

Photo Retouching

Dallas Genealogical Society – Technology SIG

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Keys to turning your image into WOW:

1. **Focal point** – what is the main focus of your photo/image?
2. **Color** – Is the color natural and realistic? Are you using all black/white for a specific effect?
3. **Depth** – Is your image flat? Can it be enhanced to add depth?
4. **Titles** – Will some title or other effects make this image more interesting?

Nothing is ever perfect; you will always find something you want to change. The best way to learn is to practice, practice, practice!

Photoshop Elements has three Edit menus:

1. **Full Edit** – lets you have full control of all editing tools
2. **Quick Edit** – lets you select “auto” to make most of the corrections automatically; PSE decides what changes need to be made to your image
3. **Guided Edit** – combines both Full Edit and Quick Edit; PSE guides you through how to make the changes

Which is best? The answer to that depends on your skill level and what you want to do to a photograph or image. In some cases, it might be a combination of all three. Once you have worked with Photoshop Elements, you will be able to decide which one(s) works best for you. There is also a free photo editor online at www.pixlr.com that operates similarly to Photoshop Elements. Go to the website, select to edit a picture and select the picture you want to edit.

Some simple editing techniques

Straighten & Crop:

Straighten

- Use the straighten tool.
- Draw a straight line with your mouse using something in your picture/image as a reference point. (For example a skyline or a building’s roof)
- When you release the mouse button, PSE will straighten the image according to the line you have drawn.



Crop:

- Use the crop tool.
- Draw out the rectangle and click the check mark. If you want your image to be a specific size, you can type a number in the option bar.
- Once you have clicked the check mark, only the portion of the image that you have selected will appear. All other background items have been deleted.
- You should save this new image using a different file name so that you do not delete the original image.



Reducing Noise – This is a great feature to use for old images that are torn or wrinkled with age and abuse.

Despeckle: Filter> Noise> Despeckle

Dust & Scratches: Filter> Noise > Dust and Scratches

Median: Edit> Noise> Median

Tonal Adjustment

Brightness/Contract Adjustment:

- Enhance> Adjust Lighting> Brightness/Contrast
- Levels Adjustment: Enhance> Adjust Lighting> Levels
- Use the eyedroppers to select the darkest area and the lightest area. Then drag the middle slider to the left a bit. Some tweaking may be needed.

Color Correction

- The best option is to use the Quick Fix edit mode for this.

Converting to Black & White

- Enhance> Convert to Black & White

Enhancing Selective Objects with Color

Eraser Method:

- Duplicate your photo/image and turn it black and white (you have the color photo underneath).
- Use the eraser tool to erase the parts of the black and white photo and reveal the color underneath.



Colorizing Method:

- Create a new layer to color on.
- Choose the color you want for your brush and paint it on the photo.
- Change the blending modes on the layers palette to achieve different effects on the object.

Creating a Focus

- Create a duplicate layer of the background.
- Turn off the lower layer.
- Select the object using your magnetic lasso tool. Once you have your selection, clean it up using a soft edged brush.
- Create another copy of the background layer for these adjustments. To create a subject focus, a background blur can be applied. On the background copy layer, apply a Gaussian Blur (Filter> Blur> Gaussian Blur). Set the blur amount according to personal preference.

Removing Background Objects

Clone Stamp Tool:

- Create a duplicate layer of the background layer for the corrections.
- Choose the clone stamp tool from the tool box.
- Select the appropriate brush size.
- Set the source by holding down the alt key and clicking.



Repairing Heritage Photos

Removing a Moire Pattern:

- Try despeckle first. If the result is not satisfactory, undo and try a 1 pixel Gaussian blur. Again, if the result is not satisfactory, undo and try the median filter. If all else fails, go back to the scan. Rotate the image slightly on the scanner and reduce the resolution slightly and the moiré pattern should be improved. Some scanners also have an anti-moire effect.

Remove Yellowing:

- Click on the Layers> New Adjust Layer> Hue/Saturation button.
- In the Edit box, choose Yellows and move the saturation slider to the left to remove the yellow cast.

Repair Folds & Fix Flaws:

- To correct the folds in the background use the Healing Brush.
- Set your target area by Alt-clicking and then use a soft edge brush to “heal” the folds.
- You can also use the clone stamp for some areas.

Retouching Portraits:

Brighten Eyes and Smiles:

- Create a new layer to work on.
- Select white for the foreground color.
- Choose a soft, round brush and reduce the opacity to about 20%, and paint one spot on the side of each eye. Also, add one brush stroke/stamp to each tooth, keeping in the center of the teeth, so the lines between the teeth are unaffected.
- Since we made these changes on a separate layer, adjust the opacity in the layers palette to get a good balance between improved, but still natural.

Reduce Facial Lines:

- Create a new layer.
- Use the Healing Tool to “heal” all the lines.
- When the subject has a baby soft face (that won’t look natural), reduce the opacity on the layer between 30-50% to bring the lines back out by they will be much more subtle.



Remove Red Eye – Use the Red Eye Tool and click directly on the red eye.



Remove Blemishes – Use the healing brush to remove any blemishes.