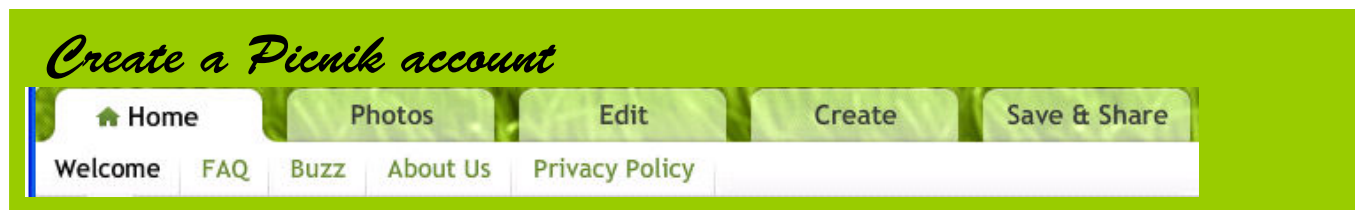


# Optimizing Your Images Using Picnik, Part I

Images are powerful communicators of information, feelings and thoughts that are sometimes difficult to express in words. Today you can take great pictures with your own digital camera or find many on the web. Often though, they are often not exactly perfect for your use, and they can even distract and confuse the viewer. Very large images can slow the loading of *web* pages and freeze *PowerPoint* shows, yet lower quality images look awful when you *print* them. You thus **optimize** the image – the best looking image at the best size for YOUR purpose. Save a single image several different ways if you like!

So how do you do this? Picnik to the rescue! **Picnik** is a free, very easy to use photoediting tool that you use online. This means you don't have to own any software to use its *basic* features. Their paid annual subscription gives you additional cool effects, but if you can get to the web, you can use basic Picnik! In this Part I tutorial you will learn Picnik basics . . . how to:

- **Create** a Picnik **account**.
- **Upload Photos** from your computer or a photohosting service (like Flickr, Picasa or Facebook.)
- **Edit** your pictures (Rotate, Crop, Resize)
- **Save and Send** them once again.



## Step 1. Begin at the Picnik website

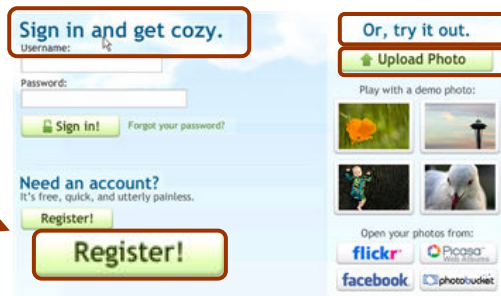
<http://www.picnik.com> and read their welcome page for an overview of their great features.

Click on the “**Get Started now!**” button. It takes a few seconds to load and you're ready to go!



**Step 2. Sign in** if you already have a Picnik account.

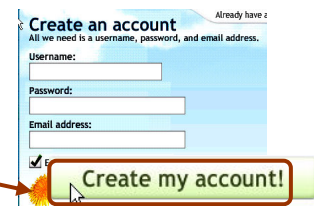
Or click the **Register** button if you don't.



**OR, if you want to try Picnik before registering**, click on one of their **Demo** images or **upload** one of yours and try it out.

**Step 3. Create a New Account.** When the registration screen opens create a **username** (one word), a **password**, and enter your email address. For security, don't use your real name as your user name. **Keep your username and password somewhere safe.**

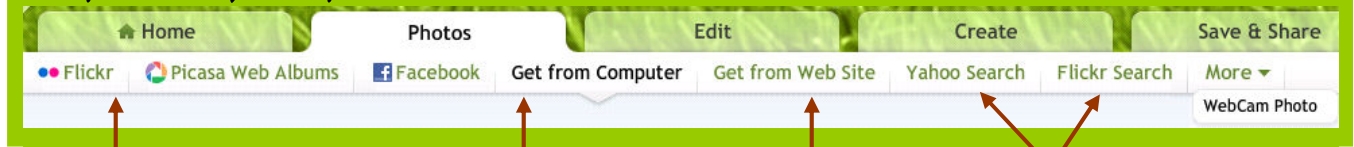
Click **Create my Account**



**Login.** Picnik will keep you logged in to your account on this computer unless you click the **Sign-Out** link near the top of the window. **If you are sharing a computer, you want to be sure to Logout when you're done.** To sign in again on this or any computer connected to the web, just follow Step 2.

## Upload your photo.

## Click the Photo tab...



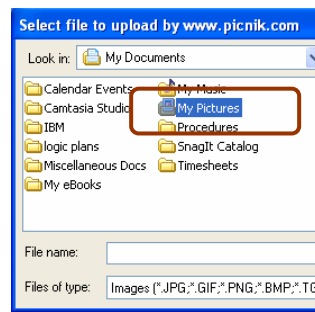
**1** Since Picnik doesn't store any of your photos at its site, you can bring in photos from your **Flickr, Picasa or Facebook photohosting services**. Follow the instructions at the site to give Picnik permission to share the picture.

These are free places to upload, share and store your pictures. **But use them with caution** since your pictures may be public. Respect copyright, ask permission and don't give out personal information to anyone who inquires about your photos.

**2** Click on the **Get from Computer** tab then **Get Photo**



to browse through the folders on your computer where your photo is stored. **Double click** on the image name OR click once then, on the Open button to open it in Picnik



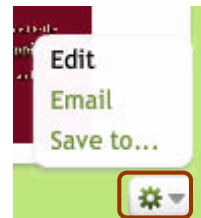
**3** Click **Get from Web Site**

Simply type in a URL web address, and Picnik will display all of the images on that webpage!



**Doubleclick** on any of image to open it.

Or click the bottom icon to Edit (open), Email or save to your computer.



**4** Let Yahoo Search or Flickr Search find images on a topic of your choice.

Click on one of these links. Enter the topic you want to search. Choose the **Safesearch** option.


Click **Search**..




Double click any image to open it in Picnik. If you've been working on another image, Picnik will ask if you want to save or discard the other image.

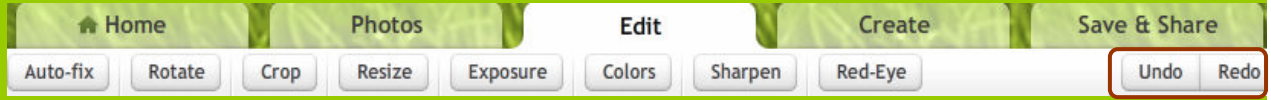
Note: You can limit the search to the size you want. X-Large files are good for printing but they may be too big to download. You can always Resize your image in Picnik.

**A word of caution - Copyright** – pay attention to the owner of the images you are using and make sure you credit them as necessary.

 **Tip: Work on a copy** of the image, just in case you change your mind after editing it. Click once on the name of the image, press Control-C (hold both keys down). Then press click, then Control-V to paste. Or open & save to a NEW name. This leaves the original intact.

 **Tip: Save the location** of images you plan to use. Make a Word or Works document. Paste the image or a thumbnail of it (small picture) then copy and paste the url (Control-C, Control-V) for the website you got it from below the picture. Save. Then you always have it to use again and to ask for permission if you need to share it or publish it on the web.

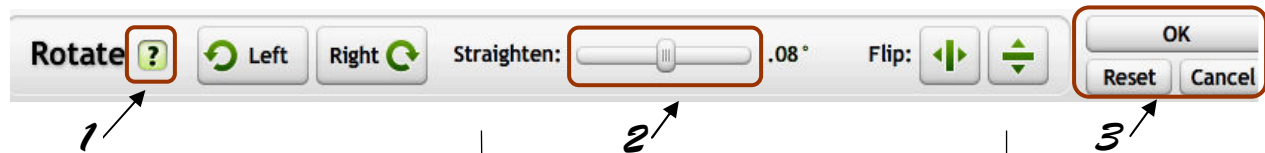
## Edit your photo





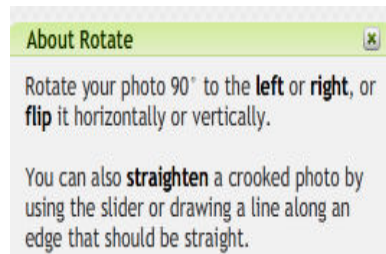
As you can see, you have several Edit tools to choose from. All tools except Auto-Fix have a few adjustments you can use to tweak your image.

Don't be afraid to try things out. **Undo and Redo** allow you to undo your last several actions or redo them again. The Ctrl-Z undo keyboard shortcut does not work. But, remember, once you SAVE, you cannot UNDO so think, then save.

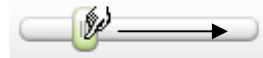
So how do the Edit Tools work? Let's use the Rotate tool as an example



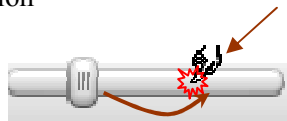
**Tool info.** Click on the  next to the tool's name and a box explaining what the tool does drops down. Click on the  again and it disappears.



If there is a slider **click and drag on the white tab to move it**



**OR** easier yet, Simply click on the slider bar where you want the tab to land up, and the tab will **jump** to that position



**Save or discard changes.**

Click **OK** if you want to keep the change.  
Click **Reset** if you want to keep using the Tool but want to start over.  
Click **Cancel** button if you want to void any changes you made using this Tool.

## Basic Edit Tools (see Part 19 for others)

**Auto-fix**

**Auto-fix** does just that, it automatically fixes the brightness, sharpness and color of your image as it thinks it should look. You just click the button and see if you like the effect. If you don't, click "Undo" and use the other Tools to achieve your effect

**Rotate**




Use Rotate to turn or flip pictures

**Turn** the image clockwise or counterclockwise

Find a **straight line** in your image, drag the slider until it lines up with your grid.

**Flip** the image left or right, or upside down/right side up.

 **Tip:** Crop, Edit and Rotate your image for interesting backgrounds/sidebars.

## Crop

Optimize the value of the *message* in your image - Crop the image to **focus** attention on the **most important** elements and **remove (cut away) distractions**.

Also use Crop to **reduce the total size (total pixels)** without decreasing the sharpness of the part you keep!

No constraints

Actual size: 333

x 221

Scale photo

**Step 1** Select the type of crop shape you want.

**No constraints** = any shape

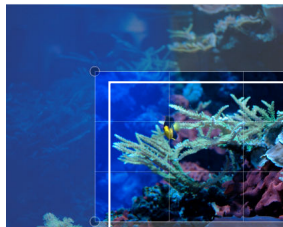
**Original** = keeps original ratio of height to width

**Others** – specific sizes or ratios such as 5 x 7.

**Actual Size** refers to the pixel size you want. A Power Point screen is about 720 x 432 pixels.

**Scale photo** will always enforce the exact Actual pixel Size you selected no matter how many **inches** the image becomes.

**Step 2** Select the crop area.  
Click from the upper left corner of the area you want to keep....  
**Drag** to the **across** and **down** to select the area



**Step 3** Move the selection as desired.

Click inside the selected area and drag to move the crop area.

**Resize.** Drag the sides or corners to resize the crop area if you can (depends on the type of crop you chose).

**Step 4.** Press Enter.

Voila! Don't like it? **Undo**

## Resize

Resize your image to fit the job.



**Tip:**

**For print** use the *high quality*, esp. for text.

**For web/PPT** – use the *lowest acceptable quality (size)*. Large, high quality images won't look any better than 72 - 96 dpi images.

New dimensions: 600

x 479

Use Percentages

Keep Proportions

**Caution:** Before you save an image, make sure you have a copy saved somewhere else. You can usually save an image to a smaller size with no problem. HOWEVER, when you save a small image to a larger size, it often pixelates and becomes fuzzy or blocky looking. Having an original lets you start again.

That said, to resize, simply **type the number of pixels** you want the image to be.

**Important:** You **almost always** want to check “**Keep Proportions**” to keep the ratio of width to height the same as the original. Otherwise you will get a squishy or elongated picture, not very professional. Then, when you change EITHER height OR width, the OTHER will be changed automatically for you.

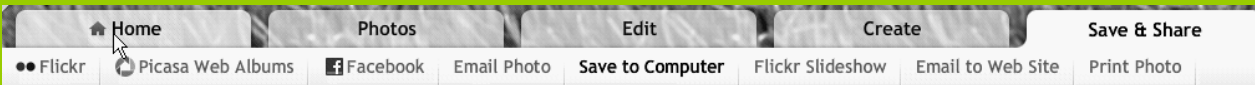
Check **Use Percentages** if you want to change the image by a certain percentage instead of pixels. 25 = 25% of the original image size.



**Tip:** If your image is too small to fit in the space, add a wide, solid colored border. Don't try to stretch the height without stretching the width and vice versa.

**Note:** This is **Part I** of the Picnik tutorial and it covers just the basics of opening, resizing and saving. Check out **Part II** to learn how to **Edit** the brightness, contrast and sharpness as well as apply some *really cool* special effects found under the **Create** tab. So sad, Picnik cannot work on more than one image at a time or combine images together.

# Save & Share your photo



This is a VERY important step because remember, Picnik does not store your photo. Once you close, its gone

You have several choices for saving your image.

**File Name.** Name the file something short but **meaningful**.

**Make sure** if you have more than one version of the image you give it a slightly **different** name. e.g. **flower1.jpg**, **flower2.jpg** Otherwise it will **OVERWRITE** your original file.

## Common Formats:

**jpgs** (j-pegs) - photographs, images with gradients, colors that gradually change.

**Gifs** - Images with large areas of solid color such as logos and drawings

**.pngs, .tiffs** - Originals and corrected images you are archiving.

- 1 Send it back to your web **hosting** service. (Flickr, Picasa, Facebook)
- 2 Send it by **Email** to someone.
- 3 Save it to your **computer, a website or**.
- 4 **Print it**



Tip: Even if you send it by email or elsewhere it's a good idea to keep a high quality copy on your computer. You can save your image several times, several ways so backup your work.

Click on any of the choices above and fill in the requested information. **Here is an example of "Save to Computer":**

## Save this photo to my computer

**Dimensions:** enter the desired size or % of the image.

**Format:** choose the way you want the image to be saved. Power Point will accept .jpgs, .gifs, .pngs and .tiffs (see sidebar). BUT .jpgs and .gifs can *usually* best saved as smaller, yet good looking images. Optimize for size (inches or pixels) as well as quality (high/med/low).

**Quality:** higher quality means a bigger file. The quality you need depends on how you are going to **use** the image. **IMPORTANT:** Save the original image at the highest quality possible (also referred to as "resolution" or pixels per inch) unless you are **SURE** you will never use it again.

- **Computer monitors**, which includes the web and Power Point, are unable to display quality above a certain level. (72 pixels per inch for Macintoshes, 96 pixels for PCs which is fairly "low" quality). Try to use the smallest *acceptable* file possible. Big files take a long time to load on the web and may freeze Power Point slide shows. But too small and they get fuzzy or pixelated (blocky).
- For **printing** you **need** a "high" quality (resolution) image (200 – 300 pixels per inch).

Picnik does not say what the resolution (pixels per inch) your image is. But you assume high quality = higher resolution. Low quality = low resolution.

**Want to learn more about optimizing graphical images? Check out these websites. Have fun!**

[http://www.molbiol.bbsrc.ac.uk/protein/graphics\\_formats.html](http://www.molbiol.bbsrc.ac.uk/protein/graphics_formats.html)

<http://webstyleguide.com/graphics/formats.html>

[http://www.designer-info.com/Web/web\\_graphics\\_tutorial.htm](http://www.designer-info.com/Web/web_graphics_tutorial.htm)

[http://graphicssoft.about.com/od/freedownloads/Free\\_Graphics\\_Software\\_Downloads.htm](http://graphicssoft.about.com/od/freedownloads/Free_Graphics_Software_Downloads.htm)