

## Preparing images for web pages A four-step process in Photoshop

Open the image in Photoshop.

### 1. Crop the photo to the desired proportions.

Since photos are often the part of a web page that takes the longest time to download, make sure that the photo only contains what you want it to. With Photoshop it's easy to crop out parts of a photo that are not needed!

Use the crop tool to draw an outline around whatever section of your photo that you wish to keep. When you have adjusted the marquee to your liking, hit enter to take the crop.

### 2. Adjust the image.

Often photos that already look pretty good can be adjusted to look even better with a few simple steps in Photoshop. The easiest way to fix minor exposure problems is with Auto Color, Auto Levels, or Auto Contrast. Choose one of them and watch your image carefully. Use the Undo feature to bounce back and forth between the adjusted and unadjusted images. Choose the one you like best.

Keep in mind that Auto Color and Auto Levels WILL change the colors of your image somewhat. On most pictures it results in a more accurate representation, but sometimes (sunsets) it can make mistakes. Use Auto Contrast to fix the exposure without altering colors.

Other simple image adjustments you can make are sharpening, brightness/contrast, etc.

### 3. Resize the image.

On the web it is imperative that you make your images as small as possible. If you have a web site chock full of huge images, it will take forever to download (especially over a typical phone line's slow 28.8 modem!) and your visitor will become impatient and possibly leave.

To combat this problem, you need to resize your image to a lower resolution. Resolution is measured by the number of pixels ("picture elements" or screen dots) that make up your picture. If you have taken a picture with a 3 MegaPixel camera, you'll have something like 2048 pixels across by 1536 pixels high: 2048x1536 = 3,145,728 pixels (3.1 MegaPixels.)

Individual photos destined for web viewing are usually around 320x240 resolution (76,800 pixels) and rarely exceed 640x480 resolution (307,200 pixels).

What size should your picture be? That's up to you. Just remember that bigger isn't always better.

### 4. Save the image using Photoshop's "Save for Web..." function.

This step is easily the most critical. In order to shrink your photo's file size as much as possible, you need to compress the image. For the internet, you should choose one of only two formats: .GIF or .JPG. Don't know which to use? It's easy:

Use .JPGs for photos.

Use .GIFs for computer art, line art, or anything with less than 256 colors.

Using Photoshop's "Save for Web..." feature is the best way to experiment with compression settings *and* get immediate feedback on their effects on your image's quality.

What file size is "small enough?" Again, the answer lies with you. When people ask me this question I always answer with: Compress it *as much as possible*, then increase the quality until the image quality becomes *barely acceptable*. You'll end up with an image that can be downloaded as fast as possible, and while the image quality might not be great – at least it'll be *acceptable*.

# Getting Images Web-Ready with Photoshop

## A Four-Step Process

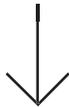
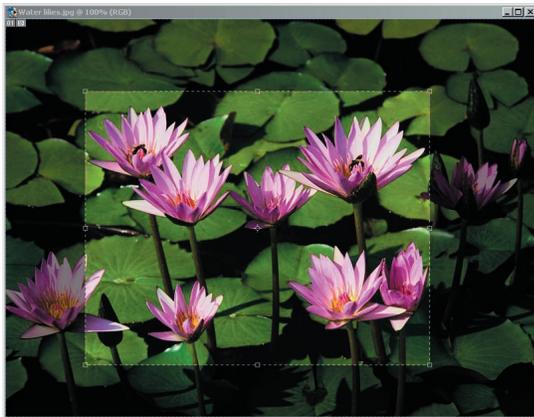


### Step 1

Select the crop tool



Left click-and-drag to make an outline around the portion of the image that you want to keep. You can make changes to your selection area after releasing the mouse button.



Hit "Enter" to crop



### Step 2

Simple adjustments can make a big difference.

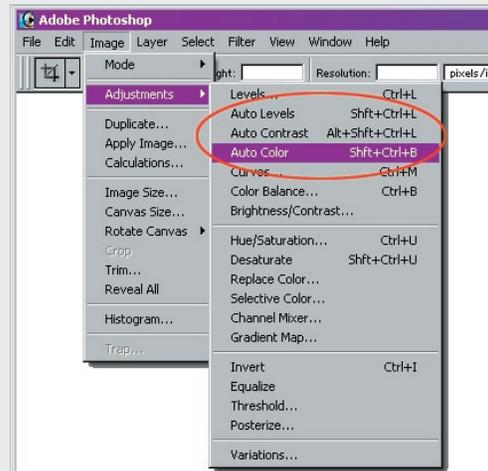
Try:

Auto Color

Auto Levels

Auto Contrast

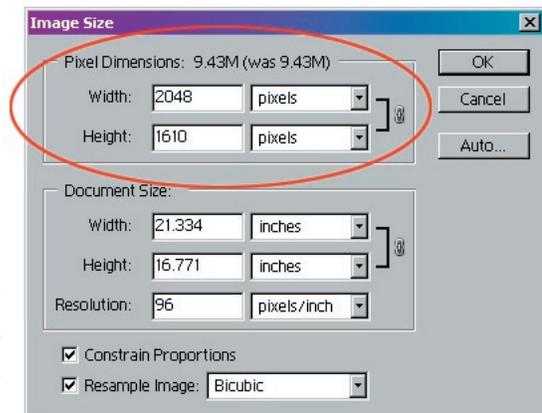
Remember that you can easily see the differences by using "ctrl-z" to bounce back and forth between "undo" and "redo!"



### Step 3

You can resize an image by going to Image -> Image Size. For web images, only alter Pixel Dimensions.

Web images can be any resolution, but often 640x480 pixels is a good MAXIMUM guideline. Resizing down to around 320x240 or less will be even better and will result in fast, easy load times!

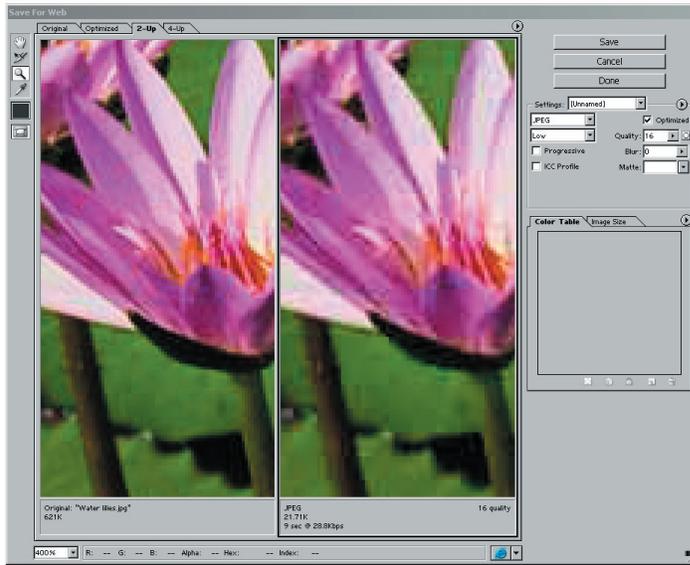


## Step 4

Compress your image using the "Save for web" function which can be found under **"File -> Save for Web..."**

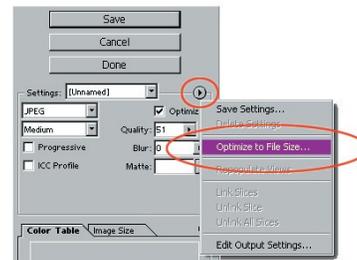
Note the following in the screen capture below:

- The "2-Up" tab is selected. This enables a comparison of the original image (left) and the optimized image (right).
- The optimized image is displayed using the settings on the right panel.
- The "100%" popup menu in the lower left allows you to zoom in and better evaluate compression on your images.  
(Base your final decision on the 100% view, though!)
- File sizes and download times are displayed underneath the images. In this example, note that the optimized file size is less than 4% of that of the original image, but it will still take 10 seconds to download on a 28.8 modem!
- When you have found the lowest file size balanced with an acceptable image quality, click the Save button.

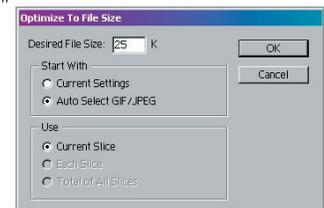


## JPEG Settings

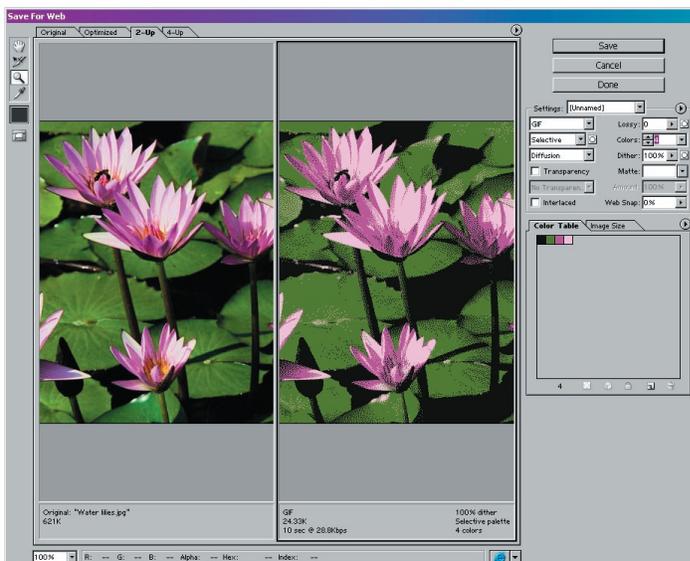
- The main setting used in JPEG compression is the popup labeled "Quality."
- "Progressive" will change the way in which the JPEG is downloaded, but will not significantly reduce the file size.



- Another very useful feature of "Save for Web..." is the ability to exactly define a file size for your image. Click the triangle-in-a-circle, then choose "Optimize to File Size..."
- In the next dialog box, choose your target size, and (if you like) let the program decide the best file format by selecting "Auto Select GIF/JPEG."



**Remember**  
Use GIFs for computer art, line art, or anything with less than 256 colors!  
Use JPEGs for *photographs!*



## GIF Settings

- The biggest factor in a GIF's filesize is the amount of colors used. Also try experimenting with the Selective and Diffusion settings, plus.
- Note that in this example only 4 colors are being used. Change that to 256 for a better (but larger!) image.
- Also, GIFs are useful for defining a transparency color. This option will be checked automatically if you used transparencies in your Photoshop image.
- *Really, a GIF shouldn't even be used here because this is a photo!*