

- » Examining the Editor workspace
- » Using the Photo Bin
- » Using Creative Effects
- » Launching Preferences
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Chapter **1**

Exploring the Photo Editor

Photoshop Elements has two workspaces: the Organizer, which we discuss in Chapter 2, and the Photo Editor, introduced in this chapter. You manage and arrange your photos in the Organizer, and you edit photos in the Photo Editor.

In this chapter, you look at the Photo Editor, where you can refine your photo-editing skills. You discover the Photo Editor's workspace in depth as well as how to access the Photo Editor's three editing modes: Quick, Guided, and Advanced. You access these three workspaces by clicking the tabs above the image window.

Examining the Photo Editor

Before you begin editing photos, you'll find it helpful to look over the Photo Editor and figure out how to move around the workspace. When the Photo Editor is in Advanced mode, you find the following (as labeled in Figure 1-1):

- (A) Menu bar:** As does just about every other program you launch, Elements supports drop-down lists. The menus are logically constructed and identified to provide commands for working with your pictures (including many

commands that you don't find supported in tools and on panels). A quick glimpse at the menu names gives you a hint of what might be contained in a given menu list. Throughout this book, we point you to the menu bar whenever it's helpful. Most of the menu commands you find in Elements 2025 are the same as those found in earlier versions of Elements.

- (B) **Create panel:** When you open the Create panel and choose an option, you leave the current editing mode. For example, when in Advanced mode, choose Create ⇨ Photo Collage, and all the options that were available in the Photo Editor temporarily disappear when the Creation Wizard opens. To return to the Photo Editor, complete the creation or cancel the wizard. Chapter 14 guides you through the options in the Create panel.
- (C) **Photo Editor modes:** The Photo Editor has three modes. The Advanced mode is shown in Figure 1-1. You find a detailed look at Quick mode in Chapter 8. An introduction to Guided mode appears later in this chapter, in the “Using Some Creative Features” section. Part 2 and 3 of the book covers all the different features of Advanced mode, including making selections, creating composites from several images, drawing, adding text, and exploring creative flourishes with filters and effects.
- (D) **Features buttons:** On Windows, you find three buttons in the top-right corner. These buttons are used to (1) minimize the window; (2) maximize/minimize the window; and (3) close the application. On Apple Macintosh, the same three buttons appear, but they are placed in the top-left corner of the window.
- (E) **Share menu:** The Share menu works similarly to the Create menu and offers options for sharing your images. Chapter 13 focuses on the Share menu.
- (F) **Panel Bin:** Figure 1-1 shows the Layers panel. You change panels by clicking the icons at the bottom of the Panel Bin. (The icons are described in item S.) *Creations* (things you make) are also contained in the Panel Bin when you click the Create button (item E).
- (G) **Open menu:** When you have several files open in the Photo Editor, the Open menu is one way to switch among these files. To use this menu, click the down-pointing arrow adjacent to the Open button and, from the drop-down list, choose the image you want to move to the foreground. **Note:** The Open menu also offers you an option to create a new, blank file.

In Figure 1-1, several files are open, as indicated by the tabs at the top of the image window. You can also place an open file in the foreground in the image window in these other ways:

- Click a tab at the top of the image window to move the image to the foreground.
- Click a photo in the Photo Bin (see item K).
- Open the Window menu and choose a photo listed at the bottom of the menu.

- (H) File tabs:** Multiple photos opened in the Photo Editor appear in different tabs at the top of the window by default.

In technical-speak, this is a *docked* position, meaning that the photos are docked in the image window. You can click a tab and drag it down to *undock* the photo. To undock photos, you must change a preference setting in the General Preferences by checking Allow Floating Windows in Advanced mode. (See “Controlling the Editing Environment,” later in this chapter, for more on changing preferences.) Doing so makes the photo appear as a *floating window*. You might want to float windows when copying and pasting image data between two or more photos. You can also view all open files in a floating window without choosing All Floating from the Layout pop-up menu (item M). To use this menu command, you must first enable the Preferences to allow floating windows.

- (I) Tools panel:** Here you find the Photo Editor toolbox, where you click a tool and apply an edit to the photo. See “Selecting the tools” and “Selecting from the Tool Options,” later in this chapter.
- (J) Document Information Pop-up Menu:** Click to open a pop-up menu displaying document information.
- (K) Photo Bin/Tool Options:** Figure 1-1 shows the Photo Bin open. Click the Tool Options button, and a set of Tool Options replaces the Photo Bin. You can also open the Tool Options by clicking a tool in the Tools panel.

Tool Options enable you to specify how the selected tool works. For example, the Tool Options for the Brush tool, as shown in Figure 1-2, enable you to select from a few different brush styles, set the size of your brush, and much more. (You discover how the specific tools work in the relevant chapters later in this book. For example, you find out how the Brush tool works in Chapter 11, which covers drawing, painting, and typing.)

Each tool in the Tools panel supports various tool options. To return to the Photo Bin, click the Photo Bin button at the bottom left of the window.

- (L) Undo/Redo:** These commands are so useful that they have an extra-prominent place in the Photo Editor interface. You can also press Ctrl+Z (⌘ +Z on the Mac) for Undo and Ctrl+Y (⌘ +Y) for Redo.
- (M) Rotate:** Click the Rotate left tool to rotate counterclockwise 90 degrees. Click the down-pointing arrow on the Rotate tool and choose the Rotate Right tool to rotate a photo 90 degrees clockwise.
- (N) Layout:** When you have multiple photos open in the Photo Editor, the Layout pop-up menu enables you to choose how the photos display in the image window (such as rows, columns, as a grid, and so on). To return to the tabbed view, choose Default from the Layout pop-up menu.

- (O) Organizer:** Click the Organizer button to open the Organizer, which we cover in detail in Chapter 2. Elements makes it very easy for you to toggle back and forth between the Organizer and the Photo Editor by clicking their respective buttons at the bottom of the windows.
- (P) Home Screen:** Opens the Elements Home Screen window.
- (Q) Media Window:** The active document is shown in this window.
- (R) Panels:** Click the icons to open the panels that include Layers, Effects, Filters, Styles, Graphics, and a category named More that's a collection of other, different panels.
- (S) More menu:** To open additional panels, click the three dots to open a pop-up menu of choices. The panels you open from the Panel Options menu appear as floating windows and can't be docked in the Panel Bin.

The description of the Photo Editor workspace is brief in this chapter. Most of the options you have for using tools, panels, and menu commands are discussed in later chapters. For now, try to get a feel for what the Photo Editor provides and how to move among many of the Photo Editor features.

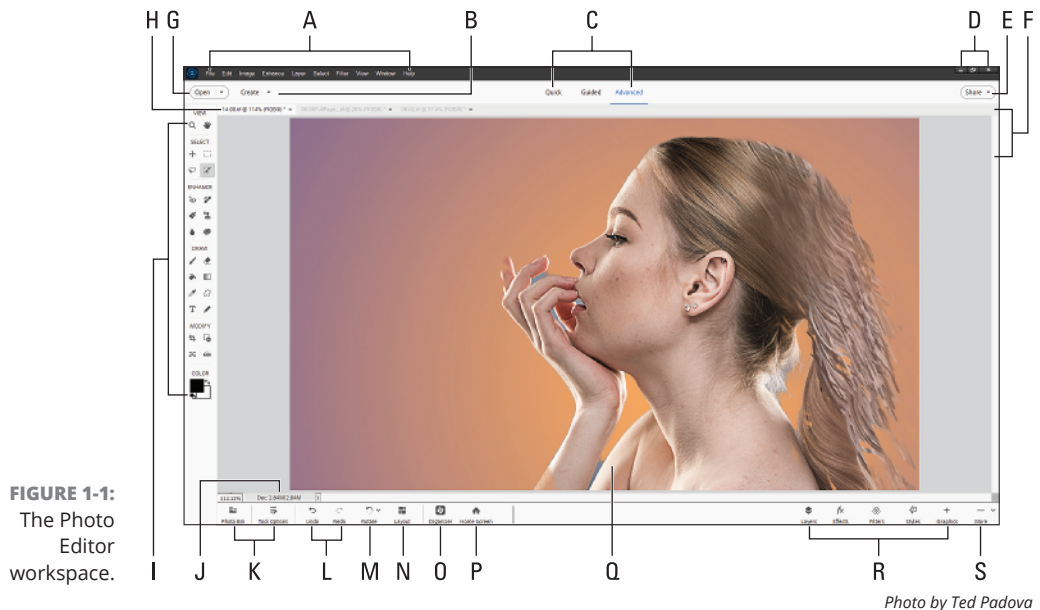
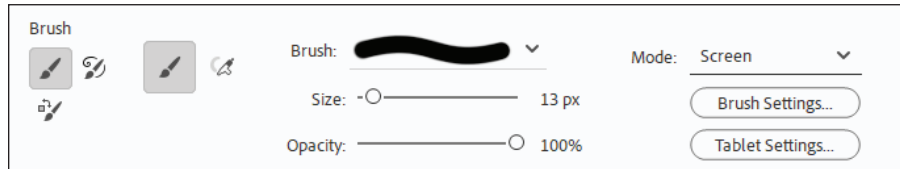


FIGURE 1-2:
Tool Options
provide
more editing
features
for tools
selected in the
Tools panel.



Examining the image window

Not surprisingly, the image window's tools and features are most useful when an image is open in the window. To open an image in the image window, shown in Figure 1-3, follow these steps:

1. Choose **File** ⇨ **Open**.

The standard Open dialog box appears; it works like any ordinary Open dialog box that you find in other applications.



REMEMBER

2. **Navigate your hard drive (by using methods you know to open folders) and then select a picture.**

If you haven't yet downloaded digital camera images or acquired scanned photos and want an image to experiment with, you can use a sample image. Both your operating system and Photoshop Elements typically provide sample images:

- On your operating system, sample images are typically found in your Pictures folder, which is one of the default folders in both Windows and macOS installations.
- In Elements, you can store photos anywhere on your hard drive and access them in your Organizer.

3. **Select a picture and click Open.**

The photo opens in a new image window in Elements.



REMEMBER

You can open as many image windows in Elements as your computer memory can handle. When each new file is opened, a thumbnail image is added to the Photo Bin at the bottom of the workspace (refer to Figure 1-1).



Photo: Courtney Jensen; Model: Hudson Jensen

Notice that in Figure 1-1, filenames appear as tabs above the image window when the windows are docked and not appearing as floating windows. Additionally, photo thumbnails appear in the Photo Bin. To bring a photo forward, click the filename in a tab or simply click a thumbnail in the Photo Bin. To close a photo, click the X adjacent to the filename or choose File ⇨ Close.



TIP

To close a photo in the image window but keep it open in the Panel Bin, click the Minimize button on a floating document window in the top-right corner (Windows) or the center button in the top-left corner (Mac). Note that in order to minimize the photo and keep it in the Photo Bin, you must set the General Preferences (Ctrl/⌘ + K) to Allow Floating Documents in Advanced Mode. Make sure the documents are in floating windows and then you can minimize them individually.



REMEMBER

By default, all document windows are attached within the Elements document window. You can change the document windows to *floating windows* (meaning that they are free floating and unattached to the document window) by choosing Preferences and, in the General Preferences, selecting the Allow Floating Documents in Advanced Mode check box. Floating windows are available only when you are using the Advanced mode in the Photo Editor.

Here's a look at important items in the image window, as shown in Figure 1-3:

- » **Filename:** Appears above the image window for each file open in the Photo Editor.
- » **Close button:** Click the *X* to the right of the filename (Windows) or the left of the filename (Mac) to close the file.
- » **Scroll bars:** These become active when you zoom in on an image. You can click the scroll arrows, move the scroll bar, or grab the Hand tool in the Tools panel and drag within the window to move the image.
- » **Magnification box:** See at a glance how much you've zoomed in or out.
- » **Information box:** You can choose what information this readout displays by choosing one of the options from the pop-up menu, which we discuss in more detail later in this section.



TIP

When you're working on an image in Elements, you always want to know the physical image size, the image resolution, and the color mode. (Size is the physical size of the image. Image resolution is the number of pixels in your image. Color mode is a mode such as RGB for red, green, and blue, grayscale for black and white, and so on.) Regardless of which menu option you select from the status bar, you can quickly glimpse these essential stats by clicking the Information box (not the right-pointing arrow but the box itself), which displays a pop-up menu like the one shown in Figure 1-4.

» **Sizing the Window:**

You can also resize the window by dragging any corner in or out when the image is undocked and not viewed as a tab.

Width: 6720 pixels (22.4 Inches)
Height: 4480 pixels (14.933 Inches)
Channels: 3 (RGB Color, 8bpc)
Resolution: 3 (RGB Color, 8bpc)

FIGURE 1-4:

Click the readout on the status bar to see file information.



TIP

To undock windows, press **Ctrl/⌘ +K** to open the Photo Editor Preferences. Click General in the Left pane and select the box where you see Allow Floating Documents in Advanced Mode. You must be in Advanced mode to view documents undocked.

Now that you're familiar with the overall image window, we want to introduce you to the Information box's pop-up menu, which enables you to choose what details appear in the Information box. Click the right-pointing arrow to open the menu, shown in Figure 1-5.

Here's the lowdown on the options you find on the pop-up menu:

- ✓ Document Sizes
- Document Profile
- Document Dimensions
- Current Selected Layer
- Scratch Sizes
- Efficiency
- Timing
- Current Tool

FIGURE 1-5:

From the pop-up menu on the status bar, choose commands to show more information about your file.

- » **Document Sizes:** Shows you the saved file size.
- » **Document Profile:** Shows you the color profile used with the file. Understanding color profiles is important when printing files. Turn to Chapter 12 for more information on using color profiles.
- » **Document Dimensions:** When selected, this option shows you the physical size in your default unit of measure, such as inches.
- » **Current Selected Layer:** When you click a layer in the Layers panel and choose Current Selected Layer, the layer name appears as the readout.
- » **Scratch Sizes:** Displays the amount of memory on your hard drive that's consumed by all documents open in Elements. For example, 20M/200M indicates that the open documents consume 20 megabytes and that a total of 200 megabytes is available for Elements to edit your images. When you add more content to a file, such as new layers, the first figure grows while the second figure remains static. If you find that Elements runs slowly, check your scratch sizes to see whether the complexity of your file is part of the problem. If so, you might clear some of your history or merge a few layers (see Chapter 7) to free space.
- » **Efficiency:** Indicates how many operations you're performing in RAM, as opposed to using your *scratch disk* (space on your hard drive). When the number is 100 percent, you're working in RAM. When the number drops below 100 percent, you're using the scratch disk.

If you continually work below 100 percent, it's a good indication that you need to buy more RAM to increase your efficiency. If you have multiple applications open, quit all other programs to conserve RAM.



TIP

- » **Timing:** Indicates the time it took to complete the last operation.
- » **Current Tool:** Shows the name of the tool selected from the Tools panel.



REMEMBER

Why is the information in this pop-up menu important? Suppose you have a great photo you want to add to your Facebook account and you examine the photo to find the physical size of 8 x 10 inches at 300 pixels per inch (ppi). You also find that the saved file size is more than 20MB. At a quick glance, you know you want to resize or crop the photo to perhaps 4 x 6 inches at 72 ppi. (Doing so drops the file size from more than 20MB to around 365K.) Changing the resolution dramatically reduces the file size. For now, realize that the pop-up menu shows you information that can be helpful when preparing files for print and display.

Don't worry about trying to understand all these terms. The important thing to know is that you can visit the pop-up menu and change the items at will during your editing sessions.

Uncovering the contextual menus

Contextual menus are common to many programs, and Photoshop Elements is no exception. They're those little menus that appear when you right-click, offering commands and tools related to whatever area or tool you right-clicked. If you have a one-button mouse on the Mac, press Ctrl+click to open a context menu.



TIP

The contextual menus are your solution when you're in doubt about where to find a command on a menu. You just right-click an item and a pop-up menu opens.

Because contextual menus provide commands related to the tool you're using or the object or location you're clicking, the menu commands change according to the tool or feature you're using and where you click at the moment you open a contextual menu. For example, in Figure 1-6, you can see the contextual menu that appears after we create a selection marquee using the Rectangular Marquee Selection tool and right-click anywhere in the image window. Notice that the commands are all related to selections. Other selection tools, like the Quick Selection tool and Magic Wand, offer you different menu choices from a contextual menu.



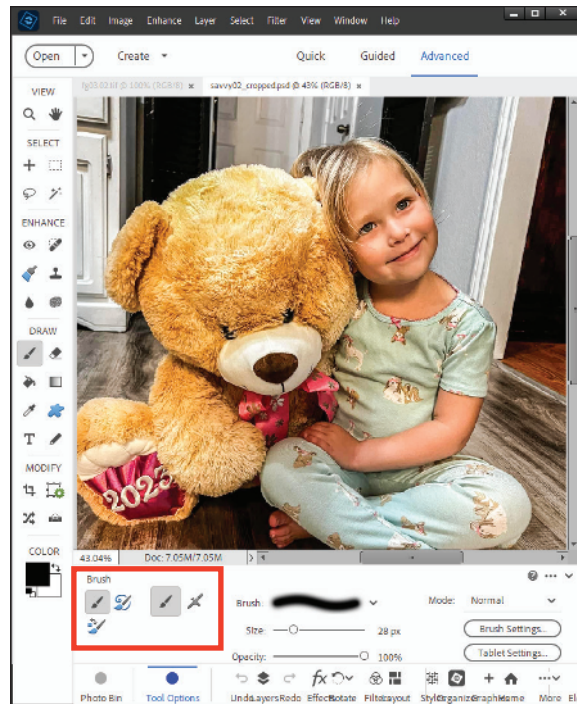
FIGURE 1-6:
A contextual menu for a Rectangular Marquee selection.

Selecting the tools

More often than not, clicking a tool on the Tools panel is your first step in editing operations. (If you're not familiar with the Tools panel, refer to the upcoming Figure 1-8.) In panel hierarchy terms, you typically first click a tool on the Tools panel and then use another panel to fine-tune how the tool works.

Sometimes when you select a tool in the Tools panel, you find additional tools in the Tool Options area. For example, you may click the Rectangular Marquee tool in order to access the Elliptical Marquee tool in the Tool Options, directly below the image window. The Brush tool, Impressionist Brush, and Color Replacement tool, plus the Brush Mode and Airbrush Mode, are all shown in Figure 1-7 and are all in the Tools panel; and the Rectangular Marquee tool and Elliptical Marquee tool appear in the Tool Options panel when one of those tools is selected. See the following section for more about the Tool Options area.

FIGURE 1-7:
Additional
tools within a
tool group are
available in the
Tool Options.



Ted Padova (Book Author)



NEW

An additional tool introduced in this version of Photoshop Elements is the Remove tool. The tool appears in the same area as the Spot Healing Brush. Click the Spot Healing Brush and, in the Tool Options, select the Remove tool. To remove an object in a photo, draw with the Remove tool around the item you want to remove. When you release the mouse button, click the check mark, and the Photo Editor does its best to fill the removed area with the background.



REMEMBER

Keep in mind that if you don't find a tool in the Tools panel, look in the Tool Options for additional tools within a tool group.

You can easily access tools in Elements by pressing shortcut keys on your keyboard. For a quick glance at the key that selects each tool in the Tools panel, look over Figure 1-8.



TIP

The following tips can help you find your way around the Tools panel with keyboard shortcuts:

- » **To select tools within a tool group by using keystrokes, press the respective key to access the tool.** For example, press the L key to select the Lasso tool. Press L again to select the Magnetic Lasso tool — the next tool in the group. Press L again and you select the Polygon Lasso tool.
- » **Whether you have to press the Shift key to select tools is controlled by a preference setting.** To change the default setting so that you need to press Shift, choose Edit ⇨ Preferences ⇨ General or press Ctrl+K. (Choose Adobe Photoshop Elements Editor ⇨ Preferences ⇨ General or press ⌘ +K on the Mac.) Then, in General Preferences, deselect the Use Shift Key for Tool Switch check box.
- » **The shortcuts work for you at all times, except when you're typing text with the cursor active inside a text block.** Be certain to click the Tools panel to select a tool when you finish editing text, or select the Commit blue check mark to end using the Text tool.

The tools are varied, and you may find that you don't use all the tools in the Tools panel in your workflow. Rather than describe the tool functions here, we address the tools in the rest of this book as they pertain to their respective Elements tasks.

Selecting from the Tool Options

When you click a tool on the Tools panel, the Tool Options box appears at the bottom of the workspace and offers you choices specific to the selected tool. (Refer to Figure 1-7, which shows the Marquee Selection tool options.) In addition to providing you with choices for selecting tools within a tool group, you can adjust settings for a selected tool.

You can find many of these fine-tuning adjustments in the Tool Options for most of the tools you select in the Tools panel.

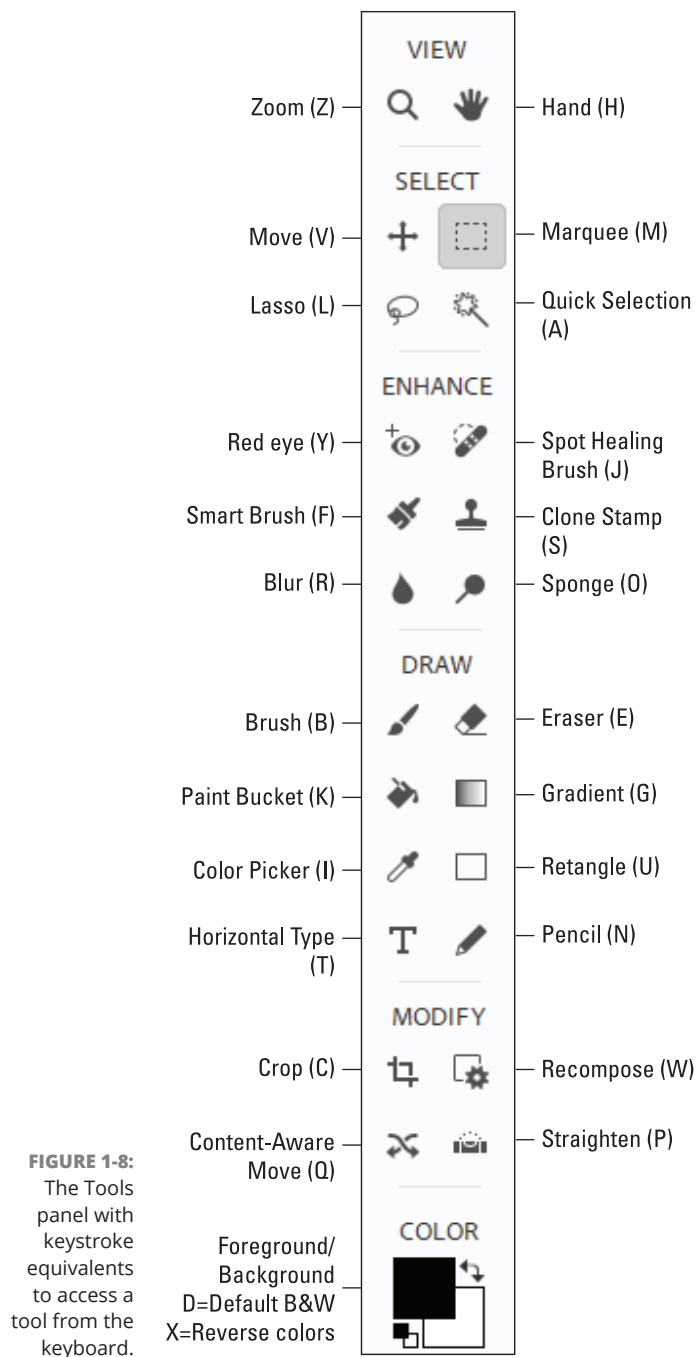


FIGURE 1-8:
The Tools panel with keystroke equivalents to access a tool from the keyboard.

Playing with panels

The panels are where you control features such as layers, effects, and more. In the Photo Editor, you open these panels in the Panel Bin:

» **Layers:** The Layers panel displays all the layers you've added to a photo. We talk much more about layers in Chapter 7. For now, look at how the different panels are designed. In the Layers panel, you find various tools at the top left and an icon with horizontal lines in the top-right corner, to the right of the Trash icon (as shown in Figure 1-9).

You can select multiple layers and click the folder icon at the top of the Layers panel to create a new layer group. All the grouped layers are nested in a folder.

When you click the icon at the top right, a pop-up menu appears (see Figure 1-10), which shows menu items supporting the tasks you perform in the Layers panel.

- » **Effects:** At the bottom of the Panel Bin, click the fx button to open the Effects panel. The Effects panel contains tabs offering a number of choices for applying a number of different effects to your pictures. You simply click an effect thumbnail you want when you edit the photo. We cover applying effects in Chapter 10.
- » **Filters:** Click Filters to open the panel where you can apply a number of different filter effects to the open image. For more on using Filters, see Chapter 10.
- » **Styles:** Click Styles, and you find a drop-down menu listing numerous styles. Open a category and click a style to apply to an image. In some respects, this panel behaves similarly to Filters. For more on Styles, see Chapter 10.

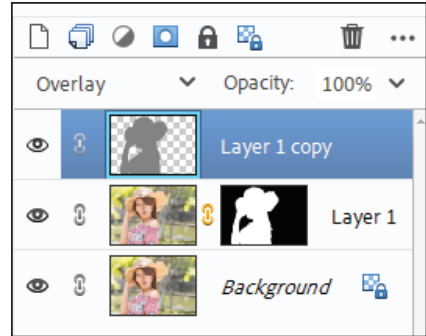


FIGURE 1-9: The Layers panel with a Background and three layers.

Layers Help	
Help Contents	
New Layer...	Shift+Ctrl+N
Duplicate Layer...	
Delete Layer	
Delete Linked Layers	
Delete Hidden Layers	
New Group...	
New Group from Layers...	
Collapse All Groups	
Rename Layer...	
Simplify Layer	
Clear Layer Style	
Link Layers	
Select Linked Layers	
Merge Down	Ctrl+E
Merge Visible	Shift+Ctrl+E
Flatten Image	
Panel Options...	

FIGURE 1-10: The Layers panel pop-up menu.

- » **Graphics:** The Graphics panel contains several menus where you can choose among a huge assortment of graphic illustrations that can also be added to your photos. For more information on using the Graphics panel, see Chapter 10.
- » **More:** Click the down-pointing arrow at the bottom of the Panel Bin to the right of the More button, and a pop-up menu opens, allowing you to choose additional panels. The Layers, Effects, Filters, Styles, Graphics, and Favorites panels are docked in the Panel Bin and can't be removed.

The panels you open from the pop-up menu shown in Figure 1-11 open as floating panels. These are your options:

- **Actions:** Actions enable you to automate a series of edits to your pictures. In Figure 1-11, you can see the Actions that are supported when you open the More menu and select the Actions tab. As with other panels, a pop-up menu is supported, and it offers Load, Replace, Reset, and Clear options so that you can modify Actions.

Elements still doesn't support recording your own series of editing steps and capturing the steps as an Action. However, most of the Actions that are created in Adobe Photoshop can be loaded in Elements.

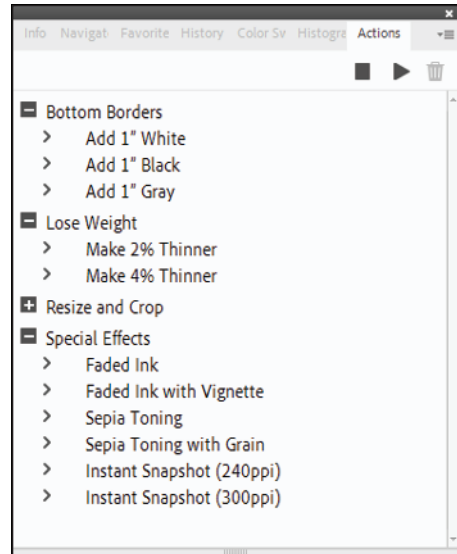


FIGURE 1-11: Actions panel opened in a group of floating windows.



TIP

You can find a number of free downloadable Actions on the internet. Just search for *Photoshop Actions* and explore the many downloads available to you.

- **Adjustments:** The Adjustments panel works only when you have an Adjustment layer. For details about using the Adjustments panel and Adjustment layers, see Chapter 7.
- **Color Swatches:** This panel displays color swatches you might use for coloring and painting that we cover in Chapter 11.

- **Favorites:** Opens the Favorites panel where you find a list of items you designated as a favorite edit.
- **Histogram:** Open this panel to display a histogram of the photo in the foreground. We talk more about histograms in Chapter 9.
- **History:** Choose this item to display the History panel. You can go back multiple steps to, for example, undo edits from many previous steps.
- **Info:** The Info panel provides readouts for different color values and physical dimensions of your photos.
- **Navigator:** The Navigator panel helps you zoom in and move around on a photo in the image window.
- **Custom Workspace:** When you choose Custom Workspace, you can dock and undock panels. This option enables you to configure a custom workspace to your liking.

» **Create/Share panel:** These panels also exist in the Organizer. Click Create at the top right of the Panel Bin to open the Create panel in the Photo Editor. In both the Photo Editor and the Organizer, the Create panel is used for making a number of creations such as calendars, photo books, greeting cards, photo collages, and more. The Share panel contains many options for sharing your photos. We talk more about making creations in Chapter 14, and we cover using the Share panel in Chapter 13.

When you open the additional panels as floating windows, the panels are docked in a common floating window. You can drag a panel out of the docked position and view it as a separate panel or move it to the docked panels.



REMEMBER

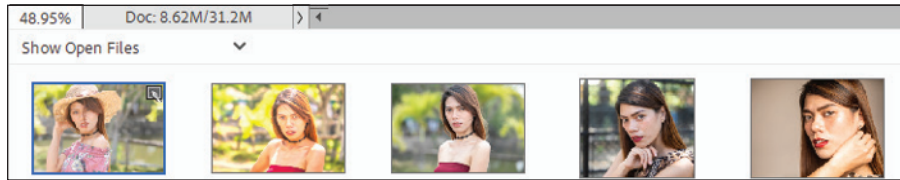
When you open a panel in either the Organizer or the Photo Editor, you find other options available from tools, drop-down lists, and a menu you open by clicking the icon with horizontal lines in the top-right corner of the panel.

Using the Photo Bin

The Photo Bin displays thumbnail views of all your open images (see Figure 1-12). You can immediately see a small image of all the pictures you have open at one time (refer to Figure 1-12). You can also see thumbnail views of all the different views you create for a single picture. Find out all the details in the following sections.

FIGURE 1-12:

Open the Photo Bin Options pop-up menu to display various actions you can perform on pictures open in the Photo Bin.



TIP

If you want to rearrange the order of the thumbnails in the Photo Bin, you can click and drag any thumbnail to the left or right.

Creating different views of an image

What? Different views of the same picture, you say? Yes, indeed. You might create a new view when you want to zoom in on an area for some precise editing and then want to switch back to a wider view. Here's how you do it:

1. Click a thumbnail image in the Photo Bin.

You must have a photo open in the Photo Editor Image window. The photo you click in the Photo Bin appears in the image window as the active document.

2. Choose View ⇨ New Window for <filename>.

Note that <filename> is the name of the file in the image window.

3. Zoom to the new view.

Note that to see both windows, you need to undock the windows from the docked position. Open Preferences by pressing **Ctrl/⌘ + K**. In General Preferences, select the box for Allow Floating Documents in Advanced Mode. Drag the windows down and away from the docked position to create a floating window. You can now position the windows side by side and view one at actual size and the other in a zoomed view.

A new view appears for the active document, and you see another thumbnail image added to the Photo Bin.

To zoom quickly, click the Zoom tool in the Tools panel and then click a few times on the picture in the image window to zoom in to the photo.



TIP

Viewing filenames

By default, photos open and are displayed in the Photo Bin without the associated filenames. However, if you mouse over a photo in the Photo Bin, a tooltip opens that displays the name of the file. If you want the name of each file shown in the Photo Bin without having to mouse over the files, open a contextual menu on a photo in the Photo Bin and choose Show Filenames.

Using Photo Bin Actions

On the Photo Bin Actions menu, you find handy tasks that you can perform on photos open in the Photo Editor. Click the Photo Bin Options drop-down menu (refer to Figure 1-12) to display the menu commands.

Here's what each Photo Bin command does:

- » **Print Bin Files:** Select the files in the Photo Bin that you want to print and then choose Print Bin Files. The selected files open in the Print dialog box, where you can make photo prints of the selected images.
- » **Save Bin as an Album:** You can add photos to an existing album, or you can create a new album. You can do many wonderful things with Photo Albums.
- » **Show Grid:** By default, no divider lines appear between photos in the Photo Bin. When you choose Show Grid, divider lines appear between the photos.

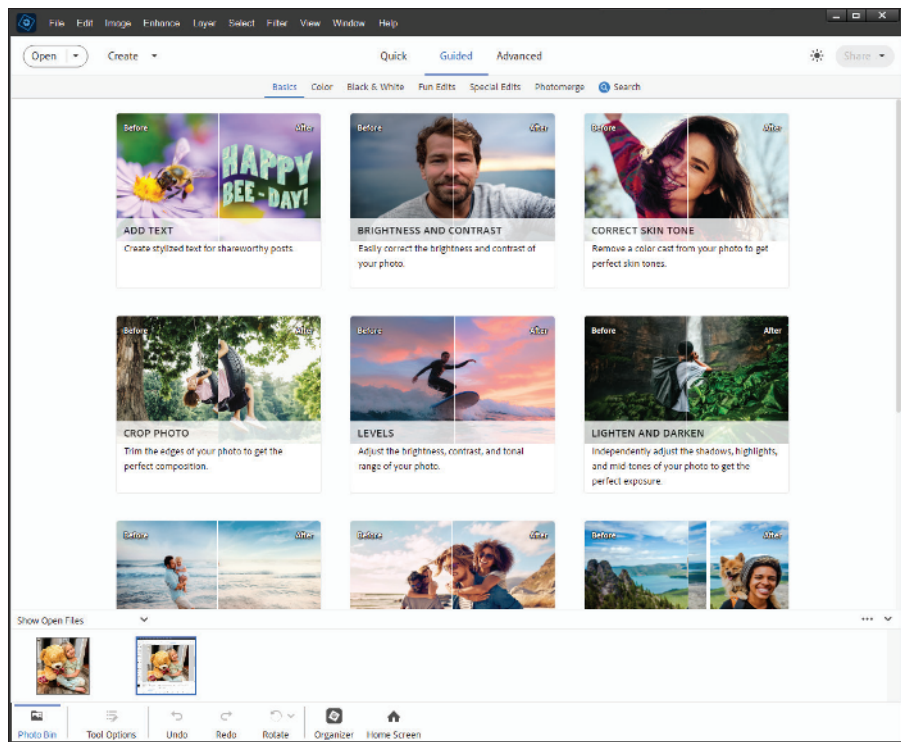
Using Some Creative Features

Adding some creative effects to your photos has long been a stellar aspect of Elements. Quite often, users explore many interesting edits in the Guided Edit panel. Guided Edits not only provide you with many interesting effects to apply to your photos but also offer you easy step-by-step instructions on how to use each effect.

Using Guided Edits

Click the Guided tab at the top of the Image window in the Photo Editor, and the Guided Edit panel opens, as shown in Figure 1-13.

FIGURE 1-13:
Click the
Guided tab
to open the
Guided Edit
panel.



When you click an editing option, a panel opens on the right side of the window. In the panel is a sequence of steps. Follow the steps, and you end up with a result similar to the example shown in the panel. At the top of the panel is a list of categories beginning with Basic on the left and ending with Search on the right. The Search option lets you search for a particular Guided Edit. When you click one of the other options for a given category, the panel changes and displays all the individual edits you find in the respective category.



TIP

Guided Edits walk you through various steps to apply a given edit to the open image. The best way to discover what results you can achieve is to open photos and apply various edits using the Guided panel. Some of the more complicated options, such as creating Out of Bounds effects, offer you a link to online video tutorials to help you further simplify the process.

Working with Adobe Stock images



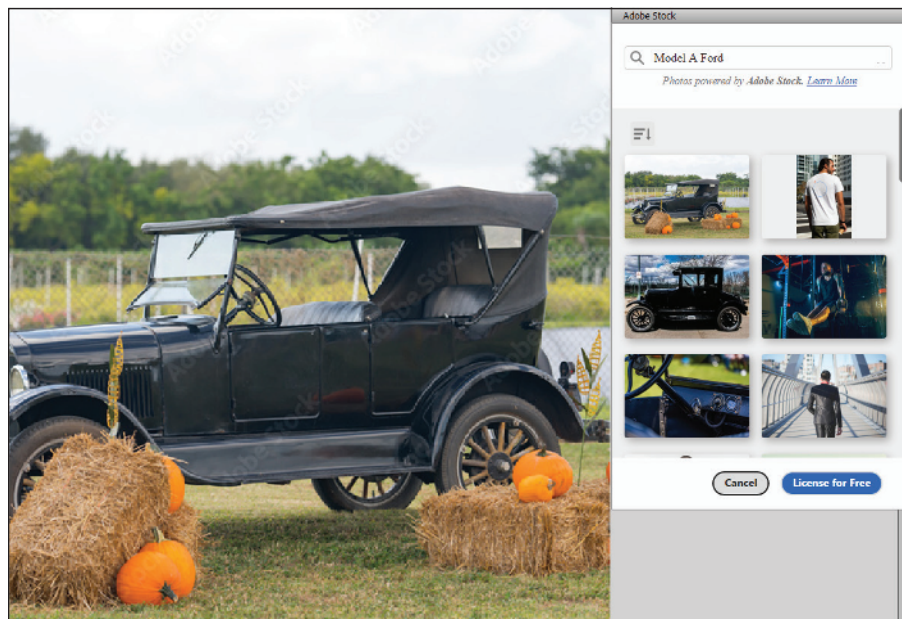
NEW

Photoshop Elements offers you access to millions of free photos in the Adobe Stock photos library. You can use stock photo images as stand-alone photos, applied as backgrounds, and use the photos in documents much as you use graphic images from the Graphics Panel.

You have three methods for accessing the Adobe Stock photos library. One way is to choose the File ⇨ Search on Adobe Stock menu command. This command lets you search for photos in the library and open them directly in the Advanced editing mode in the Photo Editor. You can also replace a background using the Replace Background Guided Edit and use a stock photo for your new background. The third option is to click Adobe Stock in the Graphics panel. You access the Graphics panel by clicking the + symbol at the bottom of the panels column. When you click Adobe Stock in the Graphics panel, the Adobe Stock dialog opens. Type search criterion and the panel displays returned results. (To find out how to replace a background, see Chapter 15; to add images to the Graphics panel, see Chapter 10.)

Figure 1-14 shows the results of entering **Model A Ford** in the Search field.

FIGURE 1-14:
Images for a
Model A Ford
found on
Adobe Stock.



Felix Mizionnikov/Adobe Stock Photos

To import a photo after finding the one you want, select it in the Search window and click the License for Free button. Elements adds the photo as a new document in the Advanced mode in the Photo Editor.

Photos in Adobe Stock are now becoming a foundation for many artificial intelligence (AI) tasks in Adobe applications. There are also web-based applications that you can use for free to enhance your photos and create some stunning results. Although these applications aren't part of Photoshop Elements, you can use some

creations made in certain free Adobe applications and import your results into Photoshop Elements documents.

One such application is Adobe Firefly (www.adobe.com/ph_en/products/firefly.html). You need to sign up for access, and you may need to wait a few days before Adobe grants you access to the website. If you're accepted, you can log on to Adobe Firefly to arrive at the default web page shown in Figure 1-15.

Searching Guided Edits

Click Search as shown in Figure 1-13 and you can search through Guided Edits to find the one you want to use.

Controlling the Editing Environment

Opening Elements for the first time is like moving into a new office. Before you begin work, you need to organize the office. At minimum, you need to set up the desk and computer before you can do anything. In Elements terms, the office organization consists of specifying preference settings. Preferences are settings that provide a means to customize your work in Elements and to fine-tune the program according to your personal work habits.

In the following sections, we explain the preference options that you most likely want to adjust.



REMEMBER

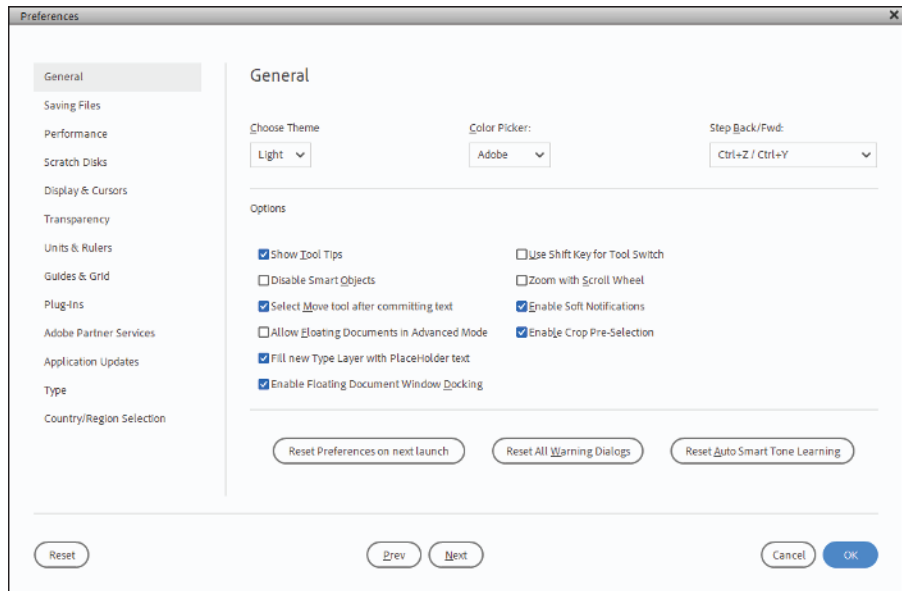
Elements has two Preferences dialog boxes: one in the Photo Editor workspace and another in the Organizer workspace. The following sections cover the Preferences dialog box that you open when in the Photo Editor, whether you're using Windows or the Mac. See Chapter 2 for details about Organizer preferences.

Launching and navigating Preferences

The Photo Editor's Preferences dialog box organizes all the options into several panes. By default, when you open the Preferences dialog box, you see the General pane.

To open the Preferences dialog box, choose Edit ⇨ Preferences ⇨ General (or Photoshop Elements Editor ⇨ Preferences ⇨ General on the Mac). Alternatively, press Ctrl+K (⌘+K on the Mac). Using either method opens the Preferences dialog box to the General pane, as shown in Figure 1-15.

FIGURE 1-15:
The General
pane in the
Preferences
dialog box.



In Figure 1-15, you see items on both the left and right sides of the dialog box that are common to all preferences panes. Here's a quick introduction to what these items are and how they work:

- » **Panes list:** Elements lists all the different panes along the left side of the Preferences dialog box. Click an item in the list to make the respective pane open on the right side of the dialog box.
- » **OK:** Click OK to accept any changes made in any pane and dismiss the Preferences dialog box.
- » **Cancel:** Click Cancel to return to the same settings as when you opened a pane and to dismiss the dialog box.
- » **Reset Preferences on Next Launch:** Clicking the Restore Default Settings button returns the dialog box to the same settings as when you opened the dialog box. The dialog box stays open for you to set new settings.



REMEMBER

Of particular importance in the General tab are the items you see for Allow Floating Documents in Advanced Mode and Enable Floating Document Window Docking. As we discuss earlier in this chapter (see “Examining the image window”), select these check boxes if you want to undock the document windows from the tabs.

Checking out all the Preferences panes

The settings in the Preferences dialog box are organized into different panes that reflect key categories of preferences. The following list briefly describes the types of settings you can adjust in each preferences pane:

- » **General preferences:** As the name implies, these apply to general settings you adjust for your editing environment.
- » **Saving Files preferences:** These relate to options available for saving files. You can change the case of existing filenames; save a file with layers or flatten layers (as we explain in Chapter 7); save files with image previews that appear when you're viewing files as icons on your desktop (Windows); and save with some compatibility options. On the Mac, the Finder generates thumbnails automatically, so you don't need to specify thumbnails in a Save dialog box.
- » **Performance preferences:** This pane is where you find history states and memory settings, such as allocating memory to Elements. Be certain to not allocate all memory to Elements. You need to have sufficient memory for your operating system, and any other applications you may use in tandem with Elements.
- » **Scratch Disks preferences:** Below Performance, you find scratch disk options. (See the nearby sidebar "What's a scratch disk?" for more on scratch disks.) You can monitor how your scratch preferences are working in the image window. See the earlier section, "Examining the image window," for details.
- » **Display & Cursors preferences:** This pane offers options for how certain tool cursors are displayed and how you view the Crop tool when you're cropping images. Chapter 8 explains how cropping works.
- » **Transparency preferences:** These require an understanding of how Elements represents transparency. Imagine painting a portrait on a piece of clear acetate. The area you paint is opaque, and the area surrounding the portrait is transparent. To display transparency in Elements, you need some method to represent transparent areas. Open the Transparency preferences and make choices for how transparency appears in Elements.
- » **Units & Rulers preferences:** Here you can specify settings for ruler units, column guides, and document preset resolutions.
- » **Guides & Grid preferences:** This pane offers options for gridline color, divisions, and subdivisions. A grid shows you nonprinting horizontal and vertical lines. You use a grid to align objects, type, and other elements. You can snap items to the gridlines to make aligning objects much easier. You can drag guides (sometimes called guidelines) from the ruler and position them between gridlines.

- » **Plug-Ins preferences:** These preferences include options for selecting an additional Plug-Ins folder. Plug-ins are third-party utilities that work with Elements. For example, you can find plug-ins that offer editing features not found in Elements, enable many different adjustments for brightness/contrast and color correction, and provide some nifty special effects. You can find many free plug-ins on the internet by searching for *Photoshop Elements Plug-Ins*.
- » **Adobe Partner Services:** Here you can control whether Elements automatically checks for new services, clears the online stored data, and resets your account information for all services.
- » **Application Updates:** You can choose to automatically update Elements or receive a notification that an update is available.
- » **Type preferences:** This pane provides options for setting text attributes. You have options for using different quotation marks, showing Asian characters, showing font names in English, and previewing font sizes.
- » **Country/Region Selection:** You can select your country or region from the drop-down menu.

WHAT'S A SCRATCH DISK?

Assume that you have 1GB of free RAM (your internal computer memory) and you want to work on a picture that consumes 1.25GB of hard drive space. Elements needs to load all 1.25GB of the file into RAM. Therefore, an auxiliary source of RAM is needed for you to work on the image. Elements uses your hard drive. When a hard drive is used as an extension of RAM, this source is a *scratch disk*.

If you have more than one hard drive connected to your computer, you can instruct Elements to use all hard drives, and you can select the order of the hard drives that Elements uses for your extension of RAM. All disks and media sources appear in a list as 1, 2, 3, 4, and so on.

Warning: Don't use USB 1.1 external hard drives or other drives that have connections slower than USB 2.0, Thunderbolt, or FireWire. Using slower drives slows Elements' performance. USB 2.0 drives are being phased out and giving way to the newer, faster USB 3.0 drives.

Perusing preset libraries

Part of the fun of image editing is choosing brush tips, swatch colors, gradient colors, and patterns to create the look you want. To get you started, Elements provides you with a number of preset libraries that you can load and use when you want. For example, you can load a Brushes library to acquire different brush tips that you can use with the Brush tool and the Eraser tool. But you're likely to want to customize the preset libraries at least a little bit, too.

You can change libraries individually in respective panels where the items are used. For example, you can change color swatch libraries on the Color Swatches panel or choose brush-tip libraries in the Tool Options. Another way you can change libraries is to use the Preset Manager dialog box, as shown in Figure 1-16.

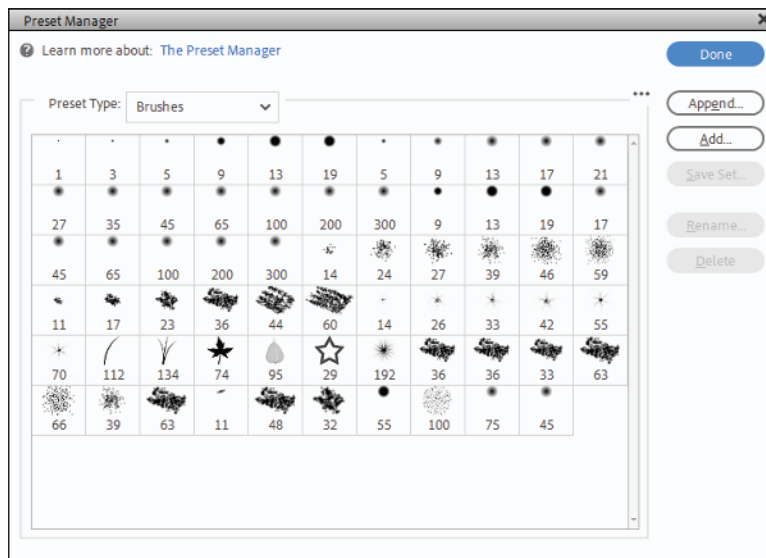


FIGURE 1-16: The Preset Manager dialog box provides a central area where you can change libraries.

We cover using the presets in Chapter 10, which is where you can find out how to use the many presets that Elements provides. The important thing to note here is that you can change the presets according to your editing needs.

To open the Preset Manager dialog box, choose Edit ⇨ Preset Manager. The available options in the dialog box are

» **Learn More About: The Preset Manager:** Click the blue Preset Manager hyperlinked text to open the Help document and find out more about managing presets.

- » **Done:** Any changes you make in the Preset Manager are recorded and saved when you click Done.
- » **Preset Type:** Open the drop-down list to choose from Brushes, Swatches, Gradients, Styles, Patterns, and Effects.
- » **Append:** Click the Append button to append a library to the existing library open in the Preset Manager.
- » **Add:** Click this button to open another library. Elements allows you to choose from several libraries for each preset type. When you choose Add, the open library closes as a new library opens. If you added a new item, such as a brush, it's lost when you click Add unless you saved the new brush. For more on brushes, see Chapter 11.
- » **Save Set:** You can save any changes you make in the Preset Manager as a new library. If you make a change, use this option so that you don't disturb the original presets.
- » **Rename:** Each item in a library has a unique name. If you want to rename an item, click the thumbnail in the Preview pane, click Rename, and then type a new name in the dialog box that appears.
- » **Delete:** Click an item in the Preview window and click Delete to remove the item from the library.

