



CLASS # 6: Sharpening and Auto Fixes

- Zoom settings
- Using unsharp mask
- Adjust sharpness
- Auto fixes
- Guided fix palette in PSE 6 and 7
- Quick fix in PSE 6 and 7

Yippee! We've made it to the end! The final step in the basic editing process is sharpening. There are very few photos that couldn't benefit from a little sharpening. It's impossible to make a photo that is extremely out of focus look perfect, but great improvements can be made in photos that need a little help. The goal for sharpening is to make the details in the photo stand out.

To begin: Open the photo you'd like to sharpen. Duplicate it!!!

ZOOM SETTINGS

When sharpening a photo, it's important to see the details close up. You want to be able to see the edges of the details in the photo to really see how sharp they are getting. Some experts say that viewing a photo at 50% is enough, while others say that you should view photos at 100% to best view the sharpening effect. You will have to decide which magnification works best for you. Here's how to change the magnification of your photos.

1. The tool at the top of the left toolbar, that looks like a magnifying glass, is the Zoom Tool. When you click on it, a little Zoom Toolbar appears at the top of your workspace.
 - The first two icons in the toolbar are the plus and minus. Click on the plus and move your cursor (which now looks like a magnifying glass with a plus on it) onto your photo. Each time you click, your photo will get bigger. Anytime you want to return to the original size, just click on "Fit Screen."

- This will work in a similar manner when you click on the minus and move your cursor over the photo. Your photo will get smaller with each click.
 - You can also make your photo larger or smaller by clicking the arrow next to the Zoom Percentage. You will get a slider which you can move back and forth to make your photo larger or smaller. The right and left arrow keys will also move the slider, just a little more gradually.
 - To view at 100%, click on the Zoom Tool and type 100% in the Zoom Percentage box in the Zoom Tool toolbar. It should say 100% at the top of your photo.
 - The above directions show you another way to do what we did in an earlier lesson, when we used CTRL and + to make a photo larger and CTRL and minus to make a photo smaller.
2. The second icon you might need is the Hand Tool which is below and to the left of the Zoom Tool. When your photo is zoomed to a larger size, you can position the Hand Tool on the photo. Hold down your mouse button and you can drag the hand around to move various parts of the photo into the viewing window.

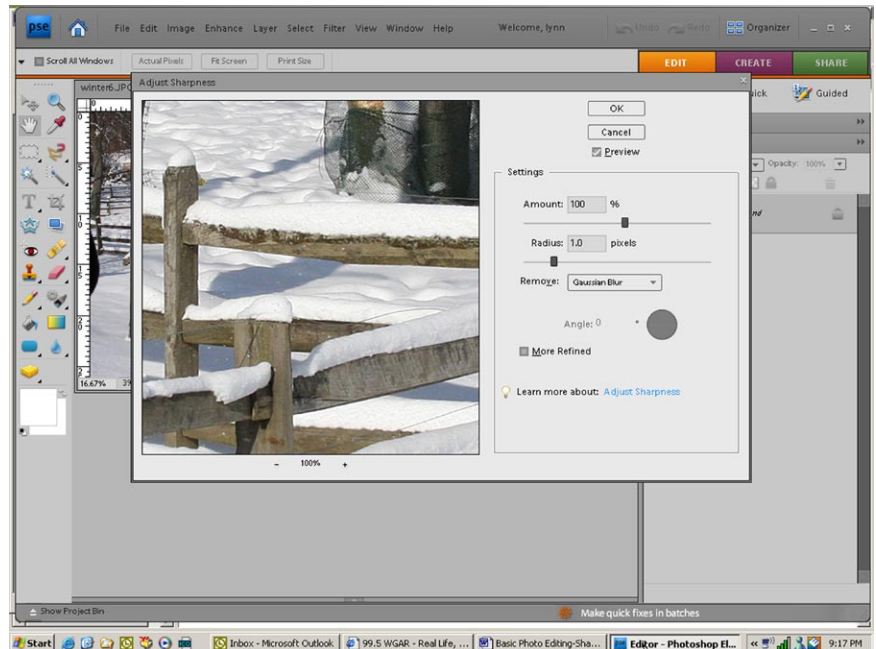
USING UNSHARP MASK

This is probably the most confusingly named tool in all of Photoshop! Its name harkens back to something film developers used to do in the darkroom to sharpen photos. Whatever it is named, Unsharp Mask is one of the most useful tools in Photoshop products. While there are other ways to sharpen, many people think that Unsharp Mask is the best way to sharpen photos. You should already have a photo open and duplicated, so let's get busy sharpening!

In PSE 6 and 7, go to the >Enhance menu. Near the bottom you will find "Unsharp Mask." (In most other versions of Photoshop and PSE, you will find the Unsharp Mask under the >Filters menu.) Click Unsharp Mask to open the fly out menu. You'll see three sliders.

- The amount slider determines the amount of sharpening applied to the photo. A higher number means more sharpening.
- The radius slider determines how many pixels out from an edge the sharpening will affect.

- The threshold slider determines how different a pixel must be from the surrounding area before it's considered an edge pixel and is sharpened by the filter. This works the opposite of the way you would think it does. The lower the number, the more intense the sharpening effect.



To use the Unsharp Mask you will enter a number in each area and click OK. In his book, *Photoshop Elements 6.0 for Digital Photographers*, Scott Kelby suggests the following settings for the Unsharp Mask sliders in different circumstances:

For soft subjects like flowers and furry animals:
Amount: 150%, Radius: 1.0 pixels, Threshold: 10 levels

For portraits:
Amount: 75%, Radius: 2 pixels, Threshold: 3 levels

All purpose sharpening:
Amount: 85%, Radius: .3 pixels, Threshold: 0 levels

It is fun to experiment with the different settings until you achieve the sharpening look that you like for each photo! Here are some guidelines, again by Scott Kelby, to help you come up with your own custom blend of sharpening.

Amount

Typical ranges run anywhere from 50% to 150%. This isn't a hard and fast rule—just a typical range for adjusting the Amount, where going below 50% won't have enough effect and going above 150% might oversharpen.

Radius

Most of the time, you'll just use 1 pixel but you can go to 2 pixels. Once in a great while, Kelby has gone as high as 4 pixels. Adobe allows you to raise the Radius as high as 250, but you would have a very strange looking photo. You might want to try it just to see what happens!

Threshold

A pretty safe range is between 3 and 20, with 3 being the most intense and 20 being more subtle.

If you are uncomfortable with creating your own Unsharp Mask settings, Kelby suggests starting with one of his settings above and moving just the Amount slider.

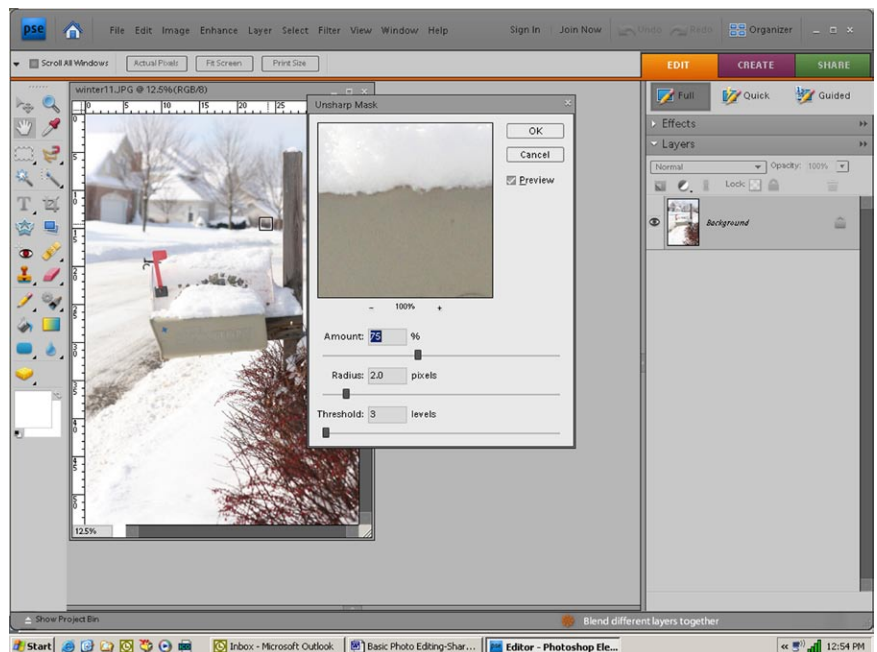
One thing you want to watch out for is oversharpening. Oversharpening cause a halo effect around items in your photo.

ADJUST SHARPNESS (for PSE 6 and 7 only)

Photoshop Elements 6 and 7 have a new tool for sharpening your photos. It's called Adjust Sharpness and is found right below Unsharp Mask at the bottom of the >Enhance menu in the top toolbar.

Blurry photos usually come from either **lens blur**, where the focal point of your lens isn't directly over the subject of your photo, or **motion blur**, where either your subject moved or you moved your camera.

Adjust Sharpness is easy to use and it gives you adjustments to correct these kinds of blur (and also Gaussian blur which we aren't going to worry about right now). Here's how it works:



1. Open your photo and duplicate it. Zoom your photo to 100%.
2. Go to >Enhance >Adjust Sharpness.
3. Make your Amount and Radius adjustments. They work exactly the same way they do in Unsharp Mask.
4. **Remove.** This is where you adjust for the type of fuzziness in your photo. If you aren't sure which one it is, try both Lens Blur and Motion Blur and see which one looks better.
5. **Angle.** With motion blur, you can tell the software which direction the motion came from. For example, your subject moved slightly to the right, so you will move the line in the circle to approximate the angle of movement. This is a very tricky adjustment and, unless the movement is extreme, you would probably be wise to simply leave it alone.
6. **More Refined.** With this box checked, PSE sharpens more details. You will want to leave it unchecked in a photo that has a lot of detail. The More Refined command can be effective in a photo without a lot of detail. More Refined can magnify dust and digital noise, so be careful!

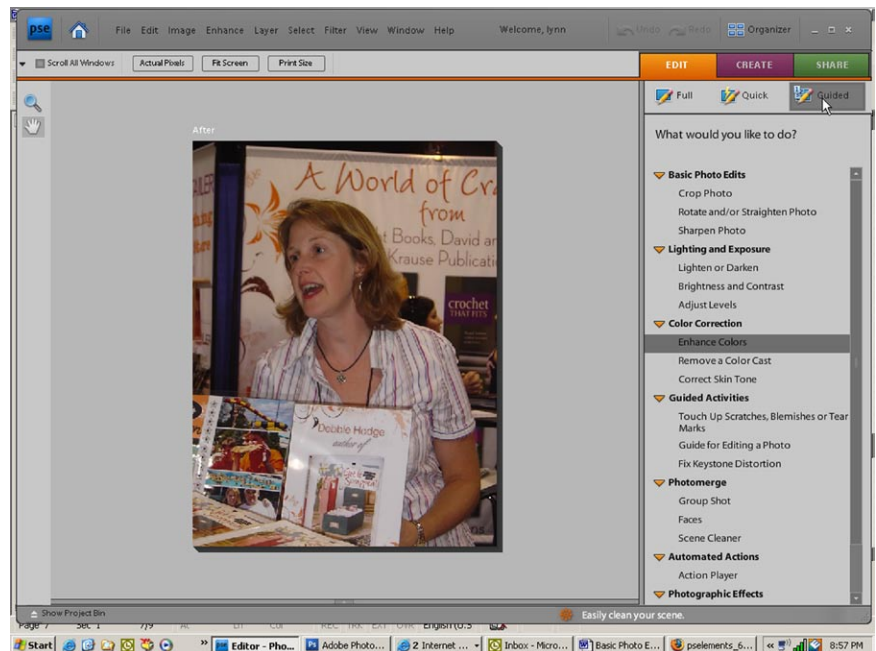
AUTO FIXES

As you move up through the various versions of Photoshop and Photoshop Elements, you will see different Auto fixes that can be applied. These are usually found on the top toolbar by choosing either >Image >Adjustments and seeing the options or >Enhance and seeing the options. Some of these Auto fixes work better than others, and they all work better on some photos than they do on others. These are mostly automatic fixes for color and contrast. You can have lots of fun playing with these. Using these Fixes doesn't require a lot of instruction. They do not automatically remove things from your photos as we have done in this lesson—with one exception and that is Photoshop Elements 7 and its new Quick Fix Touch Up Palette, which we're going to talk about later.

GUIDED FIX PALETTE IN PSE 6 AND 7

In the upper right of your workspace in PSE 6 and 7, when you choose EDIT, you have a choice of Full, Quick or Guided. Choose Guided. You will see a new Guided Edit Palette appear on the right side of your workspace, like this:

This palette does exactly what it says. It guides you through many of the fixes that we have already worked with in detail. The Auto fixes are located in this palette along with sliders for many of the other fixes we have discussed, e.g. the Hue/Saturation slider for color correction. This window can be very helpful if you are new to Photoshop Elements because it walks you through a variety of popular editing tasks. Here's how to use the Guided Edit Window.



1. Once you have selected Guided Edit and the Guided Edit palette has opened, go to >File >Open, and open a photo. Your photo will appear, and the changes you apply will appear on your photo as you work on it.
2. Next, choose the category you want to work in, such as Basic Photo Editing or Color Correction. There are a variety of editing tasks under each heading. Just click the category you want, and the task panel will display the relevant buttons and sliders for your task.
3. Make your adjustments by moving sliders and clicking buttons until you like what you see. If you want to start over, click RESET. When you are happy with the changes, click DONE.
4. Continue to choose from the guided panel until you have made all the corrections you want. Then return to FULL EDIT in the upper right of the workspace. Make any other changes to your photo and Save.

Guided Edit shows you quick and easy ways to change your photo, but it isn't always the way to get the best results. It's a great tool for starting out, but don't make the mistake of thinking what you see in this window is the best you can possibly do for your photos.

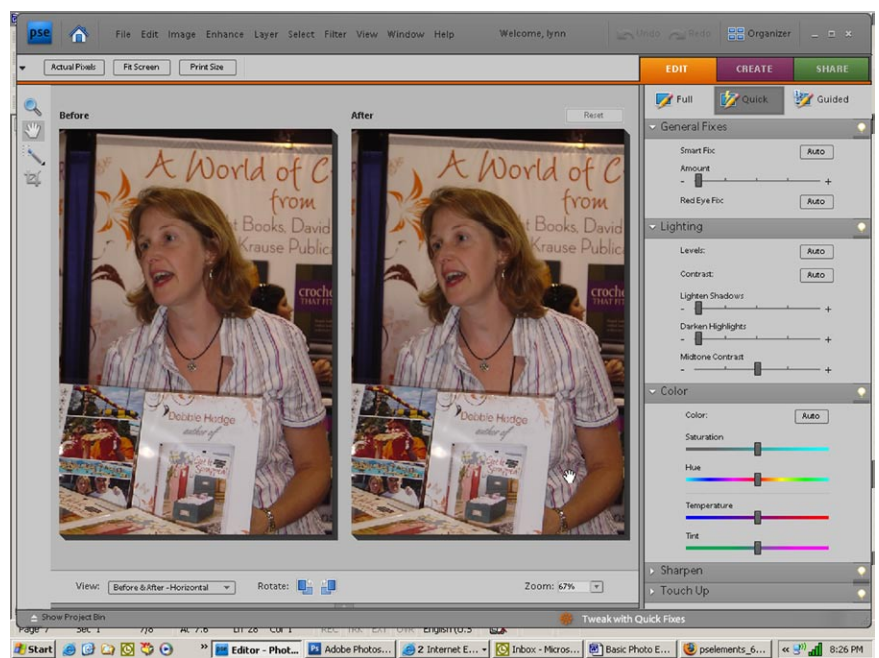
QUICK FIX IN PSE 6 AND 7

Now that you know the manual way to use many of the customary photo editing tools, if you are a Photoshop Elements 6 or 7 user, it's time to learn about the Quick Fix Palette. Quick Fix conveniently assembles many of the basic photo-fixing tools together in one spot. The tools in the Quick Fix window are pretty simple to use. You can try one or all of them—it's up to you. When you are finished you can go back to Full Edit to do anything else you'd like and Save your finished photo. Here's a quick overview of the Quick Fix editing palette.

1. Reopen the Red Eyes photo I provided. Go to the upper right area of your workspace and choose Quick. On the lower left, under the photo, you will see a View dropdown menu. Click on this and choose Before and After Vertical. Two boxes will pop up with your photo. The photo on the left is your original. The photo on your right will show your photo with the adjustments as you apply them. If, at any time, you are unhappy with the way your photo looks, you can press "Reset" above the After photo and it will return to the original.

Let's take a look at your workspace in Quick Fix.

2. At the bottom of the screen is a place where you can easily rotate your photo.
3. On the left side of the work area, you will see the Zoom and Hand tool which we have already



discussed. The third icon, which looks like a baton with a blue tip, is the Quick Selection tool which we will talk more about later. The last icon in this area is our old friend, the Crop Tool, which you can only use in the After viewing window.

Now let's work our way down the actual Quick Fix palette on the right. The tools in this window are simple to use. You can try one or all of them. Each of the fixes in the palette has a menu area which you can access by clicking on the little triangle in front of the name of the fix, for example, General Fixes, Color, Lighting. Whenever you are happy with what you have done in the Quick Fix window, you can return to the Full Edit window.

1. The first area is General Fixes.

- Smart Fix is an all inclusive command that automatically adjusts a photo's lighting, color and contrast. Just press the Auto button by Quick Fix and it will go to work! If you like the way your photo looks after the Quick Fix, you don't have to do anything else (or maybe sharpen it a little). You can go on to another photo.
- If you're not happy with the way your photo looks with the Smart Fix, you can adjust the amount of Smart Fix by moving the Smart Fix slider. The adjustment to your photo will appear when you release the mouse button.
- The other adjustment in this area is the Auto Red Eye Fix which is just that. Click the Auto button if your photo has red eyes.

2. The next area is the Lighting fixes.

- Levels. The subject of Levels is very technical but basically it adjusts the color information in your photo and fixes brightness and color in your photo at the same time. Try the Auto Levels command and see what happens!
- Contrast. This command adjusts the lightness and darkness of your photo without adjusting the color. You will probably want to use one or the other of these commands, but not both. Try both the Auto Levels and Auto Contrast commands and see which you like better.
- The sliders. Instead of using the Auto settings above, these three sliders can help to bring out the details that may be lost in your photos more precisely. Play with these and see what they can do, but go easy with the amount of

sliding you do so your photo doesn't end up looking flat!

- a. The Lighten Shadows slider can be moved to the right to help details appear out of the shadows.
- b. The Darken Highlights slider dims the brightness of overexposed areas.
- c. The Midtone Contrast slider can be used after the two sliders above to give the rest of your photo some additional depth by adjusting the contrast of the midtone areas.

3. The next area is Color Fixes which—wait for it!—fixes the color!

- The first fix is Auto Color. Try it! If you like it you're all set. If not, press Reset above your After photo and try the sliders.
- The Hue/Saturation sliders work just as they did in our discussion of Color Correction in Lesson Four. Saturation controls the intensity of color and Hue changes the actual color.
- The Temperature slider changes the color from a cool bluish look on the left to a warm orangeish look on the right.
- The Tint slider adjusts the green/magenta balance of a photo.

4. Next is Sharpening.

- View your photo at at least 50%. Try the Auto Sharpen button and see what you think! If you like it, you're done. If not, Reset and try the Sharpen slider. The usual area of best sharpening is around 30 to 40 percent.

5. The last area of the Quick Fix palette is only available in Photoshop Elements 7. It is the Touch Up area. The Red Eye Removal tool works just the way it did in other areas of the program. The Whiten Teeth, Make Dull Skies Blue, and Black and White High Contrast touch-ups are quite easy to use, and they all work pretty much the same way.

- Open your photo, and make your other corrections first (crop, resize, etc).
- Click on the Whiten Teeth, Blue Skies, or High Contrast tool and your cursor will become a crosshair cursor.

- Drag the cursor over the area you want to change. Teeth will become whiter. Blue skies will become bluer (but gray skies won't turn blue!) The High Contrast tool will remove the color from parts of your photo. (This is another way to achieve Selective Color.)
- If the "marching ants" are still on your photo when you are done, click CTRL+D to deselect that area.
- If you go to Full Edit mode after you have made repairs with the Quick Fix Touch ups, you will have to merge your photo layers.

That's the Quick Fix Editing Palette! Have fun giving it a try!

Hurray! No matter which version of Photoshop or Photoshop Elements you use, you should now be able to edit your photos through all the stages- cropping, resizing, correcting exposure, color and healing and sharpening. I hope you are happy with what you have learned.