

Getting Started with Image Editing

In This Chapter

- ▶ Starting the Photo Editor
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- ▶ Creating a new document
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- ▶ Saving your files

Image editing is incredibly fun, especially with a tool like Photoshop Elements, which enables you to modify, combine, and even draw your own images to your imagination's content. To get the most out of Elements, you need to understand some basic technical concepts, but like most people, you probably want to jump in, play around, and basically just get started right away.

You're in luck: In Quick mode, Elements helps you make basic edits to your photos, like revealing your child's face darkened by a baseball cap's shadow or cropping out the gigantic trash can on the left edge of your otherwise perfect landscape shot. In this chapter, we help you jumpstart your image-editing skills by guiding you through Quick mode and how to share photos online, retrace your steps, save your edits, and more.



Launching the Photo Editor

Photoshop Elements has two separate components:

- ✓ **The Organizer** is where you manage photos. It's full of tools for tagging, rating, sorting, and finding your images. Part II helps you start using the Organizer.

✓ **The Photo Editor** is where you correct photos for brightness and color, add effects, repair images, and so on.

In this chapter, you work in the Photo Editor to make basic edits to a photo.

Here's how to start Elements and open the Photo Editor:

1. **Double-click the Photoshop Elements shortcut on your desktop or in your Applications folder (Mac) to launch the Elements Welcome screen.**
2. **Click the Photo Editor button shown in the Welcome screen in Figure 1-1.**

The Photo Editor workspace loads and appears, as shown in Figure 1-2. By default, you see the Quick tab selected at the top of the Photo Editor workspace, which means you're in Quick mode (or right where you want to be for the purposes of this chapter). Quick mode offers a limited number of tools for adjusting brightness, contrast, color, and sharpness.



Figure 1-1: The Photoshop Elements Welcome screen.

When you first launch Photoshop Elements, you may see the eLive tab open. Click the Quick tab to see the editing options for Quick mode. See the section, "Getting a Helping Hand," later in this chapter for more about eLive.

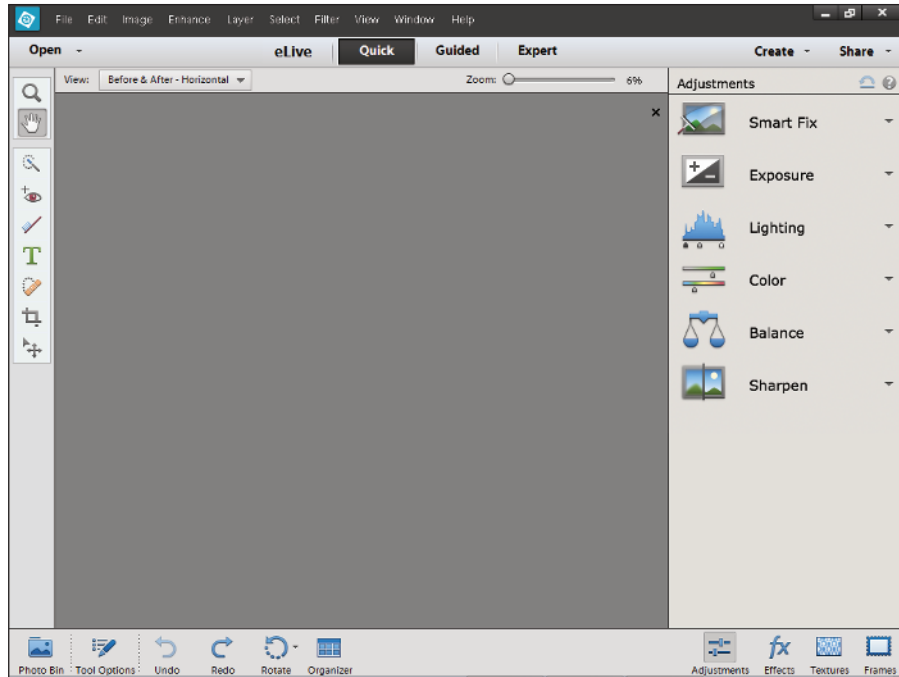


Figure 1-2: The default Photo Editor workspace with the Quick tab selected.

On the right side of the workspace, you see the Adjustments panel docked in an area dubbed the Panel Bin. When in any one of the three editing modes (Quick, Guided, Expert), you find different panels. On the left side of the workspace, you see a Tools panel. Interacting with the items in the Panel Bin and using tools in the Tools panel provides you an enormous number of options for editing, improving, and stylizing your pictures.

Making Basic Edits in Quick Mode

For beginning users, the Quick mode in the Photo Editor is both powerful and easy to use. Follow these steps to make some simple changes to an image:

- 1. Open the Photo Editor and make sure the Quick tab is selected at the top.**
- 2. Choose File ⇨ Open.**

If Elements is your default editing application, you can also double-click your photo file in Windows Explorer or the Mac Finder, and the file opens in Elements.

3. In the Open dialog box that appears, navigate your hard drive to locate the file you want to open, select the file, and click Open.
4. From the View drop-down list (in the upper left of the image window), choose Before & After – Horizontal, as shown in Figure 1-3.

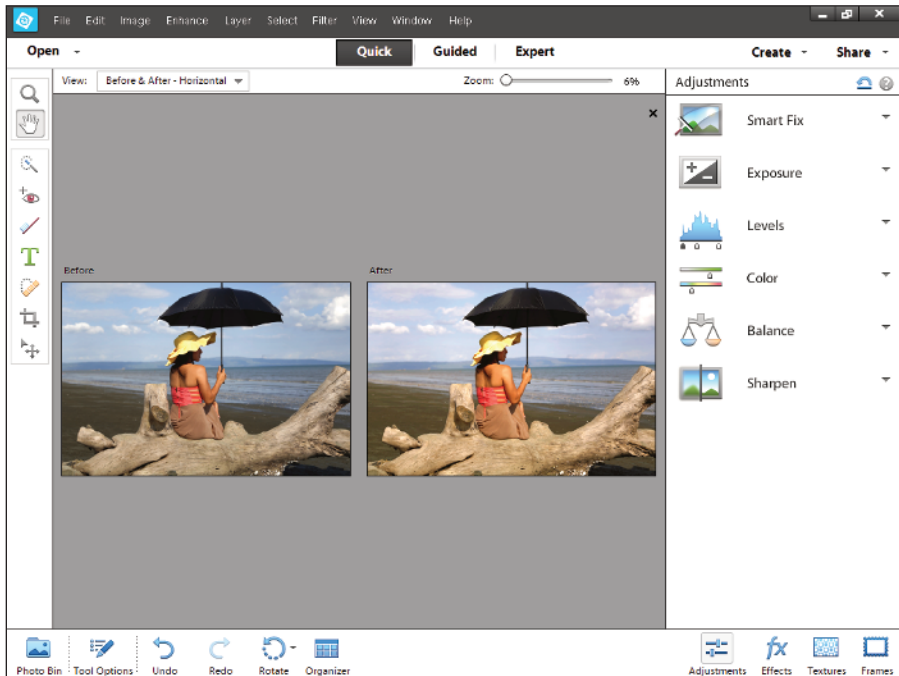


Figure 1-3: The before and after views in Quick mode.

5. Make edits to your photo.

Here's an introduction to two simple edits you can make in Quick mode:

- **Apply a Smart Fix:** Click Smart Fix in the Panel Bin to see the options. To begin with, click Auto at the bottom of the Smart Fix panel and select the After view to see whether you like the changes.

As shown in Figure 1-3, several items are listed in the Panel Bin below the Smart Fix option. Click an item to expand it and move the sliders, or click the thumbnail images to tweak the overall brightness, contrast, and color. In many cases there isn't a right or wrong adjustment. Play with the options to bring it close to your overall vision for the picture. For a more in-depth look at correcting photos in Quick mode, flip to Chapter 10.



- *Crop the photo:* In the Tools panel on the left side of the window, click the Crop tool. You immediately see a rectangle on top of the photo. Move the sides to crop the image to your liking. When finished, click the green check mark, as shown in Figure 1-4, to accept your edit.

When making any one of a huge number of edits to your pictures, you often see icons on top of the image similar to what's shown in Figure 1-4. The green check mark accepts the edit you're making at the time the icons appear. The circle with a diagonal line is the Cancel button. Click this button when you don't want to apply the recent edit.



Figure 1-4: The Crop tool sized on a photo.

6. Choose **File** ⇨ **Save As** and, in the **Save As** dialog box that opens, provide a new name for the photo. Click **Save**.

Note: When you use **Save As** and give your image a new name, you don't destroy your original image. You save a copy of the original with the new edits applied. For more on saving files, see the section "Saving Files with Purpose" later in this chapter.

Sharing a Photo

After you edit your photo, you can print the photo to share with family and friends or post the photo on a social network.

Because sharing photos on social networks is extremely popular, we introduce you to the Elements sharing features with the following steps, which explain how you can use Elements to share your photo on Facebook:

1. Prepare the photo you want to upload to Facebook.

Typically, digital cameras take photos sized very large — too large for an image that your friends and family will want to download quickly and view via Facebook on a computer screen or a mobile device. To adjust your image so it's the right size and resolution for viewing online, follow these steps:

- a. Choose *Image* ⇨ *Resize* ⇨ *Image Size*.
- b. In the *Image Size* dialog box that appears, enter your desired width (or height).

Either Width or Height is fine because the image will maintain correct proportions by choosing either. A width between 6 and 8 inches works well. Click the Pixels drop-down menu next to Width to choose Inches as your unit of measure.

- c. Type **144** in the *Resolution* box. For screen viewing only 72 ppi is fine. However if you want your friends to print the image, 144 is a better choice. You can use either resolution.
- d. Select the *Resample Image* check box and then click *OK* (see *Figure 1-5*).

The image is sized to a workable size for Facebook. In Chapter 2, you take a closer look at what these image-sizing options mean and how to choose the right settings for your prints or online images.

2. Choose *File* ⇨ *Save As* ⇨ *JPEG* to save the file as a JPEG.

Note the location where you save the file on your hard drive. Chapter 2 also explains how to choose the right file format for your images. (JPEG is one of many file formats that Elements supports.)

3. Click *Share* in the top-right corner of the workspace to open the *Share* panel and then choose *Facebook* from the drop-down list.

Elements enables you to upload to other services, like Twitter and Flickr, too. For details about the *Share* panel, flip to Chapter 15.

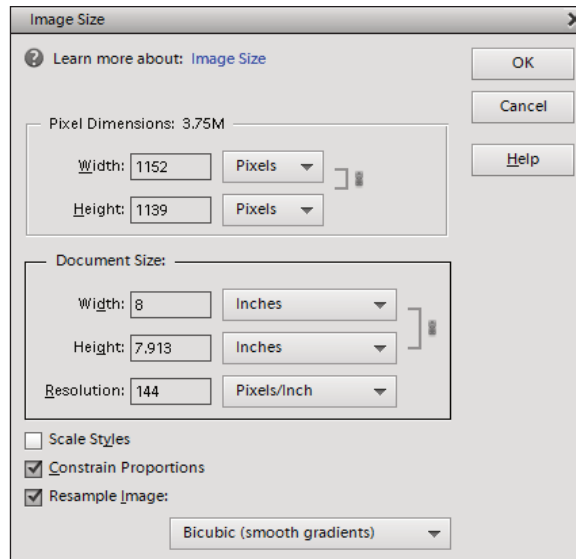


Figure 1-5: Resize an image in the Image Size dialog box.

4. Authenticate your account.

A dialog box opens when you choose Facebook in the Share panel, prompting you to authenticate your account. To authenticate your account:

- a. Click *Authenticate* in the dialog box.
- b. Fill in the text boxes for your Facebook login and password.

Your authentication is complete.

5. Click the Upload button to upload the file.

When the file upload is complete, a dialog box opens and prompts you to view the uploaded file.

6. Click Visit Facebook.

Your photo is added to your Facebook account, as shown in Figure 1-6.

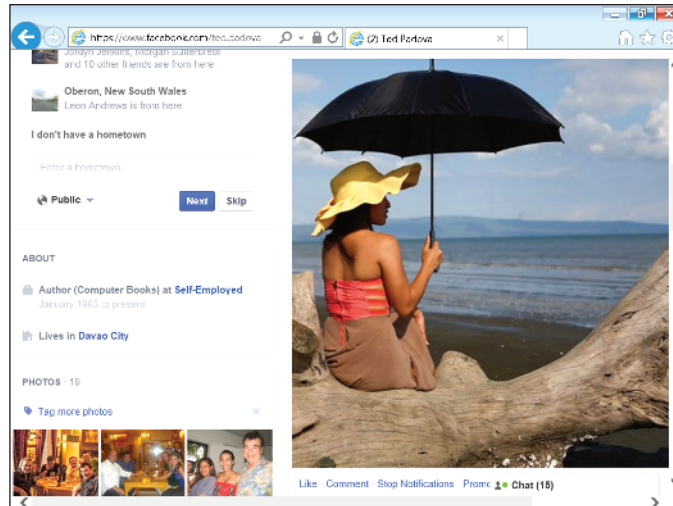


Figure 1-6: An edited photo uploaded to Facebook.

Creating Images from Scratch

You may want to start from scratch by creating a new document in Elements. New, blank pages have a number of uses:

- ✓ Mix and merge images in a new document, as we explain in Chapter 8.
- ✓ Create a canvas where you can draw and paint, as we explain in Chapter 12.
- ✓ Use the New dialog box to find out a file's size, dimensions, and resolution. You find out why these details are important in Chapter 2.

Follow these steps to create a new document while working in any editing mode:

- 1. In the Elements Photo Editor, choose File ⇨ New ⇨ Blank File or press Ctrl+N (⌘+N on the Mac).**

Alternatively, you can choose Open ⇨ New Blank File in the Photo Editor. The New dialog box opens, as shown in Figure 1-7.

- 2. Select the attributes for the new file.**

When you select these attributes, among the things you need to consider is the output you want to use for the image: screen or paper. Files created for the web or for screen views are measured in pixels, and you don't need to specify a resolution. For print, you want to use a measurement other than pixels and you need to specify resolution. We explain how all this works for the relevant settings in the following bulleted list.

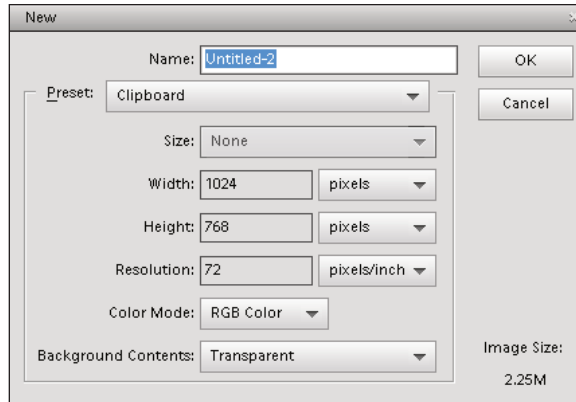


Figure 1-7: When you create a new, blank file, the New dialog box opens.

You have several options from which to choose:

- *Name:* Type a name for your file.
- *Preset:* Select from a number of sizes.
- *Size:* You can choose a preset size from a long drop-down list. This setting is optional because you can change the file attributes in the other text boxes and drop-down lists.
- *Dimensions (Width/Height):* Values in the Width and Height text boxes are independent; either box can be edited without affecting the other. Adjacent to the values in the Width and Height text boxes, you find drop-down lists that offer many options for units of measure, such as the default units of pixels followed by inches, centimeters (cm), millimeters (mm), points, picas, and columns.
- *Resolution:* Generally speaking, if your image will be printed, choose 300 dpi (dots per inch). If you plan to display your image only on a computer screen or mobile device, choose 72 ppi (pixels per inch). Chapter 2 explains the details about how resolution works.
- *Color Mode:* You most likely want to leave this at the default of RGB Color. Chapter 2 explains when you might want to use the other available color modes.
- *Background Contents:* You have three choices: White, Background Color, and Transparent. The selection you make results in the color of the blank image. If you choose Background Color, the current background color assigned on the Tools panel is applied to the background. See Chapter 12 for information on changing background color. If you choose Transparent, the blank image is the digital version of a sheet of acetate, and the image is created as a layer. Chapter 8 explains how you work with layers.

- *Image Size*: This value (displayed in the lower-right corner of the dialog box) dynamically changes when you change the Width, Height, and Resolution values. The Image Size value tells you how much file space is required to save the uncompressed file.

3. Click OK after setting the file attributes to create the new document.



Sometimes you may want to copy a selection to the Clipboard and convert the Clipboard information to an image. Be sure you have copied some image data to the Clipboard. In Elements, choose File⇨New⇨Image from Clipboard. The data on the Clipboard appears in a new document window.

After you create a new image, try playing with the different brushes and painting tools, just to experiment and get a feel for how they work. For example, click a brush on the Tools panel and then click and drag to paint in the image window. Or jump to Chapter 12, where we help you start using the drawing and painting tools.

Retracing Your Steps

In Elements, Undo is a favorite command for both beginners and experienced users alike. If you don't like a change to your image, you simply choose Edit⇨Undo or press the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+Z (⌘+Z on the Mac).

Because trial and error (and thus undoing your work) is so important to making your image look just right, Elements also offers ways to undo that are much more sophisticated than simply reverting to the last view. In the following sections, we introduce you to these more sophisticated tools.

Using the History panel

On the History panel, you see a record of your changes in an editing session. And from this record, you can undo your changes from any step in an editing sequence. To work with the History panel, you must be in Expert mode. After you click Expert at the top of the Photo Editor, here's how undoing with the History panel works:

1. To open the panel, choose Window⇨History.

The History panel displays a record of each step you made in the current editing session, as shown in Figure 1-8.

2. To undo one or more edits, click any item on the History panel.

Elements reverts your image to that last edit. All edits that follow the selected item are grayed out.

3. If you want to bring back the edits, click any grayed-out step on the panel.

Elements reinstates your edits up to that level.



All your steps are listed on the History panel as long as you remain in Elements and don't close the file. When the file is closed, all history information is lost.



Storing all this editing history can affect Elements' performance. If your computer slows to a snail's pace when you're using Elements, check out the following options:

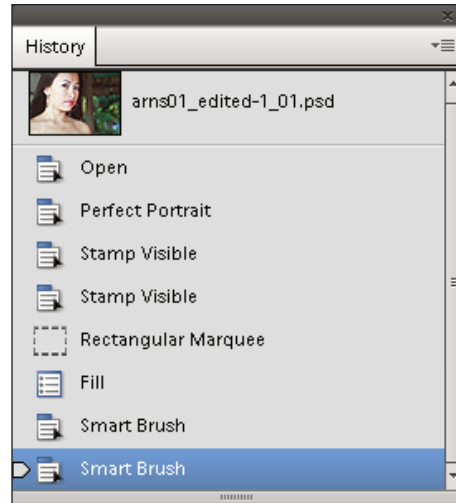


Figure 1-8: The History panel.

✓ **Choose Edit ⇨ Clear History.**

Elements flushes all the recorded history and frees up some precious memory, which often enables you to work faster. Just be sure you're okay with losing all the history in the History panel thus far.

✓ **Eliminate Clipboard data from memory.** To do so, choose Edit ⇨ Clear Clipboard Contents or Edit ⇨ Clear ⇨ All.

✓ **Restore the number of history states stored to the default of 50.** In Chapter 3, we show you how to increase the number of history states via Elements preferences. You can ratchet this number up to 1,000 if you like. But realize that the more history states you record, the more memory Elements requires.

Reverting to the last save

While you edit photos in Elements, plan on saving your work regularly. Each time you save in an editing session, the History panel preserves the list of edits you make until you hit the maximum number or close the file.

If you save, then perform more edits, and then want to return to the last saved version of your document, Elements provides you with a quick, efficient way to do so. If you choose Edit ⇨ Revert, Elements eliminates your new edits and takes you back to the last time you saved your file.

When you choose Revert, *Revert* appears in the History panel. You can eliminate the Revert command from the History panel by right-clicking (Windows) or Ctrl-clicking (on a Mac with a one-button mouse) the Revert item and choosing Delete from the contextual menu that appears.

Getting a Helping Hand

You probably bought this book because you're not a fan of sifting through help files and want an expert guide to image editing. We share everything a beginner needs to get started in Elements, but Elements is too sophisticated a program to cover completely in the pages we have here. You may also need some quick help if you don't have this book nearby.

Whenever you need a hand, know that you can find valuable help information quickly and easily within Elements itself. If you're stuck on understanding a feature, ample help documents are only a mouse click away and can help you overcome some frustrating moments.

Your first stop is the Help menu, where you can find several commands that offer information:

- ✓ **Photoshop Elements Help:** Choose Help ⇨ Photoshop Elements Help or press the F1 key (Windows) or the Help key (on a Mac with an extended keyboard) to open the Elements Help file. You can type a search topic and press Enter to display a list of search results.
- ✓ **Getting Started:** Choose this item for tips and information on getting started in Elements.
- ✓ **Key Concepts:** While you read this book, if we use a term that you don't completely understand, choose Help ⇨ Key Concepts. A web page opens in your default web browser and provides many web pages with definitions of terms and concepts.
- ✓ **Support:** This menu command launches your default web browser and takes you to the Adobe website (www.adobe.com), where you can find information about Elements, problems reported by users, and some workaround methods for getting a job done. You can find additional web-based help information by clicking Photoshop Elements Online and Online Learning Resources. The vast collection of web pages on Adobe's website offers you assistance, tips and techniques, and solutions to many problems that come with editing images. Be sure to spend some time browsing these web pages.
- ✓ **Video Tutorials:** Choose Help ⇨ Video Tutorials to open a web page where videos for common tasks are hosted on Adobe's website.
- ✓ **Forum:** Choose Help ⇨ Forum to explore user comments and questions with answers to many common problems.



Tooltips can be another helpful resource. While you move your cursor around tools and panels, pause a moment before clicking the mouse. A slight delay in your actions produces a *tooltip*, which is a small box that describes the item your mouse is pointing to. Elements provides this sort of dynamic help when you pause the cursor before moving to another location.



When you launch the Organizer or Photo Editor for the first time, you may see the eLive tab selected by default. eLive, shown in Figure 1-9, is a new feature in Elements that offers you help, tutorial assistance, and information related to updates. When you first begin to explore Elements, take a look at the various options you have for learning more about the program.

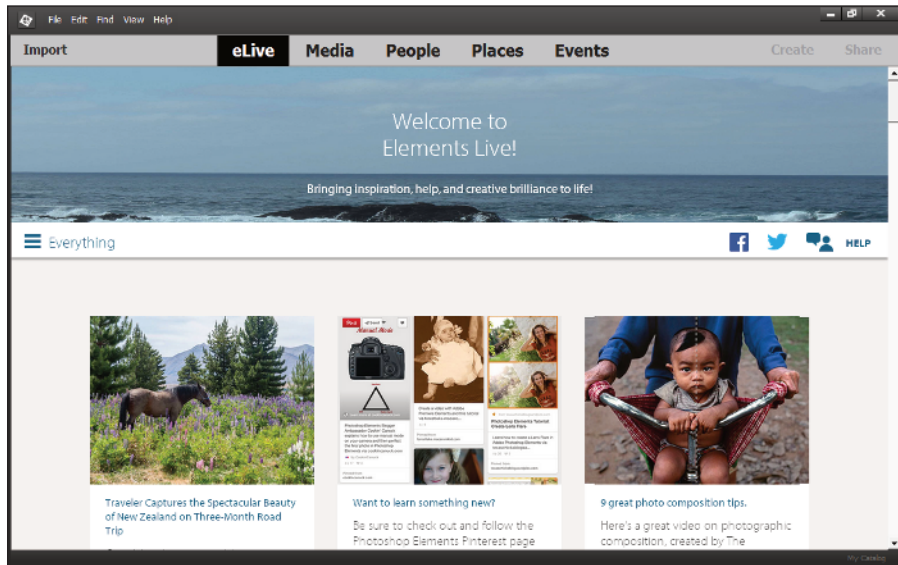


Figure 1-9: Find great help resources on the new eLive tab.

eLive has three separate categories and a View All category (called Everything) where all options are shown in the eLive window. You select a category by opening the drop-down menu from the left side of the window. Here you find:

- ✓ **Learn:** Click this item to learn various techniques in editing photos.
- ✓ **Inspire:** Click this item to view some inspirational creations.
- ✓ **News:** Click this tab to view Elements news items such as updates and announcements.

The eLive tab shows updated information as Adobe posts it. The interface is web-based and new updates to the individual items occur routinely. Be sure to explore eLive to keep updated with new ideas and announcements.

Saving Files with Purpose

When you save a file after editing it, you might save the file in the same file format, or change the format to suit your photo service center's specifications or to ensure your image downloads quickly on a website.

When you save, Elements also enables you to take advantage of special features, such as saving different versions of a file or including your edited file in the Organizer as well as saving it to your hard drive.

This section is your guided tour of the Save dialog box (or Save As dialog box if you're saving a file for the first time) and the Save for Web dialog box. In Chapter 2, you find a detailed explanation of how to choose a file format when you save.

Using the Save/Save As dialog box

In most any program, the Save (or Save As) dialog box is a familiar place where you make choices about the file to be saved. With Save As, you can save a duplicate copy of your image or save a modified copy and retain the original file. However, if you're planning to upload your final image to the web, skip the familiar Save (or Save As) dialog box and see the next section, "Saving files for the web."

To use the Save (or Save As) dialog box, choose File⇨Save for files to be saved the first time, or choose File⇨Save As for any file, and a dialog box then opens.



As a matter of good practice, when you open an image, choose File⇨Save As for your first step in editing a photo. Save with a new filename to make a copy and then proceed to edit the photo. If you don't like your editing results, you can return to the original, unedited photo and make another copy for editing.

The standard navigational tools you find in any Save dialog box appear in the Elements Save/Save As dialog box. Here are two standard options you find in the Elements Save/Save As dialog box:

- ✓ **Filename:** This item is common to all Save (Windows) or Save As (Mac) dialog boxes. Type a name for your file in the text box.
- ✓ **Format:** From the drop-down list, you choose file formats. We explain the formats that Elements supports in Chapter 2.

A few options make the Photoshop Elements Save/Save As dialog box different from other Save dialog boxes that you might be accustomed to using. The Save Options area in the Save As dialog box provides these choices:

- ✔ **Include in the Elements Organizer:** If you want the file added to the Organizer, select this check box. (For more information about using the Organizer, see Part II.)
- ✔ **Save in Version Set with Original:** You can edit images and save a version of your image, but only in Quick mode. When you save the file from Quick mode, this check box is enabled. Select the box to save a version of the original, which appears in the Organizer.
- ✔ **Layers:** If your file has layers, selecting this check box preserves the layers.
- ✔ **As a Copy:** Use this option to save a copy without overwriting the original file.
- ✔ **Color:** Color profiles help you maintain accurate color, and this box controls your image's color profile. Select the box for ICC (International Color Consortium) Profile. Depending on which profile you're using, the option appears for sRGB or Adobe RGB (1998). When the check box is selected, the profile is embedded in the image. Chapter 2 introduces color profiles in more detail, and Chapter 14 explains how to use color profiles with your prints.
- ✔ **Thumbnail (Windows only):** If you save a file with a thumbnail, you can see a miniature representation of your image when viewing it in folders or on the desktop. If you select Ask When Saving in the Saving Files preferences, the check box can be enabled or disabled. If you select an option for Never Save or Always Save in the Preferences dialog box, this box is enabled or disabled (grayed out) for you. You need to return to the Preferences dialog box if you want to change the option.

Saving files for the web

The Save for Web command helps you prepare photos to show on the web or just onscreen. To use this command, make sure you're in Expert mode. Then choose File ⇨ Save for Web. In the Save for Web dialog box that opens (see Figure 1-10), you see your original image on the left, and the result of making changes for file format and quality settings on the right.

The standard rule with web graphics is to find the smallest file size for an acceptable image appearance. In the Save for Web dialog box, you have many choices for reducing file size. Notice in Figure 1-10 that you see the original image with the file size reported below the image on the left. After choosing JPEG for the file type, you can see that the image size is reduced from the original 3.55MB to 55.52K. (See Chapter 2 for details about choosing a file type.)

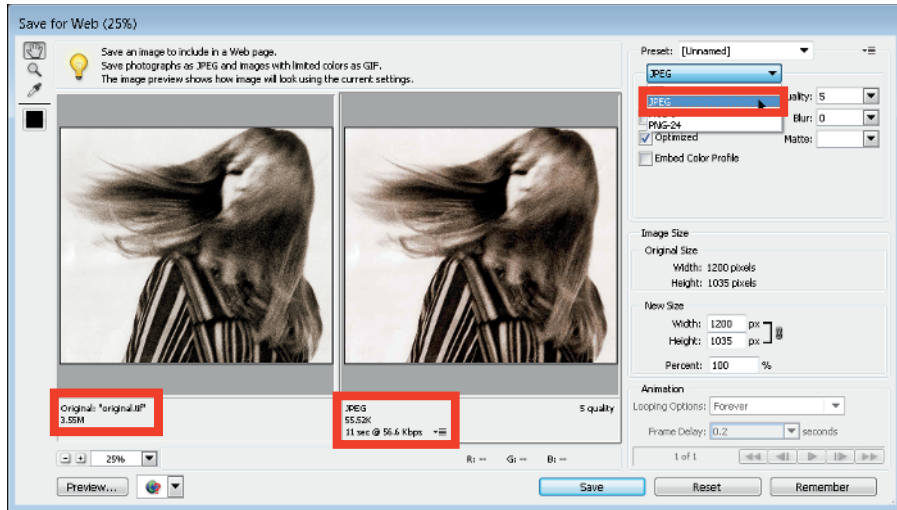


Figure 1-10: The Save for Web dialog box.

You can also use the Quality item that appears to the right of the drop-down list to adjust the final quality of the saved file. Here, you need to find the right balance between quick download times and image appearance. Just keep an eye on the preview image as well as the download time information for your optimized file.

For the most accurate viewing, set the zoom size to 100 percent. In the lower-left corner of the dialog box, you can choose zoom levels from the drop-down list or just type a value in the field box. If your chosen settings noticeably degrade your image quality, you can easily discern the loss when viewing at a 100-percent view.



Working in the Save for Web dialog box is a matter of making choices and viewing the results. Toggle the different file type choices and make adjustments for quality. If you see image degradation, change to a different quality setting or file format. Always look at the file-size item reported below the image on the right and try to find the lowest file size that produces a good-looking image.



See our web extras for detailed steps on saving files for the web at www.dummies.com/extras/photoshopelements.