Installation Cheat Sheet - OpenCV 2.4.11 and Python 2.X
using Windows 7 + Python 2 + precompiled binaries

(should also work with Windows 8/8.1, not tested though)

(NOTE: if you have a version of Python 2.X and Python 3.X installed on your computer there may be additional steps required in addition to the ones below, honestly I recommend uninstalling 3.X if installed previously and remove any references to a Python 3.X install in your PATH before continuing)

download OpenCV 2.4.11

make a folder "C:\OpenCV-2.4.11" and extract to there

download and install the latest Python 2.X (NOT Python 3.X), for example 2.7.9

reboot and make sure "C:\Python27\" is in your path variable, if not, add it (also remove any other Python paths) then reboot again

download latest NumPy matching your version of your Python 2.X (NOT Python 3.X), for example "numpy-1.9.2-win32-superpack-python2.7.exe"

if you do not want to use IDLE (editor that ships with Python) download and install your editor of choice
I recommend PyCharm Community Edition by JetBrains (yes, its free, and has awesome auto code completion)

copy:
C:\OpenCV-2.4.11\opencv\build\python\2.7\x86\cv2.pyd

to:
C:\Python27\Lib\site-packages

(note that I recommend using the 32 bit version (from x86 directory) of cv2.pyd even if you are using a 64-bit computer)

make new Python .py file as preferred

copy any JPEG image into the same directory as your .py file and rename the image "image.jpg"
(unless you are going to use a webcam feed, in which case this is not necessary, see below)

from my MicrocontrollersAndMore GitHub page, copy/paste code from either canny_still.py, canny_webcam.py, or red_ball_tracker.py as preferred

run the program, for those of you new to Python, this can be done in one of at least 3 ways:
1) choose run in your chosen Python editor
2) double click on .py file in Windows Explorer
3) run from the operating system command prompt, i.e. @WindowsCommandPrompt type "cd C:\PythonProgs", then "canny_still.py"