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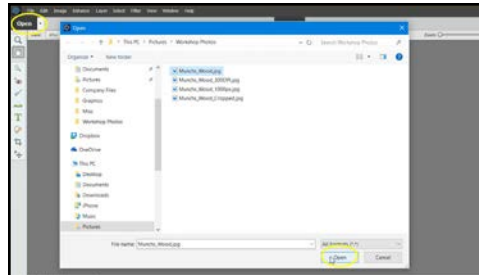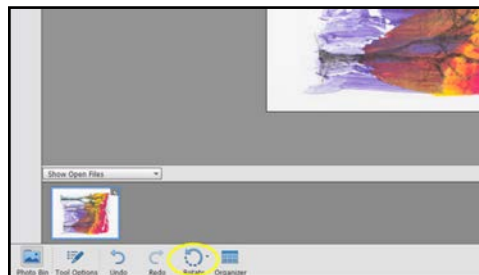
notes

Fix It Again

I'll go ahead and open an image in Photoshop® Elements, and then make the three basic edits I showed earlier—white balance, exposure, and straighten and crop.

Open the Image

In Quick Mode, click on the Open button in the upper left. This brings up the File Explorer in Windows, shown here, or Finder on the Mac. Locate the image you wish to edit, click on it and then click the Open button. Or you can click on the arrow just to the right of the Open button to see a list of recently opened files. Click on one to open it.
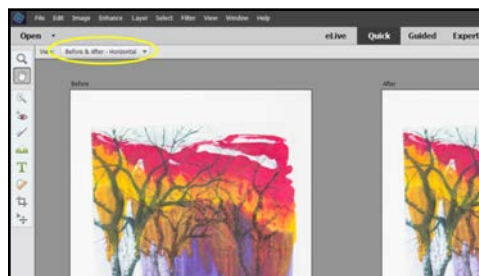
If you had photographed the artwork laying on its side and need to fix the orientation, just click on the Rotate Left tool at the bottom. Presto!

If the image needs to be rotated right instead of left, click on the small arrow next to the icon to show the Rotate Right tool.

Fix the White Balance

Now that you have an image open and in the correct orientation, you're ready to make any adjustments. It can be helpful to see both the "before" and "after" views side-by-side as you work. Click on the view dropdown in the upper left and select "Before & After - Horizontal".
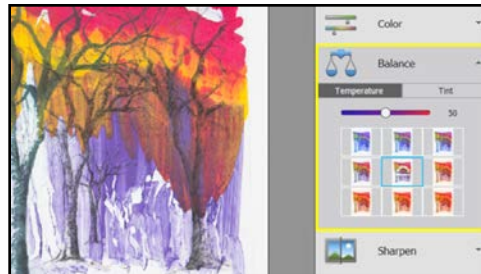
I'd like the images to be larger on the screen, so I'll close the Photo Bin and, using the Menu, change the View to "Fit on Screen". The keyboard shortcut is shown, too: hold down the Ctrl key and tap the "0" key.

Click on "Balance" in the Adjustments panel on the right to open the white balance adjustment. Select "Temperature", which is the balance between blue and yellow, and move the cursor over any of the thumbnail images to see the preset adjustment. Click on one that best corrects the white balance. The center thumbnail is "no adjustment".

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You can also drag the slider to change the setting between 0 and 100, type a number in the box, or use the up and down arrows on the keyboard. The numbers on the slider, by the way, are only an adjustment scale and don't actually mean anything.
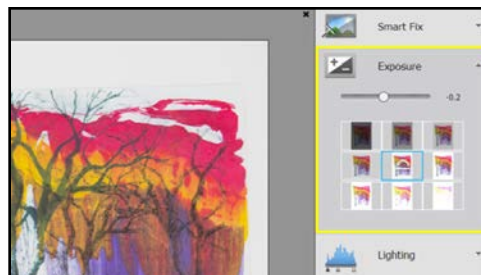
This piece has a white mat, so it doesn't look like I need to make the image "Bluer" or "Yellower" in order for the mat to look white.

You can also adjust the "Tint", which is the balance between green and red. Again, select one of the presets or use the slider to make a change. I'm going to leave the "Tint" alone for this image.

Fix the Exposure

The image looks a bit overexposed, so let's darken it. Click on "Exposure" in the Adjustments panel.
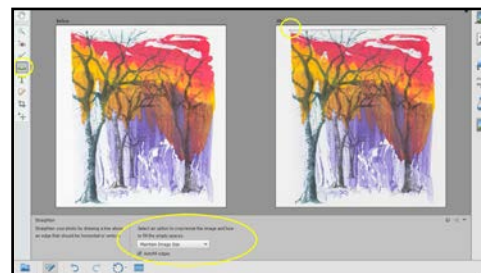
As with the Balance adjustments, move the cursor over each of the thumbnails to see the preset. Click on the one that best corrects the exposure, or use the slider to fine-tune the adjustment. There, that looks better.

Straighten

The artwork looks a bit crooked in the image, so let's straighten it.

Click on the Straighten Tool in the Toolbar. Then draw a line along an edge of the artwork that you want to be parallel with the side of the image—either horizontal or vertical. Do this by clicking at one corner and hold while you drag the cursor along the edge of the artwork. Then release and it'll be straightened.

The Tool Options area includes a couple of options for cropping the image after straightening and for filling the empty space. The default choices will work most of the time.
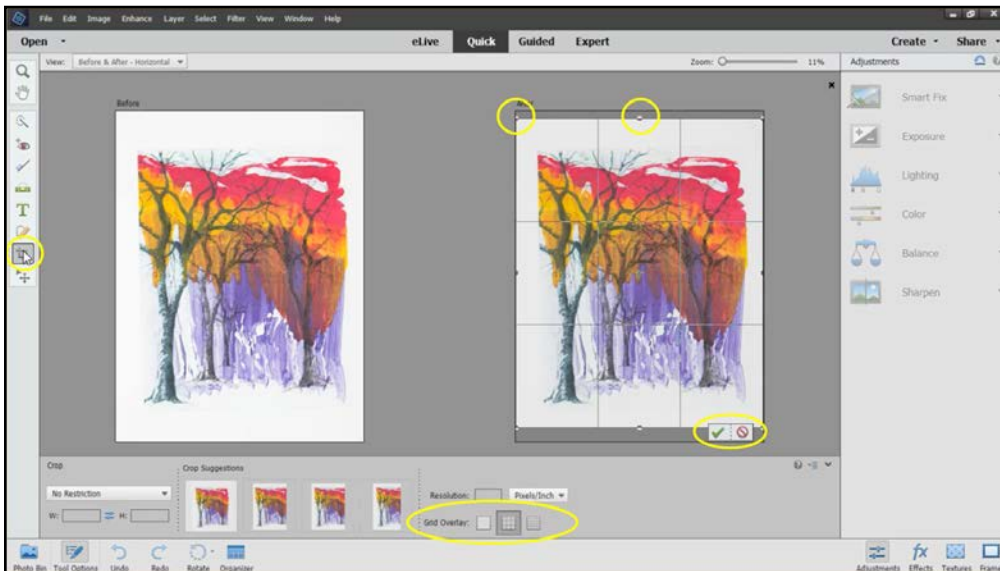
Alternatively, you can straighten the artwork at the same time you crop the image. I'll undo what I just did and show you how.

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Straighten and Crop

I'll use Ctrl-0 to zoom out and show the entire image, then click on the Crop Tool in the Toolbar. A crop box will automatically appear over the image. I'll make the grid overlay smaller to help with alignment. You can ignore everything else in the Tool Options area when cropping your artwork.
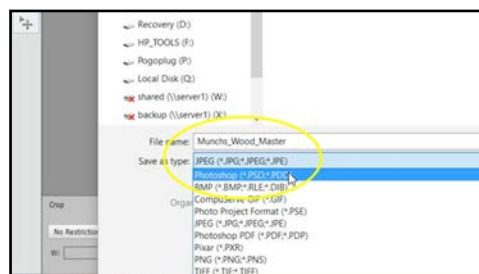

Drag the square markers at the corners and sides to adjust the size of the crop area. Click-hold inside the crop area to move the crop box over the artwork. Click-hold outside the crop area to rotate it, which straightens the image.
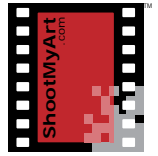
If you want to start over, just click the red Cancel icon. The crop box does not re-appear, so position the cursor at one corner of the artwork, click-hold and drag the cursor across to the opposite corner, then release. You can adjust the new crop box as before. Once you're satisfied with the position, click the green Check icon to complete the crop.

Save the Image

Now you'll want to save the edited image as the "master" to use for show entries or other purposes.

Click "File" on the Menu Bar and then "Save As". In the file manager window that opens, type in a new file name. Never save the edited master over the original image from the camera because many of the edits you make cannot be undone later if you need a clean, unedited

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image. I like to use the title of the artwork to make the image easy to find later, but avoid including any special characters (other than "-" or "_").

Select "Photoshop" as the file format using the dropdown under the file name (it'll end in ".psd"). That'll save the image in an uncompressed format, and you'll have the most flexibility later to use any of the advanced editing features. If you're not using Elements, select the TIFF format. Then click "Save".

Here's a tip—save the master images in a separate folder on your computer to avoid confusion and make them easier to find. Also, always make a backup copy of both your original and master images on a portable drive and store the it in a safe place in case the hard drive in your computer "crashes" and you need to recover your files. Alternatively, use one of the online backup services to automatically backup the files on your computer.

Basic Edits Again

1. Open an image in Photoshop® Elements in Quick edit mode (or another photo editing program on your computer).

2. Adjust the white balance

   ☐ The whites are "white", not "off-white"
   ☐ The grays are neutral, not "warm" or "cool"
   ☐ The colors are accurate and match the art

3. Correct the exposure

   ☐ The white areas are "white", not gray (increase the exposure)
   ☐ The black areas are "black", not gray (decrease the exposure)
   ☐ The overall brightness matches the artwork

4. Use the Straighten Tool to straighten the image

   ☐ Make one side of the artwork parallel with the edges of the image
   ☐ Then undo this edit.

5. Use the Crop Tool to straighten and crop the image

   ☐ The sides of the artwork are parallel with the edges of the image
   ☐ The frame and mat don't show (unless part of the piece)

6. Save the edited image for future use

   ☐ Give the "master" image a new name
   ☐ Save it as a Photoshop file type (.psd) or as a TIFF