

About selections

One of the most important aspects of image editing is the ability to select areas within an image. This can be used in a number of different ways:

- Selecting an object to apply an editing technique to it (such as changing the brightness or contrast) without affecting the rest of the image
- Selecting a particular color in an image
- Selecting an area to apply a special effect to it
- Selecting an area to remove it

Don't forget



Once a selection has been made it stays selected even when another tool is activated, to allow for editing to take place.

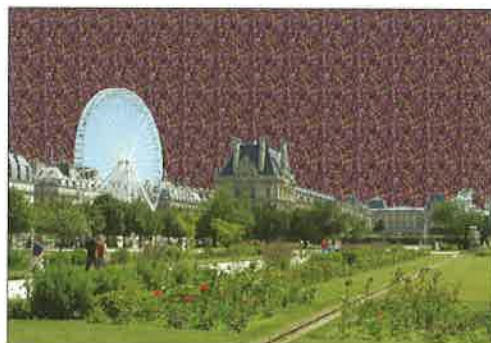
Elements has several tools that can be used to select items and there are also a number of editing functions that can be applied to selections.

Two examples of how selections can be used are:

- 1 Select an area within an image and delete it



- 2 Select an area and add a color or special effect



Hot tip



The best way to deselect a selection is to click on it once with one of the selection tools, preferably the one used to make the selection.

Marquee tools

There are two options for the Marquee tool: the Rectangular Marquee tool and the Elliptical Marquee tool. Both of these can be used to make symmetrical selections. To use the Marquee tools:

- 1 Select either the Rectangular or the Elliptical Marquee tool from the Toolbox. Select the required options from the Options bar



- 2 Make a symmetrical selection with one of the tools by clicking and dragging on an image



Don't forget



To access additional tools from the Toolbox, click and hold on the black triangle next to one of the default tools, and select one of the subsequent options that are available.

Elliptical selection

Rectangular selection



Hot tip




To make a selection that is exactly square or round, hold down Shift when dragging with the Rectangular Marquee tool or the Elliptical Marquee tool respectively.

Lasso tools

There are three options for the Lasso tools, which can be used to make freehand selections. To use these:

Lasso tool


- 1 Select the Lasso tool from the Toolbox and select the required options from the Options bar 



- 2 Make a freehand selection by clicking and dragging around an object



Polygonal Lasso tool

- 1 Select the Polygonal Lasso tool from the Toolbox and select the required options from the Options bar 

- 2 Make a selection by clicking on specific points around an object and then dragging to the next point



Hot tip



When a selection has been completed (i.e. its end point reaches its start point), a small circle will appear at the side of whichever Lasso tool is being used. Click at this point to complete the selection.

Don't forget



Making a selection with the Polygonal Lasso tool is like creating a dot-to-dot pattern.

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Magnetic Lasso tool



- 1 Select the Magnetic Lasso tool from the Toolbox and select the required options from the Options bar

- 2 Click once on an image to create the first anchor point



- 3 Make a selection by dragging continuously around an object. The selection line snaps to the closest strongest edge, i.e. the one with the most contrast. Fastening points are added as the selection is made



Don't forget



On the Options bar for the Magnetic Lasso tool, the Edge Contrast value determines the amount of contrast there has to be between colors for the selection line to snap to them. A high value detects lines with a high contrast and vice versa.

Don't forget



The Frequency setting on the Options bar determines how quickly the fastening points are inserted as a selection is being made. A high value places the fastening points more quickly than a low value.

Magic Wand tool

The Magic Wand tool can be used to select areas of the same, or similar, color. To do this:

Don't forget



On the Options bar for the Magic Wand tool, the Tolerance box determines the range of colors that will be selected in relation to the color you click on. A low value will only select a very narrow range of colors in relation to the initially selected one, while a high value will include a greater range. The values range from 0–255.

Hot tip



On the Options bar for the Magic Wand tool, check on the Contiguous box to ensure that only adjacent colors are selected. To select the same, or similar, color throughout the image, whether adjacent or not, uncheck the Contiguous box so that there is no tick showing.

- 1 Select the Magic Wand tool from the Toolbox and select the required options from the Options bar



- 2 Click on a color to select all of the adjacent pixels that are the same, or similar, color, depending on the options selected from the Options bar



Selection Brush tool

The Selection Brush tool can be used to select areas by using a brush-like stroke. Unlike with the Marquee or Lasso tools, the area selected by the Selection Brush tool is the one directly below where the tool moves. To make a selection with the Selection Brush tool:

- 1 Select the Selection Brush tool from the Toolbox and select the required options from the Options bar



- 2 Click and drag to make a selection



- 3 The selection area is underneath the borders of the Selection Brush tool


Don't forget



The Selection Brush tool can be used to select an area or to mask an area. This can be determined in the Mode box in the Options bar.

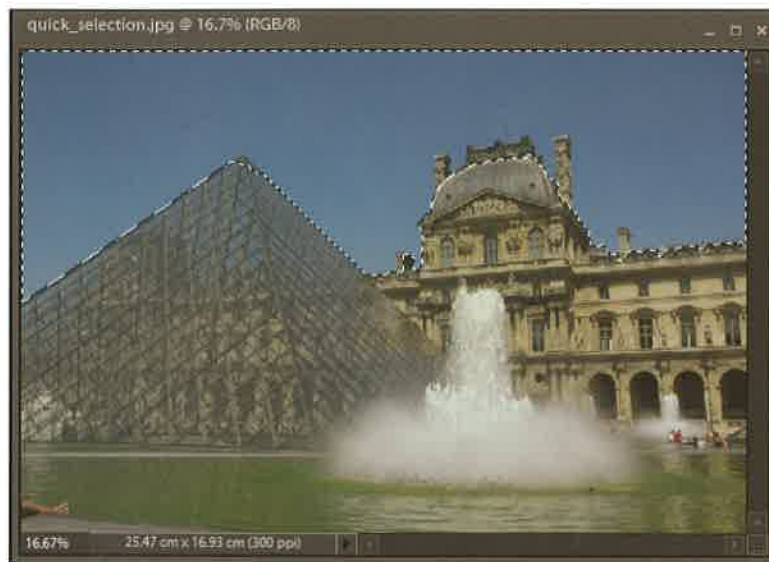
Quick Selection tool

The Quick Selection tool can be used to select areas of similar color by drawing over the general area without having to make a specific selection. To do this:

- 1 Select the Quick Selection tool from the Toolbox 
- 2 Select the required options from the Options bar



- 3 Draw over an area, or part of an area, to select all of the similarly colored pixels



Smart Brush tool

The Smart Brush tool can be used to quickly select large areas in an image (in a similar way to the Quick Selection tool) and then have effects applied automatically to the selected area. To do this:

- 1 Open the image to which you want to apply changes with the Smart Brush tool



- 2 Select the Smart Brush tool from the Toolbox 

- 3 Select the editing effect you want to apply to the area selected by the Smart Brush tool, from the Options bar



- 4 Select Brush size for the Smart Brush tool, from the Options bar



- 5 Drag the Smart Brush tool over an area of the image. In the left-hand image, below, the building has been selected and brightened, in the right-hand image the sky has been selected and enhanced



Don't forget 

Multiple editing effects can be applied with the Smart Brush tool within the same image. This usually requires selecting different parts of the image and selecting the required effect.

Inverting a selection

This can be a useful option if you have edited a selection and then you want to edit the rest of the image without affecting the area you have just selected. To do this:

- 1 Make a selection



- 2 Choose Select > Inverse from the Menu bar

- 3 The selection becomes inverted, i.e. if a background object was selected the foreground is now selected



Hot tip



When inverting a selection, ensure that the whole of the required area has been selected. If not, hold down Shift and make another selection to add this to the existing one.

Feathering

Feathering is a technique that can be used to soften the edges of a selection by making them slightly blurry. This can be used if you are pasting a selection into another image or if you want to soften the edges around a portrait of an individual. To do this:

- 1 Make a selection
- 2 Choose Select > Feather from the Menu bar



- 3 Enter a Feather value (the number of pixels around the radius of the selection that will be blurred). Click on the OK button



- 4 Invert the selection as shown on the previous page and delete the background by pressing Delete. This will leave the selection around the subject with softened edges



Don't forget



Feathering can also be selected from the Options bar once a Marquee tool is selected and before the selection has been made.

Hot tip



If required, crop the final image so that the feathered subject is more prominent.

Editing selections

When you've made a selection, you can edit it in a number of ways.

Moving

To move a selected area:

Beware



Once an area has been moved and deselected, it cannot then be selected independently again, unless it has been copied and pasted onto a separate layer.

- 1 Make a selection and select the Move tool from the Toolbox



- 2 Drag the selection to move it to a new location



Don't forget



To deselect a selection, click once inside the selection area with the tool that was used to make the selection.

Changing the selection area

To change the area under the selection:

- 1 Make a selection with a selection tool



- 2 With the same tool selected, click and drag within the selection area to move it over another part of the image



Hot tip



When changing the selection area, make sure that the New selection button is selected in the Options bar.

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Adding to a selection

To add to an existing selection:

- 1 Make a selection and click here in the Options bar



- 2 Make another selection to create a single larger selection. The two selections do not have to intersect



Hot tip



Additions to selections can also be made by holding down Shift and making another selection.

Intersecting with a selection

To create a selection by intersecting two existing selections:

- 1 Make a selection and click here in the Options bar



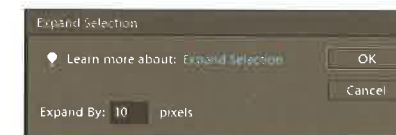
- 2 Make another selection that intersects the first. The intersected area will become the selection

Expanding a selection

To expand a selection by a specific number of pixels:

- 1 Make a selection and choose Select>Modify>Expand from the Menu bar

- 2 In the Expand Selection dialog box, enter the amount by which you want the selection expanded



Don't forget

Selections can be contracted in a similar way to expanding them, by selecting **Select>Modify>Contract** from the Menu bar. The amount for the selection to be contracted is then entered in the Contract Selection dialog box.

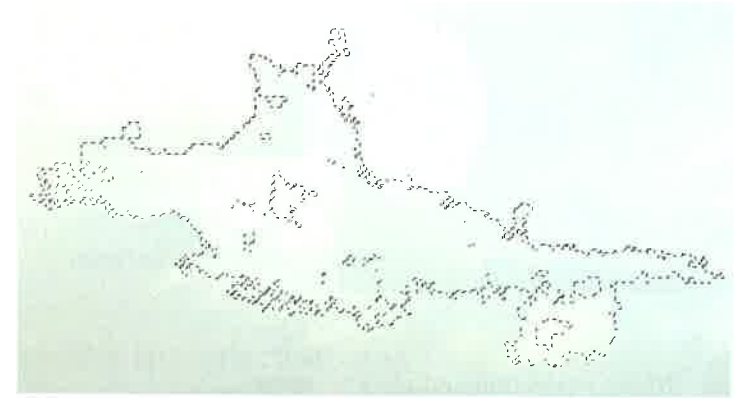
Hot tip

The Similar command (**Select>Similar** from the Menu bar) increases the selection in the same way as the Grow command, except that it includes non-adjacent pixels throughout the image too.

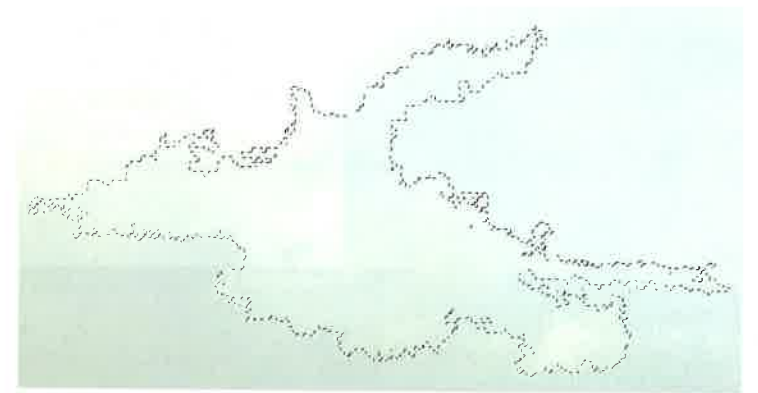
Growing a selection

The Grow command can be used on a selection when it has been made with the Magic Wand tool and some of the pixels within the selection have been omitted, due to being outside the tolerance. To do this:

- 1 Make a selection with the Magic Wand tool and make the required choices from the Options bar. Choose **Select>Grow** from the Menu bar



- 2 Depending on the choices in the Options bar, the omitted pixels are included in the selection and it has been expanded



Don't forget

Selections can be contracted in a similar way to expanding them, by selecting **Select > Modify > Contract** from the Menu bar. The amount for the selection to be contracted is then entered in the Contract Selection dialog box.

Hot tip

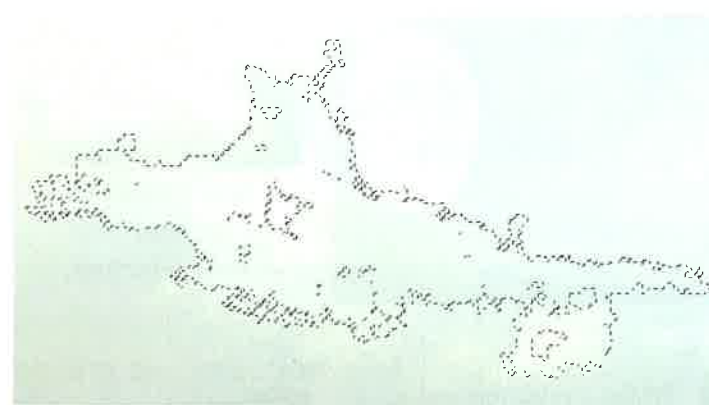
The **Similar** command (**Select > Similar** from the Menu bar) increases the selection in the same way as the **Grow** command, except that it includes non-adjacent pixels throughout the image too.

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Growing a selection

The **Grow** command can be used on a selection when it has been made with the **Magic Wand** tool and some of the pixels within the selection have been omitted, due to being outside the tolerance. To do this:

- 1 Make a selection with the **Magic Wand** tool and make the required choices from the **Options** bar. Choose **Select > Grow** from the **Menu** bar



- 2 Depending on the choices in the **Options** bar, the omitted pixels are included in the selection and it has been expanded

