DESIGN YOUR OWN TRIPTYCH
Break out of the box by using this ancient technique with your photos today, p22

WORKING WITH RAW
Master the art of photo editing with our Camera Raw tips, p7

EASY CUSTOM BOOKMARKS
Follow our simple steps to create personalized treasures, p28
In the last issue, Ben Long wrote about the benefits of shooting in your digital camera’s Raw format. There is a lot of confusion about Raw, but when you see what it can do for your photos after you take them, it’s hard to see why you wouldn’t take advantage of it. This month, Ben walks you through the basics of editing an image with Camera Raw before taking it into Photoshop Elements. It really is a lot easier than it seems, and, for many images, you won’t need to do any extra editing—just a few quick steps, and they’ll be ready to go into your projects.

Speaking of projects, be sure to check out the triptych step-by-step from Mike Rodriguez, as well as Diana Day’s bookmark tutorial. Once you’ve mastered the techniques in those creative projects, you can easily apply those skills elsewhere.

Throughout this issue, you’ll see a small “EXTRAS” box (shown below) with many of the articles. This box points to additional materials on our Web site (photoshopelementsuser.com). Log into the Subscriber area and click on the Extras button on the left side of the page, and you’ll find sample images that go with the tutorials, links to other online resources and more. We’ll continue to offer these online exclusives in every issue.

As I write this, our Pacific Northwest summer is winding down in a last burst of warmth. It has seemed unusually cool this year—it certainly has taken forever for my tomatoes to bloom—but the weatherman says that we’re in for a week of 90-degree temperatures, which the tomatoes will certainly enjoy. Soon, I’ll be heading out to take some late-summer photos, which will turn into fall projects. Hopefully, you’ve been able to get out this season and grab some of your own shots.

Until next time,

rick@photoshopelementsuser.com
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making quick selections for quick changes

SELECTIONS ARE ONE OF THE KEYS TO MASTER TO WORK EFFECTIVELY IN THE DIGITAL DARKROOM. THEY LET US MAKE CHANGES TO SPECIFIC PARTS OF OUR PHOTOS, AS OPPOSED TO MAKING GLOBAL CHANGES TO OUR ENTIRE PHOTO. HERE'S A QUICK AND EASY METHOD TO MAKE A GOOD SELECTION AND REALLY SPEED UP THOSE ENHANCEMENTS.

STEP ONE: Open the photo that has an object you want to work on. In this example, I want to select the house in the background because I think it’s just a little too bright. I’d rather see the attention on the bride, not the object behind her. But, it could literally be anything—a person, a car, a shirt—that needs a little special attention.

STEP TWO: Go to the Toolbox and choose the Quick Selection tool (or just press A, for ‘Awesome Selection’). When you do that and move your cursor over your image you’ll see a small circle, which is what you’ll use to make your selection. In the Options Bar, you can adjust the size of the brush based on the size of the object—or use the [ and ] keys to change the brush size.

If you look in the Options Bar you’ll also see the Quick Selection tool has an Auto-Enhance check box. By default, it’s turned off, but I can’t figure out why—it really does help create a better selection. So, go ahead and turn on Auto-Enhance, and leave it that way forever.

EXTRAS
To follow along, download the image shown here by going to the subscriber Extras area at photoshopelementsuser.com.
**STEP THREE:** Take the Quick Selection tool and use it simply to paint brush strokes inside the object you want to select. What’s great about this tool is that it likes random brush strokes that are within the object you’re selecting. You don’t have to be precise.

**STEP FOUR:** Once you release the mouse button, the Quick Selection tool makes your selection for you, based on the area that you painted over. If the selection includes areas you don’t want, such as the trees above the house in this image, simply press and hold the Alt key and paint over the unwanted part. This removes it from your selection.

**STEP FIVE:** Next, we will ahead and soften (or ‘feather’) the edges of that selection just a little; we don’t want to see a harsh transition when we make changes. Go to the Select menu and choose Feather. When the dialog opens, set the Feather Radius to 3 pixels and click OK.
STEP SIX: Now that we have a selection, we can make the changes we need. Here, we want to darken the house in the background, so I’m going to go to the Enhance menu and select Adjust Lighting > Brightness/Contrast. Drag the Brightness slider to the left a little until the house starts to become darker. Click OK when you’re done.

STEP SEVEN: Another great tool for changing specific parts of photos is the Hue/Saturation adjustment. Go to Enhance > Adjust Color > Adjust Hue/Saturation. Here, I’ll drag the Saturation slider toward the left a little, because I think the house looks a little too colorful from our last adjustment. You can also finesse the Lightness slider to make it brighter or darker, depending on how the effect is turning out. (And, even though we don’t need it here, the Hue slider is great for changing the color of an object—if you find that Saturation or Lightness aren’t doing what you need, try Hue, but try it in small increments, and use the Preview check box to show or hide your changes.) When you’re done, click OK and press Ctrl-D to deselect everything.
digging in with camera raw

IN PART TWO OF OUR SERIES ON THE RAW FORMAT, WE’RE GOING TO LOOK AT PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS’ RAW TOOLS, AND LEARN HOW TO USE THEM TO PROCESS RAW FILES FROM YOUR CAMERA.

BY BEN LONG

When you open a Raw image in Photoshop Elements, it automatically launches the Camera Raw plug-in and displays your image in its own window. Using Camera Raw’s controls, you can perform an incredible amount of adjustments, and, when you’re finished, the image will open in Elements just like any other image. You can edit it further there, and then save it in the format of your choice. Or, if you don’t need to perform any more edits, you can save the image directly from Camera Raw itself.

Camera Raw displays a nice big preview of your image, and as you can in Elements, you can zoom in and out using Ctrl-+ and Ctrl-– (Mac: Command-+ and –), and Ctrl-0 (Mac: Command-0) to fit your image in the window. The Zoom controls in the lower left corner of the window let you zoom numerically, or by clicking the plus and minus buttons.

When zoomed in, you can press and hold the space bar while clicking and dragging to pan about your image, also just like in Elements.

Above the preview you’ll find some simple tools on a toolbar. In addition to a magnifying glass and grabber hand (for zooming and panning) there are, from left to right, a White Balance dropper for setting white balance, a Crop tool, a Straighten tool, a Red Eye removal tool, a Preferences button, and two buttons for rotating the image 90° clockwise or counter-clockwise. These tools are straightforward in their use and function just like their Elements counterparts.

The Preview check-box in the upper-right corner of the toolbar lets you toggle between the edited and the original versions of your image. This makes it easy to see how much you’ve altered your image.

The right side of the window is filled with Camera Raw’s adjustment sliders and the histogram. These sliders are where you perform all of your Raw conversion adjustments. Camera Raw only lets you apply global adjustments—you can’t, for example, adjust the brightness in just one part of your image. For those types of adjustments, you’ll have to finish up in Camera Raw, and then take the image into Elements for further editing.

The sliders in the Basic tab provide everything you need to edit and adjust your Raw files. In general, you should simply follow the order of the sliders—from top to bottom—adjusting each one to taste.
Feature

White Balance

First off is white balance. By default, Camera Raw uses the white balance that was set on your camera, as indicated by “As Shot” in the White Balance pop-up menu. If you want to change white balance, you can pick a different predefined white balance setting from the pop-up menu, or you can simply slide the Temperature and Tint sliders. The Temperature slider will adjust the colors in your image from blue to yellow, while the tint slider will adjust from green to magenta.

The easiest way to get accurate white balance is to use the White Balance eyedropper from the Elements toolbar. Select the eyedropper and then click on something that is a neutral gray in your image. Elements will calculate a new white balance based on the point you clicked on. If the color looks off, try clicking on a different gray spot. Finding a point that’s truly gray can take some trial and error.

While the White Balance eyedropper can yield very accurate color, you don’t always want the color in your image to be perfectly accurate. Portraits, for example, benefit from a bit of extra warmth. So, start with the White Balance tool for accuracy, then slide the Temperature slider to the right to add a bit of warmth.

Because the white balance adjustment provides such extreme latitude when adjusting color, and never introduces ugly editing artifacts in your image, you should do as much color correction as you can using the white balance controls.

What do I need for shooting Raw?

First up, to shoot Raw images you must have a camera that supports it. These days, most digital SLRs and a few point-and-shoot cameras have this functionality.

If you are not sure if your camera can shoot Raw, consult the manual. On most cameras, you select Raw from the same menu that you use to select JPEG. If you don’t see a Raw option in this menu, your camera probably can’t shoot in Raw.

You also need a copy of Elements that includes Camera Raw, Adobe’s Raw-processing software engine. There are versions of Camera Raw for Elements 3 and up.

If Elements tells you that your Raw images are not supported, then you probably need to upgrade your copy of Camera Raw. You can download the latest version from www.adobe.com/cameraraw, where you’ll also find instructions for installing the newer version. If upgrading still doesn’t fix the problem, then you have a camera whose Raw format is not supported by Camera Raw (or an older version of Elements that doesn’t support the new camera). If it’s a very new camera, there’s a good chance that Adobe will soon release an update that will support it.
This image, as it was imported into Camera Raw (above left), suffers from some overexposed highlights. They’re causing a loss of detail, especially in the white helmets. Moving the Recovery slider all the way to 100 (above right) shows that there’s still significant detail in those helmets. Here, I would probably dial Recovery down to 85 and use other tools to adjust brightness and contrast.

EXPOSURE ADJUSTMENT

After white balance you’ll be ready to adjust the tone and contrast in your image. Clicking the Auto button that sits above the Exposure slider will often give you all the adjustment you need, or a good starting point for further adjustments, but it’s still good to understand the capabilities of each slider.

The Exposure slider brightens or darkens all of the tones in your image. It’s just like changing exposure compensation on your camera. If you slide the Exposure slider to +1, then your image will brighten by one stop. The Exposure slider lets you brighten or darken by up to 4 stops.

As with any brightening or darkening tool, when you use the Exposure slider you want to be careful that you don’t overexpose or underexpose parts of your image. Keep an eye on the histogram in the upper right corner, and if you see a spike on the right or left edge, you know you’ve adjusted too far. You can then decide if the over- or underexposure is acceptable or not. If it’s not, then you’ll want to back off on your adjustment by moving the slider in the appropriate direction.

The Recovery slider is one of two controls that let you recover overexposed highlights in an image. If some of the highlight detail in your image has been overexposed to complete white, then drag the Recovery slider to the right. You should see detail begin to reappear in your overexposed areas. Not all overexposed highlights can be recovered, though. Keep an eye on the histogram and if the spike on the right edge of the histogram moves to the left, rather than disappearing, then you have a highlight that can’t be recovered.

If the Recovery slider is working on your overexposed highlight, but you still can’t recover all of the overexposed details, then go back to the Exposure slider and drag it to the left. Your image will darken overall, but you should be able to recover the rest of your highlights. You can use other tools to brighten the image back up.

We can also use Exposure to perform a more dramatic highlight recovery. Our original image (top) will darken overall, but we can fix that with other tools. In this image, there are some highlights—like those on the right side—that simply won’t recover (bottom). Those blown highlights will stay white.
Feature

Because of the model’s hat, I really should have used fill flash when I took this photo (above left). But, with the Fill Light slider in Camera Raw, I can brighten up her face by simply moving the slider to the right (above right).

**TIP:** Use Exposure when you need to brighten an image overall, use Brightness when you need to brighten an image that already has really bright highlights. Where exposure will blow out those highlights, Brightness should leave them alone, while brightening the rest of your image.

**FILL LIGHT**

Fill Light works like the Adjust Lighting > Shadows/Highlights command in Elements. Fill Light identifies areas in your image that are shadows, and brightens them. It’s called Fill Light because it’s analogous to firing a really big fill flash into your scene. Darker areas will brighten, but lighter areas won’t become overexposed. When using Fill Light, keep an eye on the areas of your image that transition from dark to light. Too much Fill Light can leave strange dark halos around these areas. Also, remember that just because there are details to be had in a shadowy area doesn’t mean you should lighten them. Dark shadow details can make for interesting images, and if you adjust all the values in your image so that they’re evenly exposed, you can end up with a flat, boring picture.

The Blacks slider darkens the darker tones in your image (unlike dragging the Exposure slider to the left, which darkens the entire image). Use blacks to darken weak shadows, turning dark gray areas into true black, and to help increase the contrast in the image overall.

Brightness brightens the midtone values in your image. If your image has darkened because you used the Exposure slider to perform highlight recovery, then the Brightness slider can brighten the image back up again.

Finally, Contrast lets you increase or reduce the contrast in your scene. You can use Exposure and Blacks to achieve similar results, but Contrast is quick and easy to use. The last three sliders do more than simple tone adjustments. Clarity is a subtle effect, but an important one. As you drag the Clarity slider to the right, Camera Raw will make tiny increases in the contrast of the details in your image. This will make those details have a little more, well … clarity. (Camera Raw 4.5, which came out as we were finishing this issue, lets you apply Clarity in negative amounts, which produces a very cool softening effect.)

Saturation increases the saturation of colors in your image, making them brighter and more pronounced. While the Saturation slider can be very seductive, be careful to keep your saturation adjustments within the realm of the believable.

One problem with Saturation is that it can immediately make skin tones look fake. The Vibrance slider increases Saturation while protecting many skin tone shades, making it a better way to increase Saturation when editing pictures with people in them.
FINISHING UP

Once you’ve adjusted your file to your liking, you have several options. If you press Open Image, your adjusted image will open in Elements. There, you can perform additional edits and then save the image.

If you click Save Image, then you will be presented with a dialog box that lets you choose a location, file name, and format for saving. Whether you’re saving from the Save Image dialog box, or from within Elements, it’s best to choose Photoshop or TIFF format for saving, since saving as a JPEG file will degrade the quality of your image. Obviously, if you need to deliver a JPEG, then that’s the best choice. (For more on the differences between Raw and JPEG, see “What you need to know about shooting in Raw,” in the last issue.)

Finally, you can also choose Done to simply close Camera Raw. The thing to remember about Raw editing is that your original Raw file is never altered. Instead, Camera Raw simply stores a list of the adjustments that you’ve made, and applies this list to the Raw file any time you open it. This means that you can go back at any time and adjust or tweak your settings. Since your Raw file never changes, you can process it in many different ways, to achieve many different results. In this way, Raw files are truly like a digital negative.

Ben Long is a photographer, freelance writer and trainer based in San Francisco. He is the author of Complete Digital Photography (Charles River Media) and Getting Started With Camera RAW (Peachpit Press).

To follow along, download some of the images shown here by going to the subscriber Extras area at photoshopelementsuser.com.
macro photography: taking a closer look

No matter what your budget or your photographic style is, there is a tool that will get you up close and personal with your subject.

As Labor Day approaches each year, so does the annual Swan Island Dahlia Festival here in Oregon, and I always look forward to this event with great anticipation. It’s an excellent opportunity to wander for hours, losing myself in the acres and acres of colorful dahlias. Arriving just before sunrise, I quickly set up, mounting my camera, with a macro lens, to the tripod. I toss a spare battery and memory cards into my pocket and head into the fields, moving from row to row, flower to flower, searching for just the right bloom. The choices are limitless with flowers of every color, pattern and size imaginable spread out in every direction.
A bud with a single dewdrop clinging to it captures my attention. I bring the camera to my eye, using my macro lens to move in closer and closer, ridding the frame of everything but the bud and part of a purple bloom. Suddenly, the dewdrop pops into sharp focus and the reflection reveals a myriad of colors. I select an aperture that will render sharp focus on the bud and dewdrop. The day is overcast, and the sky is acting like a giant softbox, so I simply go with the metered value and...click, click, click! With my creative juices flowing I move on in search of my next subject.

MACRO EQUIPMENT
There are many tools available that allow us to step through the doorway into the magical world of macro photography. No matter what your budget or your photographic style is, there is a tool that will get you up close with your subject. I'll cover the variety of equipment I use and how it works. We'll look at macro lenses, close-up filters, extension tubes and teleconverters, and their application to macro photography.

Macro lenses are designed to focus very close, giving us an intimate glimpse into the world of small subjects, details and patterns. Macro lenses come in a variety of focal lengths generally ranging from 50mm to 200mm. Your photographic style, the subjects you shoot and your budget will determine which lens is best for you, but most camera manufactures—and lens companies such as Sigma, Tokina and Tamron, to name a few—produce macro lenses.

Macro lenses are designed to focus from infinity to within mere inches of your subject, resulting in a 1:1 reproduction ratio or “life-size” on your sensor (as shown in the picture of the quarter on Page 12). We’re really talking up close and personal here.

CONSIDERING A MACRO LENS
Things to consider when deciding which macro best suits your photographic style are:

• minimum focus distance (MFD), which affects how close you can be to your subject and keep it in focus;
• angle of view, which determines how much of the background gets included in your frame;
• the types of subjects you are most interested in photographing; and
• size, weight and budget.

The shorter focal length macro lenses (50mm-60mm) will focus closer and have a greater angle of view. They work well in tight spaces, when you need the closest minimum focusing distance, and when you want to include more of the environment. They’re also best if you’re on a budget.
As you increase the focal length, the minimum focusing distance increases and the angle of view narrows. If you like to photograph insects or butterflies, you may want to consider a longer focal length where the greater minimum focusing distance allows you to photograph your subject without scaring it away. A narrower field of view also gives you greater control over the background. A slight change in camera angle can radically alter the background. Long lenses will compress the image, and throw the background into a soft blur of colors.

CLOSE-UP LENSES AND OTHER MACRO ACCESSORIES
If you are on a budget or want the versatility of using your existing lenses to move in close, consider adding a high-quality close-up lens to your bag. These ‘lenses’ are actually filters that screw onto the front of your lens and give you a closer minimum focusing distance. For example, Canon offers both the 250D and 500D Close-up Lenses in a range of sizes that will fit on to most lenses (not just those made by Canon). By adding a Canon 77mm 500D to my Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 lens I am able to go from a minimum focus distance of 5 feet to under 1 foot, allowing me to move in close on an orchid, filling the frame with a single bloom. A good close-up filter can turn any lens in your bag into a macro lens at a small cost, and it’s small enough to be a constant accessory in your bag.

Extension tubes are also relatively inexpensive, and will also turn the lenses in your bag into macro lenses. Unlike a close-up filter, which threads onto the front of the lens, an extension tube mounts between the lens and the camera body. I use the Kenko Extension Tube set which includes three AF tubes. They can be used individually or stacked for greatest magnification.

Lastly, you can try a teleconverter. Their basic purpose is to increase the effective focal length of your lens—a 1.4x teleconverter converts a 200mm telephoto into a 280mm telephoto, while a 2x teleconverter turns it into a 400mm monster. But teleconverter lenses, which mount on your camera like extension tubes, can also help you get in close enough to fill the frame with your subject.

Frog with 70-200mm lens (left) & with Kenko 35mm extension tube (below).
BEATING THE DEPTH OF FIELD PROBLEM

Remember the depth of field rule? The one that says, “The closer you are to your subject, the less depth of field you have.” Well, in macro photography, we are seriously close to our subject, and that has a great impact on depth of field, which is the distance from the nearest to the furthest point of perceived sharp focus in an image. We know that, the smaller the aperture size, the greater the depth of field, but a 105mm macro lens focused at 1 foot with an aperture setting of f/32 still has less than an inch of depth of field. Not only does that impact the area that will be in focus, but it can require very slow shutter speeds, which means utter stillness and the use of a tripod.

When the depth of field gods are against you and you simply cannot get enough depth of field to render your entire subject in focus don’t throw you arms up and give in. There are software tools that you can use in your digital darkroom that let you take depth of field to a new level. With your camera set up on a tripod, lens set on manual focus and aperture priority wide open, I focus on the closest part of the subject and making slight adjustments in focus with each click of the shutter until I have focused on every element I want sharp. Then I load the images into Helicon-Soft’s Helicon Focus (www.heliconsoft.com) and it works its magic by blending only the sharp elements of each frame into one image with impossible depth of field.

So, grab your camera and close-up tool of choice and lose yourself for a while in the magical world of macro photography!
understanding resolution

I bought my husband a Nikon D50 for Christmas a few years back and needless to say, he’s totally obsessed with it. He’s snapping pictures constantly and has outfitted it with lenses, a flash, and several multi-gigabyte memory cards. He’s all set—that is, until he transfers the images on to his computer. He doesn’t know the first thing about resizing an image for print or email, so as a result, his images never make it out into the wild. He’s heard of resolution but doesn’t have a clue what it means or when it matters, bless his heart!

I’d like to dispel the myths surrounding resolution and in the process show both him and you how to easily resize images without losing quality. I’ll start by covering basic graphic terminology and exploring the relationship between resolution and pixels.

It’s like brown sugar. Really.

Think of resolution as density, specifically, how closely the pixels are packed together. Since you can’t see resolution on-screen—the pixels are way too small—it’s easier to understand if you can relate it to something in the real world.

For example, pretend you’re baking cookies. When you pour brown sugar into a measuring cup, the sugar reaches the 1-cup line. But after you pack the granules firmly into the cup, the sugar only reaches the ½-cup line. You still have the same number of granules (which are like pixels), they’re just packed more tightly together (they have a higher resolution) within the physical confines of the measuring cup (the document size). The loosely packed granules you started with are akin to low resolution, and the firmly packed granules are akin to high resolution.

Increasing image resolution means packing the pixels more tightly together, and while that results in a smaller physical printed image, it generates a smoother, better print. Lowering image resolution means loosening the pixels, resulting in a larger physical image that, as you might suspect, is unsuitable for print because the pixels can become big enough to see. (If you’ve seen this in the wild, it looks like a print made out of Legos.)
DEFINING PIXELS AND RESOLUTION

The smallest picture element of a photo is a pixel. Together, these tiny blocks of color form the whole image. If you zoom into an image around 300% or so, you’ll start to see them. In Elements, just press Ctrl+- (Mac: Command+-) several times to zoom in, then Ctrl-- (Mac: Command--) to zoom back out.

Technically, pixels have no predetermined size; they can be any size at all. Their size is determined by a measurement called resolution, which specifies how many pixels get packed into a given space. Resolution is one of the toughest digital photography concepts to wrap one’s brain around, though there are two key points to remember:

- You can change the resolution—which is represented as pixels per inch (or ppi)—of an image to anything you want, without suffering quality loss.
- Resolution doesn’t mean a hill of beans unless that image is headed to a printer. If you’re not going to print it, only the pixel dimensions matter.

Printers are one of the few devices that can really do anything with the resolution measurement, and that’s why resolution really only matters when you print. Computer monitors can only display so much information that our eyes can process, so a 72-ppi image (which is the resolution of most monitors) looks identical to a 720-ppi image on-screen. A printer, on the other hand, isn’t hampered by the human eye, so it can take advantage of higher resolutions (scanners can, too, but that’s a story for another time).

Now that you understand how resolution works, how much resolution do you need to make a gorgeous print? It depends on the type of printer you’re using. While the current crop of photo inkjet printers do a fine job at 240 ppi, an online or local printing service may require 300 ppi or more. If it’s your own printer, run two tests: Print one image at 240 ppi and another at 300 ppi and see if you can tell the difference. Smart money says you won’t, and you’ll probably find that the 240-ppi version will print faster. If someone else is printing it, ask them what resolution they need.

RESIZING A PHOTO FROM YOUR DIGITAL CAMERA FOR PRINT

To learn the pixel dimensions and resolution of an image in Elements, choose File > Resize > Image Size.

As you can see in the Image Size dialog box (shown on the top right), the example photo is 2592 by 3888 pixels, but only 72 ppi (with a big honking 36-inch by 54-inch document size). Does this mean my photo is of low quality and unsuitable for prints? Nope, it just means that the resolution needs to be changed before it’s sent to my printer.

The secret to changing resolution without changing image quality is to turn off the Resample Image option at the very bottom of the dialog box. This option has the power to lock pixel dimensions, thereby locking quality. After turning this option off, watch what happens to the document dimensions when I change the resolution to 240 ppi (bottom right).
As you can see, the physical document size has decreased to 10.8 inches by 16.2 inches. There are exactly the same number of pixels as there were when the image was opened; they're just packed more tightly together. The file size didn't change at all, either; it's still 28.8 MB, as evidenced at the top of the dialog (another clue that the pixel data, and therefore image quality, didn't change).

Again, this is confusing because the on-screen image won't change a bit; the truth is only revealed by the Image Size dialog box. As long as you uncheck the Resample Image option, you can tweak the resolution 'til the cows come home and you won't alter the image quality. However, with the Resample Image option turned on, you're altering the photo's pixel density (which means photo quality), something you don't want to do when printing. If you're resizing an image for email or posting on a Web site, though, leave the Resample Image option turned on: in those cases you really do want to lower the file size. There, you want to change the numbers in the Pixel Dimensions area of the Image Size dialog, not the Document Size.

**MAKING ELEMENTS DO IT FOR YOU**

Luckily, if you want to print a photo at a common size like 8” x 10” or 5” x 7”, you can have Elements change the resolution for you. Just choose File > Print and pick a size from the Print Size pop-up menu towards the top of the dialog (shown above). Remember to use the Page Setup button and pick the same paper size for your image, such as a borderless 8” x 10”. If your image won't fit the dimensions of the paper you're choosing, click the “Crop to Fit Print Proportions” box underneath the Print Size pop-up.

**RESIZING AND CHANGING RESOLUTION AT THE SAME TIME**

Of course, you can also resize an image and change its resolution at the same time by using the Crop tool.

Press C to select the Crop tool and go to the Options bar at the top of your screen (shown at left). Enter the dimensions of the desired print and the unit of measurement (for example, enter “5 in” for width and “7 in” for height). Enter the appropriate resolution, such as 240 ppi or 300
ppi. Draw a box around the important bits of your image and when you get it just right, press Enter (Mac: Return) to accept the crop. (Press the Escape key to exit the crop altogether.)

If the image appears to enlarge on your screen, then you're trying to crop it larger than it can really go at the resolution you've entered. If that happens, press Ctrl-Z (Mac: Command-Z) to undo and then enter smaller dimensions or lower the resolution. (It's OK if the image appears to get smaller on your screen.)

At this point you can choose File > Print to print it now, or save the photo to print later. If it's being sent to someone else to print, choose File > Save As and pick TIF from the file-format pop-up menu. TIFs can be opened in most image editors and are a high-quality format.

RESIZING FOR AN EMAIL

With Elements 6, resizing an image for email has never been easier. Just click the green Share tab at the top right of the interface and press the Email Attachments button.

Elements will automatically open the Organizer and give you the option of what size you want the photo to be when it gets emailed. For most purposes, you can choose the Medium or Big option, and the quality to 9, and the file size will be reasonable for sending. Elements will even tell you how big the file will be, and long it will take to download via modem, which is a nice touch (see the image on the upper right side of this page).

That's all there is to it! So get out there and start printing and emailing those images. And if you haven't upgraded your copy of Elements yet, get with it!

Until next time, happy shooting.

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On the Mac, Elements opens the file to be emailed in your email client. If it thinks that the file will be too big, Elements will offer to make it smaller for you, but it won't give you the control that the Windows Organizer will. However, Apple's Mail program will let you pick just how big the photo will be via a handy pop-up menu at the bottom right.
Getting back to Camera Raw defaults

When you’re working in the Camera Raw dialog box, you’ll often change a slider and will later decide that you don’t really like what you did. To reset any slider back to its default position—where it was when you first opened the photo—just double-click directly on the little slider knob.

Use the Eye to visualize layer changes

Sometimes, when we’re working on an image with multiple layers, we lose sight of the changes we’ve made, as well as their effect. To get a better idea of what you’ve done, click on a layer’s Eye icon to turn its visibility on or off. When the image is finished, you can see the combined effect of all your layers by holding down the Alt key (Mac: Option) and clicking on the Background layer’s Eye icon. Then you can see what actually has changed and not just what the mind retains.

Boost the size of layer thumbnails

Is the size of those Layers palette thumbnails too small for you? They are for me. I wear glasses that are about as thick as Coke bottles and I find the default size too tiny. If you want to make them larger just click little right facing arrows at the top of the Layers palette to open the palette’s menu. Then choose Palette Options and pick the largest thumbnail size available. Click OK and your palette thumbnails will be much larger now. The only trade-off here is that you’ll see fewer layers in the palette so you’ll wind up scrolling up or down more if you have a lot of layers. However, I’ll take it, since it makes me squint much less.
Changing Lasso types in mid-selection...

If you’re working with the Magnetic Lasso tool and need to access the Polygonal Lasso tool, hold down the Alt key (Mac: Option) and click to switch the tools. To change back to the Magnetic Lasso tool, simply release the Alt (Mac: Option) key and click again.

...and more Lasso fun

If you’ve zoomed in to use the Lasso tool (L) and you’re nearing the edge of the window, you’ll need to scroll over to continue. To do this, continue to press your mouse button (to keep the Lasso tool active) and press-and-hold the Spacebar. This will temporarily activate the Hand tool, which will let you move the image to where you need it. Position your cursor where you left off with the Lasso tool and let go of the space bar to continue.

Use the Dodge tool to quickly fix eyes

To quickly add some more interest to a subject’s eyes, try this: Select the Dodge tool (O), go to the Options Bar and change the Range to Highlight, and set the Exposure to about 25%. Make the size of your brush just a bit larger than the iris. Click to dodge from two to four times until the eyes have a little more “pop” and the color is more evident. Don’t go too far though or the eyes will start to look a bit “funky.”

Make the bounding box disappear

If portions of your images always have a bounding box around them (the boxes with the dashed lines and the square handles at the corners), and you find it annoying to look at or deal with it, there is an easy way to get rid of it. Select the Move tool (V) and go to the Options bar to turn off the Show Bounding Box check box. Now you’ll only see it when you use one of the transform functions from the Image menu.

Why would you want to get rid of the bounding box? That box should really just be there only if I’m resizing or transforming something—not all the time. For me, it gets in the way.

Quick move text while typing

If you want to move some text while you’re in the middle of typing it, don’t switch to the Move tool. Just move your cursor an inch or so away from the text and the cursor will turn into an arrow. Click-and-drag the text into place and continue typing.
triptychs: creating with the power of three

THE TRIPTYCH IS ROOTED IN MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS ART, USING THREE PANELS TO COMMUNICATE PASSION AND BEAUTY. HERE’S ONE OF THE MANY VARIATIONS ON THE TRIPTYCH THEME THAT YOU CAN CREATE WITH PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS.

STEP ONE: Open your image in Elements. For measurement ease later, let’s display the ruler and the grids by choosing View > Rulers and then View > Grid. Let’s also preserve our original layer, so duplicate the background by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J) and name the new layer. I named mine Blake Island—the island depicted in the image.

STEP TWO: Set your foreground and background colors to their default of black and white by pressing the D key. Choose the Rectangle tool (U) and, using the ruler or the grid lines as your guide, draw a rectangle. I made mine 2 inches by 6 inches, which worked for this photo. With the Rectangle tool still active, hold down Ctrl-Alt-Shift (Mac: Command-Option-Shift), click on your rectangle and drag the shape to the right. This will create a copy of the rectangle. I put mine one grid square away from the first, but you can position it however you want; just remember the distance, since you’ll want to use the same amount on the other side of the center panel.
STEP THREE: Right-Click the Shape tool (Mac: Command-Click) and choose the Shape Selection tool at the bottom of the pop-up menu. Click on the first rectangle you drew, and go to Image > Transform Shape > Perspective. Position your mouse on the handle in the top-right corner of that first rectangle and drag the handle down one grid square. The bottom-right corner of the rectangle should simultaneously move up one square. Click Enter (Mac: Return) to save the transformation.

STEP FOUR: With the Shape Selection tool still active, duplicate the transformed rectangle in the same way that you did in Step Two—hold down Ctrl-Alt-Shift, click on the rectangle and drag it to the far right side of the image one grid square away from the middle rectangle, or whatever distance you chose and press Enter (Mac: Return) to OK the move. Our example extends off the canvas, but that’s OK, we’ll fix it in a moment.

STEP FIVE: With the far right shape still selected, go to Image > Rotate > Flip Layer Horizontal to create a mirror image of the transformed rectangle. Using the Shape Selection tool, click on the middle rectangle and resize its height—by clicking on the rectangle’s center handle—to match the inner sides of the two transformed shapes. Press Enter (Mac: Return) to commit the transformation, then, using the Move tool (V), position all the shapes as desired on your image.
STEP SIX: In the Layers palette, drag the Shape layer below the Blake Island layer. Create a new blank layer below the shape layer by pressing Ctrl (Mac: Command) and clicking the New Layer icon on the Layers palette. Click on the Foreground Color swatch in the Color Picker and choose a color you'd like to use as the backdrop for your triptych (I chose a very light gray). Fill the new blank layer with that color by pressing Alt-Backspace (Mac: Option-Delete).

STEP SEVEN: Let's make that background visible. On the Layers palette, position your mouse on the line between the Blake Island and Shape layers and press Alt (Mac: Option). Your cursor should change to overlapping circles. Click on the line to create a clipping group, which will cause your image to show only in the shapes.

Select the left rectangle with the Shape Selection tool, press Ctrl-T (Mac: Command-T) and move it closer to the middle rectangle either by dragging or using the arrow keys. (Holding Shift while dragging the shape will constrain the movements to left or right.) Once you've got the left side set, do the same thing for the right rectangle.

STEP EIGHT: Click on the Shape layer in the Layers palette and then go to the Effects palette. Click the Layer Style button and choose Drop Shadows from the menu. Choose a drop shadow and double-click to apply the style (I chose Soft Edge). On the Layers palette, double-click the Layer Style symbol (the 'fx' icon) on the Shape layer. In the dialog box, click the Stroke check box to place a line around each of the shapes. Press OK.
STEP NINE: With the Shape layer still selected, add a new layer directly above it by clicking the New Layer button in the Layers palette. This will include the new layer in the clipping group. Go to Edit > Layer and choose 50% Gray from the drop-down menu. Click OK to fill the layer. Move the gray layer above the Blake Island layer and change its blend mode to Overlay. With the Burn tool (O), trace along the joints between the shapes and along bottom edges of the triptych to darken them, giving the effect of some depth and shadows. Doing this on the gray layer set to Overlay makes this move non-destructive, in case you change your mind later.

STEP TEN: Turn off the Grid (View > Grid), save your project and you’re done! If you save in the .PSD format, you’ll preserve the layers, making it easy to incorporate other photos by swapping out the image you used in the clipping group (in Step Seven). For some variations, try these options:

- Use three different pictures; put each rectangle on its own layer and associate a different photo with each rectangle by creating clipping groups.
- Try different shapes for emphasis. Use two rectangles and an oval, or other combinations.
- Experiment with the different transforming options: you can resize your shapes, apply a Free Transform, and move them all around your layout.

For more ideas, go to elementsvillage.com and search for ‘triptych.’ You’ll find some great triptychs, including beautiful examples from members Sepiana, Rubeelou and others.

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zapping shines and shadows

Do the people in your photos suffer from an acute case of shiny skin, those overexposed areas that leave folks looking sweeter than they should be? How about those shadowed, double chins? Both can ruin a picture, but they’re easy to get rid of: all you need is the Clone Stamp tool and a wee bit o’ patience.

**Step One:** Because we’ll be affecting the original pixels of the photo, it’s a good idea to duplicate the background layer—by pressing Ctrl-J (Mac: Command-J)—before getting started. This also makes for a great before and after preview, since you can toggle the visibility eye of the duplicate layer off and on to see how much progress you’re making.

**Step Two:** To fix the shiny areas, you need to graft some non-shiny skin onto the problem areas using the Clone Stamp (S) tool. Select the tool and choose a nice soft brush from the brush picker in the Options bar. Change the mode of the tool to Darken (so it will darken the shiny spots) and then lower the tool’s Opacity to 25%.

**Step Three:** Now you need to tell Elements where the good skin lives. Do that by holding the Alt key (Mac: Option) and click an area of good skin that’s as close as possible to the bad skin. Your cursor will turn into a cross-hair (shown on the left). Click to set a good skin “sample point” and then release the Alt key.

Mouse over to the shiny skin and begin to brush the shine away (you can click and drag or just click multiple times). You’ll see a little plus sign that lets you know where Elements is sampling the good skin from.
STEP FOUR: Move to another area of the photo and choose a new sample point by Alt-clicking on some good skin. Again, it’s important to choose a sample point as close to the shiny area as possible (so the color and texture match). Use this technique to brush away the bad skin wherever it exists in your own photo, remembering to change your sample point (and brush size) as often as necessary.

STEP FIVE: As luck would have it, this technique also works to brush away shadows, which can do wonders for double chins. With the Clone Stamp tool selected, go to the Options bar at the top of your screen and change the mode to Lighten (in order to lighten the shadows). Follow the exact same technique as described in steps Three and Four to choose a sample point, and then brush away shadow areas.

As you can see from the before and after versions of the photo on the right, the overly shiny areas and the shadowed double-chins are all but gone. Admittedly, you’ll want to leave a little shine and shadow in your photos to retain a look of realism. That’s why lowering the Clone Stamp tool’s opacity to 25% is so helpful—it allows you control the strength of the retouching, letting you lessen the shines and shadows so they’re not as noticeable.

Until next time, happy shine and shadow zapping!
showcase family photos with personalized bookmarks

PERSONALIZED PHOTO BOOKMARKS ARE A UNIQUE WAY OF DISPLAYING FAMILY OR PET PHOTOS, AND THEY ALSO MAKE DELIGHTFUL GIFTS FOR SOMEONE WHO LOVES TO READ. BY STARTING OFF WITH A FEW SIMPLE STEPS, THEN ADDING YOUR OWN CREATIVITY AND PHOTOS, YOU’LL END UP WITH A BOOKMARK ANY READER WILL LOVE TO CARRY AND SHOW OFF.

STEP ONE: Create a new blank document for the base of your bookmark with File > New > Blank File, or use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl-N (Mac: Command-N). In the New dialog box, enter a custom width and height, a resolution of 300 pixels/inch, and set the background color to white. You can make your bookmark any size you wish. I would suggest you use dimensions between 7.5 inches by 1.75 inches to 8 inches by 2.25 inches.

STEP TWO: Create a new layer and fill it with color. At the top of the Layers palette, click the Create a New Layer icon to get a blank layer above the Background layer. From the Edit menu, select Fill Layer. In the Fill Layer dialog, at the “Use:” prompt, click the drop-down arrow, select Color and then choose a color from the Color Picker.

TIP: Rather than use a plain color, you can also fill this layer with a gradient or a pattern; overlay a scrapbook paper; stamp a design with a brush; use a filter effect; or any combination of these. Get creative—you are unlimited in your design options.
STEP THREE: Set up the grid. Turn on the visibility of the Grid by selecting View > Grid. Also make sure Snap to Grid is checked in View > Snap To > Grid. To adjust the size of the Grid go to Edit > Preferences > Grid. I set mine to use a gridline every 1 inch, an set the subdivisions to 8.

STEP FOUR: Next, we’ll add a stroke around the edge of the bookmark.

Create a new blank layer above the layer you filled with color, and select the Rectangular Marquee tool (M). Drag a selection from the upper left corner to the lower right corner, one square inside the edges of the canvas. With Snap to Grid turned on, your selection should snap to the lines one square from the edge all the way around. If you don’t get the selection precise the first time use Select > Deselect, or press Ctrl-D (Mac: Command-D) to deselect and try the selection again.

Once the selection is made on the blank layer, choose Edit > Stroke (Outline) Selection. In the Stroke dialog, set the size to a number from 6 to 10 pixels, choose a color, and select Inside for location. Click OK to add the Stroke, then deselect and turn off the Grid (by selecting View > Grid again).

TIP: You don’t have to use a stroked box. If you wish, you can leave the edges plain or use another type of border or edging, such as stamping the edge with a brush design or adding a scrapbook border embellishment.
STEP FIVE: Open the photos you wish to use on your bookmark. At this point, your creativity determines how many photos to use and how to arrange the photos on the bookmark. If it helps, think of the bookmark as a mini scrapbook page.

To add a photo, open it and choose Select > All or Ctrl-A (Mac: Command-A). Then copy the photo with Edit > Copy or Ctrl-C (Mac: Command-C). Next, go back to your bookmark file and paste the copied photo with Edit > Paste or Ctrl-V (Mac: Command-V). (If you’re using Photoshop Elements 6.0, you can just drag and drop images from the Project Bin into your bookmark window.)

Select the Move tool (V) and drag the photo to reposition it on the bookmark. Resize or rotate the photo as desired, using the bounding box corners on the photo. Remember to hold down the Shift key when resizing if you want to keep the image’s proportions intact.

Repeat this process to copy and paste the remaining photos to your bookmark. Then add text or other elements, as desired.

STEP SIX: Remember, there are two sides to a bookmark, so create the second side of the bookmark as a new blank document using the same steps as above. You can design this second side with more photos, or you may wish to add a meaningful saying or poem. Again, let your own creativity be your guide.

CREDITS

FONT
BaaBookHMK by Hallmark Google ‘BaaBookHMK’ to find places where you can download this free font.

BRUSHES
Butterflies -n- Trails by Stephanie Shimerdla
www.brUSHES.obsidIanDawn.com
STEP SEVEN: Before setting everything up to print, let’s save the files. If you’re sure you like them the way they are, flatten each file with Layer > Flatten Image and choose File > Save.

If you think you might like to keep the files as templates for future bookmarks, first save them as PSD files to preserve the layers; then choose File > Save As… to save a copy of the file. In that copy, choose Layer > Flatten Image and File > Save.

I’ve found the best way to print bookmarks is to place both bookmark sides on one sheet. Create a new blank document at 8 inches by 10.5 inches, with a resolution of 300 and a white background. Turn the grid on, and copy and paste the bookmark front and back to the new document. I usually print multiple copies on one sheet, so paste a second copy of each bookmark front and back into your new document.

This is where the grid and the snap-to-grid option come in handy. Use the Move tool (V) to position the pasted bookmark components, lining them up vertically on the white background and leaving space between them. Then print the sheet of bookmarks on any good quality paper. I use a 48 lb. glossy flyer/brochure paper.

BOOKMARK ASSEMBLY: After printing, carefully cut apart the front and back and place the bookmark sides back-to-back. I use Elmer’s Repositionable Picture and Poster Glue Stick on the back of one side, then position the sides together so the edges are even.

I finish my bookmarks by laminating them. If you don’t have a laminator, most quick-print shops will do laminating for you. Another option is to use Scotch Self-Sealing Laminating Pouches, which are available in most office supply stores. After carefully positioning the bookmark between the layers and sealing according to the directions, trim, leaving about ⅛ inch of the sealed mylar film around the edges of the bookmark to retain the seal.