How to Do *Everything* with Photoshop® Elements 4.0

Edit, retouch, and enhance digital images

Get the most out of all the software's features

Prepare images for print or the Web

FULL COLOR

David Plotkin

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How to Do *Everything* with

Photoshop® Elements 4.0

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the two mothers in my life. The first is my mother, Nathalie Plotkin. She first encouraged my interest in photography (and later in writing), helped me to set up my first darkroom, and taught me to use a camera as more than just a "snapshot machine." She raised three sons (our pictures are sprinkled through the book, as is hers) —a doctor and two engineers—and instilled in all of us a strong sense of values that has served us well.

The other mother is my mother-in-law. A true "gift from God," she stayed with us and took care of my wife during her long recuperation after major surgery so I could get this book written on schedule. Every person should be blessed with such a family member!

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About the Author

David Plotkin is the manager of data quality for Wells Fargo Consumer Credit Group and holds a master's degree in chemical engineering from U.C. Berkeley. He is focused on improving information quality in his job, and is a self-taught, web-building tool user. David has been a photographer since age 12 and has done extensive semi-pro and action photo work. He has his own darkroom and created summer-camp yearbooks long before the days of computers. He has extensive experience with digital photography, including cameras, scanners, printers, and software.

David maintains web sites for various nonprofit and charitable organizations and has written several other computer books on database topics, graphics, and building web sites, including *How to Do Everything with FrontPage 2003* (McGraw-Hill/Osborne, 2003). He lives in Walnut Creek, California, with his wife, Marisa, a successful writer of children's books (see www.MarisaMontes.com).

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Bill Bruns is the coordinator of technology and media at the College of Education and Human Services at Southern Illinois University. He teaches a graduate course entitled "An Adventure of the American Mind," which instructs K–12 teachers on how to use the Library of Congress's American Memory database to incorporate multimedia into their lesson plans. For eight years, he has been a technical editor, working on more than 125 books relating to the Internet, web servers, HTML, operating systems, and Office applications. He originally planned to work in television production, but his interest turned to computers while working on an undergraduate internship at *Square One TV,* a children's mathematics show produced by the Children's Television Workshop in New York City. Bill holds bachelor's degrees in telecommunications and English literature from Indiana University and a master's of public administration from New York University. Bill, his wife Debbie, daughter Marlie, son Will, and his three bearded dragons live on the edge of the Shawnee National Forest in Carbondale, Illinois. You can reach him at billbruns3@yahoo.com.

Acknowledgments

Many people contribute to a book, and this is especially true of a book that includes many photographs. This book would have been much harder to write had it not been for the efforts of the following people:

- My parents, Norman and Nathalie Plotkin, for allowing me to use them as the subject of many pictures.
- My brother, Fred, whose likeness appears in many images—one of which he was removed from just because I could!
- My brother, Larry. Many of the outdoor scenes and European buildings were from Larry's collection, and he graciously allowed me to use them. He is the most artistic of the three brothers, and it really shows in his photos.
- My wife, Marisa, not only for allowing me to use her portraits, but for putting up with the brutal schedule that goes along with writing a book. Fortunately, she is a writer herself (children's books), so she understands just how hard it is to write a book.
- Megg Morin, who allowed me to use her entire collection of photos of her son, Cooper, as well as the rest of her family and friends.
- Avery Raskin of The Write Words, a friendly Canadian and fellow author who was kind enough to let me use the photos of his daughters with the most amazing example of red-eye I have ever seen. Their photo is in Chapter 8.
- Dave Huss, a professional photographer and author of numerous books (and a friend). The photos you see in the collage at the beginning of each chapter come from his extensive collection, and all are copyrighted.

Of course, the other "batch" of people who made this book a reality are the hard-working folks at McGraw-Hill/Osborne. These include my acquisitions editor Megg Morin (again), acquisitions coordinator Agatha Kim, and the best tech editor you can hope for, Bill Bruns, who also tech edited *How to Do Everything with FrontPage 2003* as well as previous versions of this book.

Putting a book like this together is hard work. To make sure that I didn't butcher the English language, copy editor Mike McGee reviewed everything and (gently) made corrections where necessary. Jody McKenzie was the project editor, making sure everything got built properly and on-time. She did a marvelous job, as seems to be the norm with the people at McGraw-Hill/Osborne.

Introduction

The fact that you bought this book—or are considering buying it—means you are ready to join the large number of people who have discovered the wonders of digitally editing photographs. Whether you get your photos into digital form by using a digital camera, scanning your snapshots or negatives, or having the corner drugstore put them on a CD for you, the wonders of what you can achieve with your photos are only beginning. In front of you is a whole book on how to use one of the premier digital editing packages. Think of this book as a way to explore this fascinating new world.

What Is this Book About?

Significant advances on the hardware front have made digital photography more and more accessible. Cameras that cost under $500 now produce images that rival film quality. Color inkjet printers that cost between $150 and $400 produce beautiful prints on glossy paper, and scanners that cost less than $200 produce scans with resolutions of over 2400 dots per inch.

Yet the real opportunity provided by digital photography (beyond seeing your pictures immediately on that tiny screen on the back of the camera) is to fix pictures that are less than perfect. Maybe the exposure or color was a little off, or a busy background distracted from the main subject. With regular film, you'd need a darkroom, an enlarger, a bunch of nasty chemicals, and considerable expertise (trust me, I know) to correct some of these items—and some you could never fix. For example, you can't add a person who isn't there to a photograph.

In other words, the real opportunity with digital photography is in the software—software like Adobe Photoshop Elements 4. You can continue to take film pictures if you wish, but with a scanner or a handy digital photo lab at the drugstore, you can digitize the images—and that is where the fun begins. You don't need the darkroom, the enlarger, or the nasty chemicals. What you *still* need is the considerable expertise, and *that* is what this book provides. It teaches you to use Adobe Photoshop Elements to modify your digital photographs using the power of its built-in tools. With a little care and some hard-drive space, nothing you do is irreversible—you can always start over from the original. And you don't have to commit the image to paper until you're truly satisfied with it.

Another opportunity presented by the software is the ability to organize your image collection. Between thumbnails (small versions of the pictures), tags (keywords), collections (ways of grouping your images), and other tools, you can keep track of your precious pictures, and find them when you need them.

How Is this Book Organized?

This book is divided into five parts:

- Part I, "Get to Know Photoshop Elements"
- Part II, "Make Simple Adjustments to Your Images"
- Part III, "Apply Changes to Specific Parts of Your Photos"
- Part IV, "Use Effects, Filters, and Text to Go Beyond the Darkroom"
- Part V, "Share and Organize Your Images"

Part I, "Get to Know Photoshop Elements," introduces the various parts of the software, including navigation, the desktop, palettes, and the toolbar. It shows you how to open and save images, and use the various tools to view images.

Part II, "Make Simple Adjustments to Your Images," teaches you to make general corrections to the overall image, such as cropping and adjusting brightness, contrast, shadows and highlights, and color. It also shows you how to use the Paintbrush and other toolbox tools to modify, sharpen, and blur an image, as well as to create other effects—for instance, with the Dodge and Burn tools you can simulate old photography techniques that lighten and darken specific portions of the image. Finally, this section shows you exactly how to repair cracked and faded photos and even "heal" blemishes.

Part III, "Apply Changes to Specific Parts of Your Photos," teaches you to select the portion of your photo you want to work with, including all areas of a certain color. Once you've selected an area, you can apply changes limited to just that area, such as a gradient fill or a blur. This section also introduces layers, which enable you to stack up changes and modifications without changing the base image. You can apply fills and adjustments (like color or brightness) to layers, adjusting the amount of the effect by changing the layer opacity and masking the effect of the layer in portions of the image. You can also apply styles to a layer, thus modifying the contents of the layer. With the transform tools, you can flip, rotate, skew, distort, and make other transformations to selected objects. In addition, you can add objects that weren't there, remove objects that were, and modify the background of an image—or replace it altogether.

Part IV, "Use Effects, Filters, and Text to Go Beyond the Darkroom," introduces filters, powerful tools that can change the look of your image with very little effort. You can add textures, make the image look like it was created in alternative media (such as watercolors or color pencils), add

special lighting, and even create a three-dimensional look for boxes, cylinders, and spheres. You can also add text to an image and modify how the text looks, even creating a mask in the shape of the text to describe an image. Finally, Photoshop Elements can automatically paste together pictures that contain overlapping images into a panoramic, which is handy for capturing entire city skylines.

Part V, "Share and Organize Your Images," introduces the Organizer, a tool for organizing your images by date, keyword, and collection. The Organizer also enables you to view thumbnails of your images and search for images using various criteria. This section also shows you how to convert your photos for Web viewing and print your images, whether it's done one at a time or in an optimized layout format that maximizes the space on your photo paper. You'll learn how to do batch conversions to change the file type and size, and how to name a set of image files. Finally, you'll discover how to make "creations," such as calendars, photo books, slide shows, and cards.

Bonus Content on the Web

If you're interested in creating online content, such as generating web galleries for your images or ordering your creations online, a bonus chapter on the Web, "Build Creations with Your Photos," provides step-by-step instructions for using Organizer to accomplish this. To access this special chapter, go to www.osborne.com and download the Adobe Acrobat file that contains the material. Click the Free Code button in the toolbar near the upper-left corner of the web site. On the next web page, pick the title of this book, as well as the bonus material, in order to start the download.

Who Is this Book Written For?

This book is written primarily for people who want to learn how to use Photoshop Elements to manipulate digital photographs. There are many features of Photoshop Elements that you won't use when working with photos. These won't be discussed in the text because there simply isn't enough room to cover everything this powerful package can do. Since this book focuses on the software, it does not teach you how to take good pictures. It does assume you know how to either create digital photos or convert film images, slides, or negatives to digital form. It presents information in a logical, step-by-step format, so you can read through the book to learn what Photoshop Elements can do and then refer to it later, as necessary, to refresh your memory on a particular technique.

So, enjoy the experience! Working with digital photos and Adobe Photoshop Elements is fun and rewarding. There is nothing quite like taking a so-so photo and turning it into a work of art. And the first time you restore a damaged (and possibly irreplaceable) photo for someone, you'll know a real feeling of satisfaction.

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Pictures from the Photospin Service

A number of the pictures in this book were printed by permission from the Photospin online photo service. These images have been noted in the text. The Photospin service has carefully cataloged a large collection of images and makes it easy to find them using keywords and categories. To use these images royalty-free, you must join Photospin and pay a membership fee.

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