

SCRAPPER'S GUIDE

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A Better Way to Crop (Photoshop Elements)

Tip of the Week by Jan Walker on May 31, 2011

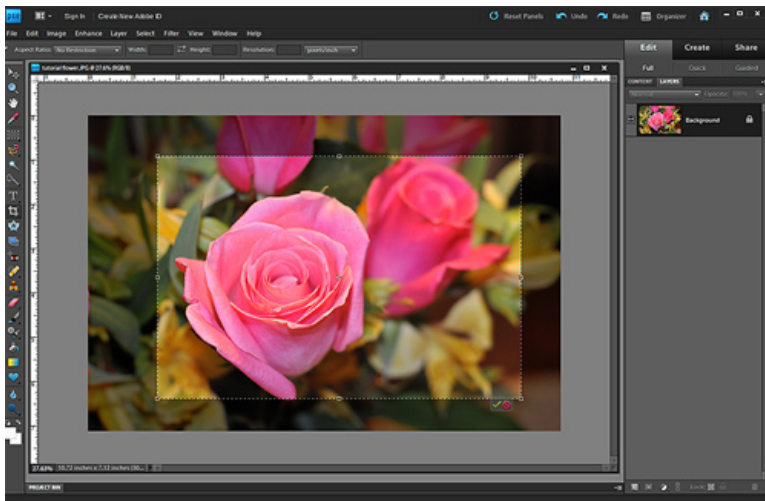
I'm always looking for creative ways to crop images, but sometimes the end result can be a little hard to visualize.

When you select the area you want to crop in Photoshop Elements, the program automatically darkens up the area outside the crop, leaving the active area bright, to give you an idea of what your final image would look like, but – especially with particularly “busy” images – that dark translucent area can be a distraction.



Well, not any more! Today you'll learn how to preview your photo on a plain background that will instantly show you how your cropped image will look.

But first, let's take a look at how the default crop screen looks:



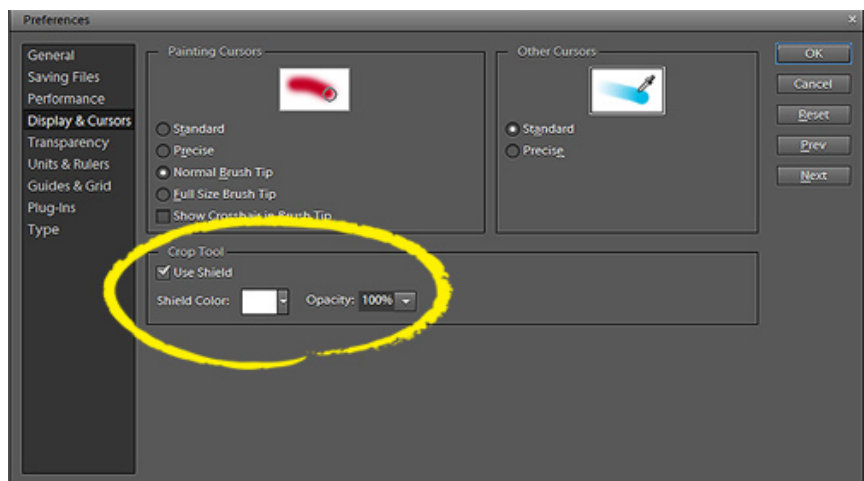
See that dark, translucent border around the area you want to crop? It “hides” the portion of the image outside the crop area, but not enough to help you visualize your crop. So let's change it up!

Step 1: Change your preferences

In the Menu bar, click on Edit > Preferences > Display & Cursors.

* Under the Crop Tool heading, there will be a check next to the words “Use Shield.”

* For the Shield Color, use the down-facing arrow and select White. (I like white, but you can choose any color you want.)



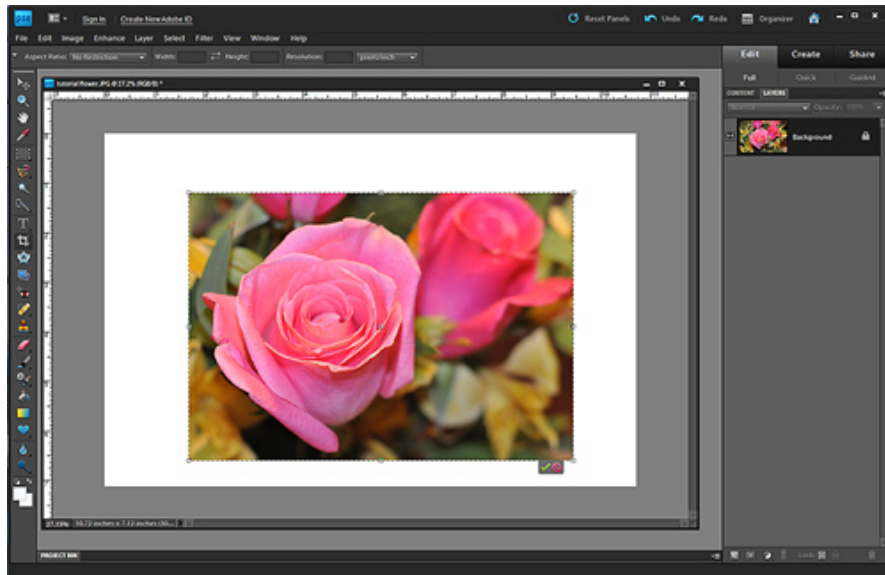
* Set the Opacity to 100% and click OK.

Step 2: Crop with confidence

* Open an image you want to crop.

* As you make your initial crop selection and let go of the mouse, you'll see that everything outside your selection is white. This gives you a clean, opaque background, making it much easier to visualize what your final crop will look like.

* You can move the crop selection around on the page, just as before, and you can use the top, side and corner handles to adjust the size and shape of your crop if you like.



Once you're satisfied with your cropped image, click on the green check mark (or press Enter) to accept the crop, and you're done.



You may want to adjust the Shield preferences – both color and opacity – to your liking. Do whatever works best for you! Either way, isn't it nice to have choices?



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