



The Photoshop Elements 3 Book for Digital Photographers
by Scott Kelby
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Scott Kelby's Top Tips For Fixing Digital Camera Image Problems in Photoshop Elements 3

Some image problems we bring upon ourselves, while others can be blamed on hardware. Regardless of whose fault it is, problems are going to happen, and you'll need to fix them. Some of the fixes are easy. Others will have you jumping through some major Elements hoops, but fear not, the problems you'll most likely run into are all covered in Scott Kelby's new book *The Photoshop Elements 3 Book for Digital Photographers*—which we've excerpted for you here—along with tons of step-by-step tips on organizing, editing, and sharing digital pictures using Photoshop Elements 3.

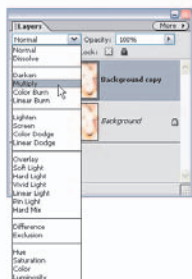
Compensating for "Too Much Flash" or Overexposure

Don't ya hate it when you open a photo and realize that either (a) the flash fired when it shouldn't have; (b) you were too close to the subject to use the flash and they're totally "blown out"; or (c) you're simply not qualified to use a flash at all, and your flash unit should be forcibly taken from you, even if that means ripping it from the camera body? Here's a quick fix to get your photo back from the "flash graveyard" while keeping your reputation, and camera parts, intact.



Step One

Open the photo that is suffering from "flashaphobia," meaning the entire subject is washed out. Make a copy of the photo by dragging-and-dropping your Background layer on the Create a New Layer icon at the top of the Layers palette. This will create a layer titled "Background copy."



Step Two

Next, change the layer blend mode of the Background copy from Normal to Multiply from the pop-up menu at the top of the Layers palette. This blend mode has a "multiplier" effect and brings back a lot of the original detail the flash "blew out."



Step Three

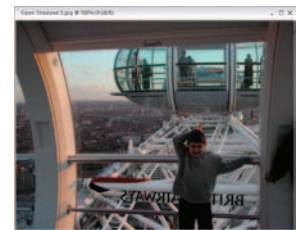
If the photo still looks washed out, you may need to make a duplicate of the Background copy layer a few times. Just drag-and-drop it to the Create a New Layer icon at the top of the Layers palette. These additional copies of the Background layer copy will already be in Multiply mode.

Opening Up Shadow Areas That Are Too Dark

If you have a problem with your photo, there's a pretty good chance it's in the shadow areas. Either you shot the photo with the light source behind the subject, or the lighting in the room put part of the subject in the shadows, or...well...you just messed up (hey, it happens). Luckily, you can open up just the shadows by moving one simple slider. Of course, you have to know where to look.

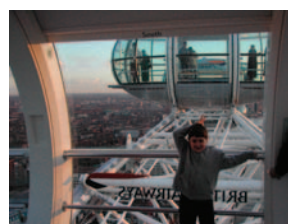
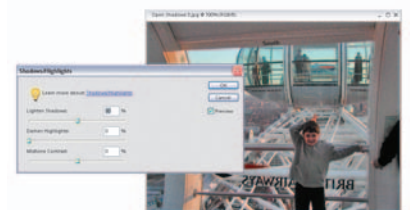
Step One

Open the photo that needs to have its shadow areas opened up to reveal detail that was "lost in the shadows."

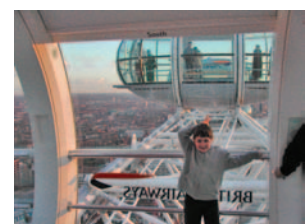


Step Two

Go under the Enhance menu, under Adjust Lighting, and choose Shadows/Highlights. When the dialog appears, it already assumes you have a shadow problem (sadly, most people do but never admit it), so it automatically opens up the shadow areas in your document by 50% (you'll see that the Lighten Shadows slider is at 50% by default [0% is no lightening of the shadows]). If you want to open the shadow areas even more, drag the Lighten Shadows slider to the right. If the shadows appear to be opened too much with the default 50% increase, drag the slider to the left to a setting below 50%. When the shadows look right, click OK. Your repair is complete.



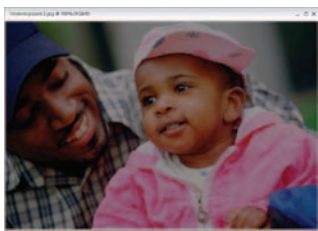
Before



After

Fixing Underexposed Photos

This is a tonal correction for people who don't like making tonal corrections (more than 60 million Americans suffer from the paralyzing fear of MTC [Making Tonal Corrections]). Since this technique requires no knowledge of tonal corrections (like using Levels), it's very popular; and even though it's incredibly simple to perform, it does a pretty incredible job of fixing underexposed photos.



Step One

Open an underexposed photo that could've used either a fill flash or a better exposure setting.



Step Two

Make a copy of the Background layer by dragging it to the Create a New Layer icon at the top of the Layers palette. This will create a layer titled "Background copy." In the Layers palette, change the blend mode of this new layer from Normal to Screen to lighten the entire photo.



Step Three

If the photo still isn't properly exposed, drag this Screen layer to the Create a New Layer icon at the top of the Layers palette to duplicate it, and keep duplicating it until the exposure looks about right.



Step Four

There's a good chance that at some point you'll duplicate the Screen layer again and the image will look overexposed. What you need is "half a

layer." Half as much lightening. Here's what to do: Lower the Opacity of your top layer to "dial in" the perfect amount of light, giving you something between the full intensity of the layer (at 100%) and no layer at all (at 0%). For half the intensity, try 50%. Once the photo looks properly exposed, click the "More" arrow at the top right of the Layers palette to access the palette's flyout menu, and choose Flatten Image.

Fixing Areas That Are Too Bright

Although most of the lighting problems you'll encounter are in the shadow areas of your photo, you'll be surprised how many times there's an area that is too bright (perhaps an area that's lit with harsh, direct sunlight, or you exposed for the foreground but the background is now overexposed). Luckily, this is now an easy fix, too!

Step One

Open the photo that has highlights that you want to tone down a bit. Note: If it's an individual area (like the sun shining directly on your subject's hair), you'll want to press the L key to switch to the Lasso tool and put a loose selection around that area. Then go under the Select menu and choose Feather. For low-res, 72-ppi images, enter 2 pixels and click OK. For high-res, 300-ppi images, try 8 pixels.



Step Two

Now go under the Enhance menu, under Adjust Lighting, and choose Shadows/Highlights. When the dialog appears, drag the Lighten Shadows slider to 0% and drag the Darken Highlights slider to the right, and as you do, the highlights will decrease, bringing back detail and balancing the overall tone of your selected highlights with the rest of your photo. Sometimes when you make adjustments to the highlights (or shadows), you can lose some of the contrast in the midtone areas (they can become muddy or flat looking, or they can become oversaturated). If that happens, drag the Midtone Contrast slider (at the bottom of the dialog) to the right to increase the amount of midtone contrast, or drag to the left to reduce it. Then click OK. Note: you'll need to press Control-D to deselect when you're finished.



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