

Photoshop Elements Basic Overview

Photoshop Elements is photo editing software that can be used to improve flawed photos or create interesting effects. An examination of the menus will introduce you to what the software can do.

File Menu

This is like File menus in all applications: **New** (document); **Open** (an existing document); **Save** (with the same name); **Save As** (create a new name); and **Print**. You can also **Create** special documents, such as greeting cards or calendars.

Edit Menu (Figure 1)

- **Undo** is undoubtedly the **most important action** you need to learn. It lets you undo a bad move. The **Undo** arrow also appears as a **button on the toolbar** across the upper part of the program window. Using the **Undo** and **Redo** arrows lets you switch back and forth to see if a change you made is acceptable.
- **Cut**, **Copy**, and **Paste** are familiar actions.

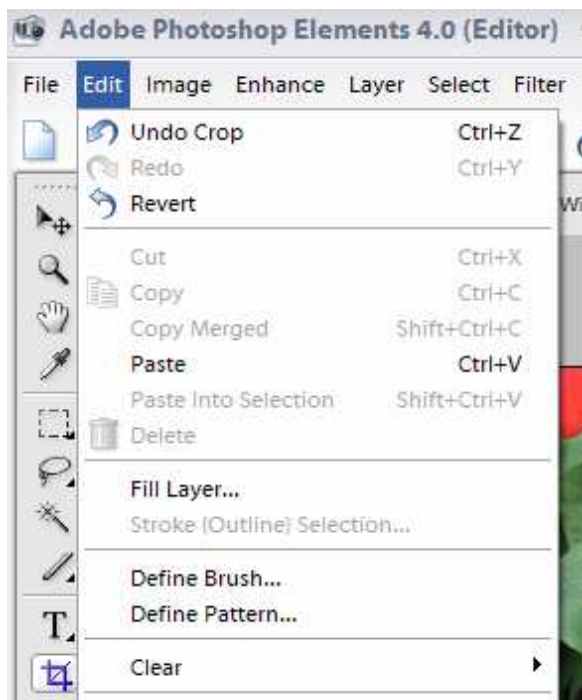


Figure 1

Image Menu (Figure 2)

- **Rotate** allows you to rotate, flip, or straighten an image. Figure 2 shows its drop-down menu. Besides standardized rotations, **Custom** allows you to choose your own degree of rotation right or left. **Straighten Image** (at the bottom of the list) sounds like a good idea, but the program can sometimes get confused and make things worse.
- **Transform** allows you to skew, distort, rotate, or change the perspective of an image. / \ → | |
- **Crop** allows you to remove unwanted areas from a picture. When you click the crop tool icon, a smaller area of the image is selected inside the photo on the screen. (Figure 3)

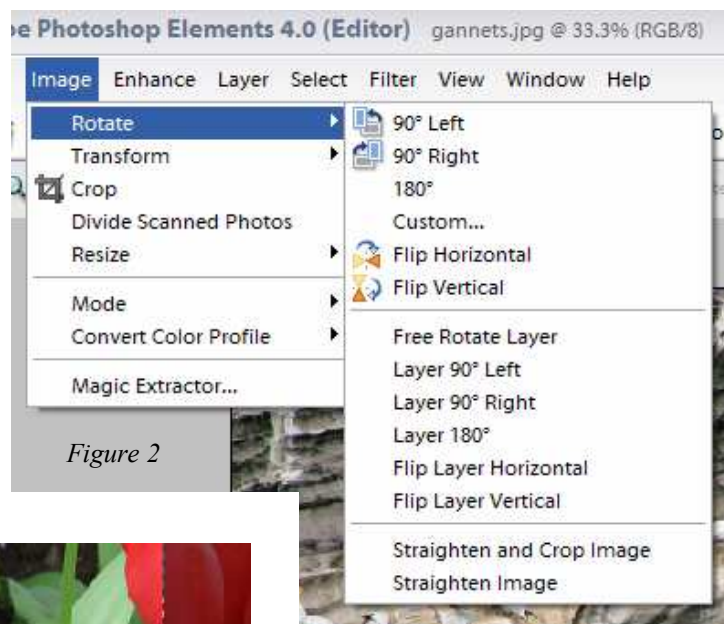


Figure 2

If the selection is not the size or shape you had in mind, you can change it by moving the selection around the image or by dragging one of the little squares on a corner or side to resize.

To keep the proportions of the photo from changing as you resize, hold down the shift key as you drag one of the corner squares.

To accept the cropped area, click the green check mark. To reject it, click the red slashed circle.

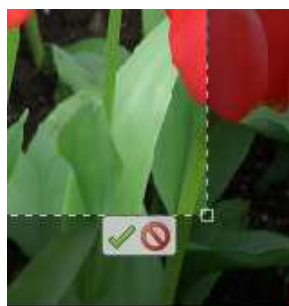


Figure 3

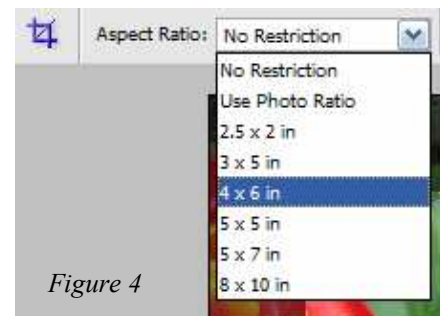


Figure 4

Be aware that the proportions of standard photo paper are not the same as the proportions of the images from your camera. On the toolbar above the picture, you can manually adjust the proportions of the cropped area to fit the size of the print you wish to make. (Figure 4)

Image Menu (continued)

- **Resize** allows you to change the size of the picture or the imaginary “canvas” on which the picture sits.
- **Mode** allows you to change from color to grayscale.

Enhance Menu (Figure 5)

- **Auto Smart Fix** analyzes your photo and makes adjustments in lighting, shadows, and colors. It can often improve photos without any further input from you.
- **Adjust Lighting** gives you three options: **Shadows/Highlights**, **Brightness/Contrast**, or **Levels**.
- **Adjust Color** has several options that alter hue and saturation to correct or enhance colors.

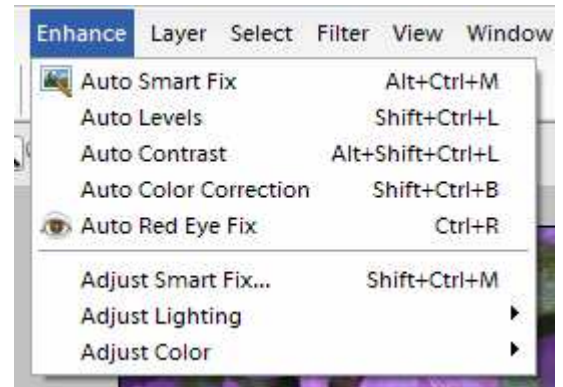


Figure 5

Layer Menu

When merging parts of two or more documents, you must create different layers. You can think of layers as transparent plastic pages, each containing a different image. The menu contains tools for creating, arranging and working with layers.

Select Menu

This menu is for selecting or deselecting all or part of an image or layers.

Filter Menu (Figure 6)

This is a fun menu, but the results are not always what you expect. Play around with it, but always remember where the **Undo** button is!

Special effects are best done on photos that are quite plain and simple. If there is too much going on, applying a filter may make the subject of the photo completely impossible to figure out.

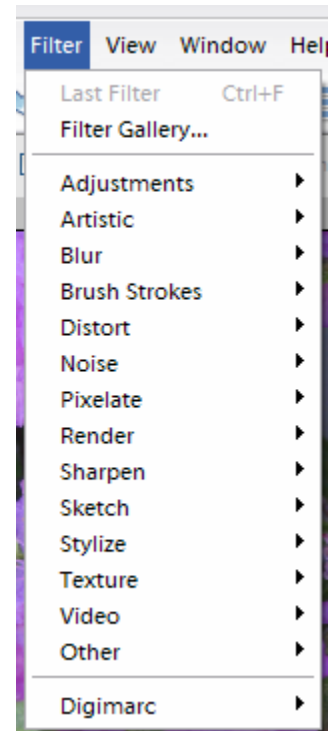
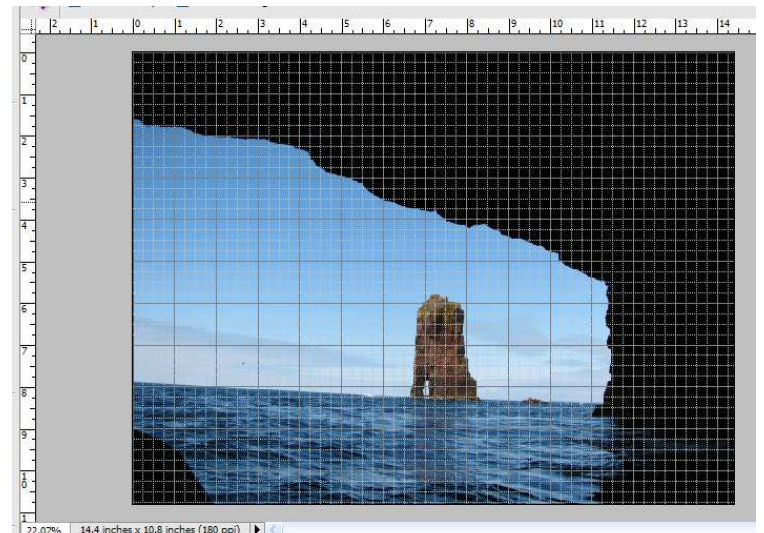
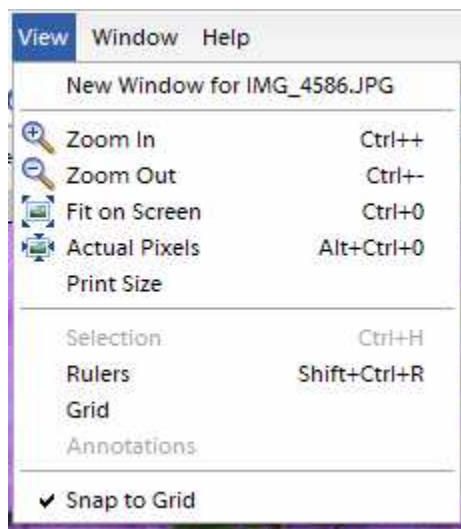


Figure 6

View Menu (Figures 7 & 8)

- **Rulers** are useful guides for determining picture size.
- **Grid** lines are useful guides for straightening photos.



Window Menu

- **Tools** are found in a vertical toolbar on the right of the program window. The tools allow you to change the way a picture looks in various ways by selecting and correcting flaws in specific areas of the photo.

With the various tools you can zoom in or out, select parts of a picture with the lasso or magic wand, add text, clone one part of the picture into a different area, paint, erase, fill areas with a different color, sharpen, blur, etc.

Icons that have a small triangle on the lower right corner have optional varieties of that tool. Right click on the triangle to reveal a drop-down menu.

- **Color Swatches** show colors that can be picked up and used for text or painting.
- **Layers** shows the layers in the document. In this example, there is only one layer, called the background layer.
- **Palette Bin** is the area to the right where **How To**, **Styles & Effects**, and **Layers** can be displayed.
- **Photo Bin** at the bottom of the screen shows the photo files that are open. In this case, there are three.

