



Getting Started With Actions

For the Actions webinar recording follow this link: <http://bit.ly/EEactionsvideo>

What Are Actions?

Actions are prerecorded edit steps which create a particular look or steps needed to clean up an image. Actions need YOU to tweak and personalize them to make them really shine.

When To Use Which Action?

FIRST—Cleaning actions (like my Deep Clean action or [InstaClean](#) action)

- Cleaning actions can be one long action or a group of shorter actions.
- These type actions will help you fix areas such as the following:
 - Exposure problems
 - Brighten eyes
 - Whiten teeth
 - Smooth skin

SECOND—Artistic actions help you produce a particular effect like vintage, black and white, sun-kissed, retro, etc.

- Run artistic actions after you have cleaned up your image with a cleaning action or on your own.
- Creative actions are NOT one-size-fits-all, some will look better on some images, not so great on others.
- Make sure to tweak each layer to give the image the look you want. You can accomplish this by:
 - Lowering the layer opacity
 - Using a white/black brush on a black/white mask to lesson the effect on particular areas
 - Changing the blend mode

THIRD—Finishing actions give your image that final polish before saving.

- Actions that sharpen and add a vignette are finishing actions.
- These actions need to be run after using cleaning and artistic actions.



Getting Started With Actions

Downloading and Saving Actions

When you purchase actions or find them free, you will be prompted to download them, either through something like e-junkie or a site like MediaFire.

- ◆ Usually your computer will give you a choice of where on your computer you would like them saved. Either create a folder and send it there, or send it to your downloads folder; either way works.
- ◆ In your download dialog box, right click on the file and choose 'Open Containing Folder,' and you will be taken straight to the zip file.
- ◆ Right click (or double click on a Mac) and choose 'Extract All' to unzip the zip file. This will extract the folder which holds the action(s).
- ◆ PSE 6 - PSE 10 follow instructions below & page 4. **PSE 11 skip to page 3.**
- ◆ If there are two folders in the download, one for Photoshop and one for Photoshop Elements, **ONLY** go into the Photoshop Elements folder and highlight all the .atn, .png, and .metadata.xml files. Press 'control' and 'c' ('command' and 'c' on a Mac) to copy those files.
- ◆ **Do NOT copy the folder! ONLY copy the files in the folder, not the entire folder itself.**
- ◆ Navigate to your Photo Effects folder (path listed on next page) and press 'control' and 'v' ('command' and 'v' on a Mac) to PASTE the files into that folder.
- ◆ If you have a Mac, you will need to delete the mediadatabase.db3 each and every time you load actions. Good news though, the rebuild is pretty quick.
- ◆ Start or restart your PSE.
- ◆ Allow a few moments for the actions to load. My PSE 10 takes up to three minutes to recognize the new actions.

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
EE Baby Clean 2.atn	5/28/2011 12:30 AM	ATN File	14 KB
EE Baby Clean 2.metadata.xml	10/26/2011 8:44 PM	XML Document	1 KB
EE Baby Clean 2.png	10/29/2011 11:07 ...	PNG image	6 KB
EE Dallas.atn	7/22/2011 9:54 PM	ATN File	5 KB
EE Dallas.metadata.xml	10/26/2011 8:46 PM	XML Document	1 KB
EE Dallas.png	10/26/2011 7:53 PM	PNG image	5 KB

**Highlight .atn, .png and .metadata.xml files and press
'control/command' and 'c'**



Getting Started With Actions

Installing Actions in PSE 11 - Action Panel

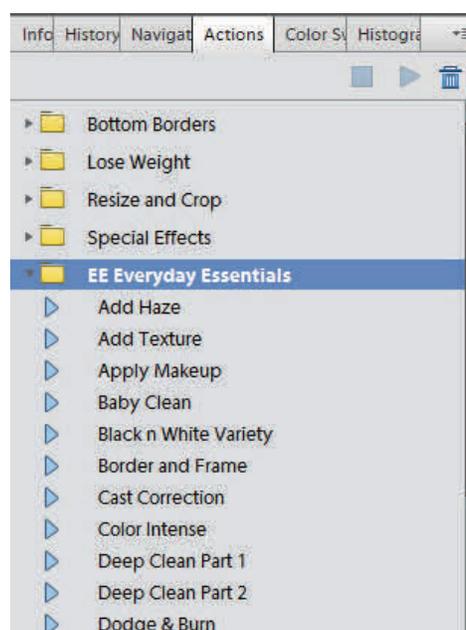
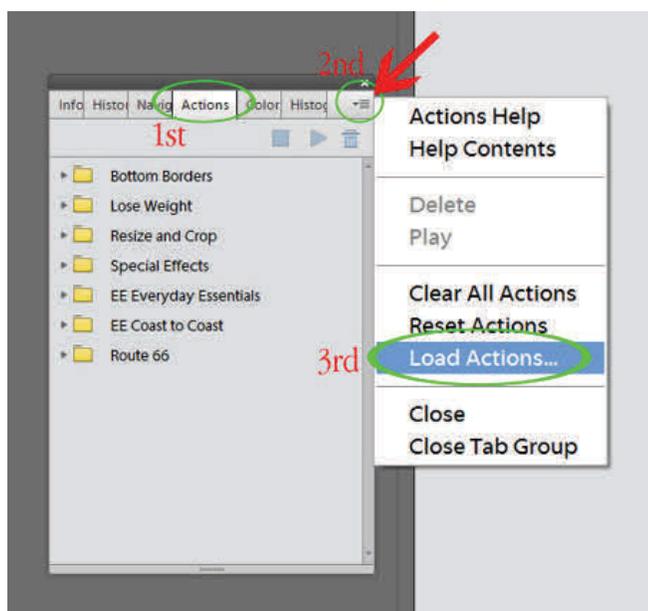
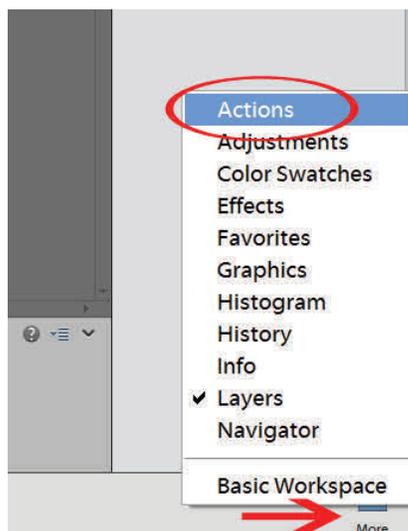
The first thing you need to do is open your PSE 11 and click on Windows, then Actions. Or, you can click on the “More” icon in the bottom right-hand corner, then on Actions. A box with several tabs will pop out, opened to the Actions tab.

To load/install actions look at the top right-hand corner of the box, and click on the little triangle with lines beside it. A menu will open and you click on ‘Load Actions.’

Your Windows Explorer or Mac Finder will open and you must navigate to where your actions are located. If all your actions are individual actions (that is the only way PSE actions could be made/used in previous versions), then you will have to install them one at a time.

When you download Everyday Elements you are provided a Photoshop version which is one .atn file. You can load that one action file and have all the actions you had before but in a combined set.

You can play actions via the Actions panel or you can use the Photo Effects panel thumbnails. Both ways will work!





Getting Started With Actions

Paths To Follow When Installing Actions in PSE 6 - PSE 10:

IMPORTANT:

PC users, you must unhide your hidden files and folders! To unhide them, go to Start/Control Panel/Tools/Folder Options/View and select “Show Hidden Files and Folder.”

Mac users, you must delete the mediadatabase.db3 file after copying/pasting actions and before restarting your PSE.

Windows Vista and 7:

C Drive/Program Data/Adobe/Photoshop Elements/9.0/ Photo Creations/Photo Effects (paste action files here)

Windows XP:

C Drive/Documents and Settings/All Users/Application Data/Adobe/Photoshop Elements/9.0/Photo Creations/Photo Effects (paste action files here).

Mac Snow Leopard:

1st -Hard drive/Library/Application Support/Adobe/Photoshop Elements/9.0 or your version/Photo Creations/Photo Effects (paste actions files in that folder)

2nd - Library/Application Support/Adobe/Photoshop Elements/9.0/Locale/en_US

3rd - Paste in action files Delete the Mediadatabase.db3 file

When you start PSE, you should see a box that says “Building Content & Effects.”

IMPORTANT—Macs have two Libraries. Make sure you are on the right one.

Mac Lion:

1st - Open Finder, click on GO in the Finder menu, then down to Computer and after that Macintosh HD.

2nd - Follow this path: MacIntosh HD/Library/Application Support/Adobe/Photoshop Elements/10.0/Photo Creations/Photo Effects (paste actions files in that folder).

3rd— After pasting action files you copied delete the Mediadatabase.db3 (see file path for Snow Leopard above).

Restart your PSE after deleting mediadatabase file.

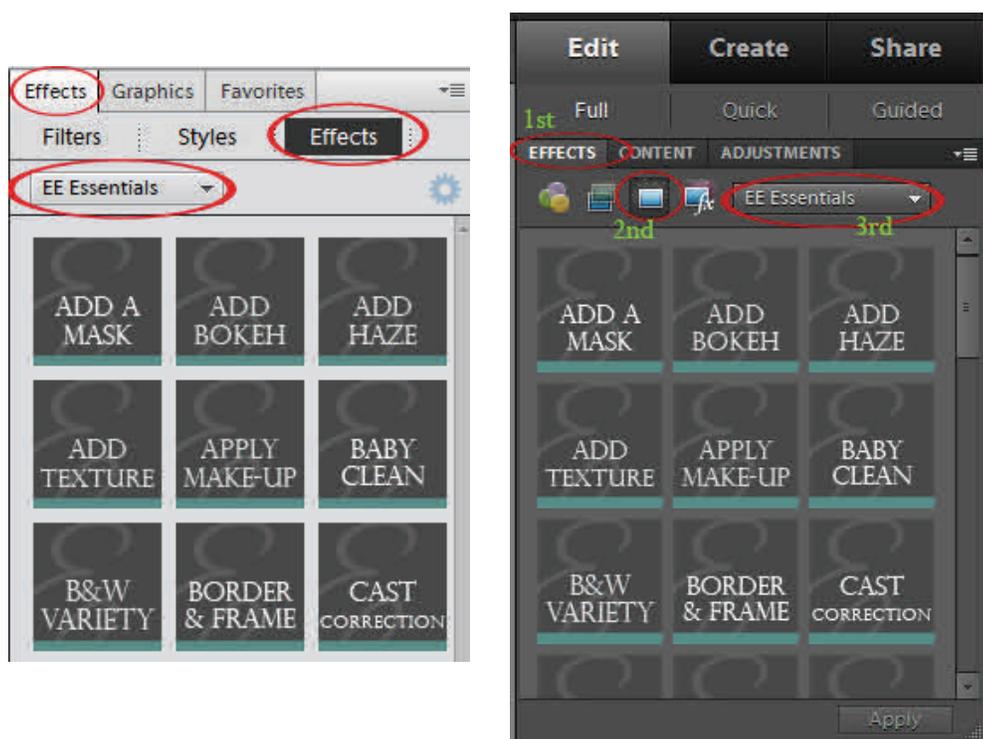


Getting Started With Actions

Most Common Mistake

One of the most common mistakes new PSE users make is going through all the right steps then not clicking on the right icon in PSE, and then think that their actions aren't there.

- ◆ Make sure you click on the rectangle with little sparkles, then click on the menu box.
- ◆ If you do click on the menu and they still aren't there, click on the three circles icon (filters) then back to the rectangle, and the actions should be there.



After you've installed the actions in Photo Effects folder, start your PSE. Look for the Effects tab (#1), and click on the Photo Effects icon (#2). If you don't see the actions, click on the drop down menu (#3) and the actions should be listed there.



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Having Trouble?

Actions can be very tricky to install the first time you do it (not in PSE 11 if only using the Action panel) but after you have done it a few times, it gets much easier. However, sometimes no matter how well you followed instructions, the actions just won't load. Below are some tips you can try.

If you have done everything you should and you open your PSE and there are no new actions in your Effects palette, click on the icon of the three circles, below the word "Effects," then click on the next icon and then the one with "sparkles" (when hovering over it, "photo effects" will appear) and at the drop down menu choose "show all.")

Actions Won't Load on PC

If you have copy/pasted the actions into the right folder, restarted PSE and waited but the actions will not show up, you may need to delete your mediadatabase.db3 file. This is something I have to do about three times a year on my PC.

1. Close your PSE
2. Follow the file path for your operating system below and DELETE the mediadatabase.db3 file.
3. Restart your PSE
4. Allow at least 25 minutes for your PSE to rebuild the "content" for the mediadatabase.db3 file. Do NOT try to use your PSE during this time. Walk away and come back later.
5. Click on the three circles/filters icon, then on Photo Effects and click on the drop down menu; your actions will all be there.

Windows Vista and 7:

C: /Program Data/Adobe/Photoshop Elements/9.0/Locale/En Us/Mediadatabase.db3

Windows XP:

C: /Documents and Settings/All Users/Application Data/Adobe/Photoshop Elements/9.0/Locale/En Us/mediadatabase.db3



Getting Started With Actions

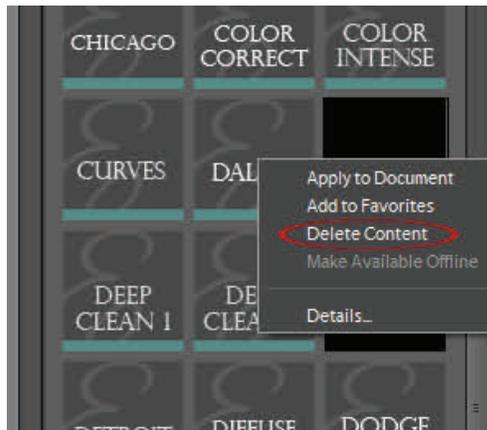
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Non-working Thumbnails

When you are first getting started with PSE, you probably copied over files that were not needed and now you have black boxes in your Effects palette, or you have thumbnails that don't work (give you an error message).

- You ONLY need the .atn and .png files (and .xml if they were included in your set; all my sets have them) from the download folder you received when you purchased actions or received free from a site.
- To get rid of nonfunctioning thumbnails, RIGHT click on them and choose 'Delete Content.'
- Then go to your Photo Effects folder, locate those files, probably a .psd file, and delete them.



Black Thumbnails (or tree picture in PSE 11)

This may be an action that actually works but the .png file name is slightly different than the .atn file name.

- Go look in the Photo Effects folder for the action and make sure the spelling is exactly the same. If not, right click and correct the .png so it matches the .atn file name.



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Using White or Black Masks

- White masks are showing you all the change - hiding nothing.
- Black masks are hiding all the change - showing nothing. You must use a white brush to reveal the change on a black mask.

For example, if the layer says Teeth/Eye Whiten, it is a layer meant to whiten the eyes and teeth so you must use a soft, white brush over the whites of the eyes and the teeth to reveal the whitened effect.

Inactive Layers

Some actions have layers turned off (the eyeball is not showing on the far left of the layer). That means it is an optional layer. You can turn it on to see if you would like to use it or keep it off if you do not want it.

Click on blue rectangle icon and then on drop down menu to view actions you have installed.

Actions will have layers with white or black masks.

Layers with white masks show the change.

Layers with black masks are hiding the change, which requires you to use a brush to reveal the change that is hidden by the mask.

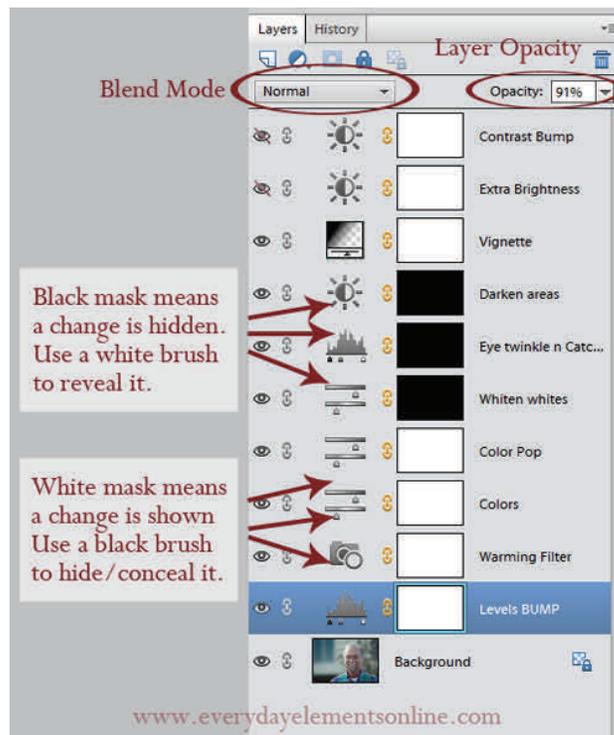


Getting Started With Actions

How to Use Actions

The most important thing to remember with actions -

- ◆ Workflow actions almost always require interaction/modification from YOU.
- ◆ Creative actions may require some modification from you.
- ◆ **Black masks** mean something is hiding - YOU must use **white brush** to reveal the change being hidden.
- ◆ **White masks** means you are seeing the change - YOU can use a **black brush** to hide the change wherever needed.



When to Use Which Action?

- ◆ Start EVERY edit by “cleaning” it up. Use cleaning actions to help your image be the BEST it can be but still look natural.
- ◆ After you have a “[clean edit](#),” save it (like ‘filename346_edit.jpg’), flatten and then try creative actions, if you choose.
- ◆ When your edit is where you want it, flatten and save it again (like ‘filename346_editMobile.jpg’ adding the action name may be helpful in the future).
- ◆ If you are going to share the image on the web, use a resize and sharpening action.





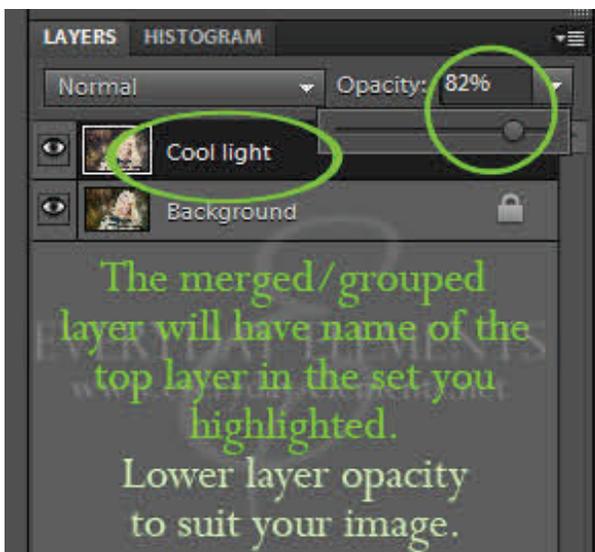
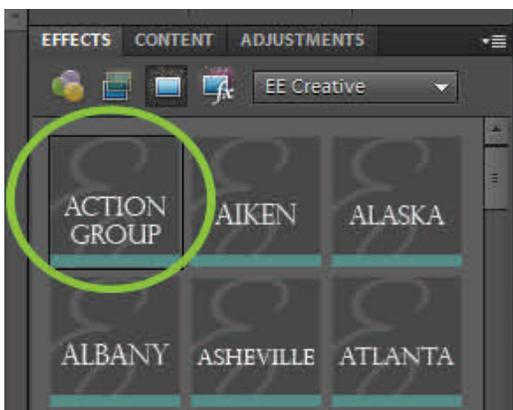
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Short Cut for Adjusting Creative Actions

When a creative action is fairly long and you like most everything about it, just want to lower the overall strength of it, this is a good time to GROUP it.

In Photoshop, you can group layers and lower the one layer opacity. In PSE, we have to MERGE those layers. So, I made an action that quickly merges the layers and you only have to lower the one merged layer's opacity.

- ◆ To run Action Group, play the action of your choice first then, run Action Group and it will condense it down to one layer for you.



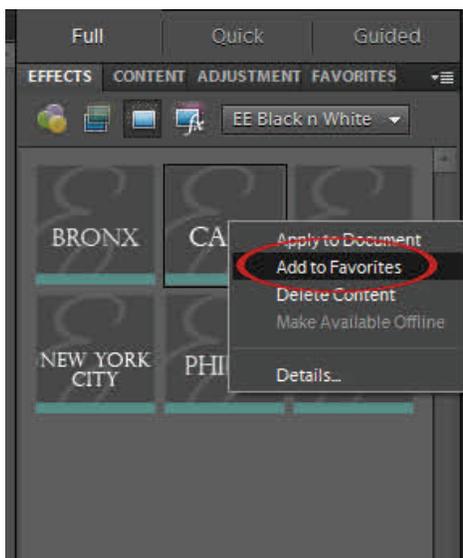
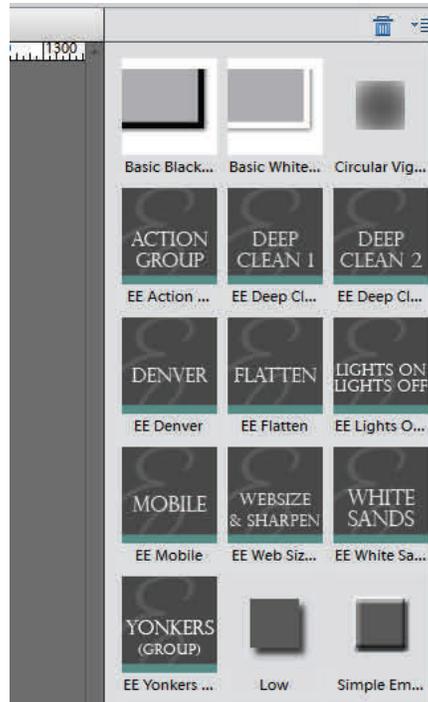
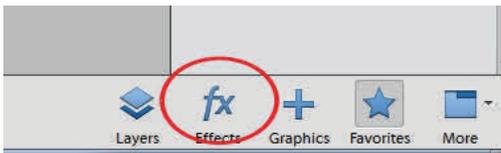


Getting Started With Actions

Easily Find Favorite Actions

If you find yourself using the same actions over and over and you are tired of hunting for them, you can add them to your Favorites panel, to make finding them quick and easy.

- ◆ To add an action to your favorites panel, right click over the action thumbnail and choose “Add to Favorites.”
- ◆ Once you have added the action(s), go to the bottom-right corner (of PSE 11) or in PSE 10 -6, go to Window then to Favorites (I am not certain PSE 6 or 7 have Favorites).
- ◆ The panel will open and show you the actions you included.





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Extra Helpful Information

If you are new to Photoshop Elements, it can be very overwhelming. Much of the information I shared during this webinar/workshop may not make sense to. If so, below are some tutorials you can find at Everyday Elements which will help reinforce what I taught or mentioned.

- ◆ [Layer Types Explained](#)
- ◆ [Understanding Layer Masks](#)
- ◆ [Learn to Love Levels](#)
- ◆ [How to Tweak White Balance With Levels](#)
- ◆ [Levels to the Rescue](#)
- ◆ [Using the Favorites Panel](#)
- ◆ [How to Resize Images for the Web](#)
- ◆ [How to Use Curves Action in PSE](#)
- ◆ [Customize Your PSE Workspace](#)
- ◆ [How to Apply Actions to Multiple Pictures at Once](#)

Keyboard Shortcuts

- Zoom in: 'control' and '+' / Zoom out: 'control' and '-'
- Increase brush size: right '[' / Decrease brush size: left '['
- Reset color palette to black/white: press 'd' on the keyboard
- To toggle between black/white in color palette: hit 'x' on keyboard
- To see where you have brushed on image: press 'alt' + click on mask
- To activate the hand tool at any time: hold down the space bar and click/drag mouse on image.
- Quickly flatten: right click on any layer and choose flatten.



Getting Started With Actions

[Visit Everyday Element's Store](#)



EVERYDAY BASICS 123

actions for beginners
designed for new PS/PSE users



EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS

essential cleaning actions for
everyday editing



ROUTE 66

creative action set
coming soon



CITY LIGHTS

black & white actions
create mood....evoke emotion



COAST TO COAST

creative actions to enhance all
types of pictures