EDITING AND IMA GE MANIPULATION

Based on Photoshop Elements and Lightroom

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Suggested action. Read these notes and then discuss over the phone a personal tuition package (free!)

WORK FLOW: RAW VERSUS TIF VERSUS JPEG

I assume you all have good archiving systems by subject or by date. Light room has an excellent catalogue system. I strongly recommend you do not keep photos on camera for longer than necessary.

Before you start to edit you may want to create a "play file" to plan your work flow. For example: "Windmill Play". Take a copy of your original and pop it into this file. Thus you can save all variations of your edit until you have finished. It is so easy to delete something after an hours work and then wish you had not. It is quite easy to cancel mistakes in "edit" but once you have deleted and moved on it may not be in the recycle bin.

Editing starts in the camera. Most serious photographers with a high end camera shoot in Raw. This creates a large file which, whilst it obeys all the controls <u>you</u> have applied (for example exposure compensation) it is unadulterated by the camera manufacturer`s settings (for example sharpness filters). Most importantly it is not compressed. It is recommended you do a basic edit in Raw (Adobe Photoshop will ask you to convert from Raw to image view) and then move to a Tagged Image File to complete the edit. TIF is also uncompressed and holds definition well when printed large. Once you have finished the edit you can decide to downgrade the file to a JPEG, which is compressed but is good enough for web sites, small prints, e mail, family shots, record shots etc. They take up much less room. If you end up with a lot of TIF you will need to delete the dross!

You may not have the luxury in working in Raw but most compacts (in particular Lumix) and bridge cameras will offer this. Check before buying! Modern mobile phones are offering better and better lenses and results but to my knowledge they all work in JPEGs. If you get the option select <u>fine</u> JPEG. If you are not sure look in your menu and check for "image quality".

EXPOSURE AND CONTRAST

In Photoshop go "enhance" on top tool bar, select lighting then brightness and contrast.
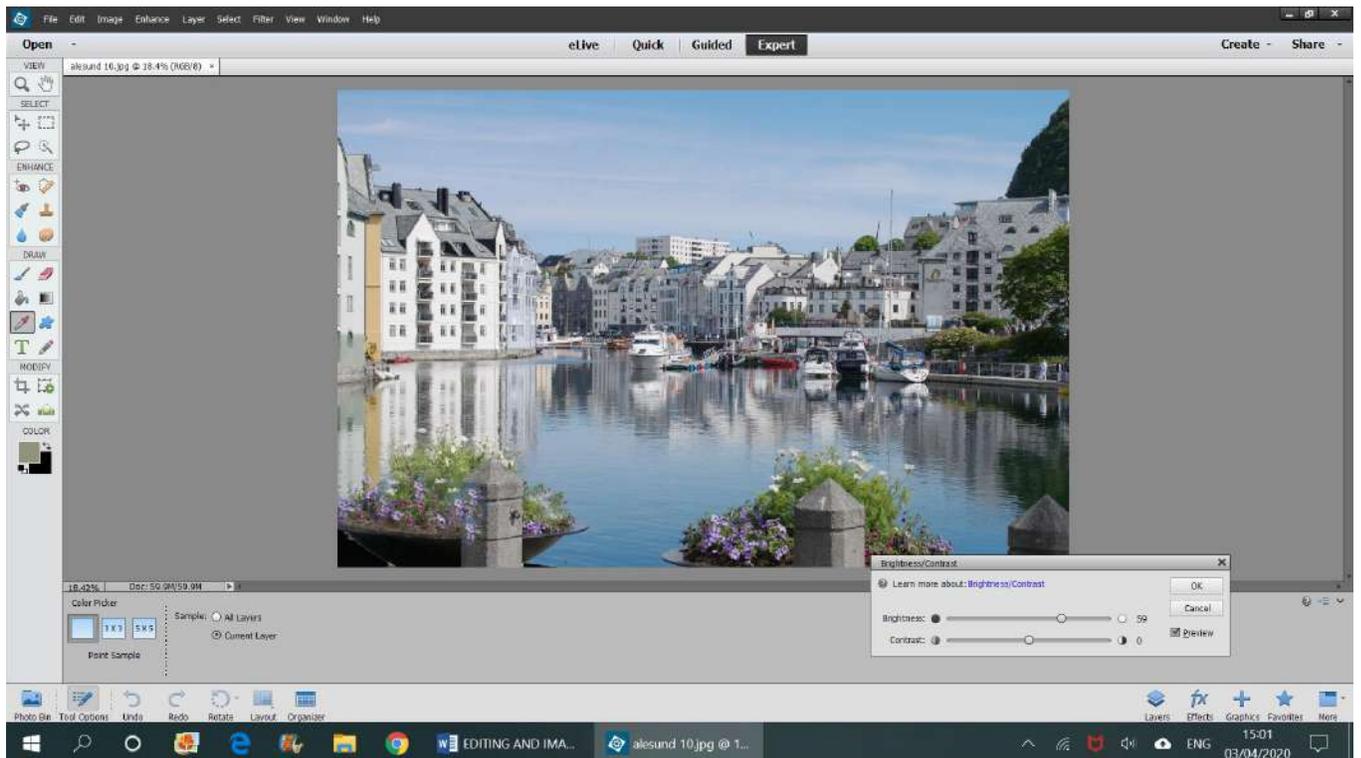
On the slider scale that appears bottom right, slide brightness to find the right level in this case plus 50% and contrast to plus 25% (experiment with the levels) and you get:

We have lightened the whole picture here but when we look at "selective tools" we can have a look at just selecting any one part of the picture. Under enhance there are a number of auto corrections you can try out and if you go back to brightness and contrast you will see you can select shadow detail only for correction. Do not worry about mistakes, you can always go back to "edit" on top tool bar and go to "undo" button.

As a matter of interest the flowers were a bit sparse so I cloned in a few extra flowers but not enough to stop the viewer`s eye going to the boats . See cloning later.

CROPPING

Sometimes you have to make a grab shot with subjects like wild life where you hardly have time to think. When you get back you realise you can make an enormous difference just by cropping. In the next picture, it was taken at leisure but the framing is not quite right.

Photoshop can deal with this effectively:
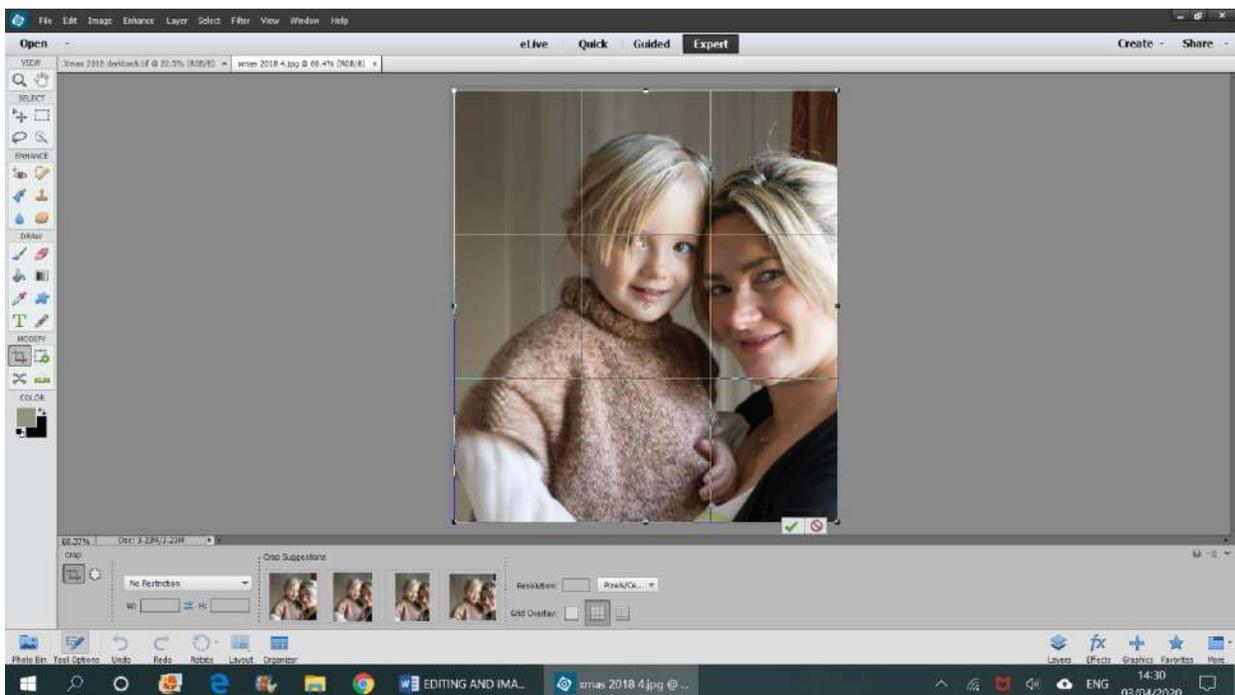
In photoshop find "modify" on left hand tool bar. Hover over first symbol which shows "cropping tool". Click on this when it will turn grey. Click on image on top left corner and start to draw the crop as you want when a grid will appear to help you. Make sure the strong points are on the one third lines. When you are happy click on green tick and you are done. In this case the difference is marginal but results in a stronger picture. The background has been darkened too and we will see how to do that later.


The lighting favours the little girl so you look at her first and her eyes are sharp and on the one third/one third lines. The lady on the right is slightly distorted and the photographer should have used a medium telephoto or stepped back a little and cropped more. A little more light on the right hand face might help and we will see how to do that later.

ADJUSTING COLOUR

Photoshop offers automatic ways of adjusting colour and saturation or a number of automatic fixes. In the next picture the skin tones are a little pale. You can use an autofix. Go "enhance" on the top toolbar then select "auto colour correction", or you can do it under your own control also in the "enhance" box. To do this go "adjust

colour". Select "Adjust hue/saturation". Bottom right a slider with a window will open. Slide the saturation handle until you are happy.
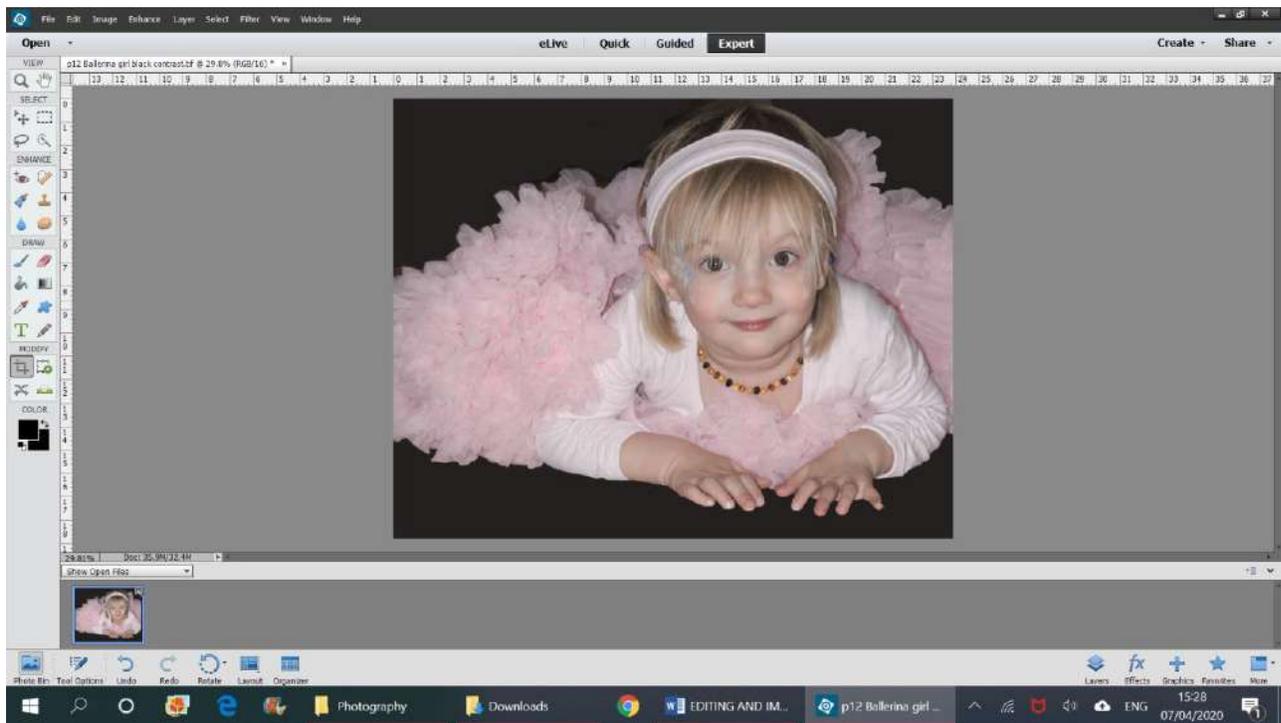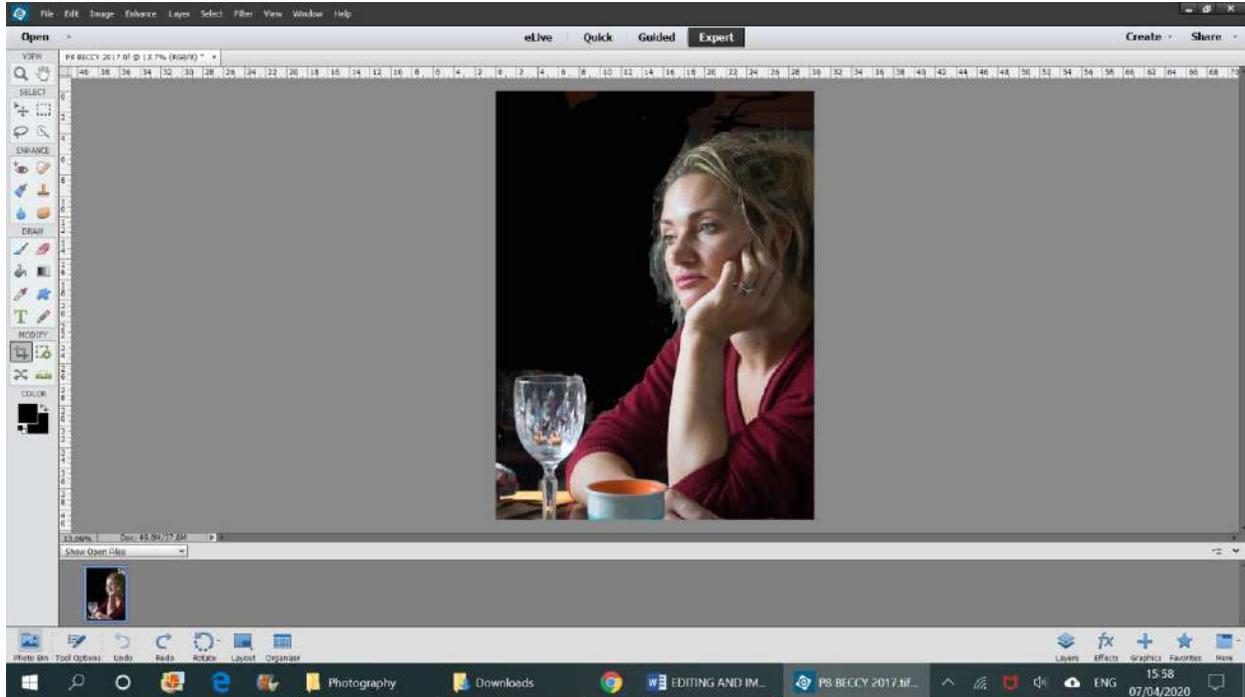

Here is the improved picture with saturation up 20%.

CHANGING TO BLACK AND WHITE

Any picture can be changed to black and white easily.

On the top tool bar go image, then select "mode" then "Grayscale" and you get an even more moody effect:

TAKING OUT BLEMISHES

For small spots or blemishes on your special person`s face (or for offending small blemishes anywhere) use the spot healing brush. On the <u>left hand tool bar</u> it is the top ikon on the right under enhance. Select it then you will see a slider bar bottom left. Play with the size of the brush to get a size to suit the blemish, then click on the blemish on the photo when you will see it is then merged with the surrounding pixels and disappears. I have used this to remove offending telephone lines, piece by piece.

CLONING

Cloning is used to move selected pieces of a photograph onto another spot to blot out an eyesore or to otherwise enhance it. I use it here to change the background by cloning the trees.
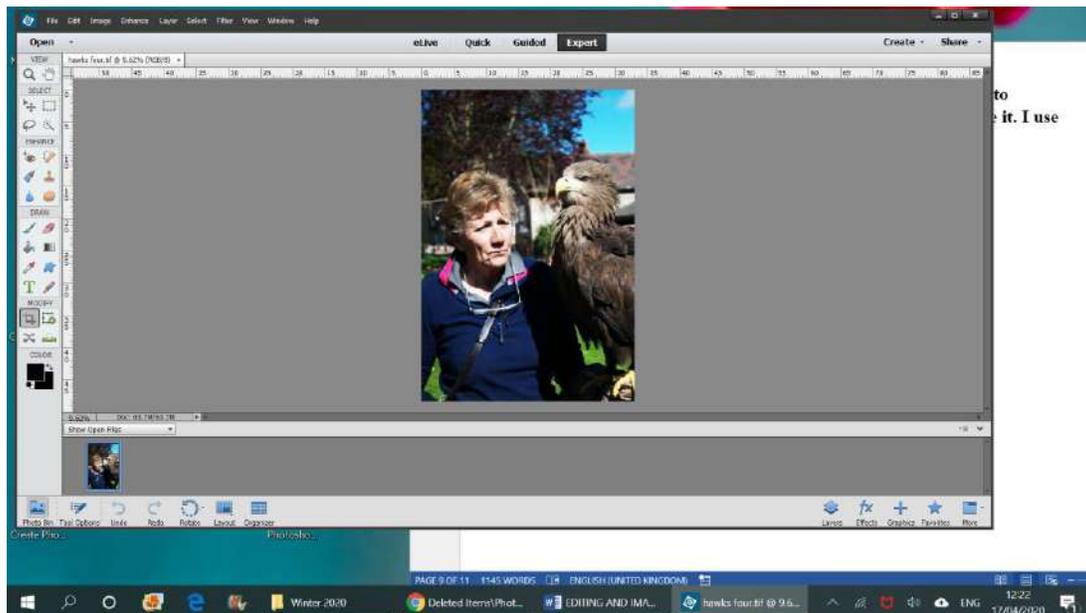
On the left hand tool bar under enhance, select second ikon down on right "clone tool", in the slide box below select pixel size to suit then press and hold down alt key and then click on part of the image you want to copy. Drag and place it over the sky blemish and release alt button.

Keep doing this until you have blotted the sky and house out. You may have to play with the size slider to get the right amount of material copied. This takes some practice to get a good match. The result below is a portrait with a cloned neutral background forcing all attention onto the subjects.

SELECTIVE TOOLS AND INVERSE SELECTION

You may want to select part of a picture to change the exposure, the colour, the saturation, or just to copy it in order to cut and paste that part of it, to use in another picture (see part two) .

On the left hand tool bar find your selection tools. The square box allows you to select rectangular or eleptical framing changes. The lasso allows you to select parts of the picture say the sky and draw around the bit you wish to change. Click on the lasso, then on the picture and you can draw a line until you join it up, inside which anything can be changed . You can change the part of the picture that has not been selected too. Go to "select " on the top tool bar and then select "inverse" . The bottom right symbol is the magic wand.

The magic wand is truly just that. Select it then start clicking on the part of the picture you want to change whilst holding down the shift key. The magic wand will show you what has been selected with a row of "marching ants". Keep going until you have selected all or part of what you want to change. (You may have to change bit by bit, for example if you are selecting the sky and some of it is in separate places.) You may have to play with number of pixels on the slider at the bottom of your screen as some selections are finer than others. The lower the pixel count the finer the selection. If you make a mistake go into "edit" on top tool bar and key "undo".

Once you made your selection you can change anything within it using any of the techniques we have discussed. In the picture below the sky was darkened leaving the little girl untouched.

FILTERS

On the top tool bar go "filters " and find a huge range of effects that you can used on the whole of a picture or on a selected bit (see above)

I think the most useful are the blurring, artistic, texture and sketch filters. The best thing to do is to try them out and see what you think.

COLOUR PICKER, PAIN BRUSH AND BUCKET

DRAW

These tools are normally used with the selection tools to pick out and drop in a change of colour to part of a picture. You can either sample a colour in your picture and use it elsewhere or choose a new colour. To sample an existing colour, first select the part of the picture you want to change (see above) Then select the eye dropper symbol and click on the colour you want in your picture.

You can now either click on the paint brush and paint in that part of the picture or click on the bucket and slosh the colour in to the selected bit in one click. The paint brush is for delicate work and the bucket for easy use. Note you do not have to select <u>part</u> of a picture. If you have a steady hand you can use the paintbrush on any picture, but zoom in first so you can work close up.

If you want a totally new colour (see below) you can use the colour selector on the bottom of the left hand tool bar. Click on this and you will get a colour chart from which to pick.
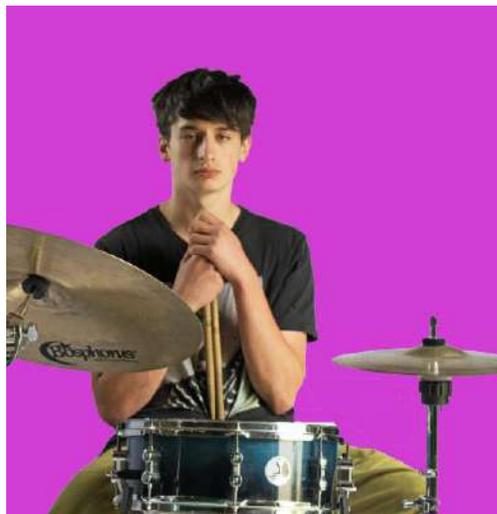
The subject was photographed against a white sheet which made it easy to pick out the background. This was then changed to a hot pink to suit the subject with the colour selector chart and the bucket. Note the two bits bottom right and left which are "islands" of colour had to be done separately.

SUMMARY

This first part is a canter through the easier possibilities. Part Two will cover rather more serious manipulation. What I suggest you do is read the notes, send me one or two examples where you want to change something, and we will work on a one to one basis to get you there.

Do not be scared to have a go. If you are working with a copy you can do harm and it`s the onl way to learn.

Further reading: Teach Yourself Visually Photoshops Elements 11 by Mike Wooldridge and Light room 5 by Tony Northrup.

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