

# Chapter

# 1

## Working with Layers and Selections

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You can create, edit, and manipulate images and photos in many ways using Photoshop Elements 4. With the layers feature, for example, you can create floating canvases and combine them into a more complex image. Similar to a cartoon animation, a layered image lets you arrange the separate canvases in front of a background.

In Elements, you can adjust all of the objects on one layer without directly or permanently affecting the other layers. For example, you can move, transform, colorize, erase, or distort an individual layer. You can learn how to add special effects, use layers to change other layers, and even make objects semitransparent. This makes layers a very helpful feature for creating art and editing photos.

You can also achieve amazing effects with the selection tools and mask tools. Selection tools allow you to specify the areas or pixels you want to change by selecting them in the image. When you make a selection, you are telling the program to change only the selected pixels and no unselected pixels. The selection tool uses a moving dotted line, also called *marching ants*, to delineate the selected area.

Layers and selections are extremely useful when working with complex images. In this chapter, you will discover how to get the most out of these tools.

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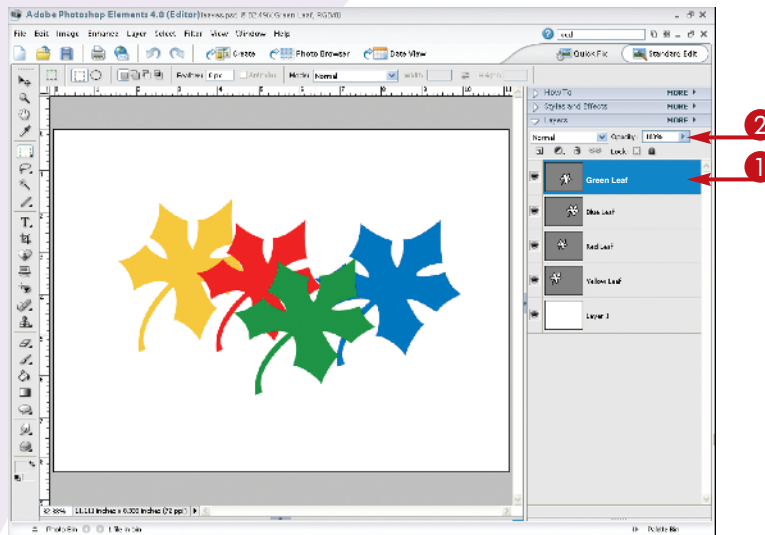


# Achieve transparency effects with the OPACITY SETTING

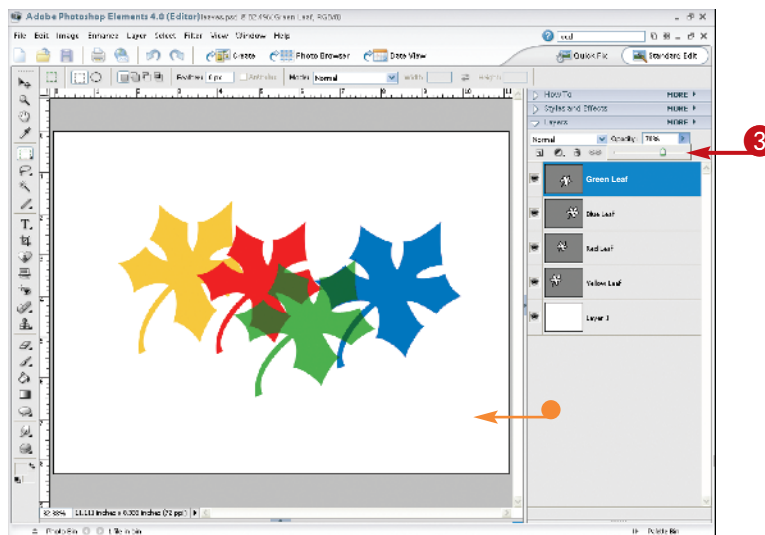
You can give your photos an almost surreal look by adjusting the opacity of layers in your image. When you reduce the opacity of a layer, you are simply making it more transparent, allowing pixels beneath that layer to become visible. This semitransparency effect has some very creative uses. For example, you can apply it to text to make the words you choose more subtle, you can make an image semitransparent to show a second image below it,

and you can give shapes and layer objects an almost spectral appearance for backgrounds or image overlays.

You can change your opacity settings at any time. You can also use opacity to work with layers below an object while still being able to detect the boundaries of the object. This is very useful in images that have many layers with overlapping objects.



- 1 In the Layers palette, click the layer you want to change.
- 2 Click here to display the Opacity slider.

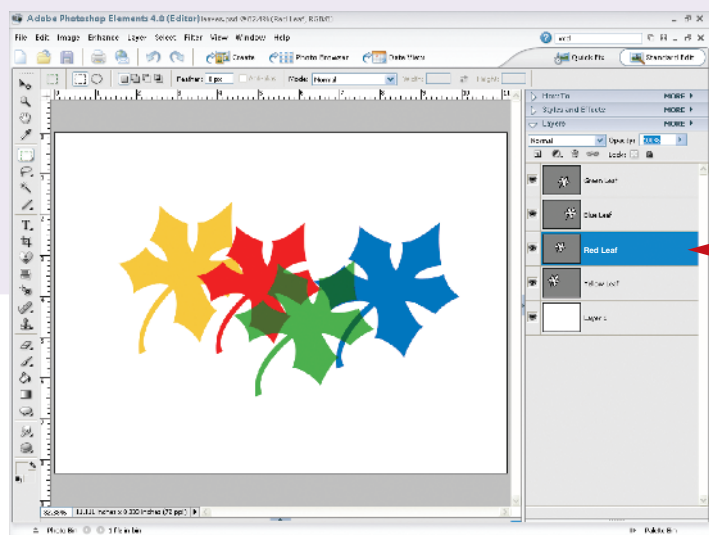


The Opacity slider appears.

- 3 Click and drag the Opacity slider to set the percentage of opacity you want.
- The opacity of the layer you selected changes to the percentage you specified.

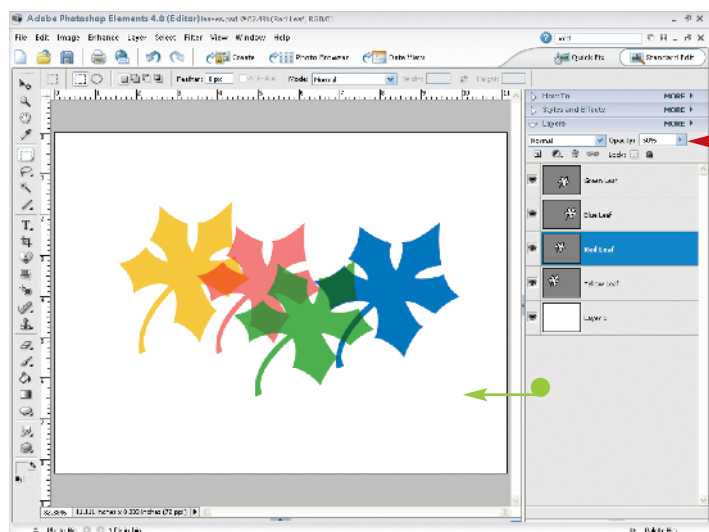
Alternatively, you can type a value between 0 and 100 in the Opacity field.

- 4 In the Layers palette, click the layer you want to change.



- 5 In the Opacity field, type the percentage of opacity you want.

- The opacity of the layer you selected changes to the percentage you specified.



## TIPS

**Did You Know?**

You cannot change the opacity of a background layer unless you first transform it into a regular layer. Click Layer, New, and then Layer From Background. You can also double-click the background layer in the Layers palette; a prompt allows you to convert it to a regular layer.

**Did You Know?**

When you overlap the objects in two layers with lower opacity settings, the objects' opacity increases. Opacity is cumulative in multiple layers. For example, if you have a layer with a yellow circle and a layer with a blue circle, you can set both layers to 50% opacity and partially overlap the circles. The overlapping colors combine to create a more opaque green color.

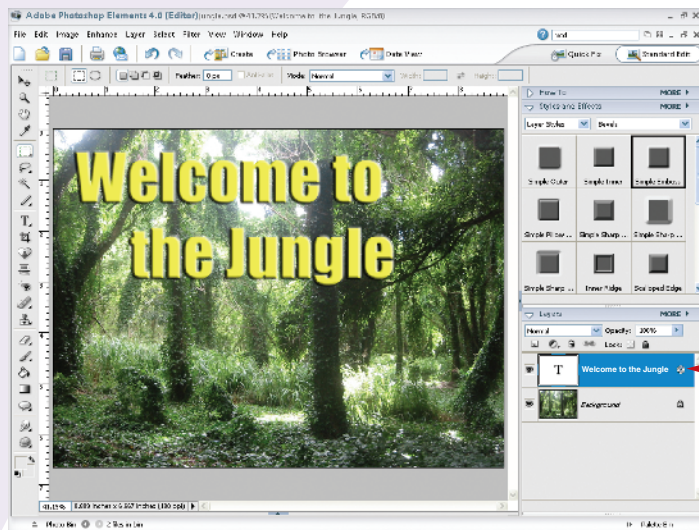
# Use the blending modes to BLEND LAYERS

You can use Photoshop Elements' blending modes to create special effects in your layers. The blending modes take the pixels of a layer and cause them to interact with the pixels of another layer. This affects the hues, tones, and saturations of the lower layer.

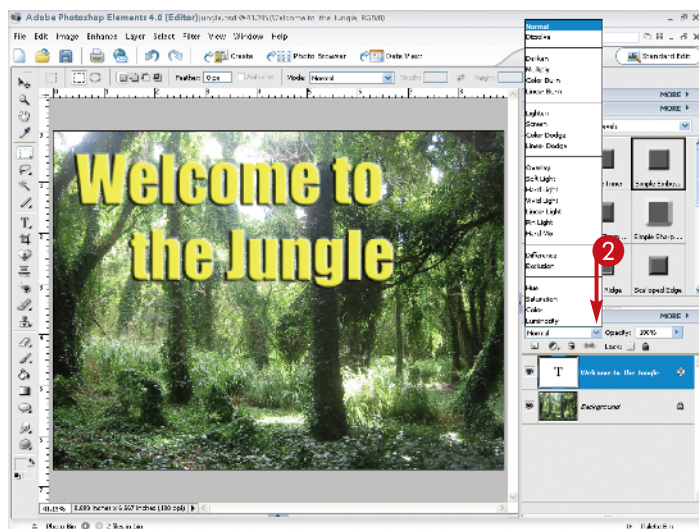
Each blending mode defines how a layer interacts with other layers, mostly in the area of highlights, midtones, shadows, and color. For example, highlight-based filters ignore midtone and shadows

and adjust only the lighter-colored pixels. Shadow and midtone blending modes affect dark and midrange tones, respectively. The color modes affect only the hue, saturation, and color blends of the layer, leaving the contrast and tones unaffected.

Try experimenting with each blending mode. Each image has its own range of tones and color, and there is often no way to predict how each blending mode will affect the other layers.

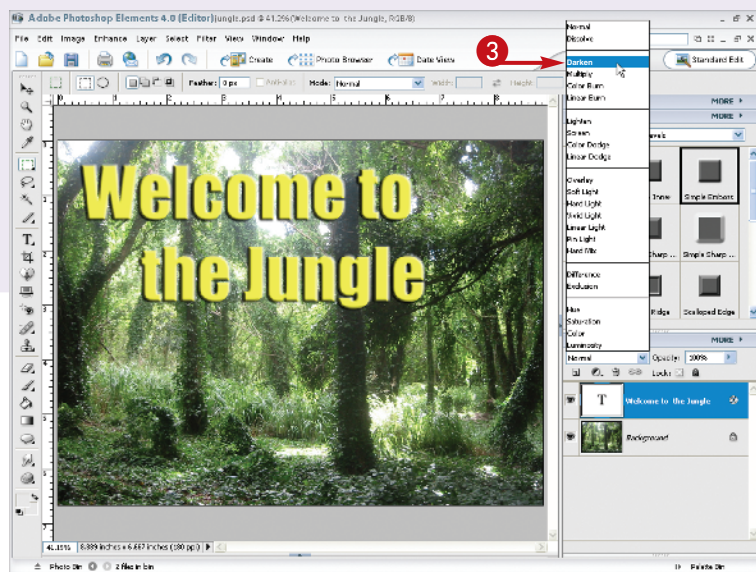


- 1 In the Layers palette, click the layer you want to blend.



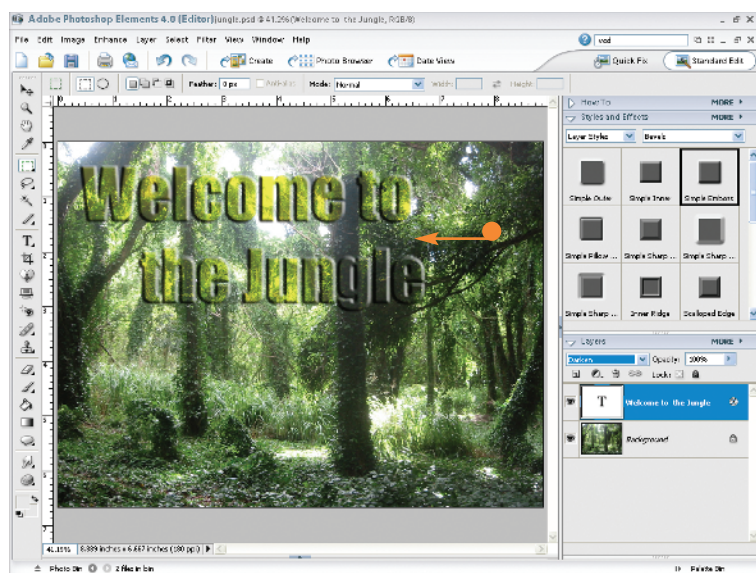
- 2 Click here to open the Blending Modes menu.





- 3 Select the blending mode you want.

#2



- Elements blends the selected layer with the layers below it.

## TIPS

### Did You Know?

Blending modes are not permanent; you can reset and adjust them at any time. However, they do affect all layers below the layer you are modifying. When you adjust a layer effect, the pixels of all the layers below it are also affected. You can adjust the opacity to reduce the effects of the blending modes.

### Did You Know?

You can use multiple blending mode layers to achieve many different effects. Blending modes are cumulative, meaning that if you have three layers and the middle layer has a blending mode, only the bottom layer is affected. If the top layer also had a blending mode, its blending mode would affect both the middle and bottom layers.

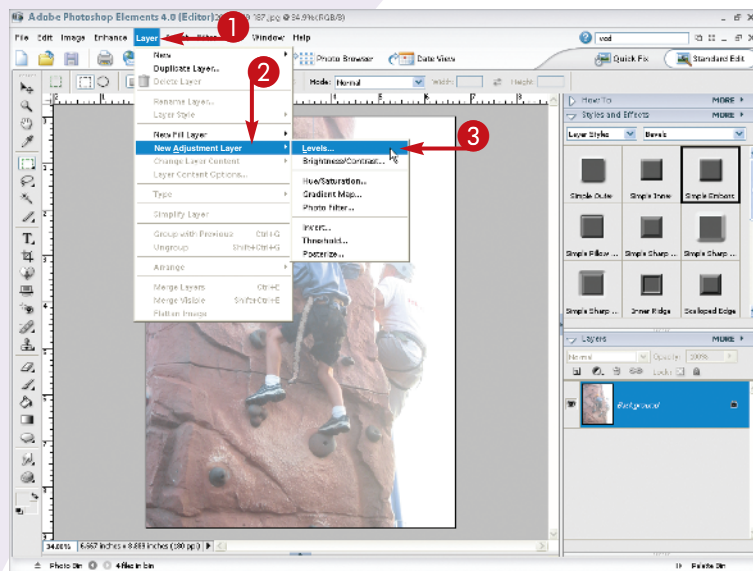
# Work with ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

You can alter the appearance of layers using other layers that have special properties. These special layers are called *adjustment layers*. Adjustment layers affect a specific property of the layers below them, such as hue/saturation, levels, or contrast.

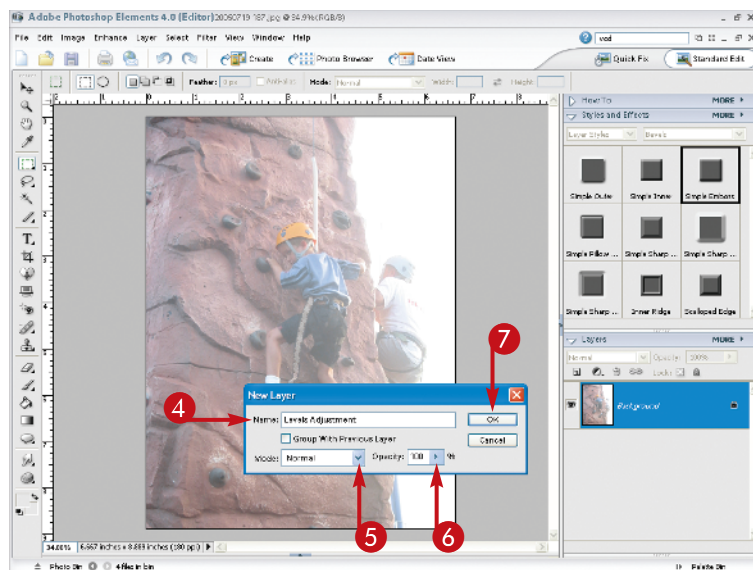
Adjustment layers are versatile because they allow you to make dramatic changes to your original image without changing it irreversibly. For example, you can enhance image color or increase the contrast of faded photographs.

By default, an adjustment layer affects all layers below it. However, you can specify that an adjustment layer affect only one layer by grouping it with that layer.

You can use adjustment layers to make initial adjustments to digital camera imports or scans, or to correct improper color balance or poor contrast. The ability to change your images significantly without changing them permanently makes adjustment layers invaluable for photo corrections.



- 1 Click Layer.
- 2 Click New Adjustment Layer.
- 3 Click the category you want to adjust.

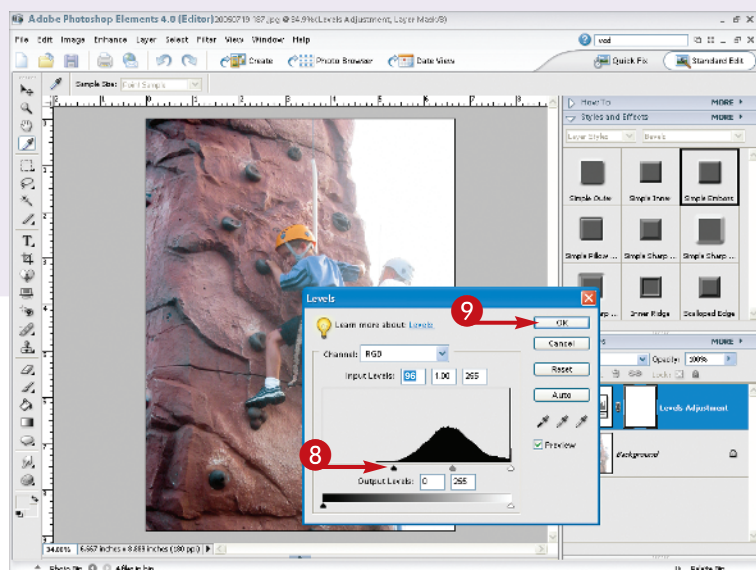


The New Layer dialog box appears.

- 4 Type a name for the new layer.
- 5 Click here and select a mode.
- 6 Click here and select an opacity percentage.
- 7 Click OK.

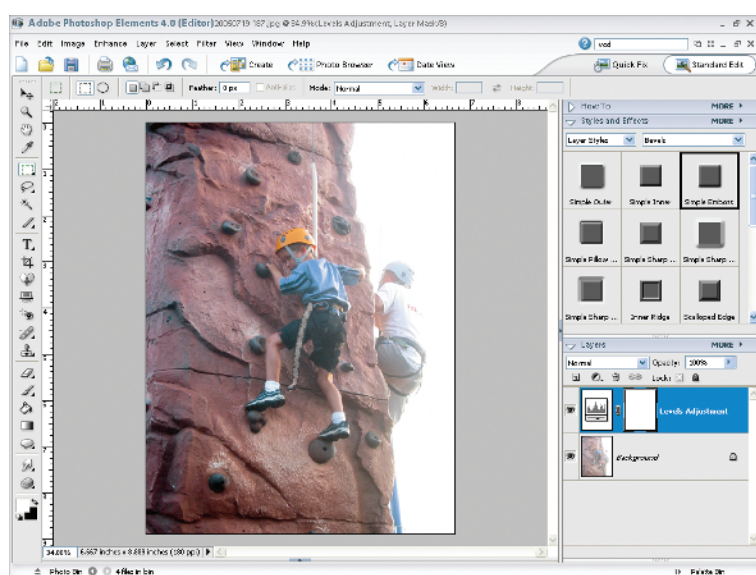
The Levels dialog box appears.

- 8 Click and drag the sliders to make adjustments.
- 9 Click OK.



Elements applies your settings.

Because the changes exist in the adjustment layer, the underlying layer remains intact.



## TIPS

**Did You Know?**

You do not have to apply an adjustment layer to an entire image. You can create a selection and apply the adjustment only to that selection area. Simply select the area you want to change using a selection tool before you create your adjustment layer. You can lower the opacity of an adjustment layer to soften the effect.

**Did You Know?**

You can use adjustment layers to affect other adjustment layers. Adjustment layers are cumulative and affect not only the regular layers below them, but also the adjustment layers. For example, two color adjustment layers set at less than 100% opacity can complement each other, blending color effects and applying those effects to the underlying layers.



# MOVE OBJECTS

## in layers

You can take advantage of the flexibility of layers and the mobility of the objects they contain. Layers are useful because their content is independent of the content in other layers; what you do to one layer does not affect the others unless you intend it to.

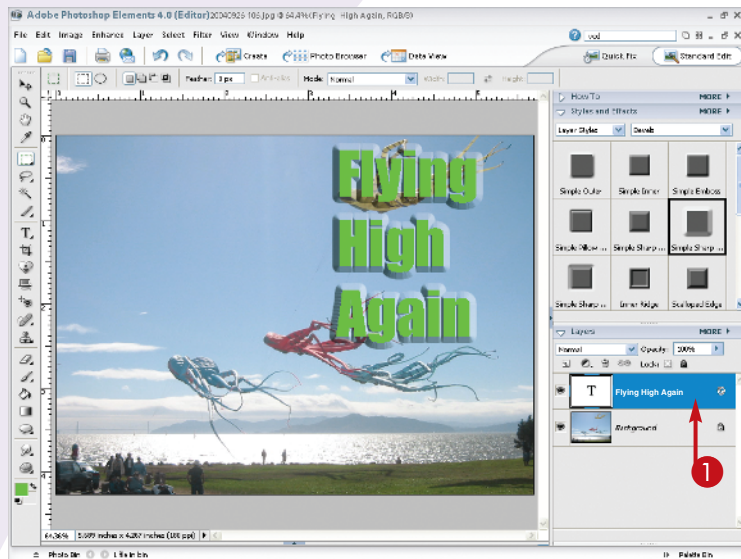
You can place your layer objects wherever you want within the image boundaries. To adjust the position of your objects, you can use the Move tool.

Using the Move tool creates a bounding box around the individual object or objects within the layer. By clicking and dragging the object, you can place it

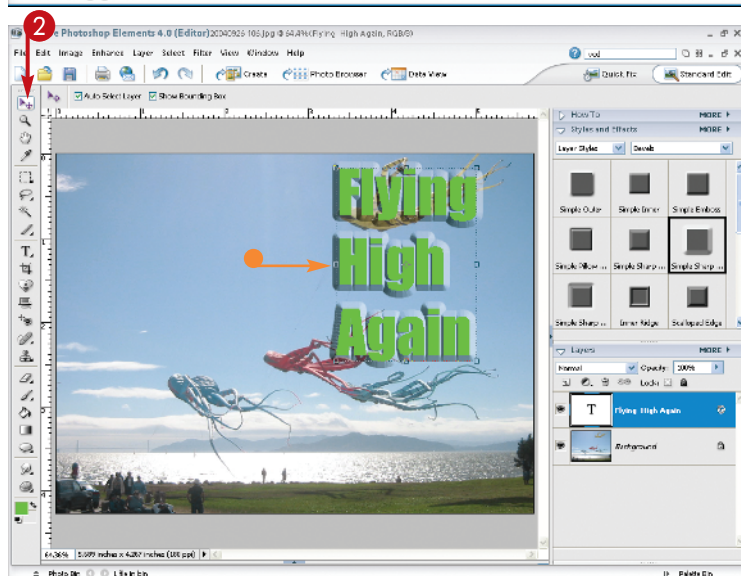
where you want it. Alternatively, you can use the arrow keys on the keyboard for more precise positioning.

You can click a different object to select it, or click any layer in the Layers palette to switch the Move tool to a new layer.

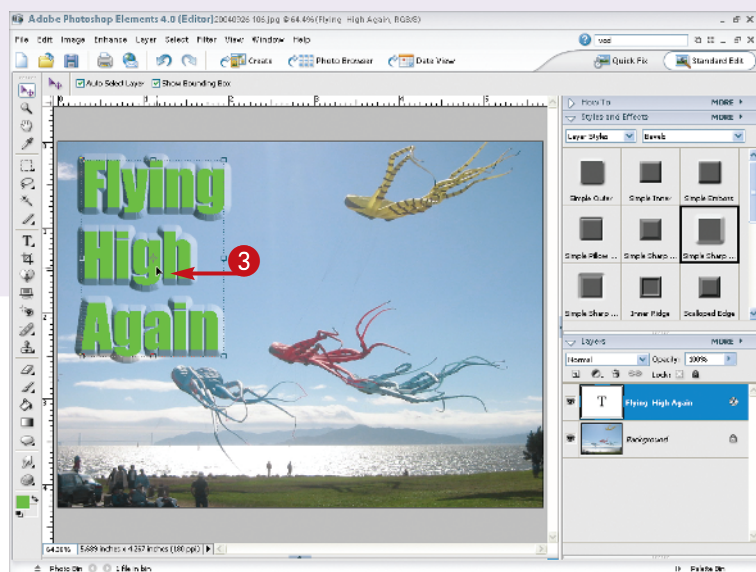
You can also switch layers by right-clicking anywhere in the image when using the Move tool. Any layers that overlap where you click should appear in a list that you can choose from to select a layer.



- 1 In the Layers palette, click the layer that contains the object you want to move.

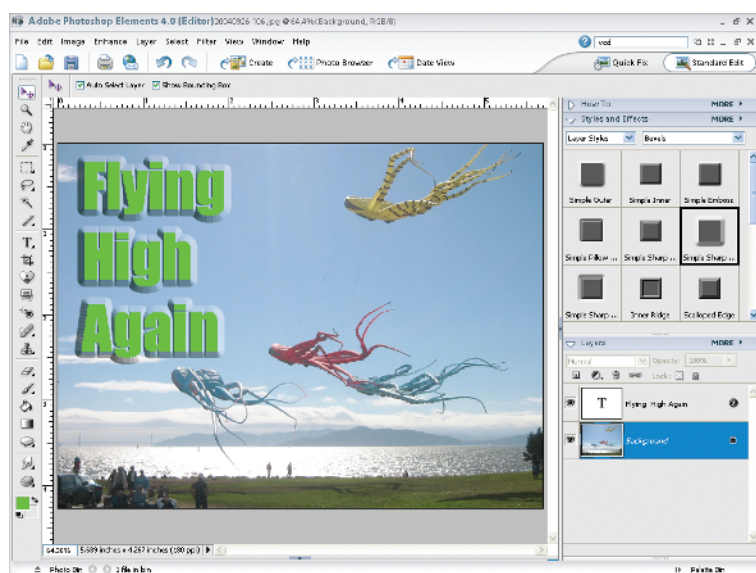


- 2 Click the Move tool.
  - By default, the Move tool automatically selects the objects in the currently selected layer.



- 3 Click and drag the object that you want to move to its new position.

#4



The object moves without affecting the other layers.

## TIPS

### Did You Know?

You can move multiple layers at once with the Move tool by first linking them together. To link layers, click one layer and then, in the Layers palette, click the empty box next to the Eye icon for any other layers you want to link. A chain appears denoting the link.

### Shortcut Keys!

You can access the Move tool at almost any time by holding the Ctrl key while using another tool. Most tools allow you to use this shortcut. When you use the keyboard to move an object, holding the Shift key while pressing the arrow keys moves the object several pixels at a time instead of one pixel at a time.

# ORGANIZE

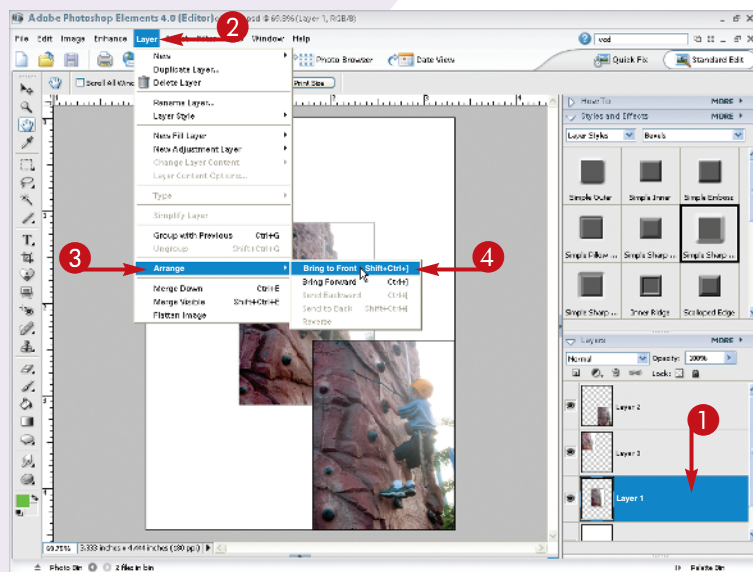
## layers

You can shuffle layers in your image to make it more visually appealing; this is possible with just a few mouse clicks in the Layers palette. Because layers are like sheets of paper, you can easily adjust the appearance of your image simply by moving a layer up or down in the Layers palette. Giving the layer a more descriptive name is also a good idea.

Each layer acts like a separate file; the changes you make to one layer do not affect other layers. However, some special effects, such as blending

modes, are designed to affect other layers. You can experiment to see how certain layers affect other layers.

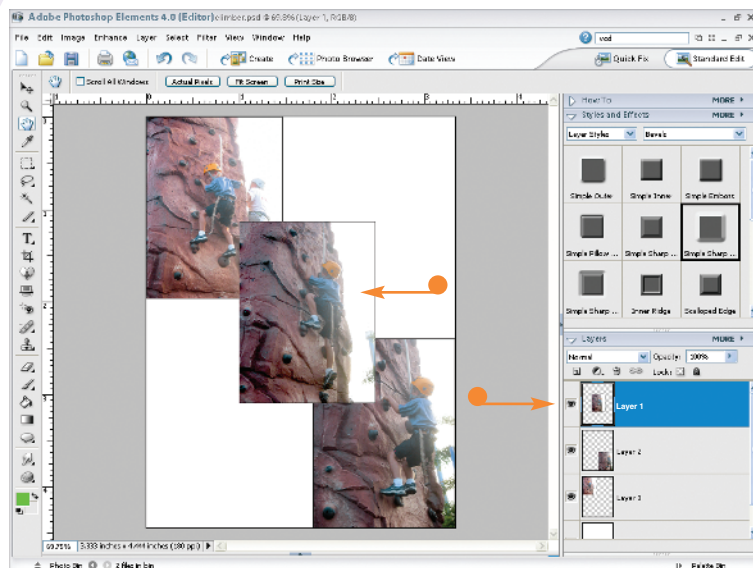
You can move all the layers except the background layer. However, you can convert the background layer into a regular layer if you need to move it.



### ORGANIZE LAYERS USING THE MENU

- 1 In the Layers palette, click the layer that you want to move to a different stacking order.
- 2 Click Layer.
- 3 Click Arrange.
- 4 Select an arrangement from the submenu.

- The layers shuffle and appear in their new order.



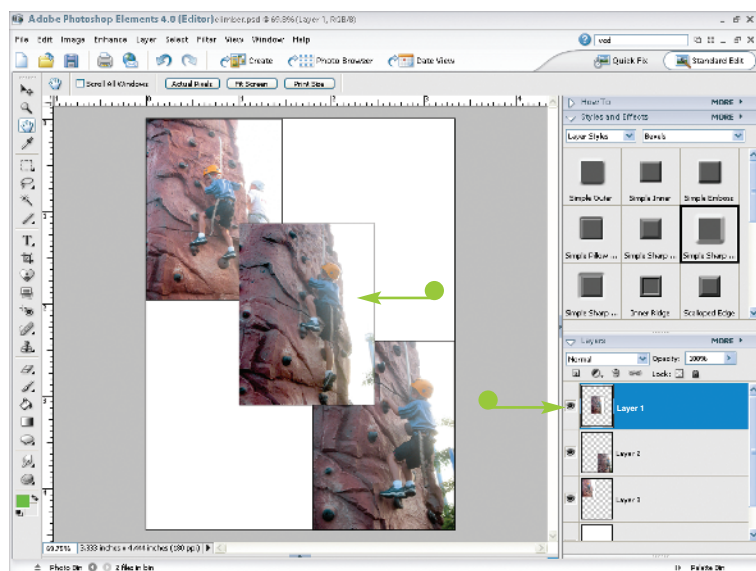
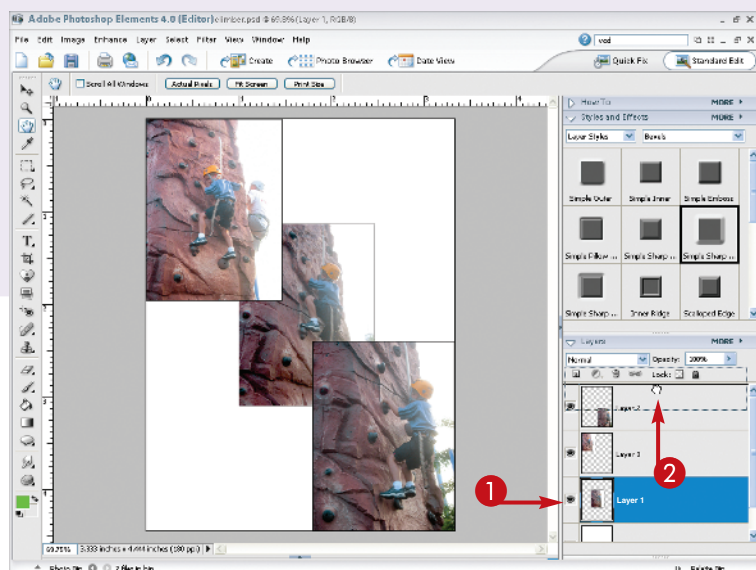


# #5

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

## ORGANIZE LAYERS BY DRAGGING

- 1 In the Layers palette, click the layer that you want to move to a different stacking order.
- 2 Click and drag the layer to its new position.



- The layers shuffle and appear in their new order.

## TIPS

### Shortcut Keys!

You can take advantage of a few keyboard shortcuts to rearrange your layers.

Shortcuts	Function
Ctrl+]	Moves a layer up one level
Ctrl+[	Moves a layer down one level
Shift+Ctrl+]	Moves a layer to the front
Shift+Ctrl+[	Moves a layer to the back

### Did You Know?

You can easily rename your layer. Click the layer you want to rename in the Layers palette, click Layer, and then click Rename Layer. In the Layer Properties dialog box, type a new name and click OK to rename the layer. You can also double-click the layer in the Layers palette to open the same dialog box.

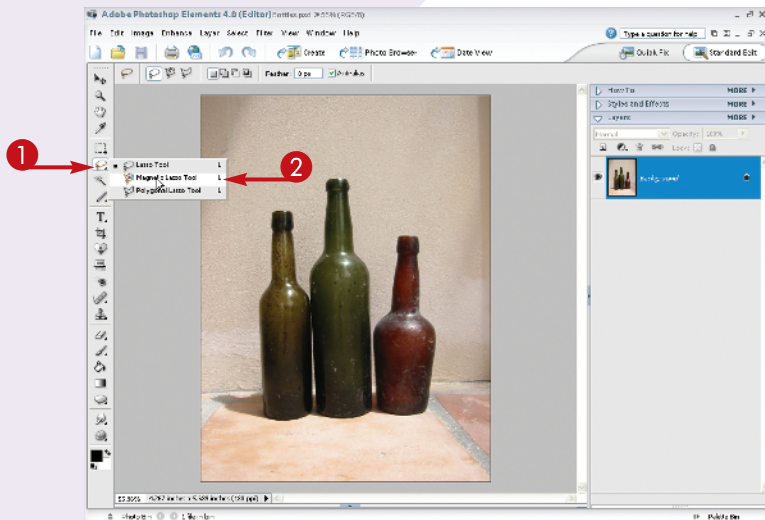
# Work with the LASSO TOOL

You can make custom and complex selections with the Lasso tool. The Lasso tool allows you to draw any shape you want with your mouse, and that shape becomes the selection area. A boundary line appears where you click and drag your mouse. If you bring the mouse back to its origin, a small letter *o* appears next to the cursor, meaning the selection is enclosed. You can release the mouse button at this point.

Marching ants appear, enclosing the area you have

drawn. Releasing the cursor sooner causes the endpoint to connect to the origin with a straight line, also enclosing the selected area.

The Magnetic Lasso tool allows you to draw a complex selection that intuitively follows the shape of an object. For example, you can easily draw around any object, such as a person's face or a flower, and the Magnetic Lasso tool corrects your path to accurately surround the object. You can deselect your selection by clicking the mouse inside a completed selection.

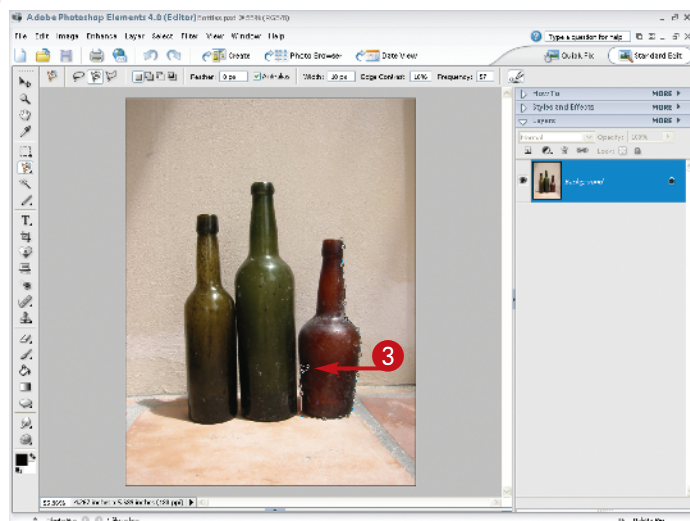


- 1 Click and hold the cursor over the Lasso tool.

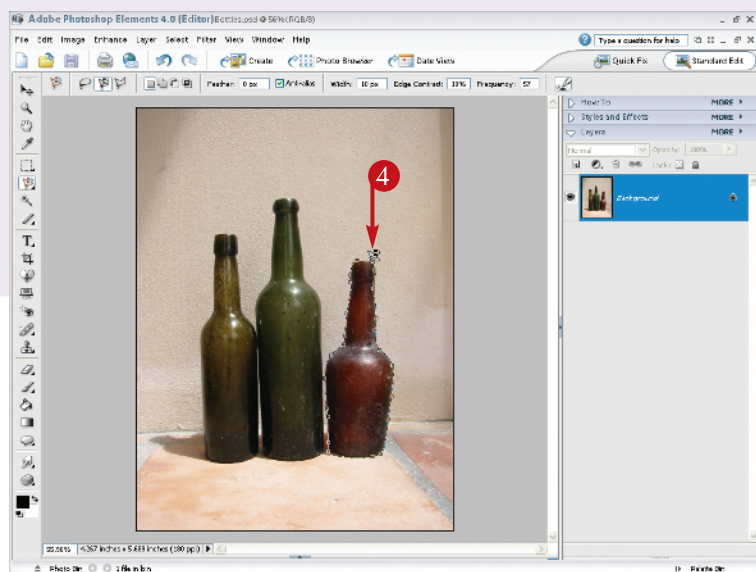
The Lasso tool selection bar appears.

- 2 Select a Lasso tool.

This example uses the Magnetic Lasso tool.



- 3 Click and drag to make a selection.

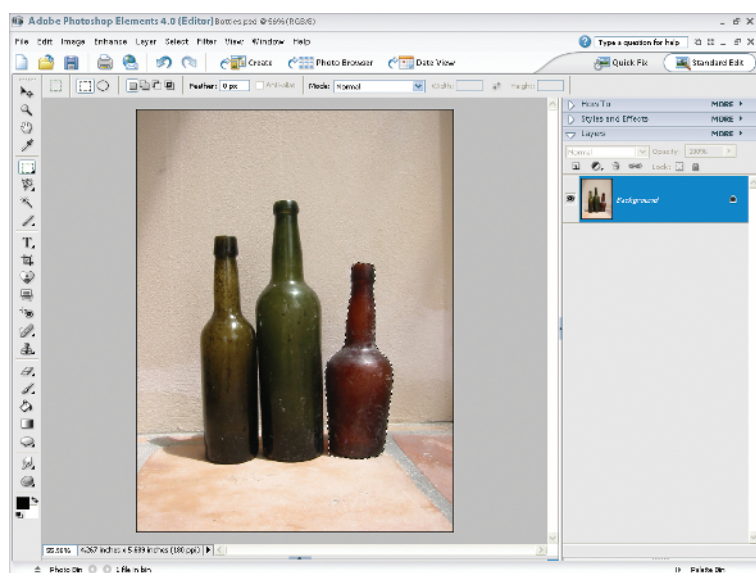


- 4 Move the cursor back to the point of origin and release the mouse button.

#6



With the Magnetic or Polygonal Lasso, a small letter o appears by the cursor when you reach the point of origin.



An active selection area appears, based on the boundaries you have drawn.

## TIPS

### Customize It!

You can add and delete parts of a selection after you complete it. To add to the current selection, press and hold down the Shift key while selecting the area you want to add. To subtract from the current selection, press and hold down the Alt key while selecting the area you want to subtract.

### Did You Know?

You can save your selections for use later on. By clicking Select and then Save Selection, you can name and save your selection in the PSD image format. If you are using a different image format, Elements saves the selection until you close the image, at which time it is discarded.



# Make selections with the SELECTION BRUSH tool

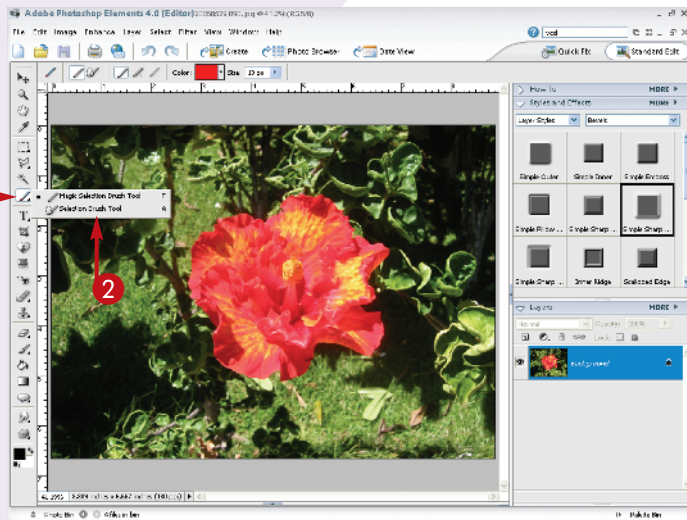
You can easily make selections with one of the most innovative selection tools Elements has to offer: the Selection Brush tool. This tool acts like the regular brush tool except that when you paint you are selecting that area rather than adding color. The Selection Brush tool gives you a quick, easy way to make oddly shaped selections.

When you use the Selection Brush tool, you can choose from the library of brush shapes. You simply

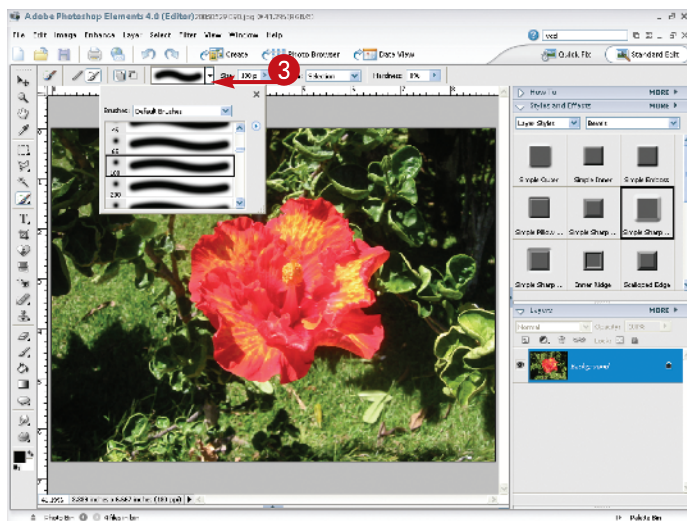
choose a brush and begin painting; the shape, size, and other options of that brush are all applied to the selection area.

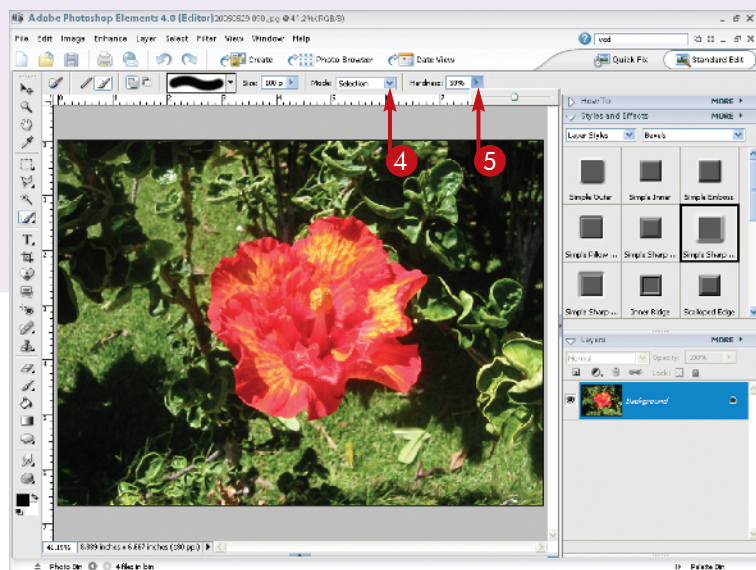
You can adjust the hardness option to vary your brush edges from soft, or lightly feathered, to crisp. This replaces the feathering option that is available on most of the other selection tools. You can deselect a selection by clicking the mouse inside the selection.

- 1 Click and hold the Magic Selection Brush tool.
- 2 Click the Selection Brush tool.



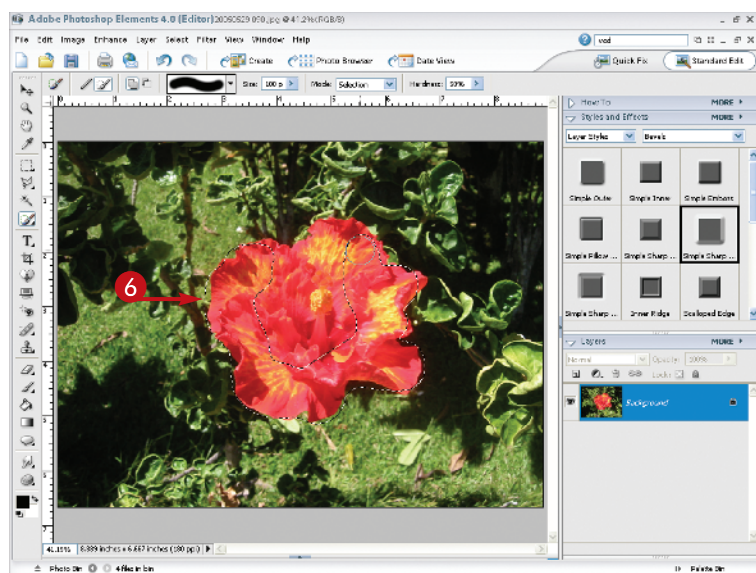
- 3 Click here and select a brush shape.





- 4 Click here and select Selection.
- 5 Click here and select the hardness percentage you want for the brush edges.

# #7



- 6 Click and drag with strokes to make a selection.
- When making a selection, you can make multiple strokes by keeping your mouse pressed down.

## TIPS

### Did You Know?

You can erase areas of a drawing by pressing and holding the Alt key while drawing with the Selection Brush tool. This is a convenient way to correct mistakes when making a selection.

### Did You Know?

You can alter the brush's settings or shape between brush strokes. You can also change any Options bar items you want. The Selection Brush tool uses these settings without affecting the settings of previously selected areas.

### Did You Know?

You can choose Mask from the Mode drop-down menu in the Options bar. Masks create selections by painting over the areas you do not want to change. When you choose a different tool or return to Selection Mode, the mask becomes a normal selection.

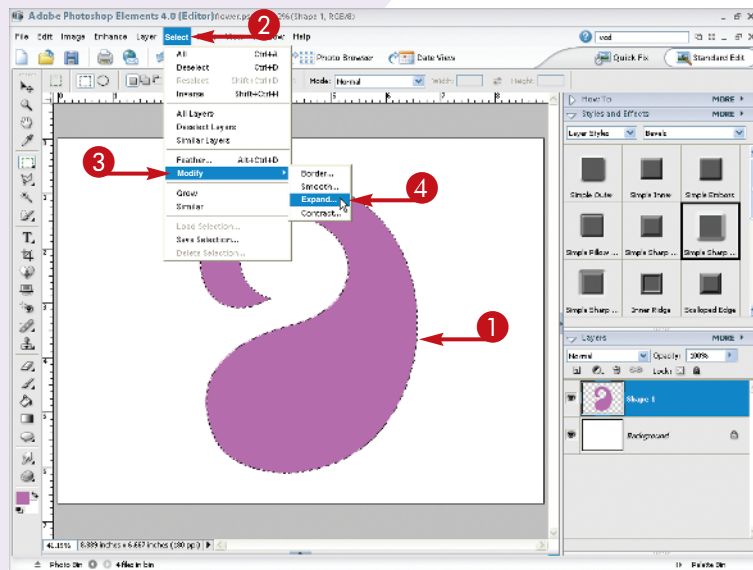
# Modify your selections

You can adjust your selections after you complete them by changing their size, structure, and edges. For example, two of the most commonly used tools are Contract and Expand, which modify the size of your selections. These tools are both particularly useful for working with complex shapes.

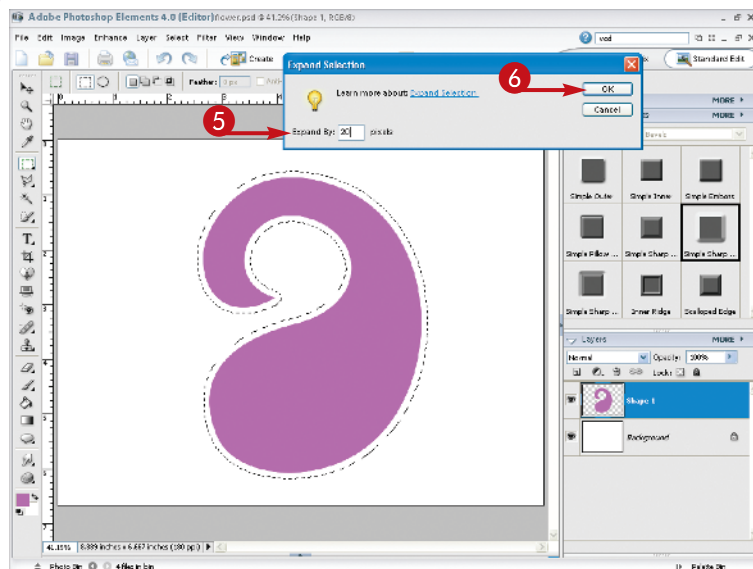
You can alter the size of your selections with these tools. For example, the Contract tool moves the perimeter of your selection inward by a specified number of pixels. The new size is constrained and is

proportional to the original. This is an excellent tool if you want to create an inner edge on an object.

The Expand tool is similar to the Contract tool except that it moves the perimeter of the selection outward. You can use the Expand tool to create an outline or to ensure that what you delete from an image leaves no remaining pixels. Both tools allow you to make adjustments, but excessive adjustments can cause the selection to lose its clarity.



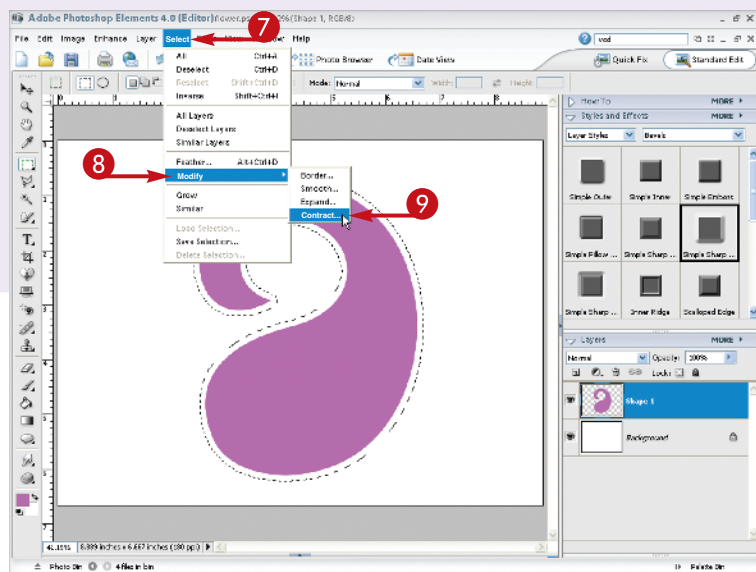
- 1 Create a selection with a selection tool.
- 2 Click Select.
- 3 Click Modify.
- 4 Click Expand.



The Expand Selection dialog box appears.

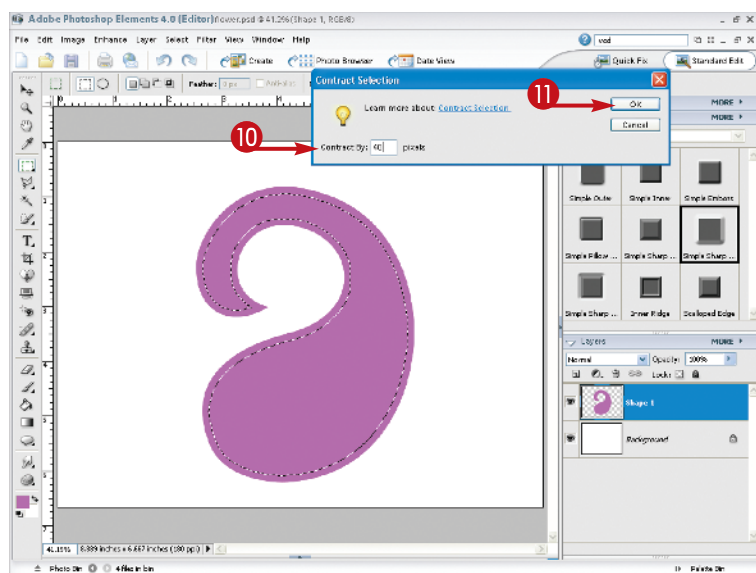
- 5 Type a number by which you want to expand your selection in pixels.
- 6 Click OK.

Elements expands the selection by the number of pixels you specified.



- 7 Click Select.
- 8 Click Modify.
- 9 Click Contract.

# #8



- The Contract Selection dialog box appears.
- 10 Type a number by which you want to contract your selection in pixels.
  - 11 Click OK.
- Elements contracts the selection by the number of pixels you specified.

## TIPS

### Customize It!

You can manipulate selected areas with the Transform tool. Elements allows you to transform selections just as you can transform shapes and objects. For example, you can scale down and distort selections. The changes you make affect only the area within the selection, which can reduce processing time.

### More Options!

You can easily invert your selections. After you make a selection, click Select and then Invert – or type Shift+Ctrl+I – and the selection changes from the area you originally selected to the area that was not selected. This is useful for deleting backgrounds from around an object.



# COPY AND PASTE

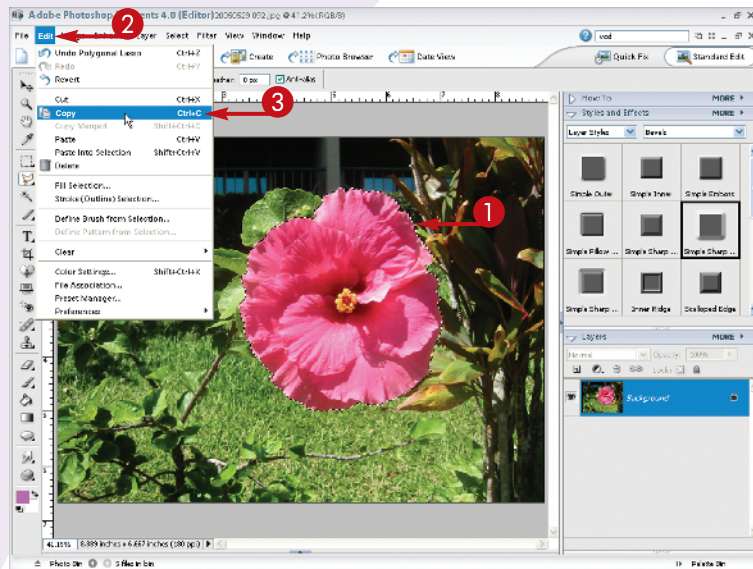
## with a selection tool

You can use the selection tools to copy and paste parts of an image. One of the most common uses for the selection tools is to copy a selection from one image or layer to another image or layer. You can use the different selection tools to cut out your subject and place that subject on another layer or even into another document.

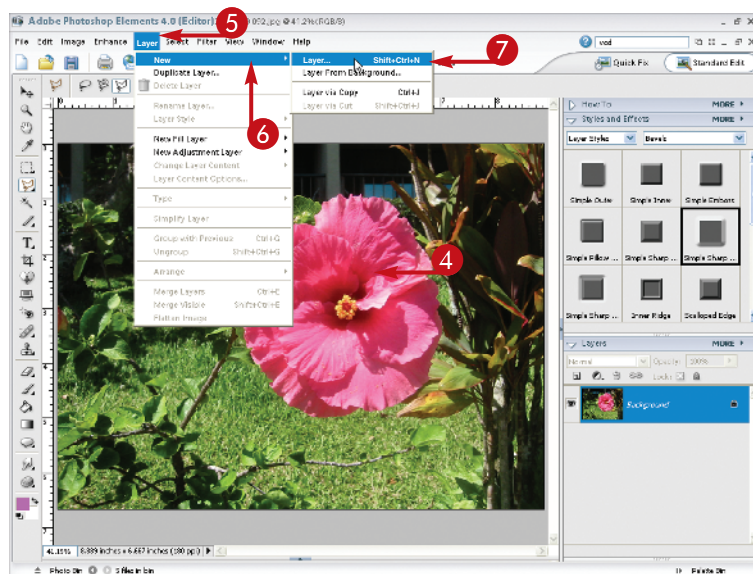
Copying with a selection is simple. You can use any of the selection tools to create an outline around the subject. Elements does not recognize any part of the

image outside of the selected area, so clicking Edit and then Copy copies only what is inside the selection boundaries. You can then simply create a new layer and paste the clipboard copy of your selection onto the new layer.

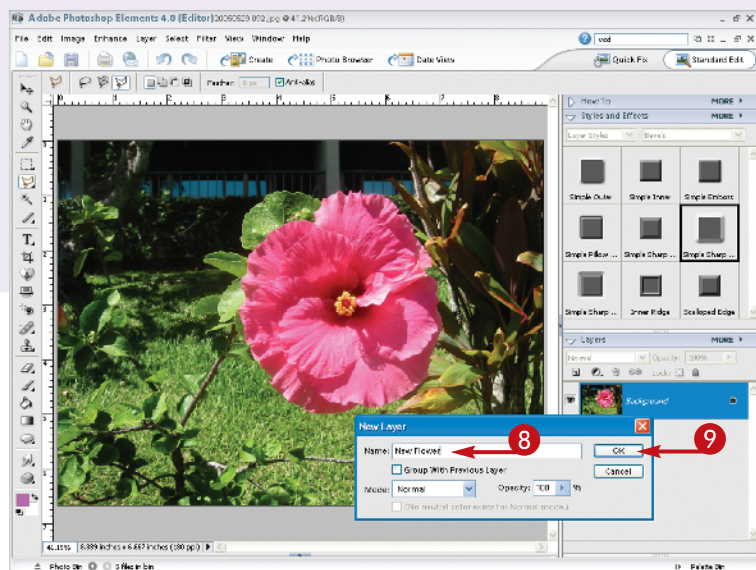
You can use selections to copy important parts of an image that you are about to edit. This lets you protect your image from permanent changes or create a specifically shaped selection for a special effect, such as a double image.



- 1 Create a selection with a selection tool.
- 2 Click Edit.
- 3 Click Copy.



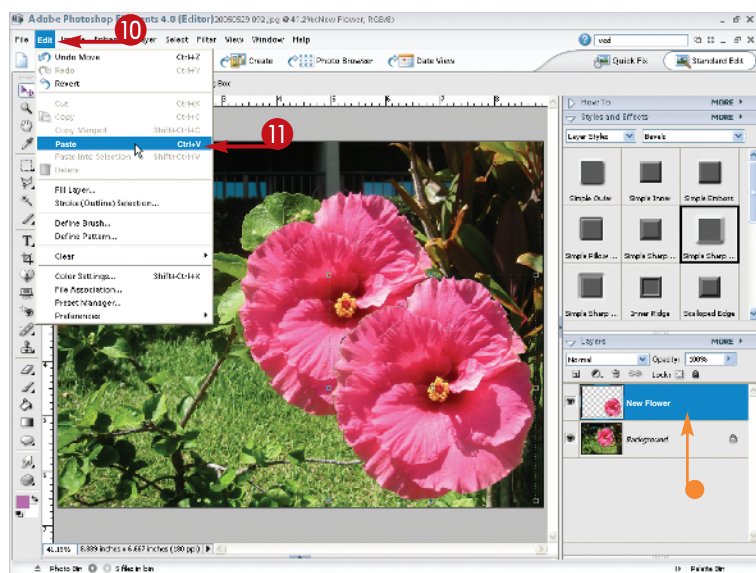
- 4 Click inside the selection to deselect it.
- 5 Click Layer.
- 6 Click New.
- 7 Click Layer.



The New Layer dialog box appears.

- 8 Type a name for the new layer.
- 9 Click OK.

#9



- 10 Click Edit.
  - 11 Click Paste.
- Elements pastes the copied selection onto the new layer.

## TIPS

### Did You Know?

You can copy all the layers in an image when using selections. When you use the Copy command, you are only making a copy of the active layer. If you have a multilayered document, you can use the Copy Merged command to create a selection copy of *all* the layers.

### Did You Know?

You can paste your copy in several different ways. For example, if you do not deselect your selection, you can paste the copy directly into the original selection area, on a new layer. If you deselect your selection, you can press and hold the Shift key while clicking Paste, and the object appears in the exact center of the document.

# FEATHER

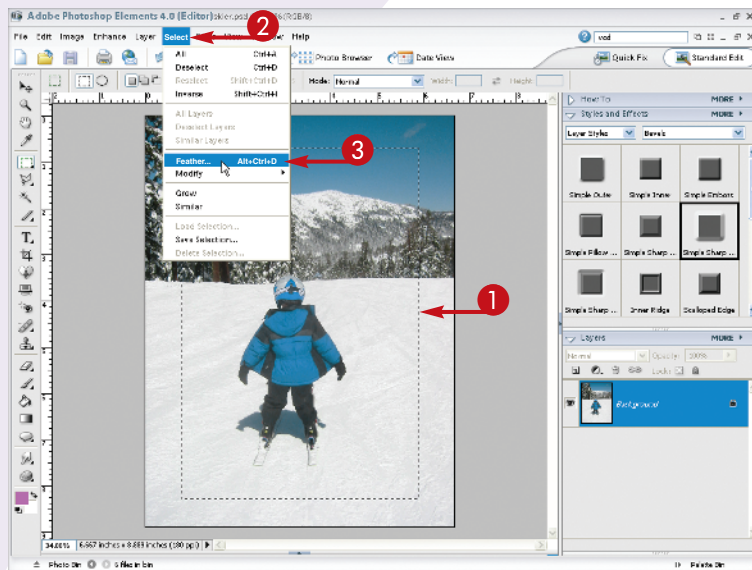
## your selections

You can create selections with edges that are smooth and gradual. Feathering an edge causes the selection edges to become semitransparent, blending with the image behind the selection. Feathered edges are useful when copying and cutting selections from images. Feathering reduces stark, choppy edges, improving the overall appearance of the image.

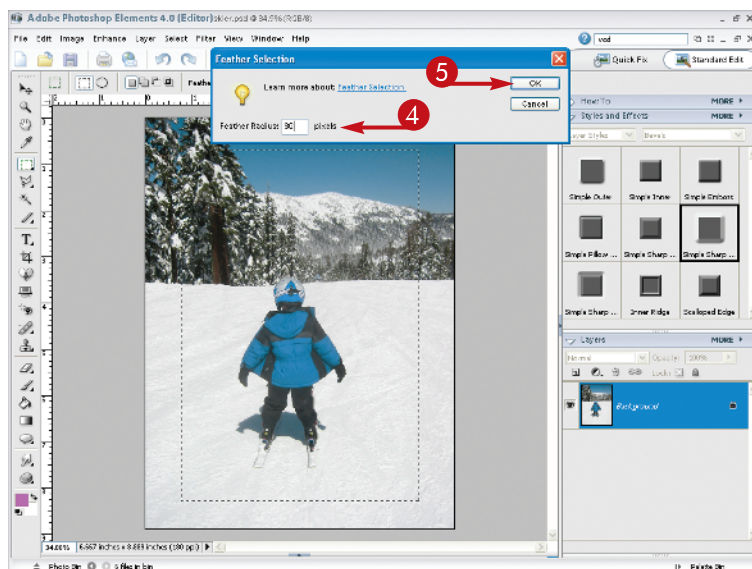
Most selection tools have feathering options that you can specify before you make a selection, so the feathering option is built into your selection. If you

do not choose a feathering option or have already made a selection, you can use the Select menu to apply feathering.

You can use feathering when you are removing elements from one image and placing them into another. You can also use feathering to create framing effects, vignettes, and other edge effects. The value you enter in the Feather Selection dialog box controls the amount of blend and blur that are applied to the edges of the selection.



- 1 Create a selection with a selection tool.
- 2 Click Select.
- 3 Click Feather.



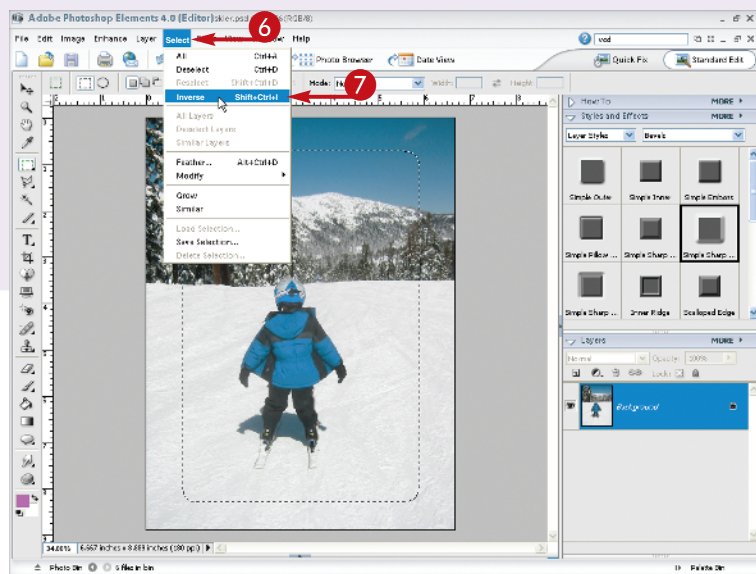
The Feather Selection dialog box appears.

- 4 Type a value in the Feather Radius box.

This value sets the amount of feathering.

- 5 Click OK.





Elements feathers your selection.

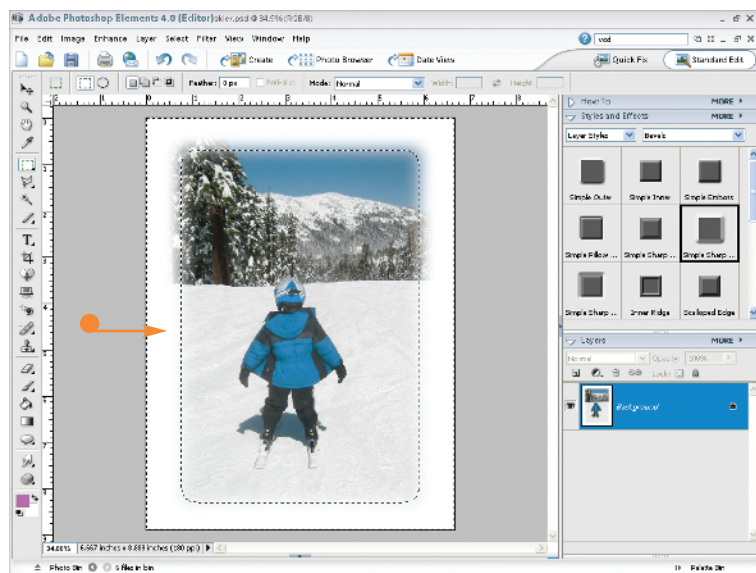
# #10

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

6 Click Select.

7 Click Inverse.

Elements inverts your selection.



8 Press Delete.

Elements deletes the area that was not selected.

- You can now see the effect of the feathering.

## TIPS

### Did You Know?

You can use the Feather option to remove objects from layers. However, you should leave a slight buffer of pixels around a selected object so that you do not erase or blur its edges.

### Did You Know?

You can feather your selections and still apply layer styles to the selected objects. Layer styles recognize most of the pixels within the feathered edge and apply the filter to them. The result may appear semitransparent because of the feathering, but the styles can still enhance your graphics.

### Shortcut Keys!

Elements lets you use shortcuts when making selections. Ctrl+Shift+I selects the inverse of an active selection, Ctrl+D deselects any current selections, and Ctrl+Shift+D reselects the last selection you made.