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image-editing concepts

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and sharpen your images

Discover how to make  
simple one-click fixes

**Barbara Obermeier**  
**Ted Padova**





# Photoshop® Elements 2025

**by Barbara Obermeier and  
Ted Padova**

**for  
dummies®**  
A Wiley Brand

## Photoshop® Elements 2025 For Dummies®

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# Contents at a Glance

<b>Introduction</b>	1
<b>Part 1: Getting Started with Photoshop Elements 2025</b>	5
CHAPTER 1: Exploring the Photo Editor	7
CHAPTER 2: Getting Familiar with the Organizer	33
CHAPTER 3: Organizing Your Pictures	47
CHAPTER 4: Viewing and Finding Your Images	57
<b>Part 2: Selecting and Correcting Photos</b>	71
CHAPTER 5: Editing Camera Raw Images	73
CHAPTER 6: Making and Modifying Selections	97
CHAPTER 7: Working with Layers	129
CHAPTER 8: Simple Image Makeovers	145
CHAPTER 9: Correcting Contrast, Color, and Clarity	181
<b>Part 3: Exploring Your Inner Artist</b>	223
CHAPTER 10: Playing with Filters, Effects, Styles, and More	225
CHAPTER 11: Drawing, Painting, and Typing	255
<b>Part 4: Printing, Creating, and Sharing</b>	287
CHAPTER 12: Getting It on Paper	289
CHAPTER 13: Sharing Your Work	297
CHAPTER 14: Making Creations	303
<b>Part 5: The Part of Tens</b>	315
CHAPTER 15: The Ten Best Guided Edits	317
CHAPTER 16: Ten (or So) More Project Ideas	335
<b>Index</b>	341



# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
Adobe Photoshop Elements 2025 New Features	1
About This Book	2
Icons Used in This Book	3
Beyond the Book	4
Where to Go from Here	4
 <b>PART 1: GETTING STARTED WITH PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 2025</b>	 <b>5</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: Exploring the Photo Editor</b>	<b>7</b>
Examining the Photo Editor	7
Examining the image window	11
Uncovering the contextual menus	15
Selecting the tools	15
Selecting from the Tool Options	17
Playing with panels	19
Using the Photo Bin	21
Creating different views of an image	22
Viewing filenames	23
Using Photo Bin Actions	23
Using Some Creative Features	23
Using Guided Edits	23
Working with Adobe Stock images	24
Searching Guided Edits	26
Controlling the Editing Environment	26
Launching and navigating Preferences	26
Checking out all the Preferences panes	28
Perusing preset libraries	30
 <b>CHAPTER 2: Getting Familiar with the Organizer</b>	 <b>33</b>
Touring the Organizer	34
Organizing Photos and Media on a Hard Drive	37
Adding Images to the Organizer	38
Adding files from folders and removable media	39
Downloading camera images with the Elements Downloader	40
Importing additional photos from folders	42
Navigating the Media Browser	44
Setting Organizer Preferences	45

<b>CHAPTER 3:</b>	<b>Organizing Your Pictures</b> .....	47
	Organizing Groups of Images with Tags .....	47
	Rating Images with Stars .....	50
	Adding Images to an Album .....	51
	Creating an album .....	51
	Editing an album .....	53
	Adding People in the Media Browser .....	54
<b>CHAPTER 4:</b>	<b>Viewing and Finding Your Images</b> .....	57
	Cataloging Files .....	57
	Using the Catalog Manager .....	58
	Working with catalogs .....	59
	Backing up your catalog .....	60
	Switching to a Different View .....	62
	Viewing Photos in Memories (Slideshow) .....	63
	Searching for Photos .....	65
	Using Search .....	65
	Searching by history .....	66
	Searching metadata .....	66
	Searching similarities .....	68
	<b>PART 2: SELECTING AND CORRECTING PHOTOS</b> .....	71
<b>CHAPTER 5:</b>	<b>Editing Camera Raw Images</b> .....	73
	Launching the Camera Raw Editor .....	73
	Understanding Camera Raw .....	74
	Learning Raw file format attributes .....	75
	Opening images in the Camera Raw Editor .....	76
	Getting Familiar with the Raw Editor .....	77
	Getting Familiar with the Panels .....	81
	Using the Basic panel .....	81
	Sharpening and reducing noise .....	85
	Using the Calibration panel .....	87
	Working with Filmstrips .....	87
	Working with Profiles .....	89
	Looking at the Adobe Camera Raw profiles .....	90
	Managing profiles .....	91
	Creating a Favorites list .....	91
	Opening Non-Raw Images in the Camera Raw Editor .....	92
	Changing Image Defaults .....	93
	Working with XML Files and Preferences .....	93
	Changing program defaults .....	93
	Using Save Options .....	95
	Using sidecar files .....	96



<b>CHAPTER 6:</b>	<b>Making and Modifying Selections</b>	97
	Defining Selections	97
	Creating Rectangular and Elliptical Selections	98
	Perfecting squares and circles with Shift and Alt (Option on the Mac)	100
	Applying Marquee options.	100
	Making Freeform Selections with the Lasso Tools	102
	Selecting with the Lasso tool	103
	Getting straight with the Polygonal Lasso tool	105
	Working Wizardry with the Magic Wand	106
	Talking about Tolerance	106
	Wielding the Wand to select	107
	Modifying Your Selections	109
	Adding to, subtracting from, and intersecting a selection.	110
	Avoiding key collisions	110
	Painting with the Selection Brush	111
	Painting with the Quick Selection Tool	113
	Selecting with the Auto Selection Tool	115
	Selecting Your Subject, Background, or Sky with One-Click Selecting	117
	Fine-Tuning with the Refine Selection Brush.	118
	Working with the Cookie Cutter Tool	120
	Eliminating with the Eraser Tools	122
	The Eraser tool.	122
	The Background Eraser tool.	123
	The Magic Eraser tool	125
	Using the Select Menu	125
	Selecting all or nothing.	125
	Refining the edges of a selection	126
<b>CHAPTER 7:</b>	<b>Working with Layers</b>	129
	Getting to Know Layers.	129
	Converting a background to a layer	130
	Anatomy of the Layers panel.	131
	Using the Layer and Select menus	134
	Tackling Layer Basics.	136
	Creating a new layer from scratch	136
	Using Layer via Copy and Layer via Cut	138
	Duplicating layers	138
	Dragging and dropping layers	139
	Moving a Layer's Content.	139
	Transforming Layers.	140
	Flattening and Merging Layers	141
	Flattening layers.	142
	Merging layers	142

<b>CHAPTER 8:</b>	<b>Simple Image Makeovers</b>	145
	Cropping and Straightening Images	145
	Cutting away with the Crop tool	146
	Fixing distortion with the Perspective Crop tool	148
	Cropping with a selection border	150
	Straightening images	150
	Recomposing Images	151
	Employing One-Step Auto Fixes	154
	Auto Smart Fix	154
	Auto Smart Tone	155
	Auto Levels	156
	Auto Contrast	157
	Auto Haze Removal	157
	Auto Color Correction	157
	Auto Sharpen	158
	Auto Red Eye Fix	159
	Editing in Quick Mode	160
	Fixing Small Imperfections with Tools	164
	Cloning with the Clone Stamp tool	164
	Retouching with the Healing Brush	167
	Zeroing in with the Spot Healing Brush	169
	Eliminating objects with the new Remove tool	170
	Repositioning with the Content-Aware Move tool	172
	Lightening and darkening with Dodge and Burn tools	174
	Smudging away rough spots	175
	Softening with the Blur tool	177
	Focusing with the Sharpen tool	178
	Sponging color on and off	179
<b>CHAPTER 9:</b>	<b>Correcting Contrast, Color, and Clarity</b>	181
	Editing Your Photos Using a Logical Workflow	182
	Adjusting Lighting	182
	Fixing lighting with Shadows/Highlights	183
	Using Brightness/Contrast	184
	Pinpointing proper contrast with Levels	185
	Adjusting Color	187
	Removing color casts automatically	188
	Adjusting with Hue/Saturation	189
	Eliminating color with Remove Color	190
	Switching colors with Replace Color	191
	Changing an object's color	193
	Correcting with Color Curves	195
	Adjusting skin tones	197
	Defringing layers	198

Eliminating haze. . . . .	199
Adjusting color temperature with photo filters . . . . .	200
Mapping your colors. . . . .	201
Adjusting Clarity. . . . .	202
Removing noise, artifacts, dust, and scratches. . . . .	203
Blurring when you need to. . . . .	204
Sharpening for better focus. . . . .	207
Opening closed eyes. . . . .	209
Colorizing a photo . . . . .	211
Smoothing skin . . . . .	213
Adjusting facial features . . . . .	214
Moving Overlays . . . . .	214
Moving Photos . . . . .	217
Moving Elements . . . . .	217
Working Intelligently with the Smart Brush Tools . . . . .	219

## **PART 3: EXPLORING YOUR INNER ARTIST** . . . . . 223

### **CHAPTER 10: Playing with Filters, Effects, Styles, and More** . . . . . 225

Having Fun with Filters . . . . .	225
Applying filters . . . . .	226
Corrective or destructive filters . . . . .	227
One-step or multistep filters . . . . .	227
Working in the Filter Gallery . . . . .	228
Distorting with the Liquify filter. . . . .	229
Correcting Camera Distortion . . . . .	232
Exploring Elements' Unique Filters . . . . .	233
Creating a comic . . . . .	234
Getting graphic . . . . .	235
Using the Pen and Ink filter . . . . .	236
Dressing Up with Photo and Text Effects. . . . .	237
Adding Shadows, Glows, and More . . . . .	240
Applying styles . . . . .	241
Working with styles . . . . .	242
Using the Graphics panel . . . . .	243
Mixing It Up with Blending Modes . . . . .	244
General blending modes . . . . .	245
Darken blending modes . . . . .	245
Lighten blending modes . . . . .	245
Lighting blending modes . . . . .	245
Inverter blending modes . . . . .	245
HSL blending modes . . . . .	249
Using Photomerge. . . . .	250
Photomerge Panorama . . . . .	250
Combine Photos . . . . .	253

<b>CHAPTER 11:</b>	<b>Drawing, Painting, and Typing</b>	255
	Choosing Color	255
	Working with the Color Picker	256
	Dipping into the Color Swatches panel	257
	Sampling with the Eyedropper tool	259
	Getting Artsy with the Pencil and Brush Tools	260
	Drawing with the Pencil tool	260
	Painting with the Brush tool	262
	Using the Impressionist Brush	264
	Filling and Outlining Selections	266
	Fill 'er up	266
	Outlining with the Stroke command	267
	Splashing on Color with the Paint Bucket Tool	268
	Working with Gradients and Patterns	269
	Applying a preset gradient	270
	Applying a preset pattern	271
	Creating Shapes of All Sorts	272
	Drawing a shape	273
	Editing shapes	274
	Creating Type	275
	Specifying Type Options	278
	Editing Text	280
	Enhancing Type	281
	Adjusting type opacity	281
	Applying filters to your type	281
	Painting your type with color and gradients	283
	Warping your type	284
	Using Text Overlay Templates	285
	<b>PART 4: PRINTING, CREATING, AND SHARING</b>	287
<b>CHAPTER 12:</b>	<b>Getting It on Paper</b>	289
	Getting Pictures Ready for Printing	290
	Working with Color Printer Profiles	291
	Printing a photo with the printer managing color	292
	Printing a photo with Elements managing color	293
	Printing a picture package or contact sheet	294
	Getting Familiar with the Print Dialog Box	295
	Using the Prints options	295
<b>CHAPTER 13:</b>	<b>Sharing Your Work</b>	297
	Using the Share Panel	297
	Emailing photos	299
	Working with Adobe Premiere Elements	300
	Sharing your photos on social networks	300

<b>CHAPTER 14:</b>	<b>Making Creations</b>	303
	Checking Out the Create Panel	303
	Grasping Creation-Assembly Basics	306
	Creating a Quote Graphic	309
	Creating a Memories Video	312
	Creating a PDF Slideshow	313
	Making Additional Creations	313
<b>PART 5:</b>	<b>THE PART OF TENS</b>	315
<b>CHAPTER 15:</b>	<b>The Ten Best Guided Edits</b>	317
	Correct Skin Tone	317
	Sharpen	319
	Object Removal	320
	Perfect Portrait	322
	Replace Background	324
	Remove a Color Cast	327
	Levels	328
	Resize Your Photo	330
	Recompose	331
	Move & Scale Object	333
<b>CHAPTER 16:</b>	<b>Ten (or So) More Project Ideas</b>	335
	Screen Savers	335
	Flyers, Ads, and Online Auctions	336
	Clothes, Hats, and More	337
	Posters	338
	Household and Business Inventories	338
	Project Documentation	338
	School Reports and Projects	339
	Blogs	339
	Wait — There's More	339
<b>INDEX</b>		341



# Introduction

**T**his book is about Photoshop Elements 2025. Quite a few of the past Photoshop Elements upgrades dealt with improvements in performance and modifications to the user interface. This new upgrade to Photoshop Elements focuses more on robust new features and much less on performance and interface changes.

Another big change in terms of *Photoshop Elements 2025 For Dummies* is our modification of the material in this book. We decided to offer you fewer printed pages to help reduce the cost of the book. Rather than rehash a lot of old material in printed form, we point you to the Elements Help menu when you need more information on a given topic. When you need additional information, open the Help Menu and choose Photoshop Elements Help.

## Adobe Photoshop Elements 2025 New Features

If you are an experienced user of Photoshop Elements and have upgraded the program through several recent versions, you no doubt know many of Adobe's additions for AI features. Adobe calls its version of artificial intelligence Adobe Sensei. We've seen some enhancements over the past several years for implementing Adobe Sensei features with tools and menu commands. In this new upgrade, you'll find some extraordinary and very welcome new AI features that include the following:

- » **ChatBot:** When you choose Help ⇨ Photoshop Elements Help, click the chat symbol in the lower-right corner of the window. This command opens an AI-generated chat window where you can interact with Adobe Virtual Assistant to get help.
- » **Change Object Color:** Users often seek to change the color of objects in photos using editing applications, for various purposes. The new Change Object Color feature helps users select an object and change its color.

- » **Quick Actions:** Quick Actions have been useful in exposing and giving the flavor of some powerful but hidden features in Photoshop Elements. Adobe continues to leverage a highly discoverable Quick Action panel to surface the suite of motion-in-photos related features. Four new Quick Actions have been added in Elements 2025.
- » **Updated content:** In Photoshop Elements 2025, you will find many updated and new textures and graphics.
- » **Remove tool:** You can use the new AI Remove tool to remove distracting objects in the photo.
- » **Elements Organizer: GIF Playback:** Double-click a GIF image in the Organizer to preview the GIF animation.
- » **Elements Organizer: Filter using Media Types:** Four new icons appear at the top of the Organizer Media Browser. Click one of the icons to filter media types associated with the selected icon.
- » **Elements Organizer: Sync Sorting Order:** You can now sync the sorting order in Albums to the same sorting order you select in the Organizer.
- » **Combine Photos:** The new Combine Photos feature helps users extract objects from multiple sources and apply them to the destination to create an output.
- » **Depth of Field filter:** The new AI-based Depth of Field filter helps users add realistic depth using a depth map and helps simulate the background blur or depth-of-field effect that a user gets from using a lens with a fast aperture.

## About This Book

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.

In this case, the command means to 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 Ctrl+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, this command means to hold down the Alt key on Windows or the Option key on the Mac, and then the Shift key, and then the Ctrl key on Windows or the ⌘ key on the Mac; then press the S key. You 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, as follows:



NEW

This icon informs you that this item is a new feature in Photoshop Elements 2025.



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 some information 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](http://www.dummies.com) and type **Photoshop Elements 2025 For Dummies Cheat Sheet** in the Search box.

## Where to Go from Here

Try to spend a little time reading through Chapter 1, Exploring the Photo Editor. 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. Look over Chapter 3, where we talk about organizing and searching photos. When it comes to editing photos, look over Chapter 5 carefully. Everything begins with adjusting photos for brightness, contrast, and color. In Chapter 5, 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 2 and 3, where you find out 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 2025, 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 2025**

### **IN THIS PART . . .**

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

Discover the basic features of the Organizer interface.

Import images from your computer, camera, or scanner into the Organizer.

Tag images with keywords, faces, places, or events so that you can easily find images.

View your pictures in the Media Browser and change views.

Use the Organizer's search features to pinpoint the images you need.

- » Examining the Editor workspace
- » Using the Photo Bin
- » Using Creative Effects
- » Launching Preferences
- » Customizing the presets

# Chapter **1**

## Exploring the Photo Editor

**P**hotoshop Elements has two workspaces: the Organizer, which we discuss in Chapter 2, and the Photo Editor, introduced in this chapter. You manage and arrange your photos in the Organizer, and you edit photos in the Photo Editor.

In this chapter, you look at the Photo Editor, where you can refine your photo-editing skills. You discover the Photo Editor's workspace in depth as well as how to access the Photo Editor's three editing modes: Quick, Guided, and Advanced. You access these three workspaces by clicking the tabs above the image window.

## Examining the Photo Editor

Before you begin editing photos, you'll find it helpful to look over the Photo Editor and figure out how to move around the workspace. When the Photo Editor is in Advanced mode, you find the following (as labeled in Figure 1-1):

- (A) Menu bar:** As does just about every other program you launch, Elements supports drop-down lists. The menus are logically constructed and identified to provide commands for working with your pictures (including many

commands that you don't find supported in tools and on panels). A quick glimpse at the menu names gives you a hint of what might be contained in a given menu list. Throughout this book, we point you to the menu bar whenever it's helpful. Most of the menu commands you find in Elements 2025 are the same as those found in earlier versions of Elements.

- (B) **Create panel:** When you open the Create panel and choose an option, you leave the current editing mode. For example, when in Advanced mode, choose Create ⇨ Photo Collage, and all the options that were available in the Photo Editor temporarily disappear when the Creation Wizard opens. To return to the Photo Editor, complete the creation or cancel the wizard. Chapter 14 guides you through the options in the Create panel.
- (C) **Photo Editor modes:** The Photo Editor has three modes. The Advanced mode is shown in Figure 1-1. You find a detailed look at Quick mode in Chapter 8. An introduction to Guided mode appears later in this chapter, in the “Using Some Creative Features” section. Part 2 and 3 of the book covers all the different features of Advanced mode, including making selections, creating composites from several images, drawing, adding text, and exploring creative flourishes with filters and effects.
- (D) **Features buttons:** On Windows, you find three buttons in the top-right corner. These buttons are used to (1) minimize the window; (2) maximize/minimize the window; and (3) close the application. On Apple Macintosh, the same three buttons appear, but they are placed in the top-left corner of the window.
- (E) **Share menu:** The Share menu works similarly to the Create menu and offers options for sharing your images. Chapter 13 focuses on the Share menu.
- (F) **Panel Bin:** Figure 1-1 shows the Layers panel. You change panels by clicking the icons at the bottom of the Panel Bin. (The icons are described in item S.) *Creations* (things you make) are also contained in the Panel Bin when you click the Create button (item E).
- (G) **Open menu:** When you have several files open in the Photo Editor, the Open menu is one way to switch among these files. To use this menu, click the down-pointing arrow adjacent to the Open button and, from the drop-down list, choose the image you want to move to the foreground. **Note:** The Open menu also offers you an option to create a new, blank file.

In Figure 1-1, several files are open, as indicated by the tabs at the top of the image window. You can also place an open file in the foreground in the image window in these other ways:

- Click a tab at the top of the image window to move the image to the foreground.
- Click a photo in the Photo Bin (see item K).
- Open the Window menu and choose a photo listed at the bottom of the menu.

- (H) File tabs:** Multiple photos opened in the Photo Editor appear in different tabs at the top of the window by default.

In technical-speak, this is a *docked* position, meaning that the photos are docked in the image window. You can click a tab and drag it down to *undock* the photo. To undock photos, you must change a preference setting in the General Preferences by checking Allow Floating Windows in Advanced mode. (See “Controlling the Editing Environment,” later in this chapter, for more on changing preferences.) Doing so makes the photo appear as a *floating window*. You might want to float windows when copying and pasting image data between two or more photos. You can also view all open files in a floating window without choosing All Floating from the Layout pop-up menu (item M). To use this menu command, you must first enable the Preferences to allow floating windows.

- (I) Tools panel:** Here you find the Photo Editor toolbox, where you click a tool and apply an edit to the photo. See “Selecting the tools” and “Selecting from the Tool Options,” later in this chapter.
- (J) Document Information Pop-up Menu:** Click to open a pop-up menu displaying document information.
- (K) Photo Bin/Tool Options:** Figure 1-1 shows the Photo Bin open. Click the Tool Options button, and a set of Tool Options replaces the Photo Bin. You can also open the Tool Options by clicking a tool in the Tools panel.

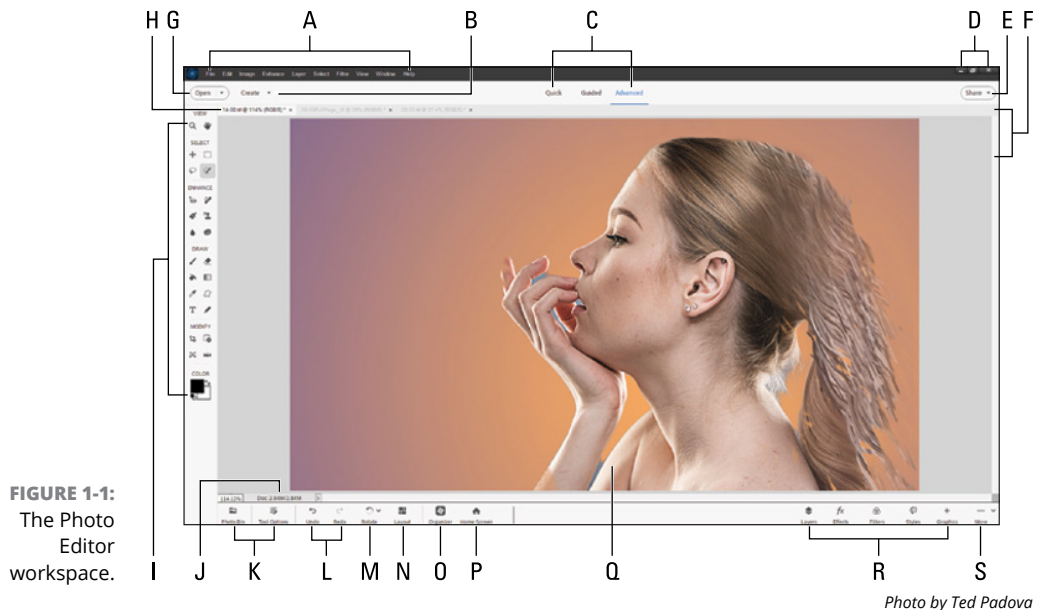
Tool Options enable you to specify how the selected tool works. For example, the Tool Options for the Brush tool, as shown in Figure 1-2, enable you to select from a few different brush styles, set the size of your brush, and much more. (You discover how the specific tools work in the relevant chapters later in this book. For example, you find out how the Brush tool works in Chapter 11, which covers drawing, painting, and typing.)

Each tool in the Tools panel supports various tool options. To return to the Photo Bin, click the Photo Bin button at the bottom left of the window.

- (L) Undo/Redo:** These commands are so useful that they have an extra-prominent place in the Photo Editor interface. You can also press Ctrl+Z (⌘ +Z on the Mac) for Undo and Ctrl+Y (⌘ +Y) for Redo.
- (M) Rotate:** Click the Rotate left tool to rotate counterclockwise 90 degrees. Click the down-pointing arrow on the Rotate tool and choose the Rotate Right tool to rotate a photo 90 degrees clockwise.
- (N) Layout:** When you have multiple photos open in the Photo Editor, the Layout pop-up menu enables you to choose how the photos display in the image window (such as rows, columns, as a grid, and so on). To return to the tabbed view, choose Default from the Layout pop-up menu.

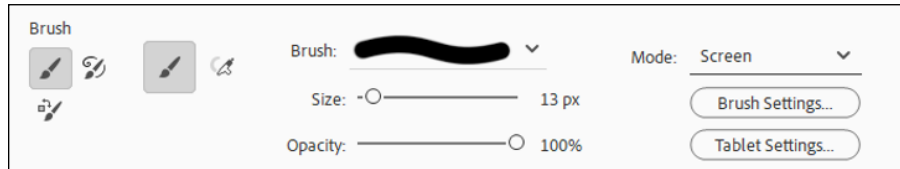
- (O) Organizer:** Click the Organizer button to open the Organizer, which we cover in detail in Chapter 2. Elements makes it very easy for you to toggle back and forth between the Organizer and the Photo Editor by clicking their respective buttons at the bottom of the windows.
- (P) Home Screen:** Opens the Elements Home Screen window.
- (Q) Media Window:** The active document is shown in this window.
- (R) Panels:** Click the icons to open the panels that include Layers, Effects, Filters, Styles, Graphics, and a category named More that's a collection of other, different panels.
- (S) More menu:** To open additional panels, click the three dots to open a pop-up menu of choices. The panels you open from the Panel Options menu appear as floating windows and can't be docked in the Panel Bin.

The description of the Photo Editor workspace is brief in this chapter. Most of the options you have for using tools, panels, and menu commands are discussed in later chapters. For now, try to get a feel for what the Photo Editor provides and how to move among many of the Photo Editor features.





**FIGURE 1-2:**  
Tool Options  
provide  
more editing  
features  
for tools  
selected in the  
Tools panel.



## Examining the image window

Not surprisingly, the image window's tools and features are most useful when an image is open in the window. To open an image in the image window, shown in Figure 1-3, follow these steps:

### 1. Choose File ⇨ Open.

The standard Open dialog box appears; it works like any ordinary Open dialog box that you find in other applications.



REMEMBER

### 2. Navigate your hard drive (by using methods you know to open folders) and then select a picture.

If you haven't yet downloaded digital camera images or acquired scanned photos and want an image to experiment with, you can use a sample image. Both your operating system and Photoshop Elements typically provide sample images:

- On your operating system, sample images are typically found in your Pictures folder, which is one of the default folders in both Windows and macOS installations.
- In Elements, you can store photos anywhere on your hard drive and access them in your Organizer.

### 3. Select a picture and click Open.

The photo opens in a new image window in Elements.



REMEMBER

You can open as many image windows in Elements as your computer memory can handle. When each new file is opened, a thumbnail image is added to the Photo Bin at the bottom of the workspace (refer to Figure 1-1).



**FIGURE 1-3:** The image window displays an open file undocked within the Elements workspace.

*Photo: Courtney Jensen; Model: Hudson Jensen*

Notice that in Figure 1-1, filenames appear as tabs above the image window when the windows are docked and not appearing as floating windows. Additionally, photo thumbnails appear in the Photo Bin. To bring a photo forward, click the filename in a tab or simply click a thumbnail in the Photo Bin. To close a photo, click the X adjacent to the filename or choose File ⇨ Close.



**TIP**

To close a photo in the image window but keep it open in the Panel Bin, click the Minimize button on a floating document window in the top-right corner (Windows) or the center button in the top-left corner (Mac). Note that in order to minimize the photo and keep it in the Photo Bin, you must set the General Preferences (Ctrl/⌘ + K) to Allow Floating Documents in Advanced Mode. Make sure the documents are in floating windows and then you can minimize them individually.



REMEMBER

By default, all document windows are attached within the Elements document window. You can change the document windows to *floating windows* (meaning that they are free floating and unattached to the document window) by choosing Preferences and, in the General Preferences, selecting the Allow Floating Documents in Advanced Mode check box. Floating windows are available only when you are using the Advanced mode in the Photo Editor.

Here's a look at important items in the image window, as shown in Figure 1-3:

- » **Filename:** Appears above the image window for each file open in the Photo Editor.
- » **Close button:** Click the *X* to the right of the filename (Windows) or the left of the filename (Mac) to close the file.
- » **Scroll bars:** These become active when you zoom in on an image. You can click the scroll arrows, move the scroll bar, or grab the Hand tool in the Tools panel and drag within the window to move the image.
- » **Magnification box:** See at a glance how much you've zoomed in or out.
- » **Information box:** You can choose what information this readout displays by choosing one of the options from the pop-up menu, which we discuss in more detail later in this section.



TIP

When you're working on an image in Elements, you always want to know the physical image size, the image resolution, and the color mode. (Size is the physical size of the image. Image resolution is the number of pixels in your image. Color mode is a mode such as RGB for red, green, and blue, grayscale for black and white, and so on.) Regardless of which menu option you select from the status bar, you can quickly glimpse these essential stats by clicking the Information box (not the right-pointing arrow but the box itself), which displays a pop-up menu like the one shown in Figure 1-4.

» **Sizing the Window:**

You can also resize the window by dragging any corner in or out when the image is undocked and not viewed as a tab.

Width: 6720 pixels (22.4 Inches)  
Height: 4480 pixels (14.933 Inches)  
Channels: 3 (RGB Color, 8bpc)  
Resolution: 3 (RGB Color, 8bpc)

**FIGURE 1-4:**

Click the readout on the status bar to see file information.



TIP

To undock windows, press **Ctrl/⌘ +K** to open the Photo Editor Preferences. Click General in the Left pane and select the box where you see Allow Floating Documents in Advanced Mode. You must be in Advanced mode to view documents undocked.

Now that you're familiar with the overall image window, we want to introduce you to the Information box's pop-up menu, which enables you to choose what details appear in the Information box. Click the right-pointing arrow to open the menu, shown in Figure 1-5.

Here's the lowdown on the options you find on the pop-up menu:

- ✓ Document Sizes
- Document Profile
- Document Dimensions
- Current Selected Layer
- Scratch Sizes
- Efficiency
- Timing
- Current Tool

**FIGURE 1-5:**

From the pop-up menu on the status bar, choose commands to show more information about your file.

- » **Document Sizes:** Shows you the saved file size.
- » **Document Profile:** Shows you the color profile used with the file. Understanding color profiles is important when printing files. Turn to Chapter 12 for more information on using color profiles.
- » **Document Dimensions:** When selected, this option shows you the physical size in your default unit of measure, such as inches.
- » **Current Selected Layer:** When you click a layer in the Layers panel and choose Current Selected Layer, the layer name appears as the readout.
- » **Scratch Sizes:** Displays the amount of memory on your hard drive that's consumed by all documents open in Elements. For example, 20M/200M indicates that the open documents consume 20 megabytes and that a total of 200 megabytes is available for Elements to edit your images. When you add more content to a file, such as new layers, the first figure grows while the second figure remains static. If you find that Elements runs slowly, check your scratch sizes to see whether the complexity of your file is part of the problem. If so, you might clear some of your history or merge a few layers (see Chapter 7) to free space.
- » **Efficiency:** Indicates how many operations you're performing in RAM, as opposed to using your *scratch disk* (space on your hard drive). When the number is 100 percent, you're working in RAM. When the number drops below 100 percent, you're using the scratch disk.

If you continually work below 100 percent, it's a good indication that you need to buy more RAM to increase your efficiency. If you have multiple applications open, quit all other programs to conserve RAM.



**TIP**

- » **Timing:** Indicates the time it took to complete the last operation.
- » **Current Tool:** Shows the name of the tool selected from the Tools panel.



REMEMBER

Why is the information in this pop-up menu important? Suppose you have a great photo you want to add to your Facebook account and you examine the photo to find the physical size of 8 x 10 inches at 300 pixels per inch (ppi). You also find that the saved file size is more than 20MB. At a quick glance, you know you want to resize or crop the photo to perhaps 4 x 6 inches at 72 ppi. (Doing so drops the file size from more than 20MB to around 365K.) Changing the resolution dramatically reduces the file size. For now, realize that the pop-up menu shows you information that can be helpful when preparing files for print and display.

Don't worry about trying to understand all these terms. The important thing to know is that you can visit the pop-up menu and change the items at will during your editing sessions.

## Uncovering the contextual menus

Contextual menus are common to many programs, and Photoshop Elements is no exception. They're those little menus that appear when you right-click, offering commands and tools related to whatever area or tool you right-clicked. If you have a one-button mouse on the Mac, press Ctrl+click to open a context menu.



TIP

The contextual menus are your solution when you're in doubt about where to find a command on a menu. You just right-click an item and a pop-up menu opens.

Because contextual menus provide commands related to the tool you're using or the object or location you're clicking, the menu commands change according to the tool or feature you're using and where you click at the moment you open a contextual menu. For example, in Figure 1-6, you can see the contextual menu that appears after we create a selection marquee using the Rectangular Marquee Selection tool and right-click anywhere in the image window. Notice that the commands are all related to selections. Other selection tools, like the Quick Selection tool and Magic Wand, offer you different menu choices from a contextual menu.



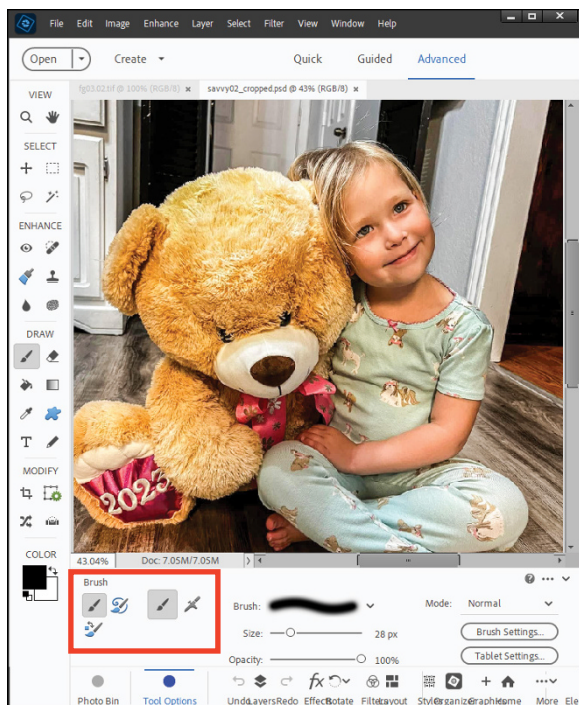
**FIGURE 1-6:**  
A contextual menu for a Rectangular Marquee selection.

## Selecting the tools

More often than not, clicking a tool on the Tools panel is your first step in editing operations. (If you're not familiar with the Tools panel, refer to the upcoming Figure 1-8.) In panel hierarchy terms, you typically first click a tool on the Tools panel and then use another panel to fine-tune how the tool works.

Sometimes when you select a tool in the Tools panel, you find additional tools in the Tool Options area. For example, you may click the Rectangular Marquee tool in order to access the Elliptical Marquee tool in the Tool Options, directly below the image window. The Brush tool, Impressionist Brush, and Color Replacement tool, plus the Brush Mode and Airbrush Mode, are all shown in Figure 1-7 and are all in the Tools panel; and the Rectangular Marquee tool and Elliptical Marquee tool appear in the Tool Options panel when one of those tools is selected. See the following section for more about the Tool Options area.

**FIGURE 1-7:**  
Additional  
tools within a  
tool group are  
available in the  
Tool Options.



*Ted Padova (Book Author)*



**NEW**

An additional tool introduced in this version of Photoshop Elements is the Remove tool. The tool appears in the same area as the Spot Healing Brush. Click the Spot Healing Brush and, in the Tool Options, select the Remove tool. To remove an object in a photo, draw with the Remove tool around the item you want to remove. When you release the mouse button, click the check mark, and the Photo Editor does its best to fill the removed area with the background.