

## Cropping Photos Proportionately (Photoshop Elements)

Tip of the Week by Barb Brookbank on March 13, 2012

Proportion and Repetition. Two principles of design. Proportion involves the relationship between sizes. Repetition is the repeated use of similar shapes, colors, or lines.

I've decided I want to create a layout with these three similar photos (repetition) but I want close-ups that include only the head and a bit of the shoulders. I want the photos to be the same physical size (3in x 3.5in) with the heads in the same proportion to each other.

So I'm going to get a bit creative with the Crop tool. In this tutorial I'm going to teach you how to crop a photo based on another image while keeping the subjects in proportion to each other.

These are the three original photos:



This is what I want:



This is what I don't want:



Even though each photo is exactly 3in x 3.5in, the first head in this series is too big compared to the other two. That is because I didn't position the crop tool correctly.



## Step One: Open the Photos

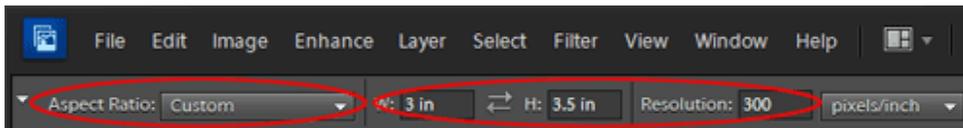
- Open (File > Open) two or more similar photos. I'm using three photos, but you could use three, four, or more photos. However, an odd number is usually more pleasing in design.

## Step Two: Duplicate the Images

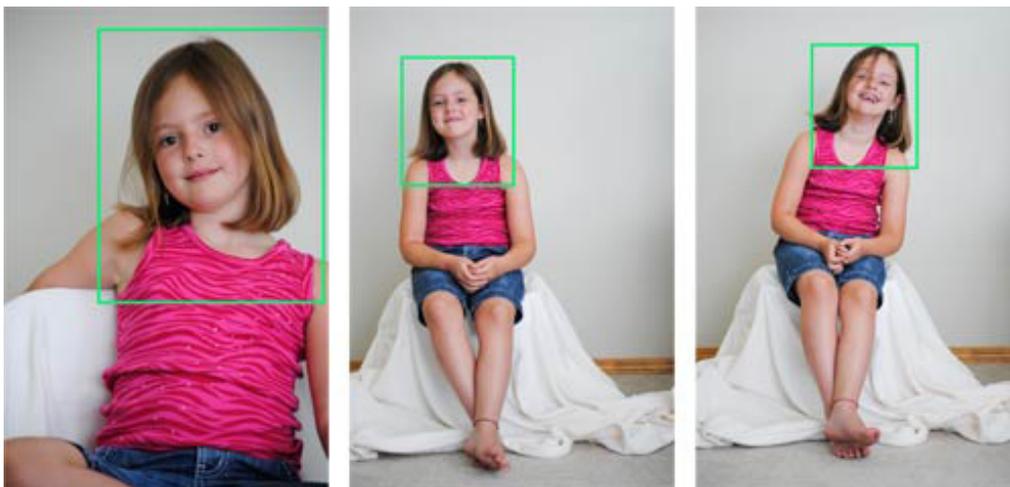
- Click on a photo.
- In the Menu Bar, choose File > Duplicate and click OK to accept the name in the dialog box.
- Close the original photo so as not to accidentally overwrite it.
- Repeat for all the photos.

## Step Three: Crop the Photos

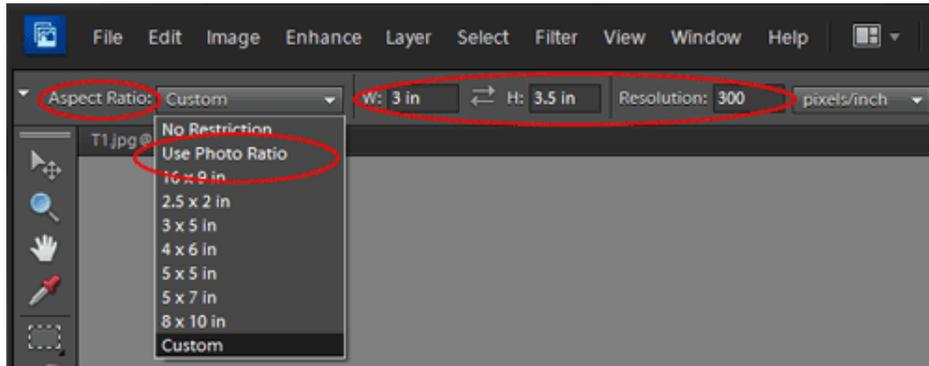
- Get the Crop tool.
- In the Options Bar, set the Aspect Ratio to Custom.
- Enter 3in for the Width and 3.5in for the Height with a Resolution of 300ppi.



- Click on a photo, then click and drag out a selection around the part of the image that you want to keep. It doesn't matter which photo you crop first.
- Click the check mark to accept the changes.
- Click on the next photo and click and drag a selection around the part of that image that you want to keep. Again, when you commit to the changes, the image will automatically be sized to 3in for the Width and 3.5in for the Height.
- You must judge where to position the cropping box to keep all the heads in the same proportion (see the following example). If you don't like your first attempt simply press Ctrl Z (Mac: Cmd Z) to revert to the original, and try again.
- Notice in the large photo, the crop box is positioned to include a little bit more of the subject — I've included more of the t-shirt at the bottom. The actual size of each green box (the crop area) is 3in x 3.5in. If I include more of my subject, the result is a smaller head.
- Repeat for all the photos.



- What if you accidentally change or lose the crop dimensions... (say, the cat jumps on the keyboard), what should you do? Start by simply activating the first photo you cropped. In the Options Bar, click on the down-facing arrow to open the Aspect Ratio Options. Choose Use Photo Ratio. This will restore the dimensions from the first crop. Click on the next photo to continue.



**Step Four: Create a New Document and Add Photos**

- Create a new document (File > New > Blank File) that is 12”x12” at 300ppi with a white background.
- Click on a photo and drag it onto the document. Repeat for the remaining photos.
- Now all the photos are the same size and proportion.

And here is the layout that I was going for! Usually (although there are exceptions), when you crop a photo of a person you want to keep a bit of the neck so their head doesn't look cut off. The top of my subject's head is almost touching the top of the frame in each photo and the heads are all the same size. I'm pleased with the result:

**Credits:**

Digi Scrap Tutorial: Cropping Photos Proportionately, by Barb Brookbank  
 Layout: 'Laugh,' by Barb Brookbank  
 Template: ScrapItNow-03-016\_stroke30\_template01sq by Jen White, available in the [Your Story. Brilliant. class](#) by Linda Sattgast  
 Kit: [Cherish This Moment](#) by Digital Scrapper Designs, available to Premier members June 2010  
 Word Art: Taylormade Expressive Laugh by Amanda Taylor, available in the Costco CD goodies included with [Photoshop Elements 10 at Costco](#).  
 Software: Photoshop Elements 10

