LEARNING MADE EASY

Photoshop® Elements 2021

for dummies®
A Wiley Brand

Get instant results with one-click fixes

Correct contrast, color, clarity, and composition

Edit and enhance images with Adobe® Camera Raw

Barbara Obermeier
Ted Padova

Photoshop® Elements 2021

by Barbara Obermeier and Ted Padova

for dummies®
A Wiley Brand

Photoshop® Elements 2021 For Dummies®

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Introduction

We are now in version 19 (Photoshop Elements 2021) of Photoshop Elements. Adobe has offered yet more wonderful features and improvements to the program.

Before we delve into some of the new features added to Photoshop Elements 2021, we want to offer our readers an apology. For several past revisions of this book, we avoided some important correction features of the program and replaced them with some general information on photography. After looking over some of the reviews of our last book on Elements, we noticed a number of readers wanted more details related to adjusting brightness, contrast, and color. Therefore, we scrubbed the old Chapter 2 related to taking photos and replaced it with the completely new Chapter 7, in which we cover using the Camera Raw Editor. Again, our apologies for the oversight, and we hope this change appeals to those who wanted more related to editing photos.

About This Book

This book is an effort to provide as much of a comprehensive view of a wildly feature-rich program as we can. Additionally, this book is written for a cross-platform audience. If you're a Mac user, you'll find all you need to work in Elements 2021 for the Mac, exactly the same as when we refer to using Elements on Windows.

In Photoshop Elements 2021, you won't find a huge number of new features. There are a few, but Adobe has again spent much time in this release on improvements and on additions to existing features. Adobe offers a few new Guided Edits as well as a new creation called Quote Graphic, which we cover in Chapter 17.

New Guided Edits include Moving Photos, which lets you select subjects and objects in a photo, move and resize the selection, or duplicate, move, and resize.

The other new Guided Edits include Perfect Landscape, which lets you perfect landscape photos, and the Creative Duotone effect, which lets you create true duotone (two-color) images.

There's also a new creation added in the Create panel. The Quote Graphic item enables you to easily add quotes and phrases to images.

Adobe has included a new option in the Adjust Facial Features dialog box you access by choosing Enhance➪Adjust Facial Features. The addition is the Face Tilt option, which lets you turn faces to face the cameras using some adjustment sliders.

Another new feature we're sure many Elements users will enjoy is a more efficient way to back up catalogs. If you have a huge catalog with a lot of photos, Elements will take a long time to back up the Organizer. In many cases, you don't need to back up photos; you may want only to back up tags, people, places, and events. Now the new Backup Catalog dialog box contains an option for backing up everything except the photos.

Throughout this book, especially in step lists, we point you to menus for keyboard commands. For accessing a menu command, you may see something like this:

Choose File➪Get Photos➪From Files and Folders.

You click the File menu to open its drop-down menu, click the menu command labeled Get Photos, and then choose the command From Files and Folders from the submenu that appears. It's that simple.

We also refer to *context menus*, which jump up at your cursor position and show you a menu of options related to whatever you're doing at the time. To open a context menu, just right-click the mouse, or Control-click on a Mac if you don't have a two-button mouse.

When we mention that keys need to be pressed on your keyboard, the text looks like this:

Press Alt+Shift+Ctrl+S (Option+Shift+⌘+S on the Mac).

In this case, you hold down the Alt key on Windows or the Option key on the Mac, then the Shift key, then the Control key on Windows or the ⌘ key on the Mac, and then press the S key. Then, release all the keys at the same time.

Icons Used in This Book

In the margins throughout this book, you see icons indicating that something is important.

NEW

This icon informs you that this item is a new feature in Photoshop Elements 2021.

WARNING

Pay particular attention when you see the Warning icon. This icon indicates possible side-effects or damage to your image that you might encounter when performing certain operations in Elements.

REMEMBER

This icon is a heads-up for something you may want to commit to memory. Usually, it tells you about a shortcut for a repetitive task that can save you time.

TIP

A Tip tells you about an alternative method for a procedure, giving you a shortcut, a work-around, or some other type of helpful information.

TECHNICAL STUFF

Elements is a computer program, after all. No matter how hard we try to simplify our explanation of features, we can't entirely avoid some technical information. If a topic is a little on the technical side, we use this icon to alert you that we're moving into a complex subject. You won't see many of these icons in the book because we try our best to give you the details in nontechnical terms.

Beyond the Book

In addition to what you're reading right now, this product also comes with a free, online Cheat Sheet that includes a detailed look at the Elements photo-editing workspace, Tool Panel shortcuts, tricks for selecting objects, and more. To get this Cheat Sheet, simply go to `www.dummies.com` and type *Photoshop Elements 2021 For Dummies Cheat Sheet* in the Search box.

Where to Go from Here

Try to spend a little time reading through the chapters in Part 1. After you know how to edit and save photos, feel free to jump around and pay special attention to the cross-referenced chapters, in case you get stuck on a concept. After exploring the Elements Photo Editor, look over Part 2, where we talk about organizing and searching photos. When it comes to editing photos, look over Chapter 7 carefully.

Everything begins with adjusting photos for brightness, contrast, and color. In Chapter 7, you learn that using the Camera Raw Editor is your first stop when editing a photo for any kind of output. If you're ready to jump into more advanced tasks, check out Parts 3 and 4, where you learn how to make selections; layer images and effects together; add filters and type; and much, much more.

We hope you have much success and enjoyment in using Adobe Photoshop Elements 2021, and it's our sincere wish that the pages ahead provide you with an informative and helpful view of the program.

1

Getting Started with Photoshop Elements 2021

IN THIS PART . . .

Open the Photo Editor and make quick and easy edits to one of your photos in Quick mode.

Select the best file format when you save your image.

Tour the Photo Editor interface so that you know how to switch among images and navigate the many panels and options.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Opening the Home screen
- Starting the Photo Editor
- Opening, editing, sharing, and saving a photo
- Using Undo History
- Finding help
- Saving your files

Chapter 1

Getting Started with Image Editing

Image editing is incredibly fun, especially with a tool like Photoshop Elements, which enables you to modify, combine, and even draw your own images to your imagination's content. To get the most out of Elements, you need to understand some basic technical concepts, but like most people, you probably want to jump in, play around, and basically just get started right away.

You're in luck: In Quick mode, Elements helps you make basic edits to your photos, like revealing your child's face darkened by a baseball cap's shadow or cropping out the gigantic trash can on the left edge of your otherwise perfect landscape shot. In this chapter, we help you jump-start your image-editing skills by guiding you through Quick mode and how to share photos online, retrace your steps, save your edits, and more.

Getting Familiar with the Home Screen

After installing Elements, launch the Elements application, and you arrive at the Home screen (or Hub, as Adobe calls it), shown in Figure 1-1.

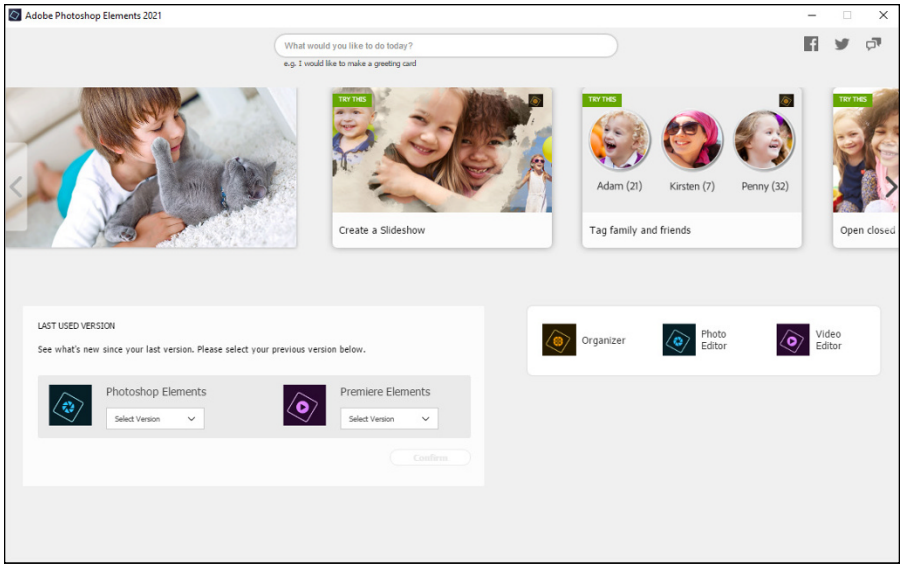

FIGURE 1-1: The Photoshop Elements Home screen.

NEW

From the Home screen, you have the following options:

- **Search (What would you like to do today?):** At the top of the window, you can search for a task and have help returned to you.
- **Facebook, Twitter, and Help:** Click one of the three respective buttons in the top-right corner to share files on Facebook and Twitter and to get some help using Elements.
- **Try This/What's New/Guided Edits/Make Creations:** The individual cards appearing at the top of the Home screen offer options for trying new tasks, exploring new features, performing a Guided Edit (Guided Edit is a step-by-step set of instructions to perform an edit), and a quick launch to make a new creation. When you mouse over a card, a link is shown where you perform the task in question.
- **Last Used Version:** Below this title, you see Photoshop Elements, Premiere Elements, and two drop-down lists. Click a version in the Photoshop Elements drop-down list and choose a version. You see some details on what was new in the respective version.
- **More:** At the right side of the cards along the top of the Home screen, you see a right chevron (right arrow). Click the arrow, and the cards scroll right, offering more choices. Click several times to scroll through all the cards.

- **Application Launcher:** Click one of the three icons to launch the Elements Photo Editor, the Organizer, or Video Editor (Adobe Premier Elements must be installed to launch this item).
- **Recent Files:** Click an image in the Recent Files list, and the file opens in the Photo Editor.

Launching the Photo Editor

Photoshop Elements has two separate components:

- **The Organizer** is where you manage photos. It's full of tools for tagging, rating, sorting, and finding your images. Part 2 helps you start using the Organizer.
- **The Photo Editor** is where you correct photos for brightness and color, add effects, repair images, and so on.

In this chapter, you work in the Photo Editor to make basic edits to a photo.

Here's how to start Elements and open the Photo Editor:

1. **Double-click the Photoshop Elements shortcut on your desktop or in your Applications folder (Mac) to launch the Home screen.**
2. **Click the Photo Editor button shown in the Home screen (refer to Figure 1-1).**

   The Photo Editor workspace loads and appears, as shown in Figure 1-2. By default, you see the Quick tab selected at the top of the Photo Editor workspace, which means you're in Quick mode (or right where you want to be for the purposes of this chapter). Quick mode offers a limited number of tools for adjusting brightness, contrast, color, and sharpness.

On the right side of the workspace, you see the Adjustments panel docked in an area dubbed the Panel Bin. When in any one of the three editing modes (Quick, Guided, Expert), you find different panels always on the right side of the window. On the left side of the workspace, you see a Tools panel. Interacting with the items in the Panel Bin and using tools in the Tools panel provides you with an enormous number of options for editing, improving, and stylizing your pictures.

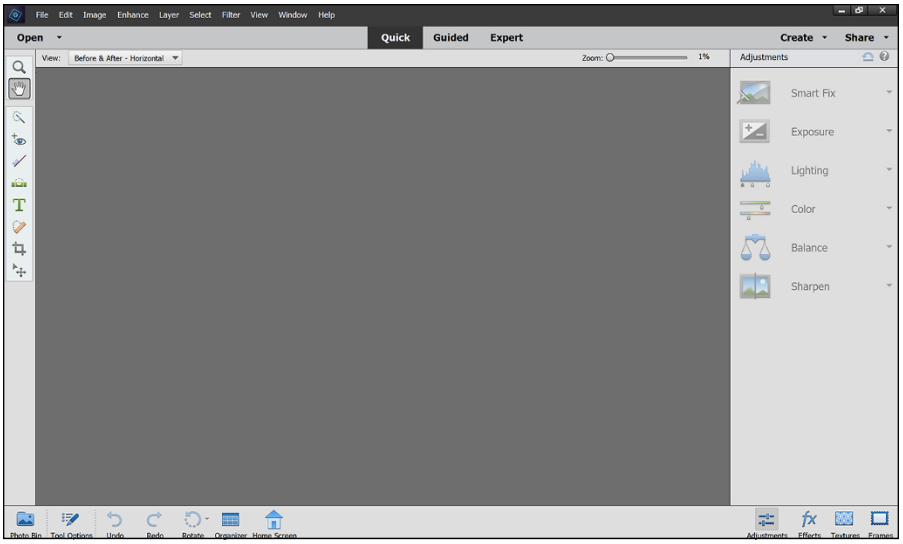

FIGURE 1-2: The default Photo Editor workspace with the Quick tab selected.

Making Basic Edits in Quick Mode

For beginning users, the Quick mode in the Photo Editor is both powerful and easy to use. Follow these steps to make some simple changes to an image:

1. **Open the Photo Editor and make sure the Quick tab is selected at the top.**
2. **Choose File ➪ Open.**

   If Elements is your default editing application, you can also double-click your photo file in Windows Explorer or the Mac Finder, and the file opens in Elements.
3. **In the Open dialog box that appears, navigate your hard drive to locate the file you want to open, select the file, and click Open.**
4. **From the View drop-down list (in the upper left of the image window), choose Before & After – Horizontal, as shown in Figure 1-3.**
5. **Make edits to your photo.**

   Here's an introduction to two simple edits you can make in Quick mode:

   - **Apply a Smart Fix:** Click Smart Fix in the Panel Bin to see the options. To begin with, click Auto at the bottom of the Smart Fix panel. At the top left of the window, you find options for viewing by opening the drop-down menu. Choose After Only or choose Before & After (Horizontal or Vertical) to see before and after views.

     Several items are listed in the Panel Bin below the Smart Fix option, as shown in Figure 1-4. Click an item to expand it and move the sliders or click

the thumbnail images to tweak the overall brightness, contrast, and color. In many cases there isn't a right or wrong adjustment. Play with the options to bring it close to your overall vision for the picture. For a more in-depth look at correcting photos in Quick mode, flip to Chapter 10.

TIP

Each of the Quick Fix options provides you with thumbnail previews showing you the result of a given edit. For a quick preview of an editing task, mouse over a Smart Fix thumbnail to see what the edit will look like when it is applied.

- **Crop the photo:** In the Tools panel on the left side of the window, click the Crop tool. You immediately see a rectangle on top of the photo. Drag the sides to crop the image to your liking. When finished, click the green check mark, as shown in Figure 1-4, to accept your edit.

REMEMBER

When making any one of a huge number of edits to your pictures, you often see icons on top of the image, similar to what's shown in Figure 1-4. The green check mark accepts the edit you're making at the time the icons appear. The circle with a diagonal line is the Cancel button. Click this button when you don't want to apply the recent edit.

TIP

At the bottom of the Editor window, you see some hints Elements gives you for crop suggestions. Click one of the options to employ the respective crop.

6. **Choose File ➪ Save As and, in the Save As dialog box that opens, provide a new name for the photo. Click Save.**

Note: When you use Save As and give your image a new name, you don't destroy your original image. You save a copy of the original with the new edits applied. For more on saving files, see the section "Saving Files with Purpose," later in this chapter.

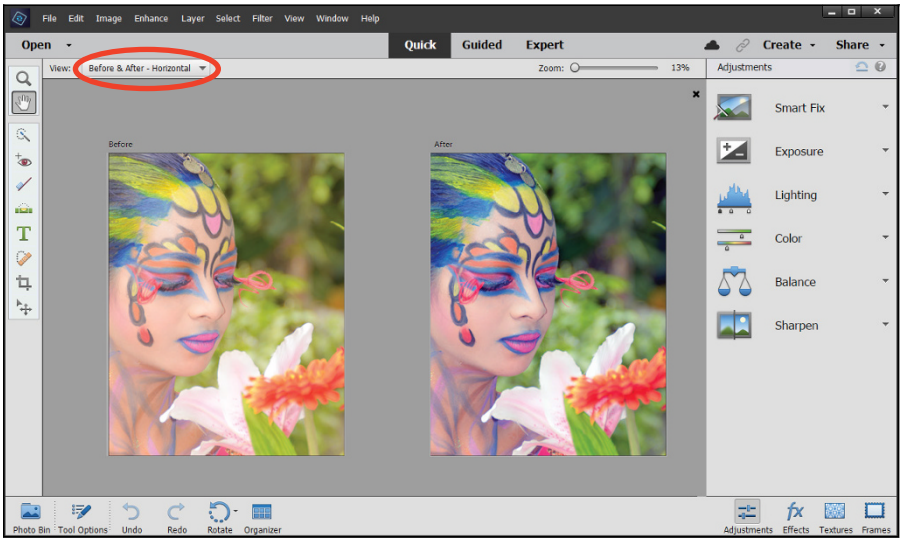

FIGURE 1-3: The before and after views in Quick mode.

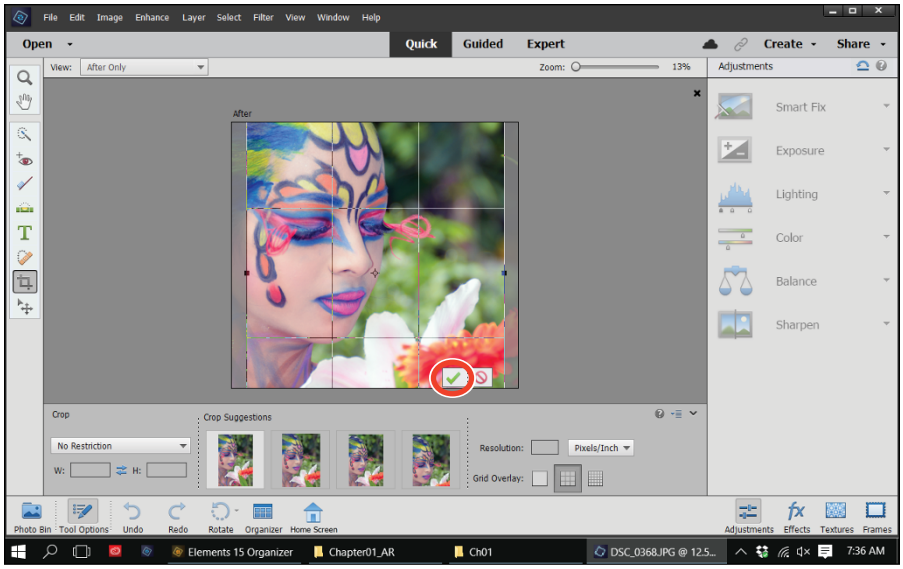

FIGURE 1-4: The Crop tool sized on a photo.

Sharing a Photo

After you edit your photo, you can print the photo to share with family and friends or post the photo on a social network site.

In previous versions of Elements, you could upload directly from within Facebook. Now, in the latest version, you need to edit the file, save it, and then open your Facebook account to upload the file. Here's how to do it:

1. **Prepare the photo you want to upload to Facebook.**

   Typically, digital cameras take photos sized very large — too large for an image that your friends and family will want to download quickly and view via Facebook on a computer screen or a mobile device. To adjust your image so it's the right size and resolution for viewing online, follow these steps:

   (a) **Choose Image ➪ Resize ➪ Image Size.**

   (b) **In the Image Size dialog box that appears, enter your desired width (or height).**

   Either Width or Height is fine because the image will maintain correct proportions by choosing either. A width of 720 pixels, 960 pixels, or 2,048 pixels works well.

REMEMBER

Facebook recommends that supported sizes for regular photos are widths of 720 pixels, 960 pixels, and 2,048 pixels, with file sizes no more than 100KB — especially if you have text in the cover photo. When you save as JPEG, the files are compressed, and you'll find the larger size to be within

Facebook recommendations. However, you don't have to be too concerned about staying within Facebook recommendations. You can upload images much larger than 100KB, but the uploads and screen refreshes will take longer. Just be certain to stay within 100 pixels if you have text on a cover photo.

(c) **Select the Resample Image check box if for some reason the box is not selected.**

(d) **Type either** 72 **or** 144 **in the Resolution box.**

For screen viewing only, 72 ppi is fine. However, if you want your friends to print the image, 144 is a better choice. You can use either resolution. Be sure the file size is no larger than 100KB.

The image is sized to a workable size for Facebook. Click OK when finished editing in the Image Size dialog box.

2. **Choose File ➪ Save As ➪ JPEG to save the file as a JPEG.**

Note the location where you save the file on your hard drive. (JPEG is one of many file formats that Elements supports.)

3. **Log in to your Facebook account.**

4. **Click Photo/Video.**

Locate the saved file and upload it to Facebook.

Your photo is added to your Facebook account, as shown in Figure 1-5.

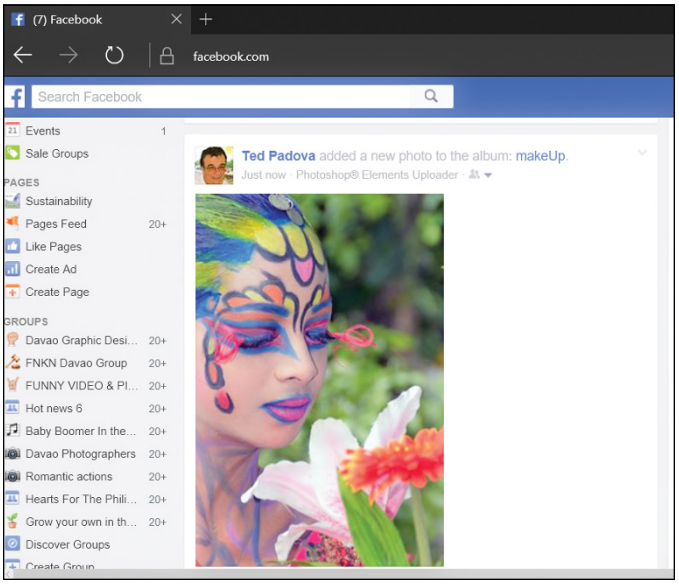

FIGURE 1-5: An edited photo uploaded to Facebook.

Retracing Your Steps

In Elements, Undo is a favorite command for both beginners and experienced users alike. If you don't like a change to your image, you simply choose Edit➪Undo or press the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+Z (⌘+Z on the Mac).

Because the process of trial and error (and thus the ability to undo your work) is so important to making your image look just right, Elements also offers ways to undo that are much more sophisticated than simply reverting to the last view. In the following sections, we introduce you to these more sophisticated tools.

Using the History panel

On the History panel, you see a record of your changes in an editing session. And from this record, you can undo your changes from any step in an editing sequence. To work with the History panel, you must be in Expert mode. After you click Expert at the top of the Photo Editor, here's how undoing with the History panel works:

1. **Click Expert in the Photo Editor and choose Window➪History.**

   The History panel displays a record of each step you made in the current editing session, as shown in Figure 1-6.

2. **To undo one or more edits, click any item on the History panel.**

   Elements reverts your image to that last edit. All edits that follow the selected item are grayed out.

3. **If you want to bring back the edits, click any grayed-out step on the panel.**

   Elements reinstates your edits up to that level. If you make a new edit after going back a few steps, the grayed-out steps disappear.

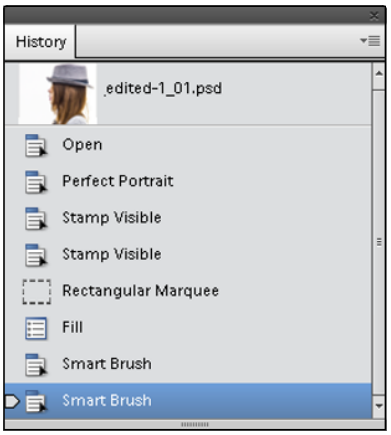

FIGURE 1-6:
The History panel.

REMEMBER

All your steps are listed on the History panel if you remain in Elements and don't close the file. When the file is closed, all history information is lost.

TIP

Storing all this editing history can affect Elements' performance. If your computer slows to a snail's pace when you're using Elements, check out the following options:

- **Choose Edit ➪ Clear ➪ Clear History.** Elements flushes all the recorded history and frees some precious memory, which often enables you to work faster. Just be sure you're okay with losing all the history in the History panel thus far.
- **Eliminate Clipboard data from memory.** To do so, choose Edit ➪ Clear ➪ Clipboard Contents or Edit ➪ Clear ➪ All.
- **Restore the number of history states stored to the default of 50.** In Elements Performance Preferences, you can change the number of history states. You can ratchet this number up to 1,000 if you like, but realize that the more history states you record, the more memory Elements requires.

Reverting to the last save

While you edit photos in Elements, plan on saving your work regularly. Each time you save in an editing session, the History panel preserves the list of edits you make until you hit the maximum number or close the file.

If you save, perform more edits, and then want to return to the last saved version of your document, Elements provides you with a quick, efficient way to do so. If you choose Edit ➪ Revert, Elements eliminates your new edits and takes you back to the last time you saved your file.

When you choose Revert, *Revert* appears in the History panel. You can eliminate the Revert command from the History panel by right-clicking (Windows) or Ctrl-clicking (on a Mac with a one-button mouse) the Revert item and choosing Delete from the contextual menu that appears.

Getting a Helping Hand

You probably bought this book because you're not a fan of sifting through Help files and want an expert guide to image editing. We share everything a beginner needs to get started in Elements, but Elements is too sophisticated a program to cover completely in the pages we have here. You may also need some quick help if you don't have this book nearby.

Whenever you need a hand, know that you can find valuable help information quickly and easily within Elements itself. If you're stuck on understanding a feature, ample help documents are only a mouse click away and can help you overcome some frustrating moments.

Your first stop is the Help menu, where you can find several commands that offer information:

- **Photoshop Elements Help:** Choose Help ➪ Photoshop Elements Help or press the F1 key (Windows) or the Help key (on a Mac with an extended keyboard) to open the Elements Help file. You can type a search topic and press Enter to display a list of search results.
- **Getting Started:** From the Help menu, choose this item for tips and information on getting started in Elements.
- **Key Concepts:** While you read this book, if we use a term that you don't completely understand, choose Help ➪ Key Concepts. A web page opens in your default web browser and provides many web pages with definitions of terms and concepts.
- **Support:** From the Help menu, this command launches your default web browser and takes you to the Adobe website (`www.adobe.com`), where you can find information about Elements, problems reported by users, and some work-around methods for getting a job done. You can find additional web-based help information by clicking Photoshop Elements Online and Online Learning Resources. The vast collection of web pages on Adobe's website offers assistance, tips and techniques, and solutions to many problems that come with editing images. Be sure to spend some time browsing these web pages.
- **Video Tutorials:** Choose Help ➪ Video Tutorials to open a web page where videos for common tasks are hosted on Adobe's website.
- **Forum:** Choose Help ➪ Forum to explore user comments and questions with answers to many common problems.

TIP

Tooltips can be another helpful resource. While you move your cursor around tools and panels, pause a moment before clicking the mouse. A slight delay in your actions produces a *tooltip*, which is a small box that describes the item your mouse is pointing to. Elements provides this sort of dynamic help when you pause the cursor before moving to another location.

You can also find help by searching in the Home screen, as mentioned in the "Getting Familiar with the Home Screen" section, earlier in this chapter.