachpit Press is a division of Pearson Education.

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ISBN: 978-0-321-80834-9

ISBN: 0-321-80834-7

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed and bound in the United States of America

Dedication:

For Emma V.

And for Eliana, who waited.

Special Thanks to:

Susan Rimerman, Cathy Caputo, Karin Arrigoni, and Cory Borman made everything smooth in the editing, indexing, and production of this edition of the book. They jumped in when they were most needed and waited patiently when some sections took longer than I anticipated.

Thank you to Roman Skuratovskiy at Edelman, and Roma Dhall, Neha Tyagi, and Bob Gager at Adobe for their assistance in providing the software and information I needed.

The content in these pages also owes a great debt to Glenn Fleishman, Agen G. N. Schmitz, Jeff Tolbert, and Laurence Chen, who assisted with an earlier edition just before the birth of my daughter.

I also want to thank Craig Hoeschen for providing great material to work with: the editions prior to version 5.

My gratitude also extends to Parie Hines, Cindy Dorsey, Steve Horn, Jill Thompson, and Scott and Lisa Johnson for their permissions to use photos of their adorable kids.

Lastly, my appreciation and love to Kim and Ellie for making me a happy man.

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Introduction

Welcome to Photoshop Elements, Adobe's powerful, easy-to-use, image-editing software. Photoshop Elements gives hobbyists, as well as professional photographers and artists, many of the same tools and features found in Adobe Photoshop (long the industry standard), but packaged in a more accessible, intuitive workspace.

Photoshop Elements' friendly user interface, combined with its bargain-basement price, has made it an instant hit with the new wave of amateur digital photographers lured by the recent proliferation of sophisticated, low-cost digital cameras.

Photoshop Elements makes it easy to retouch your digital photos; apply special effects, filters, and styles; prepare images for the Web; and even create wide-screen panoramas from a series of individual photos. And Photoshop Elements provides

several features geared specifically to the beginning user. Of particular note are the Quick and Guided photo editing controls that make complex image corrections easy to apply.

Photoshop Elements 10 provides new tools and enhancements that not only help stretch the bounds of your creativity, but also help to make your quick photo corrections and creative retouching even simpler and more fun than before.

In the next few pages, I'll cover some of Photoshop Elements' key features (both old and new) and share a few thoughts to help you get the most from this book. Then you can be on your way to mastering Photoshop Elements' simple, fun, and sophisticated image-editing tools.

What's New in Photoshop Elements 10

For most of its existence, Elements has been “Photoshop Light,” a scaled-back version of Adobe’s image-editing behemoth. Over time, Adobe has retooled Elements to be a powerful asset for digital photographers.

Photoshop Elements 10 continues Adobe’s quest to make an image editing application that responds to people’s real-world needs. There’s a lot of power in being able to apply adjustment layers and clipping masks and filters, but that isn’t always helpful when your goal, for example, is to just improve the exposure in a too-dark photo—and you don’t have the time to learn all the science behind the tools. Here are a few standout items.

The Organizer is the Elements component that lets you manage your photo library—a library that, if yours is like mine, grows larger every year. To help you locate photos, the Organizer now includes visual search features for finding images with similar characteristics or shared objects. You can also locate duplicate images, or easily stack pictures that are close enough to being duplicates.

The Editor, the component of Elements where you do the actual editing, now displays customizable guides when cropping photos for more control over getting the best composition out of your shot. For people who do more than just correct the colors and tones in their photos, Elements now boasts new tools for creating text on selections, paths, and shapes.

Other enhancements include new Guided Edits (such as Depth of Field and Orton Effect), a heap of new patterns and effects for the Smart Brush, new templates for online albums and photo books, and more.

What's New in This Edition of the Book

I’ve reworked much of the book to better reflect how people today are working with digital photos:

- Looking to get started quickly—as in, you have a memory card full of photos and you want to process them *now*? A new Chapter 1 offers an easy five-step process for editing nearly all digital photos, with pointers on where to find more detailed information about each step elsewhere in the book.
- A common query (far more common than I expected) from new users is how to use Elements to crop and resize photos. Information about cropping and straightening images is now broken out into its own chapter.
- Many consumer digital cameras now capture images in Camera Raw formats, which offer more image data and therefore more flexibility when editing. Opening raw images brings up the powerful Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) utility. Now, camera raw has gotten the full-chapter treatment, with much more detail on what the ACR controls do—and when to use or ignore them.
- I’ve shifted and combined chapters to make them work better; for example, I combined two chapters that separately dealt with adjusting lighting and colors into one (Chapter 8), and moved the chapter about working with layers closer to the front of the book (mostly to emphasize the utility of editing with adjustment layers later).
- Unlike the previous two editions, this book covers both the Windows and Mac OS X versions of Elements.

How to Use This Book

This Visual QuickStart Guide, like others in the series, is a task-based reference. Each chapter focuses on a specific area of the application and presents it in a series of concise, illustrated steps. I encourage you to follow along using your own images. I've also made 20 sample images available for download at peachpit.com/elements10vqs. After you complete the process for registering your book, look for the “Access Bonus Content” text next to the book title in the Registered Products tab. I believe the best way to learn is by doing, and this Visual QuickStart Guide is the perfect vehicle for that style of learning.

This book is meant to be a reference work, and although it's not expected that you'll read through it in sequence from front to back, I've made an attempt to order the chapters in a logical fashion.

The first chapter speeds through five steps to import, edit, and share your digital photos. The next chapter takes you on a tour of the work area to make sure we're all on the same page. From there you dive into importing pictures and managing your photo library using the Organizer. Then you explore cropping and straightening, making selections, working with layers, adjusting lighting and color, retouching and correcting images, applying effects, painting, and adding text. Next, you move along to learn a variety of techniques for saving, printing, and sharing images, including special formatting options for distributing images over the Web.

This book is suitable for the beginner just starting in digital photography and image creation, as well as hobbyists, photo enthusiasts, intermediate-level photographers, illustrators, and designers.

Sharing space with Windows and Mac OS X

Photoshop Elements is almost exactly the same on Windows as it is under Mac OS X, which is one reason I combined both versions into the same title this time around. In the few places where a feature is found in one environment but not the other, or if the steps are different for each, I make it clear which version is being discussed.

You'll also see that the screenshots are a mix of Windows and Mac—but despite obvious cosmetic differences such as title bars and menu bars, everything pretty much tracks the same within the user interface itself.

I also frequently mention keyboard shortcuts, which are faster methods of accessing commands compared to choosing items from menus. Keyboard shortcuts are great time-savers and prevent you from having to constantly refocus your energy and attention as you jump from image window to menu bar and back again.

When this book introduces a command, the keyboard shortcut is frequently also listed, with the Windows version appearing first and the Mac version trailing after a forward-slash. For example, the keyboard shortcut for the Copy command is displayed as “Ctrl+C/Command-C.”

You'll find a complete list of Photoshop Elements' keyboard shortcuts in the appendices.

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4

Cropping and Straightening Images

Have you ever taken a photo, then looked at it later and realized it would be much better if only you had gotten a little closer to your subject, or if a person was to the left of the frame instead of the center? Or maybe the shot is great except for a trash can peeking into the edge of the frame. The ability to crop an image can instantly improve the composition of a photo or remove unwanted elements at its borders.

Another common annoyance is a photo that's just a bit off-kilter. Using Elements' straightening tools, you can bend that horizon back into line (or skew it further for a dramatic effect).

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Cropping an Image

Professional photographers almost always use cropping techniques to achieve perfect composition. In spite of all the advances in film and digital cameras, rarely is a picture taken with its subjects perfectly composed or its horizon line set at just the proper level. More often than not, subjects are off-center, and unwanted objects intrude into the edge of the picture frame. Photoshop Elements offers two simple and quick methods for cropping your images.

To crop an image using the Crop tool:

1. Select the Crop tool from the toolbox (or press C) **A**.
2. In the image window, drag to define the area of the image you want to keep **B**.
The image outside the selected area is dimmed to indicate the portions that will be deleted.
3. If you want to modify your selection, move the pointer over one of the eight handles on the edges of the selection; then drag the handle to resize it **C**.
4. When you're satisfied with your crop selection, double-click within the selection, press Enter, or click the Commit button on the lower corner of the selection **D**.

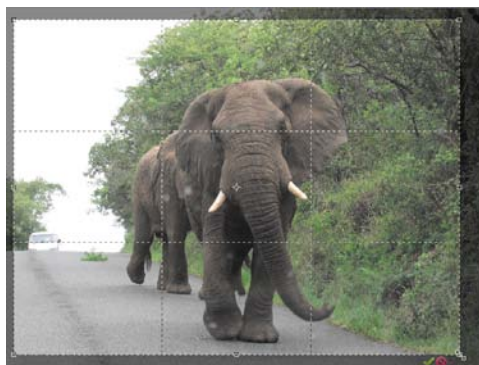
The image is cropped to the area you selected **E**.

If you're not satisfied with your selection and want to start over, click the Cancel button.

TIP A Crop selection includes an overlay splitting the area into thirds to help you compose the shot **B**. In the options bar, choose other guides from the Overlay drop-down menu.



A The Crop tool.



B Elements highlights the image that will be preserved and dims the portions to be deleted.



C You can easily move and resize the area you choose to crop by dragging the handles around the perimeter of the cropping selection.

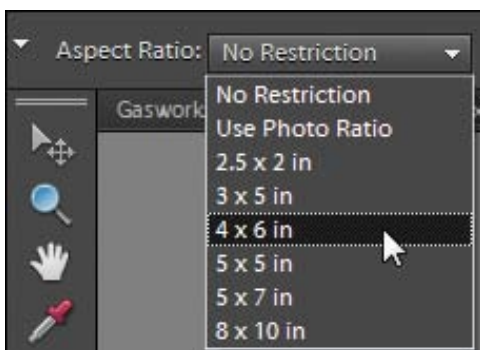


D The Commit and Cancel buttons appear on the lower edge of the crop selection.

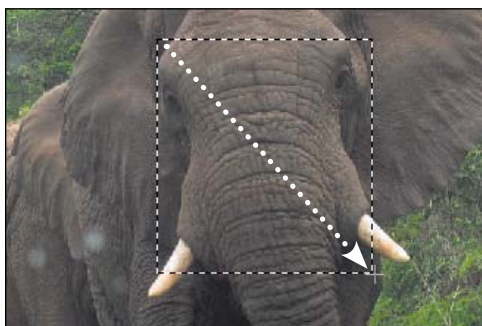
TIP You can define color and opacity options for the Crop tool shield (the dimmed area that surrounds your cropped selection) in the Display and Cursors area of the Preferences dialog. The default color is black, and the default opacity is 75 percent.



E The final, cropped image.



F Use the Aspect Ratio drop-down menu to choose common photo dimensions.



G Drag with the Rectangular Marquee tool to define the part of the image you want to crop.

To resize an image to specific dimensions using the Crop tool:

1. Follow steps 1–3 on the previous page to specify an area to crop.
2. From the Aspect Ratio drop-down menu, choose a common photo size **F**.

Or, in the options bar, enter a size in the Width and Height fields. The double-arrow button between the fields swaps values, making it easy to turn a horizontal crop area into a vertical one, and vice-versa.

3. If you need to change the image's resolution, edit the Resolution field; you can define it in pixels per inch or pixels per centimeter using the associated drop-down menu. However, see the sidebar on the next page, “The Crop Tool Size and Resolution Options,” for important information.
4. Double-click within the selection, press Enter, or click the Commit button to crop the photo.

To crop an image using the Rectangular Marquee tool:

1. Select the Rectangular Marquee tool from the toolbox, or press M.
2. In the image window, drag to define the area of the image you want to keep **G**.
3. From the Image menu, choose Crop. The image is cropped to the area you selected.

TIP If you're planning to print your photos using a commercial print service, be sure to crop your images to a standard size first. The images that digital cameras create don't match standard photo aspect ratios, which can lead to prints with black bars around the edges.

The Crop Tool Size and Resolution Options

Every digital photo is made up of millions of *pixels*, colored squares that you typically never see unless you're zoomed in; the more pixels, the higher the resolution, and in general the more detail you're able to see.

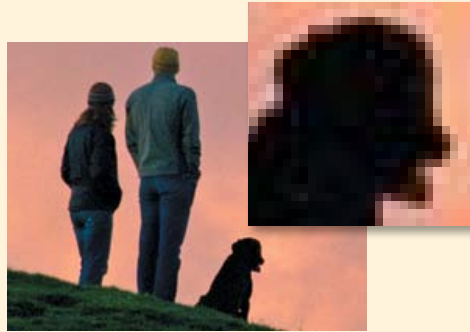
If you're cropping the edges of your photo slightly, you don't need to worry about resolution. However, if you make dramatic cuts, like keeping just one corner of a photo, you could significantly reduce the quality of the image if you print it later.

Using the Crop tool's Aspect Ratio and Resolution options can lead you down a slippery slope, introducing unexpected image quality problems—foremost among them, unwanted resolution upsampling, which creates a fuzzy, ghosted, and generally out-of-focus effect. For more information on upsampling, see the “Downsampling vs. Upsampling” sidebar in Chapter 14.

As an example, let's say you have a 4 x 5-inch image with a resolution of 150 pixels per inch. Select the Crop tool, choose “4 x 6 in” from the Aspect Ratio drop-down menu, and enter 150 in the Resolution field. Define the area you want to crop (which by definition will be a smaller area than the original 4 x 5 image), and then crop.

The area you crop from the original image, no matter the selected size, will be forced up to 4 x 6, and will introduce upsampling **H**.

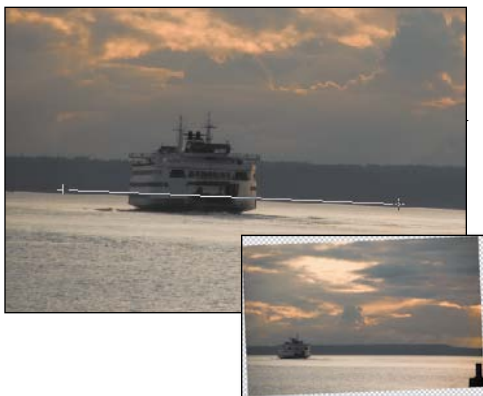
You can use the Aspect Ratio drop-down menu to control the Width and Height ratios of your cropping selection; just leave the Resolution text field blank, and use the Image Size dialog (after you crop) to set the image resolution (described in Chapter 14).



H Be cautious when using the Crop tool's size and resolution options. Here, an image was cropped with a final size defined that was larger than the original image (top). During cropping, the image was *upsampled*, sacrificing image quality (bottom). Both detail boxes are shown at 100 percent.



A The Straighten tool.



B With the Straighten tool, you simply click and drag within a tilted photo (top) to align it perfectly (bottom).



C A scanned image (top) is automatically straightened (center) or straightened and cropped (bottom).

Straightening a Crooked Photo

Sometimes even your most carefully composed photos may be just a little off angle, with a not-quite-level horizon line or tilted portrait subjects. The nifty Straighten tool makes short work out of getting your crooked photos back into alignment.

Or, perhaps you've scanned an image that shifted when you closed the scanner cover. Elements can automatically straighten it, with the option of cropping it to a clean rectangle.

To use the Straighten tool:

1. Select the Straighten tool from the toolbox, or press **P** **A**.
2. Using a horizon line or other subject as a point of reference, click and drag from one side of the photo to the other.
When you release the mouse button, your image rotates and aligns along the new horizontal plane you defined **B**.
3. Use either the Crop or Marquee Selection tool to remove any extra border area introduced while straightening.

To straighten a scanned image:

From the Image menu, choose one of the following:

- Rotate > Straighten and Crop Image.
- Rotate > Straighten Image.

The Straighten and Crop Image command will do its best to both straighten the image and delete the extra background surrounding the image. The Straighten Image command simply straightens without cropping **C**.

continues on next page

Both methods have their own sets of limitations. Rotate and Straighten works best if there is a space of at least 50 extra pixels or so surrounding the image. If this surrounding border is much smaller, Elements can have a difficult time distinguishing the actual photograph from the border and may not do a clean job of cropping.

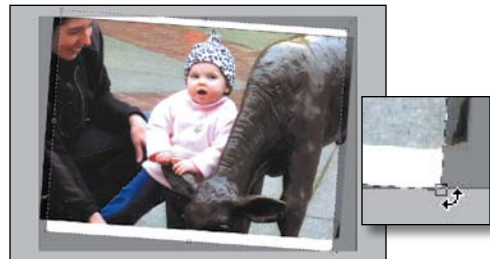
Although you'll still need to manually crop your image after using the Straighten Image command, this method is probably a better choice, because you avoid the risk of Elements indiscriminately cropping out areas of your image you may want to keep.

For the surest control, however, straighten your images using the Crop tool as described in the next procedure.

To straighten a scanned image using the Crop tool:

1. Select the Crop tool from the toolbox.
2. In the image window, drag to select the area of the image you want to crop and straighten.
3. Move the pointer outside the edge of the selection area until it changes to a rotation pointer **D**.
4. Drag outside of the selection until its edges are aligned with the image border.
5. Drag the selection handles, as necessary, to fine-tune the positioning; then press Enter **E**.

The image is cropped and automatically straightened.



D After you define a preliminary cropping selection (top), rotate the selection so it aligns with your image border (bottom).



E Make final adjustments to your cropping selection (top) before Elements automatically crops and straightens the image.

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