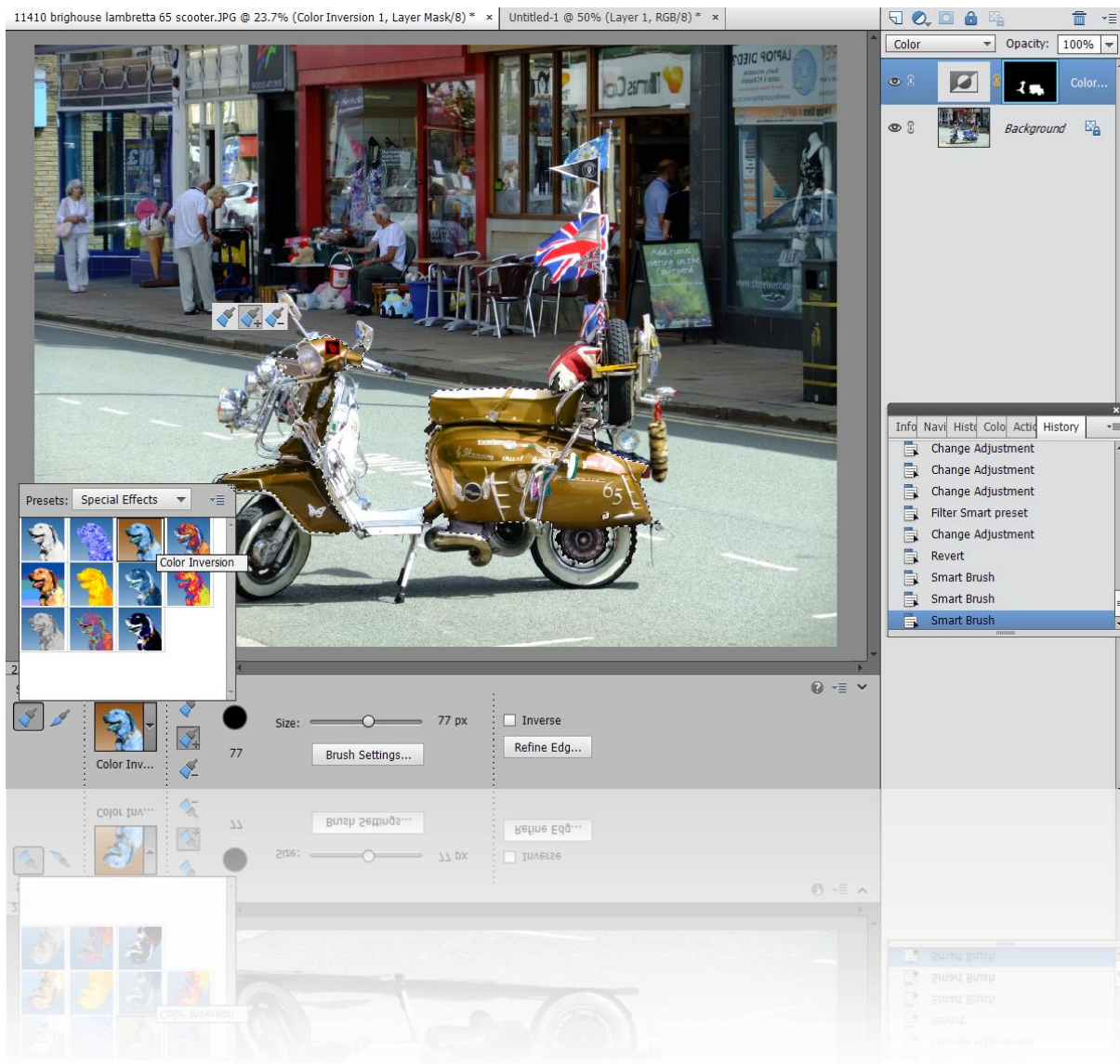


Chris Hester's Photoshop Elements Tips 2

By Chris Hester © 2018 • Version 1



Introduction

This is the second volume of tips I've made after upgrading my copy of Photoshop Elements a while back. I've found so many useful and interesting things it can do that I don't think I'll ever stop learning. The great thing is how easy and intuitive a lot of the features are. You can play around with them until you get something worth saving.

I've listed a few of my discoveries here. Of course there is a lot more the program can do, and some of it can be quite complex. Hopefully you'll find something useful here.

Note: These tips were made using Photoshop Elements 13. Many of them should work in earlier and later versions, but I can't guarantee it. Some of the tips should also work in Photoshop (the full version) though the menus and keyboard commands may well differ.

For the first volume of tips, here is the link. It's a PDF file much like this one.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1GD-R-0ePEl_rGILBqUlrP8uWOBaAwDtB

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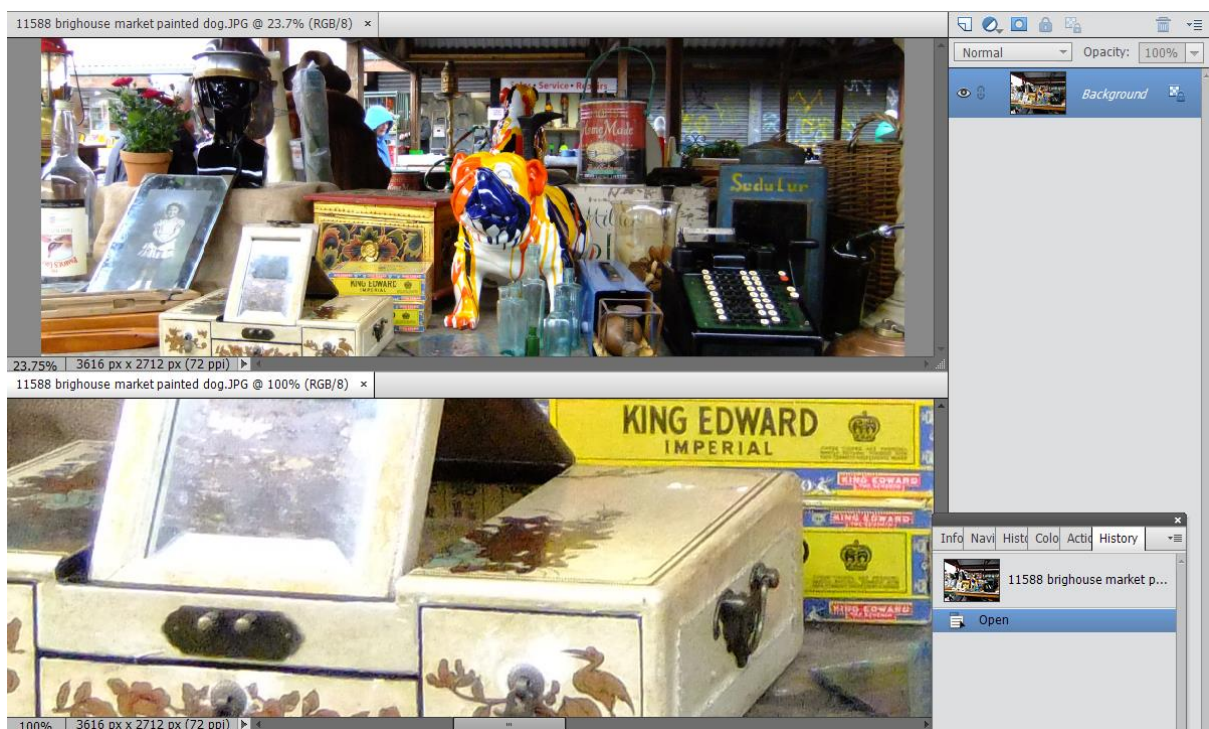
Views

Double-click on the **Hand Tool** icon to view an image in '**Fit Screen**' mode instantly.

Go straight to 100% zoom size by double-clicking on the **Zoom Tool** (magnifying glass) icon.

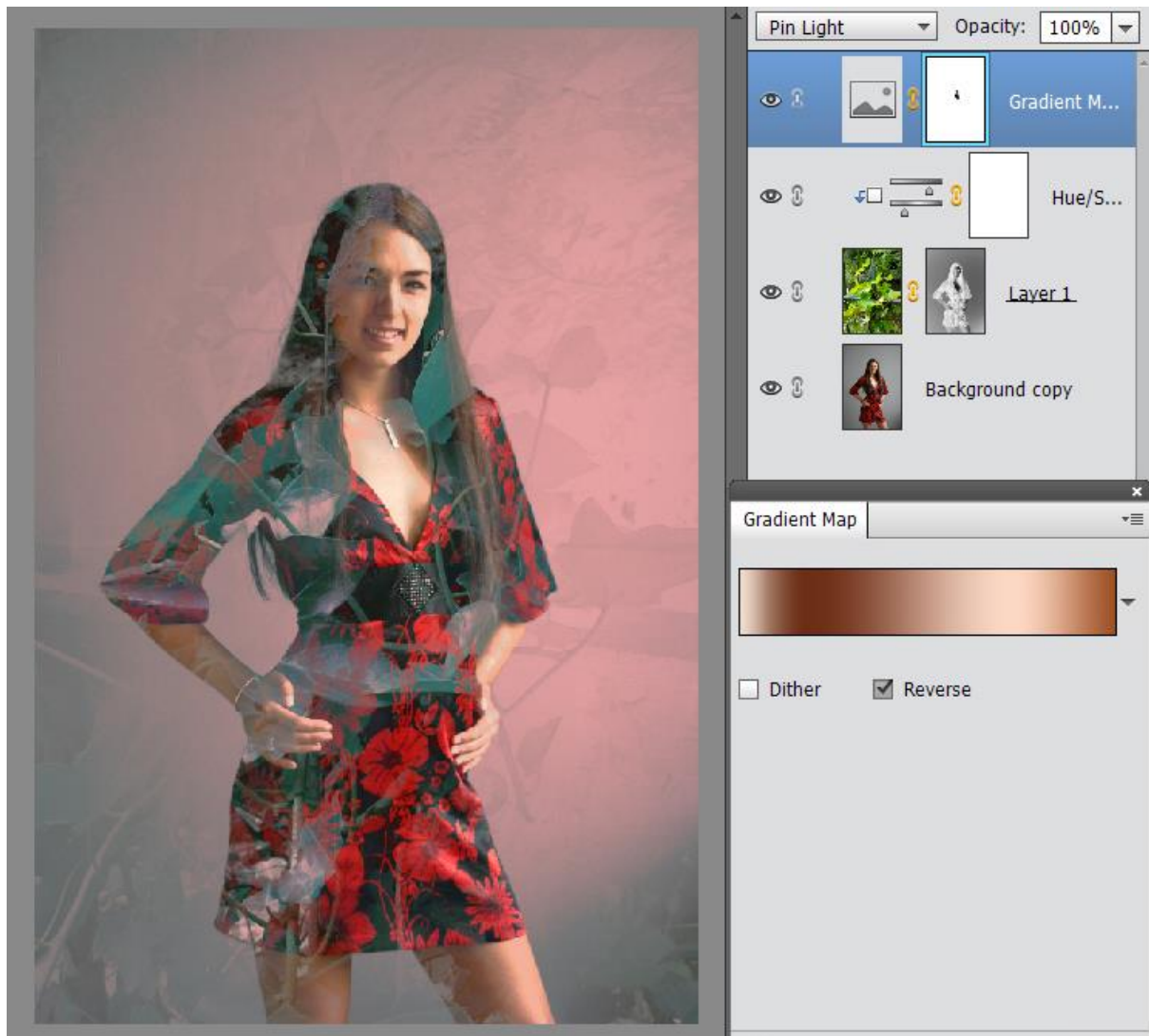
You can view the same file **twice** at 100% size and '**Fit Screen**' size at the same time. Open an image file then go to **View** and choose **New Window for [your filename]**. The image will appear in two tabs. Then whatever edits you do will affect **both** tabs. This means you can swap between different views just by choosing the tab you want. You can even open more than two copies of the same image if you want a range of views.

Use the **Layout** button in the bottom toolbar to arrange the images so you can see them both. (You can arrange them in different ways such as horizontally or vertically.) Below is a single image shown in two different views at once.



Layer Masks

Layer masks are great for showing or hiding parts of the layer underneath. Typically you paint over them with a brush. But what if you could use a much finer range of shades in a mask? You can! It's possible to **paste an image** into a mask. That way you get all the fine detail of the image, and the mask works in the same way as before. Here's an example:



To add an image to a layer mask, just follow these simple steps:

Open an image you want to paste into the mask. Now open another image and select all of it (in Windows you would use **CTRL + A**). Now go back to the first image and add a new

layer. Paste the second image into that layer. (In Windows that would be **CTRL + V**.) You should now have two layers with your two images in them.

Now choose the bottom layer and select all of it. Copy it like you did with the second image earlier.

Add a layer mask to the top layer using the square icon with a circle in it at the top. You now need to select the layer mask itself. To do this in Windows hold down the **Alt** key and click on the mask. Use paste to add the copied image into the mask.

Note: the layer mask works well inverted - in Windows that's **CTRL + I**.

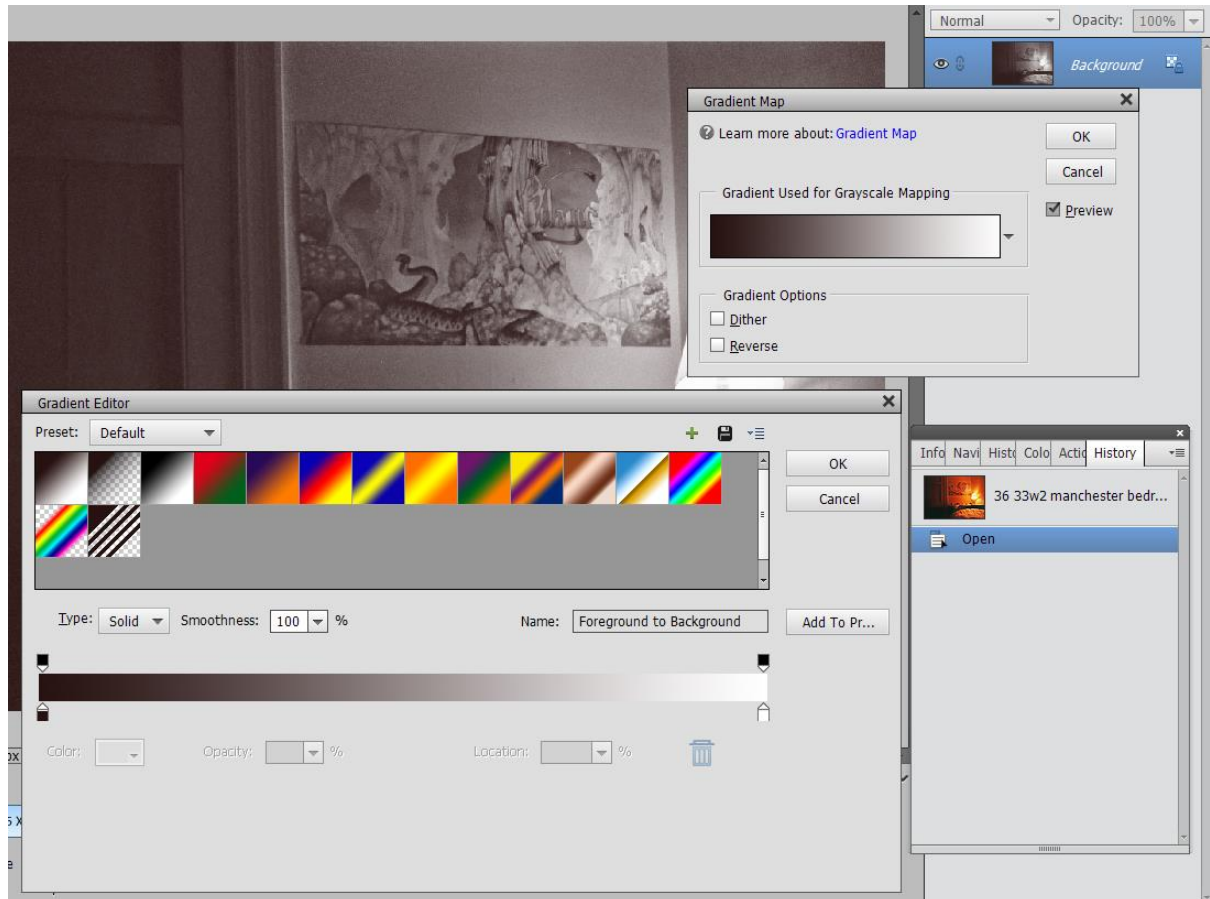
Rubylith Mode

To activate this, in Windows hold down the **ALT** key and click on a gradient fill mask. This shows the mask full screen instead of your image, so you can see what brush strokes or edits you have made to the mask. Otherwise you only have the tiny thumbnail next to the layer in the side palette to go by. (Note: this isn't something I've named myself, it's listed in the shortcuts sheet that came with Photoshop Elements 1!)

If you click on the mask in Windows and hold down **SHIFT**, it toggles the mask on and off.

Gradients

Click on the **Gradient Map** preview bar to bring up a range of options before you choose **OK**.



Colours & Contrast

Ever found yourself editing a screenshot of Photoshop where the grey background matches the one in the program? Right-click on the background around your image and choose a darker or lighter shade. Or choose a custom colour – it doesn't have to be grey. You can then see the edges of the screenshot clearly.

Fine-tune the colour sliders in the **Hue/Saturation** box by using the bottom bars. The aim is to modify the cut-off point of a single colour so the effect of using the slider alters. If you change the colour to a different hue, Photoshop renames it to match the new colour! To learn more on this complex subject, I'd recommend studying the official Adobe web page:

<https://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop-elements/using/adjusting-color-saturation-hue-vibrance.html>

One way to increase the **contrast** in an image is simply to copy the layer, then change the **Blending Mode** to **Soft Light**.

The Smart Brush

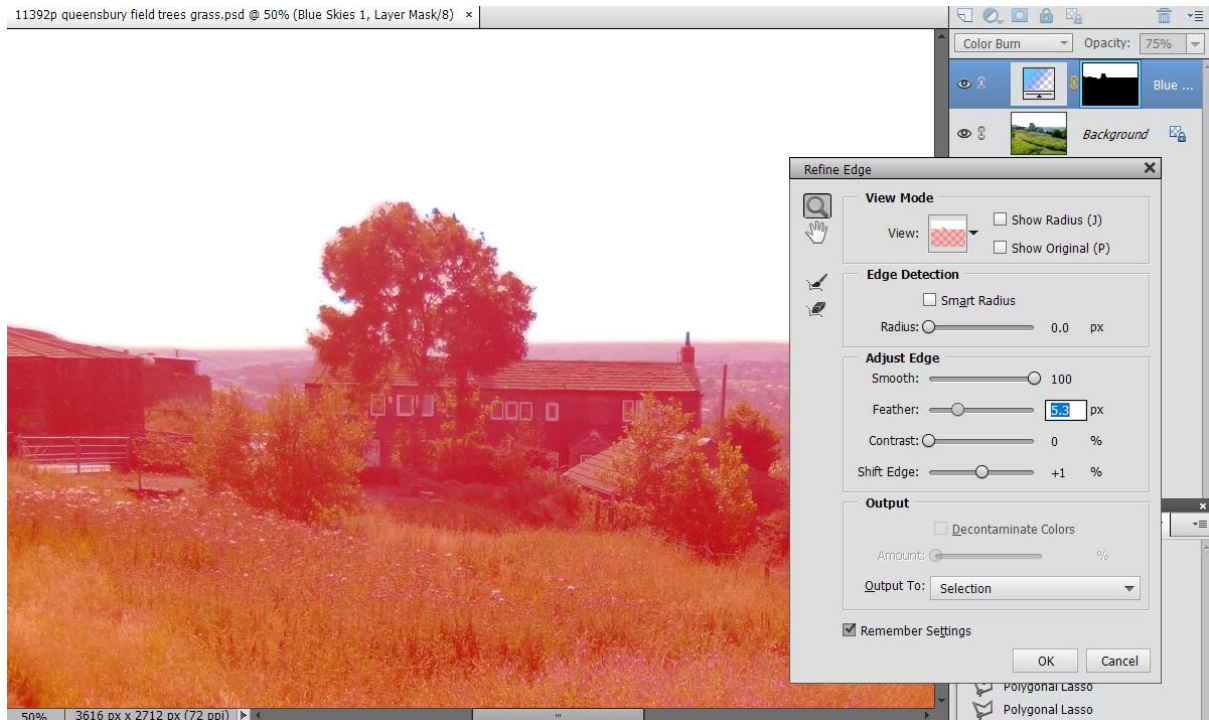
The **Smart Brush** is great for drawing over a photograph to create a selection quickly. It's like magic, following the contours of an object and sticking to edges like glue. Sure you won't get it perfect first time, but practice and you'll get the hang of it. Once you've got a rough selection, you can then fine-tune it using the other selection tools, like the **Polygonal Lasso Tool**. In Windows you can hold down **Alt** to remove bits of the selection (the tool changes to show a minus next to it) or hold down **Shift** to add to the selection (the tool shows a plus). Just draw over the areas you want to add or remove and the original selection shrinks or expands until you're happy with it.

I did a selection of the sky in the photo below using the **Smart Brush**. The tree and the slope at the left weren't covered properly, so I added and removed bits of the selection until I got it close enough. I then changed the **Layer Style** to **Darken** and a previously white sky turned blue! The trick was to select one of the effects in the **Smart Brush** options that added a blue fade to the sky. There are dozens of these effects, covering things like black and white conversions, portraits and colour effects. It's worth going through them all to see what's possible.

Note: the cover image of this document is an example of the **Color Inversion** effect, found under the **Special Effects** menu on the **Smart Brush** toolbar. I used it to change the colour of the scooter from blue to brown.



Once you have a selection, you can also use **Refine Edge** to smooth the edges so the end result is less obvious. Click on the **Refine Edge** button on the **Smart Brush** toolbar at the bottom of the screen. I chose to highlight the underlying image in red using the **View Mode** button, but you can choose black, white or other options. Now adjust the sliders so the outline is smoothed or faded as you see fit.



For this photo I set the **Smooth** slider to 100 and the **Feather** to 5.3px. This covered enough of the tree to make any changes to the sky blend in with the rest of the image. I noticed some of the gaps in the tree showed a white background, so I just had to copy the sky colour nearby using the **Color Picker** (eyedropper) tool and paint over them. The **Smart Brush** seemed to do this perfectly.