4

Quick Fix Edits

As you'll discover in the rest of the book, Photoshop Elements is a sophisticated image editor, enabling anyone to make photo corrections that would have been absurdly difficult years ago. But sometimes you don't want to be an image expert. Let the computer do the work for you, analyzing photos and correcting them automatically.

Elements offers a couple ways to get started. In the Organizer, the Fix pane provides one-click automatic fixes, which may be all you need. In the Editor, the Edit Quick pane offers sliders for making common adjustments.

When you don't want to mess with the particulars, or when you know that a photo needs just a bit of tweaking but you want a bit more control over the adjustments, turn to the Quick Fix features. You can experiment on your photo—ranging from slight tonal changes to radical tints and lighting adjustments—and then undo those changes if they seemed better in your mind's eye than they look on the screen.

The concepts behind the tools in Quick Fix, such as adjusting levels and sharpening, are dealt with later in the book. Use this chapter as a jumping-off point.

Making Quick Fix Edits

When you want Elements to take over and make corrections according to its analysis of a photo, the speediest method is directly in the Organizer.

To edit photos in the Fix pane:

1. In the Organizer, select a photo to edit.
2. Click the Fix tab to view the Fix pane (**Figure 4.1**).
3. Click a button to apply an automatic fix. For example, if the color of your photo seems off, clicking the Auto Color button makes Elements examine the color values and change them without any additional input from you.

   If you're working on a RAW image file, Elements asks you to choose a file format that the program can edit directly; the changes are then applied to a copy of the original.

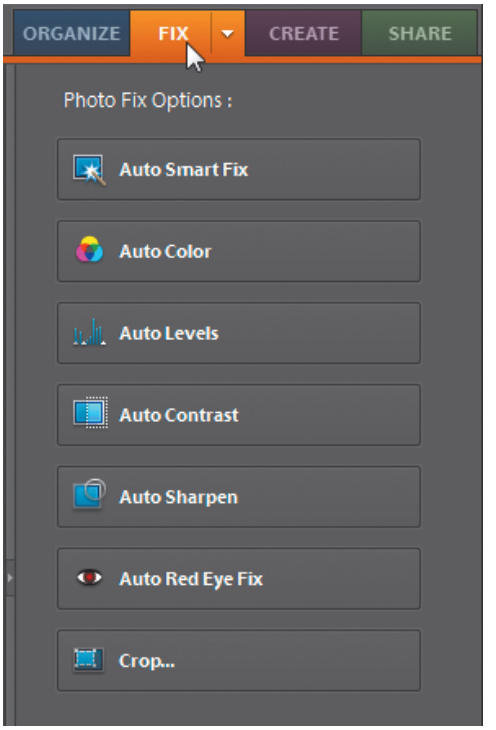


Figure 4.1 The Fix pane includes automatic tools for correcting common aspects of photos.

Using the Quick Fix editor

Quick Fix is a component of the Editor workspace and gives you a bit more control than the buttons in the Fix pane.

To edit photos in Quick Fix:

1. In the Organizer, select one or more photo thumbnails.
2. From the Fix drop-down menu above the Organize bin, choose Quick Photo Edit. Or, right-click a photo and choose Edit with Photoshop Elements from the contextual menu. The Quick Fix workspace opens (**Figure 4.2**).

Or

- Open a file in the Editor and then choose Edit Quick from the Edit pane's drop-down menu.

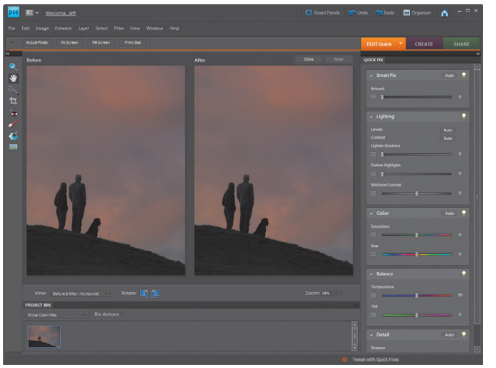


Figure 4.2 The Quick Fix workspace includes your image and a set of common photo manipulations.

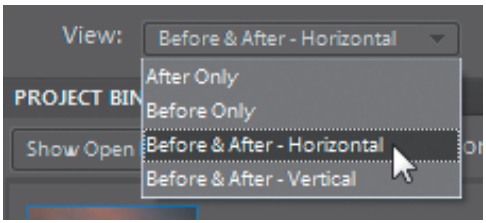


Figure 4.3 The Before and After options offer split-screen views of how fixes are affecting the photo.

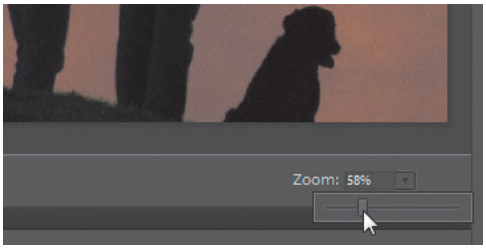


Figure 4.4 Use the Zoom field or slider to view the photo close-up.

To set view options:

- From the View menu located below the photo, choose whether you want to see the end result (After Only), the original (Before Only), or a comparison layout (the two Before and After options) (**Figure 4.3**).
- Use the Zoom field and slider to specify how zoomed-in you want to be (**Figure 4.4**). In the Before and After views, the zoom level applies to both versions.

  When the Zoom or Hand tool is active, you can also click the Actual Pixels, Fit Screen, or Print Size buttons to switch to those zoom levels.
- If Elements did not rotate your image correctly during import (or if you just prefer a skewed worldview), click the Rotate buttons to turn it clockwise or counter-clockwise in 90-degree increments.

Walk Through Adjustments with Guided Edit Mode

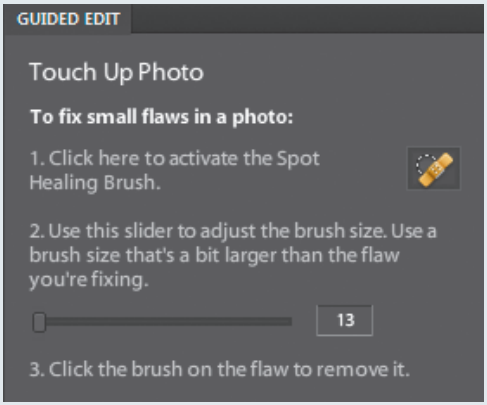


Figure 4.5 The Guided Edit interface.

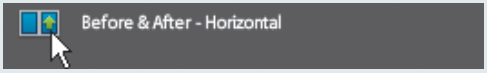


Figure 4.6 Set an editing layout with one click.

If you want to start with a little more hand-holding than what's offered by Quick Fix, try the Guided Edit mode; access it by clicking the Guided button in the Edit pane. Clicking a task in this mode gives you step-by-step instruction on performing common editing tasks (**Figure 4.5**).

Click the View icon (**Figure 4.6**) to display comparative layouts.

When you've accomplished each step, click the Done button to apply the changes, or click Cancel to discard them. You can also click the Reset button that appears in each category to go back to the state before you applied those particular edits if you want to try a different setting.

The Guide for Editing a Photo (under the Guided Activities heading) walks you through all of the edit steps.

Applying Quick Fixes

The following tools perform common image correction tasks, but we want to start with the most important command first: Reset.

To reset and undo changes:

- After making an adjustment using the tools described in this chapter, click the Cancel button that appears in the tool's title bar (**Figure 4.7**).
- Choose Undo from the Edit menu to undo the previous command.
- If you've made several edits and want to revert to the original image, click the Reset button. This removes any Quick Fix adjustments.

To select areas for applying edits:

1. Select the Quick Selection tool from the toolbar.
2. Draw within an area that you want to select. Elements makes a selection based on the colors of the pixels you drew upon (**Figure 4.8**).

To apply lighting, color, and sharpening fixes:

1. To apply fixes to a specific area of the image, use the Quick Selection tool to select an active area. Otherwise, skip to step 2.
2. Click the Auto button for one or more fixes in the Smart Fix, Lighting, Color, Balance, or Detail panes.
3. Drag the sliders for specific adjustments (such as Lighten Shadows) to fine-tune the settings (**Figure 4.9**).
4. Click the Commit button (the check mark) to apply the fixes.

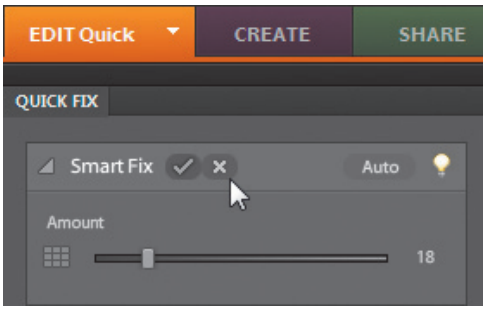
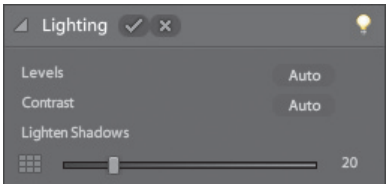


Figure 4.7 Clicking the Cancel button restores the image to the state before you made the adjustment(s).

Figure 4.8 Drawing with the Quick Selection tool creates a selection based on that area.



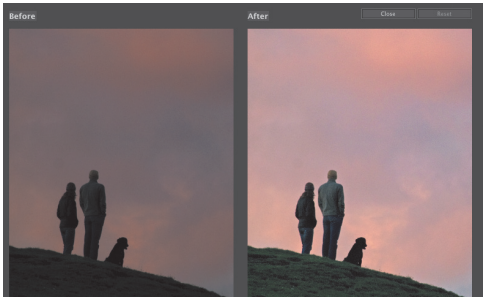


Figure 4.9 Use the sliders associated with each type of fix to adjust the After image.

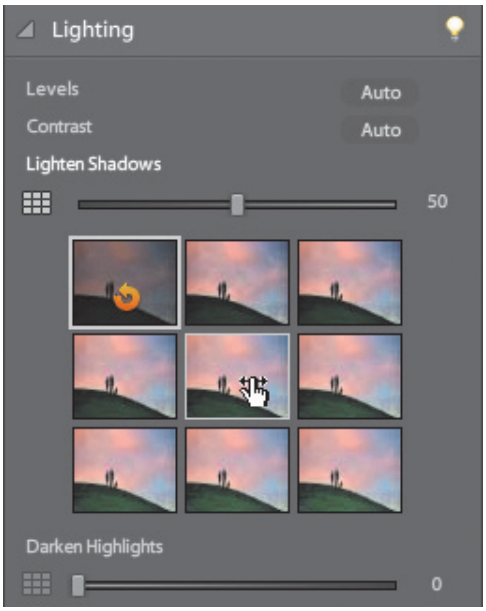


Figure 4.10 The preview grid gives you an immediate sense of how the adjustment will appear.

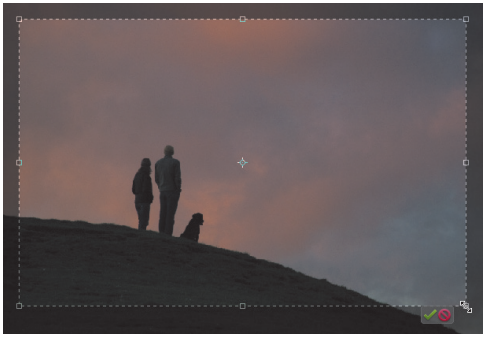


Figure 4.11 Drag a selection using the Crop tool to keep only that area and discard the rest of the image.

Get Smart

It never hurts to see what Elements thinks of your image by playing with the Smart Fix slider in the Smart Fix area. Smart Fix adjusts lighting, color, and sharpening based on its algorithms. In some cases, this may be the only edit you need.

To apply fixes using previews:

1. Click the grid icon to the left of an adjustment slider to reveal thumbnails of the range of that fix's settings.
2. Move your pointer over a thumbnail to preview the edit (**Figure 4.10**).
   The slider is still available for fine-tuning, but there's a better way. Click and drag left or right within the thumbnail to make smaller adjustments.
3. Click the thumbnail to apply the setting.

To crop the image:

1. Select the Crop tool from the toolbar.
2. In the image's After version, drag to select the area you wish to keep (**Figure 4.11**).
3. Click the Commit button (the check mark) that appears outside the selection to apply the crop.

To remove red eye:

- In the General Fixes area, click the Auto button next to Red Eye Fix.

Or

1. Select the Red Eye Removal tool from the toolbar.
2. In the After version, drag a selection around the red-eye area. The fix applies when you release the mouse button.

To apply all edits and return to the Organizer:

1. Choose File > Close, or click the close box in the upper-right corner of the workspace.
2. When prompted, save your changes.

✔ Tip

- See Chapter 6 for details on the settings offered by each tool.

Making Touch Up Edits

A few tools in the Quick Fix editor are designed to easily fix some specific situations. In the Quick pane, note the addition of four tools in the Tools pane: Red Eye Removal Tool, Whiten Teeth, Make Dull Skies Blue, and Black and White–High Contrast (**Figure 4.12**).

Figure 4.12 New Touch Up tools.

Unlike the other Quick Fix edits, which apply their adjustments to the entire image or to an area that you first specify using the Quick Selection tool, these Touch Up tools perform the selection and apply the edit in one step.

To make a Touch Up edit:

1. With a photo active in the Editor, click one of the Touch Up tool icons to select it.
2. Click and drag to define the area to be edited; for example, with the Make Dull Skies Blue tool active, drag in the sky area. Elements makes a selection and applies the effect (**Figure 4.13**).
3. Adjust the affected area using the selection tools (**Figure 4.14**).

Figure 4.13 The Make Dull Skies Blue applies a blue gradient to the selected area.

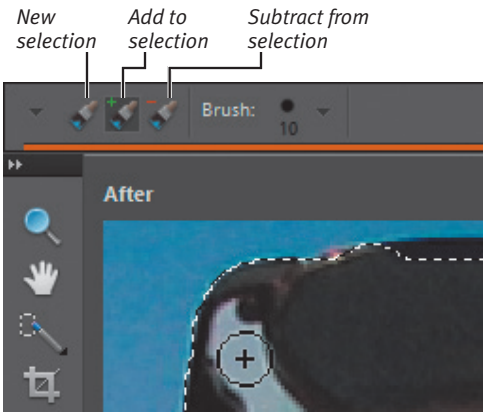


Figure 4.14 Use the selection tools to refine where the effect is applied.

✔ Tips

- You can apply multiple Touch Up tool edits to the same image. When you click an icon, any adjustment you've already made is highlighted for further editing.
- The Touch Up tools are actually simplified versions of edits that the Smart Brush makes. You can apply one and then edit it further in the Full Edit mode later. See Chapter 6 for more information.

Run Automated Actions with the Guided Edit Action Player

Figure 4.15 The Action Player can run automated combinations of adjustments.

The Action Player is a feature found in the Guided Edit pane for applying preset effects such as creating captions or applying combination edits like changing a photo's colors to sepia and adding grain to the image. In the Guided Edit pane, click Action Player under Automated Actions to reveal a set of automated effects that ship with Elements (**Figure 4.15**). Choose a set, pick a specific action, and then click the Play Action button.

That's not the whole story, though. The Action Player can run any action created in Photoshop CS. So, for example, if a photographer friend of yours uses Photoshop extensively and has created an action that resizes an image and adds a border and photo credit, you could run that action in Elements instead of performing each step. (Elements can currently only *run* actions, not create them.)

Adding a new action isn't straightforward, however. Here's how to do it:

Take a Photoshop action file—it ends in the extension .atn—and place it in the following directory on your hard disk (each backslash represents a folder name; you may need to specify that hidden folders are visible by opening a Windows Explorer window and choosing Folder and search options from the Organize menu):

```
\ProgramData\Adobe\Photoshop Elements\8.0\Locale\en_us\Workflow Panels\actions
```

Relaunch Elements, go to the Guided Edit pane of the Editor, and you'll see the action set appear in the first drop-down menu.