How to draw

You can use the brush tools—the Pencil tool, Brush tool (**Figure 1**), and Pattern Stamp tool—to draw lines or paint areas. Photoshop Elements gives you a wide set of options for brush tools. For example, you can select from a number of brush tips and sizes. You can also determine opacity, blend, scatter, and other options.

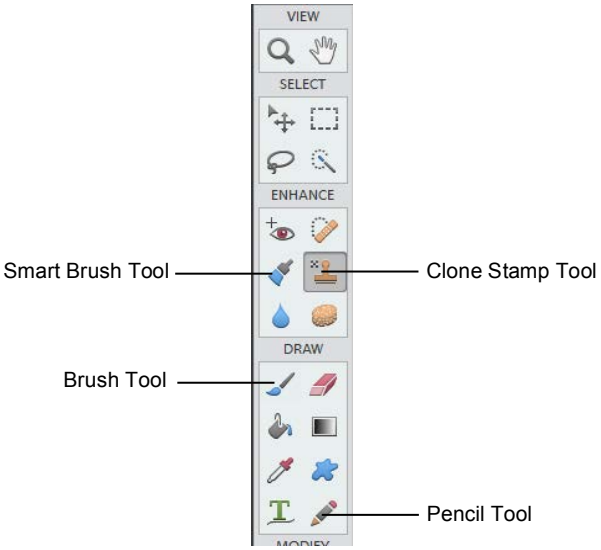

Figure 1 Brush tools

This guide is a basic introduction to drawing. After learning the basics, you can experiment with brushes to find the settings that work for you. When drawing freehand, you may prefer to use a tablet and pen instead of a mouse.

This guide covers four tools:

- The *Smart Brush* tool applies preset specials effect to a new adjustment layer.
- The *Brush tool* paints the current foreground color on an image and creates soft strokes of color.
- The *Pattern Stamp tool* paints whatever you have currently selected in the pattern picker.
- The *Pencil tool* paints the current foreground color of an image and creates hard-edged lines.

Setting brush options

With each brush, you can set one or more of the following options in the options panel (**Figure 2**).

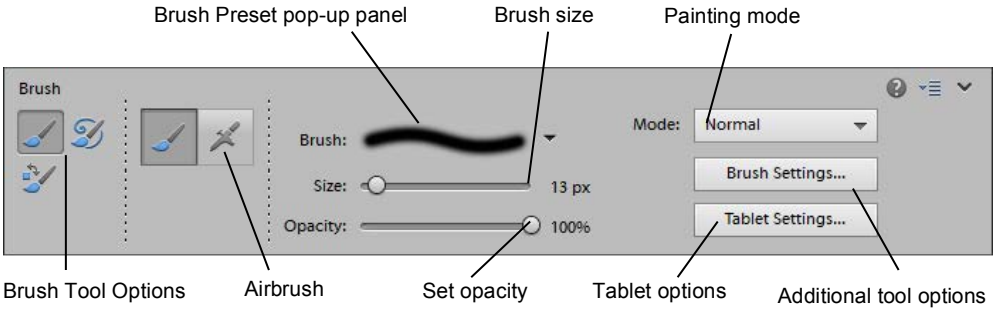

Figure 2 Brush options panel

Brush Preset pop-up panel: Select from a series of preset brushes. Photoshop Elements provides a wide range of these preset brushes, and you can also create your own by saving settings for the current tool, such as Airbrush Soft Round 50% Flow.

Blending mode: Determines how painted colors will blend with an underlying image. See the Photoshop Elements Help topic "About Blending Modes" for more detail.

Set opacity: Set the transparency level for painted lines, from 0% (invisible) to 100% (opaque). As you paint over an area, the color's transparency remains the same until you release the mouse button, no matter how many times you move the pointer over the area. When you release the mouse button and then paint over the same area, you apply additional color at the same opacity.

Airbrush: Simulate painting with an airbrush. Paint builds up as you hold down the mouse button. Brush hardness and opacity control how much paint is applied and how fast. Click the button to turn this option on or off.
Note: This setting is for the Brush tool only.

Auto erase: Paint the background color over areas that contain the foreground color. **Note:** This setting is for the Pencil tool only.

Drawing with the Pencil tool

Use the Pencil tool to create hard-edged lines. The Pencil tool may be useful for outlining shapes, or sketching.

To draw with the Pencil tool:

1. Open a new document in the Photoshop Elements Editor workspace.
2. Select the Pencil tool (**Figure 1**).
3. Choose a foreground color in the Brush options panel.
4. Choose a relatively small brush, such as 9 px, from the Brush Preset pop-up panel (**Figure 3**).
5. In the options bar, leave Mode set to Normal.
6. Make sure Opacity is set to 100%.
7. Draw by using one of the following methods:
   - To draw freehand, drag in the image (**Figure 4**).
   - To draw a straight line, click a starting point in the image. Then, while holding down the Shift key, click an ending point for the line (**Figure 5**).

   Observe that the line is hard-edged; that is, it does not have any blending at the edges.

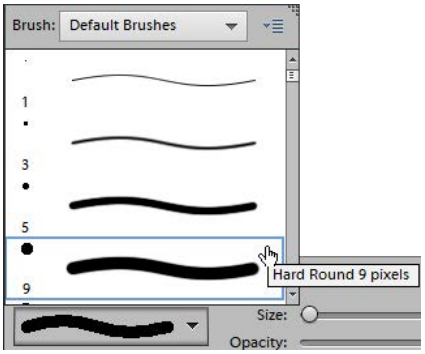

Figure 3 Default brush options in the Brush Preset pop-up panel

Figure 4 Drawing freehand with the Pencil tool

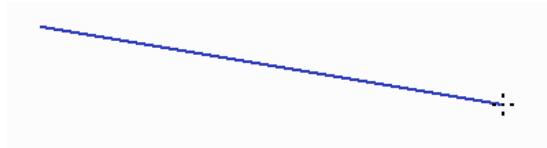

Figure 5 Drawing a straight line with the Pencil tool

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8. Change Opacity to 50% in the options bar and draw another line that overlaps the first line (**Figure 6**).

   Observe that the line is half as dark as the first line and that the first line shows through wherever you overlap it.

Figure 6 Second line with Opacity set to 50%

Drawing with the Brush tool

The Brush tool creates soft or hard strokes of color. You can also use it to simulate airbrush techniques. Use the Brush tool to shade areas and draw with a variety of brush tips.

To draw with the Brush tool:

1. Open a new document in the Photoshop Elements Editor workspace.
2. Select the Brush tool (**Figure 1**).
3. Choose a foreground color in the Brush options panel.
4. Choose a relatively large brush, such as 19 px, from the Brush Preset pop-up panel.
5. In the options bar, leave Mode set to Normal.
6. Set Opacity to 40%.
7. Draw freehand by dragging in the image. Release the mouse and drag back over the line you just painted (**Figure 7**).

   When you are using the Brush tool, the line's edges are softer than they were with the Pencil tool. Note that the line's color is lighter because you set Opacity to 40%, but the color is darker where the lines intersect. (The opacity of the overlap is 80% because the opacity of each line is 40%.)

   Note: To draw a straight line with the Brush tool, hold down the Shift key.

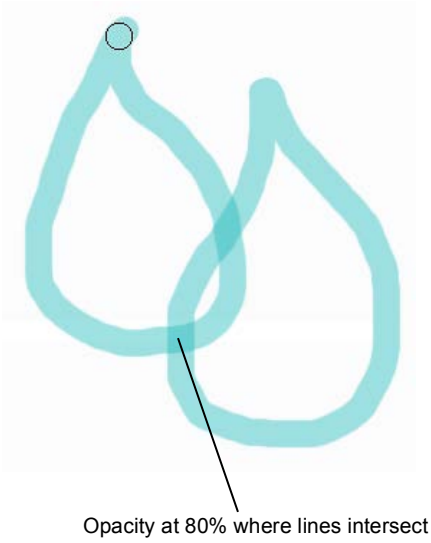

Figure 7 Drawing with Brush, Opacity 40%

Using specialty brush tips

A large number of brush tips are available in Photoshop Elements. These range from artistic brushes—wet or calligraphic brushes—to specialty brushes such as starbursts or snowflakes. You access these through the Brushes menu.

To use brush tips:

1. Open a new document in the Photoshop Elements Editor workspace.
2. Select the Brush tool.
3. Choose the Assorted Brushes category in the Brushes pop-up panel (**Figure 8**) from the Brush options panel.

   This loads the Assorted Brushes set into the Brushes pop-up panel.
4. Choose one of the specialty brush tips in the Brushes pop-up panel, such as the Crosshatch 3 brush (#15 in **Figure 9**).
5. Drag in the image to paint with the specialty brush (**Figure 10**).

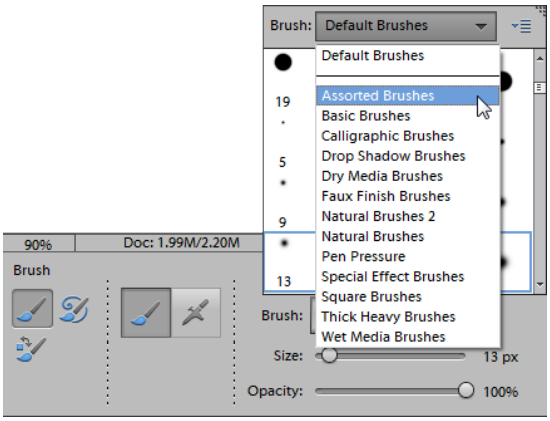

Figure 8 Brush categories in the Brushes pop-up panel

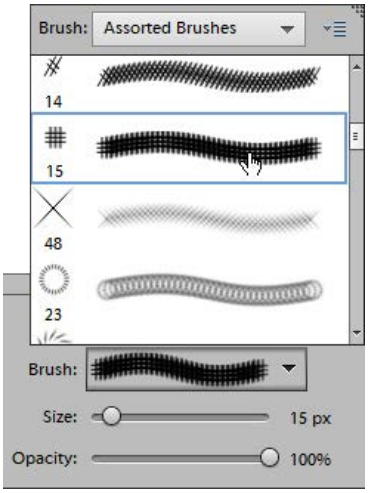

Figure 9 Tips for Assorted Brushes in the Brushes pop-up panel

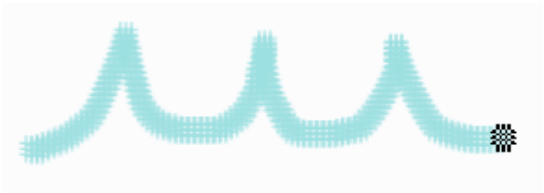

Figure 10 Painting with the Crosshatch 3 specialty brush tip

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Using the Pattern Stamp tool

With the Pattern Stamp tool, you can paint patterns onto an image, choosing from a variety of patterns.

To use the Pattern Stamp tool:

1. In the Photoshop Elements Editor workspace, select the Clone Stamp tool. If the Pattern Stamp tool is not visible, click the Clone Stamp tool and select the Pattern Stamp tool from the Brush options panel (**Figure 11**).

   Observe that the options panel is slightly different than it is for the Brush tool.

   To the right of the Opacity setting is the pattern picker.

2. Select a pattern from the pattern picker (**Figure 12**). To view more groups of patterns, click the arrow to display the Pattern pop-up menu.

3. Select the Aligned option to keep the pattern aligned with your original starting point.

   Otherwise, the pattern starts anew each time you lift the pointer.

4. Leave the Impressionist option deselected.

   With the Impressionist option selected, the pattern appears in blocks of color.

5. Drag on the image to draw with the Pattern Stamp tool (**Figure 13**).

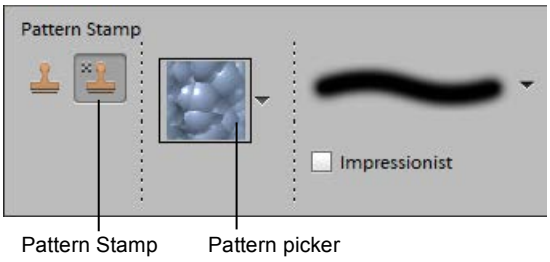

Figure 11 Pattern Stamp tool

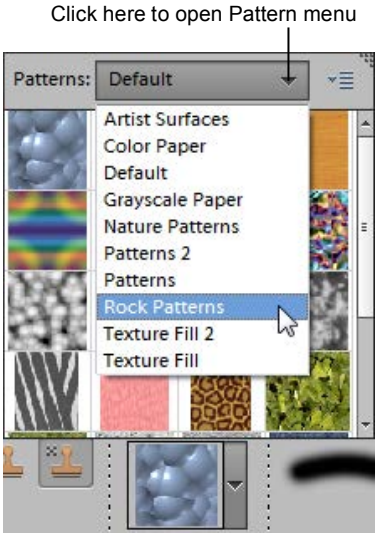

Figure 12 Pattern pop-up menu in the pattern picker

Figure 13 Painting with the Pattern Stamp tool

Applying effects with the Smart Brush tool

Use the Smart Brush tool to create a quick selection and automatically apply a special effect to the selection. The Smart Brush tool allows for non-destructive editing because it adds the effect to a new Adjustment layer, preserving the underlying layers. Photoshop Elements includes over 90 preset special effects that you can apply by using the Smart Brush tool (**Figure 14**). For a more precise selection, use the Detail Smart Brush tool instead.

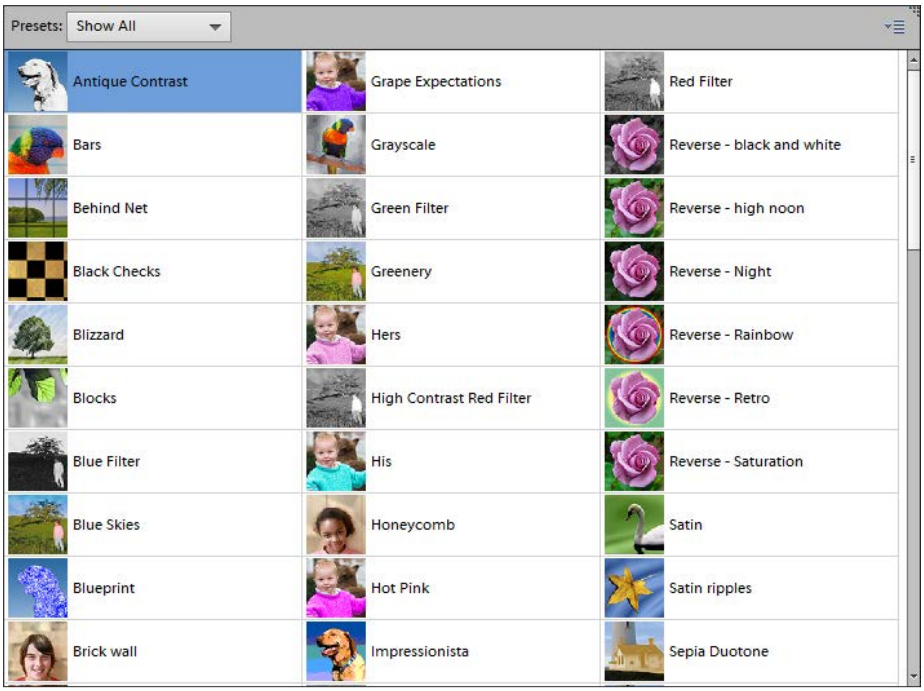

Figure 14 Examples of Smart Brush tool presets

To apply effects with the Smart Brush tool:

1. Open a new document in the Photoshop Elements Editor workspace.
2. Select the Smart Brush tool.
3. Choose a Smart Brush preset from the Smart Brush options panel (**Figure 15**).

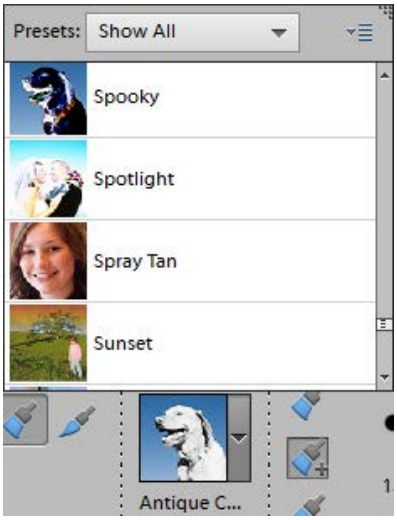

Figure 15 Smart Brush presets

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4. Drag to create a quick selection.

   Depending on the type of preset effect you choose, the effect is applied to the selected area or the inverse of the selection (**Figure 16**).

   Using the Smart Brush creates a new adjustment layer. The effects are applied in the adjustment layer, preserving the original images or shapes (**Figure 17**).

5. In the options bar, use the New Selection, Add To Selection, and Subtract From Selection to refine the selection.

6. When you are finished making the selection and applying the effect, deselect the adjustment layer to see the final result (**Figure 18**).

Figure 16 Smart Brush selection

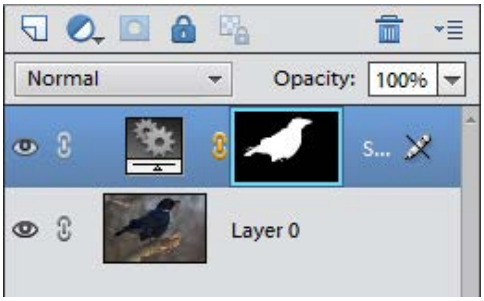

Figure 17 Adjustement layer

Figure 18 Final effect of the Spooky Smart Brush tool