8 Secrets

To Quick Photo Fixes With PaintShop Pro

by
Cassel

How many photos do you have and want to scrap? Do you have some photos that are… well… not the best, but you still want to keep them?

As memory keepers, we want to use some of those not-so-great photos because they convey emotions and feelings; they often take us back in time, with particularly important people, places, and events or just carry a mood we want to remember. Don't worry. There is hope.

Although you might not need or want to do a complete photo restoration, you can often improve your photos with **PaintShop Pro** in very little time. A quick fix is often just what you need to give more life to those pictures. No technical knowledge will be required to apply these quick fix tips.

If you do not have **PaintShop Pro** yet, you can download and install the free trial version. It will be fully functional for you to apply those quick fixes.

Download now

If you prefer to watch a video illustrating all the tips explained in this document, it is perfectly fine. Just click below.

Watch video

http://scrapbookcampus.com/

1- One Step Photo Fix

Sometimes you might have one photo that needs a facelift, but you don't want to bother going through all the brightness settings, saturation settings, and such. You want a quick fix to improve the photo, even if it is not the perfect solution for all the pictures. PaintShop Pro does have such a "magic button" that you can try as a first line of attack. It is called "One Step Photo Fix" and just as its name suggests, you can see some improvement with just one command. This was a new feature that came with PSP 9. You can find this under **Adjust > One Step Photo Fix**. One click and watch the result.

As an example, this photo was taken on a very sunny day. The photo came out too dark because the camera was unable to handle the very bright conditions caused by the combination of sun and snow.
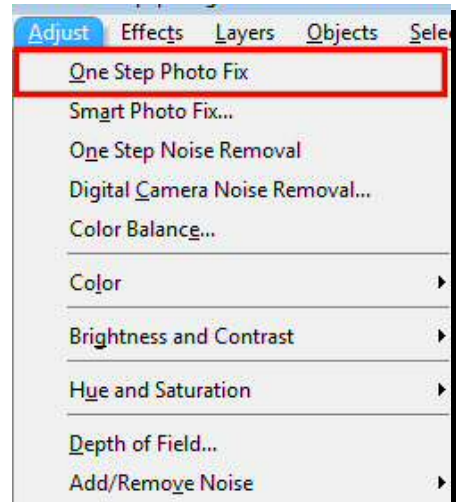

Using the **One Step Photo Fix** on the initial picture gave this result. No other adjustment was applied to the photo.

The command for the **One Step Photo Fix** is found here (screenshot from PSPX3 version):

__One little warning__: the result is MUCH better when this command is used on PSP9 and PSPX. For some reason, in subsequent versions, this command has been somewhat changed, and will not be as useful as with earlier versions.

In different versions, the pull down menu might differ but the **One Step Photo Fix** is still under the Adjust menu.

Here is another example of the use of this specific command. Not only did the picture end up lighter, but the colors appear clearer and more realistic too.
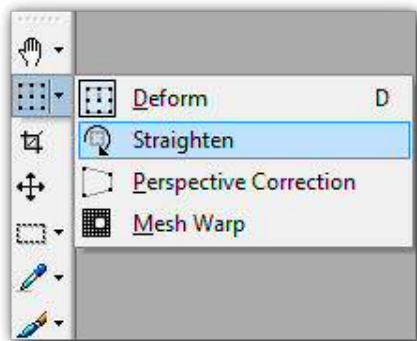
2- Straighten It

Often, when you take a picture quickly to capture a moment, you might end up with a slanted photo. You might find the horizon is not… horizontal; maybe the edge of a wall is not perfectly vertical. There are many elements in photos that suggest a vertical or horizontal alignment: door frames, wall corners, posts, pillars, windows, buildings in the background, etc.
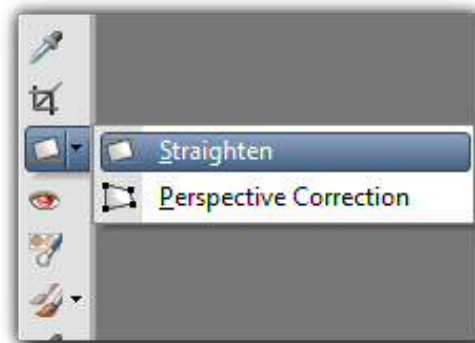
Starting with version 8, PaintShop Pro introduced a **Straighten** tool. This tool automatically provides you with a straight line with a handle at each end. Simply place the handles on a line that should be vertical or horizontal, and apply. The program will then rotate the image so the line you place will become either vertical or horizontal. Of course, that will rotate the whole image so you will have to crop it and lose a small amount of the picture around the edges, but it is well worth it to have a straight photo. In PSPX3, the cropping is done automatically once you have applied the command, but you have to do it manually in previous versions.

The **Straighten** tool icon looks a bit different depending on the PaintShop Pro version you have.
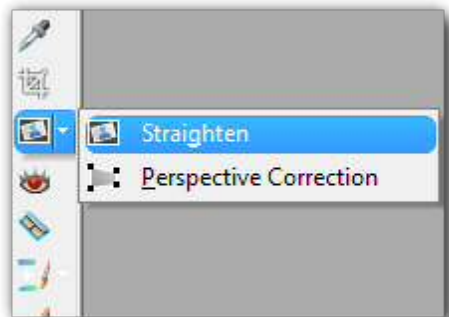
For PSP 8 and 9

For PSP X, XI, XII

For PSP X3

Here is an example of a photo that needed to be straightened horizontally. The line was placed along the edge of the roof (the shed in the back is REALLY leaning like that!).

Here is another example of a photo that needed horizontal straightening. Initially, it looked like the gazebo might be sinking into the ground, but once fixed, the result is more pleasing to the eye.
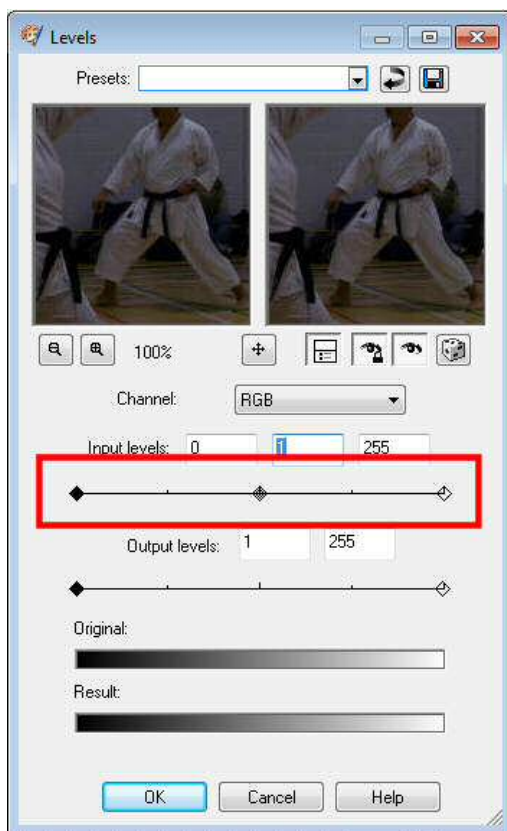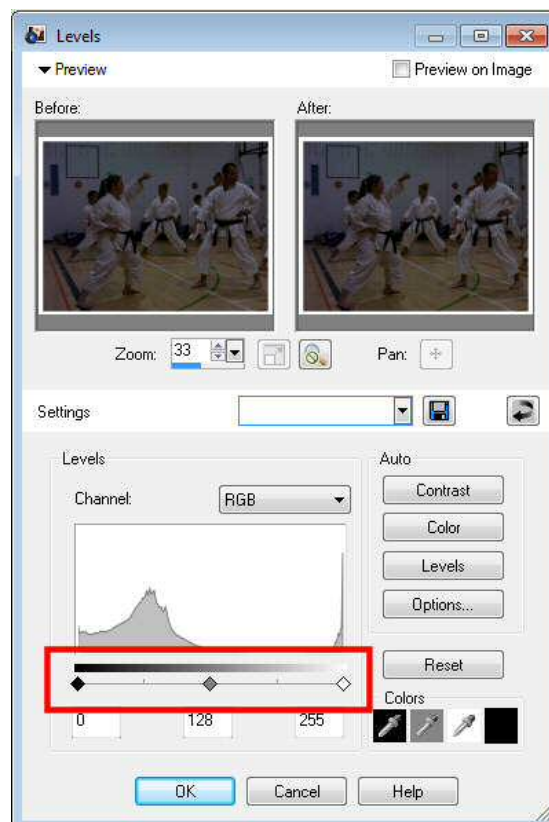
3- Level Adjustment

Often, some photos are a bit dark, possibly because they were taken indoors where a flash should have been used. This is an easy fix with the Level setting. You can find it under **Adjust > Brightness and Contrast > Levels**.

The window looks a little different depending on your version of PSP, but mainly consists of three sliders: one on the left (a dark slider) to lighten the dark colors, one on the right (the light slider) to darken the light colors, and one in the middle. Just move the sliders to see some changes. How much you need to slide them will depend on how much adjustment you need or want.

For PSP 8, 9, X   For PSP X1 and up

Although there are other adjustments in this window, you just need to be concerned with those three sliders to get a good start on adjusting the brightness of your photo.

Here is one photo taken in a gymnasium. No flash was used, as the person taking the photo simply didn't know how to turn it on. As you can see, the simple level adjustment made a world of difference. Now it is ready to be used in an album.
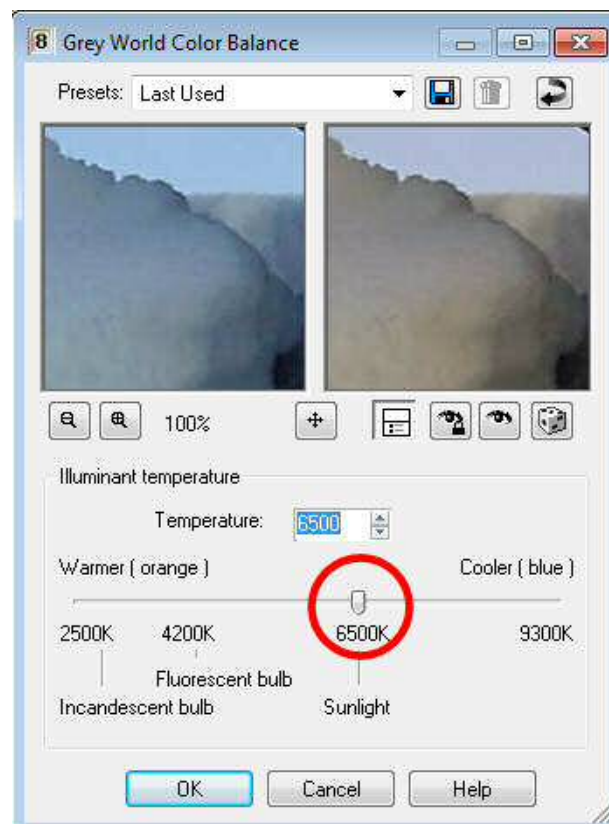
4- Add Sunshine

Often, photos can have a tint that is too blue (very common in winter photos), or too orange. One command you can use is under **Adjust > Color Balance > Grey World Color Balance**. This window includes a single slider along a "temperature" scale. Simply move that slider to the "Sunlight" setting to literally add sunshine to your photo.

For some odd reason, this command is hidden in PSPX and later versions, but you can find it and place it in the **Adjust > Color tab**. Here is how:

1. Click **View > Customize** (at the very bottom).
2. In the **Command tab**, scroll down to the very bottom of the left window to **All commands.**
3. In the right window, scroll to **Grey World Color Balance** (it is placed in alphabetical order).
4. Click on it, and drag it to the **Adjust > Color menu** and let go.
5. Now you will always have the command at your fingertips.

Here is the window you see when you open the **Grey World Color Balance** (it is almost identical in all PSP versions):
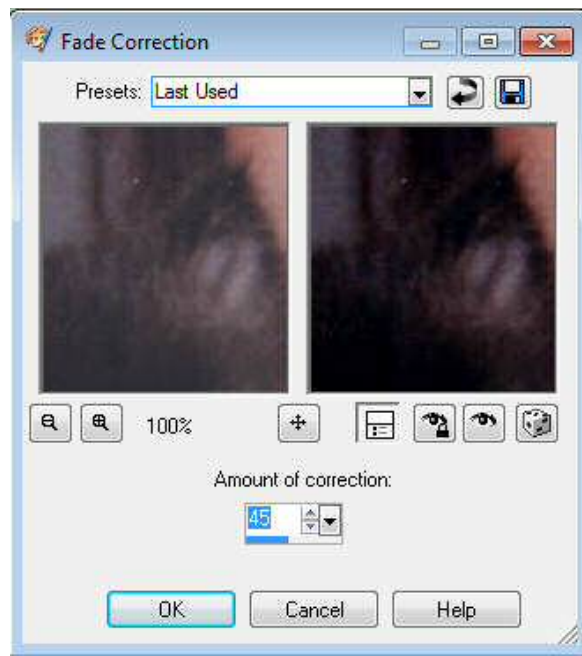
Here is a good example of a winter photo that had a bluish tint. It might not bother you too much, but once you add the sunlight, you can see the difference.

5- Goodbye Faded Colors

So often, photos have a faded or washed out look. Again, there is a single command that can make a world of difference for such a faded photo. For PSP 8 and 9, you can find that command under **Adjust > Color Balance > Fade Correction** (for PSPX and higher, it is **Adjust > Color > Fade Correction**).

The only setting you might want to play with is the **Amount of correction**, but most often, the default setting will be just what you need. Even if you were to choose a value as little as 1, you would still see a great improvement.

This photo has a very common faded appearance, a bit like a white mist over it. Using the default setting of the **Fade Correction** command, you can see how that fog seems to lift.
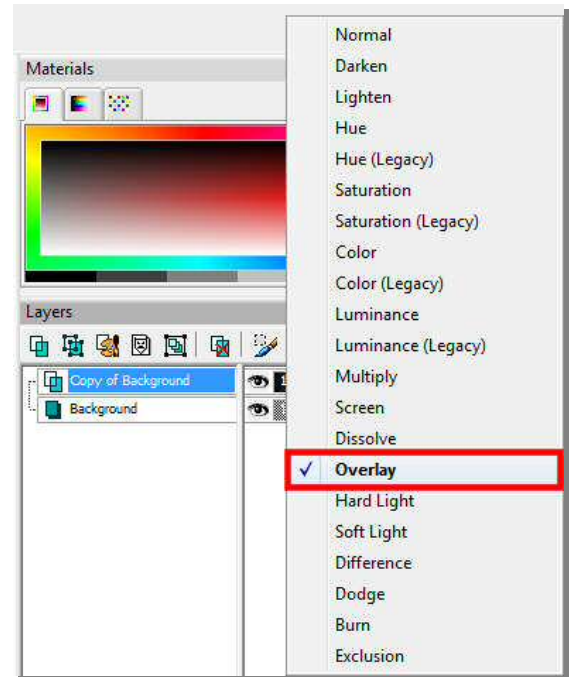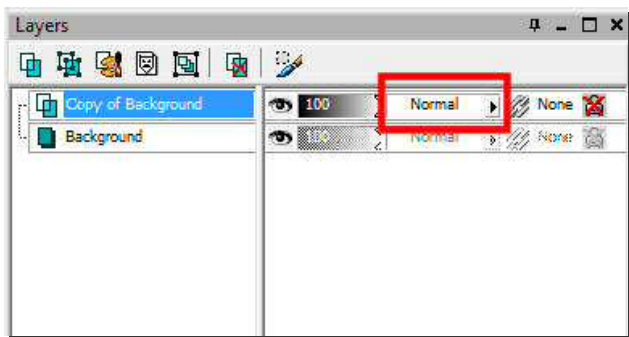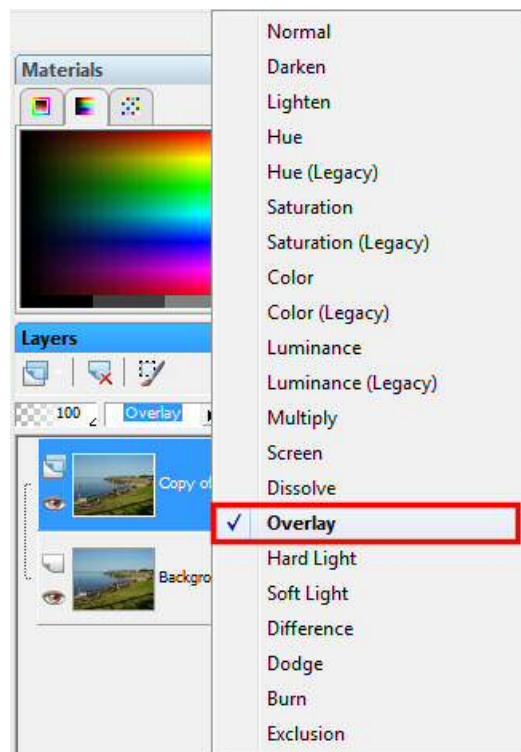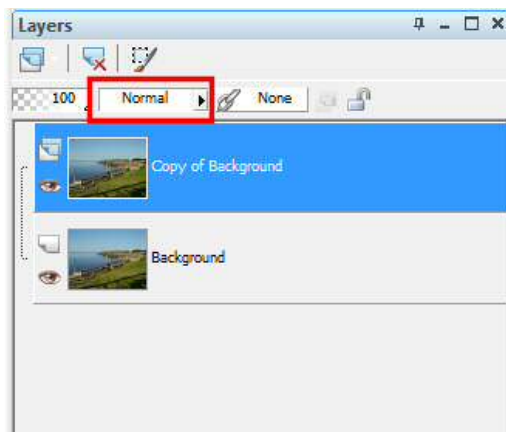
6- Blend It

Another easy way to brighten your photos is with the blend mode. This trick might take you a few more seconds than previous ones, but it can give you great results, and it also has options to adjust the correction.

Starting with your picture, duplicate it (**Layers > Duplicate**). Now, pull down the **blend mode** list and choose **Overlay**.

For PSP 8, 9

For PSP X and up.

I was fairly happy with this picture when I first saw it, but I wanted to experiment a bit with the blend mode. I was totally surprised by the result. Now, the grass is much greener and both the water and the sky are definitely a vibrant blue. So even if your photos don't seem to need a boost, give this trick a try, and see if you like it.
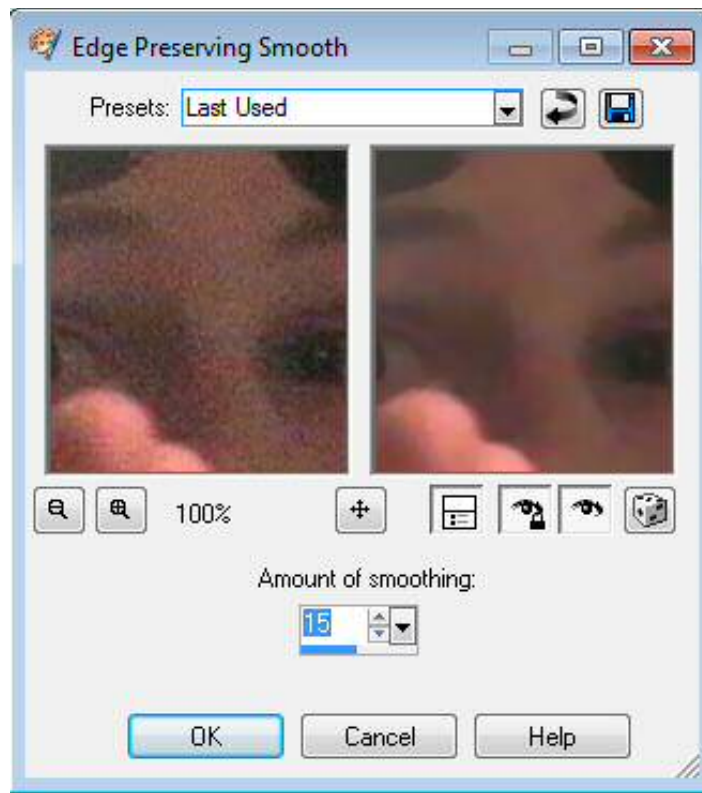
If you find that the colors are boosted too much for your liking, you can always change the opacity level of the **Overlay layer**. By default, it is set at 100%, but you can move the slider down to 70% or 50%, depending on the effect you want to achieve.

7- Smooth Adjustment

Sometimes, when older photos were printed, and then later scanned, they can have a lot of "noise", meaning they have lots of speckles that are not supposed to be in the picture. There is no way you can remove them manually, but one command can do that for you. You can find that command in **Adjust > Add/Remove Noise > Edge Preserving Smooth**. It removes a lot of the noise from your photo, and can make it look much cleaner.

The window for this **Edge Preserving Smooth** effect is identical for all versions of PaintShop Pro since version 8 (I am not sure about version 7 and below).

There is only one possible adjustment, which is the **Amount of smoothing**. Start with a medium setting, and if you need more or less, you can always change it. You can use the preview window to help determine the amount of smoothness you actually want.
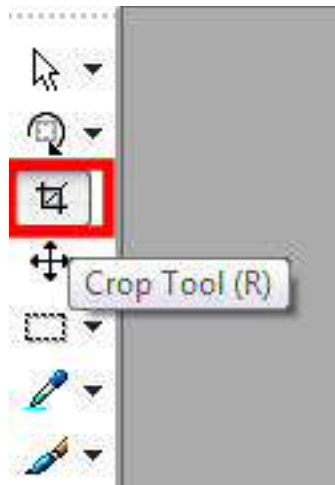
This photo was taken with a fairly low quality camera which is probably what caused the noise. However, applying the **Edge Preserving Smooth** effect improved its overall look. Maybe you can use it to remove Aunt Margie's wrinkles too?
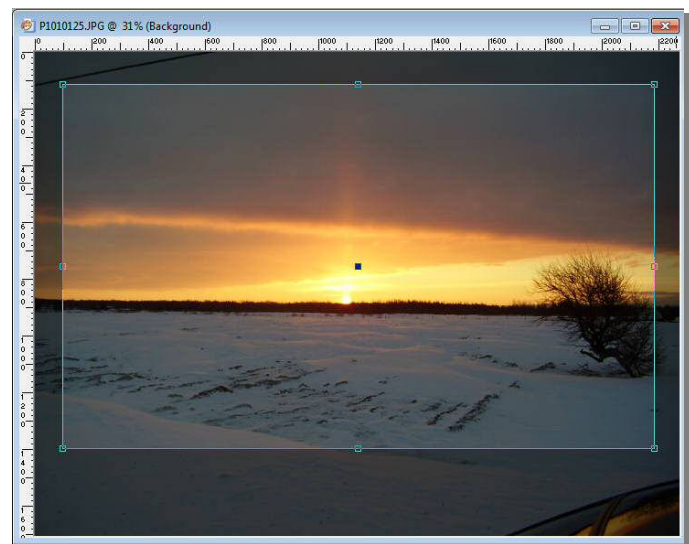
8- Crop It

Unless you have a lot of time to take a picture, it is common to have elements in it that are totally useless and often distracting. It could be the edge of a window, another person (or even half of one) on the edge, etc. Since you want the viewer to focus on the important element of your photo, just get rid of those unwanted extras: crop your photo.

There are several ways to crop using PaintShop Pro, but the fastest way is to use the **Crop tool**. This is how the tool looks in your tool bar (and it is similar in all versions of PSP):

Once the **Crop tool** is activated, select one corner of the area you want to keep (like the top left hand corner), and drag to the bottom right corner. You will notice that everything outside the selected area is darker. That is only so you can focus on what will be kept. You can find "handles" (little squares) on the sides and in the corners. Those are for you to click and drag if you want to adjust the size of the selected area. Click anywhere inside the area and you can move the whole area around. Once you are happy with the selected area, you can click the **Apply** button, or to go even faster, just double-click on the area. Like magic, everything unwanted is gone and you have a beautifully composed picture.

This tool is perfect to remove unwanted elements, like the electrical wire on the top left, and the hood of the car on the bottom right.

Another great use of the **Crop tool** is draw attention to the subject in a photo even if there was no extra element to remove. Sometimes, you might want a vertical composition when you only have a horizontal photo or vice versa, or maybe you want to have your subject more off-center, etc. Here is an example where I wanted a vertical image emphasizing the solar pillar and balanced by the bottom fence.

In this example, there is no extra element to distract the viewer but there was simply too much empty space. Cropping the picture to focus on the main subject makes it really stand out. Don't you agree?

A Little Magic in The End

All these tips and tricks can help you make seemingly lost pictures into useable ones. Here is an example of a photo that can surely be considered for the trash bin, but I thought it was a great picture to test how far you can go with PaintShop Pro to salvage something.

This is the starting picture:

Not really much to see, so let's try to adjust the **Level**. Of course, in this case, there will be a LOT of adjustment with the slider, moving the right one very far to the left (which is not usually necessary or even recommended for normal fixes, but this is not a normal photo).

Wow! You can now see the image, and we even recovered a lot of the colors! But those colors are too yellow for me. What about adding some of the **Grey World Color Balance** (adding sunshine, even if this picture is obviously taken indoors)?

This is already much better. The white suits are now much whiter than they were before, but I am sure you can see there is a lot of noise. This is a common problem if you adjust the level A LOT, but we can use the **Edge Preserving Smooth** on it. Let's see what it will do to the picture (in this case, I ran the effect three times).

I think that this picture might now belong on a scrap page instead of a scrap pile, right? Of course, you probably will not have such bad photos to start with, but if you do, there is hope. Try these tricks, and you might be surprised!

With these quick tools at your fingertips, do not hesitate to dig into those old or special photos that you always wanted to showcase but didn't because they were lower quality. Now you can share those memories and feelings.

Happy photo fixing, and happy scrapping.
http://scrapbookcampus.com/