

Introduction to Post Processing

In this series of tutorials we will be looking at the basics of post processing images using Adobe Lightroom Classic and Photoshop. We looked at various software packages including free offerings such as Gimp but felt that the user interface was both counter-intuitive and clunky. Other packages from vendors such as On1, Luminar, DXO, Topaz, software from camera manufacturers etc. share some of the common components we will be exploring so you should be able to adapt your workflow to make use of the concepts we will be covering.

How we intend to deliver the training

We will be holding Zoom meetings on a non-club evening to enable interested members to ask questions, review images and when requested provide a critique and suggestions on how to improve an image. This part of the meeting is for new and inexperienced members to gain the knowledge and confidence to get to grips part of the world of post processing. More experienced members are welcome to join the second part of these meetings.

Getting it right in camera

This is the aim of all photographers but in many cases is simply a pipe dream. Your camera looks at a subject in 2D and records what it sees whereas your eyes fix issues without you realising they have taken place. It also assumes that you the photographer understand what your camera will record as you take an image. OK you can review images on the screen on the back of your camera but how do you adjust the camera to fix any issues. If you have the time you may be able to make adjustments and take another picture but what do you do if you are taking pictures of birds in flight. The hardest part is actually get a picture of the bird in the frame without chopping off its head or wings. Even pro photographers struggle here and have to rely on post processing their images.

Should I shoot in RAW or JPEG

It all depends on what you are shooting, your experience as a photographer and the time-frame in which you need to deliver your images.

If you are an event photographer and have to deliver your images almost immediately then the answer is to shoot in JPEG. But to do this you need to look carefully at the lighting conditions, choose the right colour balance for your images and nail the exposure and speed settings.

Most of us are not working to such tight deadlines so have the opportunity to take time in finessing images. Also consider what do you do when you are faced with low contrast days with drab lighting or you are taking pictures on a cloudy summer day where the sun is in and out regularly. To load the dice in your favour the recommendation here is to shoot in RAW. But be aware that RAW is just that, you need to develop the picture rather than letting the camera attempt to do this on your behalf. The advantage is that a RAW image contains much more data which gives you more latitude to fix problems and be more creative. The downside is that you need software to develop the image as out of camera RAW images look somewhat drab and uninteresting.

To illustrate all the differences and reasons for choosing RAW or JPEG would fill a book and we would be no further forward, so well park this discussion for now.

The Photographers package

Adobe introduced Photoshop over 30 years ago and it quickly became the industry standard for professional text production. Its downside is that it is a huge package and to some extent is not focussed on photographers needs. For newcomers it can be intimidating and has many ways to achieve the same goal. This problem was recognised and Adobe introduced Lightroom in 2007. Over the following years the layout and features available were made more user friendly which in turn helps to guide the photographer to edit their pictures in a more expert and 'safe' manner.

The Photographers package is a suite of four software programs: Photoshop, Bridge, Lightroom Classic and Lightroom (an online version). It is currently only available by a monthly subscription - currently £10 a month. Whilst this may seem expensive the package receives very frequent updates, software fixes and new features - typically twice a month. Compare this with a package you buy outright and you generally have to wait for new releases and buy the next version to get the product updates. Only you can decide which is the right approach for your own circumstances.

We will be concentrating on Lightroom Classic as your images are stored on your computer and/or external drive(s). There is

a second version of Lightroom which stores your images in the cloud on Adobe servers. This version is fine for photographers who are on the road but for most of us the problem is it takes a long time to upload images to the cloud. For training purposes we'll confine our advice to Lightroom Classic and simply refer to this package as Lightroom.

Once we have covered the basics, we will introduce Photoshop and Bridge and demonstrate how the packages work together. If you currently don't have the Photographers package you can still create an Adobe account to look at the online tutorials.

And for non Adobe users this may also provide you with useful information on what can be achieved with your own software packages.

Once you have an Adobe Account you can access the tutorials by clicking on the Creative Cloud icon - which is part of the download. On the menu bar select Discover and the select Lightroom Classic from the list. You can then tailor your experience by answering the questions about your knowledge of Lightroom.

If you already have Lightroom loaded on your computer you can view the online tutorials from the Help Menu. Notice there are several items here which change as you move between the different screens.

Who is this training for?

All members are welcome to attend our training events. Before each event we will be letting you know what we intend to cover so you can decide if you should attend. We make no assumptions about pre-requisite skills so please don't be put off if you are brand new to photography or a seasoned photographer who is looking to brush up on their post processing skills.

Les and Andy will be taking the lead on delivering these sessions so feel free to contact them either by email or in person on club nights. We too were once beginners and

benefited from the experience and advice given by more experienced members.

Although in the first instance we will be concentrating on post processing we can tailor evenings to suit your requests/ requirements. For instance, how do I correct a mistake I made when I took the picture. Share an example with us and we can either give advice on the evening or if needed we can take some more time to create a short tutorial or a members night so you can practice and learn new skills.

What we will cover

On the first evening, is scheduled for Tuesday 11th October. We will be getting to know each other's software and computer skills. Before we start to consider any post processing we need cover how we store and backup images so that they remain safe.

Next we will look at how to save your images on your computer or external hard drive, covering folder structures and best advice on naming conventions. The aim here is to make it easy to locate photo-shoots, holidays or other important events.

The next stage will be to install Lightroom and have a look at the interface. Rather than taking a deep dive we'll quickly explain what the panels do and then process some pictures so you can see a before and after comparison.

One concern all new users have is I'm frightened I might

make some edits to my images and screw them up. The good news here is that Lightroom was built from the ground up to stop this happening. Your images stay safe wherever you saved them and all the adjustments and edits are saved in a separate file. If you completely mess up an edit there is a reset button which acts as get out of jail card.

We'll be taking the first couple of sessions at a very leisurely pace so you don't feel left behind and if you forget or need a better explanation we can revisit any topic.

The schedule has not yet been finalised but we could begin each meeting with say 30 minutes to look at any issues which have arisen and problem images, and then let other members join us to look at the scheduled content we have planned for that evening.

Lightroom Interface and fundamentals

Following the initial overview we will be working through the editing process and introducing functionality on each panel and how best to make use of the features. As a rough guide we will be covering -

- Setting up and managing the Lightroom workspace
- Explaining what each of the different modules do and how to move between them
- How to import images
- How to make changes to folder names and how to move them between internal and external drives
- How to rename files and folders from within Lightroom
- How to pick and set star ratings on images
- The importance of using collections and eight plus benefits in doing so
- Using collections with the same images appearing in more than one collection
- Creation of virtual copies to enable the same images to be edited in different ways
- How to choose and compare similar images
- How to make basic edits
- An explanation of what the sliders do and their usage
- Understanding the histogram and dealing with blown out and overly dark areas of images
- Setting the profiles for images and explaining how they differ from using the sliders
- Setting the colour balance for an image and looking at issues with skin tones
- Introducing the sliders which handle contrast
- Explaining the difference between vibrance and saturation
- Showing how contrast affects the perceived sharpness in an image
- Explaining how to crop an image using both preset aspect ratios and making manual adjustments
- Demonstrating the local adjustment tools such as masks, basic spot and healing and red eye removal

- Demonstrating how we can creatively change an image using different types of gradient to focus the viewers attention on our chosen subject
- Explaining how to use the three types of sharpening: capture, creative and output sharpening
- Explaining the different types of noise and how to add or reduce luminance and colour noise
- Reduce the effects of lens aberration and let Lightroom automatically add a correction
- Showing how to use the print module to prepare and image for print by a lab or home printer
- Creating presets for exporting images for printing, competition entries and an explanation of the various export settings
- Demonstrating how to take an image into Photoshop makes edits and return directly back into Lightroom
- Demonstrate how to make smart collections to automatically track your best images
- Demonstrate how we can use Lightroom to share images with family, friends and mentors allowing them to make comments even if they don't use Lightroom

Obviously we can't cover the above in one night and whilst the list may seem onerous (er gobbledeygook !), we can demonstrate the principles by using examples which you can download and experiment with, then apply the concepts to your own images.

For those members who want to dive in and see what Lightroom can do the following YouTube tutorials from Adobe Evangelist Terry White explain many of the fundamentals in more detail.

- [Lightroom Master-class part one](#)
- [Lightroom Master-class Part two](#)
- [Lightroom Bad Habits to avoid](#)