

TOOLBOX

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The Photoshop Elements toolbox is the tall, narrow palette that sits along the left edge of the workspace (**Figure 1**). It contains many of the tools you will be working with in Elements. That makes it pretty important!

(Your screen probably shows the toolbox in a single column like the default workspace screen shot. I'm just showing it here in two columns to save space.)

If you're new to Elements, it's very helpful to have a **printed toolbox reference**. If you'd like to make your own, you can do so by typing "About the toolbox" into the help search box to the right of the menu bar, and printing the resulting help page. Keep this printout handy so you can refer to it throughout these lessons.

When you look at the toolbox, notice how some of the buttons have a tiny arrow in the lower right corner (➤). This arrow indicates that other tools are hidden under that tool.

To access the other tools, click and hold down on a button and the other tools will pop out. Try this now by clicking on the rectangle marquee tool and changing to the elliptical marquee tool.

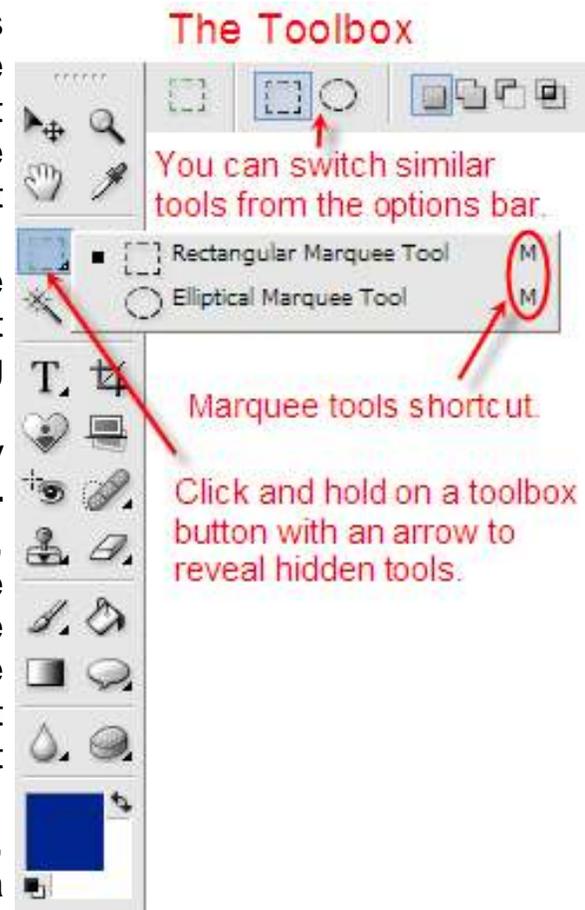


Figure 1

Now hold your cursor over one of the buttons and you should see a tool tip appear that tells you the name of the tool and its keyboard shortcut. The rectangle and elliptical marquee tools have a shortcut of M. When multiple tools share the same shortcut key, you can press the key multiple times to switch between all tools that share that shortcut. So if a marquee tool is not already active the M key will switch to it.

Once a marquee tool is already active, the M shortcut will toggle between the rectangular and elliptical marquee tools. Another shortcut for cycling through the hidden tools is to Alt (Win) or Option (Mac) click on the toolbox button. You can also switch between similar tools from the tool options bar.

Take a few moments now to familiarize yourself with the tool names using the tool tips. You'll notice that every tool in the toolbox has a link in its tool tip. Feel free to click these links to learn more about each tool from the built-in help. Use the shortcuts you've just learned to explore all the hidden tools. Don't worry about using each tool for now; we'll get to that soon enough. For now, you should just get to know the tool locations and their icons.

If your screen size is tall enough, you can switch the Photoshop Elements ToolBar from one column docked on the left side of the workspace, to a floating toolbox with two columns (**Figure 2**).

If your application window is less than 750 pixels in height, the ToolBar will be in two columns regardless of whether it is docked or floating.

If ToolBar is docked, you will notice a small dotted line at the top of the toolbox. This dotted line is like a handle. Just click the little dotted line "grabber" at the top and pull it away from the side of the window. When you release the mouse button, the toolbox will float where you drop it. You can move it anywhere you want on the screen (including outside of the application window) but if you drop it within about a half

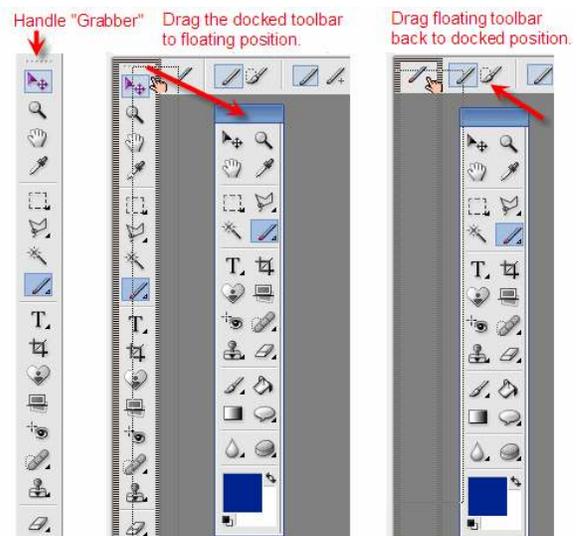


Figure 2

inch of the left edge of the window it will go back to a docked ToolBar.

To get it back to a single row, just drag it close to the left edge of the screen and you'll see a shaded outline appear. Let go and it will dock back to a single row on the edge.

The toolbox can only be docked on the left edge of the screen.

Moving down in the toolbox, we come to the color well (**Figure 3**). This is where the foreground and background colors are displayed.

The foreground color is used when you paint, fill, and stroke selections.

The background color is used when you make gradient fills, to fill in the erased areas of an image, and when you expand the canvas.

Foreground and background colors are also used by some special effects filters.

The small double arrow at the top right of the color well allows you to swap foreground and background colors. The tiny black and white swatch symbol to the lower left allows you to reset the colors to the default colors of black foreground and white background. Hold your cursor over those two areas to learn the keyboard shortcuts.

To change a color, simply click on either the foreground or background color swatch and select a new color in the color picker.

Experiment by changing the foreground and background colors and then resetting them back to defaults.

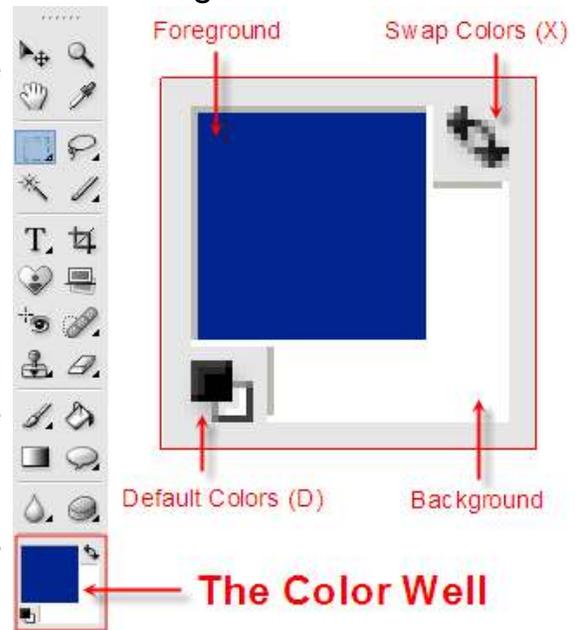


Figure 3