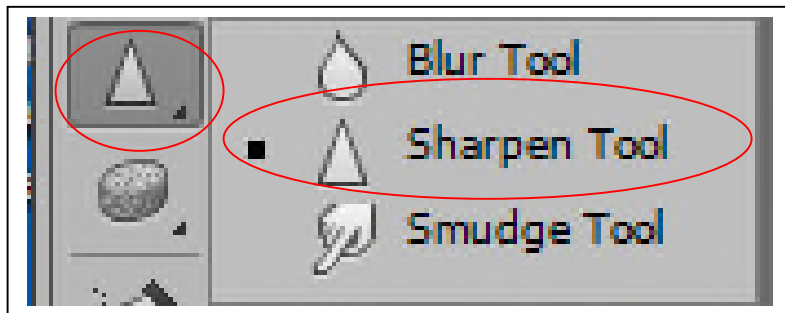
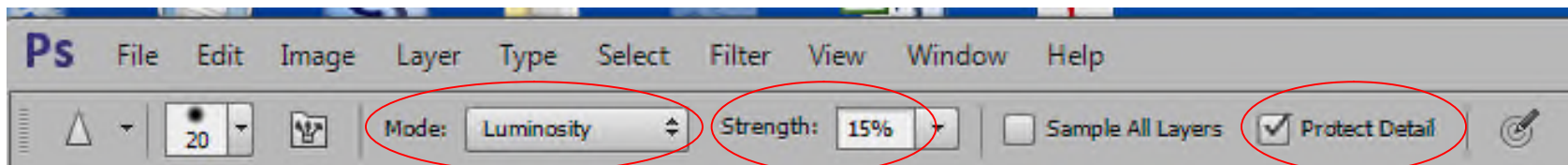


The Sharpen Tool is available in both Photoshop and Elements. It is one of the best ways to do selective sharpening because you can control the area sharpened very precisely. This tool is sized and used just like the regular Brush tools.

You will find the Sharpen Tool located in the tool groups on the panel left of the main workspace in Photoshop and Elements. Note that in Elements you will need to be in “Expert” mode (previously called Full edit). Each tool group has a small arrowhead in the lower right corner. The Sharpen Tool is located in a group with the Smudge and Blur tools. The Smudge Tool (icon like a drop of water) is often the default tool showing for the group. Right click [Mac Option click] on the small arrowhead and the tool group selections will appear. The Sharpen Tool looks like an isosceles triangle. Click on it to make it the active tool.



Once you select the Sharpen Tool you will see some controls appear at the top of the work space (see below) in Photoshop. The controls in Elements tend to move around with the different versions. Your controls for the tool may be at the bottom of the work space. Set the Blend Mode for Luminosity. This way you are sharpening only the lightness values and not touching your color. Set the strength at around 15%. You want to apply sharpening selectively and build it up by making a second or even third pass over an area rather than applying it full strength and then trying to dial it back.



I always work on a separate (composite) layer so that if I mess up, I can delete the layer and start over. For that reason I never check the Sample all Layers box.

The Protect Detail box was introduced with Photoshop CS5 and Elements 10 (I think). I know it is in Elements 12. If you have it, make sure it is checked. This will significantly reduce the possibility of creating rough edges (aka “jaggies”) when you sharpen an area more than once or twice. If you have an earlier version of either program that does not have the Protect Detail box, limit your application of sharpening to only a couple of passes on any one area.