

Curves for Photoshop Elements

Monday Morning Tip

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If you have PSE 4 thru 7 and want to add Curves (no, not the women's fitness company), you're in luck because Smart Curves v2.1 (<http://free.pages.at/easyfilter/curves.html>) is available for free. If you've never used the Curves Tool in Photoshop, you're probably scratching your head and wondering what I'm babbling about. Well, citizen, I'm about to let you in on a secret.

The Curves Tool is one of the few advantages of Photoshop that I miss in PSE. Think of Curves as Levels on steroids. The Levels Tool lets you set Black Point, White Point and Gray Point to adjust the balance of light, dark and mid-tones in a photo. Doing so helps correct the exposure and color of an otherwise badly exposed photo. We used Levels to adjust the image provided by the Computer Genealogy Society of San Diego (below) in my presentation to them.



The photo on the left is the original. The photo on the left (below) was adjusted with the Levels Tool and the photo on the right (below) was adjusted with Smart Curves v2.1. You'll notice that Smart Curves did a slightly better job. Grandpa's white shirt and the siding are whiter with Smart Curves than with just Levels. This is because Levels has just 3 adjustment points, Black, White and Gray while Curves has an infinite number of points.

I haven't yet had a chance to really test Smart Curves v2.1 but, so far, my reaction is that it's a great plug-in for anyone who uses PSE 4 thru 7.

There are other plug-ins that add curves to PSE. SC is the best I've seen to date. Smart Curves also works with other photo editing programs.

