Organize and Prepare Photos for Processing

Photoshop Elements may be Photoshop's smaller sibling, but it is no second-rate program. Elements uses the same processing engine that Photoshop uses to make your work with photos efficient and effective — it is simpler and directly geared to photographers.

Photoshop Elements is a complete program that allows you to import images, organize them, and sort the good from the bad as well as make changes to optimize individual photos. The order of this book follows a workflow that you can use to work efficiently in Photoshop Elements.

In this chapter, you learn what it means to develop a workflow right from the start. You can quickly import, sort, and organize your pictures so that you can find them more easily in the future. You can customize your workspace to fit your needs and interests and help you work more efficiently. You can also set preferences so that your program works its best. Do not skip over these seemingly mundane tasks because they can really help you speed up your work. However, the best way to work faster in Photoshop Elements is to spend some time with it. Once you have practiced and learned the core controls of the program, you will find that you can work very quickly with Photoshop Elements.
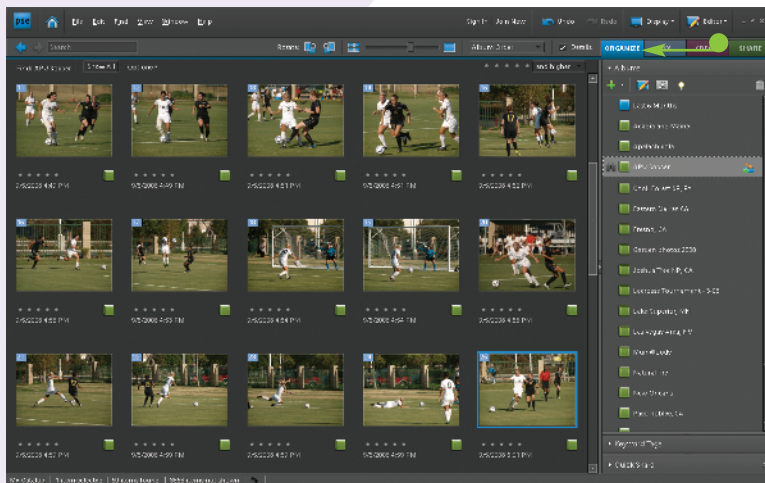
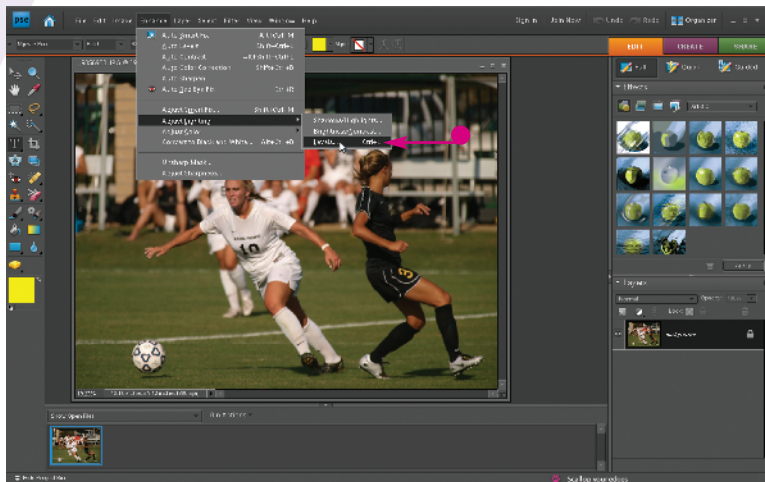# Top 100

Develop a
WORKFLOW

Workflow has become a real buzzword for photographers working with their images in the computer, but it simply describes the process of how you work with images from start to finish. It is important that you develop a consistent way of working on your images that will give you reliable results.

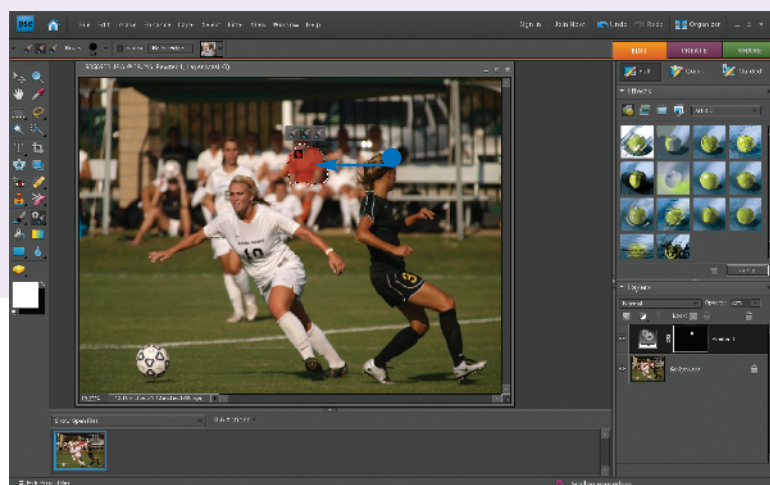This book is structured in such a way to show you a Photoshop Elements workflow that really does work. Although you can skip around in the book to find specific tips, the book is ordered to follow this workflow. As you become familiar with the program, you might find that you have to adapt some of these ideas to your specific needs. I encourage you to do that as long as you are getting the results you expect from your images. These two pages give a quick overview of a workflow structure.
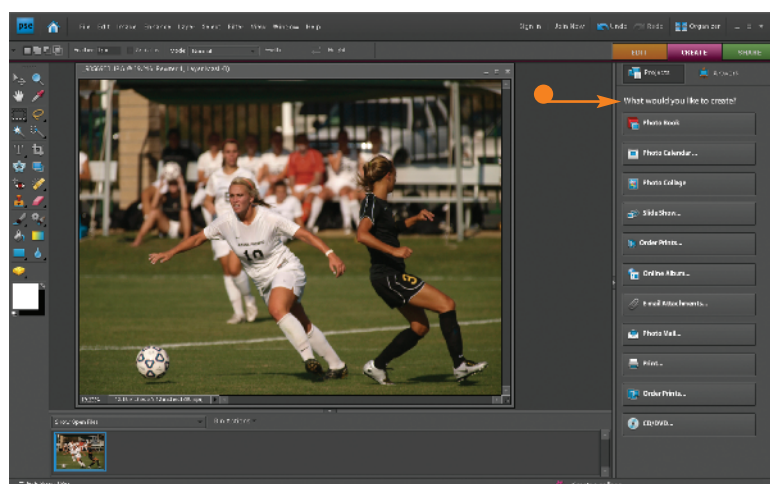

● Start the process by getting your photos into Photoshop Elements in order to sort, keep, delete, and organize them. You can process individual photos without going into the Organizer module of the program, but the Organizer helps you manage your digital photos.

● Set the tonalities of your photos first, including blacks, whites, and midtones, and then adjust color.

- Fix problems in your photos such as wrong colors, defects in an image, sensor dust, and so on.

#1

- Consider how you want to share your photos with others, from prints to photo books to Web galleries to e-mail and much more.

TIPS

Did You Know?

Photoshop Elements was originally designed to make Photoshop more accessible for photographers. Photoshop was originally developed to help people work on photos in the computer, not for photographers. Photoshop Elements has always had the photographer as the primary focus of its development and enhancement.

Try This!

Make your image immediately fill the central work area by pressing Ctrl+0 (if you press Ctrl+O, you get a file open dialog box). You can do this when a photo first comes into the program edit space or when you have enlarged a portion of the photo and need to go back to seeing all of it.

Did You Know?

Editing photos used to mean picking the good from the bad. When Photoshop was developed, the computer folks decided to call the changes to the images *editing*, so there is confusion about what editing really is for the photographer. This book avoids both usages and specifically describes the process being used.
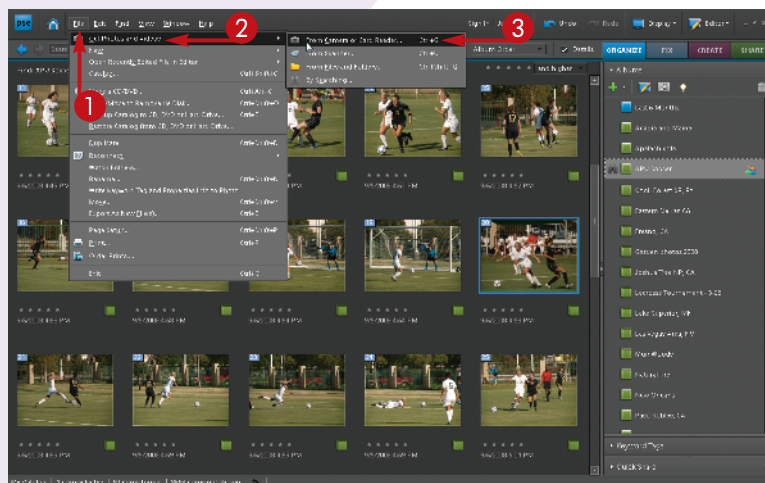
IMPORT
your images

In order to work on your images, you must get them into your computer and recognized by Photoshop Elements. To use the Organizer in Elements, you have to tell the program how to deal with your photos. It needs, in a sense, a map to where your photos are located. Photoshop Elements can help you import your photos from memory card to hard drive, including copying them from the card into a specific folder and renaming the files as well as recognizing
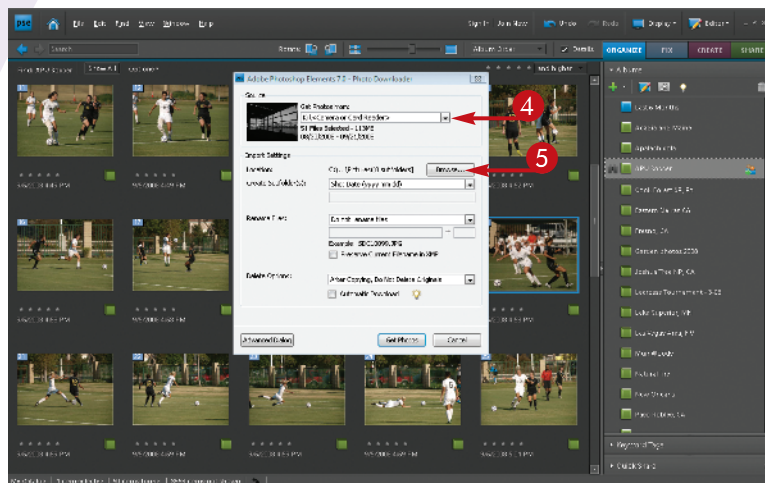
them by Organizer. Or you can tell Elements to recognize photographs that are already on your computer.

When you first open Photoshop Elements, choose the Organizer button to go into that mode. All importing is done through the Organizer mode. Once the Organizer recognizes the images, they show up as thumbnails on your screen and can then be sorted, collected into albums, and more in order to make your pictures very accessible to you.

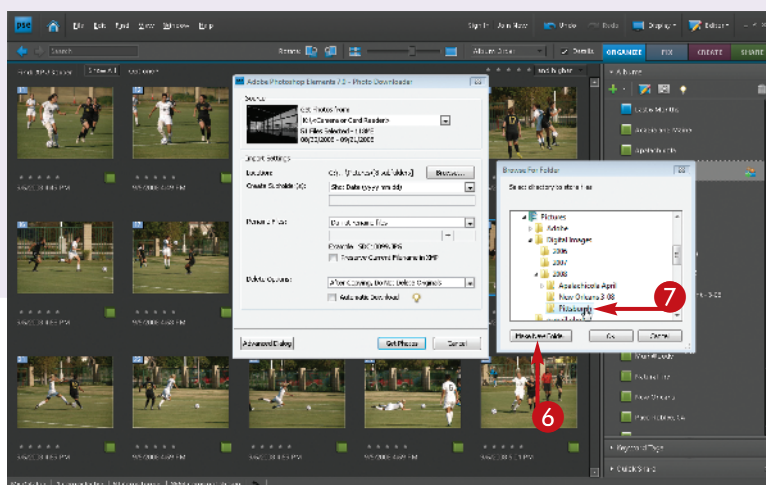### IMPORTING FROM A DIGITAL CAMERA OR MEMORY CARD

① Click File.

② Click Get Photos and Videos.

③ Click From Camera or Card Reader.

The Photo Downloader dialog box appears.

④ Click the Get Photos From drop-down menu to select your camera or card reader.

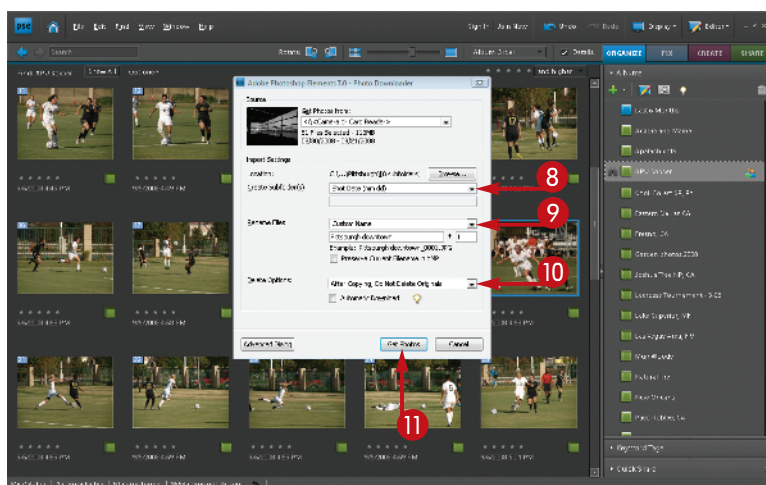⑤ Click Browse to select where you want the photos to go on your hard drive.

Navigate to the folder you want to use in the directory tree that appears.

6 Click Make New Folder for a new group of photos.

7 Name your new folder.

8 Click to select or create subfolders in the new folder, such as based on dates photos were shot, or choose no subfolders.

9 Click to rename your photos or keep the original file name.

10 Click to leave photos on the memory card so that your camera can reformat the card properly.

11 Click Get Photos.

The photos will now be imported to your computer and included in the Organizer.

TIPS

Did You Know?

A quality memory card reader is the fastest and most dependable way of downloading images. A card reader needs no power, can be left connected to your computer, and will not be damaged if accidentally knocked to the floor.

Did You Know?

The Automatic Download check box in the Photo Downloader dialog box sets up your computer to automatically download photos based on criteria set in Preferences. This can be a problem because it does not allow you to put photos into specific folders for each download, nor can you rename photos.
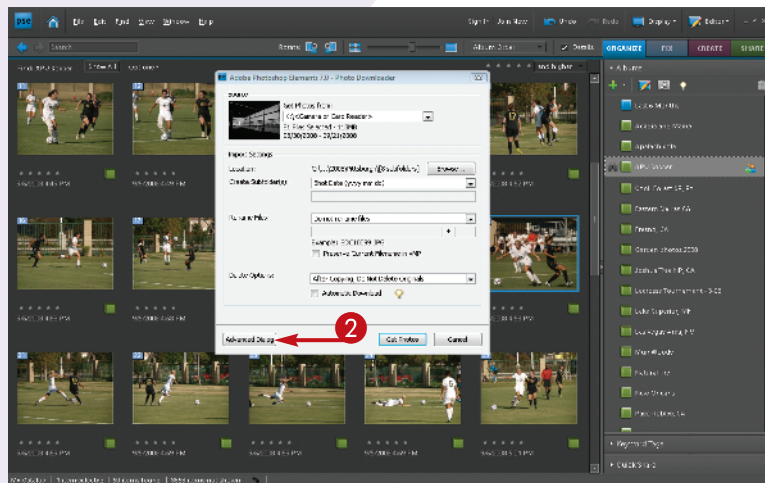
Did You Know?

Most photographers prefer to put images into distinct file folders on their hard drive instead of all lumped together into the Pictures folder. Photo Downloader lets you set up specific folders based on date and location, for example, in a folder called Digital Photos on your hard drive to make them easier to find if the Organizer in Elements ever fails.

IMPORT
your images

Sometimes there are groups of photos on your memory card, groups that you do not want to mix together into a single folder. It can be very helpful to keep your photos separated by folders so that you can always find images on your hard drive even without Photoshop Elements. The program gives you the option to import only the pictures that you want from a memory card in an advanced dialog box. This
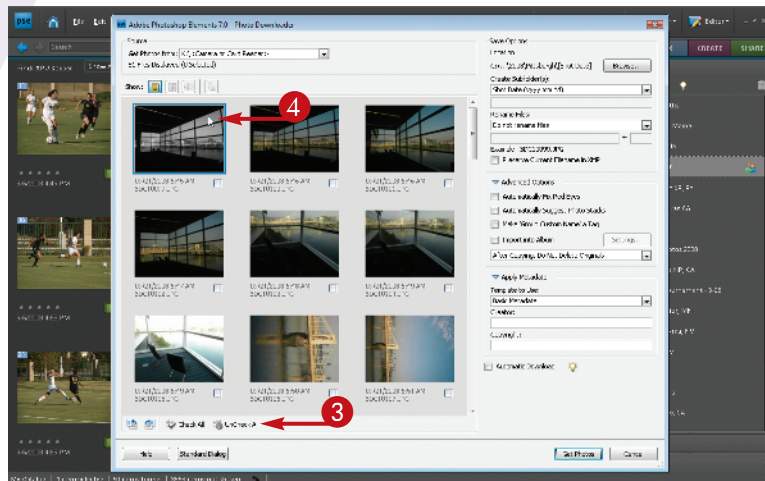
dialog box is very similar to the Photo Downloader dialog box, but there are some additional choices you should know about.

Photoshop Elements also allows you to import images already on your hard drive. The process is very similar, but does use a different dialog box. This can be useful when you have transferred pictures directly from one computer to another, for example.
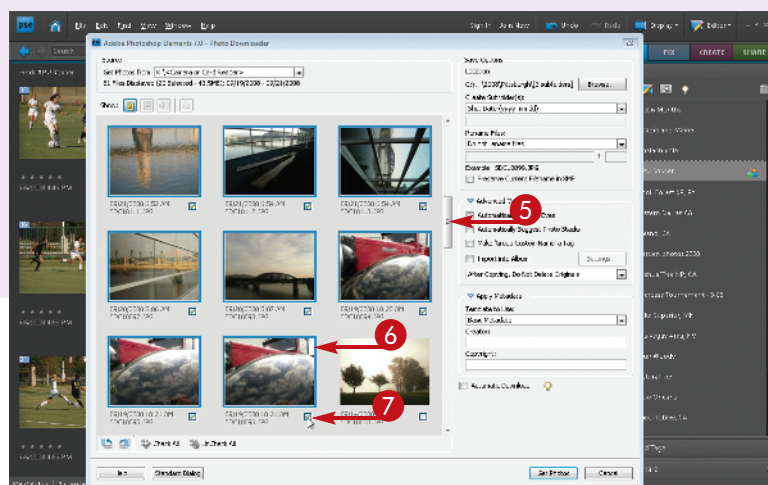

ADVANCED IMPORTING FROM A DIGITAL CAMERA OR MEMORY CARD

① Repeat steps 1 to 3 from the previous page to open the Photo Downloader dialog box.

② Click Advanced Dialog.

The advanced Photo Downloader dialog box appears.

③ Click Uncheck All to deselect all photos.

④ Click the first photo of your group to import.

CONTINUED

5 Scroll down to the last photo in the group.

6 Shift+click that last photo to select all from the first one, but no others.

You can Ctrl+click isolated photos to add or remove them from the group.

7 Click the check box under any image to check all that are selected (☐ changes to ☑).

8 Click to open Advanced Options if not already open.

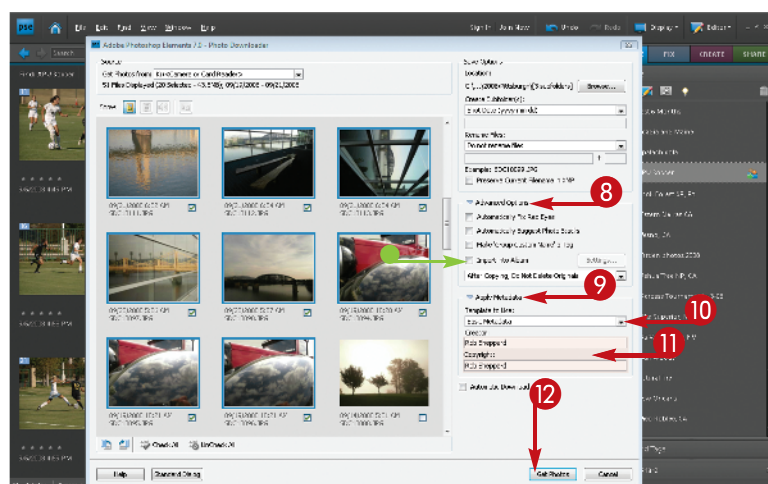● A good option to choose is Import into Album (☐ changes to ☑) if you have albums set up.

9 Click to open Apply Metadata if not already open.

10 Click here to select Basic Metadata.

11 Add your name for Creator and Copyright.

12 Click Get Photos.

The photos will now be imported to your computer and included in the Organizer.

TIPS

Did You Know?
When the Organizer recognizes photos, Elements does not move or change them unless you tell it to. Photoshop Elements is simply creating a map to these image files on your hard drive so that it can find and organize the photos as needed.

Try This!
Use the light bulb icons (💡). Photoshop Elements scatters tips throughout the program to help you when you do not understand a particular control or option. Click the icon and a tip offers you information on how to use the control or option.

Did You Know?
Having your name and copyright information on a photo helps people keep track of your photos. Even if you are not a pro, having your name in the metadata means that if you give your photo files to someone, such as for an organization's brochure, everyone will know whose photos they are.
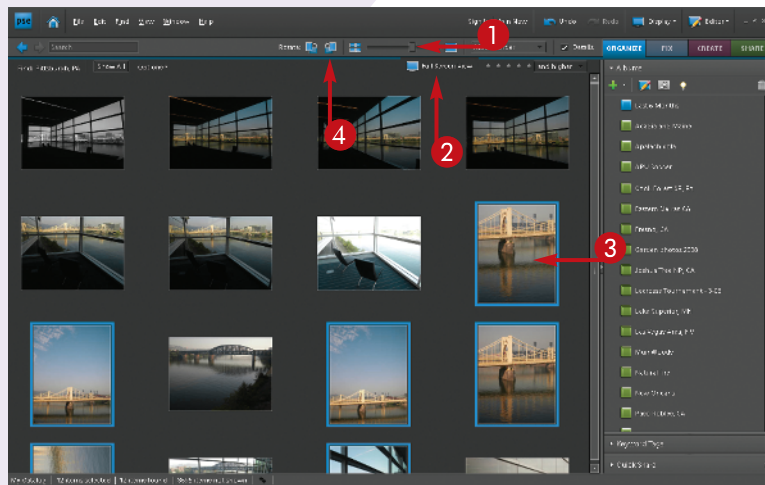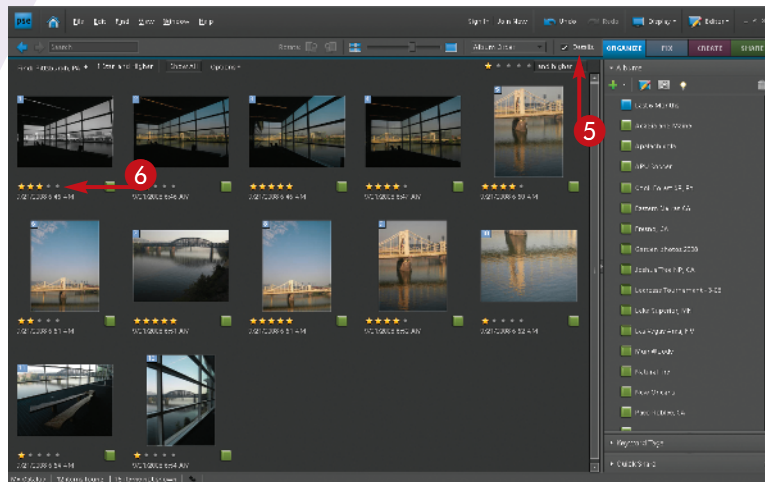
SORT
the good pictures from the bad

Traditionally, going through your pictures, finding the good ones and getting rid of the bad ones, was called photo editing. However, when computer engineers developed programs like Photoshop, they decided to call changing pictures in those programs photo editing, too, so the term can seem confusing. Still, you do need to go through your pictures and edit them based on the original definition of the word.

Photoshop Elements gives you some excellent tools to do just that. You can compare pictures, look at pictures in different sizes, and discover which pictures work well for you and which do not. To save hard drive space and eliminate clutter there, you should delete images that really do not satisfy you, thus reducing the number of pictures you have to go through to find the really good ones.

SET UP YOUR VIEW OF THE PHOTOS

1 Click and drag the thumbnail slider to change the sizes of your photo thumbnails.

2 Click Full Screen View to see a photo displayed over the whole screen.

3 Ctrl+click photos to select images that you want to rotate.

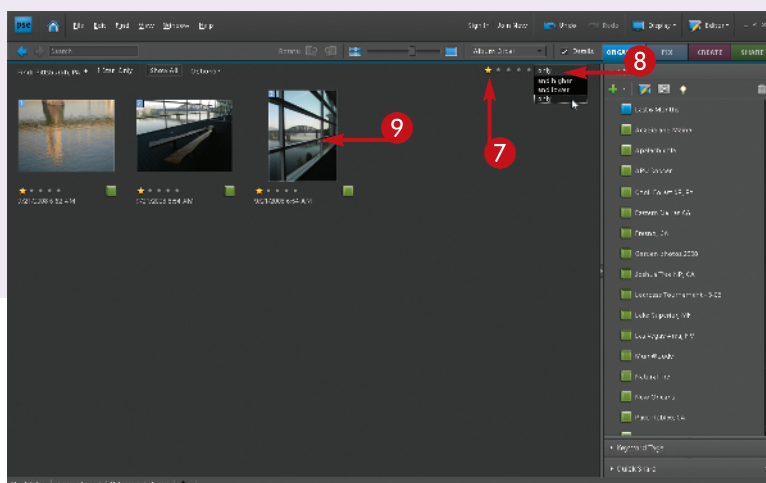4 Click the appropriate Rotate icon to rotate the selected photos.

5 Click the Details check box to show ratings (■ changes to ☑).

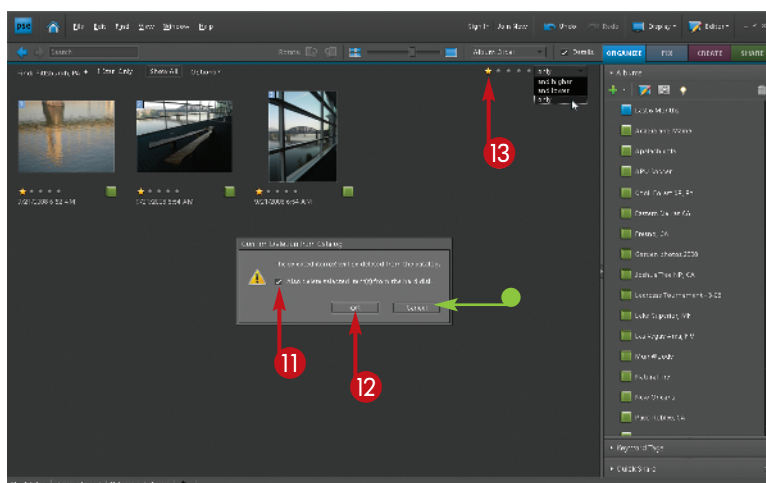*Note: You can also click the View menu and then View Details to show ratings.*

6 Click the dots to rate your photos.

You can use a system such as 1 star for reject, 5 stars for best photos, and other stars to define which you like or dislike.

Delete Photos You Do Not Want

7 Click rating star 1 at the upper right of the thumbnail display.

8 To limit photos to only those with one star, click the drop-down menu to the right of the stars and select only.

9 Select all photos with Ctrl+A.

10 Press Delete.

The Confirm Deletion from Catalog dialog box appears.

11 Check the box for Also delete selected item(s) from the hard disk to throw out your rejects (☐ changes to ☑).

Make sure that the box for Also delete selected item(s) from the hard disk is unchecked to only remove photos from Photoshop Elements view (☑ changes to ☐).

● If you feel that you made a mistake, you can click Cancel and change the ratings.

12 Click OK to finish the process.

13 Click the upper right stars to get your photos in view again.

TIPS

Remember!

You can delete images from Photoshop Elements and/or off your computer altogether. Simply select the image you want to remove and press the Delete key. This opens a dialog box that lets you decide if you simply want to remove the photo from Photoshop Elements' view or remove it off of the hard drive completely.

Try This!

To see any image at a large size, double-click it. This shows you the photo filling the thumbnail area without any other photos. This helps you better see details in your photos, such as sharpness or exposure problems. Double-click again to go back to the thumbnail view.

Did You Know?

You can show file names and other detail by using the View menu. Click View and then select the appropriate menu item to show you what you need to see in your thumbnail display.
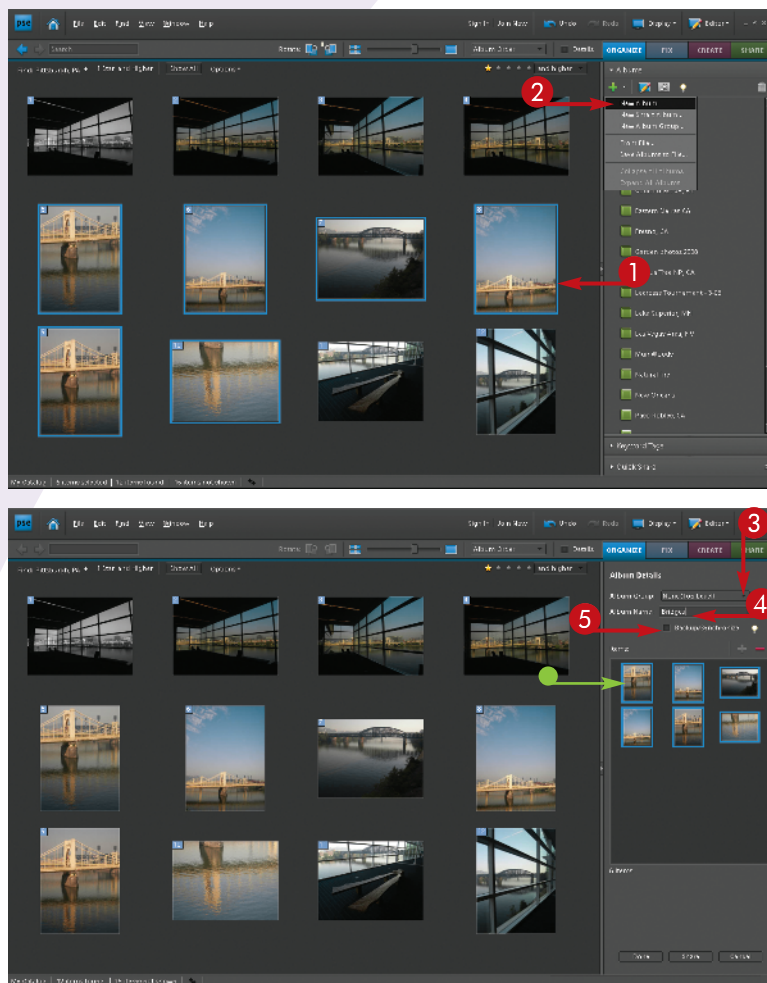
CREATE ALBUMS
to group your pictures

Albums are groupings of pictures based on your needs. You can create albums based on events such as birthdays, locations such as a recently visited city, family members, and much more.

Albums give you a way of quickly finding pictures throughout even a very large collection of images. They also allow you to group pictures together even if they were not taken at the same time. For example, you could set up an album based on a child's name

and then put images that have that child in them into that album. If you kept doing this over time, you would have a collection of images of that child from many different times and places.

Albums do not duplicate photographs. They only create references to where the pictures are on your hard drive. For that reason, individual pictures could be in many albums, which can help you find them faster in different ways.

❶ Ctrl+click photos to select individual images, or click a photo and then Shift+click the last image in a group to select photos in order.

You can also use Ctrl+A to select all photos.

❷ Click the large green plus sign under Albums and choose New Album to add an album.

The Albums section of the task panel can be opened or closed by clicking the arrow next to the word Albums.
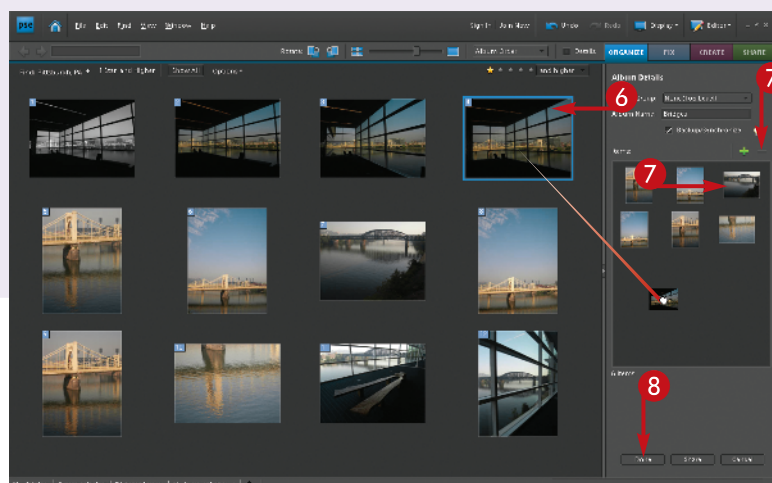
The Album Details panel appears.

❸ You can group albums by using the Album Group function, but start with None.

❹ Type a name for your album.

❺ Uncheck Backup/Synchronize until you have a Photoshop.com account (☑ changes to ▣).

Note: See Chapter 10 for more about Photoshop.com.

● Your selected photos appear in the Items box.

6 Click an image and drag it into the Items box to add a photo to an album.

7 Click to select an image in the Items box and then click the red minus sign to delete it from the group.

Neither adding nor deleting photos from an album affects their position on the hard drive.
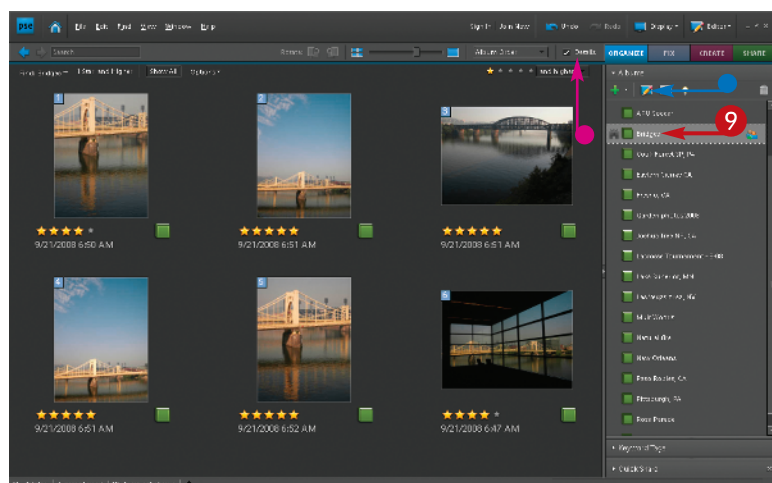
8 Click Done.

The new album now appears in the Albums panel.

9 Click the album to select it.

The photos you put in the album now appear with a small icon below them to indicate they are in albums.

● To see that icon, select Details (■ changes to ✓).

● You can edit your album by clicking the Edit icon.

TIPS

Did You Know?

You can add photos to an album at any time. Whenever you see a photo that belongs in an album, click it and then drag it to the album. It is automatically put into the album and will appear there whenever that album is opened. Remember you are only creating references to photos and not actually moving any.

Try This!

You can immediately put any new photos just imported into Photoshop Elements into an album. Simply select all images in that new group of photos, add an album with a name appropriate to that group, and the photos should appear in the Items box. If not, simply select and drag the new pictures into that Item box.

Smart Albums!

You can create smart albums that automatically add photos to the album. You set up criteria from file names to keywords to camera type in the New Smart Album dialog box, which you access by clicking the Album plus sign (➕). Whenever a photo with those criteria appears in Photoshop Elements, it is automatically included in the smart album.
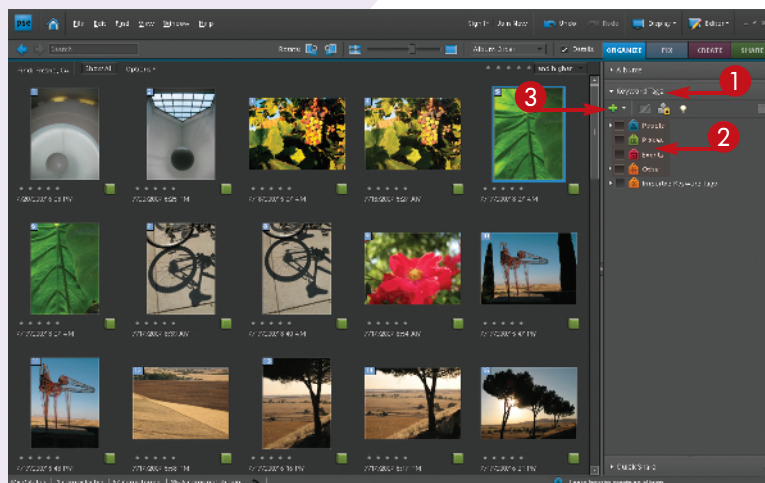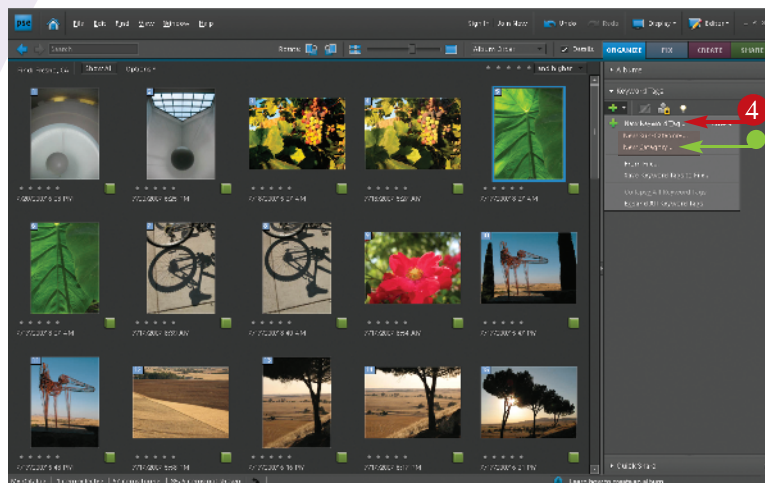
USE KEYWORDS
to tag your images

Keywords are words that you add to your photo's metadata (information about the image held in the file). They can be an important way for you to organize and find your pictures because keywords are searchable. Albums are great for creating large groupings of pictures that you can readily access. With keywords and the search function in Organizer, you can go to very specific images depending on how you have used these words for your pictures.

Keywords can be as detailed as you want. You can simply add words to large groups of pictures, which makes this process easier. Or if you want to be able to really find specific images, you can add a lot of very specific keywords to individual pictures.

Regardless of how you use keywords, they are still an important part of Photoshop Elements to understand and use as needed.

❶ Click Keyword Tags to open the keyword part of the Organize task panel.

❷ You can start with the keywords that are listed.
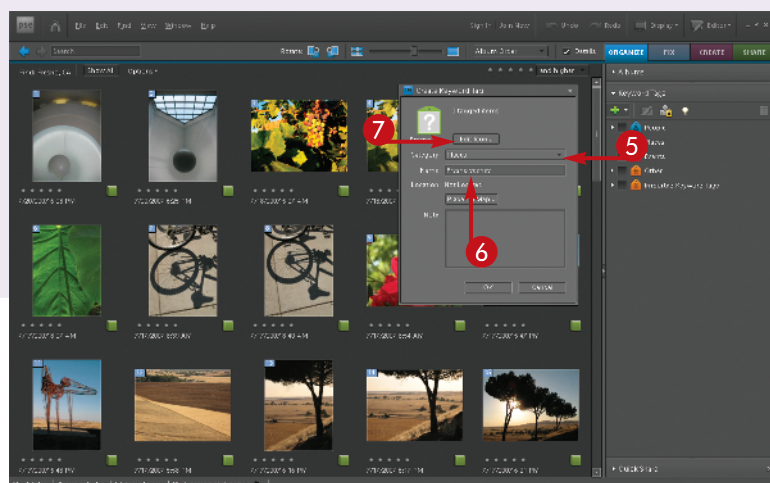
❸ Click the large green plus sign under Keyword Tags.

A drop-down menu appears.

● You can choose New Category or New Sub-Category to create your own category for keywords.
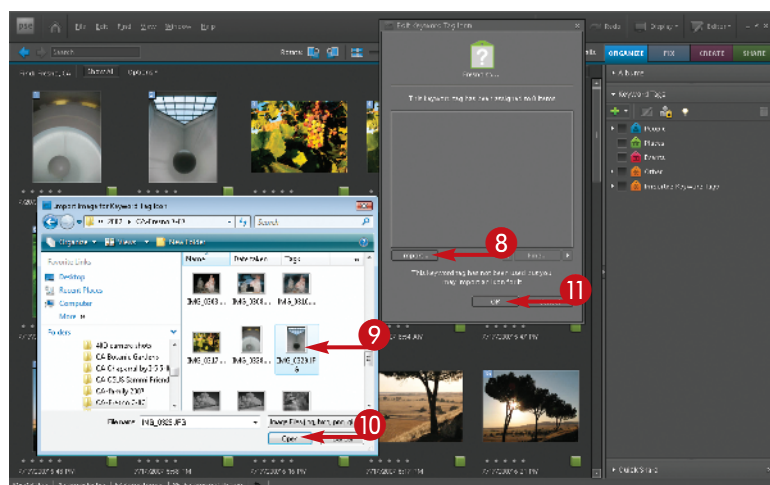
❹ Choose New Keyword Tag to add a keyword.

The Create Keyword
Tag dialog box appears.

5 Choose a category.

6 Type a name for your
keyword tag.

7 Choose an icon if
desired by clicking Edit
Icon.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

The Edit Keyword Tag Icon dialog
box appears.

8 Click Import to look for
something to use as an icon.

An Explorer window or Open
dialog box appears.

9 Find a photo that looks
interesting, perhaps from the
same group of images.

10 Click Open to select this photo
for your icon.

11 Click OK to use this new icon for
your keywords.

*Note: It is not required to have an
icon for every keyword tag.*

TIPS

Try This!

When all of the task panel controls
are open, your interface can get
cluttered and confusing. Click the
little arrows at the left of the panel
category titles to open and close a
category of control, such as
Albums. Simplify the workspace by
closing panel categories you are
not using.

Important!

Pick keywords that help you find
your photos. Your keywords will be
unique to your type of
photography. Adding keywords
that others use but do not fit your
images will make your searches
confusing. Ask yourself, "What do I
need to find?" in order to create
keywords that work for you and
your needs.

Customize It!

You can add as much or as little
information as you want to keyword
tags. The Keyword Tags dialog box
includes the option to add notes or
a specific address for a location.
These are not requirements, only
options that some photographers
will use frequently, others not at all.
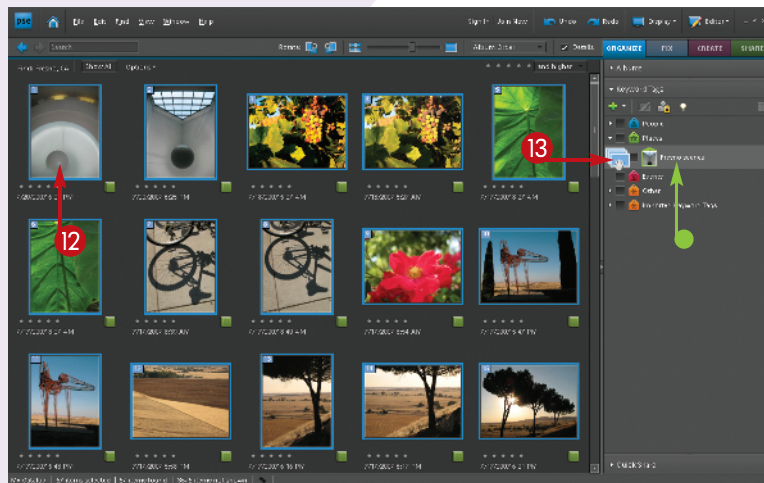Use what you need and what works
for you.

USE KEYWORDS
to tag your images

Keywords are one of those things that many photographers put off. The best time to do keywording is when you first import pictures into Photoshop Elements. At that time, you remember more things about your pictures anyway. It is also easier to add keywords then because all of your pictures are right in front of you.

It is important to understand that you can add keyword tags to one picture and only one picture, to a few pictures, or to hundreds. Keywords allow you to be very specific, down to putting a specific name on something that appears only in one picture. They also allow you to be broader in your approach and put a single word across a whole group of pictures so that you can find that group again. Keywords work across all pictures within Organizer so that you can find pictures throughout Organizer by simply searching for keywords.
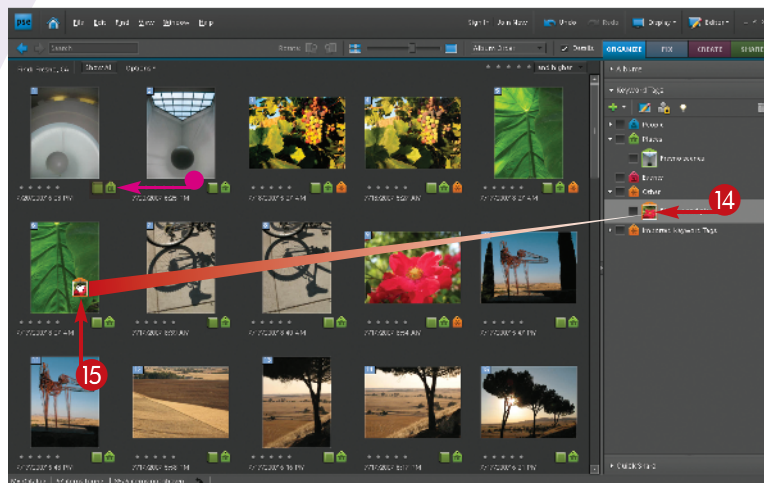

● A new keyword tag appears in the category you chose in step 5.

⑫ Select the photos that need this keyword.

The selected photos have a blue frame around them.

⑬ Click and drag the selected photos onto the tag and they will gain that tag.

You can click and drag multiple times, with different groups of photos, to add more keyword tags to photos.
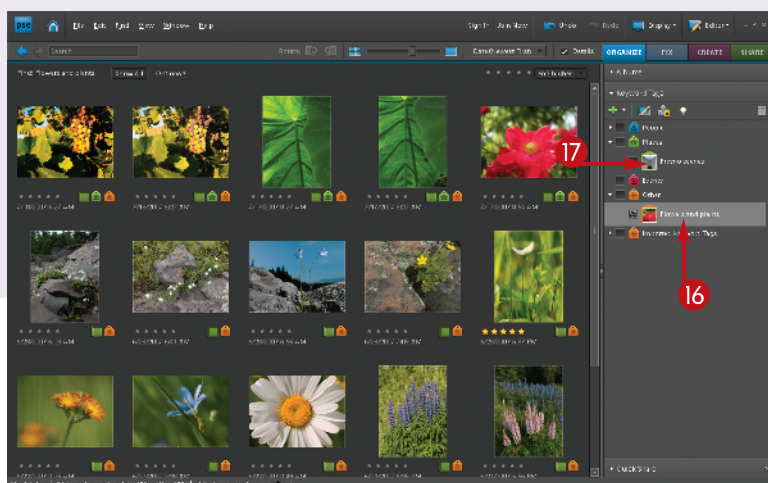

● A small keyword tag icon appears below your photos.
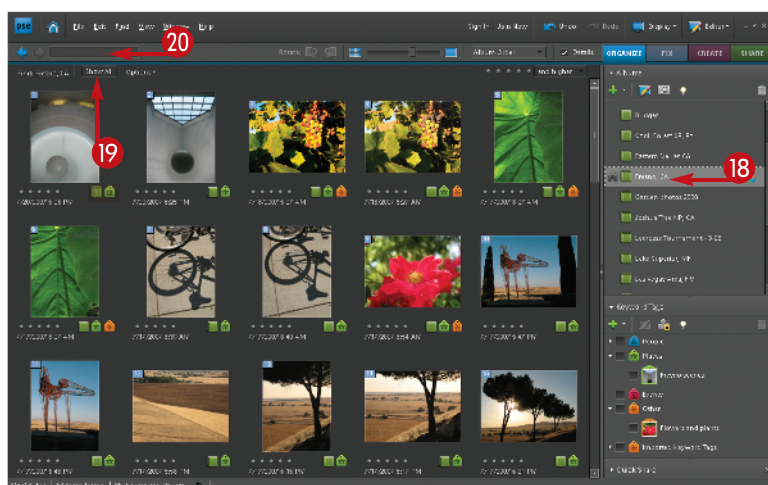
⑭ To put a keyword on specific photos, click the tag.

⑮ Drag the tag and drop it on the photo.

Any new categories used this way appear as new icons below the photo.

16 Find specific images based on your keyword by clicking the check box in front of a specific keyword tag.

17 Click additional tags to narrow your search.

18 To show specific items in an album, click the album before selecting Keyword Tags.

19 To search for images throughout your image files, click Show All first.

20 Type a name in the search box to show photos related to that name quickly.

TIPS

Customize It!

Take any existing keyword tag and customize it for your needs. Right-click any keyword tag to get a context-sensitive menu. This allows you to edit your keyword or keyword category, add a new keyword to the category, add a new subcategory, or remove keywords or categories as needed.

Did You Know?

Photoshop Elements includes a special feature that allows you to find people in your photos for tagging. This is called Find Faces for Tagging and is found in the Keyword Tags category of the task panel. You will see an icon with a person and a yellow tag (📷). Click it and all photos with faces will be highlighted for you.

Try This!

You can type a list of keywords based on common descriptions of things in your photos. You can then import this list into Photoshop Elements by clicking the green plus sign (➕) under Keyword Tags and then selecting From File. This file must be an XML file. You can save a Word file as an XML file for this purpose.

CHANGE THE ORGANIZER
interface as needed

Photoshop Elements has been designed for photographers, and its interface reflects that. However, every photographer has unique needs and ways of working. You can change the way the interface for Organizer looks and consequently acts to customize it for your needs.

The controls for affecting the look of the interface are in the buttons in the top menu bars, such as Album Order or thumbnail size icons, and in the View a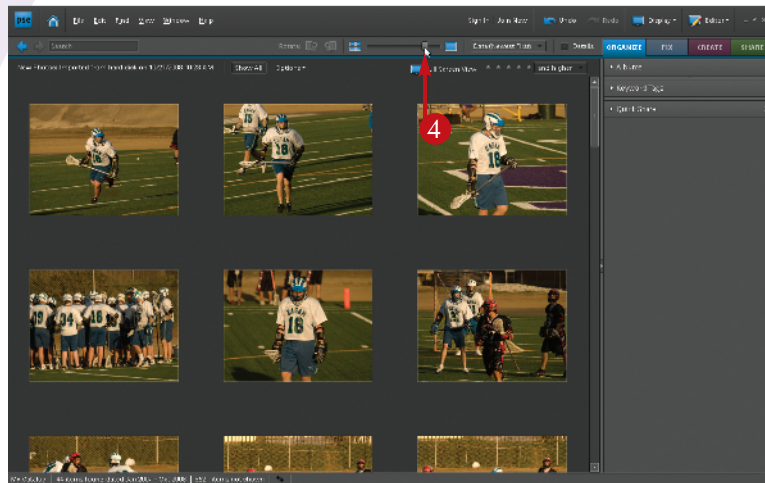nd Window menus. Do not be afraid to try different looks for your interface — you can always change back to the original look by re-clicking the button or menu item.

However you set up your interface, it should be something that helps you work more efficiently. Do not simply use something because it is there or because someone else uses it. Be sure that it really does help your work in the program. Working in Elements should be a fun way of interacting with your pictures.
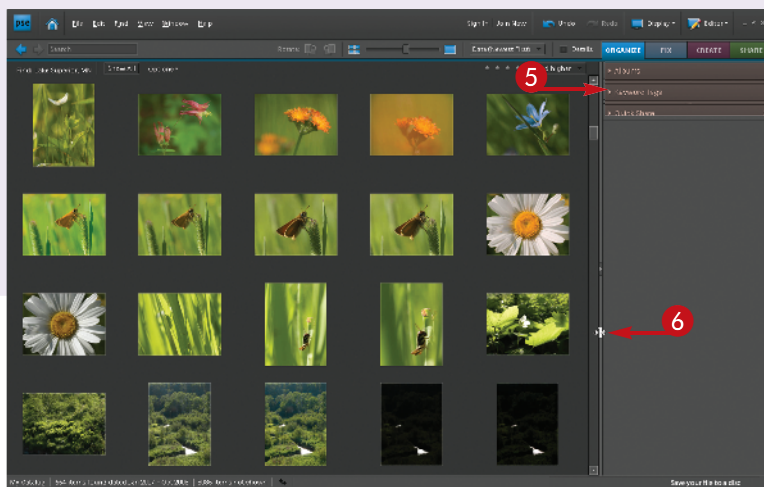

❶ Click the Display button to change your display views.

❷ Click Folder Location view to show a directory tree.

❸ In the Folder Location view, you can click directly on a folder to find photos.

If Elements is not managing pictures in a folder, right-click the folder to add them.
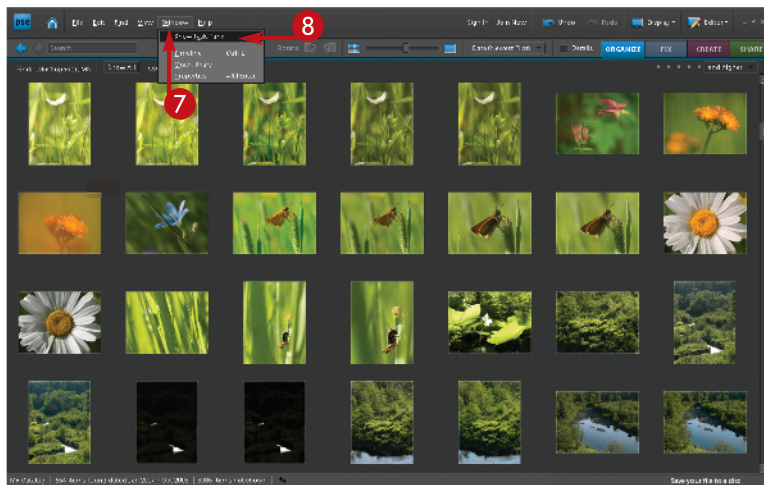

❹ Change your thumbnail size with the thumbnail slider.

5 Click the small arrow next to a right panel category to expand or collapse the panel section.

6 Click and drag along an interface edge to make it larger or smaller.

7 Click Window to change what is seen in the interface.

8 Click Hide Task Pane to give a large image viewing area; click Show Task Pane to give the normal view.

TIPS

Did You Know?

You can control many features of Photoshop Elements with keyboard commands. These allow you to quickly access controls with just a couple of keystrokes. These keystrokes are listed next to the controls in the menus. For example, you can turn on and off the detail display for thumbnails by using Ctrl+D.

Try This!

The Timeline in Photoshop Elements can help you find photos by date. This can be turned on in the Windows menu. It works for the entire database, so click the Show All button at the top left of the thumbnails first. Then you can select a specific time, and photos will appear below from that time. You can also drag the left and right sliders to limit the dates to show images.

Did You Know?

By default, all thumbnails have a small white border around them to make them show up better. Not everyone likes this border, but it can be easily turned off. Go to the View menu and click Show Borders around Thumbnails.
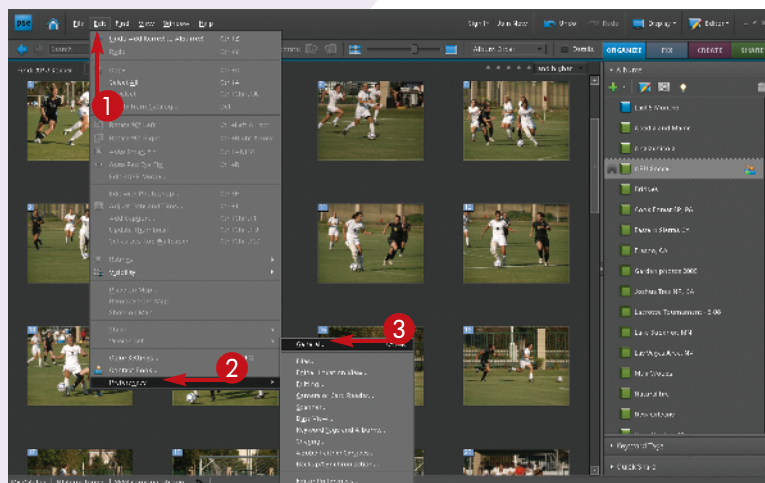
SET PREFERENCES
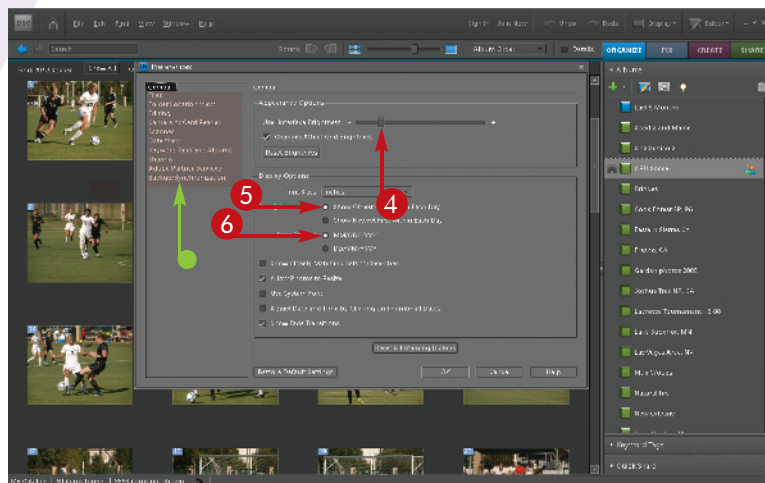## to make Organizer work for you

You can use Photoshop Elements right out of the box and get good results. However, the program has some preferences worth considering that allow you to fine-tune how Elements works with your computer and your needs.

Elements has two sets of preferences, one for the Organizer and one for the Editor. In both cases, they are found at the bottom of the Edit menu. Many of the choices can be left at their default settings, but some can be tweaked to refine how Elements works for you. Many of the settings are self-explanatory. If you are not sure of something and want to try it, go ahead, because all of the settings have a Restore Default Settings button at the bottom of the dialog box. Just reopen Preferences and use this button to go back to the defaults. This section offers some specific options that are especially worth looking at.
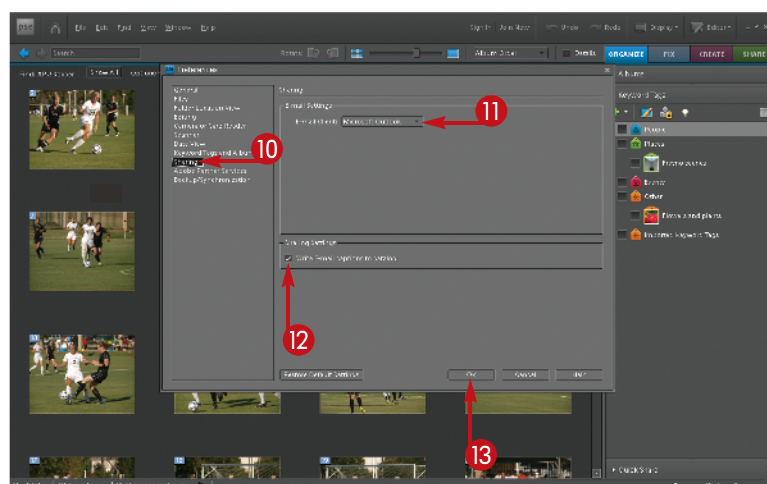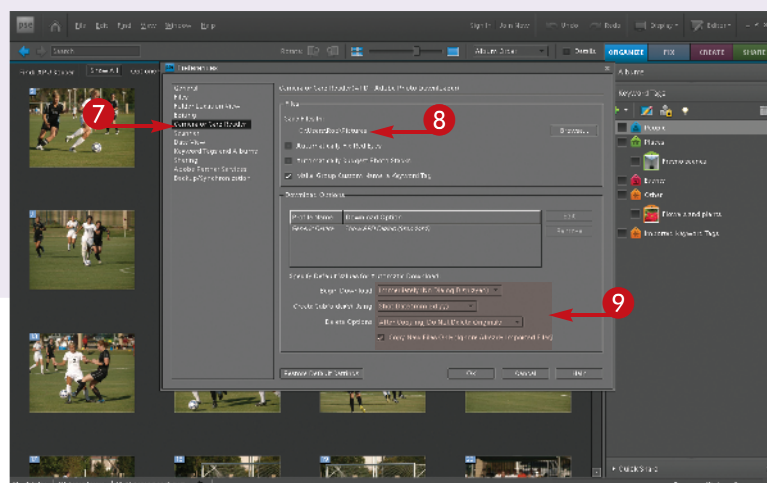

❶ Click Edit to open the Edit menu.

❷ Click Preferences.

❸ Click General.

The Preferences dialog box appears.

❹ Adjust Interface Brightness to make the background lighter or darker.

❺ Choose the order to show images by date (⊙ changes to ◉).

❻ Select a preferred Date Format (⊙ changes to ◉).

● You can click any category to adjust specific preferences.

7 Choose Camera or Card Reader.

8 Select a default location for your image files as they are copied from your camera or card reader.

9 Specify default settings for downloading. The settings shown are a good starting point.

10 Click Sharing to set up e-mail with Elements.

11 Choose your e-mail program.

12 Check Write E-mail captions to catalog to record and save captions (■ changes to ☑).

13 Click OK to close the Preferences dialog box.

TIPS

Did You Know?

You can have images in a separate location not connected to your computer and still reference them in Organizer. Photoshop Elements keeps a small thumbnail for each of the images so that you can still see them in thumbnail view. You can change the size of these previews in the Files section of Preferences.

Try This!

Select photos by standard computer selection commands. Ctrl+A selects all photos currently displayed in the organizer. Ctrl+clicking photos selects them one after another. Click one photo, and then Shift+click farther down; all photos in between are selected. You can also deselect a selected photo by Ctrl+clicking it.

Customize It!

If you use a lot of keywords, you can customize the way they are sorted in Preferences, in the section called Keyword Tags and Albums. You can, for example, change how the keywords are sorted, either alphabetically or manually. You can also choose how the tag icons are used, and you can even adjust how fast or accurate face-tagging is done.

BACK UP YOUR PICTURES
to protect them

Whenever you read about fires and other disasters destroying people's property, you always read about people wanting to save their photo albums. Photos are important to us in so many ways, whether they are memories of children growing up or artistic visions of a great natural setting.
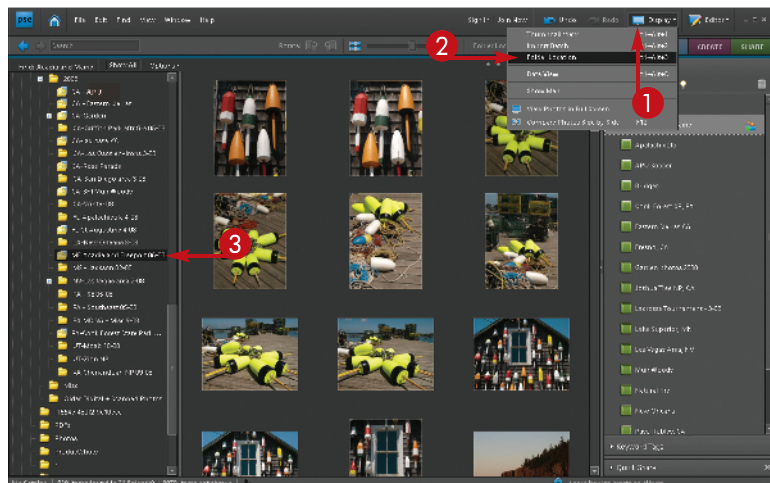
Digital photos are vulnerable to loss from a hard drive failure — and hard drives do fail. Plus, without a hard copy, you have no other record of the images. By backing them up, you can actually add more security to your pictures than was even possible with

traditional film. It is very easy to back up your photos onto accessory hard drives that plug into your computer. These have come down so much in price that many photographers back up their pictures on more than one.

Backup is so important that Adobe has added special backup features to Photoshop Elements 7, which will be covered in Chapter 10. You should have some backup of your own that you can control and access easily, which is covered here.
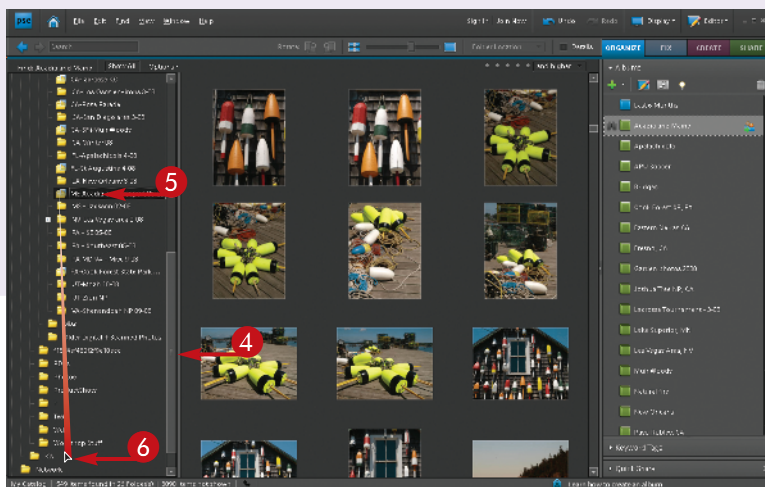

An external hard drive is one of the best ways to back up the images on your computer's hard drive.
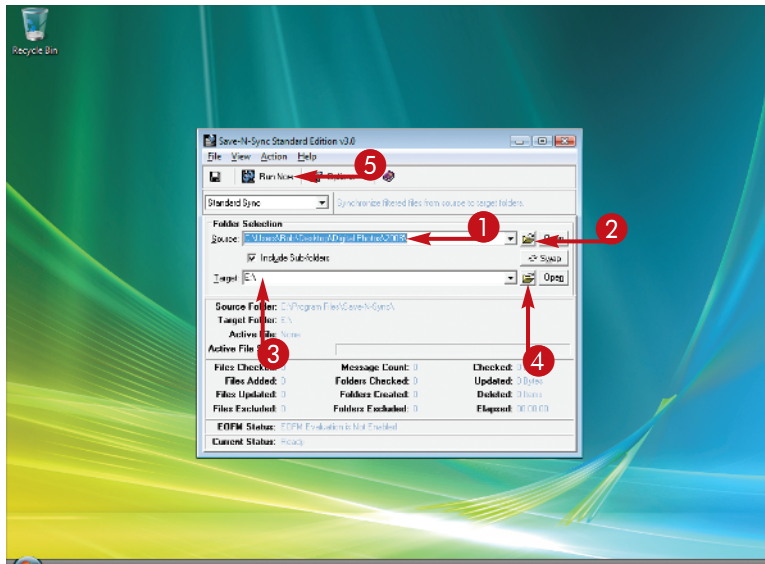

BACK UP TO AN EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE

❶ Click the Display button in the top menu bar.

❷ Choose Folder Location.

❸ Find a folder you want to duplicate for backup in the folder tree.

4 If necessary, scroll down to reveal the external hard drive.

5 Click the folder you want to duplicate.

6 Drag the folder to the external hard drive.

The folder is saved on the external hard drive.

Use Backup Software

1 With your backup software open, choose the folder or folders you want to back up.

2 Click the folder icon to find your folder.

3 Choose the accessory drive for backup.

4 Click the folder icon to select the location for backup.

5 Click Run Now to start the backup.

TIPS

Did You Know?

Backup software can make your backups easier. Once you set up backup software for specific folders and a specific accessory drive, the software remembers those locations. The next time that you ask it to back up, it simply compares what is in those two locations and adds only what is new.

Try This!

Small portable hard drives designed for laptops are more expensive than other accessory hard drives. However, they can be handy for accessing your photographs from your laptop or other computer. In addition, you can easily store such a hard drive in a location separate from your main computer, giving you added protection.

Try This!

When you try to move a folder of pictures on your hard drive to a new drive, Photoshop Elements tells you if those pictures are managed by Organizer or not. If they are not, and you want them included in Photoshop Elements, you can simply right-click the folder and select Add Unmanaged Files to Catalog.