

PSE.NET Technique Tutorial

These special layers alter the look of the layers that are arranged below them in the layers stack. They act as a filter through which the lower layers are viewed. You can use adjustment layers to perform many of the enhancement tasks that you would normally apply directly to an image layer without changing the image itself. When you choose to use an Adjustment Layer rather than applying the enhancement change directly to the image you are choosing to work non-destructively.

Creating an adjustment layer adds a new entry to the layers palette just above the active layer. The adjustment layer entry contains two thumbnails – the Layer Thumbnail on the left and the Layer Mask thumbnail on the right. Double clicking the Layer Thumbnail will display the adjustment layer's dialog. For instance, in the case of a Levels adjustment layer, double clicking the thumbnail will display the Levels dialog. This provides the user with the ability to make adjustments to existing settings, or even reset the dialog, at any time. The Layer Mask is used to customize where and how the adjustment layer's changes are applied.

Elements contains eight different types of adjustment layers which are grouped together with the fill layers under the Create Adjustment Layer button in the Layers palette. The same options can also be found in the Layer > New Adjustment Layer menu. They are:

Levels – Adjusts the tones in the picture.

Brightness/Contrast – Lightens, darkens and controls contrast.

Hue/Saturation – Changes the color and strength of color in photos.

Gradient Map – Changes the photo so that all the tones are mapped to the values of a selected gradient.

Photo Filter – Reproduces the color changes of traditional photo filters.

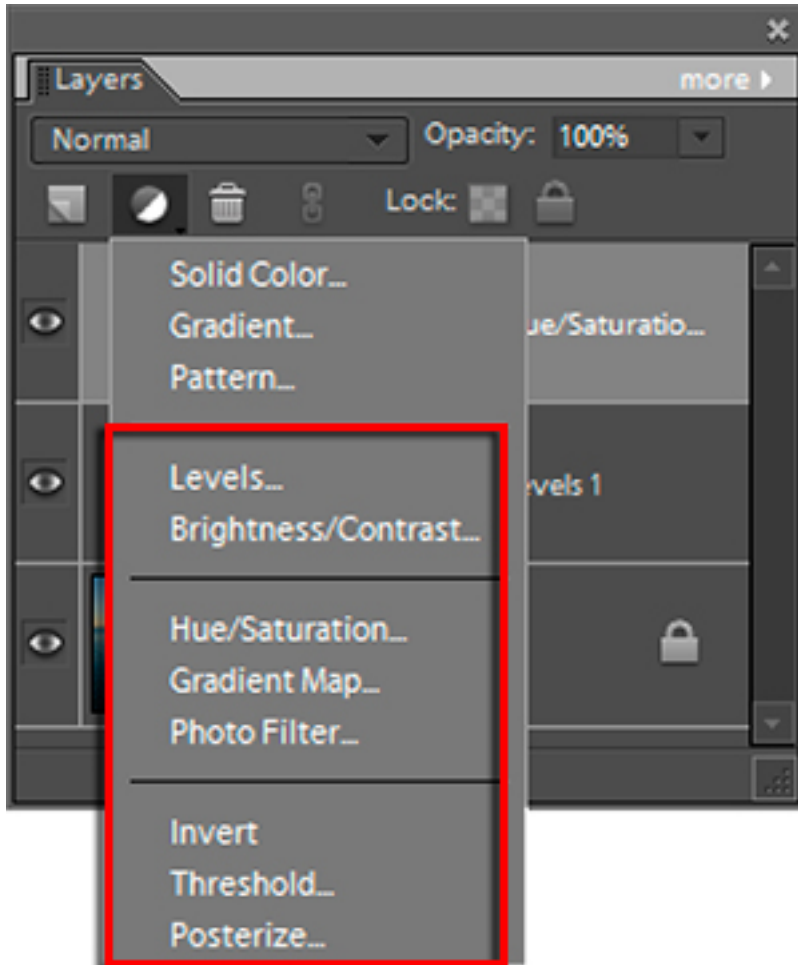
Invert – Reverses all the tones in a picture, producing a negative effect.

Threshold – Converts the picture to pure black and white with no grays present at all.

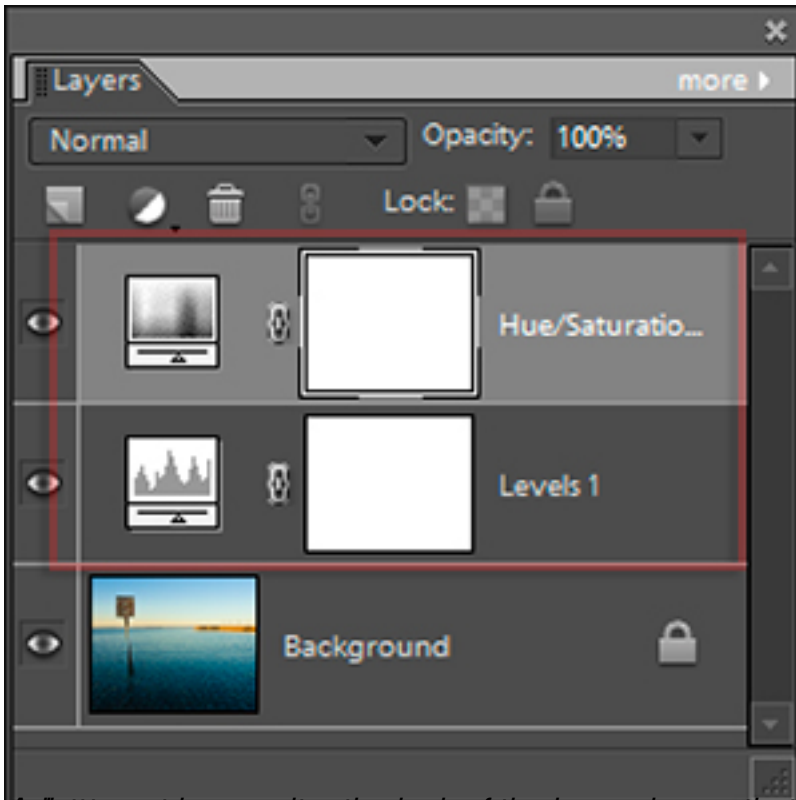
Posterize – Reduces the total number of colors in a picture and creates a flat paint (or poster)-like effect.

Placing an adjustment layer at the top of a stack of layers will ensure that the editing changes will be applied to the content of all the layers beneath. If instead of changing all the lower layers you want to restrict the effects of the adjustment layer to a single layer then after selecting the adjustment layer, pick the Group with Previous option from the Layer menu. This will indent the adjustment layer in the palette and, more importantly, 'group' the adjustment with the layer immediately below it. This technique is an important one as it changes the way that adjustment layers work and allows their non-destructive editing powers to be applied to individual image

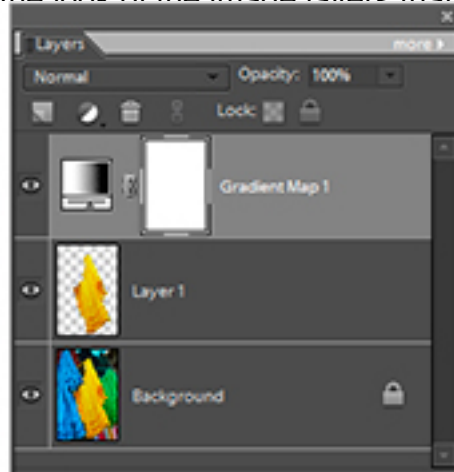
layers only.



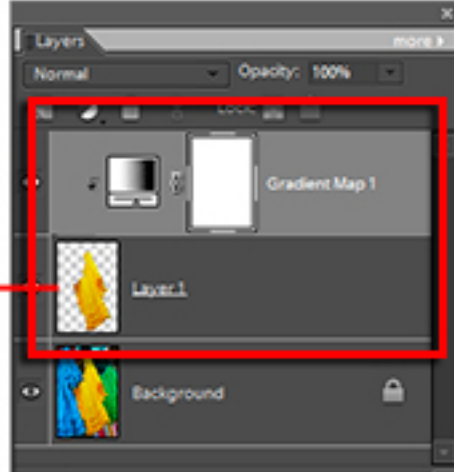
Photoshop Elements contains eight different adjustment layers.



Adjustment layers alter the look of the image layers that are positioned below them in the layers



Gradient Map adjustment layer being applied to both image layers.



On the complete first image layer equipped with Layer mask that's converted to [Channels](#) only