

Workshop #3 Image Editing Workflow

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This workshop will discuss the basic workflow of image editing. Shown will be the steps that almost every image needs.

This is the workflow I follow, these steps are by no means the only way to edit your images, nor are they necessarily the best for you. An editing workflow is something that you develop to fit your needs and tastes.

Photoshop Elements, tools used:

Crop Clone Healing Adjustment Layers Masks Unsharpen Mask

Editing workflow

1. Open your image

Click on File > Open and browse for your newly converted image, mine is **Sandy.tif**

2. Initial Crop

Click on the crop tool

This first crop is used to remove unwanted portions from our image. There are two methods that can be used here.

Harder A. If you don't have a certain size in mind for the finished image, remove all numbers from the width, height and resolution boxes, click and hold your mouse button and drag a box around the area you want to keep. You can adjust the crop as desired or move it around to different areas to see a different aspect.

Easier B. If you do have a final size in mind and it's close to the size of the image now, put the sizes in the width and height boxes followed by "in" for inches (if that's what you measure in) and leave the resolution box empty. This way as you crop your image no resampling will take place. The DPI will decrease or increase depending on whether you shrink or enlarge your image. *This is the method we'll be going with...*

In our example, the image is 6.5 x 9.997 and I want my final picture size to be 10 x 10

- First go to Image > Resize > Image Size
- Uncheck the resample button at the bottom.
- Now change the resolution from 300 to 200, 180, or even 150. Look at the sizes in the height and width boxes.

Are the numbers bigger than what we need? Yes?

Great, that means we will crop our image without having to resample the image. At least for now....This will keep the quality of our image at its best for editing.

- Click Cancel in the Image Size box.
- Now enter "10 in" in both the Width and Length boxes

- Next I'll click inside my image, starting at the top left and drag my cursor down to the bottom right. I can still grab one of the handles and do some minor changes or click in the middle and drag the whole box anywhere I want.
- When your done click on the checkmark to complete the crop.

Tips:

Always drag the crop box around a bit. Moving it about will let you see the different aspects of the image. You might find a better look that you didn't notice at first.

Vary the Opacity amount in the Edit>Preferences>Display, this will show/hide the part if the image being cropped out.

3. Cleanup

This is the step that you do everything from dirt removal to editing out other unwanted objects. Here's where the clone and healing tools do their job (*also the patch tool for regular Photoshop users*). The clone tool will help in removing small to medium sized pieces and the healing tool helps in larger areas as well as adding texture back into your image. The first thing you always need to do here is duplicate the background layer, this way you can get back to your original image if something goes wrong.

- Press Ctrl+J, this will duplicate the background layer
- Look around your image for areas that need help
- Zoom in to at least 100%, but 200% is even better
- Click on the "Clone Tool", look at the tool bar. Change the Opacity to around 50% and make sure "aligned" is checked. Check the brush as well. Hardness should be around 25 – 50% depending on the image.
- Roll your mouse over a problem spot. The circle showing the size of the clone tool should be just a small bit larger than the spot. Holding down the "Alt" key click on a section of the same colour right next to the spot. This creates the area the tool will use to paste over the problem spot. Now put your mouse back over the problem spot and click your mouse once or twice. The spot should be gone. Continue on using this same sequence to get rid of other problem spots.

For larger areas we'll use the "Healing Tool". This tool is very similar to the clone tool by creating a selection over a clean area and then clicking in a bad or dirty area of the image. One of the best things about the healing tool is that it retains texture, where the clone tool can blur texture out if over used.

- Click on the "Healing Tool". Look at the toolbar again. This time we want the first choice "Source Sampled" as our tool settings.
- Back on the image, find a large spot the needs removing. With the mouse find an area, where the colour is very similar. Holding down the "Alt" key click on that section. Move your mouse back over the dirty area and click. The problem area should be replaced.

Tip:

Get to know your keyboard shortcuts [-brush smaller]-brush larger SPACEBAR-pan
Continue on with cloning and healing until all the dirt and objects to be removed are gone. Depending on your image this could be a short or long job.

4. Adding a little punch

All digital images can do with a little bit of help after being downloaded and converted. This technique will add a little punch of colour and contrast to almost every image.

- Go to Filter > Sharpen > Unsharp Mask
- Choose these settings Amount: 20 Radius: 50 threshold: 2
- Click on the Preview checkbox a couple of times to see the change, then click OK

5. Save your image

Now is the time to save that first copy for safety

- Click on File > save as and name it something relevant Sandy-2 on our example and save it as a photoshop file(.psd)

6. Image Adjustments

Levels

Most images will need some sort of tweaking with the contrast, aka black and white levels

- In the Layers Palette on the right click on the black/white circle to create an adjustment layer. Click on “Levels” in the menu that comes up.
- Most times there is a gap on left, right, or both sides of the histogram that comes up. Drag the black slider to the right until it is under the edge of the black area of the histogram, repeat for the white slider.
- Look at your image. If you are happy with the result click OK

****The great thing about Adjustment layers is that you can easily go back in and change your adjustment at any time.****

Hue/Saturation

Another enhancement that most digital images will benefit from is having a bit of saturation added to the colour.

- Back to the layers palette for another adjustment layer. Click on Hue/Saturation this time
- Move the saturation slider to the right a bit and look at your image. Is it better or worse? Keep changing until you like it.

We've now made it to the point where other tools could be used if necessary, or if acceptable we would continue on to finalizing our image.

If your image has a colour cast then use the Colour Balance tool

Midtones muddy, try the curves tool

Whites too bright or Shadows too dark, try the Shadow/highlight tool

7. Save your image as a Master

Now that all our corrections are done we want to save our image as a final copy. We want to keep all the layers in case we want to make any additional edits as well as prior to final sizing in case we want to produce copies of different sizes

- Click on File > save as. Sandy-Master this time, and still a .psd

8. Sizing and output

Right now your master image has several layers. This could be slowing your computer down, since every layer adds more size to the image. Before final sizing we flatten the image and then resample to our desired resolution, and if changing the final size.

- Go to Layer > Flatten Image. All layers should flatten into 1.
- Go to Image > Image Size
- Click on resample on the bottom. Set the method to “Bicubic Smoother” if raising the resolution, as we are. If you are changing the image size and are reducing the size set the method to “Bicubic Sharper”.
- Enter 300 in the resolution box and click OK.

Tip:

If the image size is where you want it i.e. 10x10 for us, and the resolution is close to 200, then you don't really need to change anything. The print will be better if not resampled.

9. Output sharpening

Everytime your image is changed from one medium to another, some softening occurs. So even though your image looks good on the screen, when printed it will look softened and not as sharp as it should be. Sharpening is subjective, and every image is different, so there is no perfect setting. Portraits need to be a little softer than a landscape or product shot. A nice crisp perfume bottle is great, a nice crisp blemish, scar or age spot, not so great.

Unsharpen Mask

This is by far the most well known method of sharpening. In most cases it will work for you, but other methods such as the High Pass filter can be explored.

- Start with your image zoomed into at least 100%
- Go to Enhance > Unsharp Mask
- Set the Radius slider to 1.0 and Threshold to 1 level
- Move the amount slider to the right to increase the sharpening

This is where the subjective part comes in. Over sharpening causes what are called “Halos”, rings that start to appear around objects in your image because of pixilation.

- The trick to sharpening is to move the slider just far enough so that edges just start to get crunchy. Although it might look the best on your monitor, by the time it gets transferred to print it will look great.

There you have it, a nice quick basic workflow to make the most of your images.

