

How I Take Photos of My Jewelry



Go from this



to this!

This photo was taken outside on my daughter's picnic table on a sunny day in Florida. The background is a piece of white paper taken from her computer printer tray! There still is a small amount of glare on the stone (a picture jasper) but I think the stone shows up nicely. The bronze wire is true to color in the finished picture.

This is a small tutorial on how I, as an amateur, take pictures of my jewelry for my website. I have been told that the pictures are quite good. When I started I had many problems with reflection and glare off of the sparkling stones and the sterling silver. I didn't know about a light defusing tent and I haven't used one, yet. That will be my next step to perfection. In the meantime I thought that I would share what I have done so far.

For this tutorial I will place my jewelry piece on a piece of white paper or fabric. You can use a black or colored background but I would put a small piece of white paper up in the corner of your background just as a reference. You will crop this out later in the editing portion.

Before starting save a copy of your original photo in case you accidentally save an edited picture that you later are unhappy with. You can always go back to your original copy and start over!

I use a Canon Power Shot SD110 camera. It's a pretty simple camera. Some cameras have an automatic "White Adjustment" feature. Mine does not. These are the settings I use:

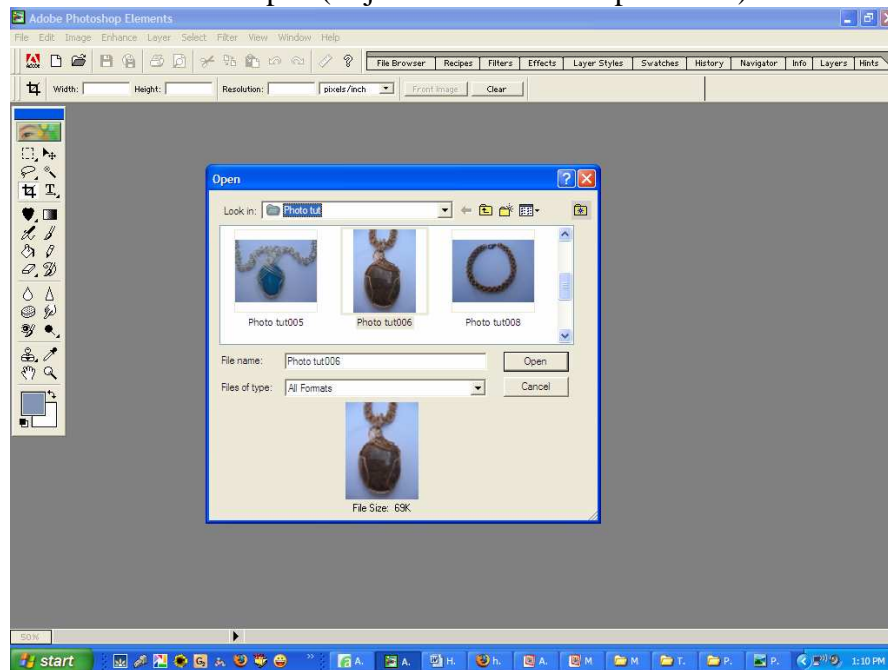
1. I turn off the flash so you have to have a good lighting source. I use my Ott lamp or the great Florida sunshine! I try to have the lamp light directly over the piece to avoid sharp shadows. I shot the picture with the camera directly over the piece. Now, I'm told that at this point the light defusing box would help a great deal in cutting down on these shadows. I haven't tried one but I will probably do that in the future.

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2. I turn on the macro setting. This, on my camera, is represented by a flower icon. I believe it is similar on other cameras. This setting allows me to get up close to my piece. I don't use the zoom on the camera. I just bring the camera in with my shaky hands!
3. Speaking of shaky hands the next setting is really helpful with that problem! I set the timer on the camera. I set the time for 2 – 3 second delay. This allows me some time to steady my hands after I've clicked the shutter! It really works if you don't have a tri-pod!
4. Take more than one picture of each object. Take as many as 3 shots each at different angles. You will pick the best of the bunch after editing and get rid of the rest (unless you're a packrat like me!).

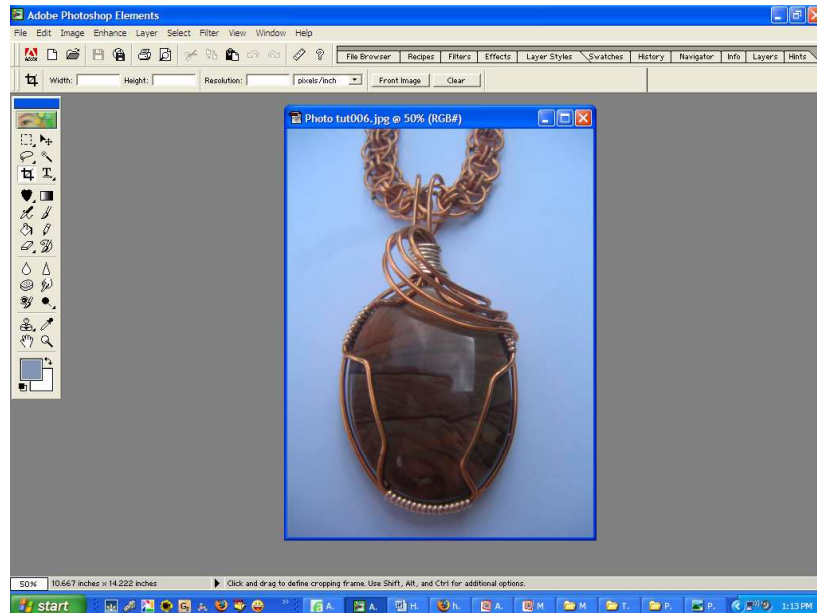
You need a decent photo editing program. I use Photoshop Elements. I would like to have the Photoshop CS3 but it is prohibitive in price so I make do with Elements and it serves the purpose. I am in no way an expert in this program but I can edit my photos using it. I'll go through the steps that I use.

1. First open your program.
2. Click on File and then Open (or just click on the "Open" icon).

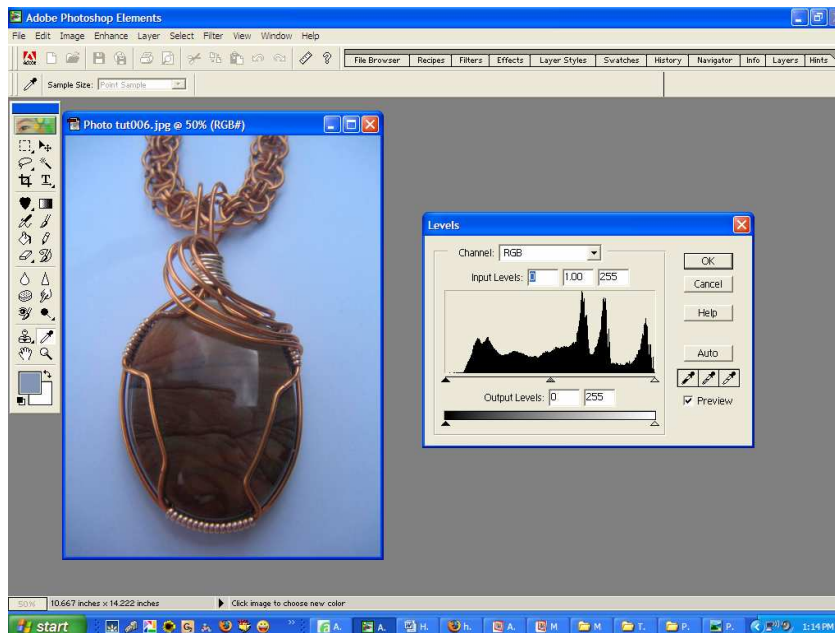


3. You will now import your image into the program by locating where you have stored your photo. You will highlight that picture and click on "Open". This will bring the unedited picture into your program so you can begin the fun part!
4. In your unedited picture will have a gray or in this case a blue background instead of the white that it should be.

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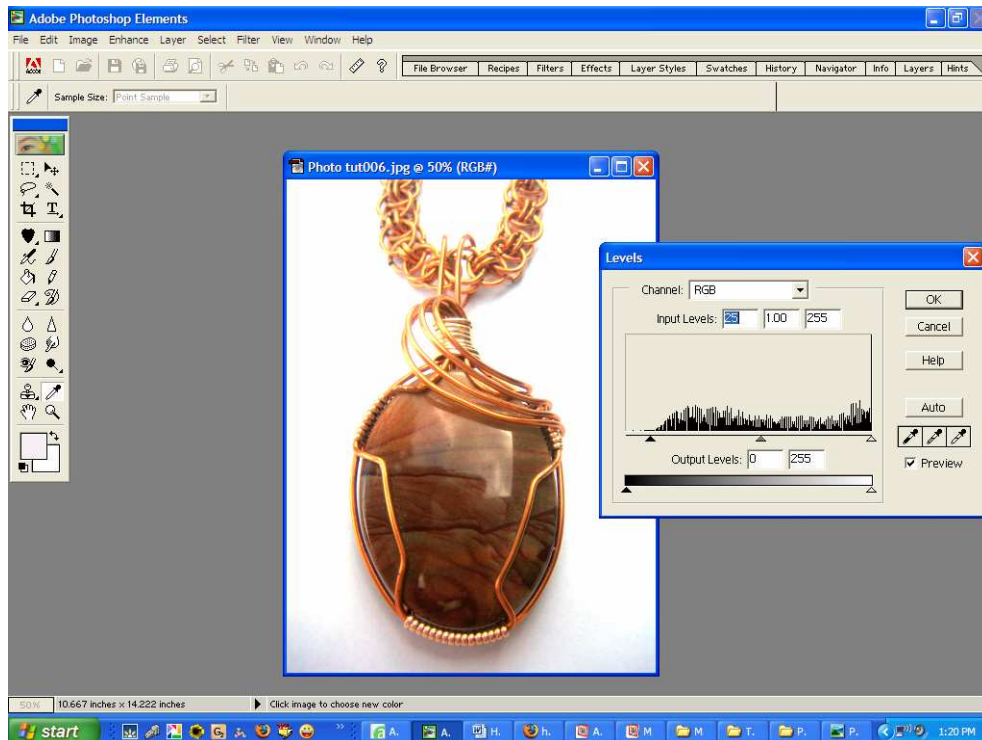
5. At the top menu go to “Enhance”, “Brightness/Contrast”, “Levels”. Click on “Levels”



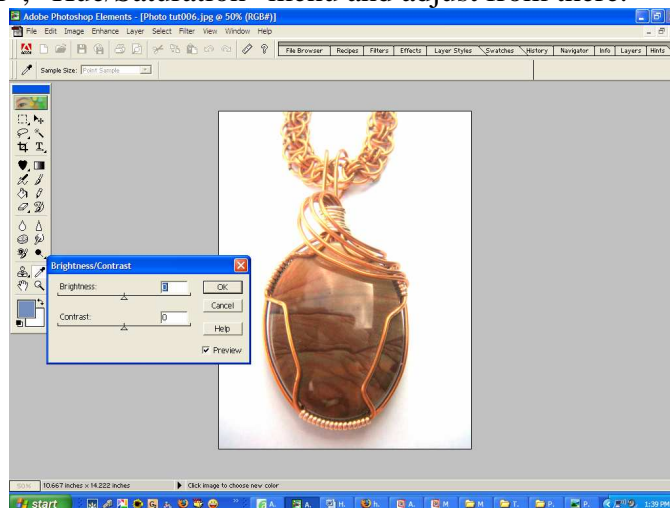
5. In the “Levels” box you will see a graph with a black arrow at one end. Moving this to the right will adjust the darkness. You move this arrow to just where the graph starts to elevate. At the other end is a white arrow. Moving this arrow to the left will adjust the brightness. You move it to where the graph starts to elevate. You will now see your photo is much lighter and brighter. In this particular instance no lighter adjustment is needed.
6. Next you will use the eyedropper. An eyedropper will change the color on the portion of the picture that is clicked on to the desired color. In this case it will change the clicked area to either black, white or grey depending on which dropper is used. There are three eyedroppers. The one on the left adjusts your picture to black. The middle is grey and the one on the right (the most important one in our

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case is white). Click on the right eyedropper and then click with that eyedropper on the background in your photo. The lower corners of the picture are a little darker than the upper corners. I clicked on the lower corners. If you have a black background, with that tiny white spot that I advised you to put in when we discussed jewelry placement on a background, you will click on that white spot. Doing this will immediately bring the white to a true white and all colors will adjust to true colors. This is my favorite step. It's like so fascinating to see those colors come to life!

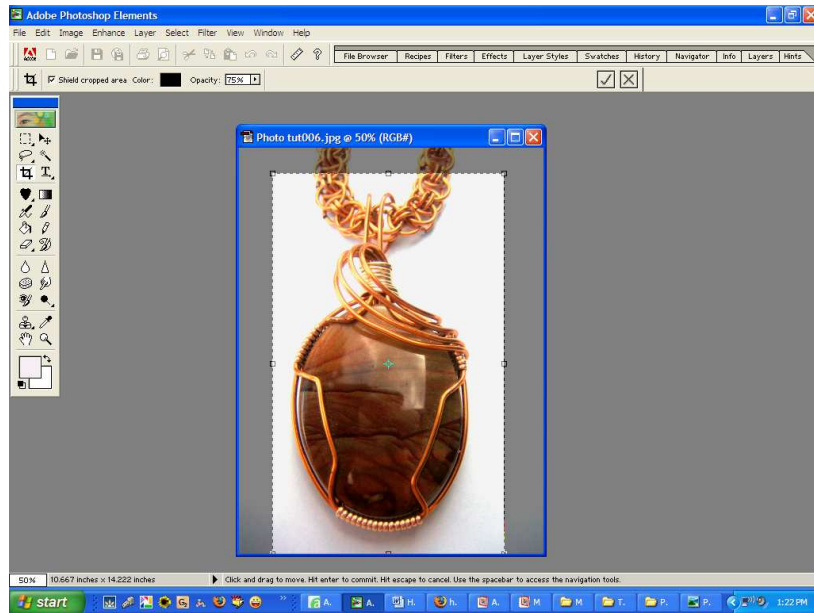


7. If your picture needs further adjusting you can go to the “Brightness/Contrast” area and adjust from there. If you need further adjusting on the color you can go to the “Color”, “Hue/Saturation” menu and adjust from there.



8. Once you have your photo adjusted to how you want it to look you can then crop it using the crop feature.

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9. Once you have it cropped to your satisfaction click “Save” under “File” or use the little floppy disc icon in the tool bar. You will find your edited photo right where it started. It may still look the same in your “My Picture” album but when you open it the edited version will open.

I learned all this from fooling around with the program on my own and asking some questions of people who know a lot more than I do. This is by no means a professional tutorial. There are probably many ways of doing this process that are better and easier but this is how I do it. I hope it helps you and makes your jewelry photo experience more fun. So play away! You’ll learn by doing. These are just some guidelines to get you to that point where you’ll feel confident in playing.

Other examples of before and after photos



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