

Basic Color Correction In Elements

By Jerry Koons

The following tutorial outlines a method for BASIC color correction.

This is not a preferred method except for the very beginning level of the Elements program users. Numerous other methods exist and do a better job of color correcting but this method will normally produce the desired results for those just learning the program.

This technique does not employ any layers or complicated steps.

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*.

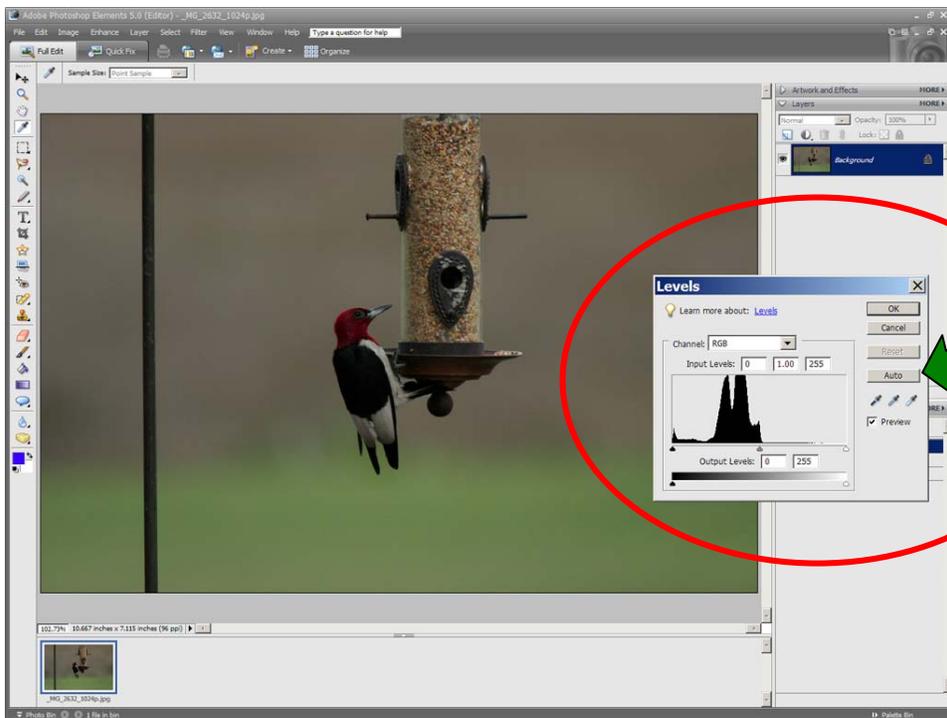


Figure 1

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

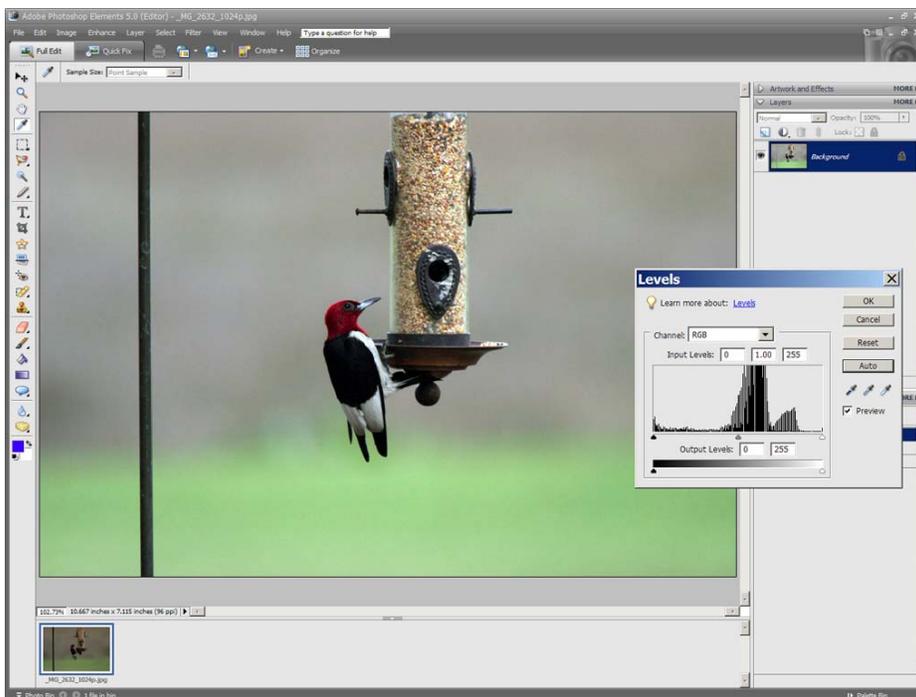


Figure 2

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.

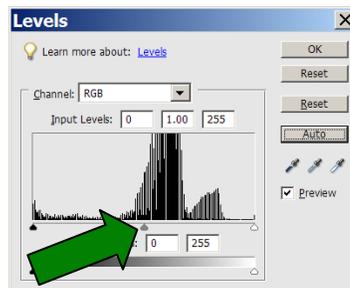


Figure 3

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Step Six

Perhaps the easiest method for beginners to Elements to obtain correct color tones is to use the *Variations* tool. The advantage is being able to SEE the changes in color tone PRIOR to actually committing the adjustment.

Open the Color Variations dialog box by clicking on *Enhance > Adjust Color > Color Variations*.

Follow the prompts in the dialog box for steps 1, 2 and 3 to adjust the color tones.

General tips are:

1. Look for the best color tone before clicking on any patch.
2. Normally, adjusting the *Midtones* provides the best corrections
3. Move the *Intensity* slider to the left to reduce the amount of intensity effect of the various color patches. This usually makes the tonal choices very easy.
4. After clicking on the intended patch, carefully examine the *Before and After* images to see the effect.
5. Notice that the individual color patches now reflect how the image would appear if another patch is selected.
6. It may be wise to decrease (or increase) the *Intensity* slider to obtain a better tone.
7. Pressing the *Undo* button will undo the previous actions and the *Reset* button will reset to the original state.

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

The dialog box on the right, reflects the changes made to this image. The changes are subtle because this image had only a very slight color cast.

Note that the *Adjust Intensity* slider in the lower left hand corner is set to a very low intensity setting.

This image was corrected by clicking on the Increase Red patch and also the Decrease Blue patch.

The Variations dialog box varies between versions and your version may be different than the Elements 5 that is shown.

