Uncover the inside tips and tricks of the trade for organizing, correcting, editing, sharpening, and retouching your photos like a pro

the photoshop elements 2020 book

for digital photographers

Scott Kelby

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Converting RAW Photos to the Adobe DNG Format

You have the option of converting your RAW images from your camera manufacturer's proprietary RAW format to Adobe's open format DNG (Digital Negative) format. DNG was created by Adobe out of concern that one day, one or more manufacturers might abandon their proprietary RAW format, leaving photographers shooting RAW out in the cold. Unfortunately, none of the big three camera manufacturers embraced this DNG format, and even I stopped converting my images a few years ago. However, if you want to convert to DNG, here's how:
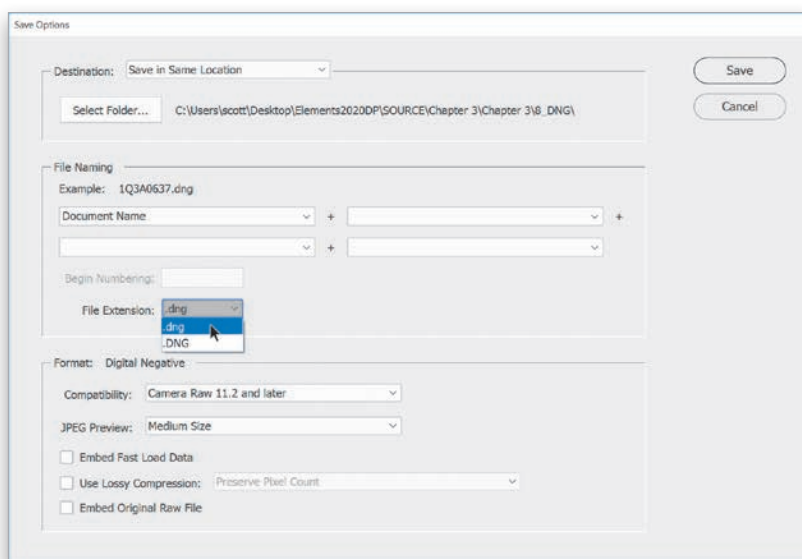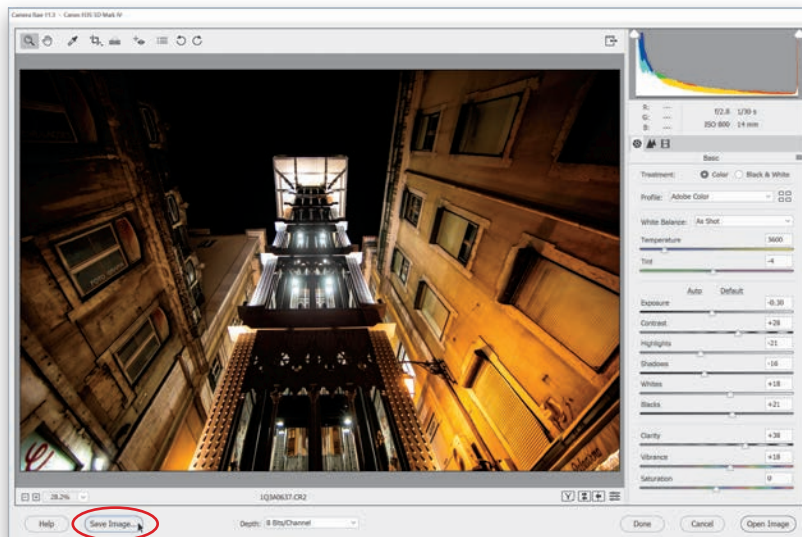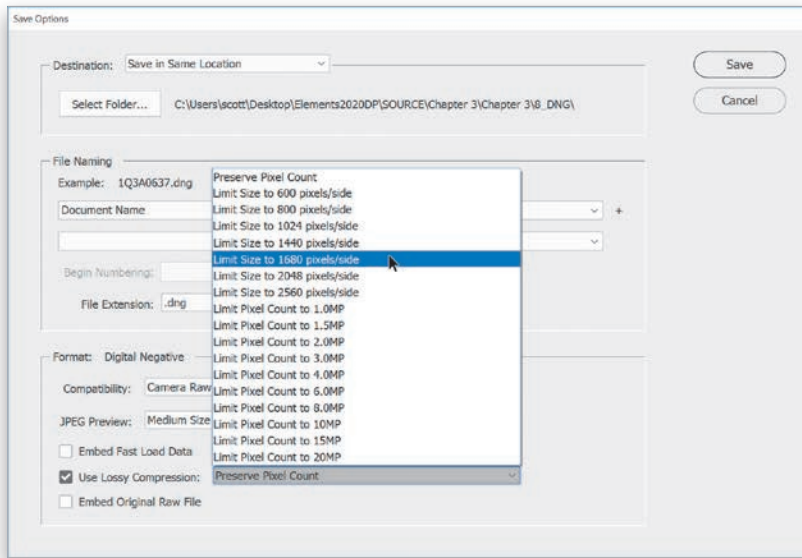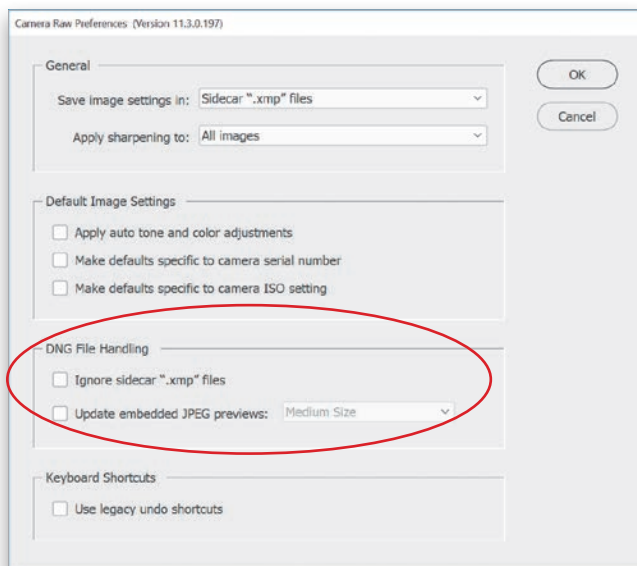
Step One:

There are two advantages of the DNG format: (1) DNG files maintain the RAW properties, but are about 20% smaller in file size, and (2) if you need to share an original RAW image file with someone, and you want that file to include any changes you made to it in Camera Raw (including keywords, copyright, metadata, etc.), you don't have to generate a separate XMP sidecar file (a separate text file that stores all that info). With DNG, all that data is backed right into the file itself, so there is no need for a second file. There are disadvantages to DNG, as well, including importing taking longer because your RAW files have to be converted to DNG first. Also, DNGs aren't supported by many other photo applications. Just so you know. However, if you have a RAW image open in Camera Raw that you want to save as an Adobe DNG, click the Save Image button (as shown here) to bring up the Save Options dialog (seen in the next step). *Note:* There's really no advantage to saving TIFF, JPEG, or PSD files as DNGs.

Step Two:

When the Save Options dialog appears, in the middle of the dialog, you'll see the File Extension pop-up menu is set to DNG (shown here). Below that, under Format: Digital Negative, is a set of options for saving your DNGs.

Step Three:

In the Format section is the Embed Fast Load Data checkbox, which uses a smaller embedded RAW preview that makes switching between images faster. Below that is a somewhat controversial option. It uses a JPEG-like lossy compression (meaning there is a loss in quality), but the trade-off (just like in JPEG) is that your file sizes are dramatically smaller (about 25% of the size of a full, uncompressed RAW file). So, if there's a loss of quality, why would you use this? Well, you wouldn't use it for your Picks (the best images from a shoot—ones you might print, or a client might see), but what about the hundreds the client rejected or you don't like? Those might (it's your call) be candidates to be compressed to save drive space. It's something to consider. If you do want to do it, turn on that checkbox, then choose (from its pop-up menu) which option is most important to you: saving the same physical dimensions (pixel size) or file size (megapixels). Once you've made your choices, click Save, and you've got a DNG.

TIP: Setting Your DNG Preferences

With Camera Raw open, press **Ctrl-K (Mac: Command-K)** to bring up Camera Raw's Preferences dialog. There are two preferences in the DNG File Handling section: Choose Ignore Sidecar ".xmp" Files only if you use a different RAW processing application (other than Camera Raw or Lightroom), and you want Camera Raw to ignore any XMP files created by that application. If you turn on the Update Embedded JPEG Previews checkbox (and choose your preferred preview size from the pop-up menu), then any changes you make to the DNG will be applied to the preview, as well.

Location: Venice, Italy | Exposure: 1/125 sec | Focal Length: 11mm | Aperture Value: ƒ/4.0

Scream of the Crop
how to resize and crop photos

You know what? If I go to Google or the iTunes Store (two of my most reliable sources for TV show, song, and movie titles), and type in "crop," do you know what I'm going to get? That's right, a bunch of results about corn and wheat. Now, I have to be straight with you—I hate corn. I don't know what it is about corn that I don't like (maybe it's red color?), but I just never warmed up to it at all. It's probably because I don't like the smell of corn, and if you think about it, when it comes to which foods we like and which we don't like, we generally don't like any foods that smell bad to us. For example, when was the last time you put a big forkful of food up to your mouth and said, "Wow, this smells horrible!" and you actually ate it? Okay, outside of a fraternity prank, when was the last time? Really? You eat food that stinks? Wow, I never knew that about you. I'm a little surprised frankly, because up to this point, I thought we had kind of a simpatico thing going between us. I write ridiculous stuff, and you don't return the book for a refund, and
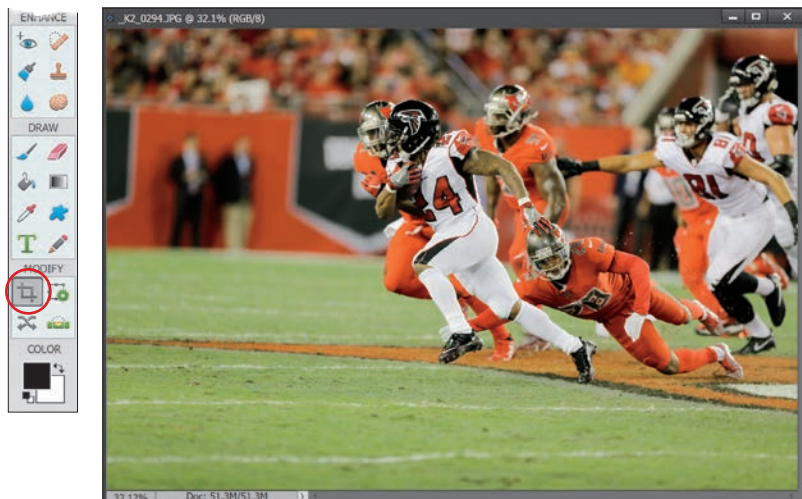
you even skip entire chapters just to jump to the next chapter opener. I thought we were buds, but this…this really has me worried. What else haven't you told me? What? No way! Did you get sick? Oh man, that had to be bad. Did you call the cops? Why not? Oh. Then what? No way! What? What? What? Ewwwww! Look, I'm not sure we can go through any more of these chapter intros together. You're pretty messed up, and I'm not sure that reading these is good for you. You seem like you're in kind of a downward spiral. What? No, I am not judging you. Okay, I'm judging you, but no more than anyone else would who knew you did that, which by the way was pretty sick, and yes you should have called the cops, or a lawyer, or a podiatrist, or a taxidermist. So, corn, huh? All that, and you're totally okay with eating corn, even though it smells bad to you. Well, if it's any consolation, I don't eat wheat. I mean, where would you even buy a bushel of wheat? The tack shop? The Purina shop? Subway? Hey, I have a 50% off coupon!

Basic Cropping

After you've sorted your images in the Organizer, one of the first editing tasks you'll probably undertake is cropping a photo. There are a number of different ways to crop a photo in Elements. We'll start with the basic garden-variety options, and then we'll look at some ways to make the task faster and easier.
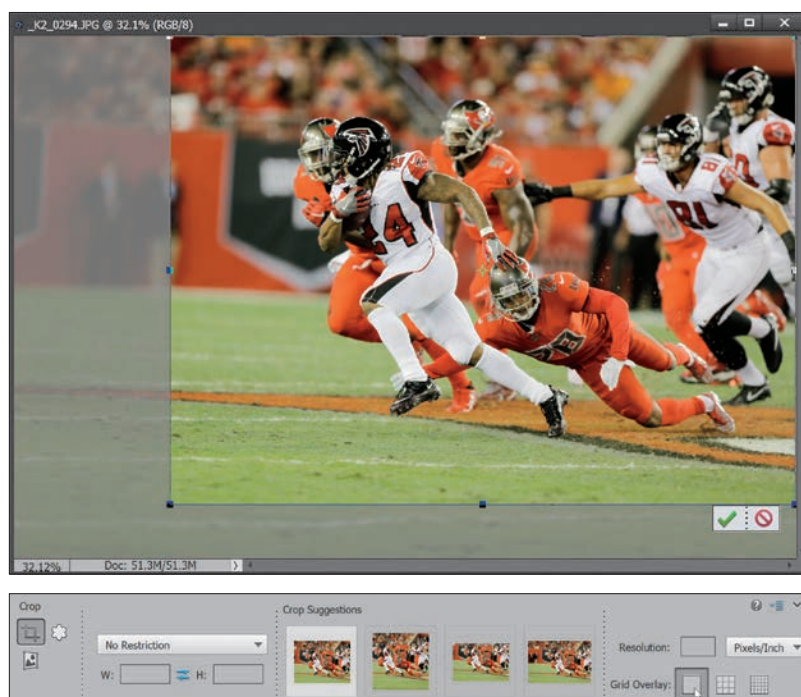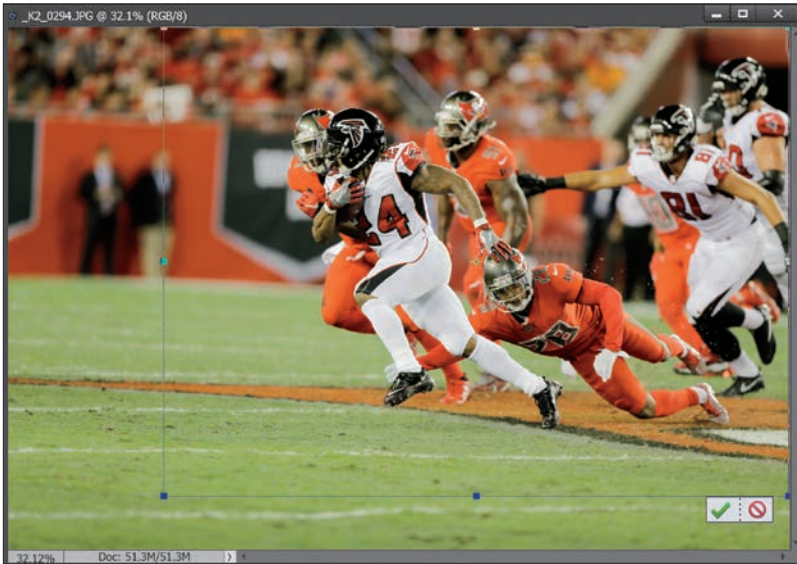
Step One:

Open the image you want to crop in the Elements Editor, and then press the letter **C** to get the Crop tool (you could always select the tool directly from the Toolbox, but I only recommend doing so if you're charging by the hour).
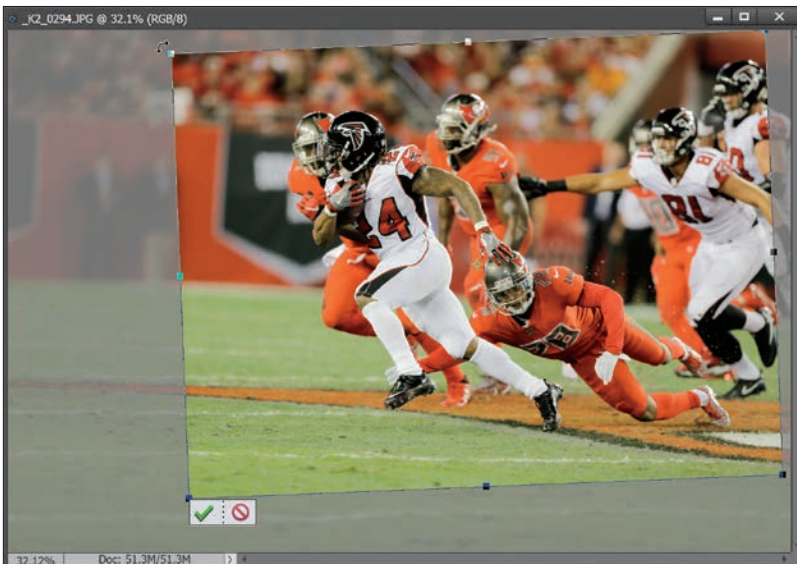

Step Two:

Click within your photo and drag out a cropping border. By default, you'll see a grid appear within your border. This feature lets you crop photos based on some of the popular composition rules that photographers and designers use. We'll go over this feature more in a moment, so for now click on the None icon in the Grid Overlay section on the right end of the Tool Options Bar. The area to be cropped away will appear dimmed (shaded). You don't have to worry about getting your cropping border right when you first drag it out, because you can edit it by dragging the control handles that appear in each corner and at the center of each side.

TIP: Turn Off the Shading

If you don't like seeing your photo with the cropped-away areas appearing shaded (as in the previous step), you can toggle this shading feature off/on by pressing the **Forward Slash key (/)** on your keyboard. When you press the Forward Slash key, the border remains in place but the shading is turned off.

Step Three:

While you have the cropping border in place, you can rotate the entire border. Just move your cursor outside the border, and your cursor will change into a double-headed arrow. Then, click-and-drag, and the cropping border will rotate in the direction that you drag. (This is a great way to save time if you have a crooked image, because it lets you crop and rotate at the same time.)

Continued