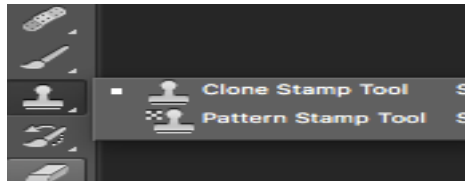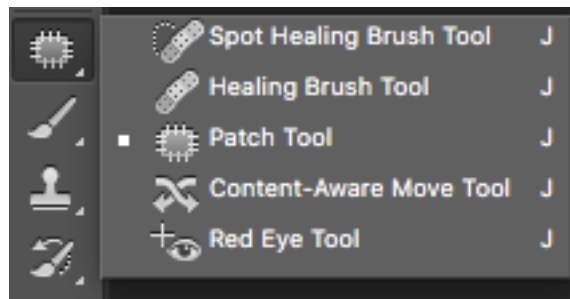# Healing tools in Photoshop and Elements.
Carlow Photographic Society

The clone tool copies pixels from one location to another using a brush. You select the source location to copy from and then you paint in the destination location. You can select the opacity of the brush and / or make the clone blend into the new location.
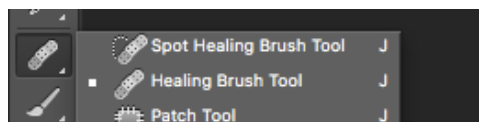

Clone tool - Fig 1

The patch tool is a higher level tool than the clone tool. You pick a destination that you want to modify and you pick a source location to get some "good pixels" from and the Patch tool attempts to match the texture , shading and lighting of the area you are trying to fix. It modifies the pixels from the source area to attempt to match those around the destination area.
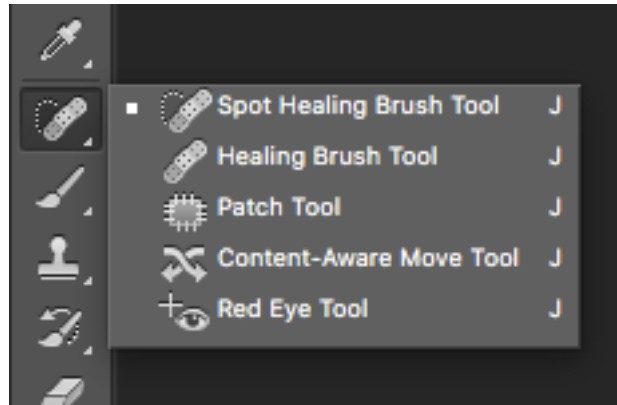

Patch tool - Fig 2.

The Healing brush is specifically designed for fixing flaws in an image like dust spots, scratches or wrinkles. It works similar to the clone tool [you pick a source area and paint on a destination area], except that it copies the texture of the source area and attempts to match the tonal values of the destination to make the painting blend "automatically". See fig 3.

Healing brush tool - Fig 3

The Spot healing brush is the same as the healing brush except that you don't pick the source. You just paint the area you want fixed and Photoshop attempts to automatically pick a source area from nearby and then automatically apply the healing brush logic. It works great for small blemishes such as dust spots or small scratches and it's very fast and completely automatic. Sometimes

Photoshop won't automatically pick the right source pixels. In this case, you can just revert to the healing brush tool where you tell it what the source is.

Spot Healing Brush tool – Fig 4.

For small fixes, I personally start with the spot healing brush because it's the easiest. If its automatic functionality doesn't work for some reason, you can then switch to either the healing brush or clone tool depending upon how much control you want. I've never personally found the patch tool useful – probably because I just never really figured out how to best use it.

For your dust spots, I'd definitely try the spot healing brush. Just select the tool, set the brush size to just a few pixels larger than your defects and just click on each dust spots.

You may want to experiment with the dust and scratches filter, which is designed for just this purpose. When you get the settings right, it can remove all the dust spots at once without having to manually click on each one.