Organizing and Fixing Photographs with Adobe Photoshop

After you have taken pictures with your digital camera, you will want to transfer them to your computer, organize them, and touch them up. As much fun as you had taking pictures, editing adds the little extra something that makes digital so cool. Here are some quick tips, courtesy of Adobe's "Digital Kids Club" <http://www.adobe.com/education/digkids/intro/index.html>.

For a detailed, step-by-step guide to touching up and editing photographs using Adobe Photoshop, see **"Basic Photo Corrections," Adobe Photoshop CS2,** *Classroom in a Book.* We've included a PDF of the lesson here.

GETTING ORGANIZED

Importing pictures into your computer
The first step is to install Adobe® Photoshop® Elements on your computer. Now you can connect your camera or card-reader to your computer and import images directly into Photoshop Elements. Printed photographs can also be brought into your computer by using a scanner, and images you have already stored in your computer can be imported as well.

Finding your photos easily
Digital cameras make photography easy and affordable, so it is very common to end up with a lot of pictures. Having a lot of pictures requires a good software tool for keeping them organized. Photoshop Elements allows you to view all of your photos in one place, organized by the date they were taken, or by tags that you create—such as "Immigrant Workers" or "Celebrations." This method is far easier than renaming every picture, creating folders, and manually putting images into the folders. It also makes it much easier to find them later. To tag a photo, simply drag the appropriate tag on top of the photo and you're done. Adobe Photoshop Elements allows you to view your images as thumbnails, and find them quickly based on a timeline or the tags you have assigned.

Backing up your original photos to CD
The files your camera creates are your original photos. Just like film negatives, if they are ever lost or damaged, you can't get the pictures back. Make sure your original pictures are safe by copying them to a CD-R right after you have transferred them to the computer. Photoshop Elements has backup and archive functions that can assist you with this. If you use a CD-RW (rewriteable CD), make sure that you never overwrite the CD, or you will lose pictures that are already on it. Put the CD in a safe place and go take some more pictures.

Clearing your camera
Now that you have safely stored and organized your photos, you can clear the camera memory, so you can go fill it up again. Adobe Photoshop Elements has a feature that can help you do this, called "Delete photos after copying." If your camera uses a memory card, you may want to format the card to completely remove all data.

EDITING

NOTE: The points below are intended as a checklist rather than a how-to. For a detailed, step-by-step guide to touching up and editing photographs using Adobe Photoshop, see "Basic Photo Corrections" in Adobe Photoshop CS2, *Classroom in a Book.* (We have included a PDF of the chapter here.) Also remember: It's possible that a photo is just fine as is, or that the fixing it needs is minimal—perhaps just tweaking the contrast.

Only edit a copy of the photo.
Never edit the digital negative, or you'll never be able to get the original photo back.

Edit on the computer, not the camera.
Unless it's an emergency, never edit or delete photos in the camera.

Edit in full view.
It's much easier to edit when you're looking at a photo in its actual size (the 100% view). That way, you're sure to know the full effect the change makes on the picture.

Level the photo.
Hopefully, the photos you take will be consistently level—not cock-eyed, with the image sloping a bit to the left or right. If the level is a tiny bit off, however, the first editing job is to straighten it. (If it's significantly cock-eyed, the process of leveling will make the picture too blurry. It isn't worth doing.)

Crop the photo.
When the important part of your picture is too small, too far away, off-center, or inadvertently overshadowed by something else in the picture, it's time to crop that picture down to size. When you crop a picture, you cut off the unwanted parts, effectively zooming in on the part of the picture you want to keep. It's a great way to improve a picture's composition, after the fact.

Adjust the picture's contrast.
Have you ever wondered why a photo you took doesn't have the same intense color you saw as you snapped the picture? Even the best digital cameras can have trouble showing the full effect. In photography, contrast is the balance between dark and light. Adjust the contrast and tweak its brightness, and the picture comes to life.

Balance the color.
Most digital cameras do a good job of accurately capturing colors. However, there are times where the image as the camera created it is a bit off in terms of color balance, or where the color is accurate but not exactly what you imagined for the scene. In those situations, you can adjust the color to obtain the best colors possible. Color balancing can make a photo really pop.

Remove red-eye.
When you use a camera's flash, especially in darkened rooms, red-eye can be hard to avoid. Use the red-eye removal tool to make everyone's eyes the color they were meant to be.

Resize the picture.
If you've taken a photo in a high-resolution format, which is necessary if you will be creating a good-sized print, you must create a second version with a reduced image size and resolution if you also want to share it on the Internet. Be sure to keep the original high-resolution version. You want to end up with two versions. Name the files in a way that lets you know which version is which, so that you don't have to open the photo and check the image size each time you work with it.