

**Movie 10 (Chapter 17 extract)**

# Photomerge

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## Photomerge

The Photomerge feature first appeared in Photoshop Elements, just after the release of Photoshop 6.0. And has now at last been included in Photoshop itself. The main difference being that this version of Photomerge is able to handle the processing of large compositions and you can save a Photomerge composition as a layered file.

Photomerge is mainly used to join photographs together to make a panoramic composition. If you are planning to create a panoramic scene, then here are a few words of advice. You need to make sure that all the images overlap sufficiently, by at least 15% and as you take your series of pictures, rotate the camera in gradual steps aiming to pivot the rotation around the center of the lens. And try to prevent the camera lens axis shifting about too much. You will generally get good results if you start with a simple composition that stitches together only a few shots. Before you shoot the photographs, lock the camera settings so that the exposure is on manual and the exposures consistent. If shooting digitally, make sure that the white balance setting remains the same. The focal length must remain constant as well. Don't attempt to zoom in or out as you are taking photographs. Wide angle shots are more tricky to stitch together, so try to use a focal length that is equivalent to a 35 mm lens on a 35 mm camera, or longer.

Launch Photomerge from the File ⇨ Automate menu, and click on the Browse button in the introductory dialog to select a folder of images, all open files or add individual files that you wish to merge together. If you check the box at the bottom, Photomerge will always attempt to automatically join images together. This setting will apply when Photomerging images directly from the File Browser menu as well. If you have already pre-saved a Photomerge composition, you can click the Load Composition... button, which will load the saved composition data and locate the associated source files.

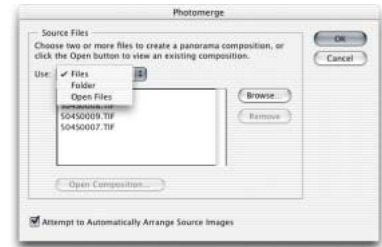


Figure 17.17 The Photomerge opening dialog.

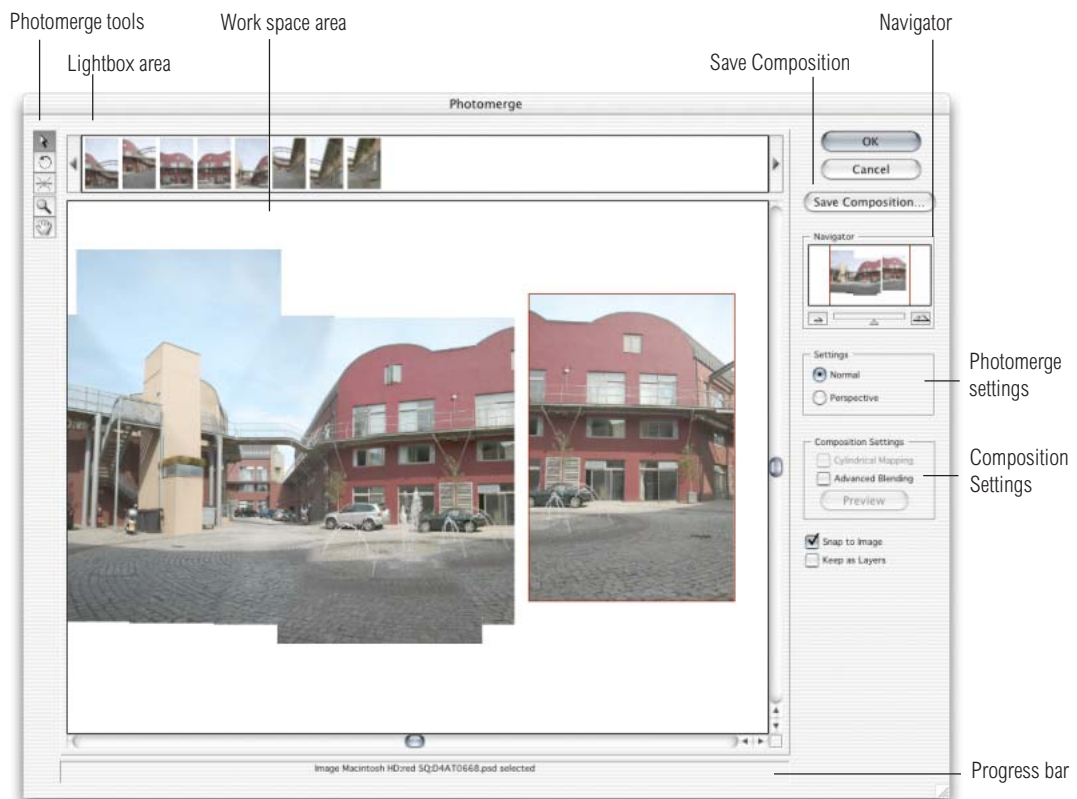


Figure 17.18 The main Photomerge dialog.

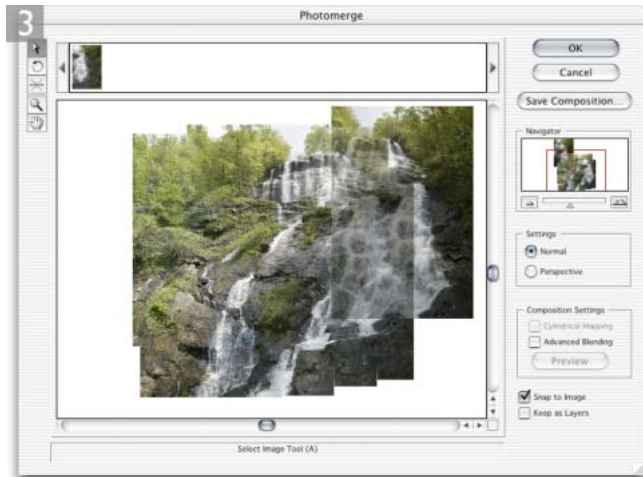
**1** Gather together a selection of images that you wish to build a panoramic image with. I find that the best approach is to make an edited selection of photographs via the File Browser and choose Photomerge... from the File Browser Automate menu.

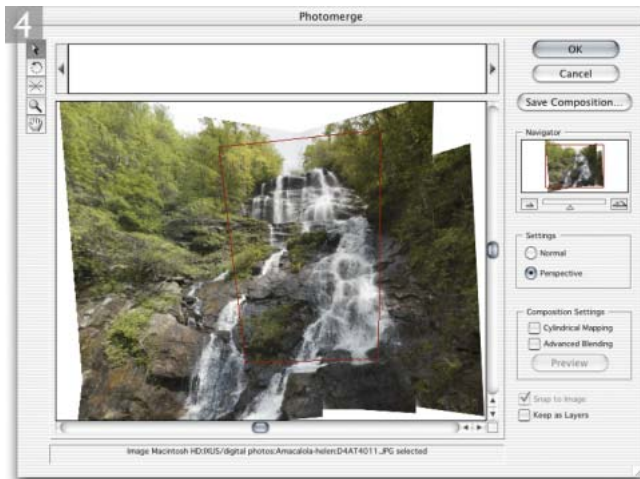


**2** As Photomerge launches it will open all of the images in sequence and attempt to auto stitch the pictures together. As you can see here, Photomerge was able to work out how to assemble six of the eight shots in the work area all by itself. The two shots that wouldn't auto match are held in the Lightbox area above. You can use the Navigator controls to zoom in and out of the work space area and scroll around the composition.



**3** If you want to merge the remaining images held in the lightbox area, make sure the Select Image tool is active and the Snap to Image box is checked. Click on one of the above images, drag it into the work area. The image will appear semitransparent where it overlaps the underlying composition. This will enable you to judge where to position it so that the image registers as closely as possible to the rest of the composition. If the image does not appear to match too well, select the Rotate image tool and rotate it slightly until it does.





4 Once all the image components are in place, you can try making further improvements. If you click on the Perspective button in the dialog settings, Photomerge will adjust the composition preview, transforming each image component in order to achieve an improved composition perspective, centered around the currently active image, which will be the one outlined in red. If the perspective needs adjusting, select the set Vanishing Point tool and click in the work area to set a new vanishing point.



5 If the perspective correction produces a rather extreme looking composite image, check the Cylindrical Mapping button. This will implement the perspective correction to blend the images better, but the composite image will be rendered 'flatter'. If you check the Advanced Blending box, you can preview how the image will look using the improved blending mode. When Advanced Blending is selected, Photomerge will aim to produce the smoothest tonal transition possible between the composite images. I normally use this mode all the time. Click the Save Composition button if all you want to do for now is save the composition settings. To load a Photomerge setting, choose Photomerge from the File → Automate menu and click on the Load Composition button in the opening dialog. Photomerge settings can be saved anywhere, but they may fail to work if the source folder name is changed. Click OK to process the images and create a blended panorama. The Keep all layers option will produce a layered file with the elements in register, as they appear in the composition.

