



## Edges & Borders

*I'd like to thank Barbara Hill, Leslie Houghton and Tony Booth for allowing me to use their lovely images in this tutorial.*

This tutorial uses a mixture of techniques we've already covered, plus a couple of new ones, but in a different context. We're going to look at various ways of adding edges and borders to images.

### Stroking

A lot of images are improved by the addition of a simple edge, especially if you want to use them on a web site, blog or social medium like Facebook. A lot of the time a very simple, unobtrusive frame, is all that is needed. To do this:

- Select the whole image - Ctrl-A
- Go to the Edit menu and click on Stroke selection – you can select the width and colour of the line you are going to create.
- You can then select where you want the line to appear **in relation to the edge of the image or selection**. Here if you select 'outside' then you won't see the line at all as it is outside the edge of the image. Selecting 'center' would give you half the width selected, as the other half would be outside the edge of the image. Selecting 'inside' will make the whole width of the line visible.

Now, if you remember from the tutorial on making repeating patterns, you can create extra space (canvas) around an image by using Image > resize > canvas size but if you are happy to create extra space, and judge it by eye, then you can create some more canvas around the image using the crop tool.

- Select a background colour that you want your new canvas to use.
- Using the crop tool mark the whole image.
- Drag the edges of the crop box outside the image
- Click on the green tick when you have the new edges where you want them. The new space will be filled with the colour currently selected as your background colour.

You can then select the new outside edge and stroke that with colour.

**Remember that this stroking can be done to any selection of any shape!!**

### **Soft edges**

Sometimes you might just want to soften the edges of an image so it looks less stark, especially if you want to incorporate the image into a bigger design. The simplest way is to use a soft brush. I've selected the brush tool and a big soft brush and have set the foreground colour to white. Now, holding the shift key down to keep the stroke parallel to the edges, simply paint a stroke round the image.

- The colour doesn't have to be white of course – you could select a colour from the image itself and use that.
- The stroke doesn't even have to be straight – you can soften the edges in sweeps of softness.

### **Vignette effect:**

Next we're going to look at creating a vignette. You'll have seen this effect on old photographic prints – a gradual fading out of the image. To do this:

- Open your image.
- Use the elliptical marquee tool with a feather of something like 150 to give the softened edge, and select part of the image.
- Then use Select | inverse to select the outside area rather than the centre.
- Make a new layer and, with the new layer active, fill the selection with the background colour (ctrl + backspace) – this can, of course, be sampled from the image if you wish.
- At this stage you can apply a filter to give some texture if you wish.

You can use this technique with any selection method – consider using the lasso tool or the quick selection tool.

### **Coloured border:**

Next we are going to create a multi-coloured border. This mimics the look of the matte you often see on paintings to visually separate the painting from the frame.

First of all unlock the background layer – we need to be able to drag layers below the background layer and won't be able to do that if it's locked.

We are going to follow a sequence for each section of coloured border:

1. Increase the canvas size of the image by a small amount, try 5-10% – Image | Resize | Canvas Size (Alt-Ctrl-C).
2. Add a new layer to the bottom of the stack.
3. Fill this layer with your chosen colour.
4. Apply a filter to give texture if you wish.

Repeat 1-4 several times with varying amounts of extra canvas and a different fill colour each time to give a striped, multi-coloured border.

### **Textured border:**

This is one of my favourite borders ...

- Open an image (the image)
- Open a second image (the texture).
- Select all of the texture (ctrl-A), copy it (ctrl-C).
- Select the main image and paste the texture on to it (ctrl-V) – the pasted, image will be on a separate layer as usual.
- Make sure the texture layer is active then, using the rectangular marquee tool, select the centre of the image. I like to use a feather of around 50 to give a softer transition between the two images when they are blended together.
- Delete the selected area. You should now see the image layer in the centre and the texture layer around the edges.
- Use a blending mode to blend the two layers together. We'll be looking in some detail at blending modes later on but for now try the following.
  - Make sure the texture layer is active then go to the drop down list at the top of the Layers panel (marked as 'normal'). Try selecting Difference, Multiply or Overlay and see what effect you get.

I used this image in a very similar way to create a finished piece of textile work. I simply printed it on to linen with an inkjet printer. I sewed the print on to a piece of black felt and then stretched the felt over some canvas stretchers to give it a bit of 'presence'. I thought I would simulate this in Elements so you could see the rough idea.

The only technique I used on this simulation that we haven't used yet was a very small amount of noise filter on the wide outside band to simulate the look of the felt. Filter > Noise > Add Noise – then drag the Amount slider almost all the way to the left and select Monochromatic.

### **Using a clipping mask**

We've already used a clipping mask, in the tutorials on layers, to cut out an image in the shape of text. This time we are going to use the same technique to create a border with a spiky edge.

The basic process is to:

- Open an image
- Unlock the background layer
- Create a pattern layer, using any combinations of tools and brushes.
- Drag the pattern layer below the image layer
- Make the image layer active
- Add a Clipping Mask from the Layers menu (Ctrl-G).

The image is then cut out to the shape of the pattern layer.

### Notes:

- Remember that the background of your pattern layer must be transparent. If it is white or another colour then there won't be any effect when you apply the clipping mask.
- You can save and re-use pattern images whenever you want, building up a library for later.

## Using Elements' own frames

Lastly, for this tutorial, we're going to have a look at the frames that are built in to Elements. There are a lot of frames built in that you can use on your images and some of them are truly hideous but there are some really nice ones mixed in with the dross, so it's worth getting to know how to use them.

As you may remember I only have the Layers and Undo History panels permanently open in Elements so I need to go to the Windows menu and click on Content to open the panel that contains the frames. This is called Graphics in later versions. Make sure that 'By Type' is selected from the first drop down list and 'Frames' from the second drop down. You may want to dock the panel in the panel bin so that you can see more options without having to scroll down.

Frames act differently depending on whether you are working on an image with a **single LOCKED layer** or on an image with either a **single UNLOCKED layer** or **multiple layers**.

First, if you have a **single locked layer**, when you double click on a frame in the Content panel then the frame attaches itself to the locked layer and your frame appears. At this stage you should see a little control panel appear at the top of the frame with a slider, which lets you zoom in and out of the image, a blue button which will let you rotate the image and a folder icon which will let you select an alternative image file to insert into the frame.

You can also move the image inside the frame by dragging with the mouse. This is the only editing you can do to the image once it's inside the frame – any other editing must be done before you insert it into the frame. To finish, click on the green tick to accept the edits or the cancel icon to reject them.

Now you'll see another bounding box – dragging on this will re-size the image and the frame together. Don't forget to drag by the corners if you want to keep the aspect ratio of the image consistent.

The second variation is if you want to add a frame to an image with a **single unlocked layer or multiple layers**. We'll use the same image but this time we'll unlock the background layer first. Again, you double click on the frame in the contents panel that you want to use. This time though the frame appears on its own layer. Now you can either go to the layers panel and drag the image layer on to the frame or you can select a different image by clicking in the frame and selecting from your folders in the usual way.

I have to admit I don't find this terribly intuitive but that's the way it works!

Once you have everything sized and positioned as you wish you can apply different frames or insert different images without disturbing the layout.

*My favourite way of working is to create a blank document, add the frame, re-size it to my requirements and then drag in the image.*

**Notes:**

- Double click on the image to bring up the little control bar so you can use the zoom slider, rotate etc.
- I've done a lot of research on this and so far I haven't found a way to create your own custom frame layers within Elements without installing additional software.

I think I'd better stop there – there are SO many ways to add borders and edges I could go on and on ☺. We'll have a look at a few other techniques in later tutorials.

**Assignment:**

1. Try each of the techniques with your own images, pattern layers and so on. Then upload your four favourites to Moodle. It would be great if you can upload one or two of them to the forum as well, so everyone can benefit from seeing what everyone else is doing.
2. An optional exercise is to see if you can come up with an edge or border technique of your own or a new variation on a theme. You have quite a few techniques to play with now ... ☺