



## PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS

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## Image manipulation

When you have a photo you might like to do some image manipulation to erase an object you do not wish to see. We can take this away with a simple tool IF the object is surrounded by a regular looking background, like sky or grass. You cannot take something away and reveal details from a house behind it!

## The Clone Stamp Tool

The Clone Stamp Tool is what you will probably use most for removing the odd blemish. Blemishes such as a pimple, or a piece of garbage on your lawn... Click the Clone Stamp Tool and choose an area you like to clone onto the offensive item. Adjust the brush size so you can 'paint' the cloned area over the area you wish to clone. For a pimple on a face you might have the same size brush as the pimple.

Hold down the ALT key on your keyboard while you click your mouse on the area you like the look of, say some clear bit of skin. Then release the ALT key and move the brush onto the pimple, and press the mouse button. That's it! If you missed a little area you can dab/paint some more. Remember that it will just duplicate the image. So if you go right you clone right from the area you had already selected. Have a go, and see how it clones. It is easy!

## **Gaussian Blur**

Gaussian Blur is an effect that is like making your image goes 'out of focus'. If you create a second copy of the layer you wish to manipulate and with the lower of the two layers highlighted select Filter/Blur/Gaussian Blur you can blur that layer. You will not see that on the screen as your un-blurred image is above it! The trick now is to use the eraser tool to erase the top layer to reveal the blurred layer. Is nice and simple. If you feel someone's skin is not nice and smooth you blur the layer below and erase the not-so-smooth bits of skin of the layer above it.

Make sure you use an appropriately sized brush and one that has fuzzy edges to ensure a nice effect!

## **Adding Elements**

Ever taken a family photo and Johnny was nowhere to be found? We can put Johnny back in with not too much effort! The first thing to do is find Johnny and take a photo of him in roughly the same lighting condition. If the image of Johnny has hard shadows and the family photo was taken under a tree then it will not look too natural. Make sure the image you want to paste into a photo is similarly exposed.

So open you image of Johnny, enlarge the screen so you have him in sight, and choose one of the lasso tools. Ideally Johnny is pictured against a contrasting background (preferably fluorescent green), in which case the magnetic lasso will be ideal. Move it around his shape till you come full circle (right around Johnny), and press the ENTER key on the keyboard. Johnny will now be highlighted by a marching ants line around him.

Press CtrlC (or Edit/Copy). Click on the image, or open the image, that you like to paste him in. Click CtrlV (or Edit/Paste) and there he is! He got his own layer, and you might like to name that layer 'Johnny' while you are at it! Use your move tool to position him, and change his size to a correct proportion for that photo. When dragging the corners of his layer to resize him hold down the SHIFT key, this will ensure he stays in the right proportions and you don't stretch him!

You can alter the contrast, levels, lighting, hue and saturation and do anything you need to do to Johnny's layer to make him fit in nicely with the scene!

## *Photoshop Elements*

If your brush took more from the Johnny photo than you intended you can use the eraser brush to erase the bits of his layer. Use a small brush to do this or you'll erase bits of Johnny. You may want to brush parts of him away to make him look like he stands behind an object! Best is to highlight the layer on which you see the object, say a car, and use the magnetic lasso to draw around the car and below it. Click ENTER to make sure you see the marching ants, click on the Johnny layer and press the DELETE key. The shape you had just made is now cut out of Johnny, making it look as if he stands behind the car!

You can also duplicate a person within an image; just do exactly the same as before except copy a selection from the one same photo!

## **Using the Lasso Tools**

Magnetic lassos are always handy. They try and follow the contrast lines. You will like them lots when there is a clear distinction between the background and the object you wish to highlight. Other times you can use the plain Lasso tool, so you just draw with your mouse, or use the Polygonal lasso, which makes straight lines. Straight lines are ideal for cutting out objects with straight lines obviously, especially when the object blends into the background at times.

Here's a few helpful shortcuts you should know about working with this tool: If you get too far away from the edge, you may get a point in the wrong place. You can back up and remove points by clicking the delete key as you use the magnetic lasso tool. You can also add points manually by clicking once where you want to place a point.

Note when you use the magnetic lasso you get parameters you can change: Feather, width, contrast, and frequency. Play with them!

Feather is an interesting option; it makes the edges of your selection fuzzy. This makes some object easier to blend in. If you give it too high a value (value of feather depends on the number of pixels in your photo) it will not work nicely. Play with feather and see what happens when you copy and paste selections!

## **Examples Using Filters**

Filters are great for creating fun pictures. Creating movement or putting the focus on subjects or for plainly ruining perfectly good images! As always duplicate the image layer and apply the filter on one layer and use the eraser on the upper layer to regulate which part is affected. The full version of Photoshop has a 'history brush', but if you don't have that I can recommend the double layer and eraser technique!

## Gaussian Blur



Lets say you have a nice picture of a person in a garden. You like to make her stand out of the picture. Use the Style/Blur/Gaussian Blur filter on the top (visible) layer and use the eraser brush to erase the (now) blurred person. This allows the 'sharp' image to show in its place creating an effect where the person stands out sharp whilst the majority of the background is still blurred. The perfectionist will want to do a more perfect job and mark the person with a lasso and have all the background blurred. This is a lot harder to do, and will often look a little shoddy unless you do a really good job lassoing the person!

Here you see the quick and easy way (notice some of the kitchen scene is sharp), compared to the lasso method (only the foreground has been made sharp).



## **Motion Blur**

It is fun to use motion blur. Take an image of an object that was moving, but showed up frozen in the picture. Duplicate the image and apply the Filter/Blur/Motion Blur effect to the top layer. Use the magnetic lasso to go around the object and highlight it. If you have trouble seeing what you are doing in the motion blurred image just switch off the blurred layer's visibility! Then cut this shape out of the blurred image to reveal a sharp object on a motion blurred background.



## **Lens Flare**

An interesting effect to use is the 'lens flare'. Using the image above we can take either image layer, click on Filter/Render/Lens Flare. Use the cross hair to place the light in the right part of the picture (the sky in this case). Here is the result:



## **Practice Practice Practice**

Now that you have had a quick 3 lesson introduction to the basic techniques in Photoshop Elements you should have a good idea of what you can do with it. You have now got the steep learning curve out of the way and you should be able to go on from here! The internet is full of tutorials and tips, video tutorials (for those with fast internet) and regular text tutorials. Just remember there are many variations and generations of Photoshop, hence not all tutorials will make perfect sense. However they all work on the same principals and they will all be useful to you. Another way to access great Photoshop tutorials is to buy the Photoshop or digital photo magazines. Their CDs often have excellent tutorials on them!

To begin with do a Google search on  
**'Photoshop Elements' tutorial borders**

And you get these interesting sites amongst many others:

- <http://graphicssoft.about.com/od/pselements/ss/polaroid.htm> (Turn a Photo Into a Polaroid with Photoshop Elements)
- <http://www.cbtcafe.com/elements/index.html> (Photoshop Elements Tutorials)
- [http://www.arrach.com/elements/pse\\_hhow1.htm](http://www.arrach.com/elements/pse_hhow1.htm) (Photoshop Elements Tips)