

Alternative Basic Color Correction In Elements

By Jerry Koons

The following tutorial outlines an improved method for BASIC color correction.

This method is preferred over the one shown in the Basic Color Correction In Elements tutorial because it provides more user control for making changes. Having more control over the correction process will permit you to produce better quality images.

Steps One through Five are identical to the above mentioned tutorial so this is an alternative and somewhat advanced technique.

Step One

Open the image in Elements.

Step Two

Press and hold the *Ctrl* key down and tap the *L* key to open the *Levels Dialog* box as shown below in *Figure 1*.

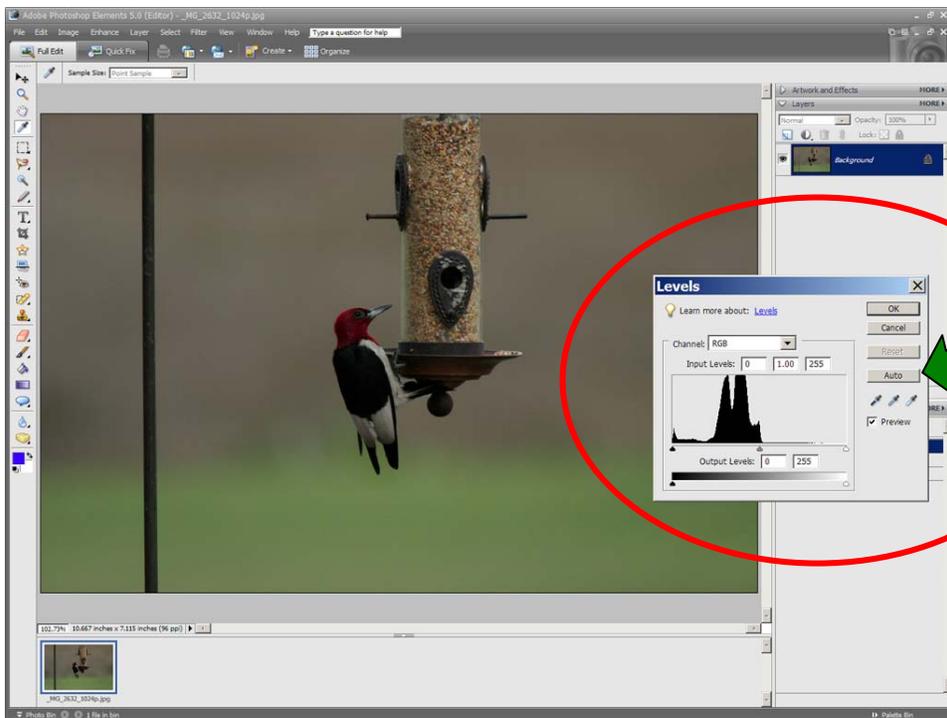


Figure 1

Step Three

Click on the *Auto* button as indicated by the arrow in the dialog box in Figure 1 above and notice that the image now has Adobe's recommended adjustments for color and contrast. Refer to Figure 2 on the next page for the "after" effect.

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Step Three - continued

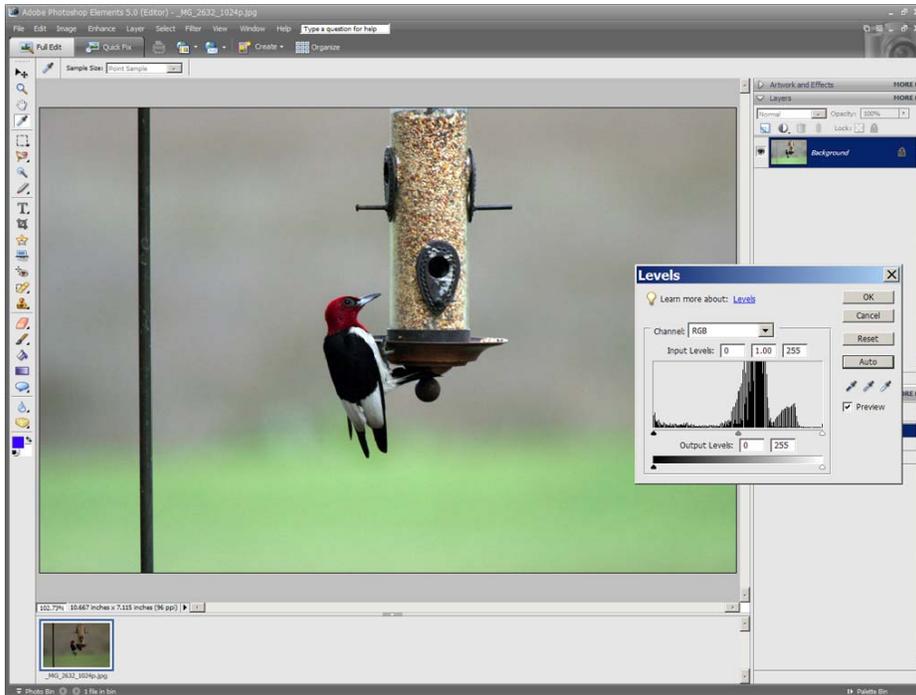


Figure 2

IF the image is improved to your satisfaction, simply save the file and you are done.

IF the image needs additional correction, refer to the next Step.

IF the image looks worse and unacceptable, close the file **WITHOUT** saving.

Step Four

IF the image is too dark or too light, refer to Step Five.

IF the image has a color cast, refer to Step Six.

Step Five

You can easily control the lightness or darkness of the image by moving the **CENTER SLIDER ONLY** to the left to lighten the image and to the right to darken the image. Refer to Figure 3.

If the adjustments are complete, save the image, preferably with a different name.

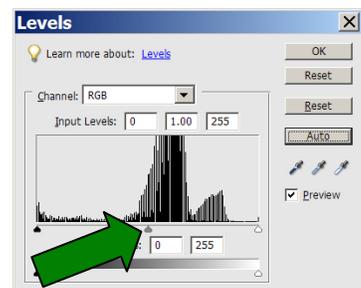


Figure 3

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Step Six

A better method for obtaining correct color tones is to use the *Levels* tool. You will still be able to SEE the changes in color tones PRIOR to actually committing the adjustment, but you will have more control.

To use this method, you must determine the undesirable color cast or casts.

This can be difficult for some people and if that is the case, it may be better to use the Basic Color Correction In Elements tutorial until you develop “an eye” for determining color casts. Neutral colors, such as middle tone grays are easiest to detect color casts.

If you closed the Levels dialog box, reopen it by Pressing and holding the Ctrl key down and tap the L key.

1. Click on the down arrow of the *Channels* and select the color channel that needs revising. *NOTE: Keep in mind that both the color and it's opposite can be adjusted. For example, Red and it's opposite, Cyan, can be adjusted in the Red channel. Green and it's opposite, Magenta in the Green channel and Blue and it's opposite, Yellow, can be changed in the Blue channel. More than one color channel may require revising and it is recommended to change the most offensive colors first and then proceed to the next.*
2. Click and drag the *CENTER SLIDER ONLY* to the left to increase the color or to the right to decrease the channel color (which increases it's opposite color). *NOTE: You can also highlight the number in the center box and use the up or down arrow keys to move the slider in smaller increments. Do Not move any slider except the center one.*
3. If necessary, select another color channel and move the *CENER SLIDER ONLY* to adjust that channel color or it's opposite.
4. This should provide the desired color correction but occasionally, it may be necessary to return to the first color channel and “tweak” the center slider.

Click OK to commit the changes and save the image – preferably with a different name.