

CHAPTER 12 - TIPS AND TRICKS

We receive many questions or challenges that do not fall neatly into any of the restoration categories. However, times they may impact the ability to restore a photo. Here are some topics that are related to restoration:

- Enlarging small images.
- Fixing blurry photos.
- Making photos pop.

Enlarging Small Images

Many old photographs are so small it is difficult to see all the content or appreciate their value.

If you want a larger image or print do not simply rely on stretching or re-sizing the image in software.

Software enlargement relies on mathematical formulas to make up new pixels. These formulas look at existing pixels and the new image size you wish, and starts duplicating the pixels it *thinks* the picture could use. Results are not always pretty.

If you want to enlarge a small picture or enlarge a small portion of a picture, scan it at 1200 or 2400 DPI. This c. 1851 daguerreotype case is only 3¼ inches and the oval image is 1½ inches wide. Yet, we wanted an enlargement to showcase all the interesting things in the photo.

The image was copied at about 1600 DPI, then trimmed to the oval. When the resolution was set to a printable 300 DPI (this does not change the pixels), the print size became about 8 inches wide and 9½ inches tall.

Instead of just printing an 8" x 10" picture, we made this beautiful composite picture that tells the whole story. An actual-size image of the daguerreotype and case was placed on the canvas along with a title. This can all be accomplished in Photoshop Elements.

Scan tiny photos at very high resolution for large prints: 1200 to 2400 DPI.



Figure 12-1. Actual size c. 1851 Daguerreotype.



Figure 12-2. Framed 12' x 16" print.

Blurry Photos - Please Make Them Sharp

There are many reason photographs can be blurry. The camera could have moved during exposure. The subject moved. The lens was not focused, or the depth of field was shallow. In older photographs, the film grain might have been poor.

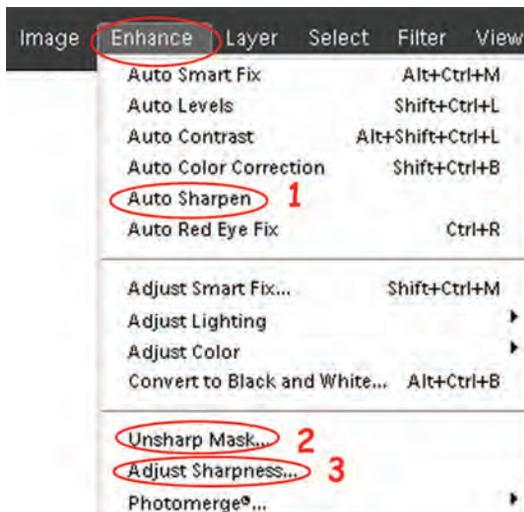
The answer to your question of ‘can I make it not blurry’ is a definite maybe. Or maybe not. Each case is different and you will only know when you try.

Slight blurs can generally be fixed easily, massive blurring is difficult or impossible to eliminate.

For critical, must-fix blurry photos, use the High Pass method.

Sharpening Options in Elements

In Elements version 11, there are four places in the Expert mode to perform sharpening, and additional ones in the Guided and Quick modes. We will cover the four Expert mode tools.



12-3. Three places to sharpen under the Enhance tab.

Yes, there four tools. The fourth one is hidden, or at least difficult to find.

Auto Sharpen - This is for the casual, quick fix. Not useful for serious work. No options or control.

Unsharp Mask – We do not use this as it is redundant and confusing. The next method is better.

Adjust Sharpen – This is a newer tool, it is similar to Unsharp Mask, but eliminates one of the options

(which confused most users anyway). This is recommended for uncomplicated sharpening.



Figure 12-4. Nice but blurry 1890 cabinet card photo.

This cabinet card is in excellent condition, however the children’s faces are all blurry. We believe the photographer mis-focused the camera, as the delicate lace on the baby’s dress is much sharper.

Click on **Adjust Sharpen** for its options box.

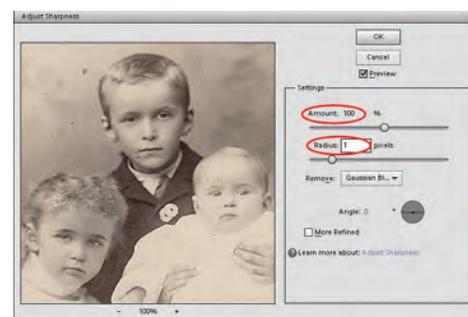


Figure 12-5. Options for Adjust Sharpen.

The values you enter for **Amount** and **Radius** are dependent on the resolution of your scan. Start with 100% and 1 pixel for high resolution scans, and 50% and .5 pixels for low resolutions scans.