

Preparing Images for Critiques

Jeffrey Sward
May 2022

Your Results Will Vary

- Select what you need and bypass the rest
- The full process is worst case overkill
- Case-by-case, it is normal to bypass steps even with a well-established workflow
- Similar to a technical conference, there likely will be one or two items directly useful

Notes About Photoshop and Lightroom

Attribute	Photoshop	Lightroom
Introduced	1987	2007
Scope	Manipulation, creation, and enhancement of single images. Pixel level perfection. Fine-tuning, retouching, precise local adjustments.	Organizing and processing groups of photos. Quick access to frequently used controls.
Target user base	Creative professionals. Photographers as well as photo retouchers, fine artists, graphic designers, compositing artists, etc.	Photographers

- Full chart link in references at end

Photographic Workflow Definition

- A digital photography post-processing workflow is an end-to-end system of working with digital images from capture to delivery.
- Consists of a series of inter-connected steps to simplify and standardize.

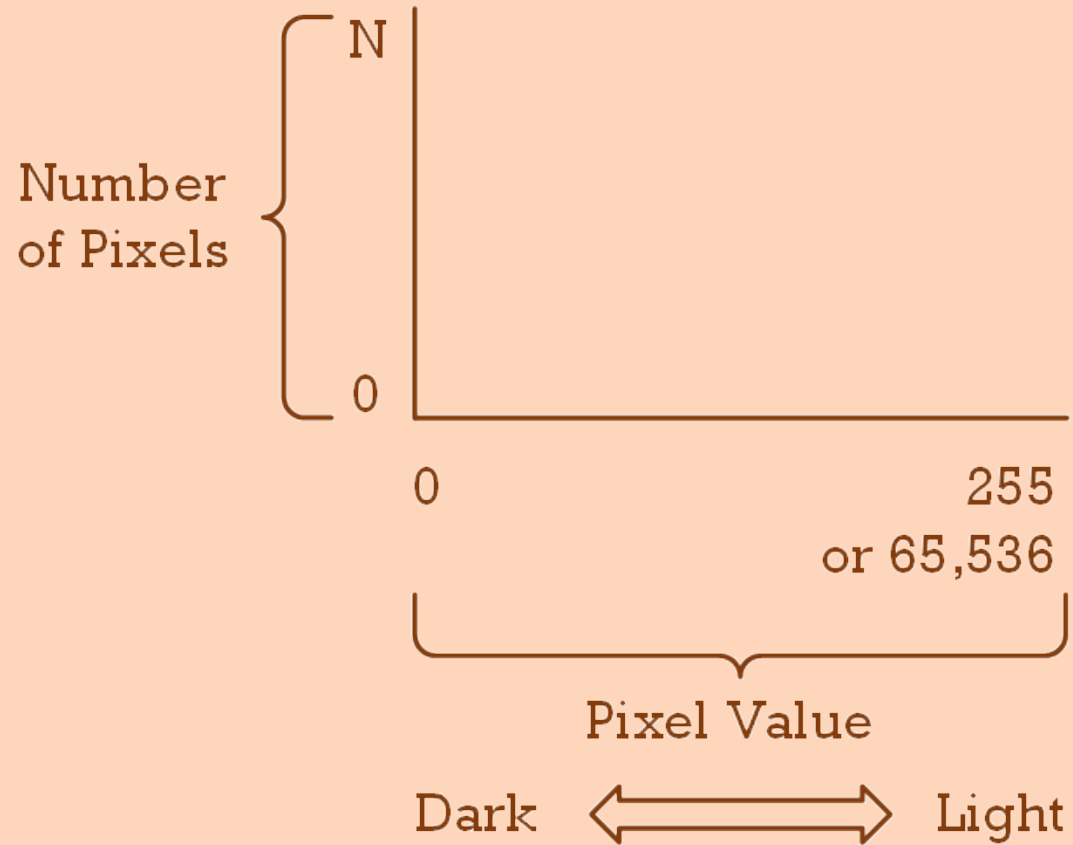
Objectives for an Image Preparation Workflow

- Best possible picture quality.
- Minimize labor (effort hours).
- Minimize duration (elapsed time).
- Return to any point in the edit cycle and revise the edits.
- Identify changes made to images at a later date.

Workflow Objective Properties

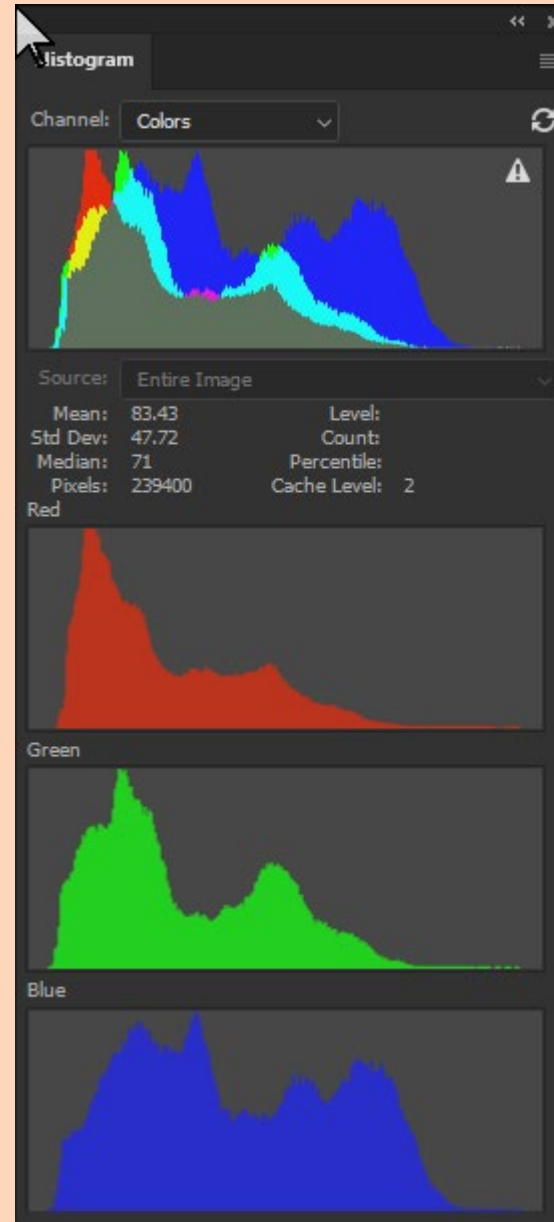
- Quality
- Repeatability
- Predictability
- Flexibility
- Reliability
- Scalability
- Traceability
- Usability
- Modifiability
- Maintainability
- Auditability
- Properties are trendy

Understanding Histograms



Histograms in Photoshop

- Why do we care?
- Check for clipping
- Check for unused tones
- Tonal changes become visible



Sequenced Workflow Segments

- (0.0) One-time setup notes
- (0.1) Capture
- (0.2) Import and Organize with folder tree
- (0.3) Raw conversion
- (1) Edit distracting elements
- (4) Edit noise, color, local contrast, etc.
- (5 before) Perspective align before crops
- (5) Crop leaving all original pixels
- (5 size) Convert to final pixel size, color space, sharpen, output

(0.0) One-Time Setup Notes

- Color calibrate the main photo editing monitor
 - Datacolor SpyderX
- Workspace with saving
- Action files with saving
- History window
- Save all files in all steps in a lossless format such as psd or tiff
- Final viewable file for distribution is usually jpg, which is lossy

(0.1, 0.2) Capture, Import

- Raw format is your friend
- Tools
 - Your camera
 - Memory card reader and Windows Explorer
 - Adobe Bridge for Image selection after copy
- Demo
 - Adobe bridge

(0.3) Raw Conversion

- Raw format is your friend
- Adobe Camera Raw
 - Use settings to keep histograms within bounds, not for appearance
 - Remove fringing at this point, usually purple
 - Save as psd
- Start with correcting fringing
- Color space
 - Adobe 1998
 - for cmyk output or larger gamut
 - Used for main workflow
 - Srgb – for output to web or most silver print services
- Demo
 - Adobe camera raw

Some Tools Are Both Faster and Better

- Can have at most of two of good, fast, and cheap
- Appropriate plugs-ins save elapsed time, labor, and improve quality (DXO Nik, Topaz, Noiseware)
- Wacom tablet reduces artifact removal time by 90%
- Day job involved evaluation and acquisition of digital productivity tools



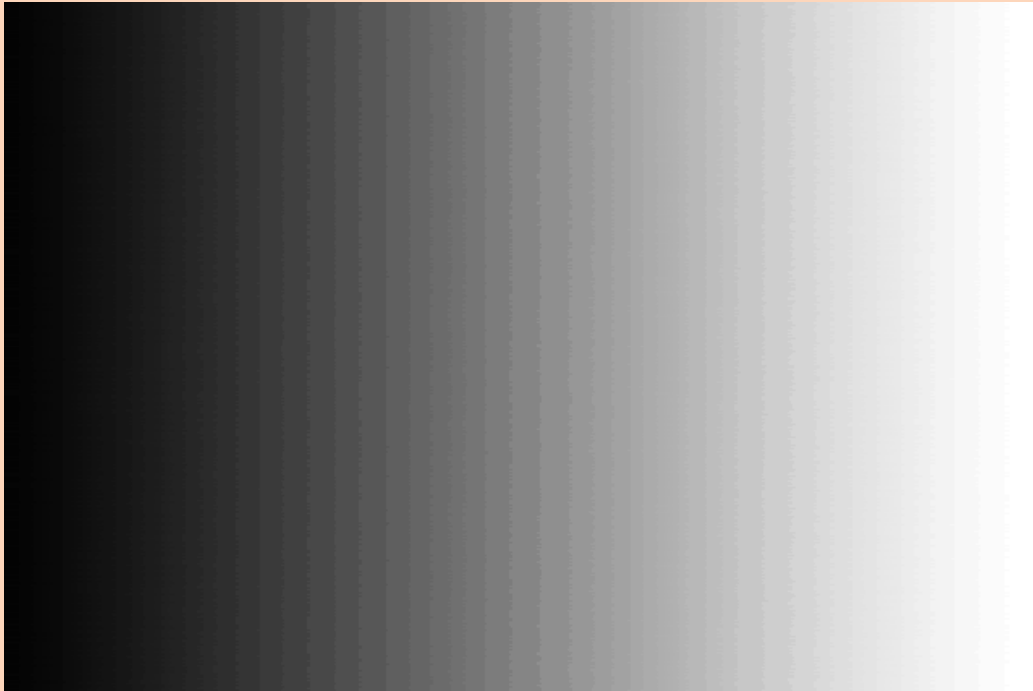
(1) Edit Distracting Elements

- Grid 1h x 2w at screen resolution
- 200%
- Spot healing brush
- Clone
- Lasso plus new layer via copy
- Lasso plus context sensitive delete
- Demo
 - Photoshop tools
- Full sequence of five steps show removed items

Photoshop Actions Demo

- Actions allow multiple commands to be executed in repeatable sequence
- Create new action with name
- Record
- Stop recording
- Assign pf key
- Set overrides on appropriate steps
- Run

Use 16-Bit to Avoid Banding and/or Mottle



8-Bit = 256 colors per channel



16-Bit = 65,536 colors per channel

(4) Edit noise, color, local contrast, etc.

- Covert to 16-bit
- Noiseware plug-in
- Levels including 50% lighten as other steps will darken
- Selective color
- DXO Nik Collection Color Efex plug-ins
 - Tonal (local) contrast
 - Can show hidden detail in highlights, such as clouds
 - Default (10-20-30-20) Case {30-40-20-30}
 - Pro contrast
 - White neutralizer
- Curves as needed
- Final levels
- Convert to 8-bit
- Demo
 - Photoshop action which invokes all steps {pf4}

(5 before) Perspective align before crops

- Demo
 - Photoshop {pf5}
 - => Filter => Lens Correction
 - Mcit1095 vert -5
 - Mcit1101 0.4 ccw
- Alternative is DXO Nik Collection Perspective Efex
- Perspective correction can be combined with crop in crop tool. Not recommended because one backup step removed and there is often more than one crop per image

(5) Crop Leaving All Original Pixels

- Demo
 - Photoshop crop tool
 - Danger Danger generally at this point do not lock aspect ratio and do not resample

(5 size) Convert to final pixel size, color space, sharpen, output

- Demo Photoshop action
 - {shift pf6} for width 1200 pixels
 - Resize
 - Color to srgb
 - DXO Nik collection sharpener pro
 - Sharpening for prints and digital use require different strategies
 - Save as psd
- Save as jpg for lab {pf11} or web {pf12}

Other Tools for Special Cases

- DXO Nik collection sliver efex - bw conversion
- Topaz mask ai
- Foto Quote - quotes
- Foto Biz - invoicing
- ACDsee photo studio - image organization, image comparison, and proof sheet printing
- Fotoworks lab - Physical silver prints
- Amazing mail - Physical post cards
- Dreamweaver - websites

References

- Photoshop – Lightroom comparison chart
<http://www.jeffreysward.com/editorials/psvslr.htm>
- Photoshop function key to action assignments
<http://www.jeffreysward.com/editorials/pskeys.htm>
- Action file backup
http://www.jeffreysward.com/image/Swine_Batch_Clean_Digital_82.atn
- Links page for photographic resources
<http://www.jeffreysward.com/editorials/photores.htm>

Examples for image cleanup

- Meteor city
 - Mcit1095 vert -5
 - Mcit1101 0.4 ccw