

CHAPTER

1

Getting Started



Are you interested in working with photos on your computer? This chapter introduces you to Adobe Photoshop Elements 6, a popular software application for editing and creating digital images.

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Introducing Photoshop Elements 6

Photoshop Elements is a popular photo-editing program you can use to modify, optimize, and organize digital images. You can use the program's Editor to make imperfect snapshots clearer and more colorful, as well as retouch and restore older photos. You can also use the program's Organizer to group your photos into albums, assign descriptive keyword tags, and create slide shows, online galleries, and more.



Manipulate Photos

As its name suggests, Photoshop Elements excels at letting you edit elements in your digital photographs. The program includes numerous image-editing tools and commands you can apply to manipulate the look of your photos. Whether you import photos from a digital camera or a scanner, you can apply a wide variety of editing techniques to your images, from subtle adjustments in color to elaborate filters that make your snapshots look like paintings. See Chapter 6 for more on manipulating selected parts of your photos. See Chapter 11 for more on painting and drawing and Chapter 12 for more on adding effects.



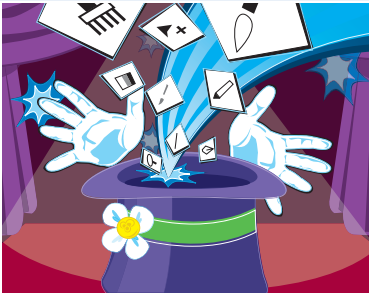
Retouch and Repair

You can use Photoshop Elements to edit new photos as well as retouch and repair older photos that suffer from aging problems. For example, you can restore a faded photo to make it more vibrant, or you can use the Clone Stamp tool to repair a tear or stain. You can also use the program's tools to fix exposure and lighting problems as well as edit out unwanted objects. See Chapter 8 for more on retouching your photos.



Add Elements

Photoshop Elements' painting tools make it a formidable illustration tool as well as photo editor. You can apply colors or patterns to your images with a variety of brush styles. See Chapter 11 to discover how to paint and draw on your photos. In addition, you can use the application's typographic tools to integrate stylized letters and words into your images. See Chapter 13 for more about adding text elements.



Create a Digital Collage

You can combine parts of different images in Photoshop Elements to create a collage. Your compositions can include photos, scanned art, text, and anything else you can save on your computer as a digital image. By placing elements onto separate layers, you can move, transform, and customize them independently of one another. See Chapter 7 for more about layers.



Organize and Catalog

As you bring photos into Photoshop Elements, the program keeps track of them in the Organizer. In the Organizer, you can place groups of photos into theme-specific albums, tag your photos with keywords that describe where they were taken or who is in them, and search for specific photos based on a variety of criteria. See Chapter 3 to read more about the Organizer.



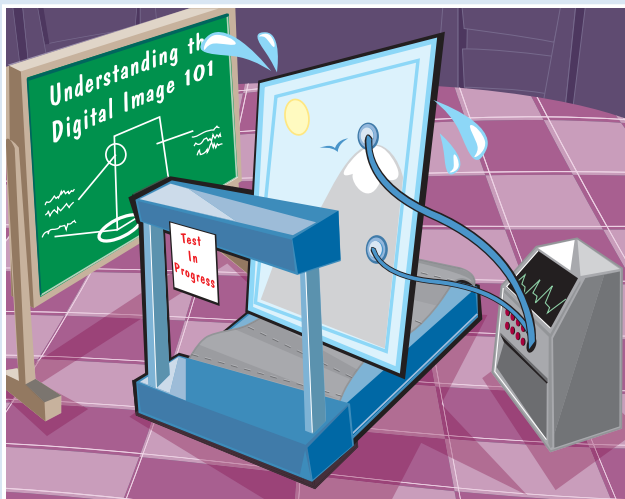
Put Your Photos to Work

After you edit your photographs, you can use them in a variety of ways. Photoshop Elements lets you print your images, save them for the Web, or bring them together into a slide show. You can e-mail your photos to someone else with the Photo Mail feature. You can also create greeting cards, calendars, and other projects. For more on creating and printing your photo projects, see Chapters 15 and 16.



Understanding Digital Images

To work with photos in Photoshop Elements, you must first turn them into a digital format. This section introduces you to some important basics about how computers store images in digital form.



Acquire Photos

You can acquire photographic images to use in Photoshop Elements from a number of sources. You can download photos to Elements from a digital camera or a photo CD. You can scan photographs, slides, or artwork and import the images directly into the program. In addition, you can acquire still images, or *frames*, from digital video. For more on importing photos, see Chapter 2.



Understanding Pixels

Digital images that you download from a camera consist of tiny, solid-color squares called *pixels*. Photoshop Elements works its magic by rearranging and recoloring these squares. You can edit specific pixels or groups of pixels by selecting the area of the photo you want to edit. If you zoom in close, you can see the pixels that make up your image.



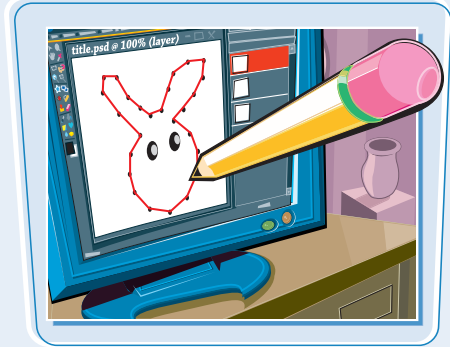
Bitmap Images

Images that are composed of pixels are known as *bitmap images*, or sometimes *raster images*. The pixels are arranged in a rectangular grid, and each pixel includes information about its color and position. Most of the time when you are working in Elements you are working with bitmap content.



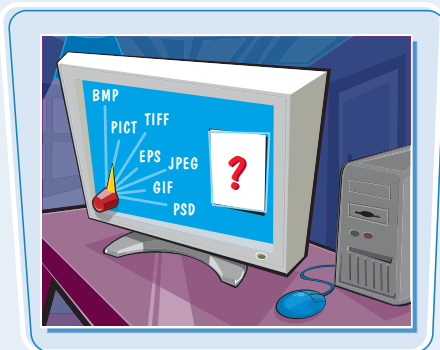
Vector Graphics

The other common way of displaying pictures on your computer is with vector graphics. Vector graphics encode image information using mathematical equations rather than pixels. Unlike raster images, vector graphics can change size without a loss of quality. When you add shapes or text to your photos in Elements, you are working with vector graphics.



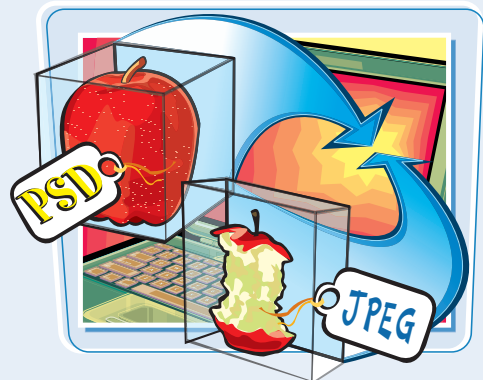
Supported File Formats

Photoshop Elements supports a variety of file types you can both import and export. Popular file formats include BMP, PICT, TIFF, EPS, JPEG, GIF, PNG, and PSD, which stands for Photoshop Document. Files that you save in the PSD format can be shared with other Adobe programs, such as Photoshop and Illustrator. For images that are published on the Internet, JPEG, GIF, and PNG are the most common formats.



File Size

An important way file formats differ from one another is in the amount of storage they take up on your computer. File formats such as PSD and TIFF tend to take up more space because they faithfully save all the information that was originally captured by your camera or other device. Those formats can also include multiple layers. JPEG, GIF, and PNG files, on the other hand, are built to be sent over the Internet and usually sacrifice some quality for the sake of compactness.



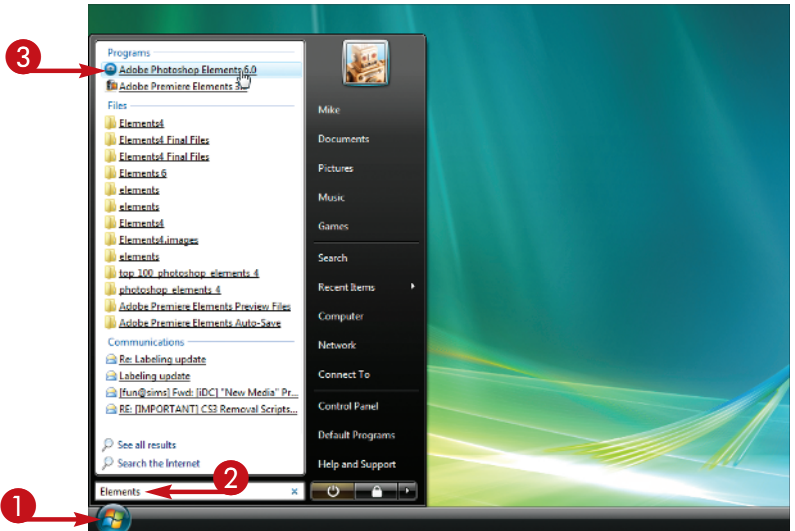
Start Photoshop Elements

You can start Photoshop Elements and begin creating and editing digital images.



Start Photoshop Elements

- 1 Click the **Start** button.
- 2 Type **Elements** in the search box.
Windows displays a list of search results.
- 3 Click **Adobe Photoshop Elements 6**.



The Photoshop Elements Welcome Screen opens.

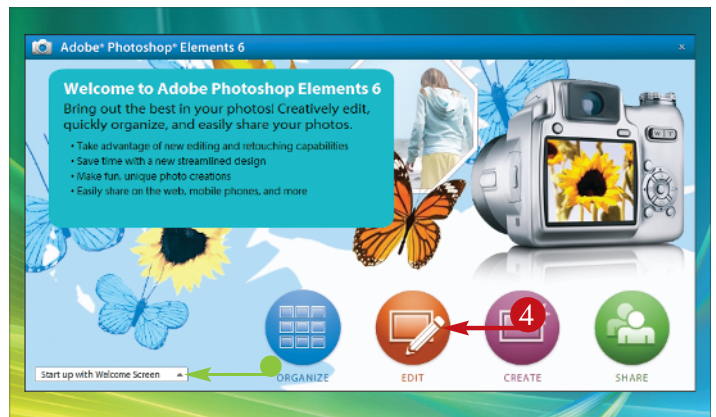
The Welcome Screen displays clickable icons that take you to different views in Photoshop Elements.

- 4 Click **Edit**.

The Photoshop Elements Editor opens.

You can click **Organize**, **Create**, or **Share** to open the Organizer.

- To change how Elements starts, click here and choose an option.



In the Photoshop Elements Editor, you can use a combination of tools, menu commands, and palette-based features to open and edit your digital photos. The main Editor pane displays the photos that you are currently modifying. This section gives you a preview of the interface elements in the Editor.

To open the Editor, click Edit in the Welcome Screen.

Image Window

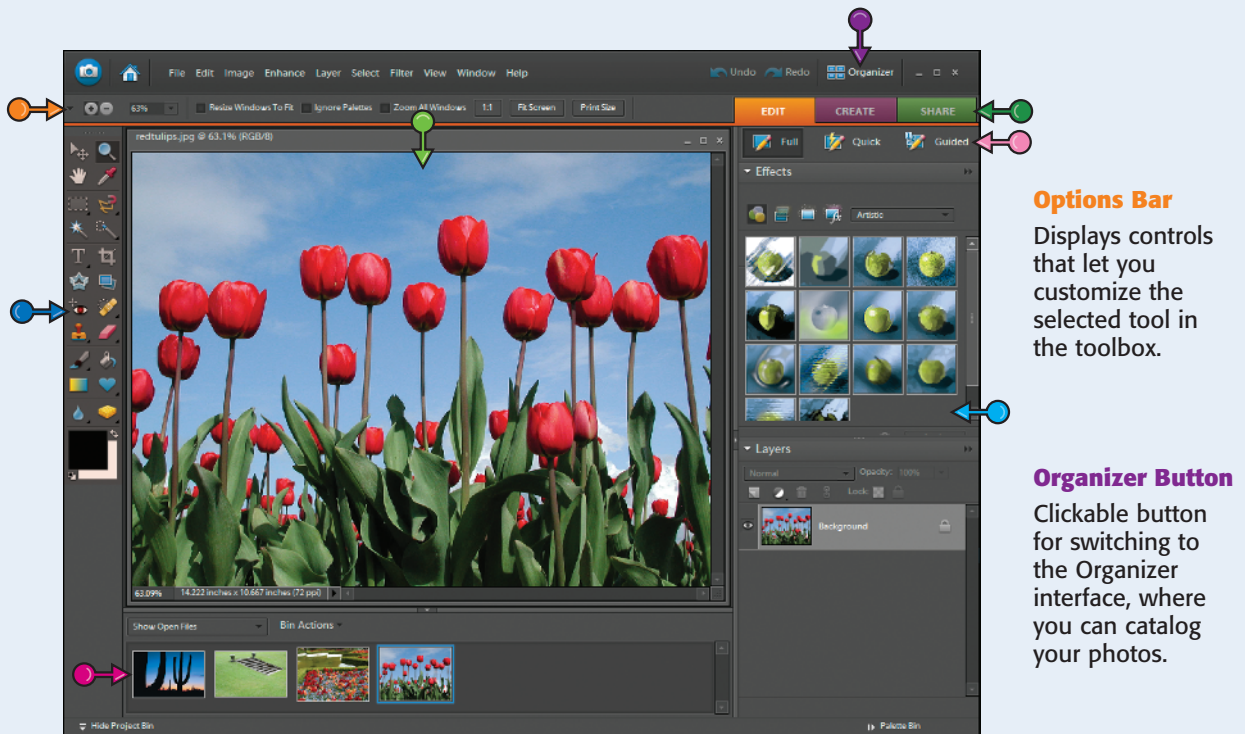
Displays each photo you open in Photoshop Elements.

Project Bin

Enables you to open and work with multiple photos.

Toolbox

Displays a variety of icons, each representing an image-editing tool.



Options Bar

Displays controls that let you customize the selected tool in the toolbox.

Organizer Button

Clickable button for switching to the Organizer interface, where you can catalog your photos.

Palette Bin

A storage area for frequently used palettes.

Edit Mode Buttons

Clickable buttons for switching between the different editing modes.

Task Tabs

Clickable tabs for switching between workflows in the Editor.

The Organizer Workspace

In the Photoshop Elements Organizer, you can catalog, view, and sort your growing library of digital photos. The main Organizer pane shows miniature versions of the photos in your catalog. This section gives you a preview of the interface elements in the Organizer.

To open the Organizer, click Organize, Create, or Share in the Welcome Screen.

Photo Browser

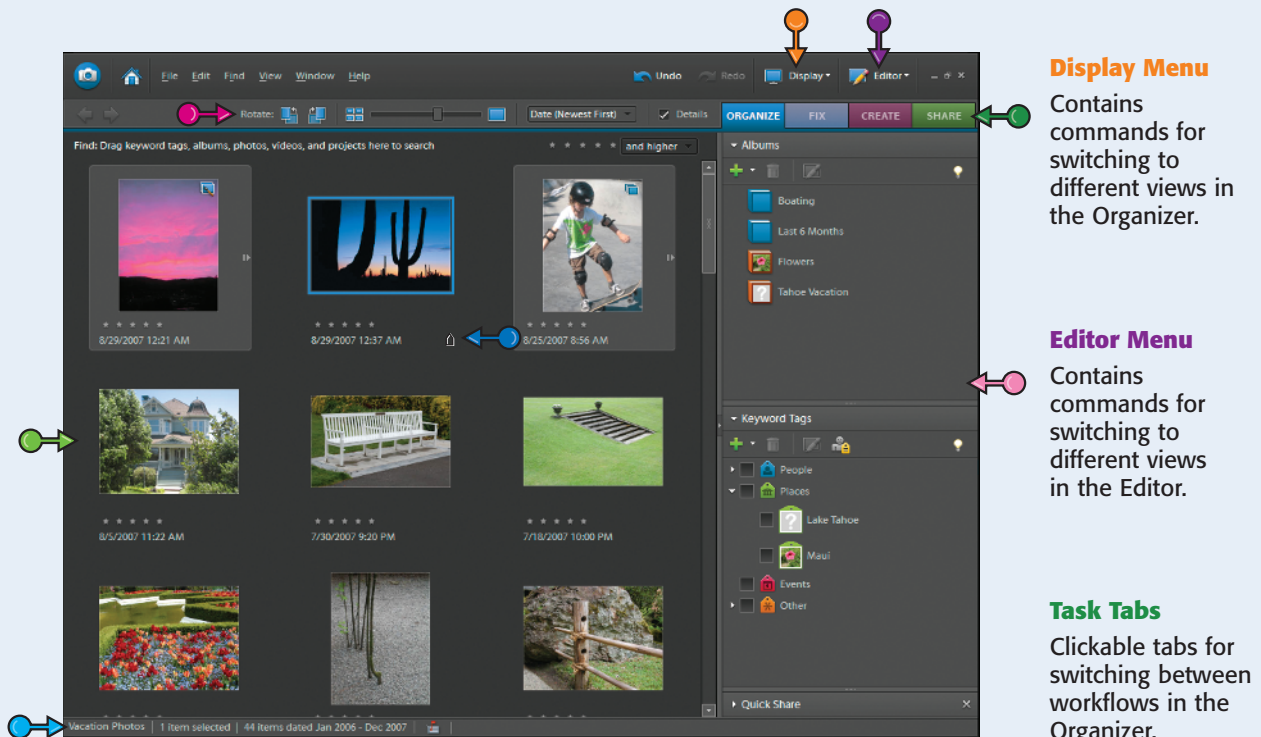
Displays miniature versions, or *thumbnails*, of the photos in your catalog.

Toolbar

Displays buttons and other options for modifying and sorting photos in the Photo Browser.

Tag Icon

Shows which tags have been applied to a photo.



Display Menu

Contains commands for switching to different views in the Organizer.

Editor Menu

Contains commands for switching to different views in the Editor.

Task Tabs

Clickable tabs for switching between workflows in the Organizer.

Status Bar

Displays the name of the currently open catalog, how many photos are in the catalog, and other summary information.

Palette Bin

A storage area for frequently used palettes.

Switch Between the Editor and the Organizer

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Photoshop Elements has two main views: the Editor and the Organizer. The Editor enables you to modify, combine, and optimize your photos, and the Organizer lets you browse, sort, and categorize photos in your collection. You can easily switch between the two views.

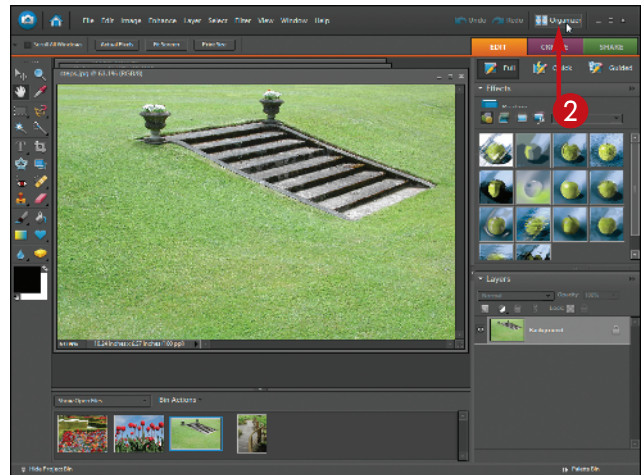


Switch Between the Editor and the Organizer

- 1 Start Photoshop Elements in the Editor view.

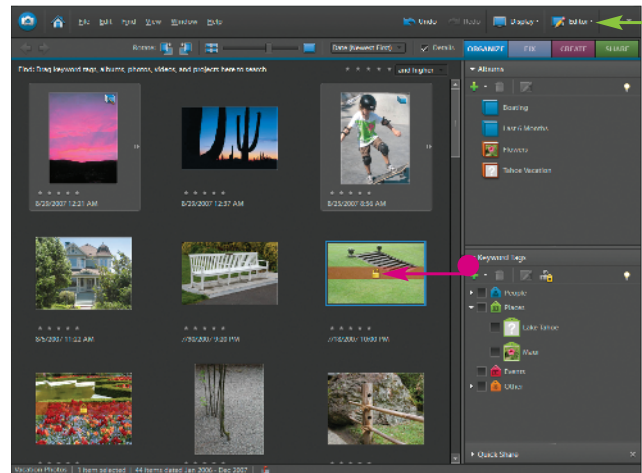
Note: See the section “Start Photoshop Elements” for details on starting the program.

- 2 Click **Organizer**.



The Organizer appears.

- You can click **Editor** and then **Full Edit** to return to the Editor.
- A lock icon (🔒) appears on any Organizer photos that are currently being edited in the Editor.



Anatomy of the Elements Toolbox

To aid in manipulating photos, Photoshop Elements offers a variety of specialized tools that let you edit your image. Take some time to familiarize yourself with the toolbox tools.

Move

Lets you move selected areas of an image.

Zoom

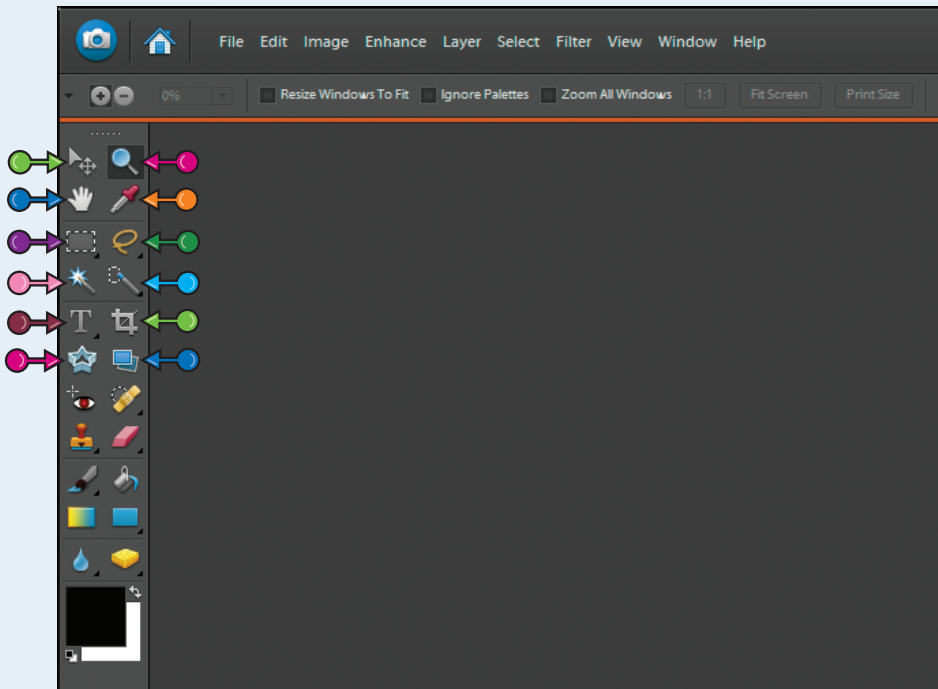
Lets you zoom your view of an image in or out.

Hand

Lets you view unseen parts of larger images.

Eyedropper

Lets you sample color from an area of an image.



Marquee

Lets you select pixels by drawing a box or circle around the area you want to edit.

Lasso

Lets you select pixels by drawing a free-form shape around the area you want to edit.

Magic Wand

Lets you select pixels of odd-shaped areas based on similar pixel color.

Quick Selection Brush

Lets you select pixels using brush shapes.

Straighten

Lets you straighten tilted images.

Cookie Cutter

Lets you crop your image into shapes.

Crop

Lets you trim an image to create a new size.

Type

Lets you add letters and other symbols to an image.

Red-Eye Removal

Lets you correct red-eye problems.

Spot Healing Brush

Lets you quickly fix slight imperfections by cloning nearby pixels.

Clone Stamp

Lets you duplicate an area of the image.

Eraser

Lets you erase pixels.

Brush

Lets you paint strokes of color.

Paint Bucket

Lets you fill areas with color.

Gradient

Lets you create blended color effects to use as fills.

Custom Shape

Lets you draw predefined shapes.

Foreground and Background Colors

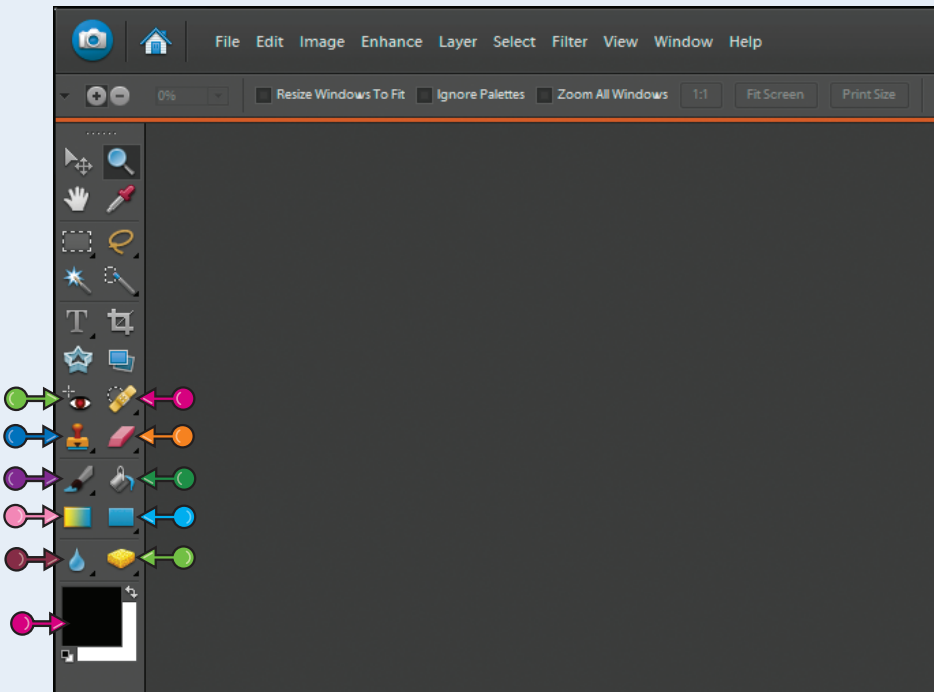
Lets you set the foreground and background colors that different tools apply.

Sponge

Lets you adjust color saturation or intensity.

Blur

Lets you blur objects in your image.



Work with Toolbox Tools

You can use the tools in Photoshop Elements' toolbox to make changes to an image. Positioning the mouse pointer over a tool displays the tool name. After you click to select a tool, the Options bar displays controls for customizing how the tool works. Some tools have a tiny triangle in the corner indicating hidden tools you can select. For example, the Marquee tool has two variations: Rectangular and Elliptical.

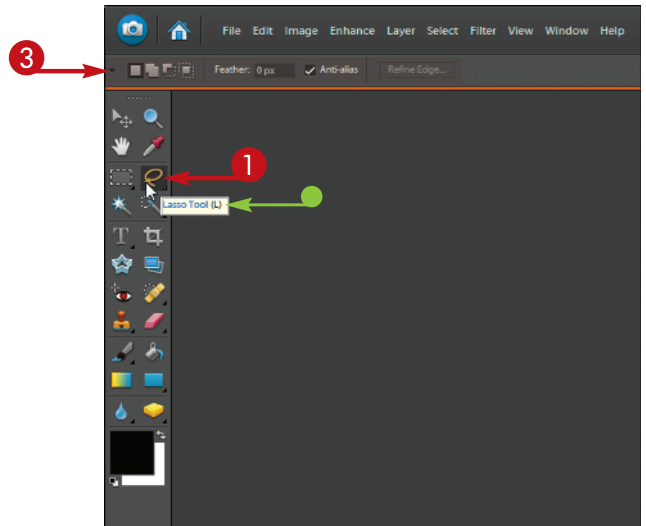


Work with Toolbox Tools

SELECT A TOOL

- 1 Position the mouse pointer (☞) over a tool.
 - A label appears displaying the tool name. You can click the tool name to access Help information about the tool.
- 2 Click a tool to select it.

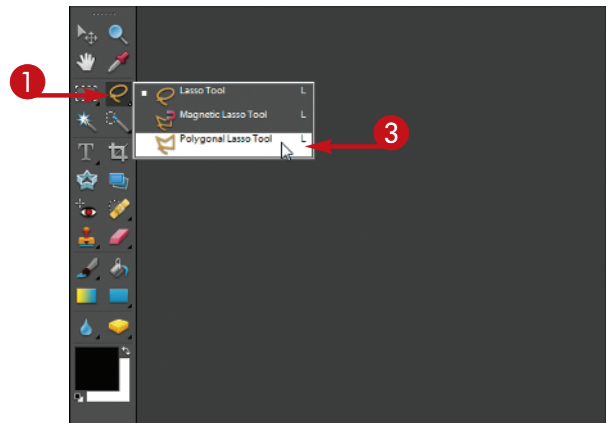
The Options bar displays customizing options for the selected tool.
- 3 Specify any options you want for the tool.



SELECT A HIDDEN TOOL

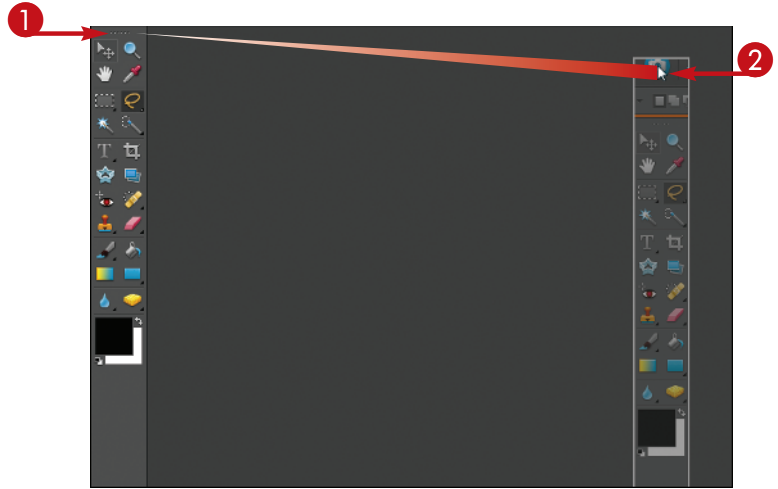
- 1 Click a tool that has a triangle in its corner.
- 2 Press and hold the mouse button.

A menu of hidden tools appears.
- 3 Click the tool you want to use.

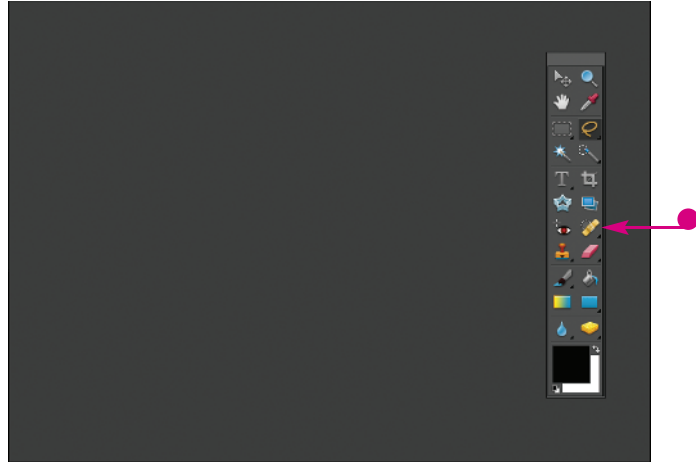


MOVE THE TOOLBOX

- 1 Position the mouse pointer (☞) over the top of the docked toolbox.
- 2 Drag the toolbox to a new location on the screen.



- 3 Release the mouse button.
- Photoshop Elements displays the toolbox as a floating palette.
- You can drag the toolbox to another location by dragging the top of the palette.

**TIPS****How do I close the floating toolbox?**

Closing the toolbox palette closes the toolbox entirely so that the tools no longer appear on-screen. To close the floating toolbox palette, click **Window**, and then click **Tools**. To reopen the palette, click **Window** and then **Tools** again. If the toolbox is floating, you can press **Tab** to open or close it.

**How do I dock my floating toolbox again?**

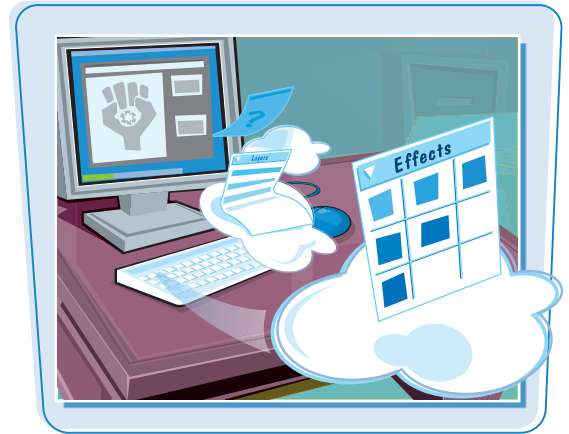
Position the mouse pointer (☞) over the top of the toolbox palette, and then click and drag the toolbox to the left side of the program window. Photoshop Elements automatically docks it for you when you drag it close enough to the left edge of the window.



Work with Palettes

You can open free-floating windows called *palettes* to access different Photoshop Elements commands and features. You can store the palettes you use the most in the Palette Bin for easy access. You can collapse and expand palettes in the Palette Bin.

For more on the location of the Palette Bin, see the section “The Editor Workspace.”



Work with Palettes

EXPAND OR COLLAPSE A PALETTE IN THE PALETTE BIN

- 1 Click the triangle next to the palette name in the Palette Bin.
 - Click the **Expand** arrow (▶) to display a collapsed palette.
 - Click the **Collapse** arrow (▼) to collapse a palette from view.
- In this example, the Effects palette is now shown.



OPEN A NEW PALETTE

- 1 Click **Window**.
- 2 Click the palette name.

A check mark (✓) next to the palette name indicates the palette is already open.



- The palette opens.

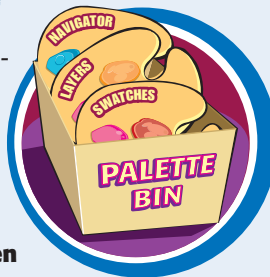
You can move the palette by dragging its title bar.



TIPS

How do I add a palette to the Palette Bin?

Open the palette as a free-floating window and then click the palette menu's **More** button. This displays a menu of related palette commands. Next, click **Place in Palette Bin when Closed**. After you close the palette, Photoshop Elements adds the palette to the Palette Bin.



How do I minimize a free-floating palette?

Double-click the palette's title to minimize the palette window. To view the full palette again, double-click the title.



continued

Work with Palettes (continued)

You can move palettes around the program window to suit the way you work. You can close a palette you no longer want to view. You can also hide the Palette Bin to free up more on-screen workspace.



Work with Palettes (continued)

MOVE A PALETTE

- 1 Click and drag the palette title to the work area.
- 2 Release the mouse.

The palette opens as a free-floating window.

- You can click the **More** button to access commands relevant to the palette.

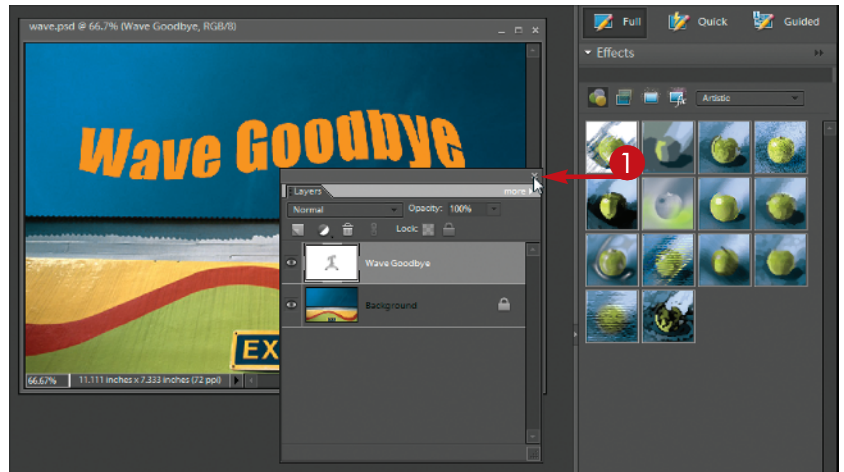
You can resize the Palette Bin by dragging the bin's border.



CLOSE A PALETTE

- 1 Click the **Close** button (✕).

The palette closes.



CLOSE THE PALETTE BIN

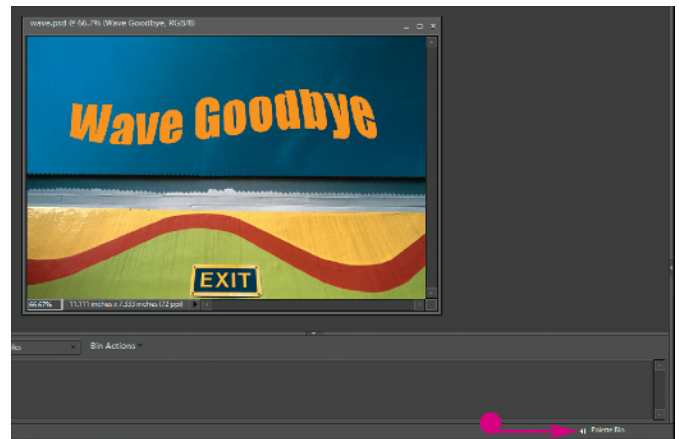
- 1 Click the **Close Palette Bin** button (■).

You can also click **Window** and then click **Palette Bin**.



The Palette Bin closes.

- To display the bin again, click the **Open Palette Bin** button (■).



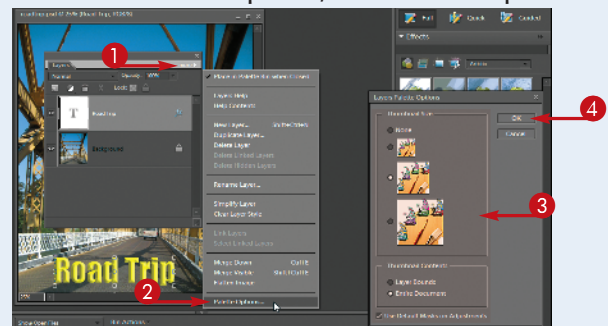
TIP

Can I customize a palette?

You can customize some of the palettes in Photoshop Elements. For example, you can change the size of the thumbnail image that appears in the Layers palette. To customize a palette, follow these steps:

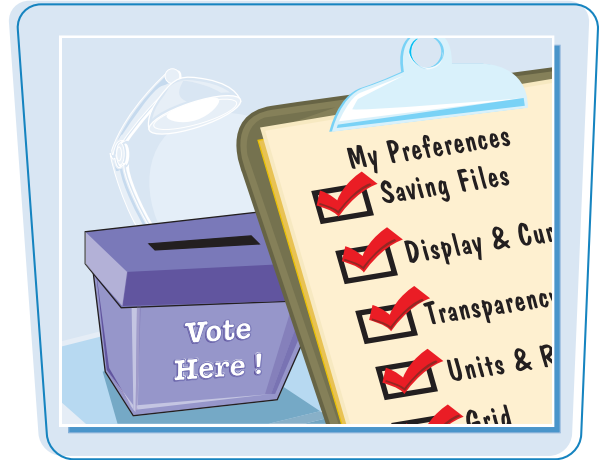
- 1 Click here.
 - 2 Click **Palette Options**.
- The palette's Options dialog box opens.
- 3 Make any changes to the palette options.
 - 4 Click **OK**.

Elements applies the changes to the palette.



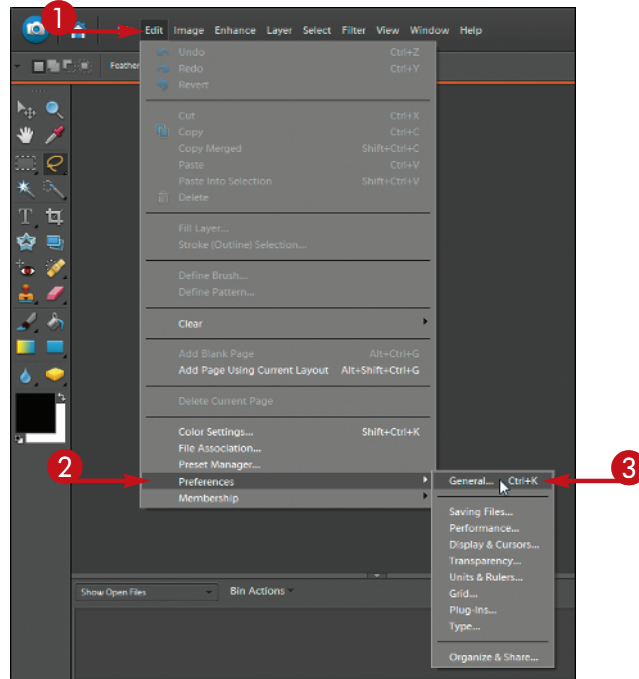
Set Program Preferences

Photoshop Elements' Preferences dialog box lets you change default settings and customize how the program looks. The Preferences dialog box includes nine categories: General, Saving Files, Performance, Display & Cursors, Transparency, Units & Rulers, Grid, Plug-Ins, and Type. You can view and select from different settings in each category.



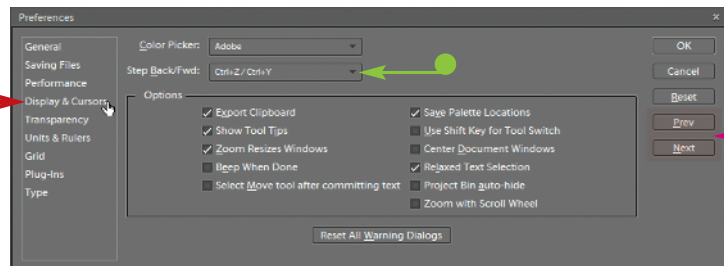
Set Program Preferences

- 1 Click **Edit**.
- 2 Click **Preferences**.
- 3 Click **General**.



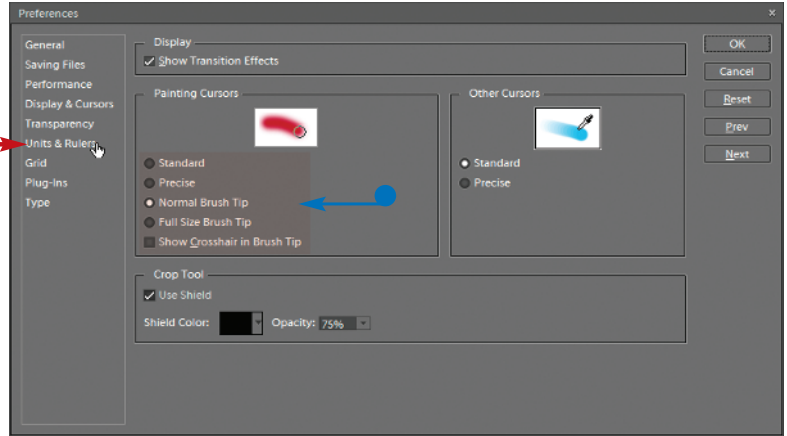
The Preferences dialog box appears and displays General options.

- 4 Select any settings you want to change.
 - For example, you can specify the shortcut keys for stepping backward and forward through your commands.
- 5 Click a different preference category.
 - You can also click **Prev** and **Next** to move back and forth between categories.



In this example, the Preferences dialog box shows Display & Cursors options.

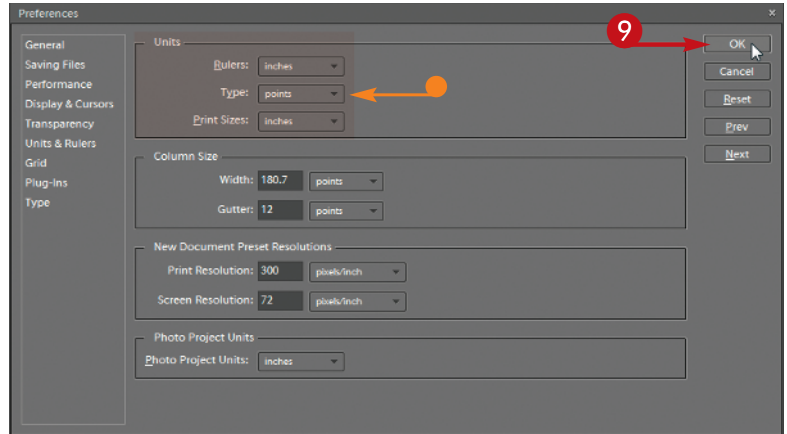
- 6 Select any settings you want to change.
- 7 Click a different preference category.



In this example, the Preferences dialog box displays Units & Rulers options.

- 8 Select any settings you want to change.
- 9 Click **OK**.

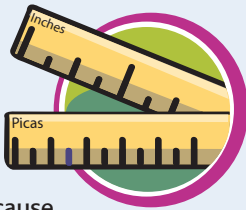
Photoshop Elements sets the preferences to your specifications.



TIPS

What type of measurement units should I use in Elements?

Typically, you should use the units most applicable to the type of output you intend to produce. Pixel units are useful for Web imaging because monitor dimensions are measured in pixels. Inches or picas are useful for print because those are standards for working on paper. You can find measurement settings in the Units & Rulers preferences.



How do I allocate extra memory to Elements for opening more image files?

Digital image-editing programs can use up a lot of random access memory, or *RAM*. The Performance preferences show how much memory you have available and how much of it Photoshop Elements is using. You can make changes to these settings to enhance the program's performance. The Scratch Disks preferences enable you to allocate extra memory on your hard drive, called *scratch disk space*, to use if your computer runs out of RAM.



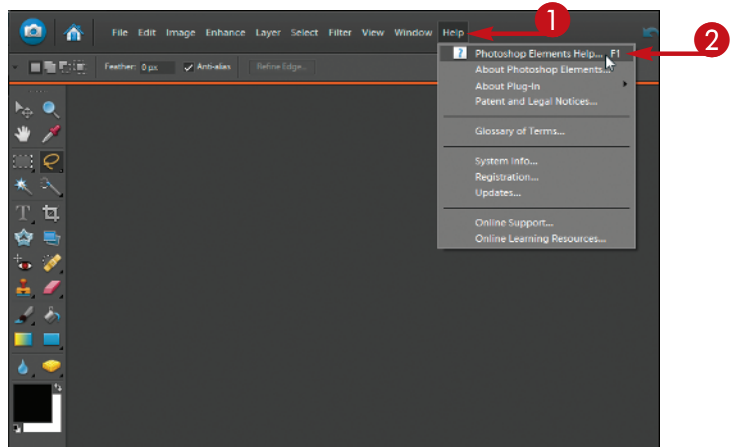
Find Help

Photoshop Elements comes with plenty of electronic documentation that you can access whenever you need help.



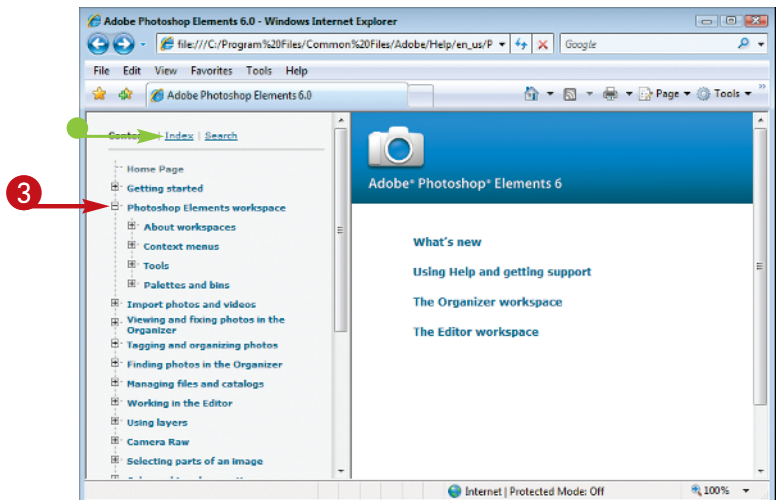
Find Help

- 1 Click **Help**.
- 2 Click **Photoshop Elements Help**.



The Help documentation opens in a Web browser with help topics on the left.

- You can click **Index** to list help topics alphabetically.
- 3 Click here to view a list of subtopics (+) changes to (-).

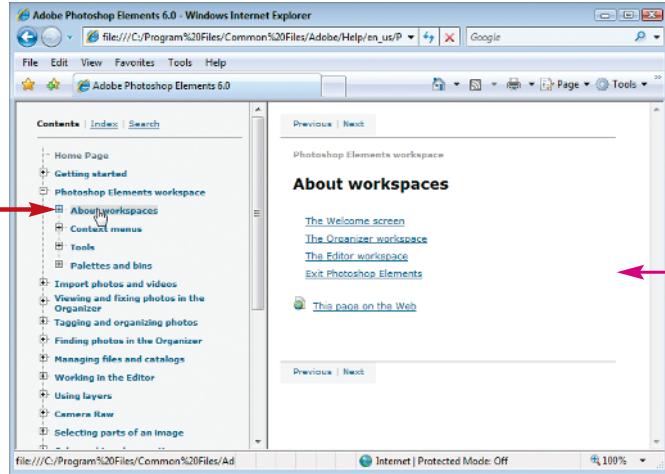


A list of subtopics appears.

- 4 Click the topic you want to view.
- The Help system displays information about the topic in the right-hand frame.

You can scroll through the information and click links to learn more about a topic.

4

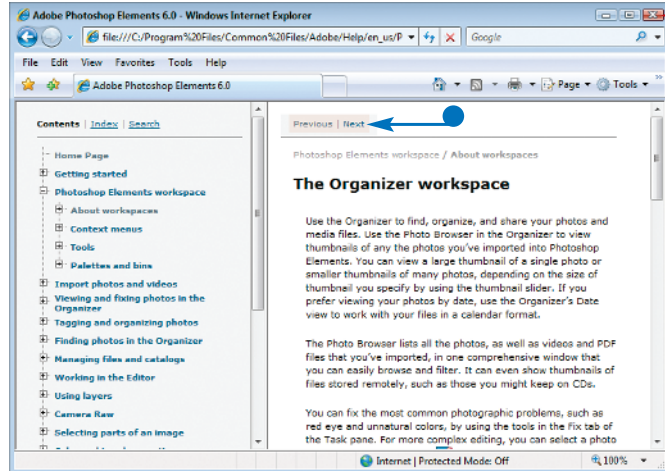


- You can click **Previous** and **Next** to move between topics.

- 5 Click the **Close** button (X).

The Help documentation browser window closes.

5



How do I search for a particular topic?

You can use the search feature in the Help documentation to look up keywords. Click **Search** in the top-left corner, type your search keywords in the text box, and then click **Search**. Photoshop Elements displays any matching search results as a list of clickable links.



How can I get additional tips and news about Photoshop Elements?

If you have an Internet connection, you can click **Help** and then click **Online Support** to open the Support Web page on the Adobe Web site. Here you can access an up-to-date knowledge base that covers technical issues related to Elements. You can also click **Help** and then click **Online Learning Resources** to access a Web page with links to Elements tutorials and other educational tools.

