

Basic Photo Enhancement with Photoshop Elements

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For Cary Photographic Artists

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Agenda

- Brightness/contrast
- Shadows/Highlights
- Levels
- Saturation
- Adjustment Layers
- Clone Stamp Tool
- Spot Healing Tool (Band aid)
- New Pop Photo article

Focus on simple editing

- Not covering
 - Importing
 - Organizing/albums
 - Rating
 - Sharpening
 - Printing
 - Raw/JPEG

Not on the agenda

- Photoshop Elements
 - compared to
- Photoshop CS3
 - compared to
- Lightroom
 - compared to
- Aperture
 - compared to
- PaintShop Pro, etc.

Two Quotes

“Elements is 75% of Photoshop for \$75.”

“There are at least 5 ways to do anything in Photoshop, and 3 or 4 of them are the best way.”

But now to the meat of the presentation...

Add some “snap” to church doors



The goal is to improve, not perform an extreme make-over.

Exploring Elements

- Standard windows dialog
- Open your photo
- Make enhancements
- **SAVE AS....**
 - Never overwrite your original!
- Some advise duplication of the original layer and working on that

demonstration

Enhance → Adjust lighting

- Shadows/Highlights
- Brightness/Contrast
- Levels

Adjustment Layers

- Layer → New Adjustment Layer
 - Levels
 - Brightness/Contrast
 - Hue/Saturation
- Can have multiple layers
- Can make them visible/invisible with “eye”
 - (Actually, “eye” applies to all layers, not just adjustment layers)

Saving a photo with layers

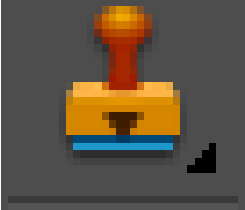
- Layers are a proprietary technology of Adobe, so they cannot be saved in standard formats
 - JPG, GIF, TIF etc.
- If you save in .PSD format, then layers are preserved
 - You can re-edit
 - You cannot send to photofinisher, post on web, etc
- Layers → Flatten image
 - Can save in standard formats
 - Layers integrated into image – no re-edit

Note: Before you save your first .PSD do edit
→ preferences → saving files → maximum
capability → never

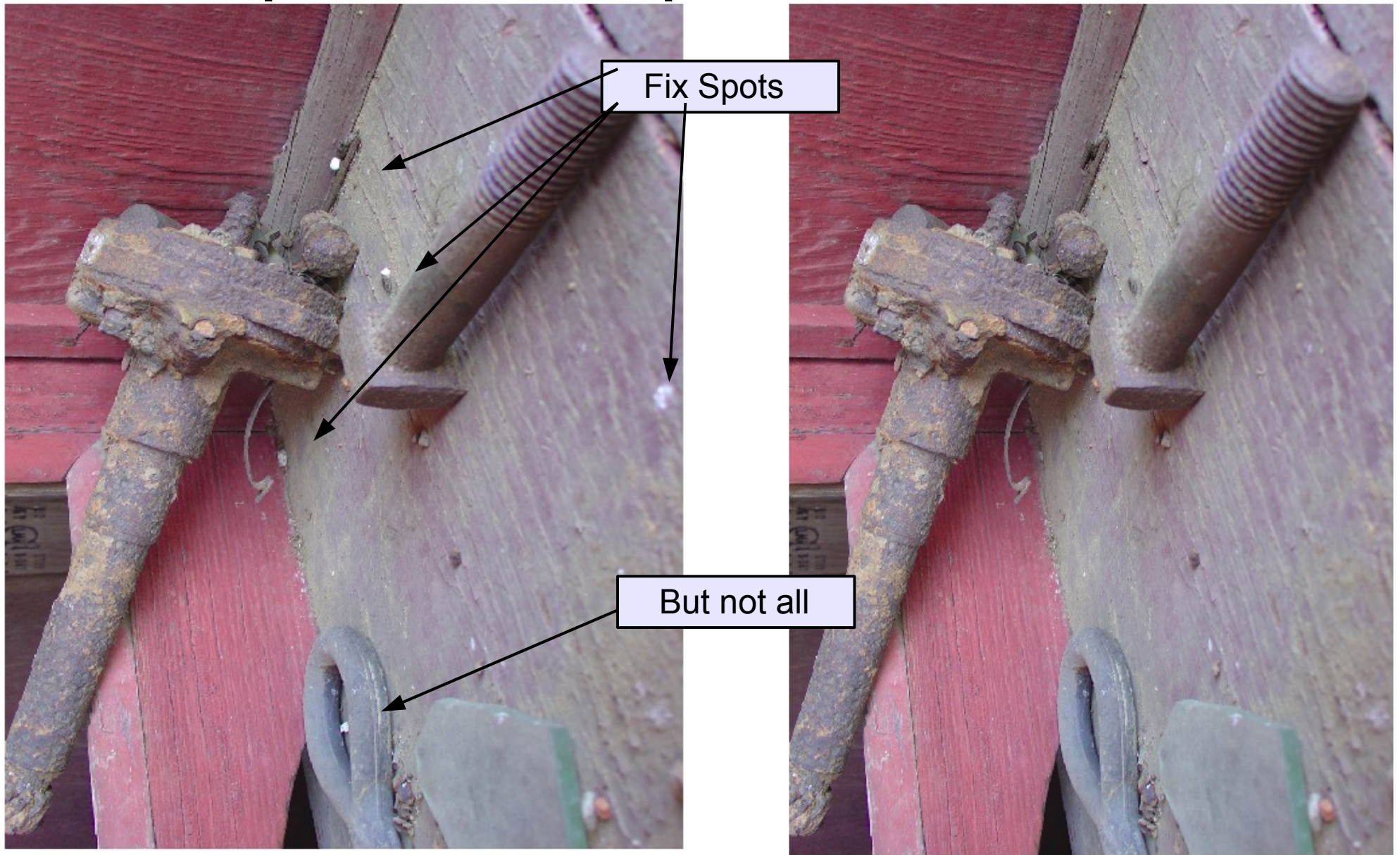
Clone Stamp – fix flaws



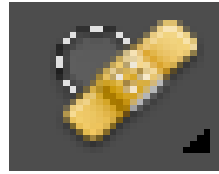
Clone stamp

- Click Clone Stamp Icon → 
- Select size
- Alt-Click to sample
- Click to paste
- Often best to magnify the area to work on
- Watch for trails and seams
- Be your own toughest critic
 - Nothing looks cheesier than poorly stamped photo
 - If you can see it, so can your audience

Spot Healing Tool – fix flaws



Spot Healing Tool (Band Aid)



- Click Band Aid icon
- “Brush” over area – flaws disappear (hopefully)
- Often best to magnify the area to work on
- Watch for blotches and discolorations
- Be your own worst critic
 - Poor workmanship makes an image worse, not better
 - If you can see it, so can your audience

Clone Stamp vs. Spot Healing

- Works best in complex area
 - Gives you control over source
 - Possible to follow edges
- Works best in simple area
 - Attempts to make painted area match surroundings
 - Only control is coverage

Recent article in Popular Photography

- “Secrets of Elements”
- May 2008 issue
- Online at <http://www.popphoto.com/>
 - Click features then look at lower left
- Covers a different way to do brightness and contrast
- Covers a different way to do saturation

Brightness and contrast

Pop Photo article

- Enhance → Adjust Color → Adjust Color Curves
- Not available as a layer
- Provides sliders for
 - Midtones
 - Shadows
 - Highlights

Saturation

Pop Photo article

- Open file (even JPG or TIF) in Camera Raw
- Vibrance slider
- Clarity Slider
- When done, click Open Image to go to regular editor

Summary

- Elements is powerful
 - The many options can be confusing
 - You can stick with a few simple techniques
- 30 day download free trial at
 - <http://www.adobe.com/downloads/>
 - But not during June 2008
- Remember:
 - The goal is to improve, not perform an extreme make-over.
 - Be your own toughest critic.