

**Best of Blogging
Top Ten Blog Posts: Edit Your Digital
Photos**



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10 Tips To Edit Photos



1. Screen test. Check your computer monitor and adjust it if you're not getting a good picture. Most Windows PCs are set up wrong. For a complete guide to adjusting the display, go to <http://twcnny.rr.com/technofile> and type "adjust" (without quotes) in the search field.

2. Edit your images in a sensible order. First, save a copy. Keep that copy safe by moving it to a separate folder. Next, crop the image. Crop the picture, then adjust the levels, also called "curves." Your software might do this automatically. Next, adjust the color and what we loosely call the "tint." Then get rid of noises and blemishes (in the picture, silly, not in your nephew's skin). Finally, save the image ... TWICE. Put the copy in a different folder, out of the way.

3. Look sharp. Be sharp. But keep your hands off the "sharpening" menu. You'll notice that I did not tell you to sharpen the image in the list of things to do above. Why? Because that's how most pictures get ruined. Sharpening can't be undone. Sharpening should be the very last thing you do to an image before you print it or place it in an on-screen album. Do NOT sharpen an image before saving it. If you decide you want to return to the picture later to edit it some more, you'll be in a pickle. Do all your sharpening on temporary copies that you are planning to print or send to the Web.

4. Don't be judge and jury. If you're not sure whether one of your images looks better or worse after editing, ask someone else to take a look. Show side-by-side versions, before and after your editing. Don't start a family argument if your spouse (or, worse yet, your 9-year-old) says you have no talent. Be honest about what others see.

5. Peg of my heart, maybe; but JPEG in my image editor, no. JPEG (also called JPG, and pronounced "jay-peg" no matter how it's spelled) is the nearly universal file format for Web photos. It's fine for that, but it's lousy for your own digital pictures. Images saved as JPEGs can't be edited and then saved as JPEGs again without losing parts of the picture.

6. Big surprise: Don't resize. Image editors make things too easy sometimes. They let you resize any photo larger or smaller. Leave that function alone. Unless you are very careful about how you make your

images larger or smaller, you're sure to make them worse. Change the dots-per-inch (DPI) resolution setting all you want, if your software has such a thing, but don't increase or reduce the actual number of pixels. (If this seems like jabberwocky, don't worry; it IS jabberwocky. Just keep your hands off the resize menu.)

7. Take sides. If you are going to print your images as, say, 4-inch by 6-inch frameable prints, crop them to the correct ratio before you save the versions you are going to print. Suppose you have a picture that's 400 pixels on one side and 600 pixels on the other. That's the correct ratio and you're all set. But if it's 500 pixels on one side and 700 on the other — a 5:7 ratio instead of a 4:6 ratio — you'll have to do some cropping if you want the printed picture to fit perfectly into the 4-inch by 6-inch space. Run your calculator (all computers have one) and do some of that 5th Grade math you've almost forgotten.

8. Rescue mission. A photo that's really bad should be trashed if it's of nobody in particular, but if it's the only shot you have of Missy's graduation you'd better try to rescue it. Try blurring the photo slightly, fading down a bit on the color and sharpening it about twice as much as you'd normally think necessary. If the picture is truly bad, you can always say later, "But you should have seen what it looked like before I rescued it!"

9. Pixel parity. Never judge a digital photo without looking at the actual pixels. Image editors often squeeze the image down to the size of your screen (or, even worse, down to the size of a window on your screen). No matter how good the software is, it can't remove a lot of pixels and still show you the same image. Your image editor should have a menu choice for "Actual Size," "Actual Pixels" or "1:1." Slide your chair back a few feet if you need to get a longer view when you're looking at the actual pixels. And be sure to view your images full-screen; all good editors let you do that.

10. Remember your audience. If your photos are destined for Web pages, don't worry about minor flaws; get the dark-and-light balance right and make sure your pictures are mostly close-ups. If your photos are going to be printed at 8-inches by 10-inches or larger, take the time to smooth out the flaws. Make brutal crops, too. No one will know later that you took out the telephone pole alongside Billy's head. Distractions are just as annoying in photographs as they are in real life.

Here Are Some Fun Ways To Edit Digital Photography



One problem people face when starting out with digital photography is how to touch up raw digital images. Perhaps an image is slightly dark, perhaps it has to be rotated or cropped. Maybe some dirty spots have to be cleaned out and erased. Digital photos usually require some form of manipulation before final output, unless, of course one takes a perfect picture. The first step is to find an image editor. For beginners, a program that has easy, simple tools will do just fine. More advanced people can move on to more complicated programs.

There are many pictures that you've probably taken that would've looked great... except for the red-eye. Just about every graphics program has a red-eye removal, so that no matter what level your program is you'll be able to remove the red-eye. However, in order to prevent it in the first place, it helps to know what causes it. Red-eye is caused by the flash reflecting to the back of the eyes all the way to the retina, and the red comes from the blood vessels in the eye. Therefore, if you flash a light in the eyes of your subject, this will cause the pupil to contract, and then there won't be any red-eye.

Cropping is a good tool to use when you have a picture that has too much going on, or perhaps too little. In the former, you would want to cut the image down to just the subject of your picture, essentially eliminating all the distracting surrounding objects. In the latter, you would do the same thing, in order for your subject not to look too solitary. Once you begin cropping, you'll find there are many different creative ways to crop your pictures; every picture is different, and you'll find different ways to improve your pictures with cropping.

If you have a rather plain photograph, or a black and white picture, there are ways to manipulate the colors to make the picture more interesting. Your editing program will probably have a way to enhance the color of a picture, or you can completely change the color of an object. If you learn to use the tools well, you could be able to convert

a black and white picture to color. You can also create aged effects, or make a picture grayscale. Experiment with your program and find out what you can do to improve the coloring of your pictures.

When you upload your pictures from your digital camera to your computer, most of them will probably be a little blurry. Probably it won't be enough to make you want to change it, but if it's not, there's always the UnSharp Mask that you can use to sharpen the image. Most cameras don't apply any kind of sharpening filter to pictures they take, and so they won't always look as crisp as you might want. Most likely if you have a basic editing program you will be able to sharpen your pictures successfully, and you can sharpen them as much or as little as you want.

What's the "right" size for a picture? Well, that depends on the photo. Most monitors display at 72 dpi (dots per inch). So, if you want the picture to be 5 inches wide (probably about the biggest you would want for an e-mail message), the picture would be 360 pixels wide (5 inches x 72 dpi = 360 pixels). Pixel is short for "Picture Element" and is the smallest unit of visual information used to build an image. If you have ever zoomed in on an image, Pixels are those little squares that you see. The more pixels in an image, the better the resolution.

Remember to save your work in the appropriate image format. Use the large TIFF image format if you want to retain all details for subsequent image editing. On the other hand, you can use the JPEG image format if you want to just send the picture via email or upload them to your website. With the explosion of scanners, digital cameras and the World Wide Web, the JPEG image format has quickly become the most widely used digital image format. Many people believe a JPEG image will lose quality every time it is opened or saved. This is simply not true. Saving a JPEG repeatedly during the same editing session (without ever closing the image) will not accumulate a loss in quality. Copying and renaming a JPEG will not introduce any loss, but some image editors do recompress JPEGs when the Save As command is used. To avoid more loss you should duplicate and rename JPEGs in a file manager rather than using "Save As JPEG" in an editing program. However, if a JPEG image is opened, edited, and saved again it results in additional image degradation.

Fix Underexposed Photos Using Photoshop



Ok, to start off, we obviously need an underexposed photo. I will be using this photo, if you want to follow this tutorial, you are welcome to save this photo and use it for this tutorial.

In the days before Photoshop CS, to fix this photo, we would need to use the Brightness and Contrast adjustments, so lets try that and see how far we go...

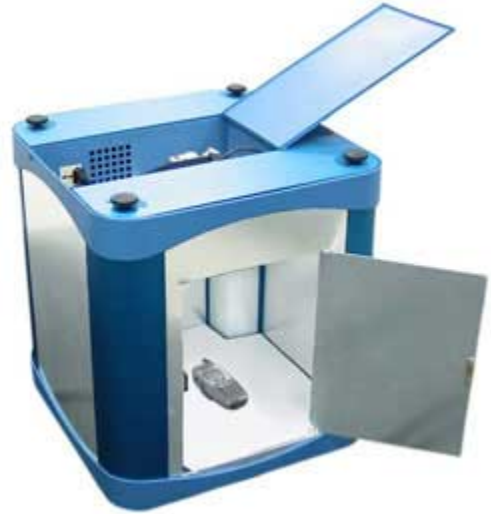
With the original image, go to **Image->Adjustment->Shadow/Highlight**.

Instantly, this adjustment will improve your image, without overexposing it. You can slide the Shadows slider over to 100% to really brighten it up, while still maintaining the image's exposure. If you did this using the Brightness/Contrast option above, your image will render unrecognizable.

So there you go, a super fast and easy way to fix your underexposed photo.

Taking Great Product Photos for eBay

Every eBay seller would like to attract customers and increase sales. Successful eBay sellers know that better product photos could make you more money, because your buyers will feel more comfortable buying items from you. But taking great product photos isn't always easy, read these quick tips to find out how to take great product photos for eBay.



1) Using a digital camera with fully automated shooting modes will make taking product photos much easier. It allows you to instantly preview, upload, and edit your photos with your computer.

2) Use a tripod to avoid blurred images which occur when you handhold a camera.

3) Use proper lighting. Some people find natural outdoor lighting the best, but never use direct lighting such as a flash. Flashes wash out colors, details, and create harsh shadows, especially when doing close-ups. Use soft, diffused lighting to avoid losing detail in your photo and create soft shadows. If you're a serious eBay seller consider buying a photo tent or light box to diffuse the light for you. Alternatively you can use lights and buy white plastic light covers, which will also create diffused light.

4) Find a good backdrop for your product and avoid clutter which distracts the eye. Your product should be the only item you're shooting. If you're using something like a photo tent or light box it's easy, or alternatively you could use a sheet or piece of fabric. Larger items can be more difficult but be sure to cleanup the background so that there are no distracting objects.

5) Avoid underexposing your photos, especially if you're shooting against a white background or outside in bright light. Your digital camera should have an over/under expose button that allows you to compensate and adjust the exposure. When taking pictures against a white background you might want to increase the exposure by +1 so

that it lets more light into the camera and the background becomes a pure white.

6) Getting close and filling the frame with your subject will produce a better photo, and also help avoid clutter. Buyers like to see the details of what they are buying. The best way to take good close-up photos is to use your camera's macro setting, which is designed to focus at short distances.

7) Your product should be sharp and in focus. Take care to focus correctly. Auto focus on your digital camera may not always produce the best results as it can sometimes be fooled. In these cases use aperture priority mode, and set an aperture of 8 or higher to ensure that your entire photo is sharp. When you increase the aperture your camera compensates with a slower shutter speed, so remember to use a tripod.

8) Take photos of different parts of your product and try different angles. Photographing your product from many angles helps add depth and avoid a flat online appearance. Pick one main overall shot of the item, but also use other detailed photos or different perspective shots. The more buyers can see, the more likely they will buy your product rather than your competitors.

9) Once you've saved all your photos to your computer, you can optimize your pictures for online viewing. Make sure your images are saved as JPEG files and increase the compression so that your pages will download more quickly on a user's computer. Also crop your photos so that it is composed only of your product, eliminating white space and making your product look better.

10) Edit your photo. Adjust the light and contrast to improve on your original photo. Make your subject stand out by adjusting the contrast between the foreground and background colors. You can also make certain parts of your picture lighter or darker to improve the overall look.

Once you've practiced photographing your products using these tips, visitors will have a better shopping experience and will be more likely to bid on your items.

Use Photoshop To Create The Perfect Shot



Many amateur photographers have recently switched over from using traditional film to the digital realm, especially with the advent of the cheaper digital SLR or DSLR cameras.

Now you can use your digital camera in exactly the same way that you could a traditional 35mm SLR. In fact the digital models are even better as you can set the film speed and make

previews etc.

Having made the change to digital there are far too few photographers who realize the power of Photoshop.

Digital enhancement of your images is something that can turn some of the most amateur photos into professional looking shots.

The possibilities are endless but include;

Creating better composition.

This is the first and most important step in creating the perfect image. Get this right and your photo could be stunning.

There are certain rules to the composition of the perfect image which we will not go into in detail here but you can adjust your image in Photoshop so that it adheres to some of these rules. For example, with a little creative use of the crop tool you can resize your image and adjust the position of the subject to fall into one of the key positions making it more pleasing to the eye. For example, in most cases, a central subject is not as effective as one that is offset to the side (adhering to the rule of thirds). Using crop can effectively move the subject over, up or down to position it perfectly.

Create depth of field.

You can quite easily add depth of field to the images that you have taken "snaps" of. If you have an image that is completely in focus and the background too is in focus (a common effect of non SLR digital point and shoot cameras) the you can solve this using Photoshop. You simply draw a mask or make a selection around the subject, invert

that mask so that it selects all but the subject and apply a blur effect to the part of the image that is selected. In the later versions of Photoshop there is actually a filter that emulates the natural lens blur. The end result is a sharp, in focus subject with an out of focus background. This can be very effective and can draw attention to the subject.

Color Correction

You can change the color of your image and balance the overall exposure of your images in a number of ways. The most common is by using the levels function or the curves. Here you can gently touch up your photo making the dark areas darker and the lighter areas lighter to achieve greater or lesser contrast.

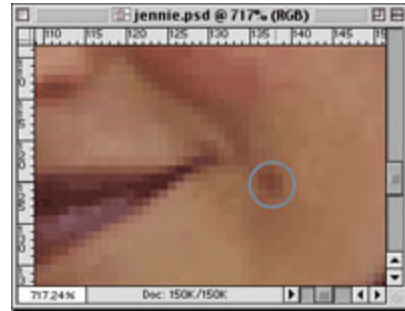
There are countless other methods and techniques you can use with Photoshop to better your images without having them look like they have been altered. Selective blurring can give the impression of movement, you can change certain areas of a photo such as the color of a specific object, red eye effects can be removed, skin blemishes and spots can be hidden and even with a little more skill and knowledge, complete makeovers can be achieved.

We have an ever increasing collection of video tutorials on our Photography Book web site which show you step by step how to achieve some of these process.

Don't fall into the trap of thinking that Photoshop is a tool for designers and fantasy artists alone. It is fast becoming the chosen tool of the trade for most professional photographers and is used on a daily basis.

Remove Skin Blemishes

1. Open the original photo with blemished skin and go to the Healing Brush Tool, (press J) or select it on the tool box.
2. Zoom it a little bit (pressing Ctrl together with +), and click on the parts you want to change. This tool is very smart and can make wonderful results alone.
3. But, if you encounter some issue this tool cannot resolve, try the "Clone Stamp Tool" (pressing S). With the Clone Stamp, you have to hold ALT and click on a part of the skin you like, then without ALT pressed, just click on the part you want to change. It's not complicated, as you will see.
4. For the final touch, create a new layer, go to the Brush Tool (press B) and with a brown color (I used #ECA85C), paint an area on the girl's face, like on the picture. Set this layer as "Screen" mode, and it's opacity to 25%.
5. Your skin should be cleaner and smoother than ever!



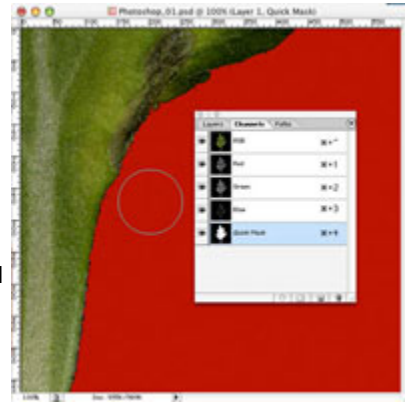
Learn How To Age Your Photos



1. Load up the image you want to "age".
2. First off all Desaturate the image (make it black and white). Do this by clicking on Image, Adjust, and then Desaturate. (Image> Adjust> Desaturate)
3. After desaturating the image, create a new layer. Make sure that u have the default colors selected by pressing "D". Fill the new layer black. Now add noise. With a value of 45. Make sure Gaussian and monochromatic are selected.
4. Now select the magic wand tool,(or press w) and select the black background. Once selected delete it.
5. If there are bits of white pieces left, keep them, they make it look even better. Now use the Ripple effect, about 4-5 times, till u get a nice result. Use the highest value of 999% and medium in the dropdown box. Also sharpen the image a bit.
(Filter > Distort > Ripple) x4
(Filter > Sharpen > Sharpen) x2
6. Ah looks nice already 😊 To make it even better, duplicate the layer, and add Gaussian blur to it.
7. There we go, looks quite old doesn't it?

Precise Photo Editing Is Made Easy With Photoshop's Grow Tool

If you have been learning to do digital photo editing in Photoshop and have been going crazy trying to do precise object selection the following information is going to be music to your ears. Just about everything you do in Photoshop seems to involve selecting objects or people for purposes such as copying, color correction, special effects, and more. Have you ever wanted to cut an irregular shaped object out of the photo for use with another background? It can be difficult if not darned near impossible to perfectly select the object using your mouse and the selection tool.



Let me introduce you to the “grow” tool. The grow tool give you the ability to easily select an object with a photograph with almost perfection. What used to be an enormous source of frustration is now a breeze. In fact, the “grow” tool makes what was previously often considered impossible possible.

Here is how the grow tool works. Let’s say you have an irregularly shaped object that you need to select for the purpose of extracting it from the original image for use in digital photo collage. Without the grow tool you would have to increase the size of the image and slow move your curser around the object until you had selected the entire object and even then your selection would probably be off quite a bit. Another option might be to use he magic wand tool but the grow tool works wonderfully for this purpose.

When you select an area within an object the grow tool makes the selection grow or expand to the areas adjacent that are similar in color. Using the grow tool you don’t need to worry about selecting your object perfectly to the edge. Just select the best you can and let the grow tool expand your selection to the edge of the object.

Modifying Standard Shapes in Photoshop



Have you ever wondered how someone was able to create a logo that looked so perfect? I used to think that someone probably had to draw the logo by hand, but then I learned some very interesting things about creating shapes in Photoshop. I used to think that you could only create standard shapes like ovals, rectangles, squares, and circles. However I recently learned that Photoshop gives you the ability to take these standard shapes and modify them to make new shapes that are very appealing. The way that this is accomplished is by selecting the path of the shape and manipulating it to create a completely new and different shape.

The first thing that you need to do is create a shape like a rectangle or an oval. Then choose the direct selection tool (white arrow), and select the path around the shape. You will know that you have selected the path, because you will see anchor points at the corners of the shape. Once you see the anchor points you will be able to click the anchor points and use them to resize and redesign the shape. The best thing about using paths to change the shape's design is that the shape maintains its crisp lines, and looks just as good as a standard shape. How are you able to do this? The reason these changes are so clean is that the shape is vector based, and not pixel based, so you are able to just manipulate the vectors that comprise the shape. Another great thing about editing a shape in this way is that whatever formatting you have used on the shape will not be affected by modifying the path. If you have a gradient fill on the shape it will be modified as you modify the path of the shape, and it will maintain the same look as before you modified the shape. Now that you know how to modify the path of a shape you are no longer limited by the standard shapes that appear in the tools palette. Use your freedom wisely, and take this new found knowledge to you computer so you can create graphics that everyone else will envy for a change.

Must Have Arsenal of the Digital Photographer

Besides their trusty camera digital photographers need a full cache of arsenal. All digital photographers must have a complete range of adequate picture database software, this includes digital camera import and downloader software to automate the photo transfer process, a photo organizer, or a photo gallery/ album software with detailed picture database capabilities and editing software for taking care of simple but necessary picture enhancements or for the more adventurous, complete digital manipulation.



Below are the top software programs no serious digital photographer should be without.

- RoboImport - A very affordable digital camera import software that automates the workflow required when downloading your photographs from your digital camera or memory card reader. RoboImport will Import your photographs and rename your photos with appropriate descriptive names into a specially designated directory to be easily located when needing to access them latter. RoboImport will do much more than less respected picture management program by performing some of the more tedious but necessary digital image editing tasks without the usual fuss. It is not expected that digital image downloader software should rename your photos, RoboImport does this and more. RoboImport fills in IPTC data required for professional photographers in a language that is recognized by appropriate editing or archiving programs. RoboImport will auto correct resolution issues, incredibly it will set your images to 300 DPI (dots per inch) for expected printing quality, as many less advanced cameras only shoot in a poor 72 DPI, 300 DPI is absolutely necessary for any photographer who will be wanting to print their photographic treasures to share away from their computer. RoboImport will also protect your photos from accidental deletion by allowing you to set your pictures to read only.

- Photoshop - This digital picture editing program is certainly not cheap, but is considered to be the awesome editing tool of professional

digital photographers. Unfortunately Photoshop is also not so easy to learn completely to benefit from the high cost for most photographers. The good news is that due to the popularity of the program, and the real benefits Photoshop offers serious digital photographers there are many ways one can comfortably learn Photoshop techniques either in your own time on the internet or off line through regular classes offered by certified professionals.

Photoshop is in reality the desk top darkroom for digital photographers.

Photoshop takes digital photography to new levels by going beyond necessary photo editing requirements. Photoshop users are able to take their not so successful photographs to become the base of new digital art by allowing the user to apply extreme manipulations and effects turning a useless image into an artistic creation.

- PicaJet- A powerful but still affordable picture management and image database program, recommended for easily cataloging and searching your digital photo catalogue. PicaJet automatically imports the metadata of your photographs and indexes your pictures accordingly. The real attraction of PicaJet for digital photographers is its genuine ease of use. PicaJet will assign each picture to each appropriate available category, making locating your digital photos from a huge data bank of thousands of photographs possible and without fuss.

PicaJet is an ideal program for ease of printing as it automatically arranges on the assigned paper and selects the most appropriate printing options. Incredibly PicaJet also reads and plays back various video formats. Unlike most other digital photograph organizers PicaJet even allows for privacy of those personal photos or pictures you would rather not share. Like Photoshop PicaJet is so rich in functions it is impossible to mention every incredible feature in just these few words.

PicaJet is perhaps the best value for money of available digital picture management program.

- Neat Image- this is a very handy little tool for digital photographers. Neat Image is a filter software program designed to reduce noise and grain produced by digital cameras. Shooting in low light environments does seriously affect the quality of digital photographs; Neat Image greatly enhances an image's quality that may have been compromised by an inadequate camera or poor lighting.

Neat image is available as a standalone program, or for photographers with Photoshop it may be added to work as a noise reduction plug-in.