

New Book - Available December 2008

Adobe Photoshop Elements 7
Maximum Performance
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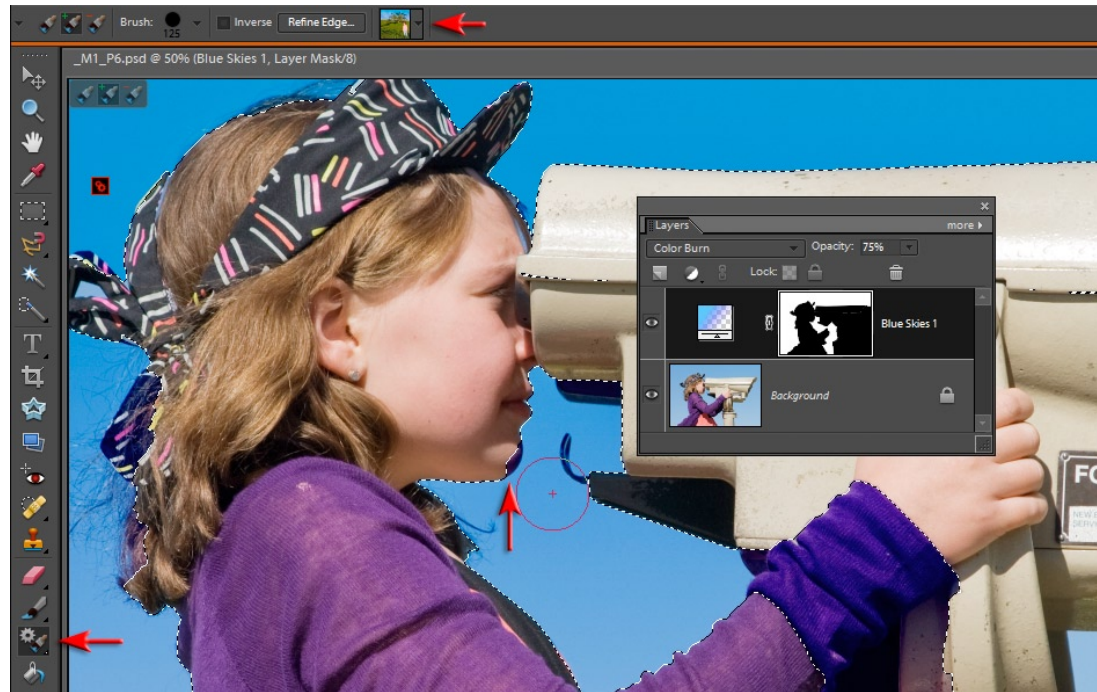
Full Resolution Camera
Raw image on DVD with
supporting movie and free
smart brush presets

Target and adjust the hue, saturation and luminance values of selected colors - in the image above the blues are made darker and the magentas are moved towards blue. The image is then completed using two of the Maximum Performance actions from the DVD that ships with the book

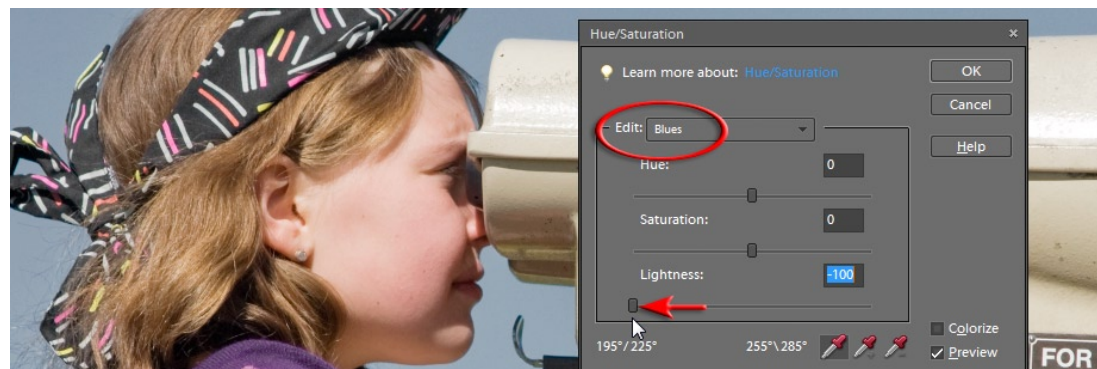
Smart Brushes and Actions

OK, here is a few interesting questions, what does acronym HSL stand for in Adobe image editing software? Would that be Lightness or Luminance? And why do we have an L anyway when Photoshop Elements uses HSB (Hue, Saturation and Brightness in the Color Picker as its standard RGB color model? Is the L having an identity crisis and do Luminance, Lightness and Brightness sliders all do the same thing? In order to take control over our colors and tones when image editing we have to understand one of the most basic image adjustment features inside of Photoshop Elements - Hue/Saturation. The third slider in the Hue/Saturation dialog is the Lightness slider and this is so useful that even Adobe decided to leave its name off the adjustment feature!

If you try to make a target color lighter or darker using the Lightness slider in the Hue/Saturation adjustment dialog it is always desaturated the color in the process. In this project we will explore how to adjust the brightness of a color without desaturating it. Adjusting how bright a colors appears without shifting its Hue or Saturation is what Adobe now calls a 'Luminance' adjustment. This, however, can only be made possible in Photoshop Elements 7 with the new Smart Brushes that come shipped with the Maximum Performance DVD and some very clever Maximum Performance know-how. This project concludes with a few automated actions courtesy of the new Action Player in Photoshop Elements 7 and some action presets from the Maximum Performance DVD.



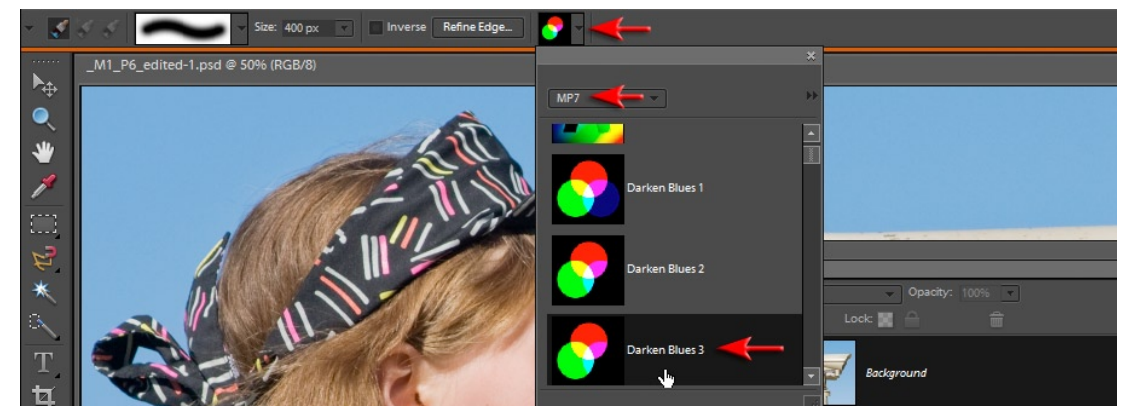
1. In Photoshop Elements 7 it is possible to paint with adjustment presets using either the new Smart Brush Tool or Detail Smart Brush Tool. The Smart Brush tool creates its own layer mask as it paints the adjustment by looking for the edges of your subject matter. In the example above the Smart Brush Tool is used in conjunction with the Blue Skies preset to increase the vibrancy of the existing sky. If the adjustment invades your subject you can hold down the Alt key and then paint to remove the adjustment in this area. In areas where there is low edge contrast, these presets can be difficult to apply. A Hue/Saturation adjustment can also be used to target and adjust specific colors without upsetting other colors in the image and without painting.



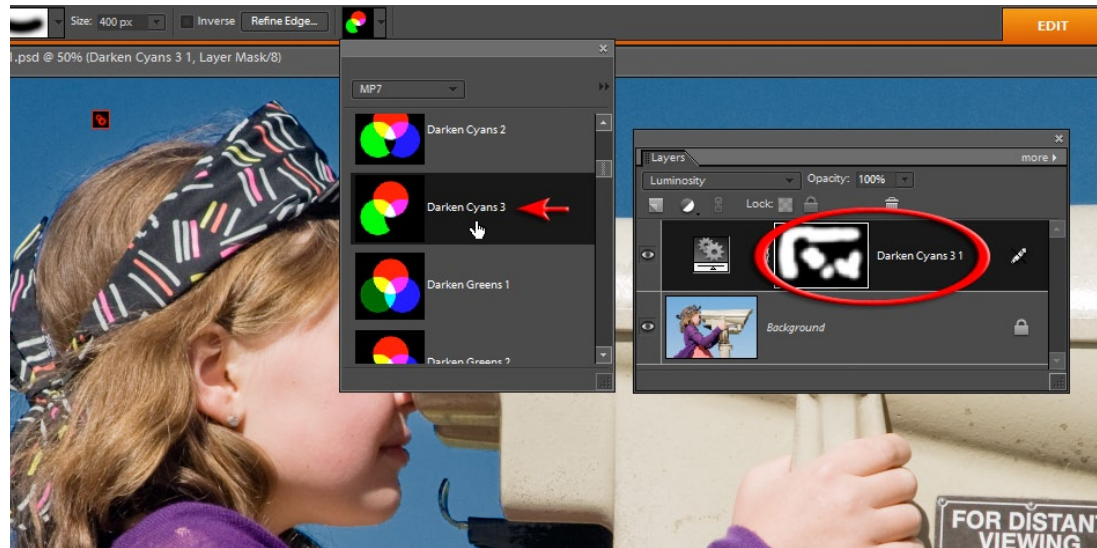
2. Although a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer can be used to effectively adjust the hue or saturation of a selected color (Blues have been selected in the image above) it is less than effective for controlling the brightness of the target color. Note how the blue appears desaturated when the Lightness slider is moved to -100.



3. Switching the mode of the Hue/Saturation layer to Luminosity will help restore the saturation levels of the adjusted color. The impact of these adjustments, however, are limited when using this technique (only minor differences are achieved with maximum adjustments of the Lightness slider), and any Hue or Saturation adjustments that have also been made using a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer will be removed when the Luminosity mode is applied. A better way to adjust the brightness of a target color is to emulate the powerful and superior Luminance sliders that can be found in Photoshop Lightroom, without leaving Photoshop Elements. If you install the Maximum Performance Photo-Effects from the supporting DVD you will have full control to render any color darker or lighter colors without upsetting the hue and saturation values. By adjusting the Luminance value of a color instead of the Lightness value (using the power of my MP7 Luminance presets in conjunction with one of the Smart brushes) you can achieve Maximum Performance when editing your images.



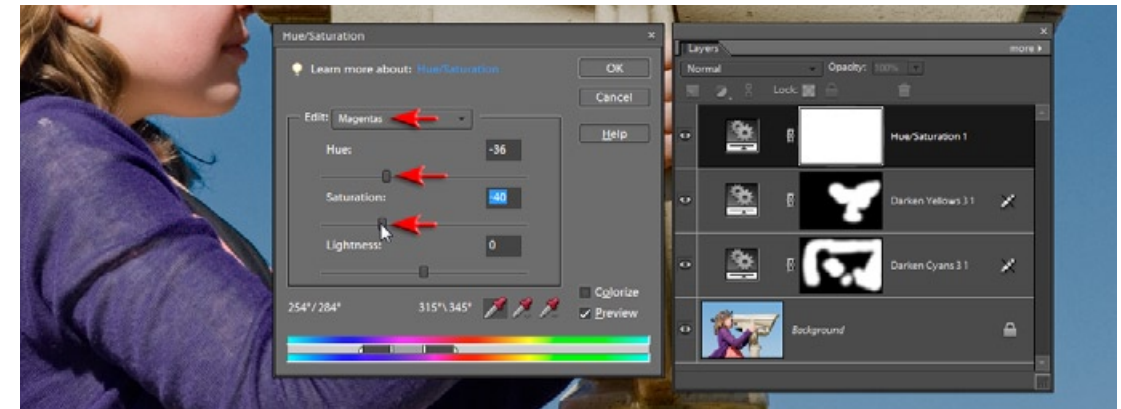
4. The MP7 Luminance presets (designed to make a target color lighter or darker) can be selected from the Options bar after first selecting the Smart Brush Tool or Detail Smart Brush Tool. The Detail Smart Brush Tool does not have the edge detection capability of the Smart Brush Tool but is quicker to use when there is no need for edge detection, i.e. the neighboring colors surrounding the area you want to adjust are a different hue. Selecting the Darker Blues 3 preset in the Options bar and then painting over the sky with large soft brush (the presets come in 3 strengths, mild, medium and extra strong - 3 being the strongest adjustment) will create a dramatically darker sky.



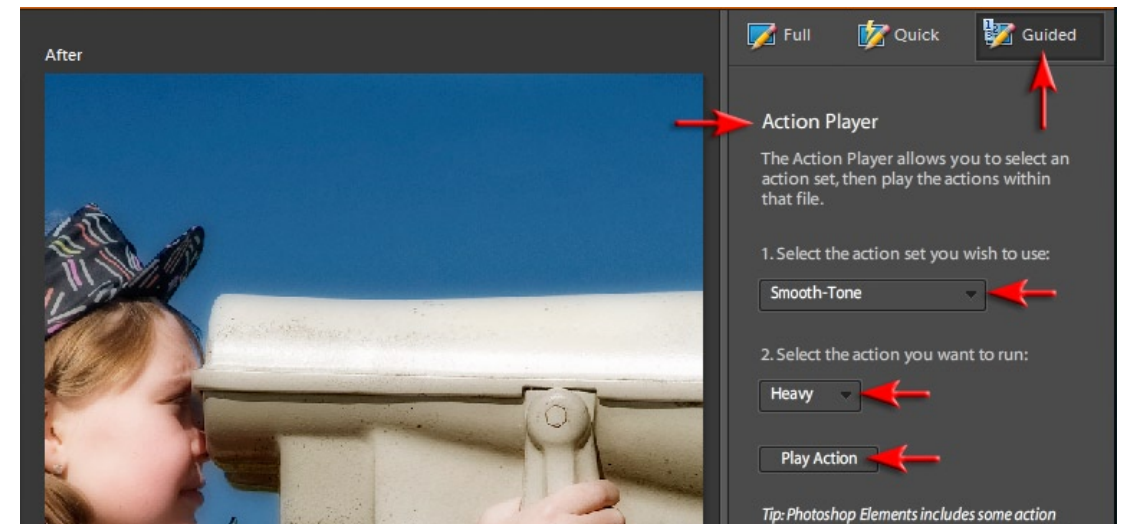
5. In the Layers panel you will see that an adjustment layer has been created after painting with a Smart Brush. You cannot edit a luminance preset by double-clicking on the Layer thumbnail (the preset was created using features not currently available in Photoshop Elements) but you can lower the opacity or click on an alternative color in the Preset options. In the illustration above I have clicked on the Darker Cyans 3 preset to more effectively target the sky in this image (the hue of the sky is actually closer to Cyan than Blue).



6. Click on the Background layer if you would now like to adjust another color in the image (clicking on a new preset with the adjustment layer still selected will change the first adjustment). In the illustration above I have selected the Darker yellows 3 preset and then painted over the yellow tones in the image to lower their luminance value.

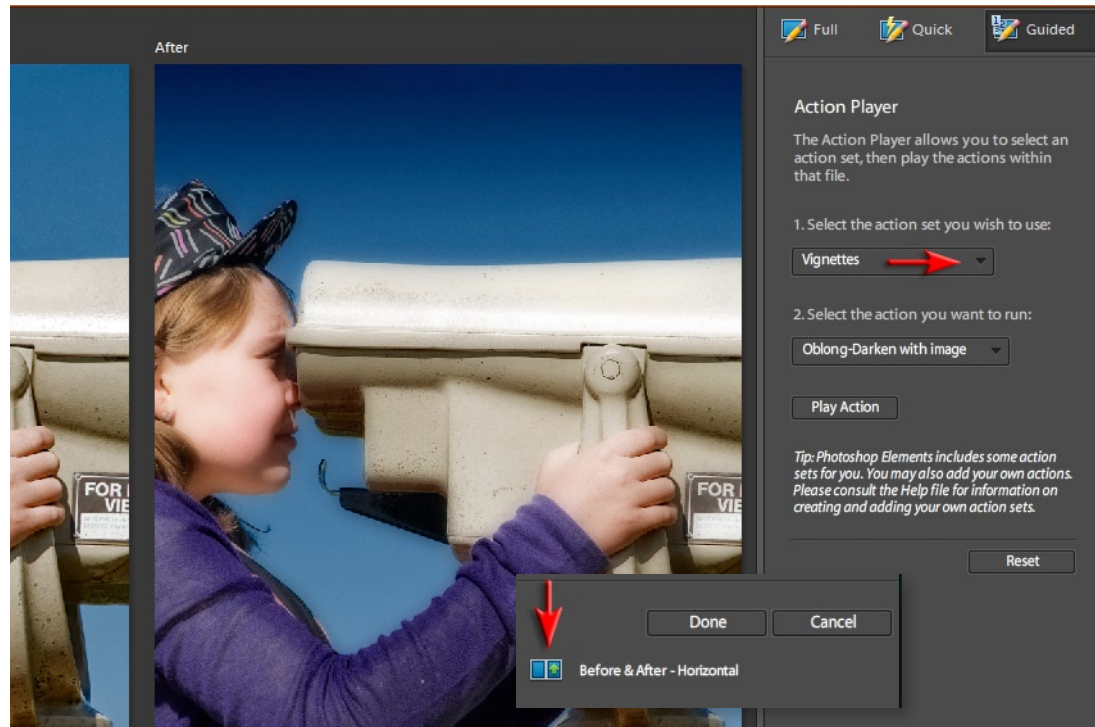


7. The third color adjustment applied to this project image does not need to use the luminance presets. Selecting a Hue/Saturation adjustment from the Create new adjustment menu in the Layers panel and then selecting Magentas from the Edit pull-down menu targets the color of the girls purple top effectively. Moving the Hue and Saturation sliders to the left will modify the color and saturation of the top without effecting the neighboring colors.

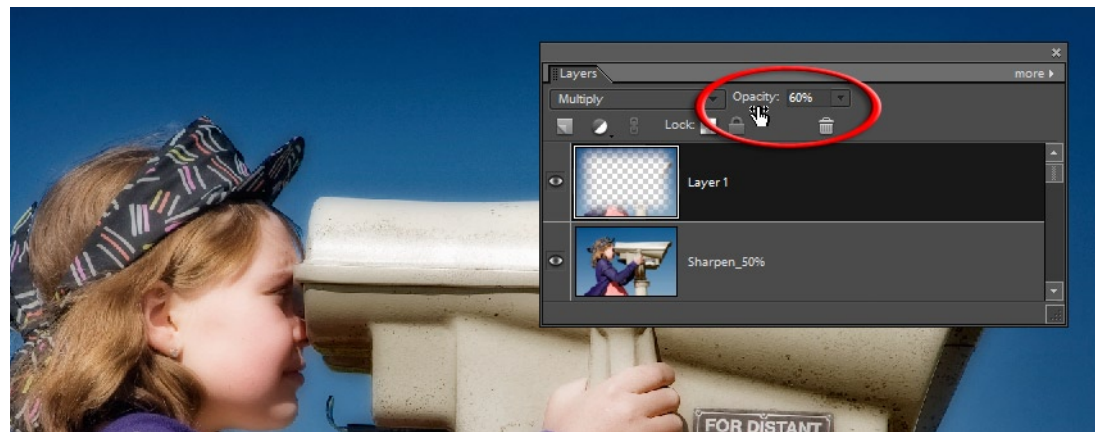


8. New to Photoshop Elements 7 is the Action Player that enables you to apply multiple editing tasks with a few clicks of the mouse. To access these actions click on the Guided edit option in the right panel and select the Action Player from the Automated Actions section. In the illustration above a soft focus effect is applied to the image.

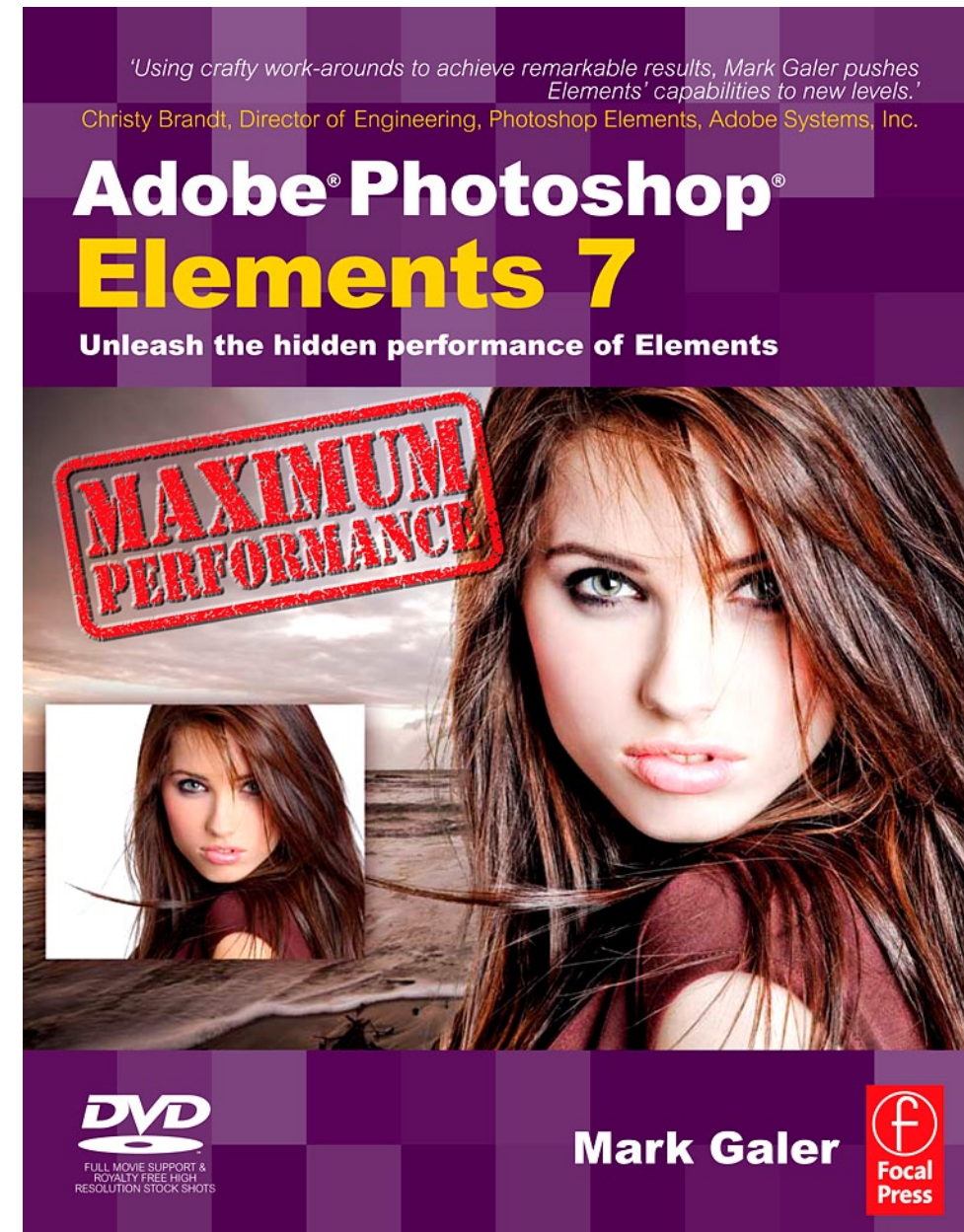
Note > The Maximum Performance DVD comes with dozens of useful actions that will help you create visually stunning images and enhance your editing workflows. They turn lengthy, and often complex, editing procedures into simple-to-apply effects that are non-destructive to your background image. All layers used to create the effect are left so that you can adjust the technique to fit your own imaging needs.



9. In the illustration above the Action Player has been used to apply a Maximum Performance vignette to the image. The 'Oblong-Darken with image' vignette has been optimized to darken the edges of the image without excessively darkening any highlight details at the edge of the frame. In the Bottom-right hand corner of the panel you can access a before and after button. Clicking on the Full button at the top of the panel will return you to the main editing space.



10. In the Layers panel you can observe the layers that have been created by applying the actions. If you want to decrease the strength of the vignette you can simply lower the opacity of the layer in the Layers panel until the appropriate level of darkening is achieved.



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