

Chapter

1

Working with Layers and Selections

You can create, edit, and manipulate images and photos in many ways with Photoshop Elements 3. Using the layers feature, you can create floating canvasses that work together like those in cartoon animation. These overlapping canvasses arrange items in front of a background, and you can organize them into a more complex image.

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 and results with the selection tools and mask tools. Selection tools are essential to Elements users because they allow you to specify what 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 those* selected pixels, and *not* any unselected pixels. The selection tool indicates a border around your selected area with a moving dotted line, also called *marching ants*.

Layers and selections are extremely useful when working with complex images. In this chapter, you can discover many different methods of using these tools, so that you can get the most out of them.

Top 100

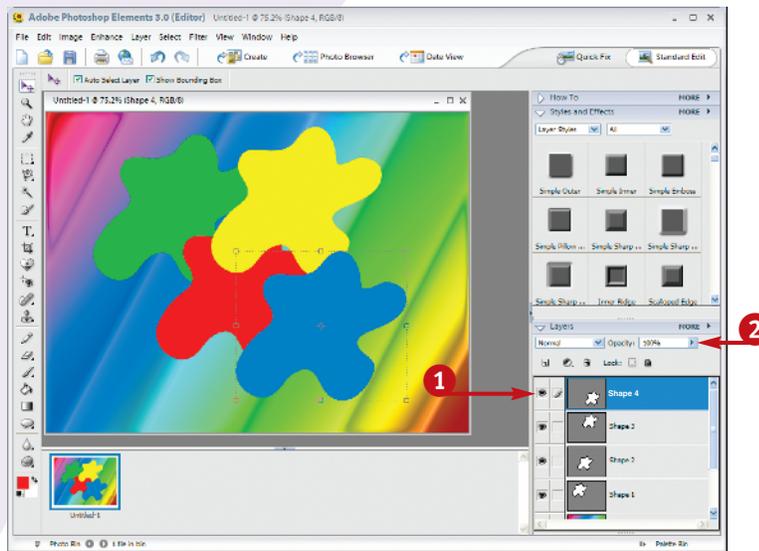
# 1	Achieve Transparency Effects with the Opacity Setting . . .	4	
# 2	Use the Blending Modes to Blend Layers	6	
# 3	Work with Adjustment Layers	8	
# 4	Move Objects in Layers	10	
# 5	Organize Layers to Jazz Up Your Arrangement	12	
# 6	Work with the Lasso Tool	14	
# 7	Make Selections with the Selection Brush Tool	16	
# 8	Modify Your Selections	18	
# 9	Copy and Paste with a Selection Tool	20	
#10	Feather Your Selections	22	

Achieve transparency effects with the OPACITY SETTING

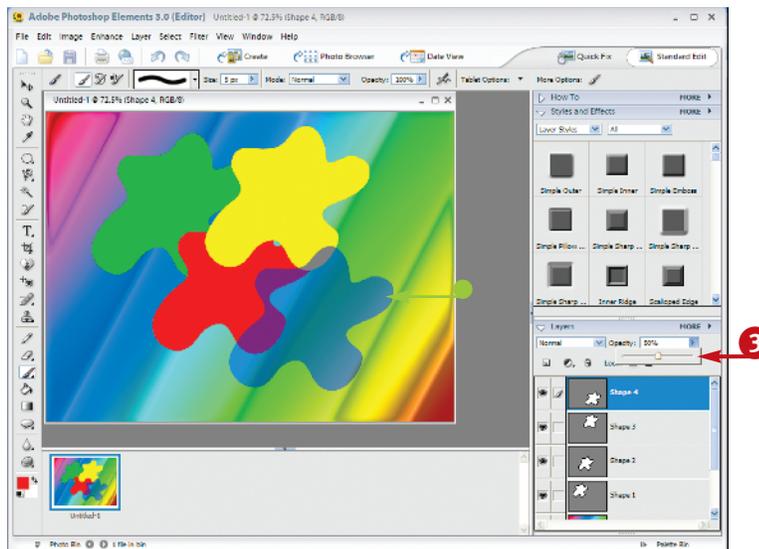
You can achieve an almost surreal look in your photos by adjusting the opacity of layers within your image. When you adjust the opacity of a layer, you simply make it more transparent, allowing pixels beneath the layer objects to become visible, based on the opacity settings you apply. This semitransparency effect has some very creative uses. For example, you can apply it to text to create a more subtle impact on the words you choose, 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 for working on layers below an object, while still being able to detect the boundaries of the object. This is very useful with images that have many layers with overlapping objects.

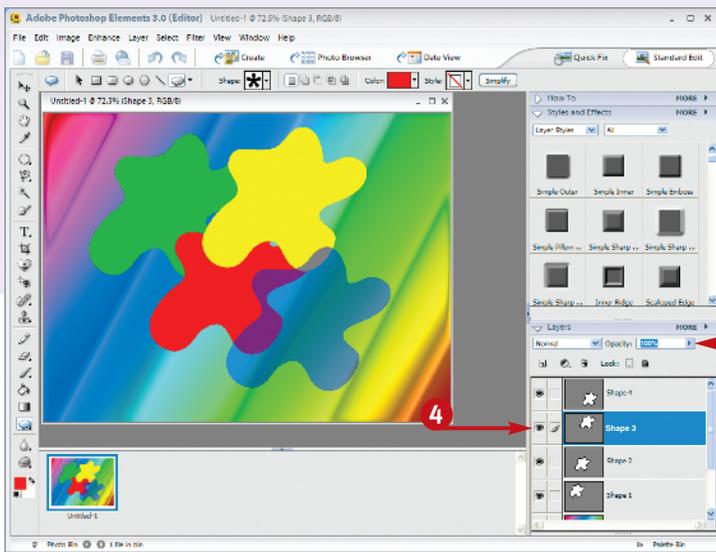


- 1 In the Layers palette, click the layer that you want to change.
- 2 Click here to display the Opacity slider.



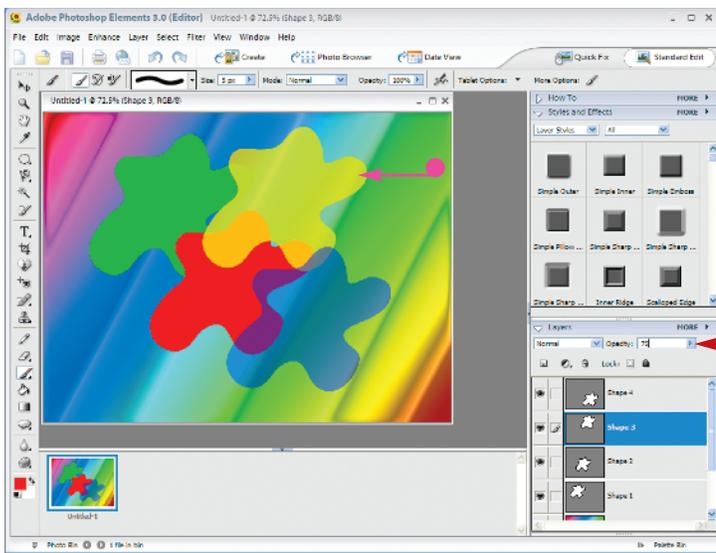
The Opacity slider appears.

- 3 Click and drag the Opacity slider to set the percentage of opacity you want.
- The layer you selected changes opacity 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 that you want to change.
- 5 Click here and select the Opacity field.



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

TIPS

Did You Know?

You cannot change the opacity of a Background layer unless you 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, and 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, their overlapping areas combine their colors and have higher opacity. 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 percent opacity and partially overlap the circles. The overlapping colors combine into a more opaque green color.

Use the blending modes to

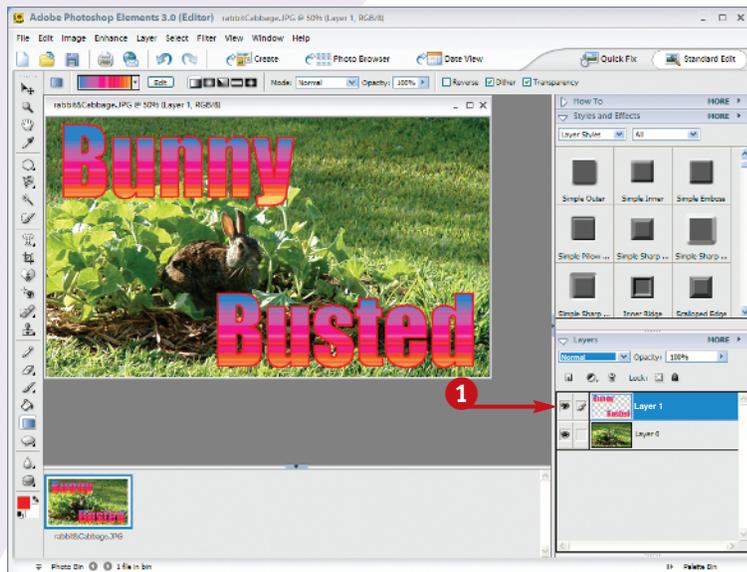
BLEND LAYERS

You can use the 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's image.

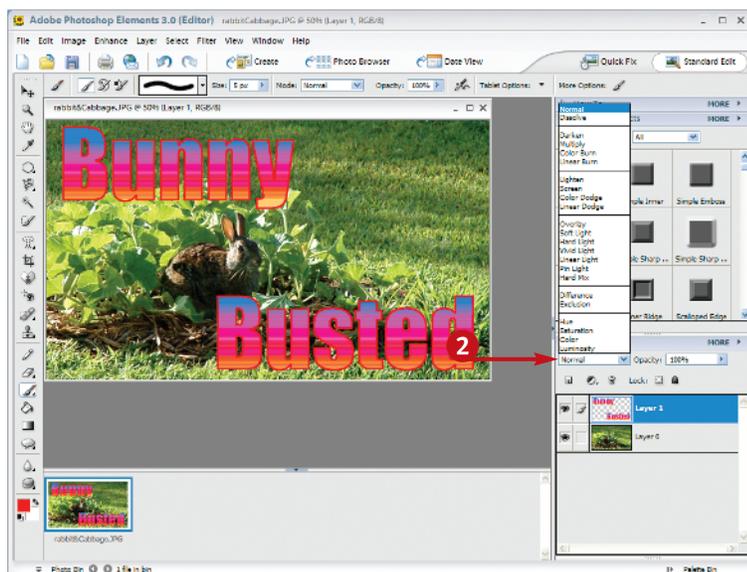
There are several groups of blending modes that you can use. Each blending mode has several variations of a basic effect form. Each mode defines how a layer interacts with other layers, mostly in the area of highlights, midtones, shadows, and color. For example, highlight-based filters ignore midtone and

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

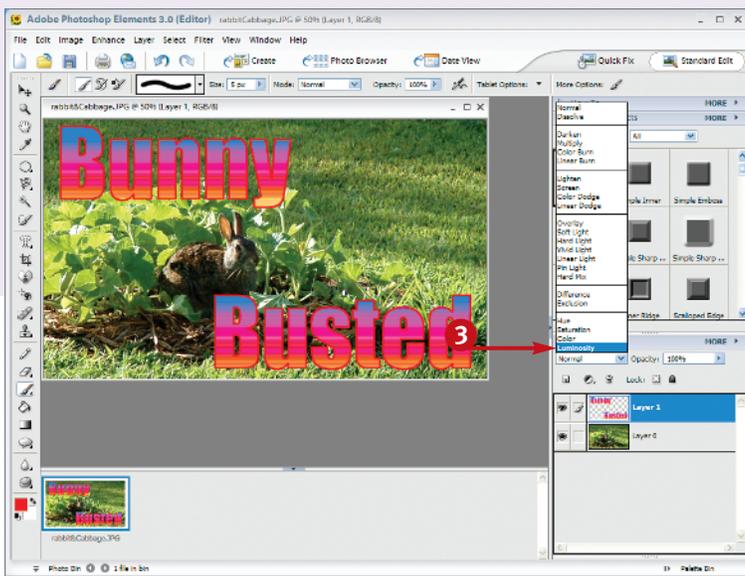
You can experiment with each blending mode. This is strongly encouraged because each image has its own range of tones and color, and there is no way to predict how each blending mode may affect the other layers.



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

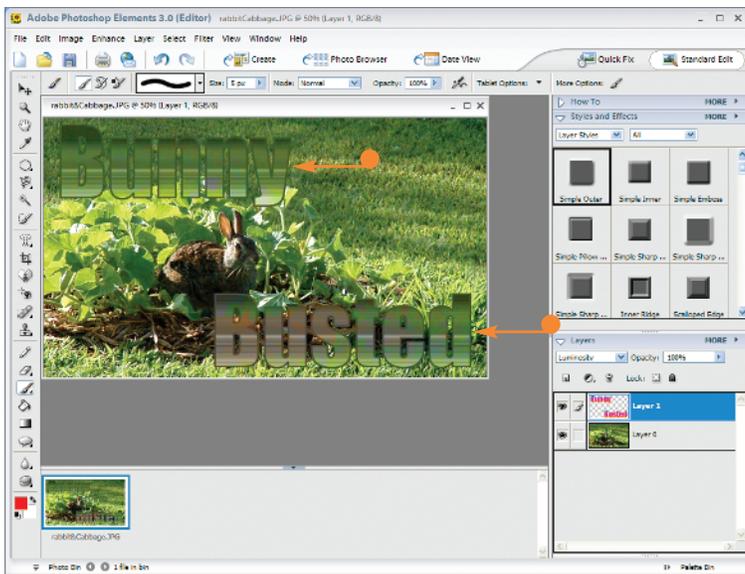


- 2 Click here to open the Blending Modes menu.



- 3 Select the blending mode you want.

#2



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

TIPS

Did You Know?

You can reset and adjust blending modes at any time. Blending modes are not permanent effects. However, they do affect all layers below the layer where you are applying the blending modes. When adjustments are made to a layer effect, the pixels of all the layers below it are affected. You can adjust the opacity to reduce the effects that the blending modes apply.

Did You Know?

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

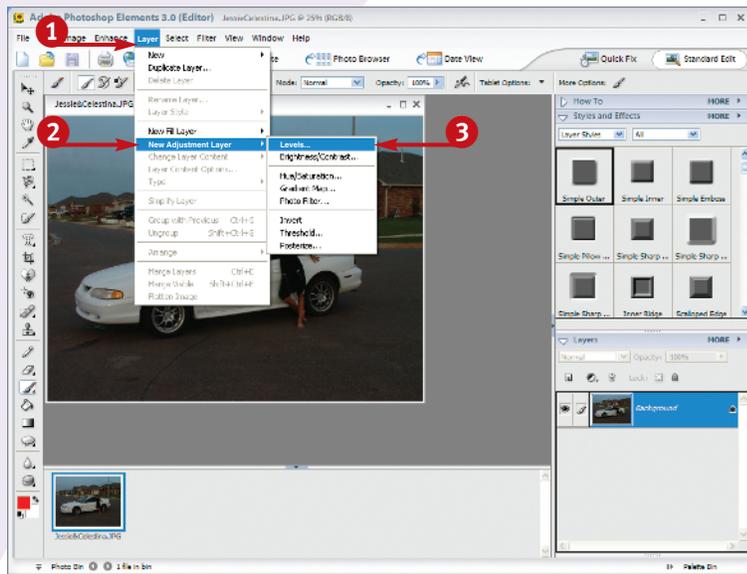
Work with ADJUSTMENT LAYERS

You can alter the appearance of layers by using other layers that have special properties. These special layers are called *adjustment layers*. Adjustment layers affect one of several specific properties of the layers below them. Hue/saturation, levels, contrast, and other options are available.

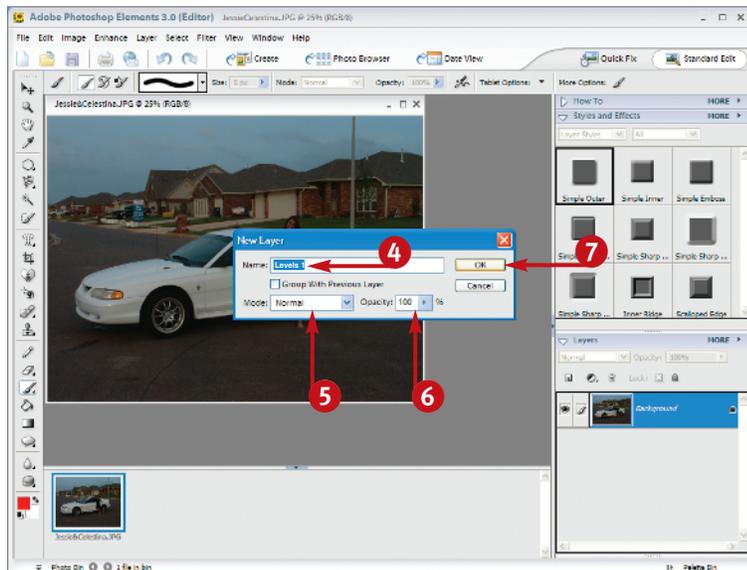
The adjustment layer is versatile because it allows you to make dramatic changes to your original image without irreversibly changing it. For example, you can enhance image color, or increase the contrast of faded photographs.

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 balances or poor contrast. The ability to make significant changes to your images without permanently changing them makes adjustment layers invaluable for photo corrections.

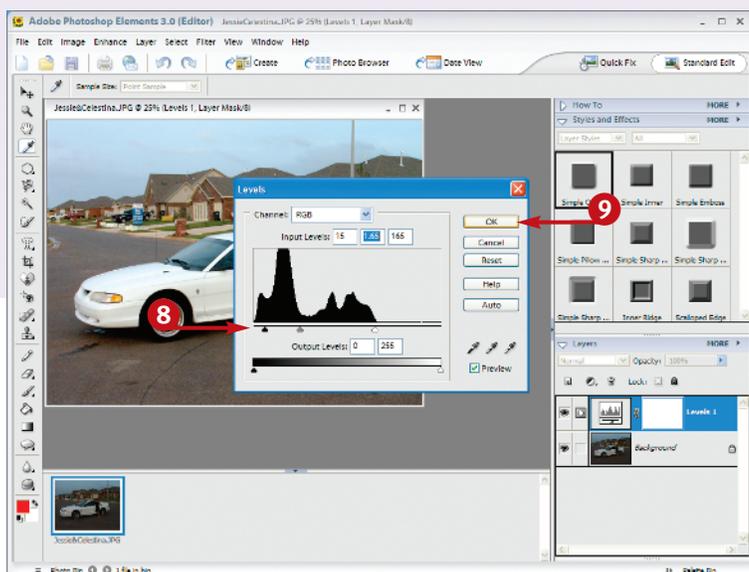


- 1 Click Layer.
- 2 Click New Adjustment Layer.
- 3 Click the category you want to adjust.



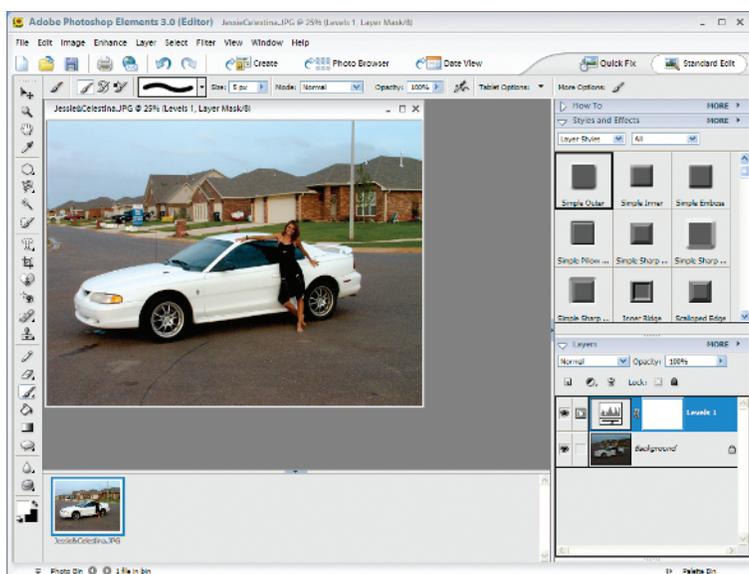
The New Layer dialog box appears.

- 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.

Although the image appears different, it actually remains unchanged because you only made changes in the adjustment layer.

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 that you want to change using the 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 different color adjustment layers set at less than 100% opacity can complement each other, blending color effects, and applying those color effects to the regular layers below.

MOVE OBJECTS

in layers

You can take advantage of the flexibility of layers and the mobility of the objects that 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.

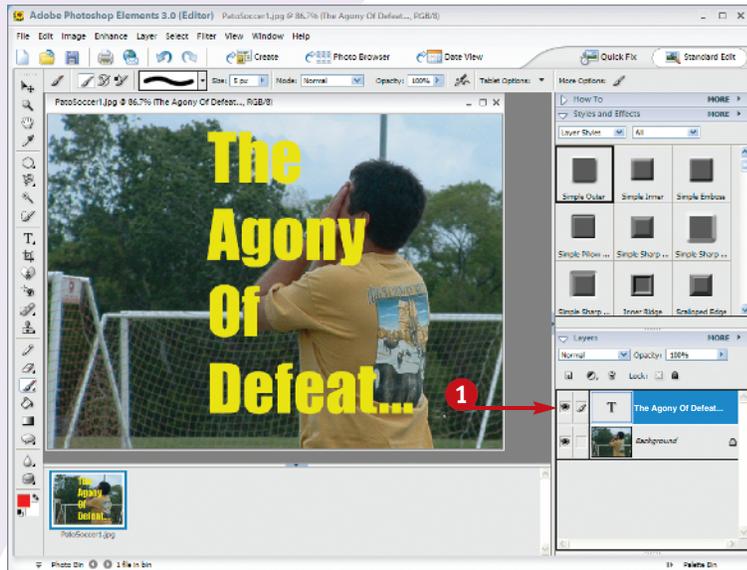
You can place your layer objects wherever you want within the image boundaries. To adjust the position of your objects, you can use the Move tool.

Using the Move tool creates a bounding box around the individual object or objects within the layer. By

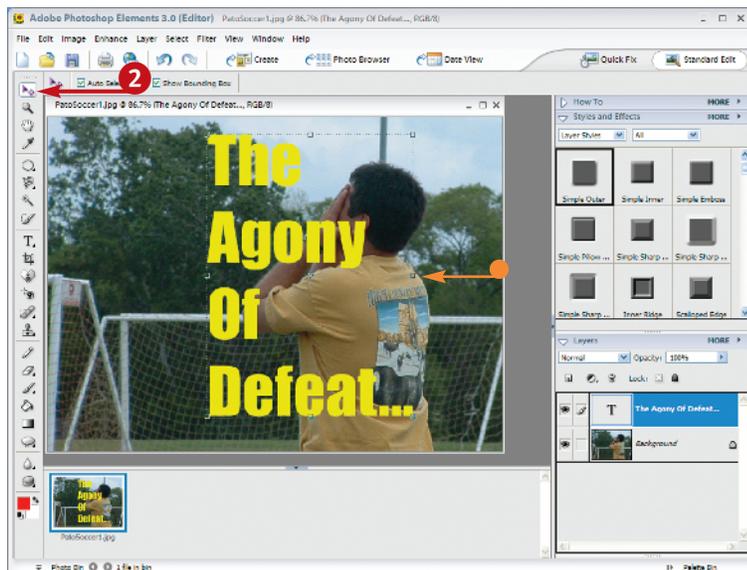
clicking and dragging the object, you can place it where you want. Alternatively, you can use the arrow keys on the keyboard for precise positioning.

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.

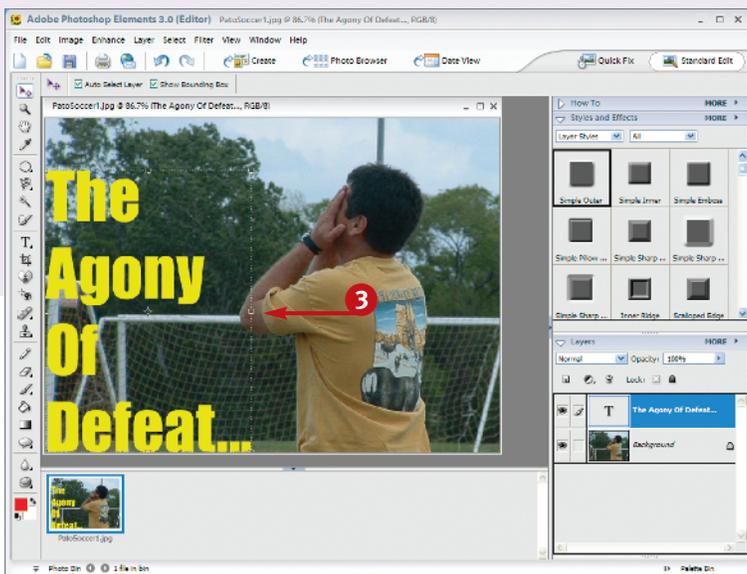
You can also switch layers by right-clicking anywhere in the image when using the Move tool. Any layers that overlap where you click should appear in a list that you can choose from to select a layer.



- 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.

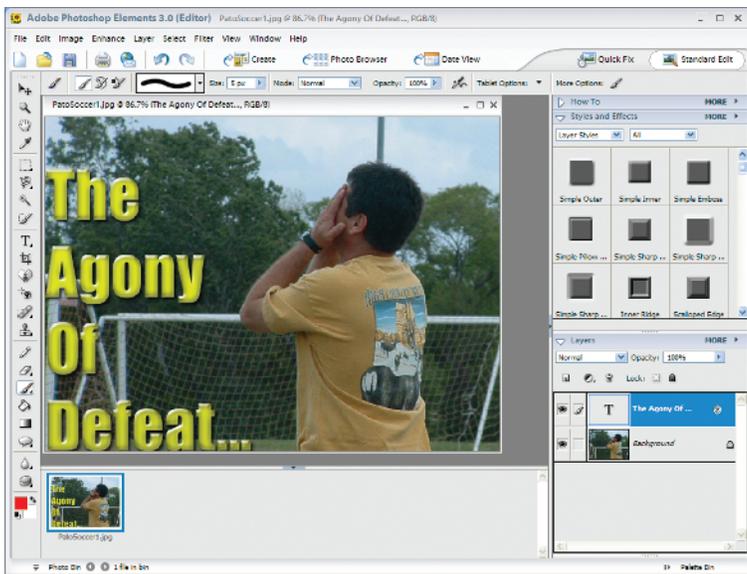


- 3 Click and drag the object that you want to move to its new position.

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 that 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 Control key while using another tool. Most tools allow you to access this shortcut.

When you use the keyboard to move an object, you can hold the Shift key while pressing the arrow keys. This moves the object several pixels at a time, instead of one pixel at a time.

ORGANIZE LAYERS

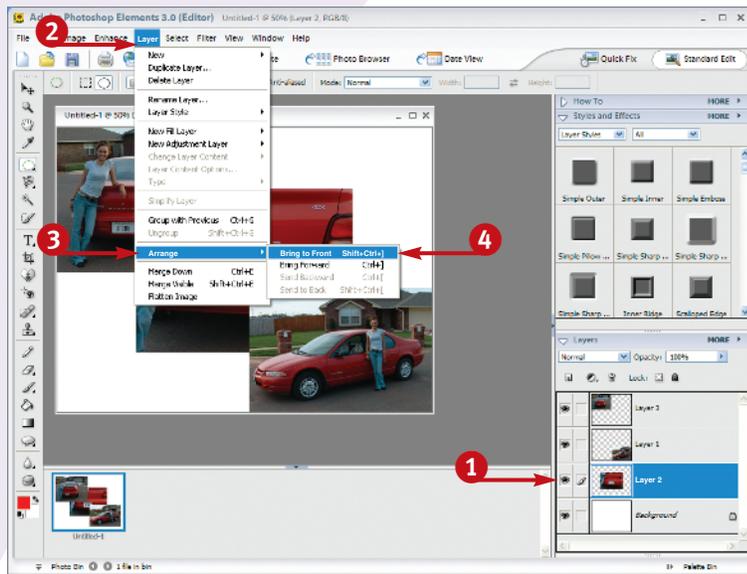
to jazz up your arrangement

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 by simply 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, meaning that the changes that you make to one layer do not affect all

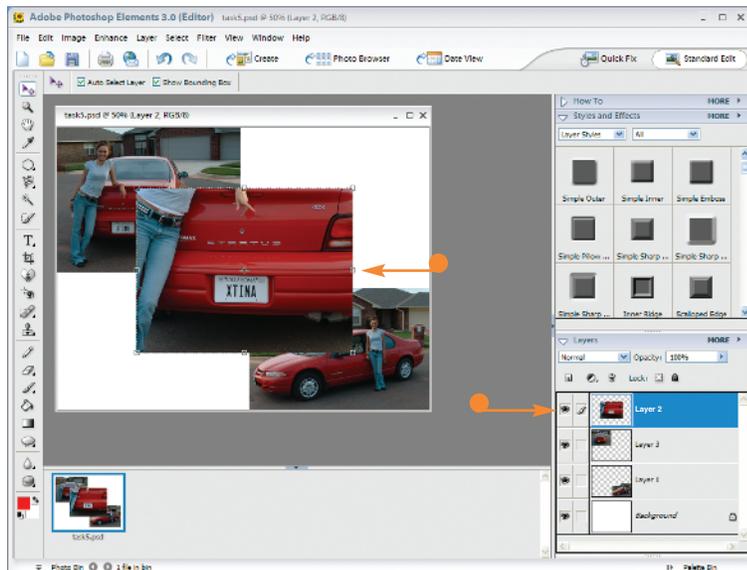
layers. However, special effects layers, such as with a blending mode, are intended to affect other layers. You can experiment to see how certain layers affect others.

You can move all of the layers except for the Background layer. However, you can convert the Background layer into a regular layer if you need to move it as well.



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.



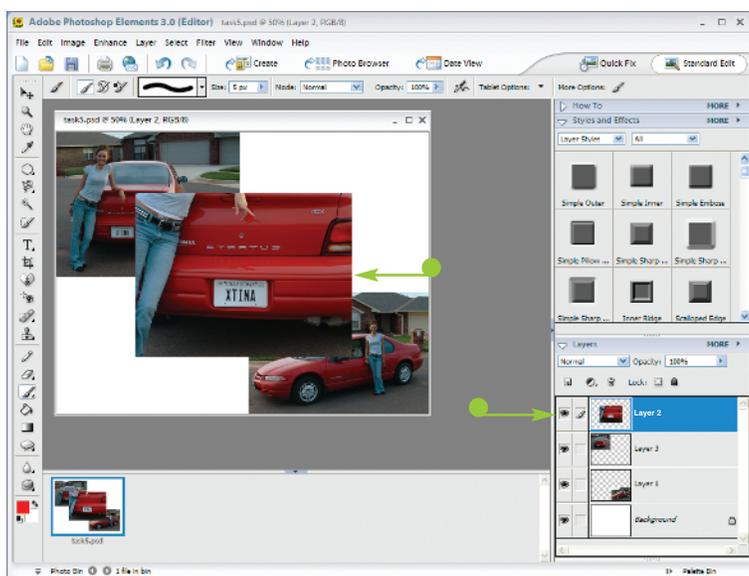
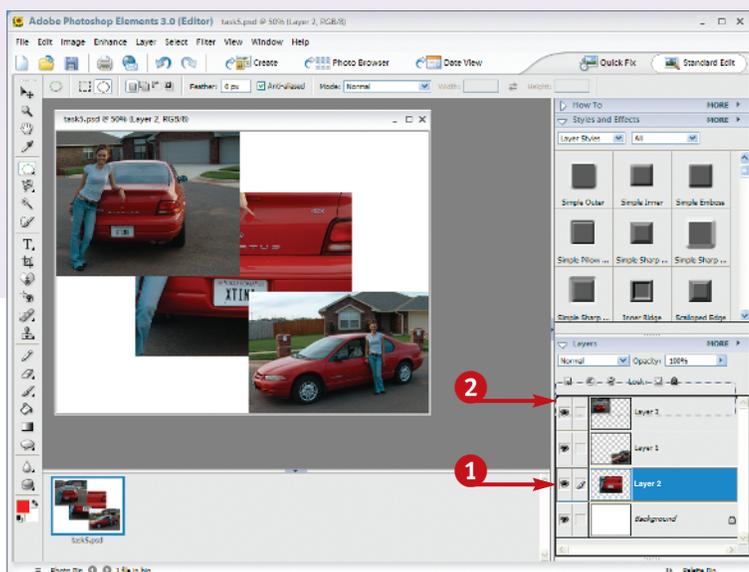
- The layers shuffle and appear in their new order.

#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.

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

Did You Know?

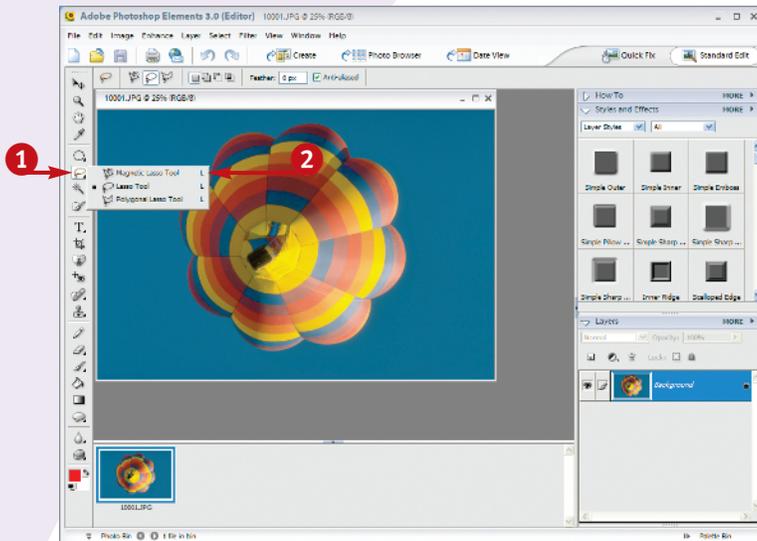
You can easily rename your layer. Click the layer you want to rename in the Layers palette, click Layer, and then Rename Layer. In the Layer Properties dialog box, type a new name and click OK to rename the layer. You can also double-click the layer in the Layers palette to open the same dialog box.

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 point, 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, representing the area that 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 reflect the object. You can deselect your selection by clicking the mouse on the inside of a completed selection.

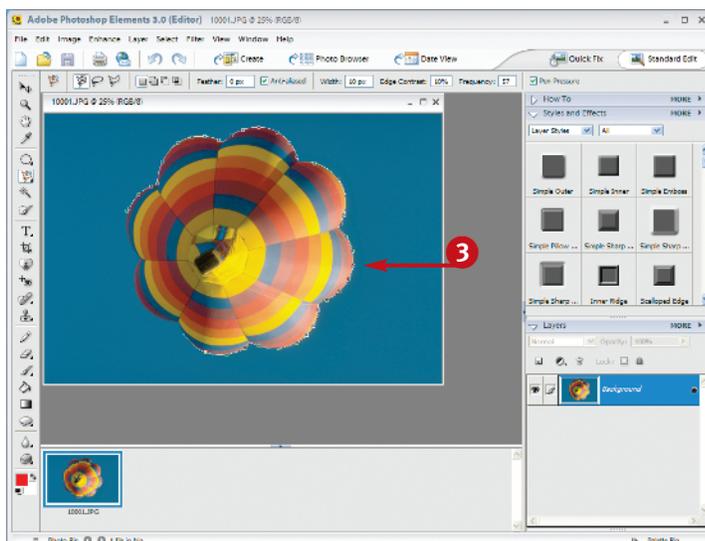


- 1 Click and hold the cursor over the Lasso tool.

The Lasso tool selection bar appears.

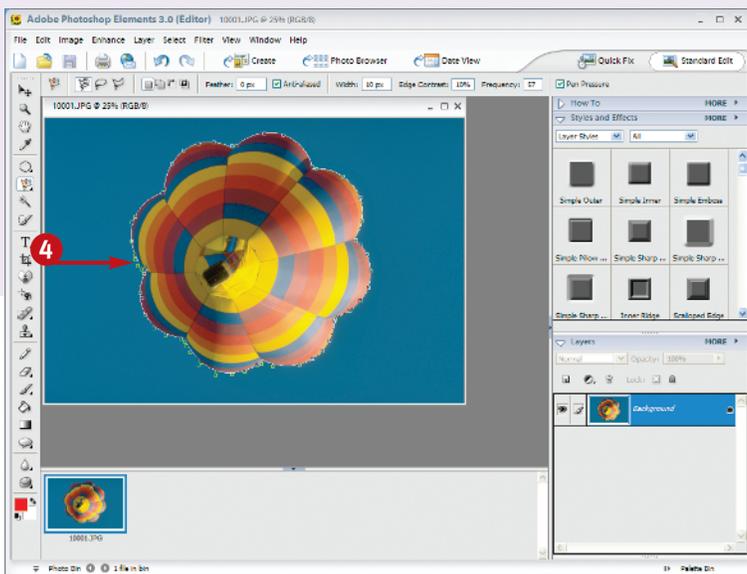
- 2 Select a Lasso tool.

This example uses the Magnetic Lasso tool.



- 3 Click and drag to make a selection.

Note: The Lasso tool requires that you fully encompass boundaries, so draw with the intent to return to the point of origin.

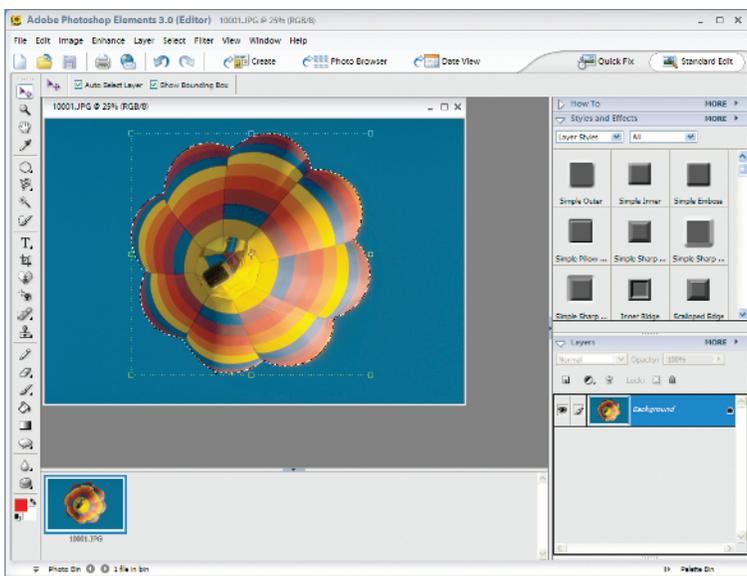


- 4 Move the cursor back to the point of origin and release the mouse button.

6



When using the Magnetic or Polygonal Lasso tool, 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 making the selection that you want to add to the current selection. 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. By clicking Select and then Save Selection, you can name and save your selection in a 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.

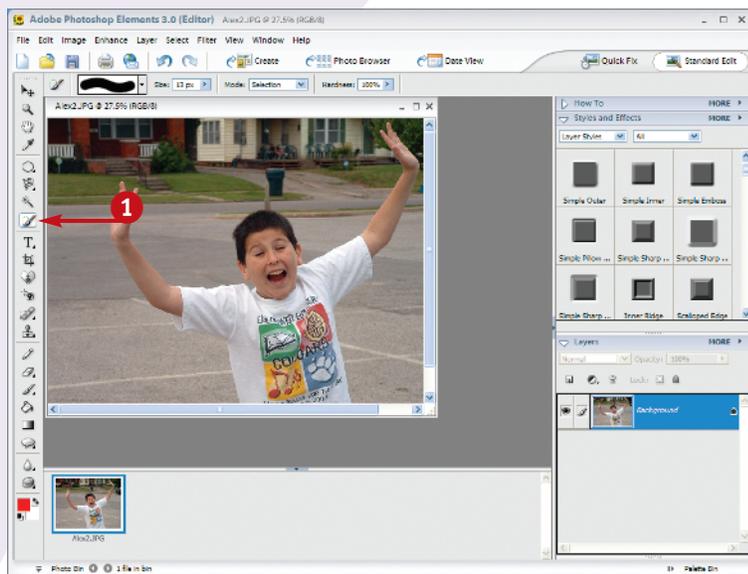
Make selections with the SELECTION BRUSH TOOL

You can easily make selections with one of the most innovative selection tools that Elements has to offer, the Selection Brush tool. The Selection Brush tool acts like the regular brush tool, except that when you draw with the Selection Brush tool, instead of pixels or colors, you paint a selection. This allows you to make sophisticated and quick selections.

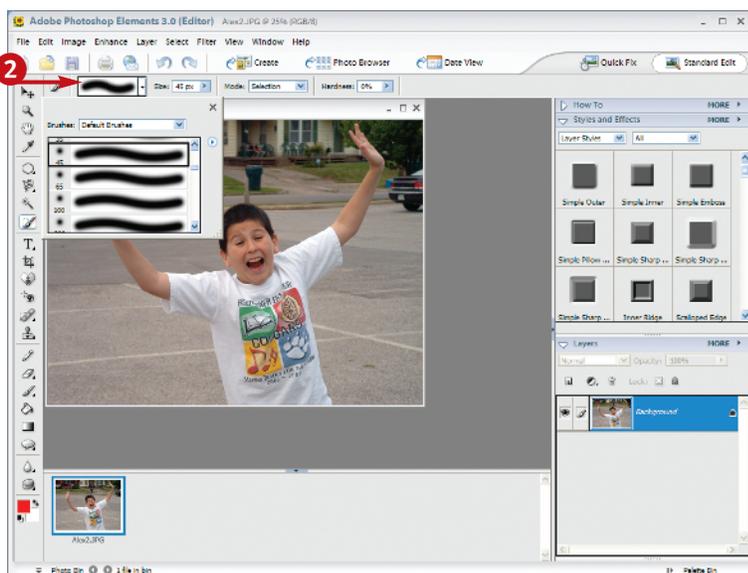
When you use the Selection Brush tool, you can choose from the library of brush shapes. You simply

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

You can adjust the hardness option that allows you 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 on the inside of the selection.



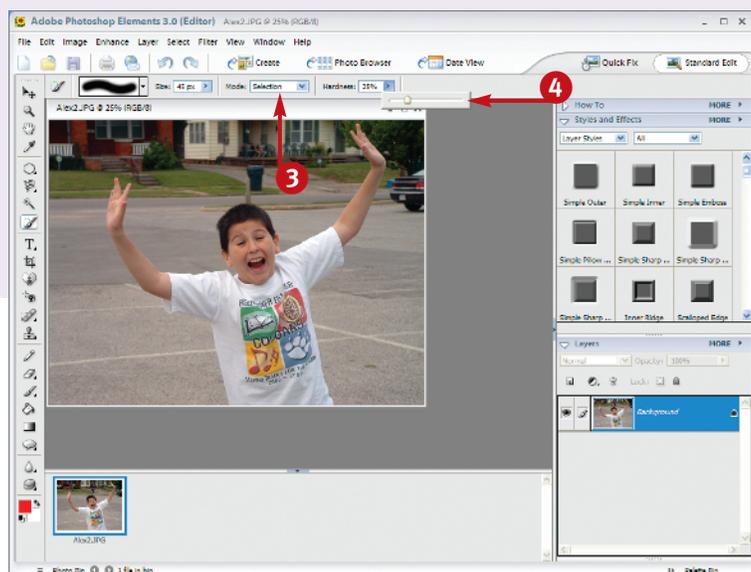
1 Click the Selection Brush tool.



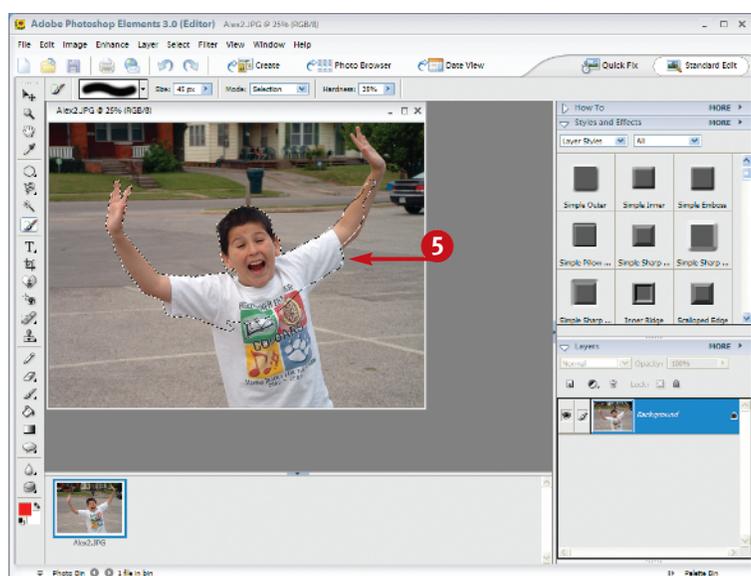
2 Click here and select a brush shape.

#7

DIFFICULTY LEVEL



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



- 5 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 very convenient corrective feature to use when you select an area by mistake.

Did You Know?

You can alter the settings of the brush or the brush shape while drawing your selections. 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 affect. When you choose a different tool or return to Selection Mode, the mask converts to a normal selection.

MODIFY

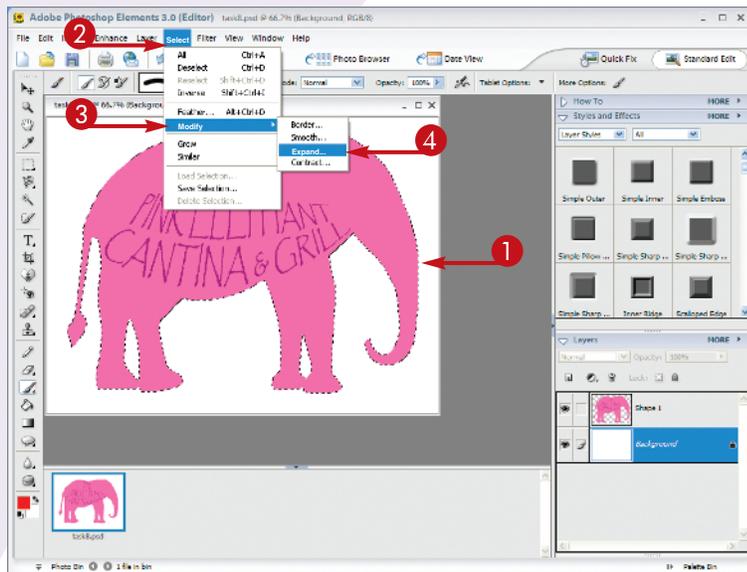
your selections

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.

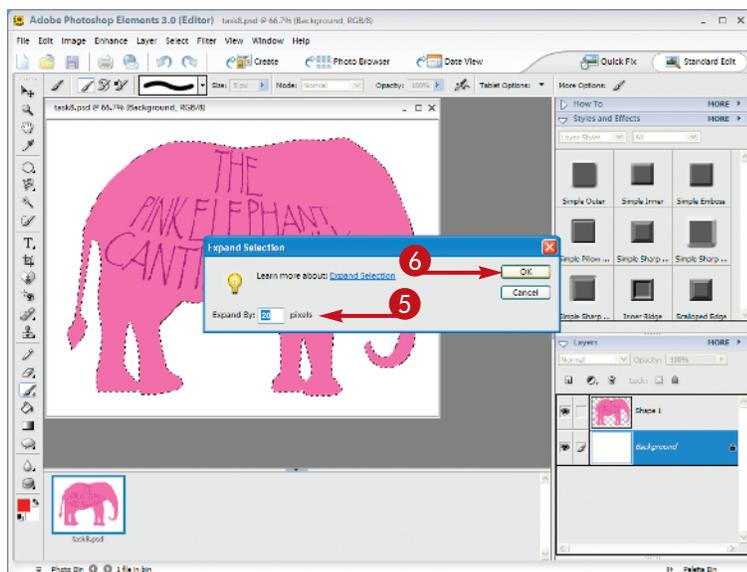
You can alter the size of your selections with these tools. For example, the Contract tool moves the perimeter of your selection inwards by a specified number of pixels. The new size is constrained, and

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 outwards. 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.



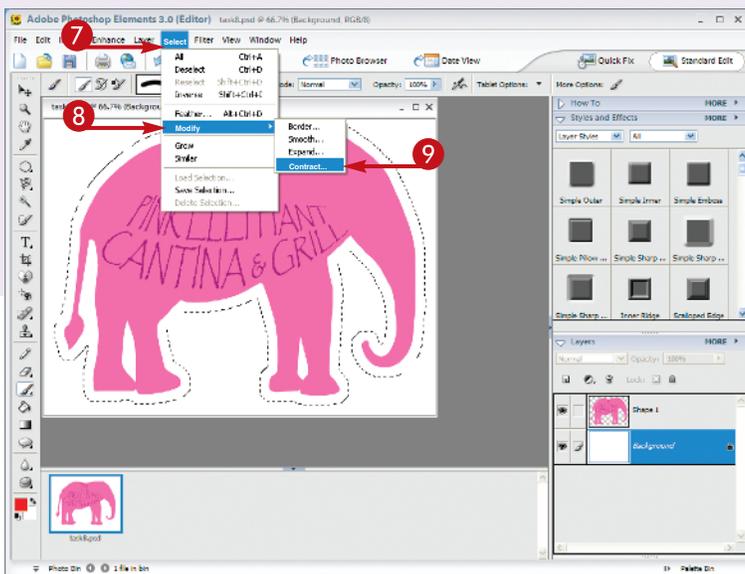
- 1 Create a selection with a selection tool.
- 2 Click Select.
- 3 Click Modify.
- 4 Click Expand.



The Expand Selection dialog box appears.

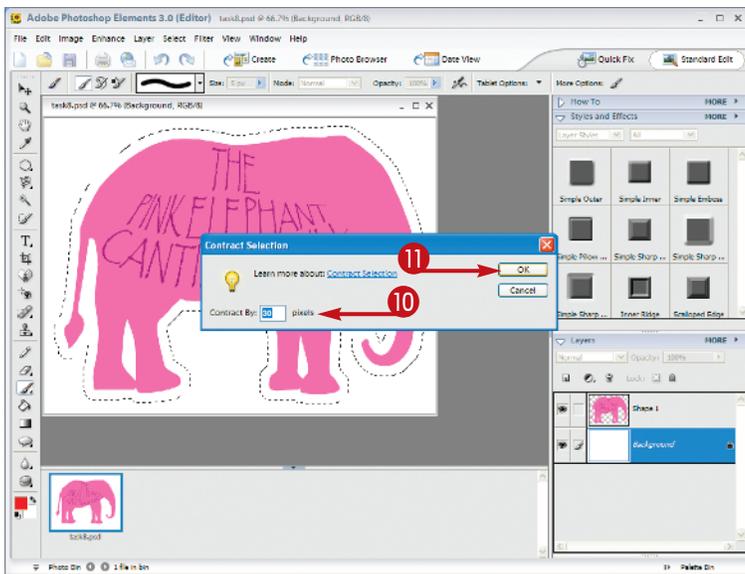
- 5 Type a number by which you want to expand your selection in pixels.
- 6 Click OK.

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 that you make only affect the area within the selection. This can reduce processing time by selecting only a single item to transform.

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 that you originally selected to the area that was not selected. This is useful for deleting backgrounds from around an object.

COPY AND PASTE

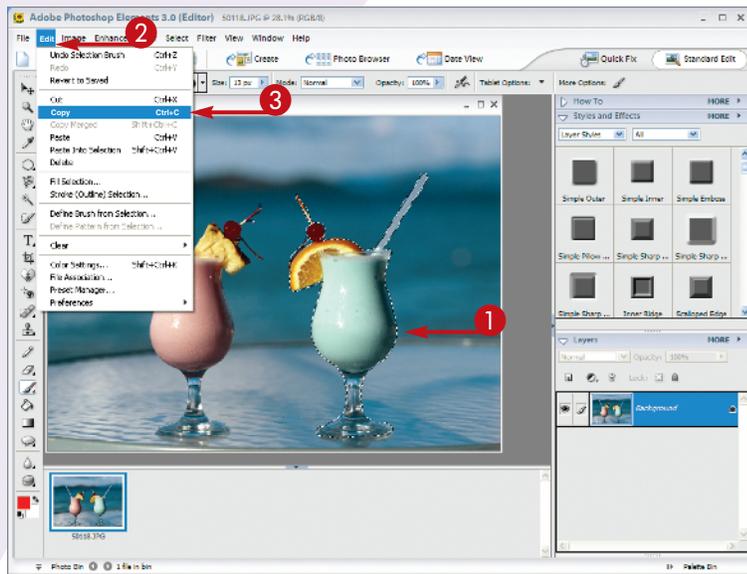
with a selection tool

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.

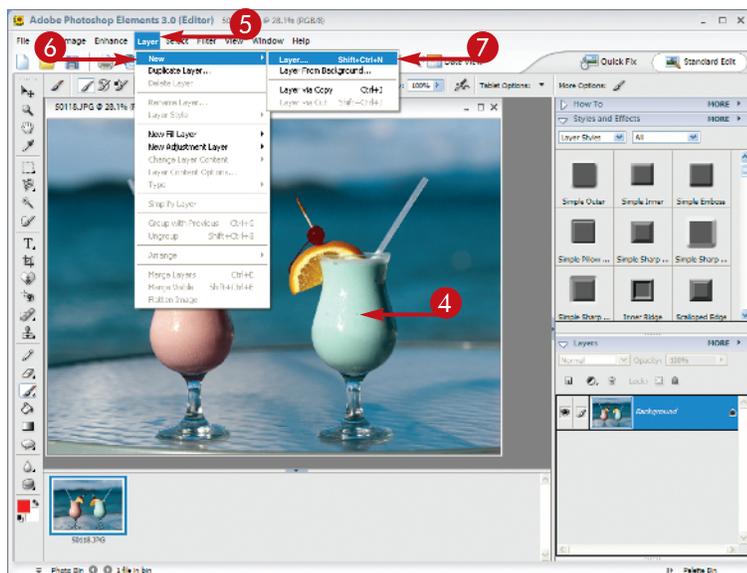
To copy with a selection is simple. You can use any of the selection tools to create an outline around the subject. Elements does not recognize any part of the

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

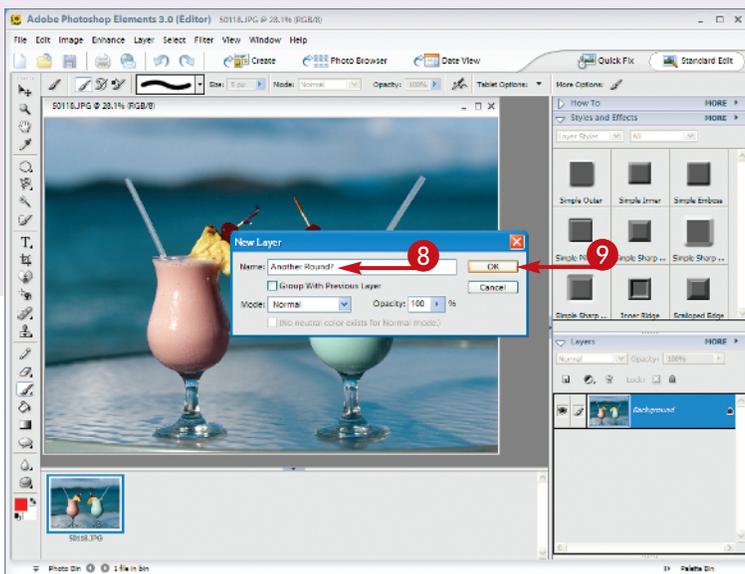
You can use selections to copy important parts of an image that you are about to edit in order to protect against permanent changes, or to create a specifically shaped selection for a special effect such as a double image.



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



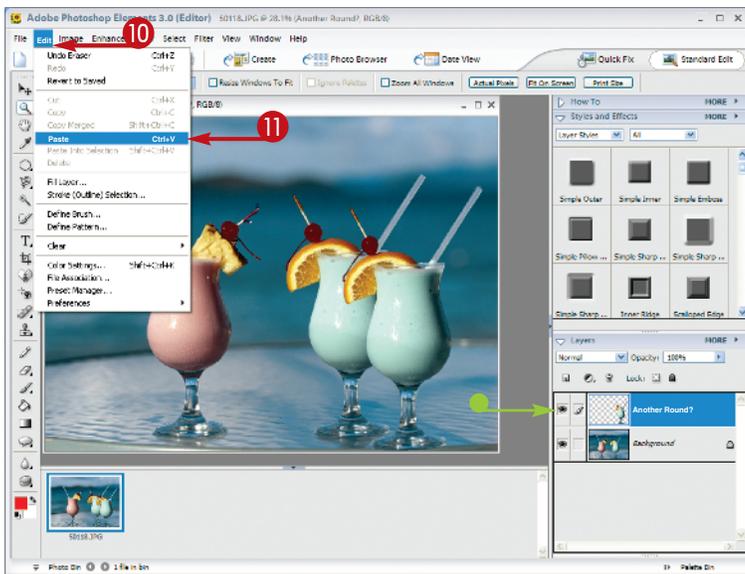
- 4 Click inside the selection to deselect it.
- 5 Click Layer.
- 6 Click New.
- 7 Click Layer.



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 of 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 multilayer document, you can use the Copy Merged command to create a selection copy of *all* of the layers.

Did You Know?

You can place your copy in several different ways. For example, if you do not deselect your selection, you can paste your 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

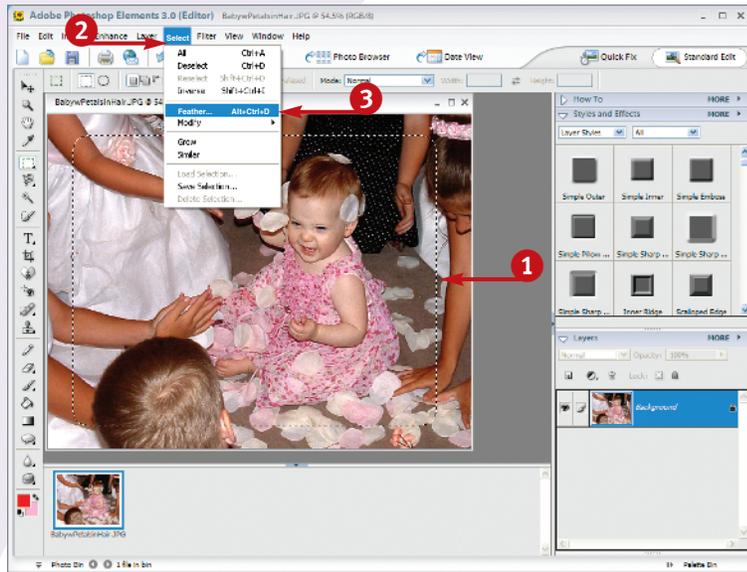
your selections

You can create selections with edges that are smooth and gradual. Feathering an edge causes the selection edges to become semitransparent, or to blend in the selection edges with the image behind it. Feathered edges are useful when copying and cutting selections from images. Feathering creates a smoother blend to the selection and reduces choppy and stark edges, which improves overall appearance.

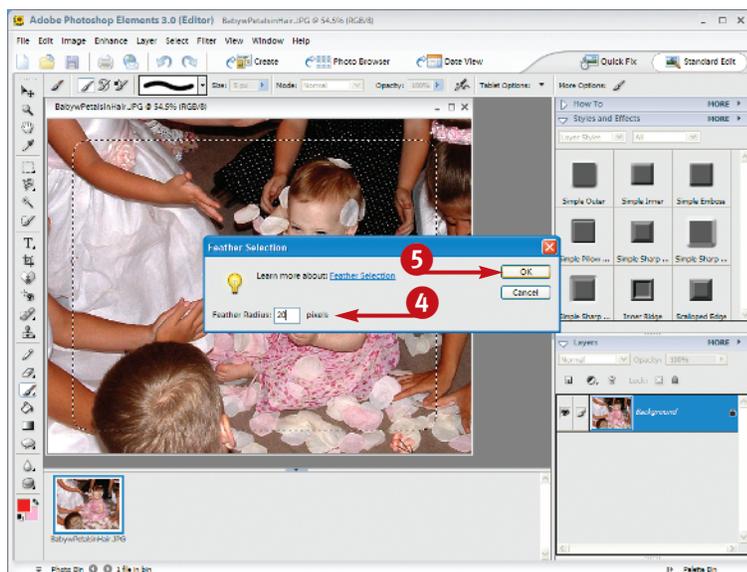
Most selection tools have feathering options that you can specify before you make a selection. This builds the feathering option into your selection. If you do

not have 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 in another. You can also use feathering to create framing effects, vignettes, and other edge effects. The amount that you enter in the Feather Selection dialog box controls the amounts 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.

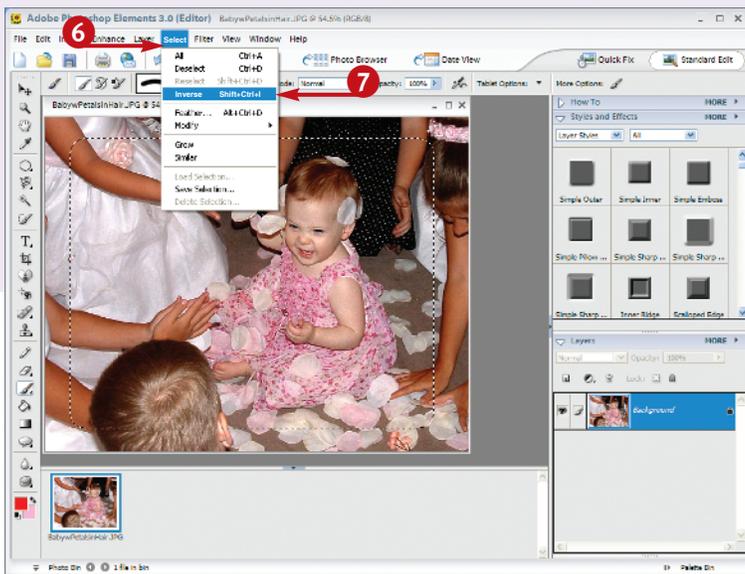


The Feather Selection dialog box appears.

- 4 Type a value in the Feather Radius box.

This value sets the amount of feathering.

- 5 Click OK.

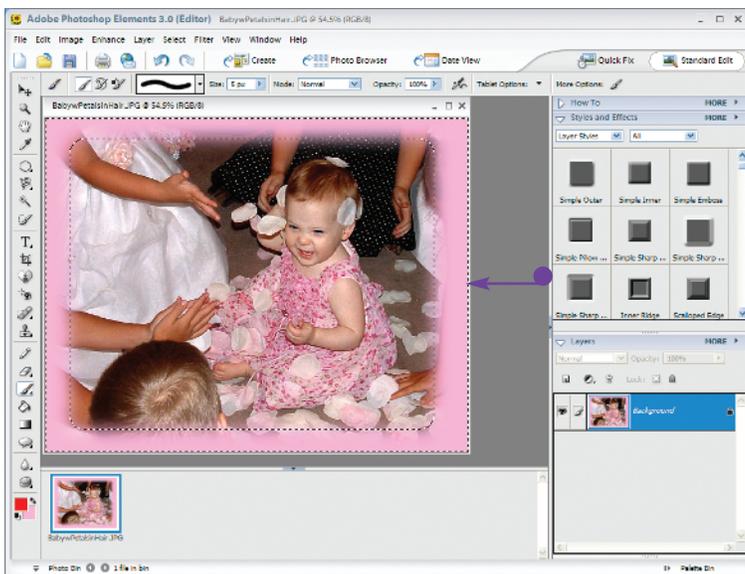


Elements feathers your selection.

#10

- 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 effects of feathering.

TIPS

Did You Know?

You can use the Feather option to remove objects from layers. However, you should leave a slight outer pixel buffer around your selected objects, so that you do not erase or blur the object's edges.

Did You Know?

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

Shortcut Keys!

There are some useful shortcuts that you can use 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 that you made.