

Photoshop Elements 3 – Image Editing Workflow

We now have covered most of the image editing tools available in Photoshop Elements. Before we move on to other things, we need to think about the order in which you use these tools – your **image editing workflow**. The following is the workflow I generally follow when working on an image. All of the steps may not be necessary for a given image.

1. **Save the image as a Photoshop .PSD file.**
 - a. NEVER work on the original image
 - b. ALWAYS work with PSD files
2. **Rotate** the image by 90°, if necessary
3. **Straighten** the image, if necessary
 - a. This includes transforming its **perspective**, if necessary
4. **Crop** the image, if necessary
5. **Remove unwanted objects and spots**, if any, from the image.
 - a. Use the Clone Stamp tool or Healing Brush tools to do this
6. **Adjust the brightness and contrast** of the image
 - a. Usually you will use the Levels Histogram to do this.
 - i. A Levels Adjustment Layer will allow you to alter changes later
 - b. If the picture has high contrast with dark shadows and well-exposed highlights, the Shadows/Highlights menu item may work better than the Levels Histogram
7. **Improve the color saturation or color cast** of the image, if necessary
 - a. A Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer is the best way to do this
 - i. If you increase the saturation of an image, be subtle. Major changes in saturation can look garish and unnatural.
 - b. If the color is really bad, Auto Color Correction sometimes works
8. **Make local changes** in brightness, contrast, and saturation, if necessary
 - a. Use the Dodge, Burn, and Sponge tools
9. **Sharpen** the image
 - a. Sharpening an image almost always is necessary.
 - b. ALWAYS use the Unsharp Mask to sharpen images
10. **Save** the image with a new name
11. **Resize and crop the image** for printing or for display on the Web, if necessary
12. **Sharpen** the image again if resizing required you to resample the image.
13. **Save** the image again.
 - a. You also may want to save it as a JPG file if it is going to be displayed on the Web or if you are going to email it to someone.

Practice Problems

Use the workflow on the preceding page to modify the images below.

1. Horse.jpg

Other than the obvious, a few of the problems I notice in this picture are

- The blue color of the sky does not look natural. You might increase the Hue of the picture slightly so that sky becomes more deep blue
- The picture is not straight and there may be perspective problems with the building on the right

We want to print this image as a 4" x 6" photograph.

2. Toronto.jpg

This picture, which is too dark, also has evident perspective problems that need correcting. I also find the two people in the foreground distracting – remove them from the picture. It may be easier to remove the van behind the man at the same time. You may want to smooth out the area after you have removed the man and the van.

It may help the image to increase its saturation slightly to brighten it up a bit.

We want to print this image as a 11" x 14" photograph.

3. Hillside.jpg

Other than the obvious, make the following changes in this picture:

- It is a scanned picture. Look for dust spots in the sky.
- Remove the orange buoy in the river
- Decrease the brightness of the buildings on the shore without affecting the rest of the picture
- Increase the brightness of the castle without affecting the rest of the picture

We want to use this picture on a web site, but it is too big for our web page. Resize the picture so that the pixel width and pixel height are decreased by 50%.