How to enhance a photo

The Adobe Photoshop Elements Editor workspace includes three editing views. These include Quick, Guided, and Expert (**Figure 1**). Use Quick to automatically adjust the tonal range, color, and sharpness of your photos. Guided offers detailed instructions for performing basic and advanced editing techniques. Use Expert for manual editing.

Basic edits include things like cropping and rotating photos. Examples of advanced guided edits are photo retouching, applying lens effects, and merging photos.

This guide covers the following topics:

- Using the Expert view to fix red eye caused by flash photography.
- Using the Quick view to apply auto adjustments to color, contrast, lighting, and sharpness.
- Using the Quick Selection tool to make changes to image selections.
- Using the Guided view to view and apply photo editing techniques such as merging photos, apply styles, stacking images, and using the Orton effect to create a soft dreamy feel to your photography.

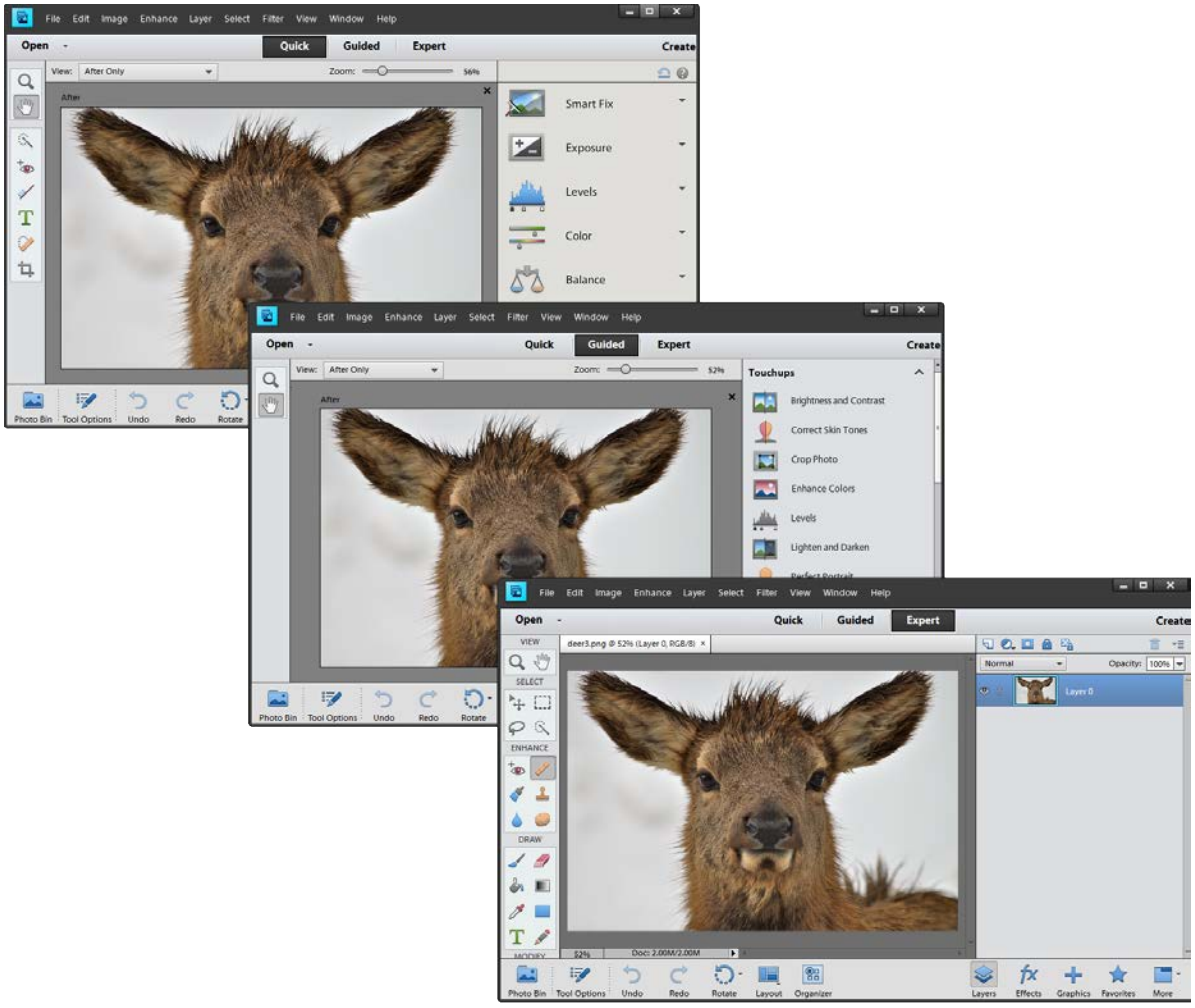

Figure 1 Quick, Guided, and Expert edit views

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Removing red eye

One of the most common photography problems is the red eye effect caused by a camera's flash. This problem is even more common with digital cameras because the flash unit is so close to the lens. Removing red eye is extremely simple with Photoshop Elements.

To remove red eye:

1. Open an image that has red eye in the Photoshop Elements Editor workspace.
2. Select Expert from the Modes tab to open the full toolbar.
3. Zoom in to the area that needs correction.
4. Select the Red Eye Removal tool in the toolbox (**Figure 2**).
5. Drag to draw a selection border around the affected eye (**Figure 3**).

   The red eye is removed.
6. (Optional) Refine the Pupil Radius and Darken amount using the Red Eye Removal panel. Repeat the process on the same or other eyes until you are happy with the results.

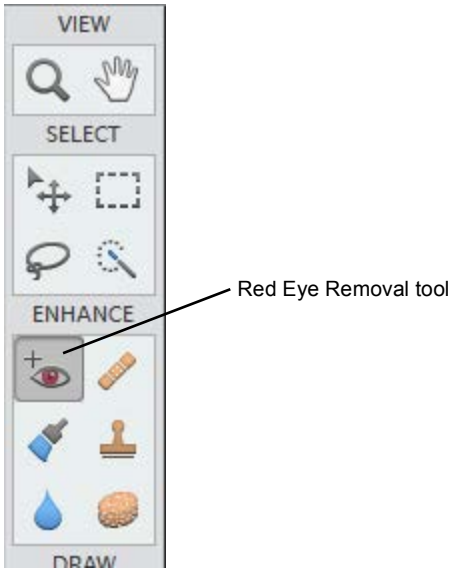

Figure 2 Red Eye Removal tool

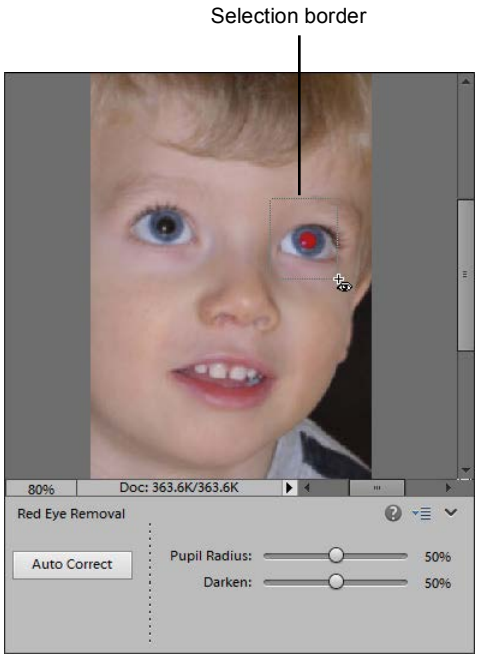

Figure 3 Red eye removal

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Using Quick Fix

You can use several methods to enhance the images you bring into Adobe Photoshop Elements, but if you prefer to let Photoshop Elements do most of the work, you can probably find everything you need in Quick mode.

In Quick, you can make auto adjustments to color, contrast, lighting, and sharpness. You can even remove unwanted red eye caused by flash photography.

For even faster results, you can let Photoshop Elements make all the decisions by applying a Smart Fix. Smart Fixes make automatic adjustments to lighting, color, and contrast with a single click. If you like the results, you can move on to editing another photo. If not, undo your changes and try applying other enhancements from the Enhance menu or the Lighting, Color, or Sharpness panels.

To enhance an image with Smart Fix:

1. Open the image in the Photoshop Elements Editor workspace and select Quick from the Modes tab.

   You

2. Click SmartFix button to open the panel (**Figure 4**).

2. Open the View menu in the upper-left corner of the workspace and select Before & After - Horizontal (**Figure 5**).

   You can view the photo as it appears after applying fixes, or place the original beside the fixed image for a before-and-after view.

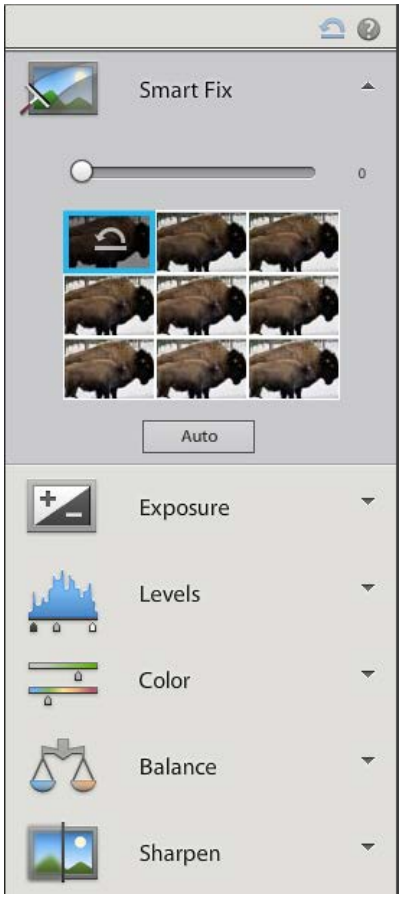

Figure 4 Smart Fix panel

Figure 5 View drop-down menu

The copies of the image appear side-by-side (**Figure 6**).

3. Choose Enhance > Auto Smart Fix.

   In the example (**Figure 7**), the After image is enhanced automatically by increasing the color saturation, adjusting the color levels, and correcting the contrast.

   If you like the result, you have finished editing. If not, adjust the amount of Smart Fix by dragging the slider in the Smart Fix panel. After manually adjusting the image, you can confirm or cancel the change by clicking the check mark or X at the top of the Smart Fix panel (**Figure 8**).

Figure 6 Before and After views

Figure 7 After view with Smart Fix applied

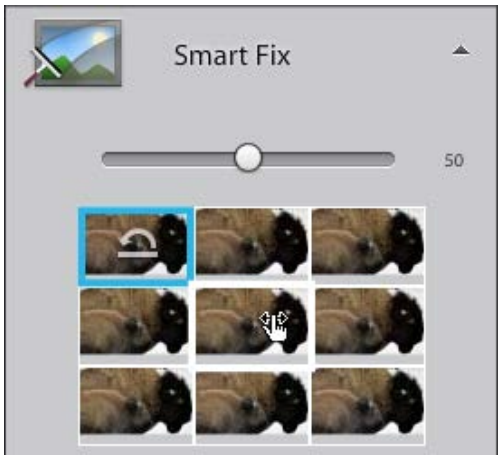

Figure 8 Manually applying a Smart Fix

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To apply automatic enhancement for brightness, contrast, color, and sharpness:

1. To adjust brightness, choose Enhance > Auto Levels.

   Note: You can also click the Auto button for Levels in the Levels panel **(Figure 9)**.

2. To adjust contrast, choose Enhance > Auto Contrast.

   Note: You can also click the Auto button for Contrast or use the sliders in the Levels panel.

3. To adjust color, choose Enhance > Auto Color Correction.

   Note: You can also use the Auto button for Color or the sliders in the Color panel (**Figure 10**).

4. To adjust sharpness, choose Enhance > Auto Sharpen.

   Note: You can also use the Auto button for Sharpness or the Sharpen slider in the Sharpness panel (**Figure 11**).

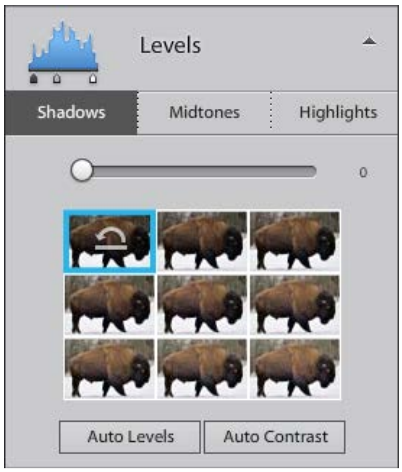

Figure 9 Levels panel

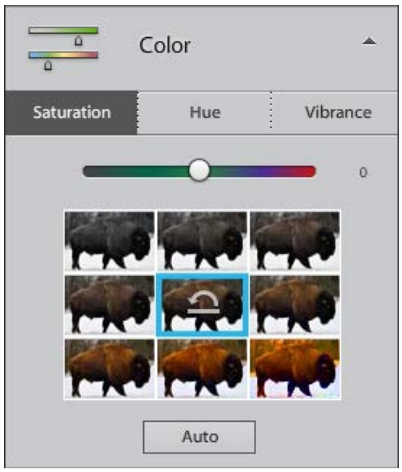

Figure 10 Colors panel

Figure 11 Sharpness panel

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Using the Quick Selection tool

Before you can edit discreet parts of a photo, you need to select the area of the image or layer you want to edit. One way to do this is by using the Quick Selection tool. The Quick Selection tool lets you apply enhancements to limited parts of an image. Using the Quick Selection tool, you can select areas with similar colors by dragging the tool across the canvas.

To use Quick Selection:

1. Open the image in the Photoshop Elements Editor workspace.
2. Click the Quick Selection tool (**Figure 12**).
3. Drag the pointer across the canvas over an area with consistent color.

   As you do, observe that all of the surrounding area of similar color is selected (**Figure 13**).
4. Apply a change in one of the Quick Fix panels. For example, you could increase the midtone contrast.

   Observe that changes apply only to the selected area (**Figure 14**).

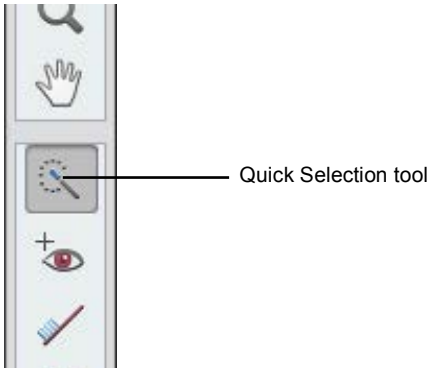

Figure 12 Quick Selection tool

Figure 13 Quick Selection tool applied

Figure 14 Changes applied to selected areas

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Performing guided edits

Guided Edit mode includes eight categories of guided editing effects ranging from basic to advanced. For example, you can crop a photo, adjust color and lighting. You can also apply special lens and photography effects such as Depth of Field or the Orton Effect.

The following are a few examples of guided edits:

- *Depth of Field* is the distance between the nearest and farthest objects in a scene that appear acceptably sharp in an image (**Figure 15**). In some cases, it may be desirable to have the entire image sharp, and a large depth of field is appropriate. In other cases, a small depth of file may be more effective, emphasizing the subject while de-emphasizing (or blurring) the foreground and background.

Figure 15 Small depth of field (left) and large depth of field (right)

- The *Orton Effect*, named after Michael Orton, is a photography technique which blends two completely different photos of the same scene, resulting in a distinctive mix of high and low detail areas within the same photo giving it a soft and dreamy feel (**Figure 16**). The original technique was to overlay two or more images of an identical scene with very different exposures on slide film. One image is sharply focused and the others are very out of focus. In Photoshop Elements, you can apply this effect to a single image by using the Orton Effect under Photography Effects in Guided Edit mode. You can also attempt to manually create this effect by merging two photos of the same scene with different exposures.

Figure 16 Orton Effect

- A *Picture Stack* produces the effect of a single image made from a collage of separate pictures (**Figure 17**). A picture stack makes a great cover image for a photo book, web page, or report.

Figure 17 Picture Stack

- *Photomerge Style Match* applies the style from a one photo to another.

To create a picture stack:

1. Open an image in the Photoshop Elements Editor workspace. This is the source for the picture stack.
2. Select Guided from the Modes tabs to display the options.
3. Expand the Picture Stack panel if it is not already open (**Figure 18**).

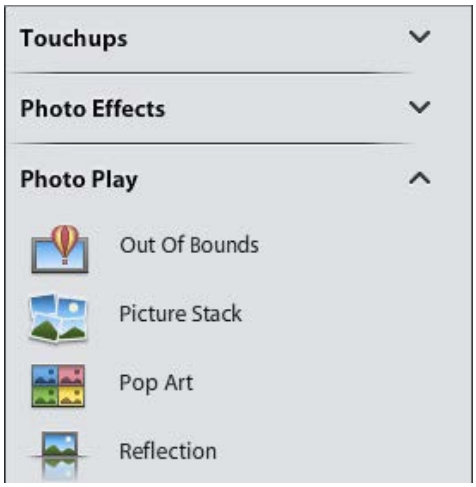

Figure 18 Photo Play panel

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4. Click Picture Stack in the Photo Play panel.

   The Picture Stack options appear (**Figure 19**).

5. Select options for the Picture stack, including the number of pictures, border, and background.

6. Click Done.

Figure 19 Picture Stack options

To apply a style from another image:

1. Open an image in the Photoshop Elements Editor workspace.
2. Select Guided from the Modes tabs to display the options.
3. Choose Enhance > Photomerge > Photomerge Style Match .

   The Photomerge Style Match panel opens (**Figure 20**).

   The Style Image and the After image opens in the document workspace, with the Style Bin below (**Figure 21**).
4. From the Style Bin, select an image that matches the style you wish to apply to your image, and drag that image into the Style Image box in the document workspace.

Figure 20 Photomerge panel

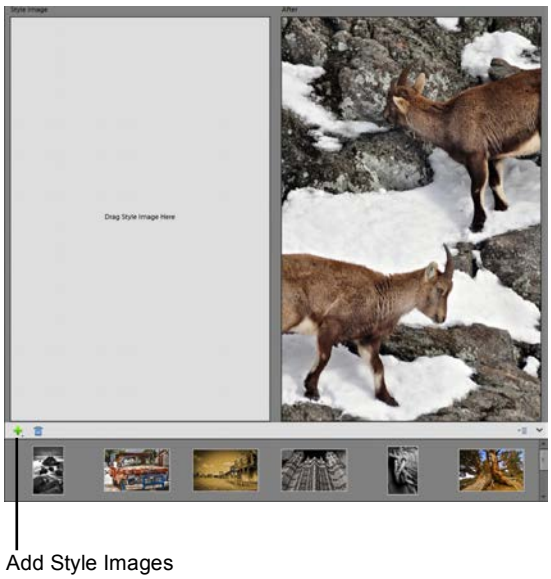

Figure 21 Style Match

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Note: You can also add your own images to the Style Bin. Click the Add Style Images button and navigate to the location of the images you want to add to the Style Bin (**Figure 22**).

The style of Style Image is applied to the source image.

5. Use the sliders and other controls in the Photomerge Style Match panel to adjust the style intensity, clarity, and level of detail of your image (**Figure 20**).

   The changes are applied to the image. You can preview the changes in the document window (**Figure 23**).

6. Click the Done button to apply the Photomerge Style Match (**Figure 20**).

   The style changes are saved for your image.

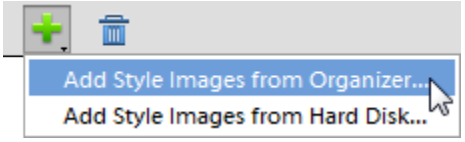

Figure 22 Add Style Images options

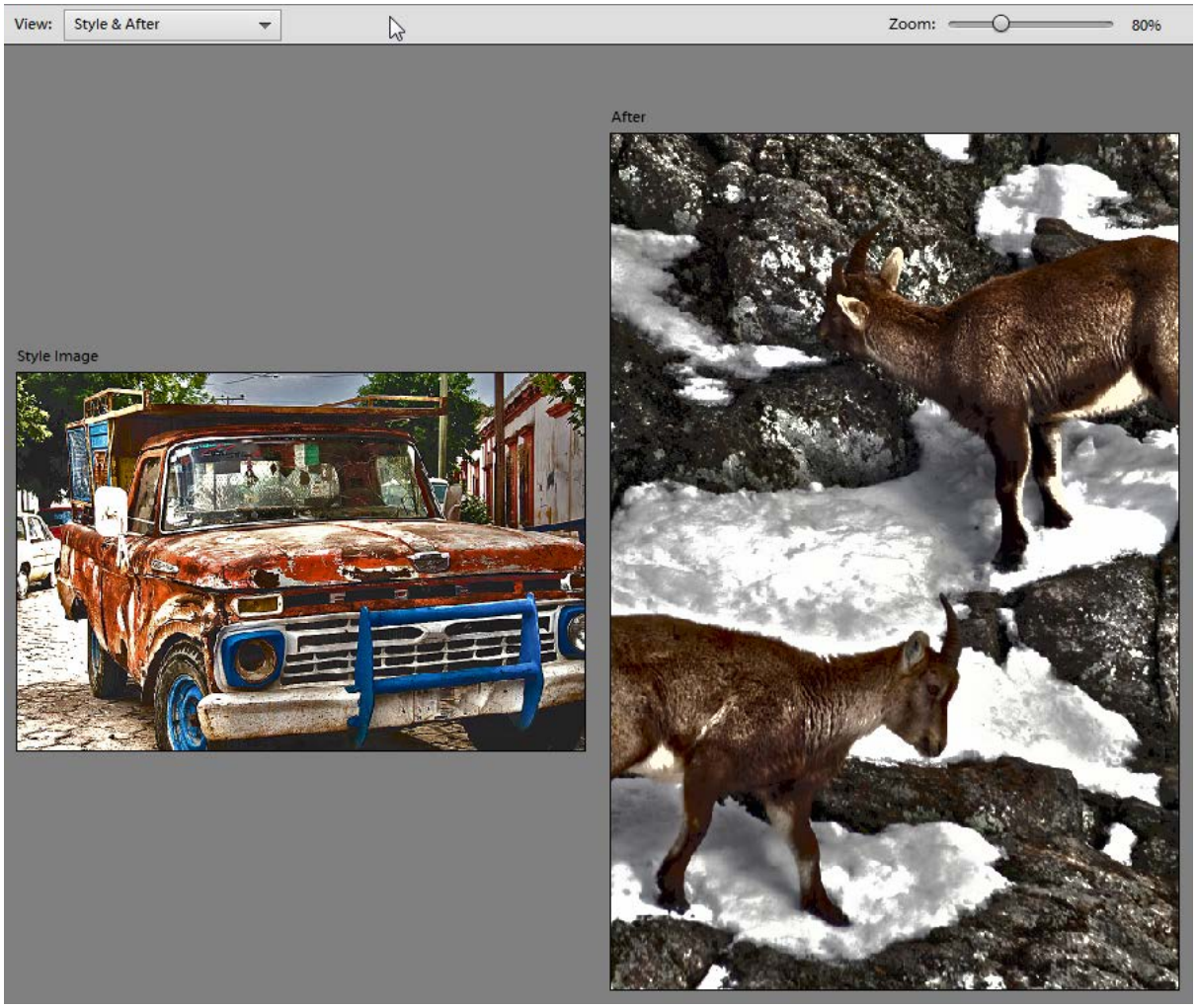

Figure 23 Style Match