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**Guides and Rulers**  
**The Photoshop Elements Toolbox**  
**The Panel Bin**  
**The Photo Bin**  
**What's New in Version 2020?**

## Chapter 2

# Get to Know Photoshop Elements 2020

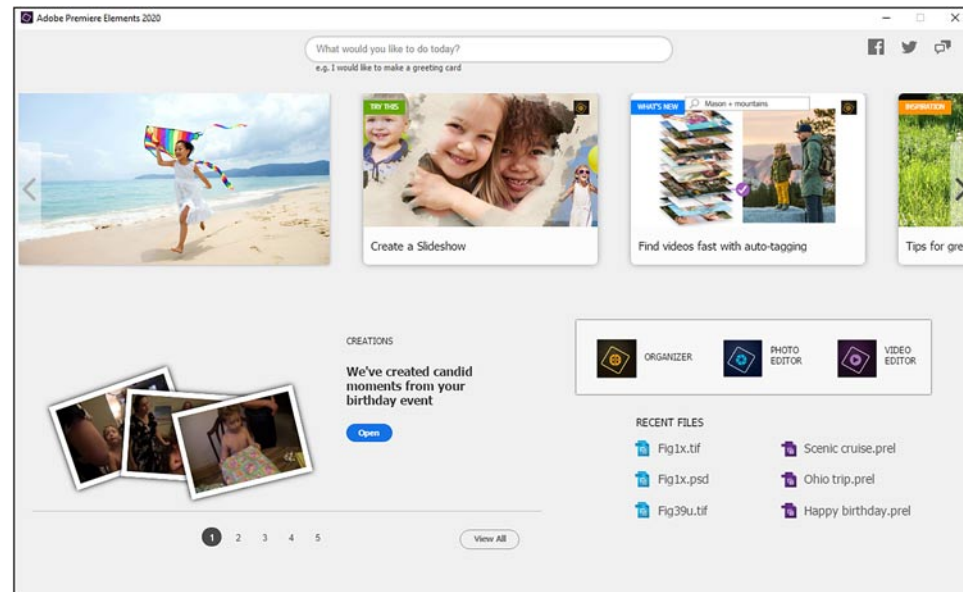
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## What's what and what it does

Welcome to Photoshop Elements – a terrific, affordable photo retouching application and graphics editor that just seems to get better and more feature-packed with every generation!

This is a program that seems to offer more wonderful surprises the deeper you dig into it. It provides not only the obvious tools for cleaning, stylizing and creating images, but also lots of not-so-obvious tools for managing your image files, outputting a variety of print projects and even sharing your work online.

In this chapter, we'll look at the various workspaces in Photoshop Elements – and then we'll dig deeper, looking at the tools Adobe has added in its 2020 version to make the program even more fun to use.



## The Elements Hub

Whenever you launch Photoshop Elements, you'll be greeted by the **Elements Hub**, a screen offering tips, tutorials and links to your Elements programs and projects.

A key feature of the **Hub** is a very intuitive help search tool. Type a brief description of what you'd like to do into the search box along the top of the screen and the **Hub** will suggest a list of related tutorials and helps (including some by yours truly!). Along the top of this panel you'll also find thumbnails labeled **Inspiration**, **What's New** and **Try This**, links to tutorials highlighting the program's effects and tools.

Another key feature of the **Elements Hub** is something Adobe calls **Auto Creations**. Whenever your computer is up and running, the Organizer's **Auto Analyzer** will be working in the background, looking for opportunities for Premiere Elements and, if it's installed, Photoshop Elements to assemble your recently saved video files and still photos into slideshows or movies or to create visual effects like **Color Pop**, **Blur** or **Painterly Effects**. (For more information on how the **Auto Analyzer** works, see page 222.)

Your latest **Auto Creation** will appear in the lower left of the **Elements Hub**. To see the complete set, click the **View All** button.

On the screen that opens, you'll have the option of opening an **Auto Creation** in one of the Elements programs for further editing.

To return to the **Hub**, click the **Back** button at the top of the **Auto Creations** browser panel.



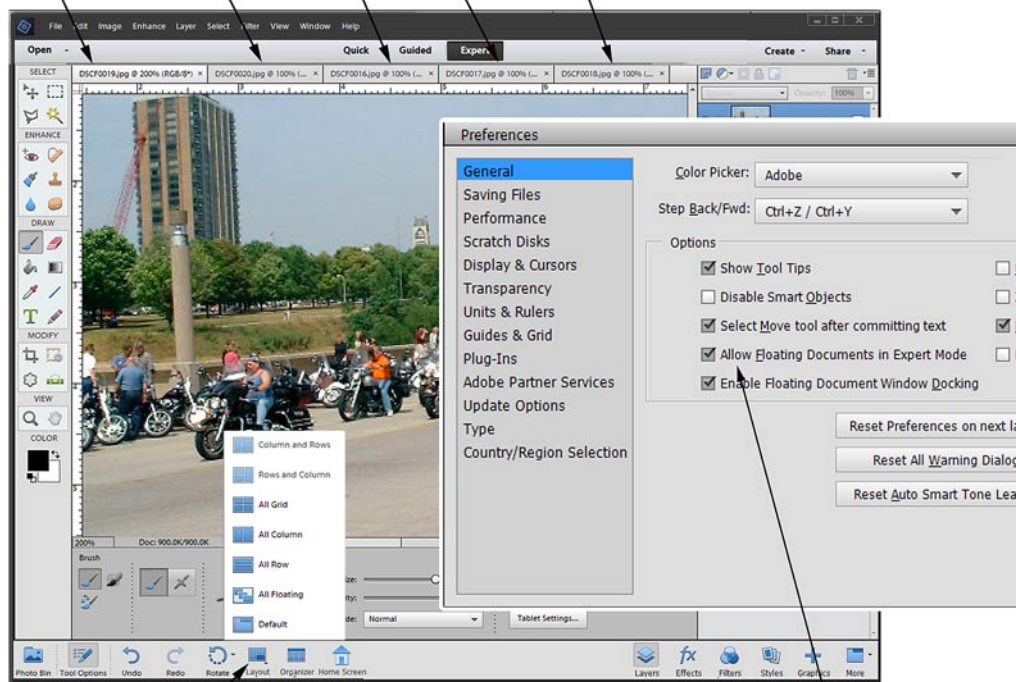
## The Editor workspace

The Editor workspace in Photoshop Elements 2020 is actually *several* photo editing workspaces, each with its own set of tools and features. Its three main workspaces can be accessed by clicking on the tabs at the top center of the interface.

- In the **Quick Edit** workspace, you'll find a simplified set of tools for cleaning up or enhancing your photos. We'll show you how to use the tools in this workspace in **Chapter 3**.
- In the **Guided Edit** workspace, the program walks you, step by step, through the editing process. The **Guided Edit** tools can do some pretty advanced things too! Not only can **Guided Edits** walk you through simple clean-up of your photo, but they can also take you through some pretty high-level photo tricks, like creating a photo that seems to be standing on a reflective surface, an image with a **Tilt-Shift** effect applied and a photo in which someone seems to be popping right out of the frame! We'll show you how these cool edits work in **Chapter 4**.
- The **Expert Edit** workspace (illustrated above) includes a comprehensive photo editing and graphics creation **Toolbox**. This is likely where you'll do most of your "serious" editing. It most closely resembles the workspace in the professional version of Photoshop. Needless to say, it's the workspace most of this book is about.

Additionally, the Editor workspace shares a number of tools for creating fun photo pieces with the Elements Organizer under the **Create** and **Share** tabs in the upper right of the interface. We discuss these tools and how to use them in **Chapter 16, Create Fun Pieces** and **Chapter 17, Share Your Photos and Videos**.

By default, all open files are “docked” and appear as tabs along the top of the interface.



Your docked files can be displayed one at a time or in a variety of arrangements by selecting an option from the Layout menu.

The option to have Floating Windows in your Editor workspace is set in the program's Edit/Preferences.

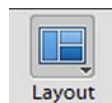
### The Expert Edit Workspace

The **Expert Edit** workspace is modeled after the interface in the professional version of Photoshop.

As illustrated at the top of the facing page, in Photoshop Elements, you have the option of displaying your open photo and image files as a single tabbed set, each photo filling the Editor workspace panel and each open file represented by a tab at the top of the workspace – or displaying your open photos as floating windows, a stack of open files that you can drag into any position around your computer desktop as you edit them.

To float your windows, you must have **Enable Floating Documents** checked on the **General** screen under **Edit/Preferences**, as in the illustration above.

The option to display your files in either mode – as well as a number of optional tabbed arrangements – is found under the **Layout** menu button.

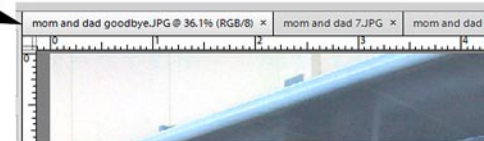


The **Layout** menu button appears along the bottom of the interface, as seen in the illustration.

As many veteran Photoshop users know, there are advantages to displaying your photos as floating windows rather than a tabbed set.



By default, all open photos display maximized in the work panel. You can switch between your photos by clicking on the tabs along the top of the panel.



By dragging on its tab, you can undock a photo from the tabbed set and make it a floating window.



To dock or re-dock a floating window back into a tabbed set, drag it to the top of the tabbed set by its docking header (the top of the frame) until it becomes semi-transparent and a bright blue line displays around the photo. When you release your mouse button, the photo will dock with the rest of the tabbed set.

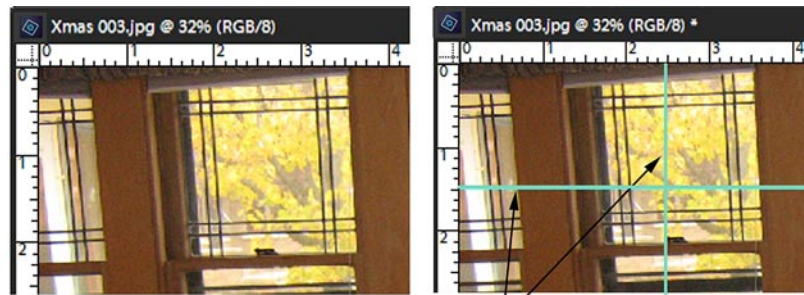
For instance, when your files are displayed as floating windows, you can copy images, portions of images and even entire layers from one image file to another simply by dragging these elements from one open file to another.

As in the illustration above, there are two ways to switch between displaying your photos as a docked, tabbed set and displaying them as floating windows:

- **Set the Layout menu to All Floating.** When you click on the **Layout** button and select **All Floating**, all of your photo files will display as floating windows.
- **Undock a photo from the tabbed set by dragging on its tab.** When you pull the photo file by its tab from the others in a tabbed set, it becomes a floating window.

Floating windows, by the way, *always float over tabbed photo files*. This means that, in order to get to the photos in your tabbed, docked set, you may have to either minimize any floating windows or drag them out of the way.

To dock or re-dock a photo into a tabbed set, simply drag the floating window by its docking header (the top of the window) to the top of the Editor workspace. When the photo file becomes semi-transparent (as illustrated above) release your mouse button and the photo will dock to the tabbed set.



Photoshop Elements can optionally display Rulers and Guides over your image files to help you with placement and measurement of your imagery. To create a guide line, drag onto your photo from one of the rulers.

**Guides and Rulers**

Optionally, Photoshop Elements will display **Guides** over your image files. These horizontal and vertical lines don't show up on your final piece, of course. But they can be a great help for placing elements and text and ensuring that they are properly lined up.

The program can also display **Rulers** which, like **Guides**, can be very helpful in measuring and placing your imagery.

To display **Rulers**, select the option from the Photoshop Elements **View** menu.

To create a new **Guide**, click and drag onto your photo from one of the **Rulers** running along the tops and sides of your image files. (Drag from the **Ruler** along the top of your photo to create a horizontal guide or from the **Ruler** along the left of your photo to create a vertical guide.)

To toggle between displaying and hiding the guides on your image files, press **Ctrl+**; on a PC or **⌘+**; on a Mac or select the option from the **View** menu.

**The Toolbox**

Along the left side of this workspace is the program's **Toolbox** (as illustrated on the left). The tools in this panel serve a number of functions, from selecting areas in your image file to creating graphics and text to patching and cloning areas of your images. As each tool is selected, that tool's individual settings are displayed in the **Tool Options Bin** that runs along the bottom of the editing workspace.

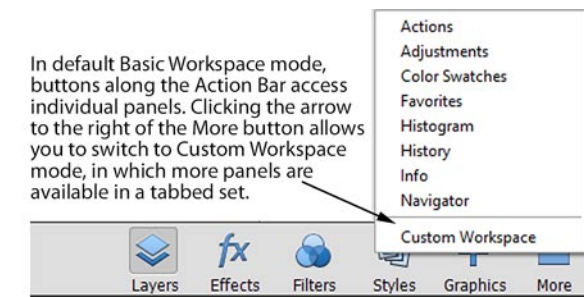
We'll spend considerable time getting to know the tools in the **Toolbox** and how to use their settings and options in **Chapter 5, Get to Know the Photoshop Elements Toolbox**.

**The Panel Bin**

To the right of the editing workspace is a column known as the **Panel Bin**, which includes a number of tools and panels that vary, depending on whether you're in **Quick Edit**, **Guided Edit** or **Expert** mode.



When you first open the program's Expert edit workspace, this **Panel Bin** will be in **Basic Workspace** mode. In **Basic Workspace** mode, you can view the **Layers**, **Effects**, **Filters**, **Styles** or **Graphics** panels in this bin by clicking on the buttons in the lower right of the program's interface.



If you click on the arrow to the right of the **More** button, you will find the option to set the **Panel Bin** to **Custom Workspace**, which opens the **Layers**, **Effects** and **Graphics** panels (and their respective sub-panels) in the **Panel Bin** in a tabbed set, as illustrated below

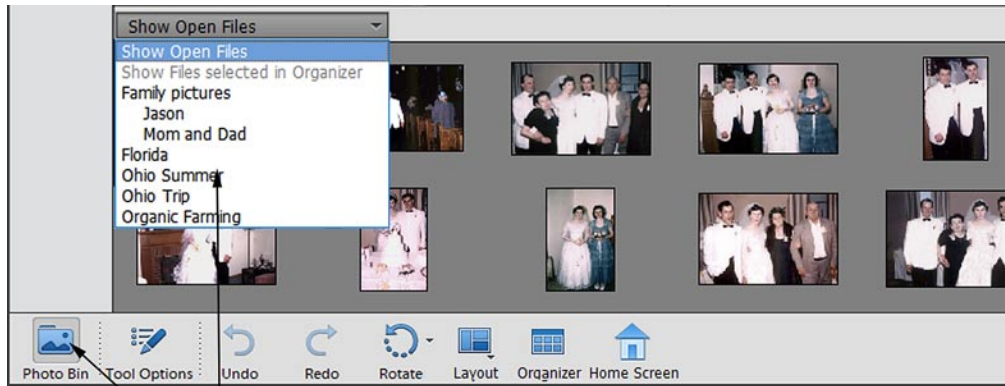
You can click and drag on any tab in the **Panel Bin** to make its panel a separate, floating panel. (It's common for experienced Photoshop Elements users to make the **Layers** panel a floating panel so that it is always available.)

Clicking directly on the **More** button will open an additional bundle of tabbed panels, including **Info**, **Navigation**, **History**, etc. These panels can likewise be accessed by clicking on the appropriate tab or, by dragging on the tab, can be made a separate, floating panel.

We take a close up look at the **Effects**, **Filters** and **Styles** panels in **Chapter 11**, starting on page 159.

The panels of the tabbed Panel Bin in Custom Workspace mode.





When the Photo Bin option is selected, the area below the Editor workspace will display all of the photos you have open in your Photoshop Elements editor, all of the photos you have selected in the Elements Organizer's Media Browser or any photos you've saved to individual Organizer Albums.

## The Photo Bin

Running along the bottom of the Editor workspace and sharing space with the **Tool Options Bin** is a small but powerful panel known as the **Photo Bin**.

When the **Photo Bin** button is selected in the lower left of the program's interface, all photos and image files you have open in your Editor workspace will appear as thumbnails in this bin.

To open a file in your **Photo Bin** in the Editor workspace, **double-click** on its thumbnail in the **Photo Bin**.

Although this is the default and most common way to use the **Photo Bin**, it is certainly not its only function. The **Photo Bin** also interfaces with a number of other workspaces.

To access and change the **Photo Bin's** display options, click on the bin's drop-down menu, which reads **Show Open Files** by default, as in the illustration above.

**Show Open Files.** Displays, as thumbnails, all of the image files you currently have open in your **Editor** workspace.

**Show Files Selected in the Organizer.** If you have both Photoshop Elements and the Elements Organizer open, and you have files selected in the Organizer's **Media Browser**, selecting this option displays those files in the **Photo Bin**. These photos or image files can then be launched in the Editor workspace by **double-clicking** on them.

**Organizer Albums.** If you've created **Albums** in the Organizer (see **Chapter 15, Manage Your Files with The Organizer**), you can select the option to display the photos in a particular **Album**.



## What's new in Photoshop Elements 2020?

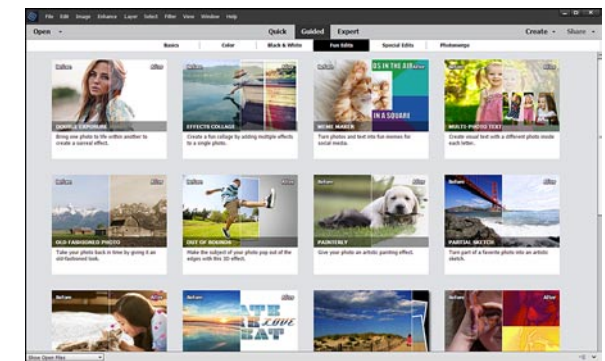
Adobe continues to focus on simplifying many of the photo editing processes in version 2020. It includes a couple of cool new semi-automatic tools as well as some new **Guided Edits**, tools that take you step-by-step through the process of enhancing your photos.

### New Guided Edits

Adobe continues to build out its library of step-by-step helps in Photoshop Elements 2020, bringing the total number of photo editing walkthroughs to 55!

New to version 2020 are **Guided Edits** for restoring aged or damaged photos, for effectively removing people or objects from your photos and for painting a pattern of images across your pictures.

We discuss the entire **Guided Edits** library in detail in **Chapter 4, Guided Edits**.



### Select Subject

Building on the semi-automatic **Smart Selection** technology introduced in version 2019, the latest version of Photoshop Elements now includes a fully automatic **Select Subject** tool that identifies or person or object and in the foreground of your photo and automatically makes a selection based on its analysis. The tool works surprisingly well – and even when it doesn't make a perfect selection, it provides you a pretty good starting point!



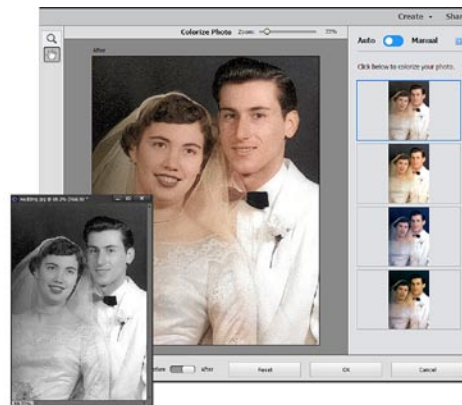
We show you how this tool works on page 101 of **Chapter 6, Select and Isolate Areas in Your Photos.**

### Colorize Photo

Another nice, nearly automatic feature in version 2020 is the **Colorize Photo** tool, a tool which analyzes your black & white photo, identifies objects in it and tints the areas accordingly. It works especially well at identifying faces and provides effective skins tones.

It also includes fine tuning tools for selecting and custom coloring areas in your pictures.

We show you how this tool works on page 126 of **Chapter 8, Correct Color and Lighting.**



### Smooth Skin

Want to soften some of the age lines in a subject's portrait? The new **Smooth Skin** tool identifies faces in your pictures gently blurs the wrinkles – and it does so without affecting the other facial features or details in the picture.

It's a very effective tool for touching up pictures, and we show you how it works on page 129 of **Chapter 8, Correct Color and Lighting.**



### Need some Basic Training?

Need more help learning the basics of Photoshop Elements?

Check out my free tutorial series **Basic Training for Photoshop Elements** at Muvipix.com.

This simple, eight-part series will teach you the basics of photo resolution and show you how to adjust lighting and correct color in your photos, work with layers, add effects, scan your pictures and even share your photos and videos online. And, yes, it's absolutely free!

To see the series, just go to <http://Muvipix.com> and type "Basic Training for Photoshop Elements" in the product search box and then click the magnifying glass button. (We also offer Basic Training tutorials for other products, including Premiere Elements.)

And while you're there, why not drop by the Community Forum and say hi! We'd love to have you become a part of our growing city. Hope to see you there!

If you'd like to see tutorials of some of the program's latest features, check out our book page at [Muvipix.com/pe2020.php](http://Muvipix.com/pe2020.php).

### Organizer enhancements

Finally Adobe continues to improve performance in the Organizer – the media file management tool bundled free with Premiere Elements and Photoshop Elements.

In addition to automatically generating **Smart Tags** for your videos as well as your photos, the Organizer also interfaces with the **Elements Hub** panel (see page 00), suggesting projects based on your media including those using the programs' color pop, blur effect, painterly effect and pattern brush tools.

We discuss the Organizer and its many file management and project features in detail in **Chapters 15, 16 and 17** of this book.



