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- » Starting the Photo Editor
- » Opening, editing, sharing, and saving a photo
- » Using Undo History
- » Finding help
- » Saving your files

Chapter 1

Getting Started with Image Editing

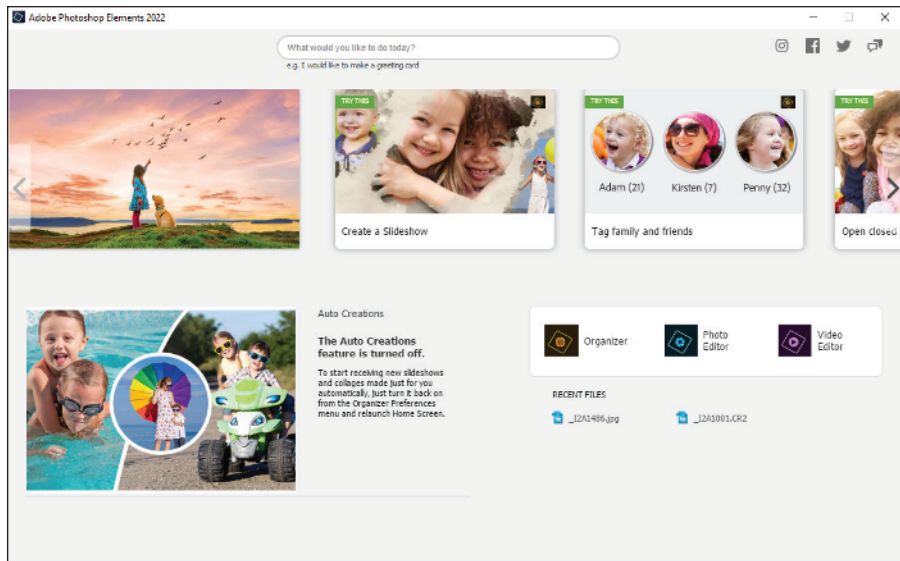
Image editing is incredibly fun, especially with a tool like Photoshop Elements, which enables you to modify, combine, and even draw your own images to your imagination's content. To get the most out of Elements, you need to understand some basic technical concepts, but like most people, you probably 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 jump-start your image-editing skills by guiding you through Quick mode and how to share photos online, retrace your steps, save your edits, and more.

Getting Familiar with the Home Screen

After installing Elements, launch the Elements application, and you arrive at the Home screen (or Hub, as Adobe calls it), shown in Figure 1-1.

FIGURE 1-1:
The Photoshop
Elements Home
screen.



From the Home screen, you have the following options:

- » **Search (What would you like to do today?):** At the top of the window, you can search for a task and have help returned to you (see the text at the top of the window where it reads: “What would you like to do today?”).
- » **Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Help:** At the top right, click one of the three respective buttons to share files on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Click the fourth icon to get some help using Elements. Clicking Help takes you to a web link.
- » **Try This/What's New/Guided Edits/Make Creations:** The individual cards appearing at the top of the Home screen offer options for trying different tasks, exploring features, performing a Guided Edit (Guided Edit is a step-by-step set of instructions to perform an edit), and a quick launch to make a new creation. When you mouse over a card, a link is shown where you perform the task in question.
- » **Application Launcher:** Click one of the three icons to launch the Elements Photo Editor, the Organizer, or Video Editor (Adobe Premier Elements must be installed to launch this item).
- » **Recent Files:** Click an image in the Recent Files list, and the file opens in the Photo Editor.

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 2 of this book 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.

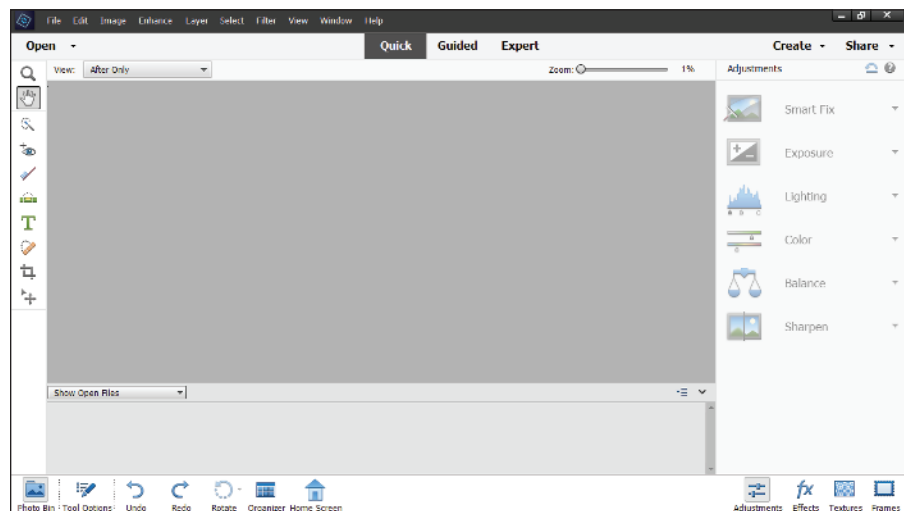
In this chapter, you work in the Photo Editor to make basic edits to a photo.

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 Home screen.**
2. **Click the Photo Editor button shown in the Home screen (refer to 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 1-2:
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, always on the right side of the window. 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 provide you with 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 or click the Open button at the top left of the Photo Editor.**

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.**
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. At the top left of the window, you find options for viewing by opening the drop-down menu. Choose After Only or choose Before & After (Horizontal or Vertical) to see before and after views.

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.

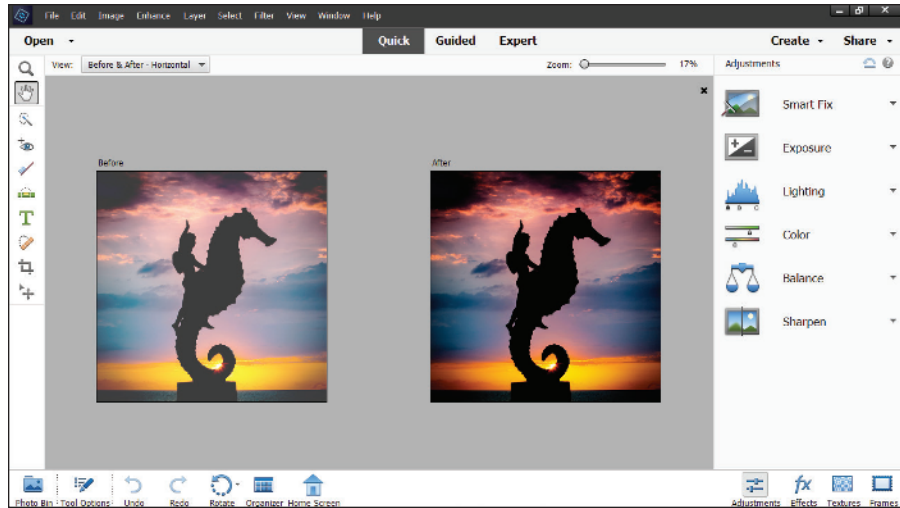


FIGURE 1-3:
The before and
after views in
Quick mode.



TIP

Each of the Quick Fix options provides you with thumbnail previews showing you the result of a given edit. For a quick preview of an editing task, mouse over a Smart Fix thumbnail to see what the edit will look like when it is applied.

- **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. Drag 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.



REMEMBER

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.



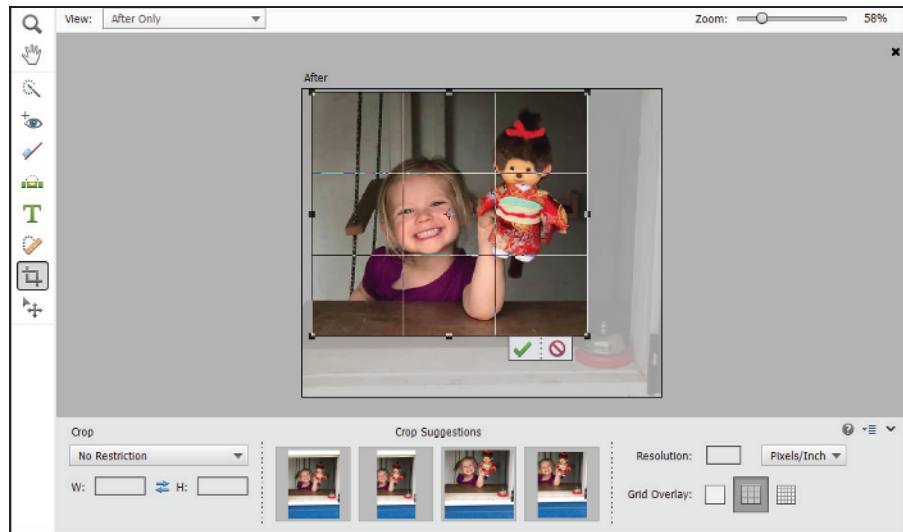
TIP

At the bottom of the Editor window, you see some hints that Elements gives you for crop suggestions. Click one of the options to employ the respective crop.

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.

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



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 site.

In earlier versions of Elements, you could upload directly from within Facebook. In more recent versions, you need to edit the file, save it, and then open your Facebook account to upload the file. Here's how to do it:

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 mobile device. To adjust your image so that 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 of 720 pixels, 960 pixels, or 2,048 pixels works well.

Facebook recommends that supported sizes for regular photos are widths of 720 pixels, 960 pixels, and 2,048 pixels, with file sizes no more than 100KB — especially if you have text in the cover photo. When you save as JPEG, the files are compressed, and you'll find the larger size to be within Facebook recommendations. However, you don't have to be too concerned about staying within Facebook recommendations. You can upload images much larger than 100KB, but the uploads and screen refreshes will take longer. Just be certain to stay within 100 KB if you have text on a cover photo.

(c) Select the Resample Image check box if for some reason the box is not selected.

(d) Type either 72 or 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. Be sure the file size is no larger than 100KB.

The image is sized to a workable size for Facebook. Click OK when finished editing in the Image Size dialog box.

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. (JPEG is one of many file formats that Elements supports.)

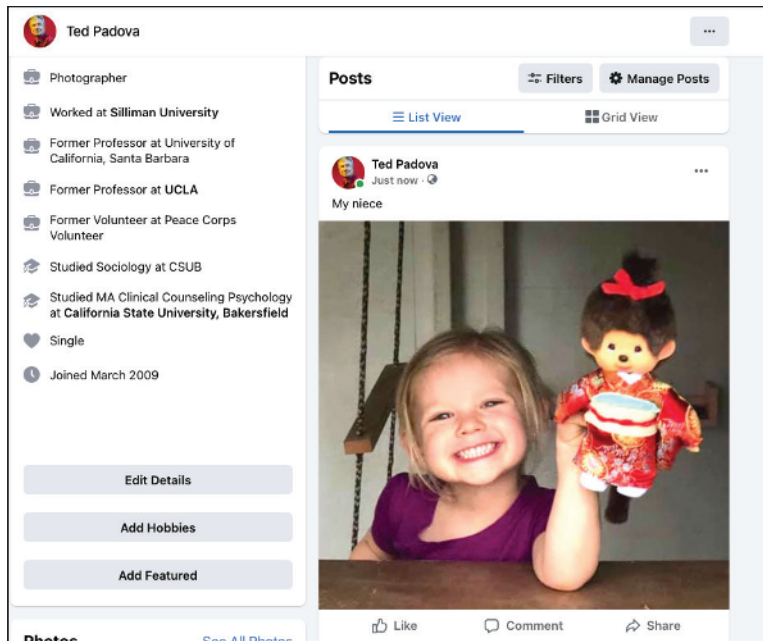
3. Log in to your Facebook account.

4. Click Photo/Video.

Locate the saved file and upload it to Facebook.

Your photo is added to your Facebook account, as shown in Figure 1-5.

FIGURE 1-5:
An edited
photo
uploaded to
Facebook.



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 the process of trial and error (and thus the ability to undo 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. Click Expert in the Photo Editor and choose Window ⇨ History.

The History panel displays a record of each step you made in the current editing session, as shown in Figure 1-6.

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. If you make a new edit after going back a few steps, the grayed-out steps disappear.

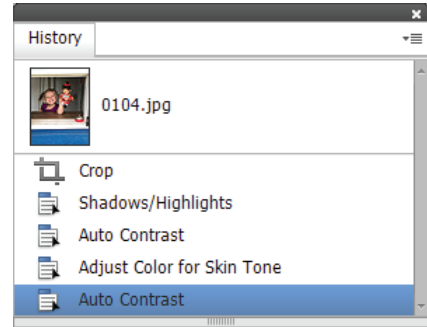


FIGURE 1-6:
The History panel.



REMEMBER

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



TIP

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:

- » **Choose Edit ⇨ Clear ⇨ Clear History.** Elements flushes all the recorded history and frees 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 Elements Performance Preferences, you can change the number of history states. 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, 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:** From the Help menu, 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:** From the Help menu, this 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 work-around 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 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.



TIP

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.

You can also find help by searching in the Home screen, as mentioned in the “Getting Familiar with the Home Screen” section, earlier in this chapter.

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 that 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/Save As dialog box (or Save As dialog box, if you’re saving a file for the first time) and the Save for Web dialog box.

Using the Save/Save As dialog box



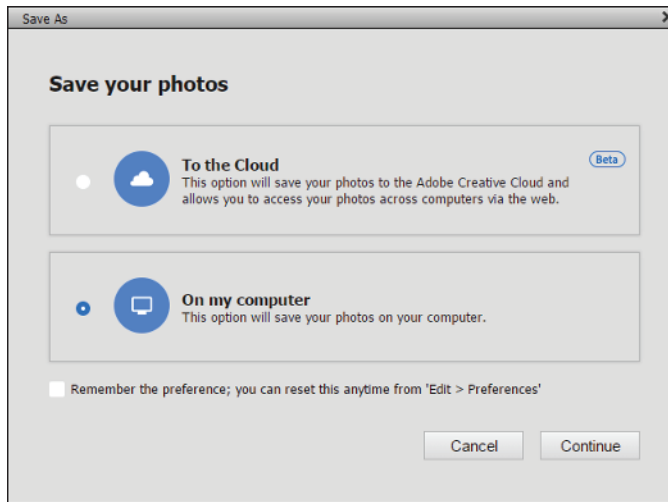
NEW

Before you save a file, Elements offers you an option for where you want to save your file. Choose File ⇨ Save or File ⇨ Save As and the Save As dialog box opens, as shown in Figure 1-7.

Choices offered in this dialog box include saving your files to the cloud. You can choose to save files on Adobe’s servers and access the file from any computer when you log on to Adobe Creative Cloud. Or you can choose to save files locally in your computer.

If you want to eliminate this dialog box from opening each time you save a file, select the check box at the bottom of the dialog box.

FIGURE 1-7:
The Save As
dialog box that
appears on
using your first
Save/Save As.



In almost 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 when you want to make a copy of the open file, and a dialog box then opens.



TIP

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 that you find in any Save dialog box appear in the Elements Save/Save As dialog box. Here are two standard options 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. For more on file formats, see 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:

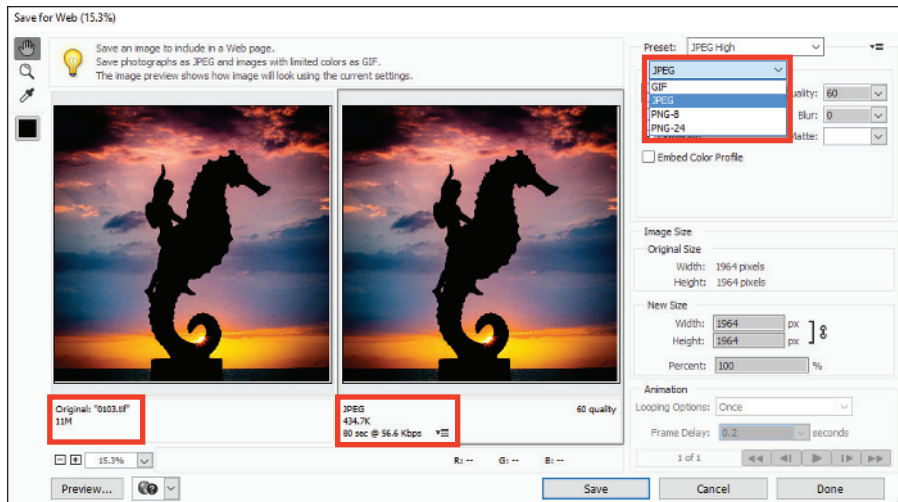
- » **Include in the Elements Organizer:** If you want the file added to the Organizer, select this check box. (For more information about using the Organizer, see Part 2.)
- » **Save in Version Set with Original:** This choice is a bit odd. You won't see Version Set available for any photo you open in either Quick or Expert mode by choosing File ⇨ Open. You must load the file in the Organizer and open from the Organizer in the Photo Editor; then, when you save the file in either mode, you see Version Set available. This option provides you with opportunities to make multiple edits on a file and save as different versions all within the same file.
- » **Layers:** If your file has layers, selecting this check box preserves the layers. For more on Layers, see Chapter 9.
- » **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 15 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. Choose File ⇨ Save for Web. In the Save for Web dialog box that opens (see Figure 1-8), you see your original image on the left, and you see 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 1-8 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 11MB to 434.7K.

FIGURE 1-8:
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.



REMEMBER

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.