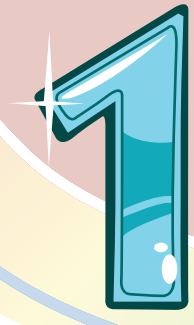
CHAPTER



Getting Started

Are you interested in working with digital images on your computer? This chapter introduces you to Adobe Photoshop Elements 7, a popular software application for editing and creating digital images.

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Introducing Photoshop Elements 7

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

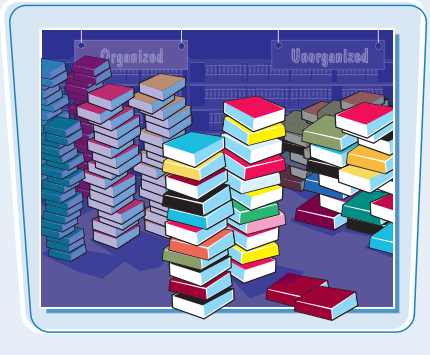
Photoshop Elements' painting tools make it a formidable illustration tool as well as photo editor. You can apply colors or patterns to your images with a variety of brush styles. See Chapter 11 to discover how to paint and draw on your photos. In addition, you can use the application's typographic tools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

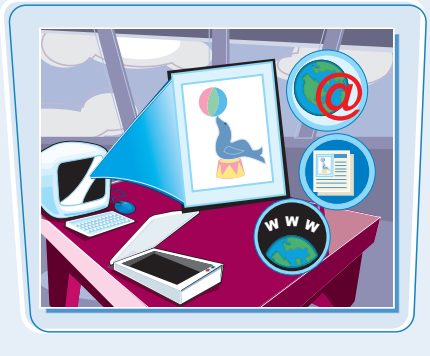
Organize and Catalog

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.

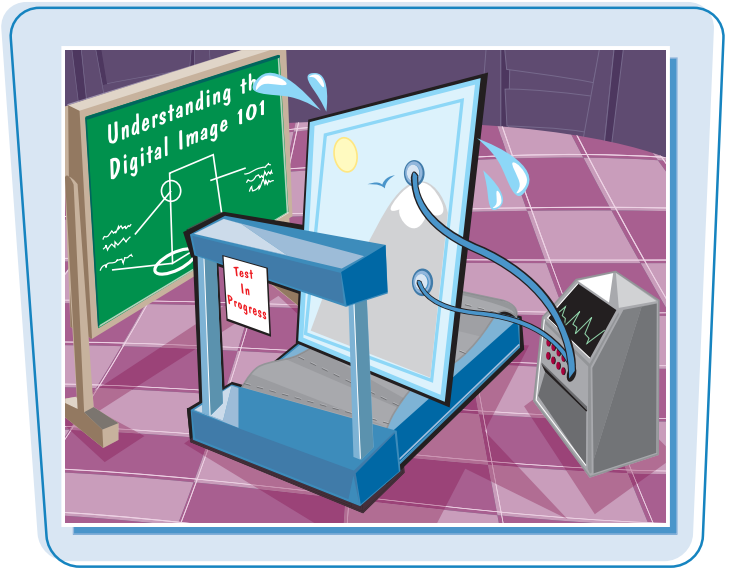


Put Your Photos to Work

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 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.



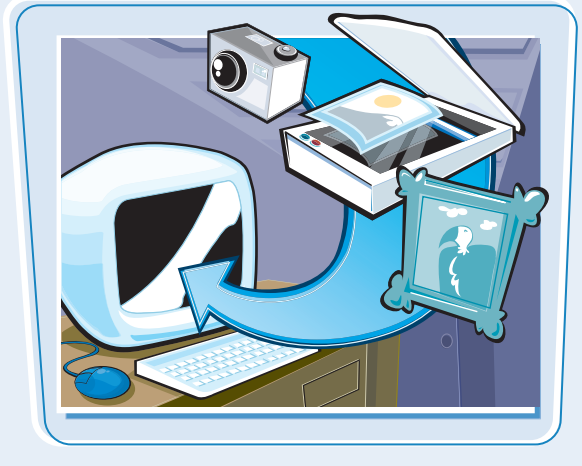
Understanding Digital Images



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, memory card, or photo CD. You can scan photographs, slides, or artwork and import the images directly into the program. You can also bring in photos that you have downloaded from the Web. For more on importing photos, see Chapter 2.



Understanding Pixels

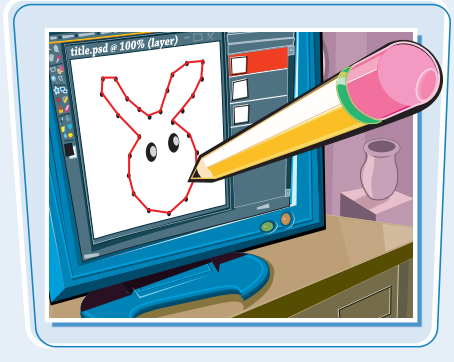
Digital images that you download from a camera consist of tiny, solid-color squares called *pixels*. Photoshop Elements works its magic by rearranging and recoloring these squares. You can edit specific pixels or groups of pixels by selecting the area of the photo you want to edit. If you zoom in close,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

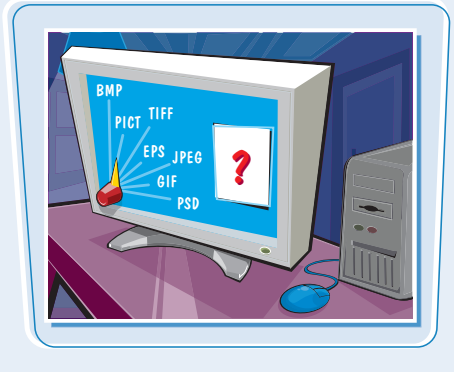
Vector Graphics

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.



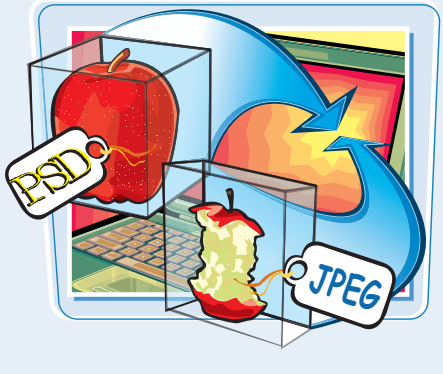
Supported File Formats

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.



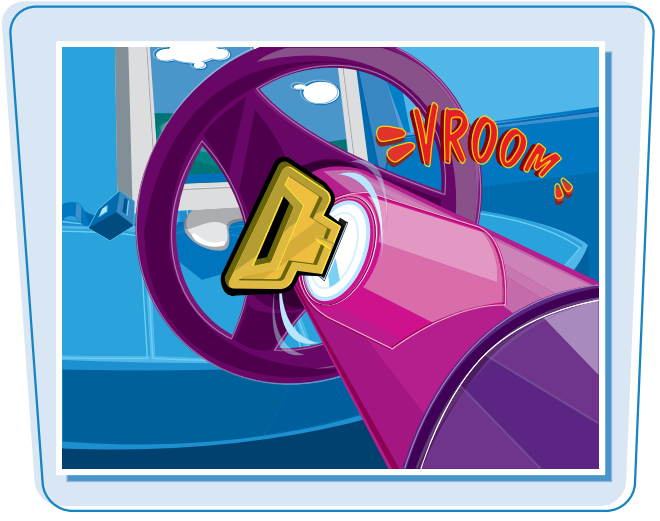
File Size

An important way file formats differ from one another is 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

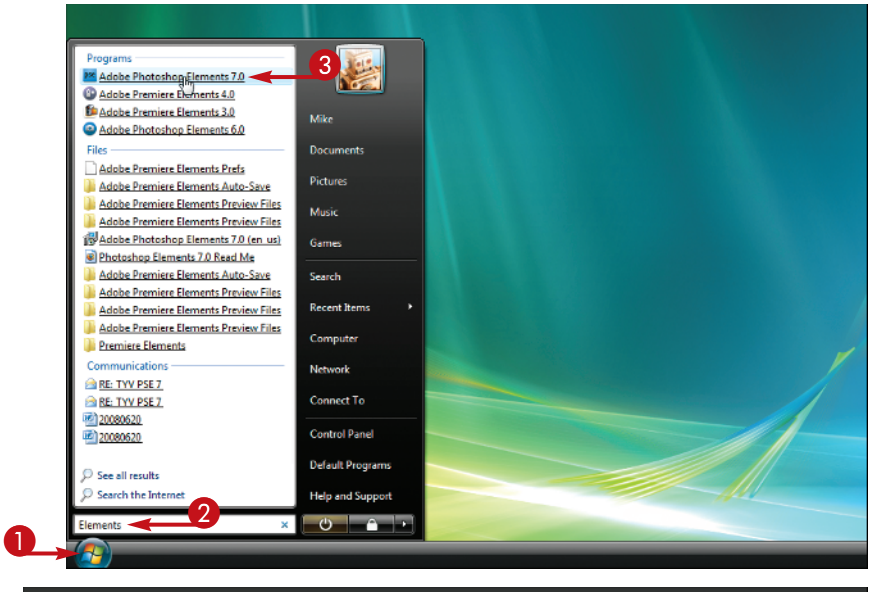
You can start Photoshop Elements and begin creating and editing digital images.



Start Photoshop Elements

1. Click **Start**.
2. Type **Elements** in the search box.

   Windows displays a list of search results.
3. Click **Adobe Photoshop Elements 7.0**.



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.

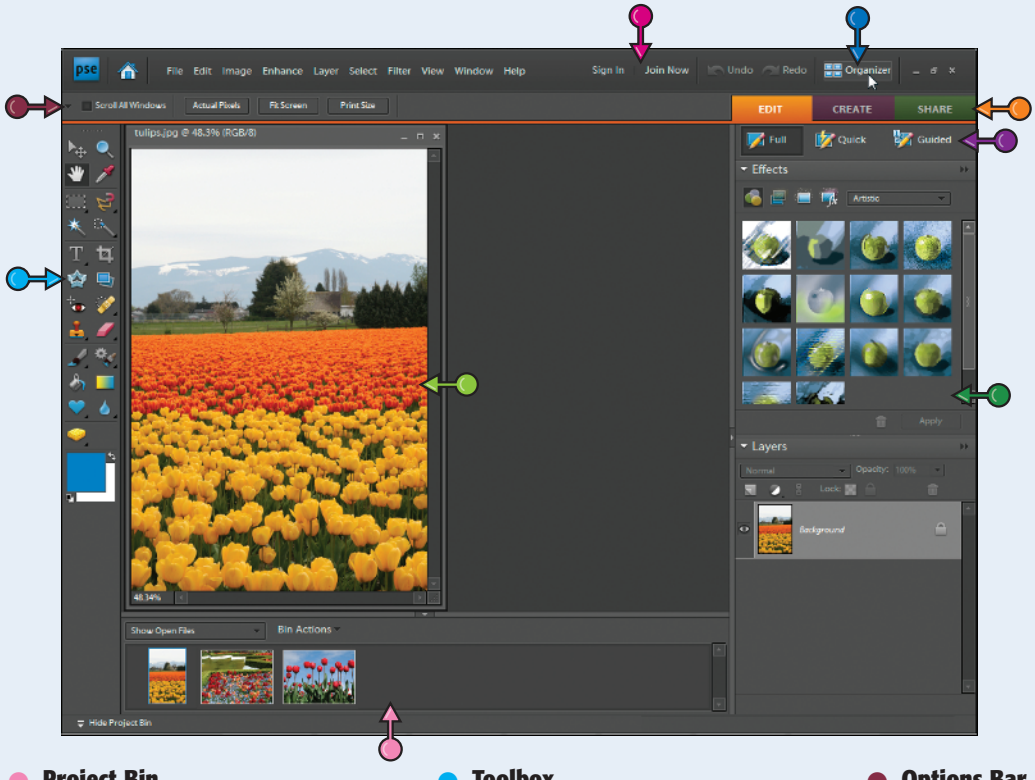
- You can also sign in to Photoshop.com to manage photos that you have stored online.

The Editor Workspace

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.
- **Photoshop.com Links**
  Clickable links for signing in to Photoshop.com for managing your photos online.
- **Organizer Button**
  Clickable button for switching to the Organizer interface, where you can catalog your photos.



- **Task Tabs**
  Clickable tabs for switching between workflows in the Editor.
- **Edit Mode Buttons**
  Clickable buttons for switching between the different editing modes.
- **Palette Bin**
  A storage area for frequently used palettes.

- **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.

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

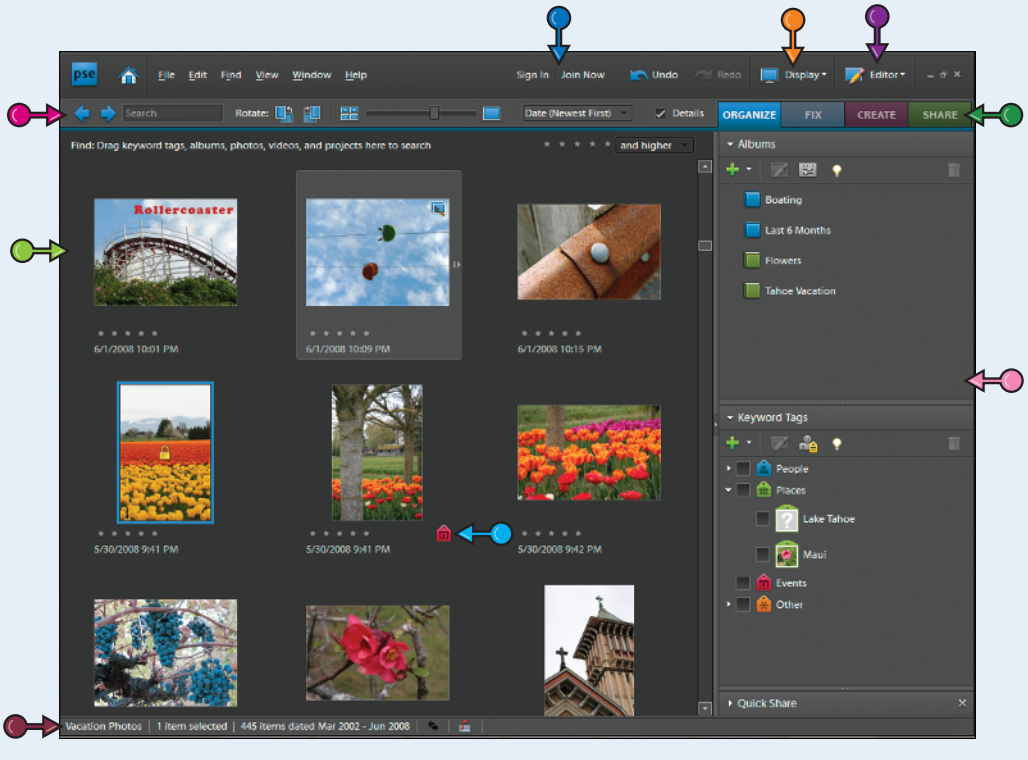
Displays miniature versions, or *thumbnails*, of the photos in your catalog.

Toolbar

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

Photoshop.com Links

Clickable links for signing in to Photoshop.com for managing your photos online.



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.

Tag Icon

Shows which tags have been applied to a photo.

Palette Bin

A storage area for frequently used palettes.

Switch between the Editor and the Organizer

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, share, 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.

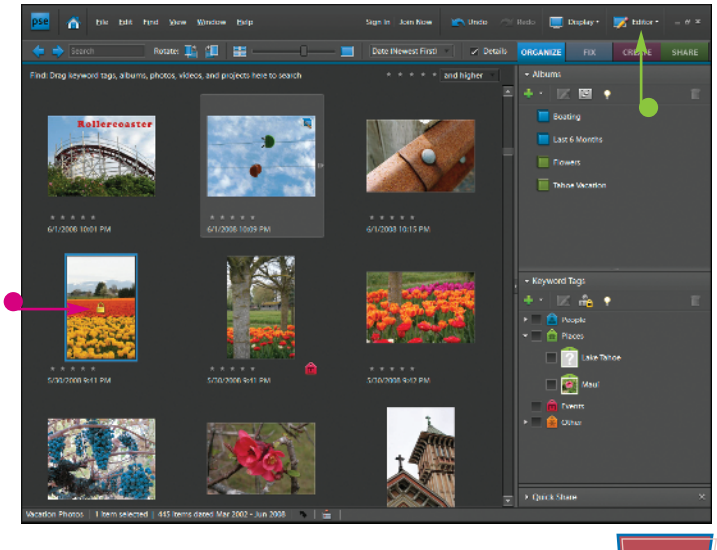
Note: *See the section "Start Photoshop Elements" for details on starting the program.*

You can open and edit a photo in the Editor.

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.

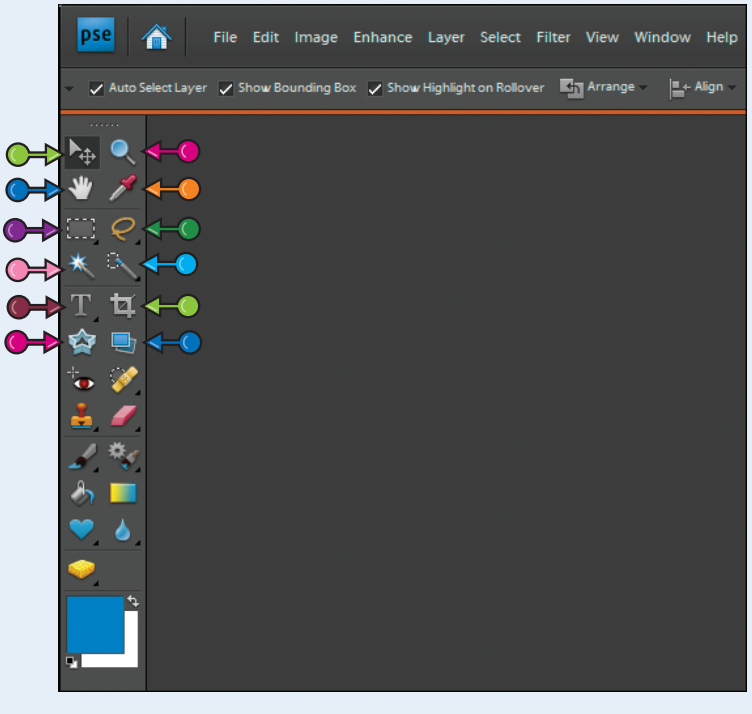


Anatomy of the Photoshop Elements Toolbox

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.

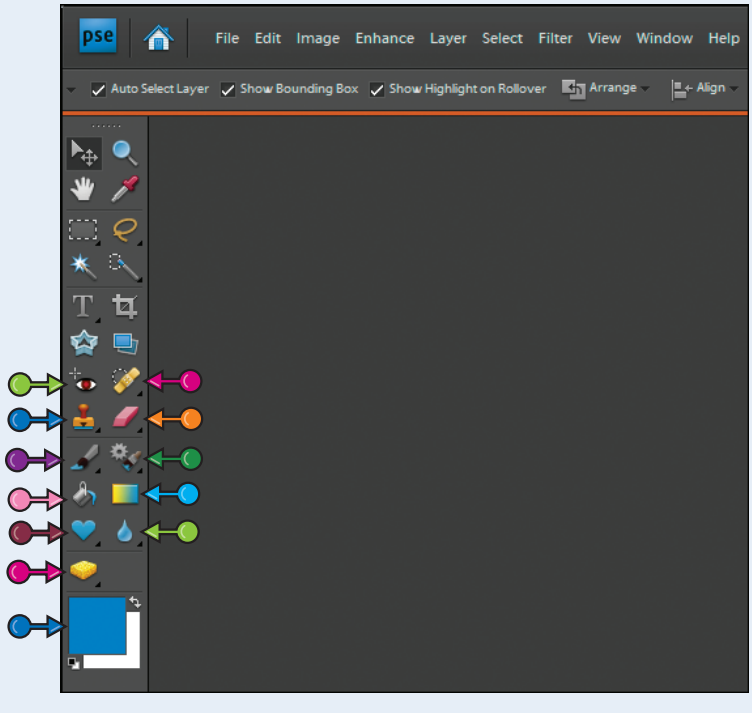
You can select tools by clicking buttons in the toolbox or by typing a keyboard shortcut key. Keyboard shortcut keys are shown in parentheses.

- **Move (V)**
  Moves selected areas of an image.
- **Zoom (Z)**
  Zooms your view of an image in or out.
- **Hand (H)**
  Shows unseen parts of larger images.
- **Eyedropper (I)**
  Samples color from an area of an image.



- **Marquee (M)**
  Selects pixels by drawing a box or circle around the area you want to edit.
- **Lasso (L)**
  Selects pixels by drawing a free-form shape around the area you want to edit.
- **Magic Wand (W)**
  Selects pixels of odd-shaped areas based on similar pixel color.
- **Quick Selection Brush (A)**
  Selects pixels using brush shapes.
- **Type (T)**
  Adds type to an image.
- **Crop (C)**
  Trims an image to create a new size.
- **Cookie Cutter (Q)**
  Crops your image into shapes.
- **Straighten (P)**
  Straightens tilted images.

- **Red-Eye Removal (Y)**
  Corrects red-eye problems.
- **Spot Healing Brush (J)**
  Quickly fixes slight imperfections by cloning nearby pixels.
- **Clone Stamp (S)**
  Duplicates an area of the image.
- **Eraser (E)**
  Erases pixels.



- **Brush (B)**
  Paints strokes of color.
- **Smart Brush (F)**
  Simultaneously selects objects and applies color adjustments.
- **Paint Bucket (K)**
  Fills areas with color.
- **Gradient (G)**
  Creates blended color effects to use as fills.
- **Custom Shape (U)**
  Draws predefined shapes.
- **Blur (R)**
  Blurs objects in your image.
- **Sponge (O)**
  Adjusts color saturation or intensity.
- **Foreground and Background Color**
  Sets foreground and background colors to use with tools.

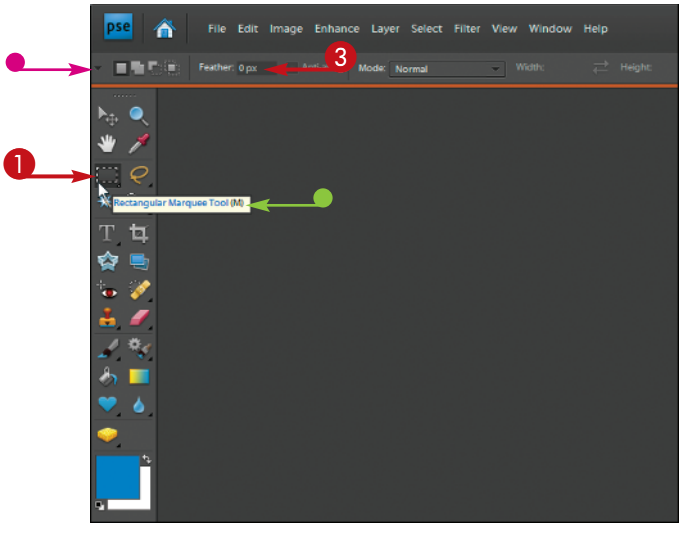
Work with Toolbox Tools

You can use the tools in Photoshop Elements' toolbox to make changes to an image. After you click to select a tool, the options bar displays controls for customizing how the tool works. Some tools include a tiny triangle in the bottom-right corner indicating hidden tools you can select. For example, the Marquee tool includes two variations: Rectangular and Elliptical.

Work with Toolbox Tools

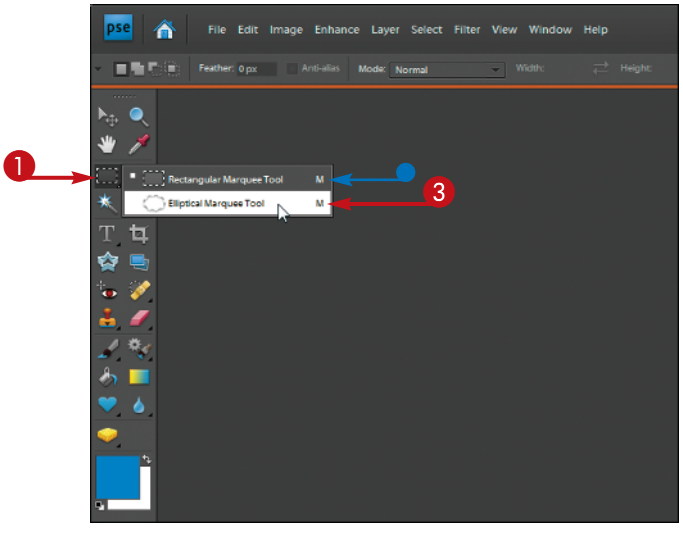
SELECT A TOOL

1. Position the mouse pointer over a tool.
   - A label appears displaying the tool name and shortcut key. 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.



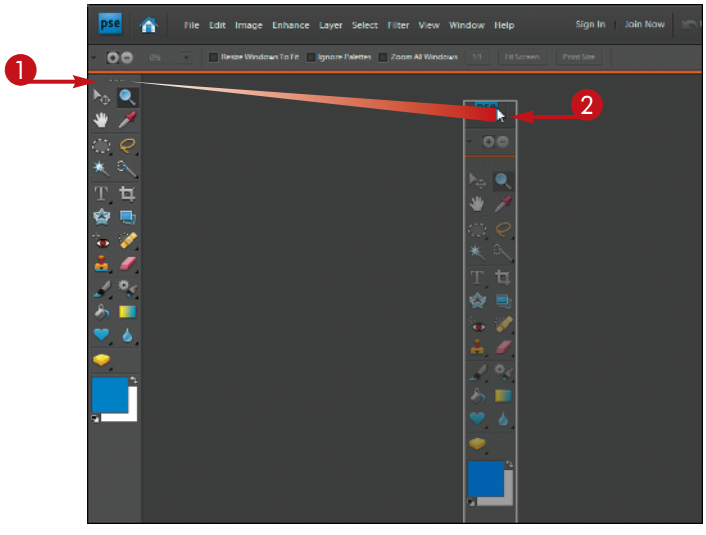
SELECT A HIDDEN TOOL

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

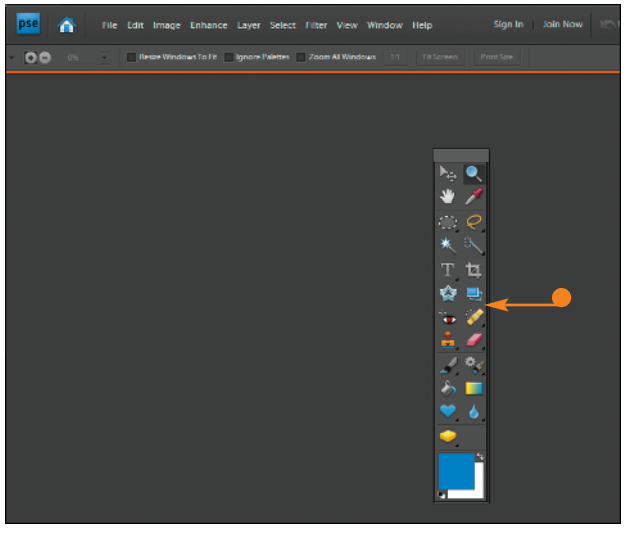
1. Position the mouse pointer over the top of the docked toolbox.
2. Drag the toolbox to a new location on the screen.



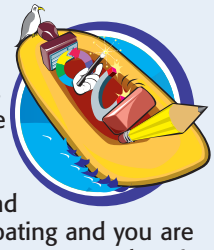
3. Release the mouse button.

- Photoshop Elements displays the toolbox as a floating palette.

  You can drag the toolbox to another location by dragging the top of the palette.



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 and you are not editing text, 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

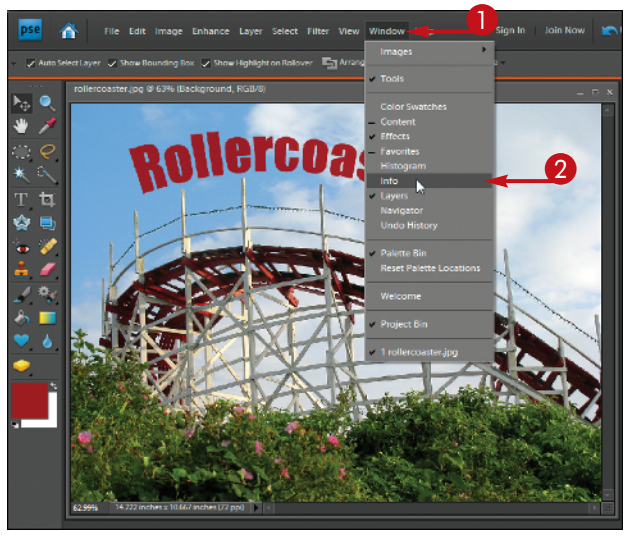
1. Click the triangle next to the palette name in the Palette Bin.
   - Click the **Expand** arrow ( ) to display a collapsed palette.
   - Click the **Collapse** arrow ( ) to collapse a palette from view.

- 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 **Adjust Palette Bin Size** button ( ).

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

   The Palette Bin closes.

- To display the bin again, click the **Adjust Palette Bin Size** button ( ).

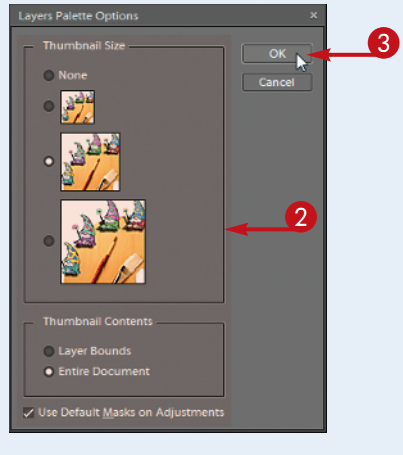
TIP

Can I customize a palette?

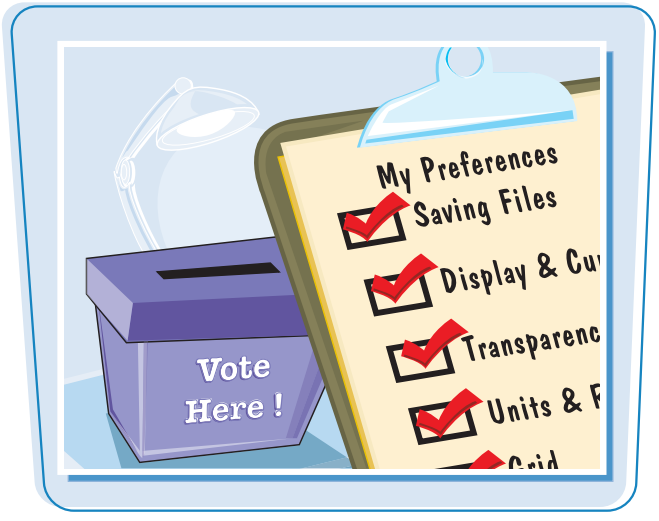
You can customize some palettes in Photoshop Elements. For example, you can change the size of the thumbnail image that appears in the Layers palette. To customize a palette, follow these steps:

1. Click the palette's **More** button, and click **Palette Options** from the menu that appears.
2. In the palette's Options dialog box, make any changes to the palette options.
3. Click **OK**.

   Photoshop Elements applies the changes to the palette.



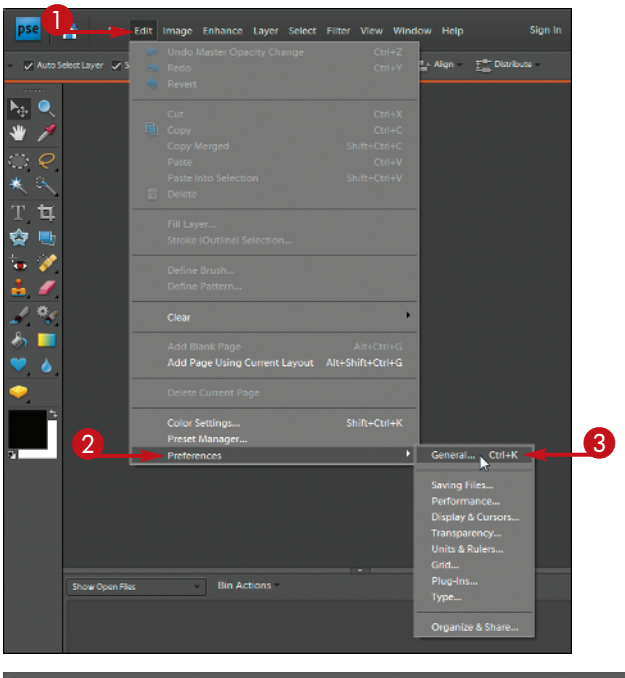
Set Program Preferences



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**.



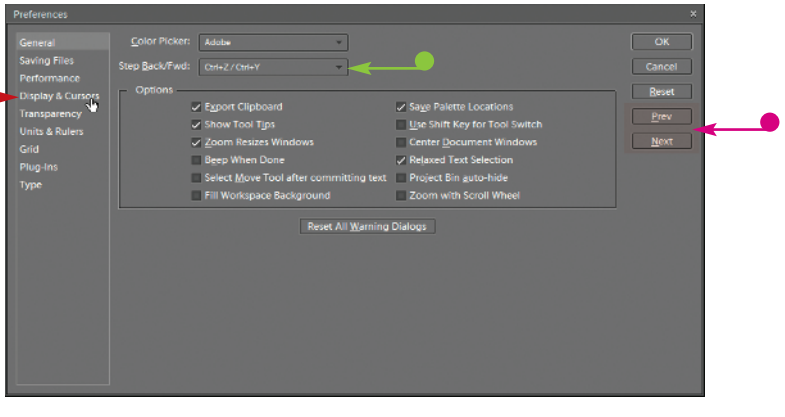
The Preferences dialog box appears and displays General options.

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.

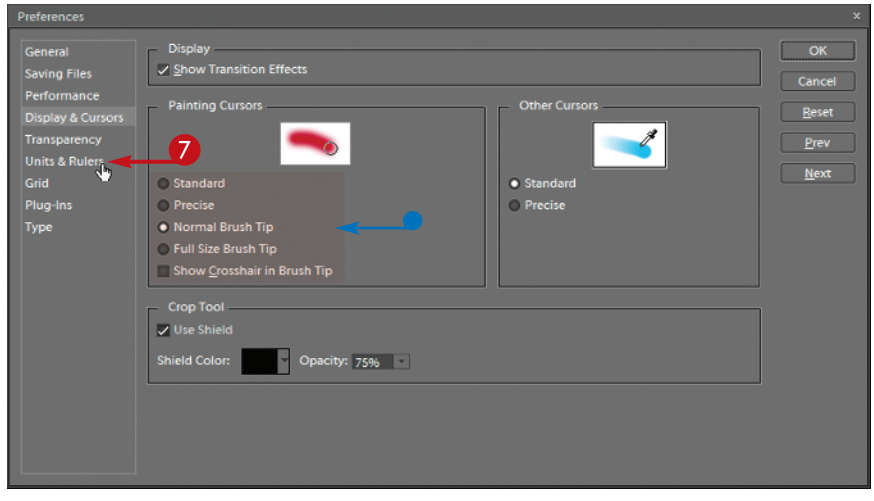


In this example, the Preferences dialog box displays Display & Cursors options.

6 Select any settings you want to change.

- For example, you can specify the shape of the painting tool cursors.

7 Click a different preference category.



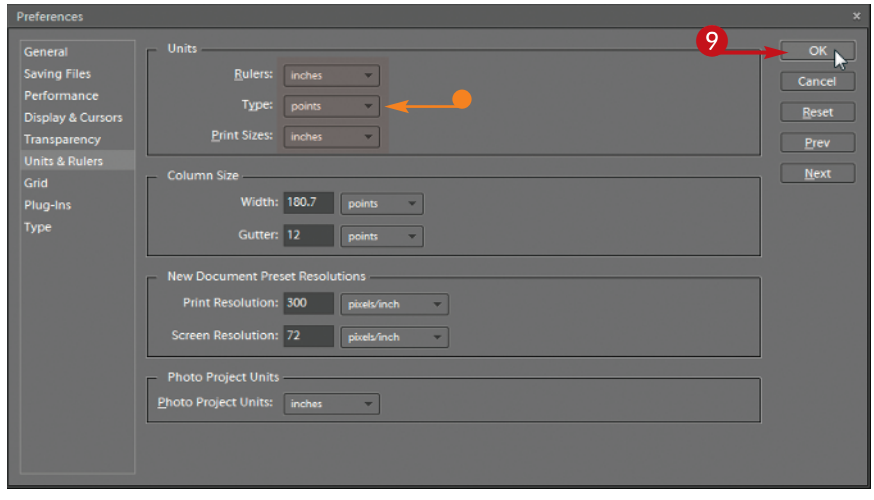
In this example, the Preferences dialog box displays Units & Rulers options.

8 Select any settings you want to change.

- For example, you can specify the default units for various aspects of the program.

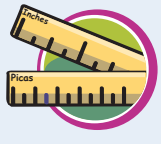
9 Click **OK**.

Photoshop Elements sets the preferences to your specifications.



TIPS

What type of measurement units should I use in Photoshop 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, picas, centimeters, or millimeters 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 Photoshop Elements for opening more image files?

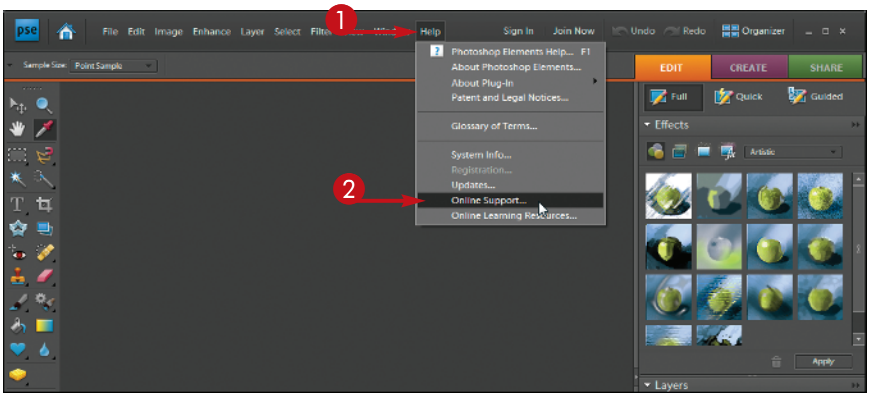
Digital image-editing programs can use up a lot of memory on your computer, called *random access memory*, or *RAM*. The Performance preferences show how much memory you have available and how much of it Photoshop Elements is using. You can make changes to these settings to enhance the program's performance. 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

You can access a variety of resources online at Adobe.com to learn more about Photoshop Elements and solve problems. The site includes video tutorials and an up-to-date, searchable knowledge base.

Find Help

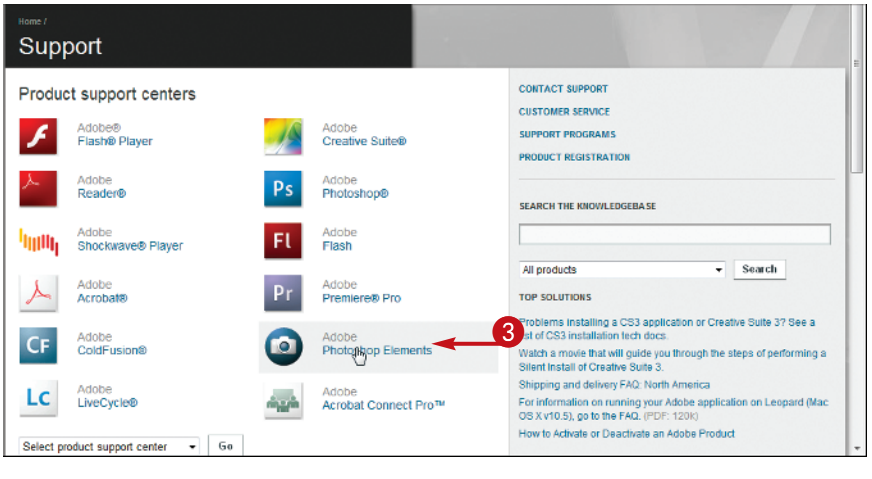
1. Click **Help**.
2. Click **Online Support**.



The Adobe Support page opens in a Web browser.

The page links to resources for different Adobe software products.

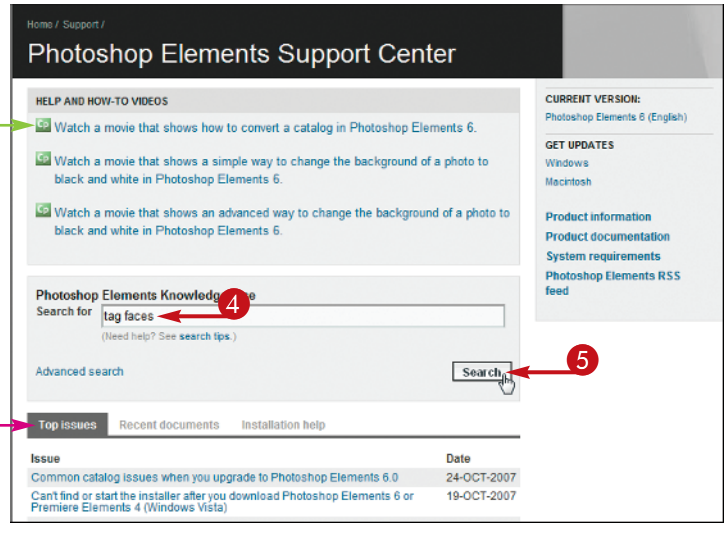
3. Click the **Photoshop Elements** link.



The Photoshop Elements Support Center page opens.

- You can click here to view popular video tutorials.
- You can click **Top issues** to view solutions to common support issues.

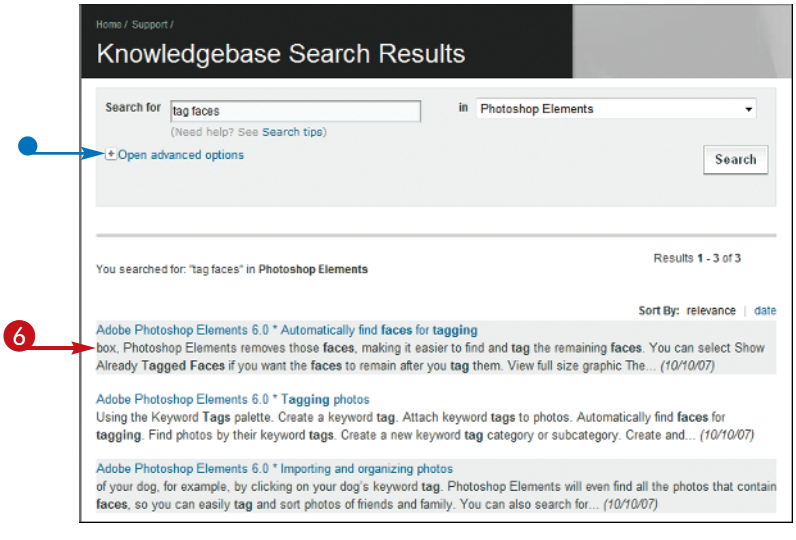
4. Type a keyword to search for.
5. Click **Search**.



A results page appears.

6. Click a link to view a search result.

- You can click **Open advanced options** to access settings that let you limit results by document type, search by date, and more.



TIPS

How do I access the Photoshop Elements user documentation?

You can click **Help** and then **Photoshop Elements Help**. The application's user documentation opens in your Web browser with information about the application's tools and commands. You can browse the information by category or search by keyword.

How can I automatically receive troubleshooting tips for Photoshop Elements?

If you have an RSS newsreader, you can subscribe to the Photoshop Elements RSS feed. On the Photoshop Elements Support Center page, click **Photoshop Elements RSS Feed**. The RSS Feed page has information about how to use newsreaders.