

## Photoshop Tips - Jim McCormick

The following tips are based on my experience using “Photoshop 7”, but I believe they work equally as well with “Photoshop Elements”, except that the terminology is slightly different.

### **Variations:**

Colour corrections in Photoshop can be confusing, especially if you’re just starting out. Any picture that looks subtly wrong - it might be too magenta, or too light etc., could be solved by experimenting with “Variations”. “Image”, “Adjustments”, “Variations”, lets you preview a range of colour and brightness changes that you can apply, any fine tuning can be done in Photoshop. It’s a lot easier than getting to grips with Colour Balance, Curves and Levels.

### **Auto Levels:**

One of my favourite “instant fixes” is to apply “Auto Levels”, this can be found under “Image”, “Adjustments”, “Auto Levels”, or use the keyboard shortcut “Shift-Ctrl-L”. Auto Levels checks the red, green and blue channels in your image, and optimises each for tonal range. This can often make a spectacular difference to an otherwise dull and unsaturated image. It doesn’t work every time, if not, you can always undo the application.

### **Set Crop Size:**

If you want to produce an image of a specific size, you’ll need to crop it to resize it, but instead of doing this in two or three steps, Photoshop lets you do it in one. Select the “Crop” tool, and then take a look at the options on the Properties bar above, this allows you to set the final dimensions of your image. Enter the Width and Height in pixels/inch, or pixels/centimetre, that you wish your image to be. If it’s being resized for printed, set the Resolution to 300dpi, for projection, set the Resolution to 96dpi, this being your monitors default resolution. Now, whenever you drag out the crop area on an image, Photoshop constrains it to the preset proportions. When the crop is applied, Photoshop will resample the image to 300dpi or 96dpi at the same time. Preset crop sizes can be saved for future use in the preset crop picker.

### **Crop and Rotate in One:**

Wonky horizons are a thing that judges quickly criticize but with Photoshop this shouldn’t be a problem. You can of course use Photoshop to rotate images, but you need to guess the correct rotation angle and you’ll need to crop it afterwards. Photoshop has on the other hand, the facility to rotate and crop in a single action. Drag out a marquee within the picture area with the crop tool, and then move the mouse pointer just outside the marquee boundary. You’ll see it turn into a “rotate symbol”, you can now rotate the marquee to match the tilt in your image. Adjust the crop to suit the composition; apply the crop and it will correct the tilt also.