How to rotate, level, crop, and size images

You can make good photos look great with the editing tools in Adobe Photoshop Elements. You can easily rotate, straighten, crop, resize, and recompose images. Some of the tools for these basic edits are in the toolbox (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1 Toolbox

Rotating and leveling images

Many photographers rotate the camera while taking a picture. When these images are viewed on a computer, they appear sideways. Photoshop Elements makes rotating images easy, by using either the Organizer or the Editor. Sometimes the required rotation isn't a precise 90-degree turn to the right or left; instead the photo might need only a slight adjustment to level the horizon. The Straighten tool in Photoshop Elements can do this for you.

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To rotate an image 90 degrees in the Organizer workspace:

1. In the Organizer, select an image that needs to be rotated (**Figure 2**).

   Note: You can select multiple images by Control-clicking (Windows) or Command-clicking (Mac OS).

2. Choose one of these methods to rotate the image:

   - Edit > Rotate 90° Left or Edit > Rotate 90° Right.
   - Click the Rotate Left button in the options bar at the bottom of the document window, or click the Rotate options menu to display the Rotate Right button (**Figure 3**).

   The Image rotates 90 degrees (**Figure 4**).

   Note: Photoshop Elements may warn you that the image cannot be "losslessly rotated." This means that rotating the image may hurt the quality of the image. In this situation, Photoshop Elements offers to create a new rotated version of the image, so that the original image isn't harmed.

   You may find that rotating the image in the Editor is a better solution.

Figure 2 Image that needs to be rotated

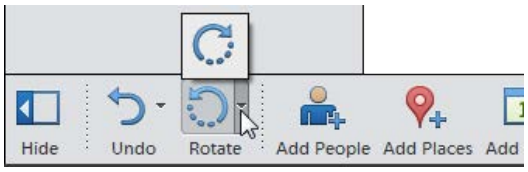

Figure 3 Rotate Left and Rotate Right buttons

Figure 4 Image rotated 90 degrees

To rotate an image 90 degrees in the Editor workspace:

1. In the Editor, open an image that needs to be rotated. You can use either Quick Edit or Standard Edit.

2. Choose one of these methods to rotate the image:

   - Edit > Rotate 90° Left or Edit > Rotate 90° Right.
   - Click the Rotate Left or Rotate Right button in the options bar at the bottom of the document window.

   Note: You can also rotate the image 180 degrees.

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To level an image by using its horizon:

1. In the Editor, open an image that needs to be leveled, and select Full from the Edit tab to use the Standard Edit workspace.
2. Select the Straighten tool in the toolbox (**Figure 1**).
3. Drag to draw a straight line representing what should be the horizon of the photo (**Figure 5**).

   The image is leveled based on the line you draw. The horizon is now level, but the outer edges of the photo are at an angle (**Figure 6**). You can fix this by cropping the image.

Figure 5 Image being leveled

Figure 6 Leveled image

Cropping an image

Photographers often use the Crop tool (**Figure 1**) to remove sections of an image, or to reframe a composition..

Most professional images in magazines and billboards have been cropped to improve the balance and symmetry of the original picture. Photoshop Elements lets you crop an image using either Quick Fix or Standard Edit in the Editor workspace.

To crop an image in the Editor workspace:

1. In the Editor, open an image that needs to be cropped.
2. Select the Crop tool in the toolbox.

3. Drag to select the area of the photo to be cropped.

   The interior of the crop selection is what will remain after the photo is cropped (**Figure 7**).

   A Rule of Thirds overlays the image, and breaks the image in thirds, horizontally and vertically (equidistant lines) into nine parts thus providing a better visual aid to decide a crop. You can change the overlay to a simple Grid, Golden Ratio, or remove it altogether in the Crop Options panel (**Figure 8**).

4. Use the selection handles along the crop border to adjust the cropping area.

   Alternatively, you can use the Crop Preset Area in the Crop Options panel to refine your cropping area by choosing a preset width and height.

5. At the bottom of the image, click the Commit Current Operation button (green check mark) to complete the crop.

   The image is cropped (**Figure 9**).

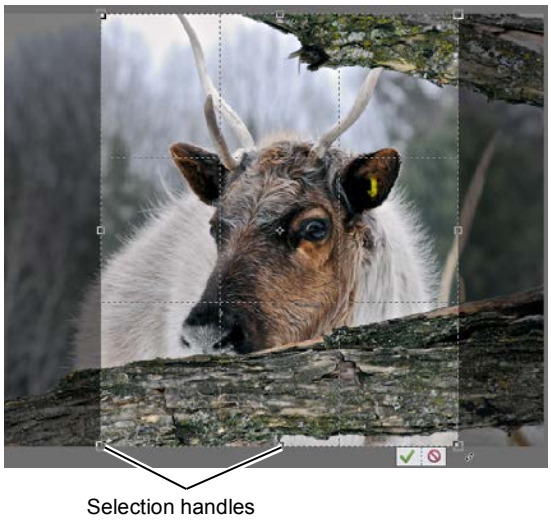

Figure 7 Area selected for cropping

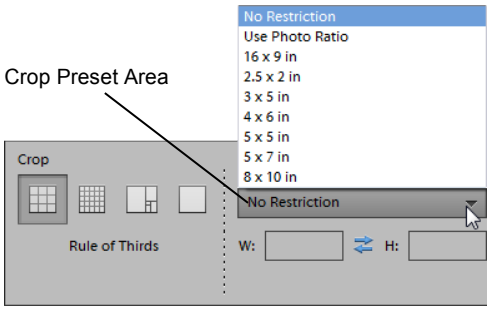

Figure 8 Crop Options panel

Figure 9 Cropped image

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Adjusting image size and resolution

Once you've finished editing or retouching a photograph, you may also need to change its overall file size and resolution to optimize the image for viewing. For example, an image intended for printing will have a much larger file size and resolution than one you plan to place on a web site or send by e-mail.

To adjust the size and resolution of a file:

1. Open the image in the Editor.

   You can use either Quick Edit or Standard Edit.

2. Choose Image > Resize > Image Size.

   The Image Size dialog box appears (**Figure 10**).

3. Make sure the Resample Image option is selected.

4. Make sure the Constrain Proportions option is selected.

   This forces you to maintain the width-to-height proportion of the image.

5. Use the resolution box to change the resolution. The preferred resolution for viewing images on computer screens is 72 pixels/inch. For printing images, you will want a higher resolution.

   If you plan to show the image on the web or to send the image by e-mail, you should leave the resolution at 72 and then adjust the dimensions to the maximum size you want them to appear onscreen. Because you have Constrain Proportions selected, you can change either Width or Height in the Pixel Dimensions section, and the remaining measurements will change automatically (**Figure 11**).

   Making the image smaller can reduce the file size significantly.

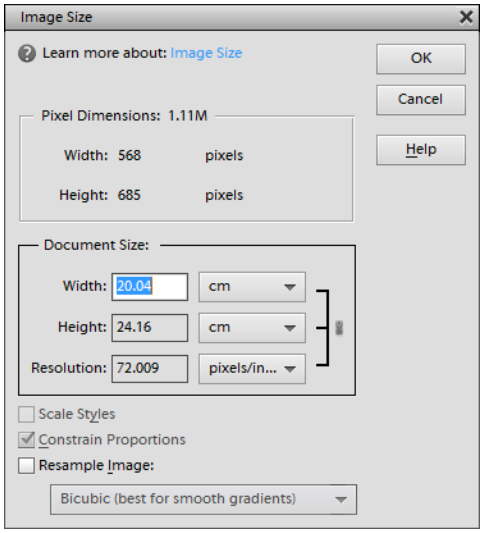

Figure 10 Image Size dialog box

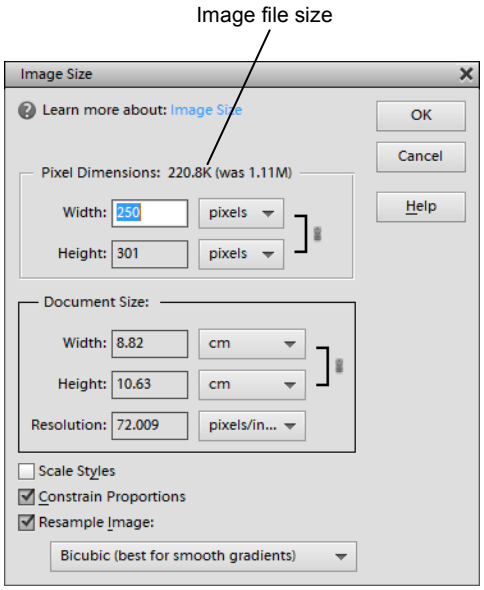

Figure 11 Smaller image dimensions can reduce file size

Recomposing images

You can use the Recompose command to resize an image without distorting content. You can also choose to protect or remove particular parts of the image during the recomposition process.

Use the Recompose options bar (**Figure 12**) to determine how the recomposition process proceeds.

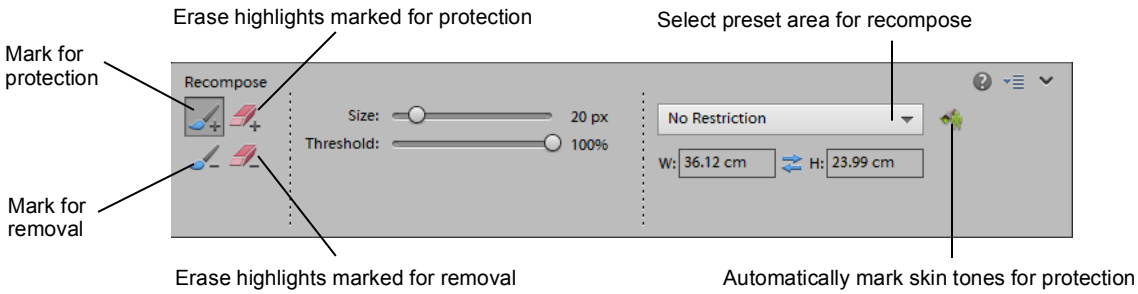

Figure 12 Recompose options panel

To recompose an image:

1. Open the image in the Editor.
2. Select the Recompose tool.

   Note: If the Recompose tool is not visible, click and hold the arrow in the lower-right corner of the Crop tool to make the Recompose tool visible. If the Recompose tool information message appears, click OK to close it.
3. In the options bar, click Mark For Protection and drag to highlight areas in the image that you want to protect (**Figure 13**).
4. Click Mark For Removal and highlight areas in the image that you want to remove.

Figure 13 Areas marked for protection and removal

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5. Drag the selection handles to set the target area for the recomposed image (**Figure 14**).

   Photoshop Elements recomposes the image (**Figure 15**). Observe that the diver remains in the picture even though the selection line was dragged below the diver. This is because the diver was marked for protection. Similarly, the coral in the lower left of the image has been removed, because it was marked for removal.

6. Click the green check mark to accept the change.

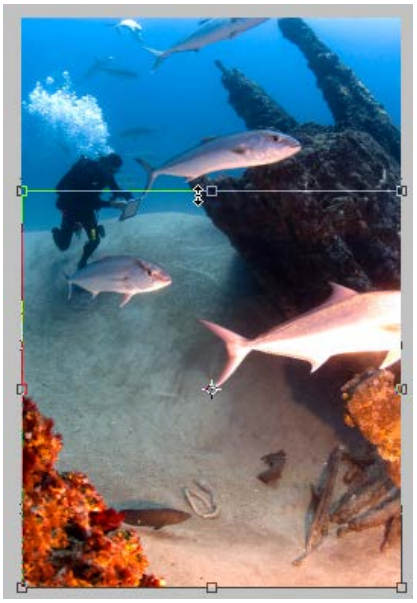

Figure 14 Target area for recomposed image

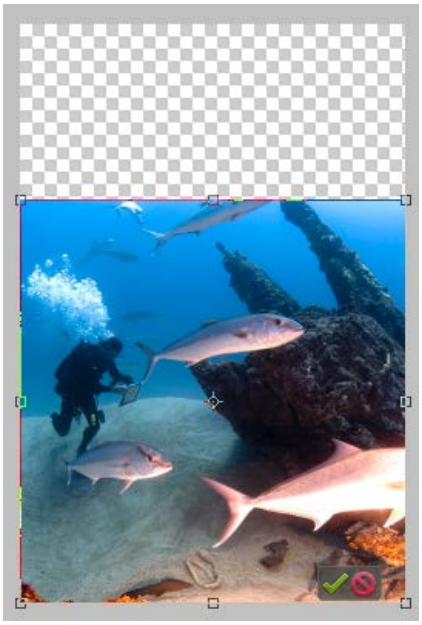

Figure 15 Recomposed image