

How to edit pictures with Windows Live Photo Gallery



With today's digital photography software, it's very easy to edit your photos, whether your goal is to correct mistakes or add a creative flourish. Below we'll run through some of the ways you can use the software to do both.

Before you can begin, you'll need a photo software program. In this guide, we've used the free Windows Live Photo Gallery (see our guide [How to download Windows Live Photo Gallery](#) for more information). However, you'll find that other programs such as [Photoscape](#) and [Paint.net](#) follow a very similar process.

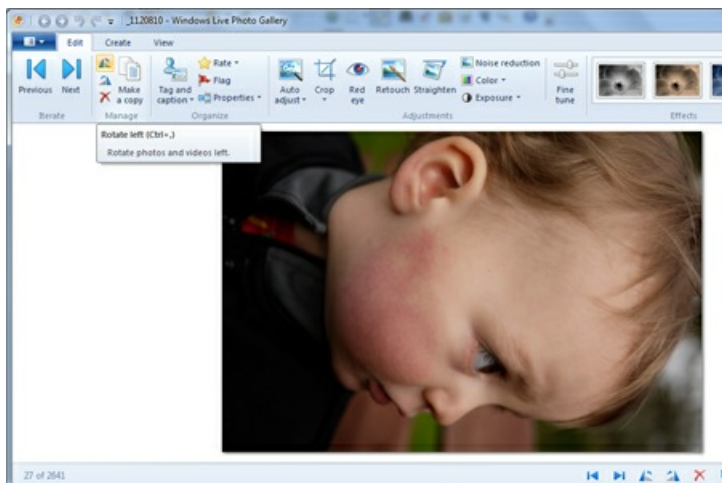
To start, open Windows Live Photo Gallery. You'll see five tabs at the top left of the screen. Click **Edit**. All your pictures will remain at the bottom of the screen, but at the top, you'll see a number of options for editing your pictures.

To keep it simple, these have been divided into four categories: 'Manage', 'Properties', 'Adjustments' and 'Effects'. Let's take a closer look at each one.

Manage

In the 'Manage' functions in the top left of your screen, you're given the option to 'Select all' of your photos. This can be handy as it saves time by applying the edit to every photo you've selected. For instance, if you want to resize all of them to a specific size, this lets you do it in one step rather than having to do it again and again. However, if you intend to make different changes to each photo, it's best to edit them one at a time.

Other key features here include the 'Delete' button (marked with a red X) and options to rotate an image left or right, 90 degrees at a time.



Why would you want to rotate a photo? Often you'll find that, when you take a portrait-shaped picture with your camera, it comes out sideways when you view it on your computer. In Windows Live Photo Gallery, you can click the rotate button until your photo eventually faces right side up.

Properties

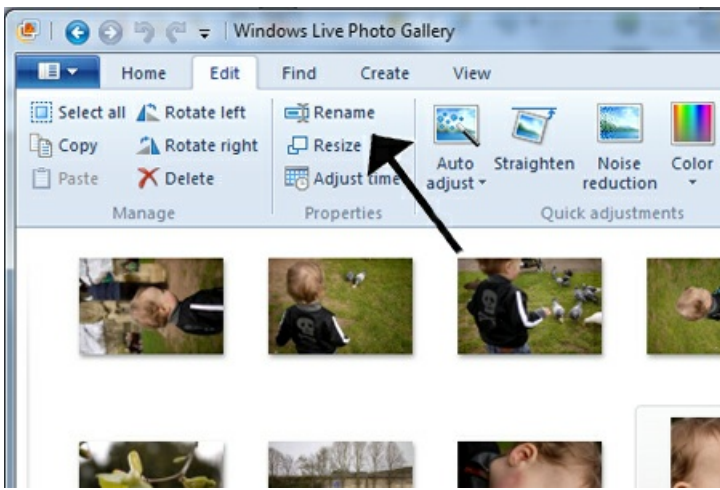
The 'Properties' section is where you'll find the 'Resize' button that lets you make your picture bigger or smaller. For more about this, see our guide [How to resize photos](#).

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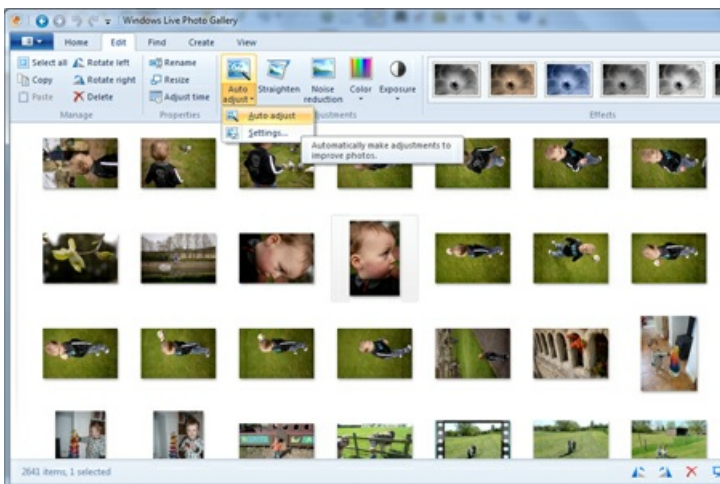
Why would you want to rename your picture? Your camera will automatically give each of your photos a file name that often consists of two letters followed by a series of numbers. It will be difficult to scroll through a list of names like these and find your photo of Emma's birthday cake! The 'Rename' tool lets you change the file name of that picture to 'Emma's birthday cake'.

Last in the 'Properties' section is the 'Adjust time' tool, just below the 'Resize' button. Your camera has an internal clock and calendar, which few of us ever remember to set. If a particular photo, such as 'Emma's birthday cake', is tied to a specific date and time, you might want to use this tool to correct this information. Assigning the correct date and time to photos also helps you organise them (see our guide [How to organise photos](#)).

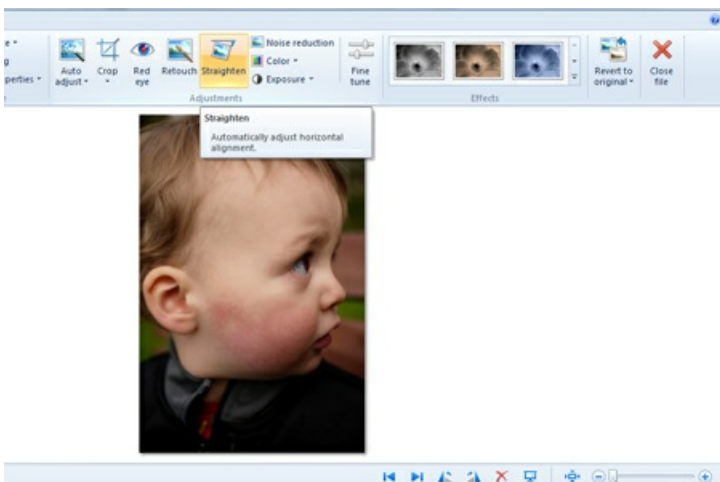
Adjustments

The 'Adjustments' section is probably where you'll make most of your edits. Here you will find the tools 'Auto adjust', 'Straighten', 'Noise reduction', 'Color' and 'Exposure'.

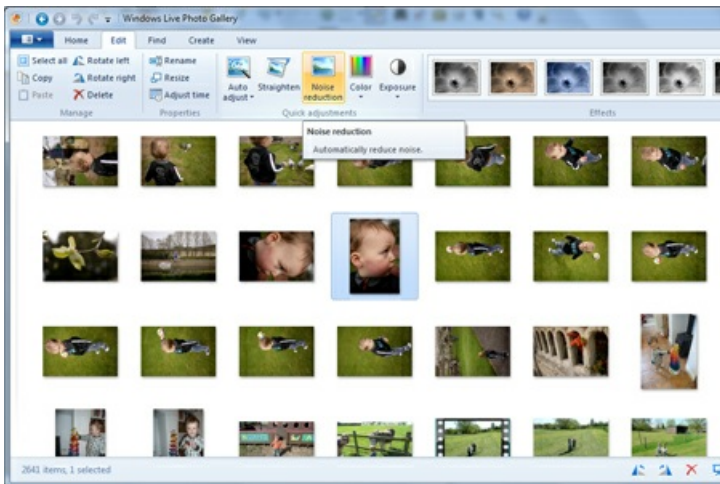
'Auto adjust', in particular, can become your best friend. One click of this button and Windows Live Photo Gallery examines your photo to determine which areas could be improved – for example, whether your shadows are too dark or the colours too flat. It then automatically corrects these faults.



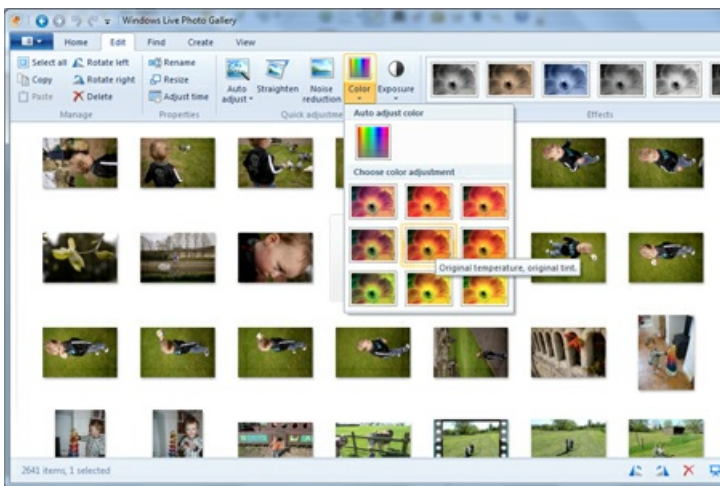
The 'Straighten' tool will level any crooked horizon or strong horizontal lines in your photographs.



If you shoot a picture in low light, it will often end up looking spotty. Small specks – known as ‘noise’ – will appear, particularly in shadow areas, caused by your camera straining to find light. By clicking **Noise reduction**, Windows Live Photo Gallery will smooth over some of these spots and give you a cleaner picture.

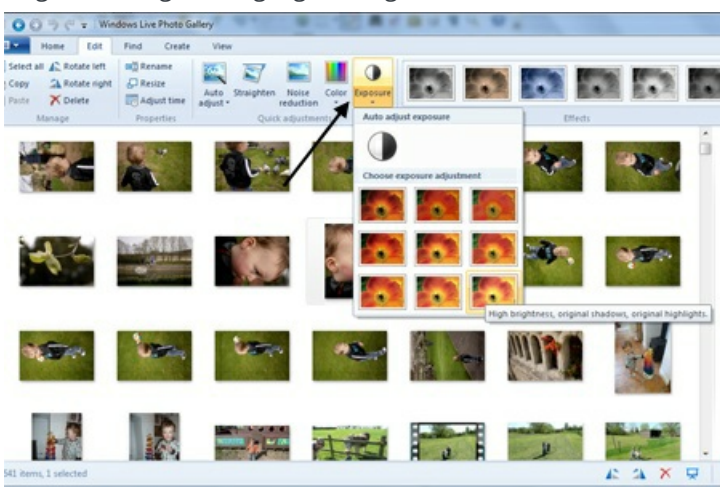


Clicking **Color** once will make an automatic adjustment to the saturation of colours in your photo. If you click **Color** and then hold down, a list of options will drop down. These allow you to apply a warm or cool tint to your photo. For example, a sunny beach photo might warrant a warmer orange tint, while you might want to apply a cooler blue tone to photos from your skiing holiday.



Like the **Color** button, if you click **Exposure** once, Windows Live Photo Gallery will make an automatic adjustment to your photo's brightness and darkness levels, based on what the program determines to be the biggest problem areas.

If you click **Exposure** and then hold down, a list of further options will appear, offering you a the chance to make more targeted changes to highlights (bright areas), shadows and overall image brightness.

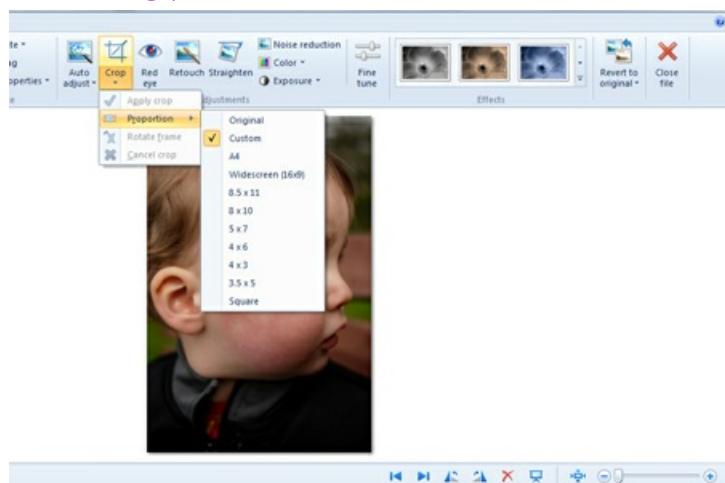


More 'Adjustments'

When you double-click on an individual image to open it (or if you open up an image by clicking **View file** at the top right of the Edit tab on your main screen), you'll find a few more specialised editing tools in the 'Adjustments' section.

Crop

The 'Crop' tool lets you change the composition of an image. For instance, if there's a family eating sandwiches in the corner of a photo of your son on the beach, you can use the 'Crop' function to essentially cut them out of the picture. See our guide [Photo editing: photo effects](#) for more.

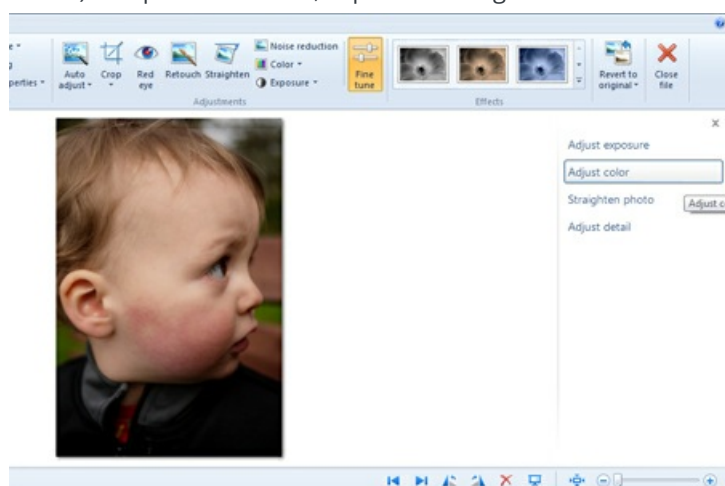


Retouch

The 'Retouch' tool lets you remove imperfections, whether it's a spot on someone's forehead or a stain on the carpet. To do this, click Retouch, drag the crosshairs pointer over the offending area and then let go of the mouse. Windows Live Photo Gallery will remove the blemish. If only we had such a tool in real life!

Fine tune

This tool gives you a little more manual control over adjusting the sharpness of fine details (such as flower petals or eye lashes) or a picture's colour, exposure or alignment.

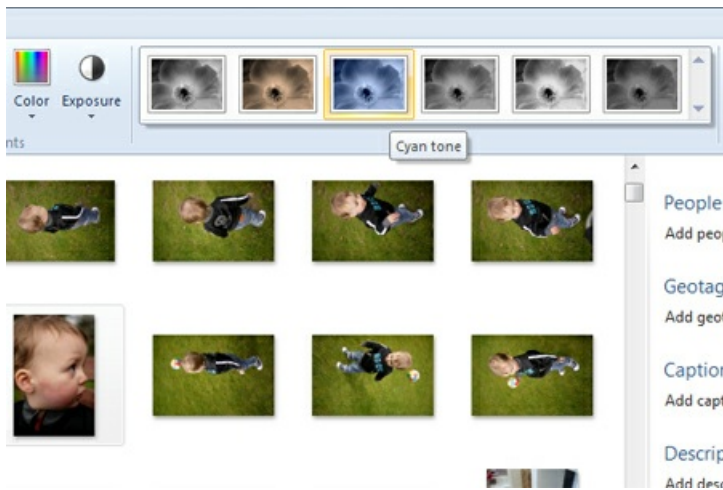


Red eye

Next to 'Crop', you'll find the 'Red eye' tool. This eliminates the 'devil's eyes' that can appear in people's eyes when a flash is used. For more information about this, see our guide [How to remove red eye](#).

Effects

The 'Effects' section of Windows Live Photo Gallery's editing tools offers you a range of different creative 'filters' for your pictures. Click each button once, and the program will apply the effect.



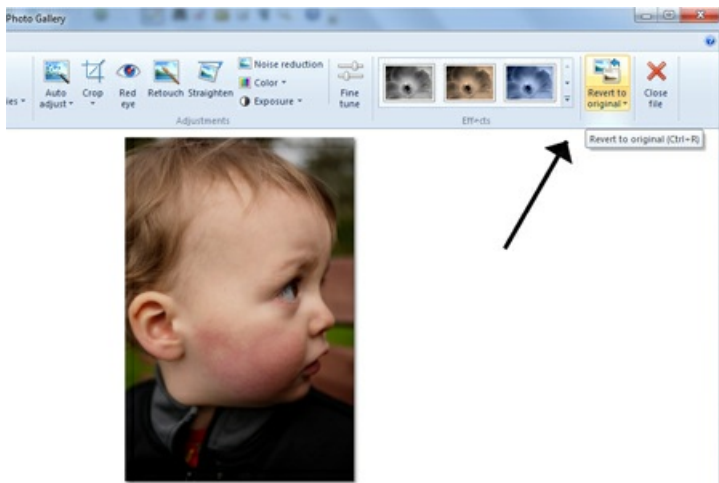
'Black and white' removes the color from your image to give it a classic look. The 'Sepia filter' applies a warm tone over a black and white effect to give photos an historical appeal.

The remaining filters are 'Cyan' (blue-green), 'Yellow', 'Orange' and 'Red', which apply tints of these individual colours to your pictures. These filter tools are intended to recreate the effects of the different coloured filters that photographers sometimes screw on to the ends of their lenses.

Revert to original

If you're not happy with the results of any of your edits, don't fear. Handily placed at the top right of the screen, next to the 'Effects' tools, is 'Revert to original'. Clicking this will undo all of the changes you've made to a picture. (In fact, this tool is sometimes known as 'Undo' in other computer programs.)

But don't worry if you click it by mistake. Windows Live Photo Gallery will ask you first if you're certain that you want to remove a change, before undoing all of your edits!



Jeff Meyer writes about camera techniques and other aspects of photography for PhotoRadar.com.

Next steps

[Photo editing: photo effects](#)

[How to resize photos](#)

[How to email a picture](#)
