

Get great detail
in your subjects!

Photoshop Lightroom

From Snapshots to Great Shots

Learn the best
ways to compose
your pictures!

Jeff Revell

Photoshop Lightroom: From Snapshots to Great Shots

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DEDICATION

For all my Snow Clan brothers, "Cover me, I'm reloading!"

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I worked with a new team on this book, and I have to say that they did a great job of keeping me on track while letting me do things in my own wacky way. I'm not always the easiest person to work with, so I want to thank them for their patience and understanding. Many people are involved in writing a book, but I especially want to thank Valerie Witte, Anne Marie Walker, Becky Winter, and my buddy Ted Waitt. I know there are many others, and even though I may not know you personally, I truly appreciate your efforts.

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Introduction

I've written quite a few books in the *From Snapshots to Great Shots* series, and most of them have been about cameras. My philosophy for writing them has been to provide readers with a good foundation for taking great photographs through the application of camera technology and knowledge. It's so important to understand the fundamentals and how to apply them when taking photographs. But is that all there is to making a good image? Well, it used to be.

There was a time when all you could control was the exposure of your film, and everything else was handed off to a photofinisher. It was the photofinisher's job to make sure that the film was processed correctly and that everything from that point on was done to produce a decent-looking image. Just how decent depended on who was doing the processing.

Today, you can still drop off your files at the local drugstore and get photos back, but if you want to get great-looking images, you need to take control of that other side of the photography coin—the image processing. That's why I wrote this book, because showing you how to take a great photo is just part of the equation. To get the most from your photographic efforts, you need to learn how to finish the photo by using software tools like Adobe Photoshop Lightroom.

The old saying—*Give a man a fish, feed him today. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for life*—is really not that simple. You have to teach him not only how to catch it, but also how to clean it and cook it. Otherwise, he just has a bunch of fish that he doesn't know what to do with. This book will take you beyond the catching phase. Once you have caught your fish, you'll learn how to clean it and cook it, and make it a truly great meal.

I hope I've given you some clues as to what this book is about, but if you still aren't sure, read the following Q&A.

Q: WHY ADOBE PHOTOSHOP LIGHTROOM?

A: It's true that there are a lot of image processing programs on the market to choose from, but I wanted to use a program that had all the power to handle many different image file types, including raw and JPEG. The program also needed enhancement tools that were fairly simple to use but were also very powerful. I also wanted to ensure that there would be image management as well as lots of output options. Photoshop Lightroom has all of these features and more. It has a great image management feature called the Library, and many of the same great tools as its cousin, Adobe Photoshop. Lightroom uses the Adobe Camera Raw engine for complete control over image processing plus some great productivity tools for making books, slide shows, and more.

Q: DOES IT MATTER IF I HAVE A MAC OR WINDOWS MACHINE?

A: No. The program performs almost identically on either platform. When there is a difference between the keyboard shortcuts, I list the Mac shortcut first, followed by the Windows shortcut in parentheses, like this: To deselect, press Shift+Command+A (Shift+Ctrl+A in Windows). The screen captures in this book were made on my Mac, using the OS X Lion operating system, so you might see some aesthetic differences (buttons, cursors, and the like), but overall the program interface should look almost identical.

Q: YOU WROTE THIS BOOK USING LIGHTROOM 4; DOES THAT MEAN I CAN'T USE IT WITH MY EARLIER VERSION?

A: Not at all. Notice that there is no version number on the front of this book. The reason is that most of the tasks you'll be doing will be general in nature and use the same tools that have been available in previous versions of Lightroom. I've tried to focus on the basics of image processing, so I address color correction, cropping, exposure adjustments, sharpening, and so on. The tools to perform these operations have changed little over the years and will still be available in future versions as well. They are the core elements of image processing, and just like f-stops and shutter speeds, they will probably change very little in the future. I do my best to point out where there are differences as well as when some features are not in earlier versions so you can just skip ahead.

Q: DO YOU COVER EVERY FEATURE?

A: Not even close. Lightroom is jam-packed with so many features that this book would be many hundreds of pages long if I covered them all. My focus for this book is to bring you the information and techniques necessary to take images from your camera and enhance them into great shots. I also want you to be able to hit the ground running without getting bogged down by the nitty gritty. As in my camera

books, I'll cover the tools and features that will give you a great image processing foundation and let you start improving your photos right away.

Q: WHAT CAN I EXPECT TO LEARN FROM THIS BOOK?

A: I like to think of image processing as a three-step process. The first step is importing, where I move images from my camera to my computer. The second step is when I work on my images, giving them the right treatment to really fulfill the vision I had when I took the photo. The third step is to output my images in some way, whether it's making prints to hang on the wall or sharing them online with friends, family, or even clients. These are the processes that you will learn. They aren't overly complicated or advanced, but you don't have to tell anyone that.

Q: WHAT ARE THE ASSIGNMENTS ALL ABOUT?

A: At the end of each chapter, you'll find short assignments where I offer suggestions as to how you can apply the lessons of the chapter to help reinforce everything you just learned. A lot of the information covered in the chapters will be new to you, and I'm a firm believer in learning by doing. The assignments are simple exercises that will help you gain a better understanding, and also allow for a nice break, before moving on to the next chapter.

Q: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW BEFORE GETTING STARTED?

A: In order to keep the book short and focused, I had to be pretty selective about what I put in each chapter. The problem is that there is a whole other chapter that I wanted to include, but I just couldn't make it work. But instead of just leaving it out and shortchanging you, I have included it as a bonus chapter. So what's in this bonus chapter? It's a step-by-step accounting of my Lightroom workflow from import to exporting and printing. To access the bonus chapter, just log in or join peachpit.com (it's free), and then enter the book's ISBN. After you register the book, a link to the bonus chapter will be listed on your Account page under Registered Products.

Q: IS THAT IT?

A: I know what fun it can be to share what you've learned with others and maybe even show off a bit. To that end, I invite you to show off your before-and-after shots in the *Lightroom: From Snapshots to Great Shots* Flickr group. You've worked hard learning new skills, so go ahead, join the group, and show everyone your great shots. Just point your browser to www.flickr.com/groups/photoshoplightroomfromsnapshotstogreatshots, and join in on the fun. I'm looking forward to seeing your work.

4



ISO 800
1/1250 sec.
f/7.1
17mm lens



Selective Adjustment

USING THE ADJUSTMENT TOOLS FOR LOCAL EDITS

The previous chapter covered several image-processing tools. Even though they all perform different tasks, they all have one characteristic in common: They are global in nature. By that I mean when you use the Exposure slider, it either darkens or lightens the entire image. When you sharpen, sharpening is applied across the entire image, as are Contrast and Clarity adjustments. Applying adjustments globally is a great place to start, but sometimes localized portions of an image need to be tweaked differently. That's where the adjustment tools come into play. Some of them apply enhancements and some fix problems, but most of them are applied to a specific area, which gives you the power to create some awesome photographs.

PORING OVER THE PICTURE

If you've ever been to Santa Fe, New Mexico, you know that it is a photographer's paradise. If you haven't been, by all means, put it on your list of places to shoot before you die. It is a truly picturesque location with photo opportunities around every corner—like this pair of doors that I found when I walked around a corner. I shot them with a wide angle lens because I wasn't sure how I wanted my final composition to look. This gave me a lot of room to work with the Crop tool when I imported the image into Lightroom.

The Crop tool eliminated all the unwanted areas around the edges.



Using the Adjustment Brush, I darkened the one brightly lit area on the wall.

ISO 400
1/125 sec.
f/5.6
35mm lens

The White Balance
was set to a
warmer color.

Using the Post-Crop
Vignette tool, I created
the darkened area
around the edge of
the image.





FIGURE 4.1

Sometimes photos will not import with the correct orientation, and vertical images will appear horizontal.

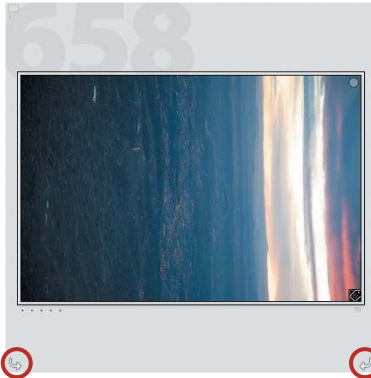


FIGURE 4.2

Click the curved arrows at the bottom of the thumbnail to rotate your image.

IMAGE ROTATION AND CROPPING

Because I first mentioned tools for global adjustments, I'll kick off this chapter by talking about another global tool that is important for you to know—the Rotate tool. Most cameras today are smart enough to know when you have turned the camera to a vertical position to take a photo, and that information is conveyed to Lightroom. For this reason, most of those images will automatically be rotated to a vertical (sometimes referred to as portrait) orientation. Sometimes there will be a disconnect, and a photo will import in the wrong orientation (**Figure 4.1**).

ROTATING IMAGES

You can quickly correct an orientation problem by choosing Photo > Rotate Left/Rotate Right. I prefer to use the keyboard shortcut Command+[for rotate left or Command+] for rotate right (Ctrl+[or Ctrl+]). It's fast and efficient, and works no matter which view or module you are working in.

If you are into mouse clicking, you can place the cursor over the selected thumbnail and a set of rotation arrows will appear at the bottom of the thumbnail frame (**Figure 4.2**). Just click to rotate the image.

If you have a group of images that need rotating, you can select them all and then apply one of the aforementioned rotation techniques, and Lightroom will rotate them en masse. Just be sure that they all need to rotate in the same direction.

TIP

Rotating more than one image at once works only in Grid view in the Library. You can have more than one image selected in the Filmstrip, but Lightroom will only rotate the image that is being displayed in Loupe view in the Library and Develop modules.



FIGURE 4.3
The Crop tool panel.

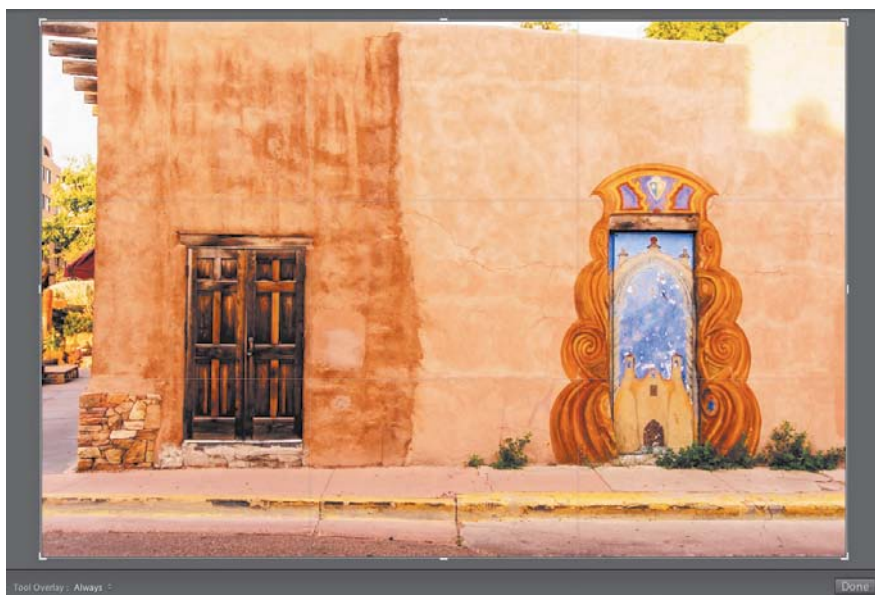


FIGURE 4.4
The Crop tool activates the crop guide and handles on the edges of the frame.

CREATING A NEW COMPOSITION WITH THE CROP TOOL

Maybe it's due to the fact that I learned photography in the darkroom with enlargers and easels, but I really like working with the Crop tool. It lets me discover new compositions for my image that I just didn't see when I took the photo.

You access the Crop tool in the toolbar by clicking on the dotted-line rectangle. You can also hop right into it by pressing the R key. When activated, you'll first see a new set of tools in the Crop panel (**Figure 4.3**). You'll also see that your image is full screen in the preview window and that it has an overlay of lines. If you look closely at the edges of the image, you'll see enlarged corner areas that act as handles for you to grab, move, rotate, and resize the crop guides (**Figure 4.4**). Depending on where you place your cursor, you'll be able to move the crop guide in different ways. If you place your cursor in the corner, it will turn into a double-arrow and will let you drag the crop guide in towards the center of the frame (**Figure 4.5**). If you move your cursor out of the frame and down towards the side, the cursor will turn into a curved double-arrow shape. This indicates that if you click and drag in this spot, the image will rotate inside the crop guide (**Figure 4.6**). This is very handy for straightening your photos, especially if you shoot a little crooked like me.



FIGURE 4.5
Placing your cursor at the corner lets you resize two sides of the image at once.

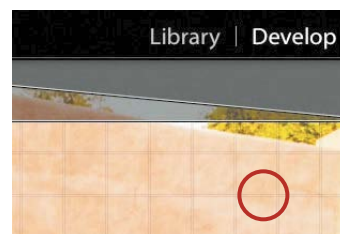


FIGURE 4.6
Move the cursor down from the corner, and you'll see the rotation cursor.



FIGURE 4.7

The Straighten tool looks like a ruler and will straighten photos when dragged along a vertical or horizontal line in the image.



FIGURE 4.8

The edge of the building was used to straighten the vertical lines.

Using the Crop tool can take a little getting used to, especially if you've cropped images using another editing program. The reason is that the crop guide floats above the image and doesn't move. When you crop, the image moves behind the guide. So when you want to reposition the new crop over the image, you place your cursor in the middle of the frame and grab the photo to move it around, not the crop guide. Once you get used to it, you'll love the way the Crop tool works.

If dragging lines isn't your style and you are more accustomed to dragging out your own crop guides, you can use the Crop Frame tool. It's the tool in the Crop panel that looks like two right angles on top of each other. To use it, just click the tool and then drag out the crop that you want on top of your image. Be sure to draw your crop towards the opposite corner. When you release the tool, you'll be able to reposition the crop guides by dragging or rotating. If at any time you want to remove the crop and start over, just click the Reset button at the bottom of the Crop panel.

STRAIGHTENING AN IMAGE

As mentioned earlier, you can fix a crooked photo by rotating the crop window, but there are a couple of other ways to do this as well. If you have vertical or horizontal lines in your image, you can use the Straighten tool to drag a straight line along something you want to look perfectly vertical or horizontal. The Straighten tool is the icon that looks like a ruler inside a circle in the Crop panel. Just click and drag along a line that should be at 90 degrees (**Figure 4.7**). When you release the mouse button, the photo will automatically rotate to the correct angle and straighten out the image (**Figure 4.8**).

The other method of straightening your image is to use the Angle slider in the Crop panel. Just grab the center positioning triangle on the slider and move it left or right until your image looks straight. Be sure to take a good look at the image as it is rotating. Lightroom overlays a small grid on the image as it is rotating to give you a little guidance.

CHANGING YOUR ASPECT RATIO

In the Crop panel you may have noticed a small padlock with the word Original to the left of it. The lock means that your aspect ratio, or the ratio of length versus width, is locked and will remain constant no matter how small you crop or rotate your image. If you want to change the actual dimensions of the image—that is, make the length or width longer than the original—you need to unlock the padlock by clicking it. Once you have unlocked it, you can move the crop guides independently of each other.

FLIPPING THE RATIO

Whenever you are drawing out a locked crop guide, you will probably find that it is stuck to the orientation of your image. That is, it will keep the long side long and the short side short. But what if you wanted to make a vertical crop selection inside of a horizontal image (or vice versa)? The solution is just a keystroke away. To flip the crop from one orientation to another, just press the X key (**Figure 4.9**).



FIGURE 4.9

Pressing the X key lets you flip the cropping aspect ratio.

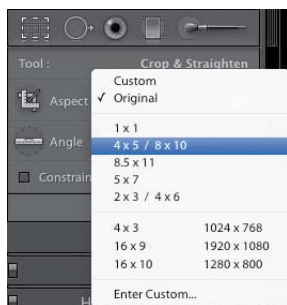


FIGURE 4.10

A number of preset crop ratios are available to choose from, or you can create your own.

In addition, some popular preset sizes are available that might already suit your needs, such as 8x10, 1x1, 5x7, and so on. You can find these by clicking the arrows between the word Original and the padlock. When the menu opens, select the size you want, and then crop your photo as you normally would (**Figure 4.10**). You can also enter a custom crop size that you can add to the list to use whenever needed.

SPOT REMOVER

Shooting with a DSLR camera is great because it offers so much flexibility in lens selection. The problem is that changing lenses creates opportunities for dust to enter your camera body where it usually ends up finding a home on your image sensor. You can't see it when you are shooting, but when you zoom in on your photo, there it is, clear as day. That's when the Spot Removal tool comes in handy. The easiest way to use the tool is to either click the icon in the toolbar (it's the circle with the arrow coming out the side) or press the Q key. When activated, a control panel drops down under the toolbar that lets you change the size of your brush and the opacity. You can also change the mode of the brush from Heal, which removes spots, to Clone, which allows you to copy an area in your image. I almost always use the Spot Removal tool in Heal mode, which samples a piece of the image from an adjacent area (source) and allows you to repair the problem area wherever you click (destination). It does a great job of matching the source to the destination, but if it's not quite right, you can move the source spot and sample a new location.

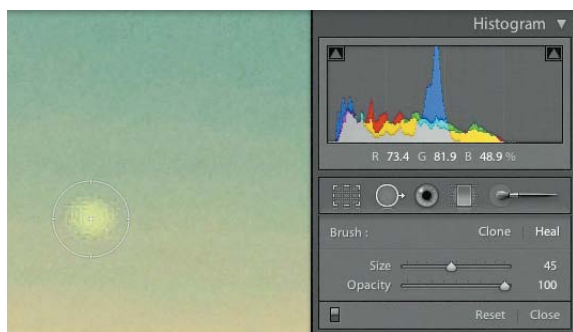


FIGURE 4.11

Make your brush size just a little larger than the spot you want to remove.

USING THE SPOT REMOVAL TOOL

Follow these steps to repair an area of your image with a sample from another area.

1. With the brush set to Heal, enlarge your image in the preview window by pressing Z.
2. Hold down the spacebar and drag your photo around in the preview window until you find the dust spot that you want to remove.
3. Release the spacebar, and then place your cursor over the dust spot.
4. Resize the brush using the Size slider until the cursor is just slightly larger than the spot (**Figure 4.11**).

5. Click to remove the spot, and if necessary, move the source circle to a better spot to sample.

TIP

If you want an easier, faster method of resizing your brush, press the left and right bracket keys ([and]). The left bracket makes the brush smaller; the right makes it bigger.

GET THE RED OUT

If you use an on-camera flash to take people pictures, you're bound to get some red eye shots eventually. If that happens, click the Red Eye Correction tool on the toolbar. This is one of the easiest tools to use, and it does a fantastic job of eliminating red eye.

USING THE RED EYE TOOL

Follow these steps to remove red eye from your images.

1. Click the Red Eye Correction tool in the toolbar (the icon looks like an eye).
2. Hold down the spacebar and drag your photo around in the preview window until you find the eye(s) that you want to correct.
3. Release the spacebar, and then place your cursor crosshairs directly in the center of the pupil. Click and drag out a circular selection around the pupil (**Figure 4.12**).
4. In the Red Eye Correction panel adjust the pupil size and darkness (**Figure 4.13**).
5. If you are correcting more than one eye, move the cursor over the next eye and either click in the center or drag out a new circle as you did before.
6. Repeat step 4, and then click Done at the bottom of the preview window.

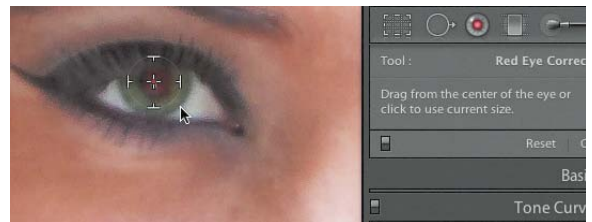


FIGURE 4.12

Click in the center of the pupil, and drag out a circle around the pupil.

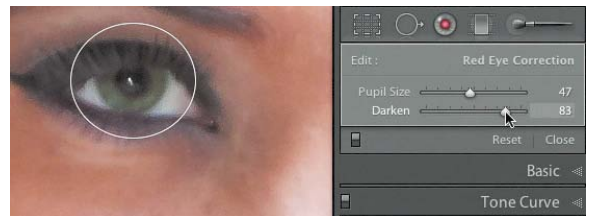


FIGURE 4.13

Adjust the sliders in the panel to fine-tune the correction.

GRADUATED FILTER

In traditional photography, if you wanted to darken a sky without darkening the foreground, you would have used a graduated neutral density filter on the front of your camera lens. The filter was usually two or three stops darker at the top and would then lighten back to clear towards the center. You can still use graduated glass filters in your photography, but you also have the option of adding the effect in Lightroom with the Graduated Filter feature. What's even better is that the Graduated Filter in Lightroom isn't just limited to going from dark to light. You can also use it to lighten an area of an image or change the color temperature of the filtered area (this feature is only available in Lightroom 4). In fact, just about any other adjustments that you might make using the other Develop panels can be applied in a graduated fashion using this tool.

Click the Graduated Filter icon in the toolbar to see a large panel of options beneath the toolbar (**Figure 4.14**). You can add all of these adjustment sliders to the filter to create just the effect you want.

So, in **Figure 4.15**, for example, the foreground looks good but the sky needs a little darkening and perhaps an increase in saturation. It would also be nice to add a bit of contrast to the clouds.

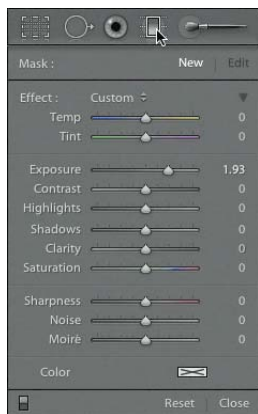


FIGURE 4.14
The Graduated Filter and adjustment slider panel.



FIGURE 4.15
The sky in this image needs some darkening and a little color enhancement.

APPLYING THE GRADUATED FILTER

To make adjustments to selected areas of an image, the sky in this example, follow these steps.

1. To darken the sky, set the Exposure slider to a darker setting. I prefer to go a little overboard by moving the slider to about -2 stops so I can see where my filter is being applied and then lighten it later.
2. Place your cursor above the image in the preview window and drag down towards the bottom, releasing when you think the filter is applied to the right area (**Figure 4.16**).
3. If you darkened the effect too much with the Exposure slider, you can now adjust the slider to a setting that is right for the look you're after.
4. Add some Clarity and Contrast to fix the clouds.
5. Add a little Saturation to help intensify the color of the sky.

When complete, you'll end up with a more dramatic-looking photograph (**Figure 4.17**). The great thing about the Graduated filter is that you can go back at any point in time and readjust the settings. You can also apply additional graduated filters by clicking the word **New** at the top of the slider panel.

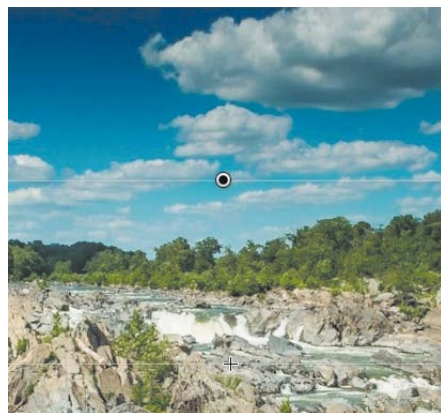
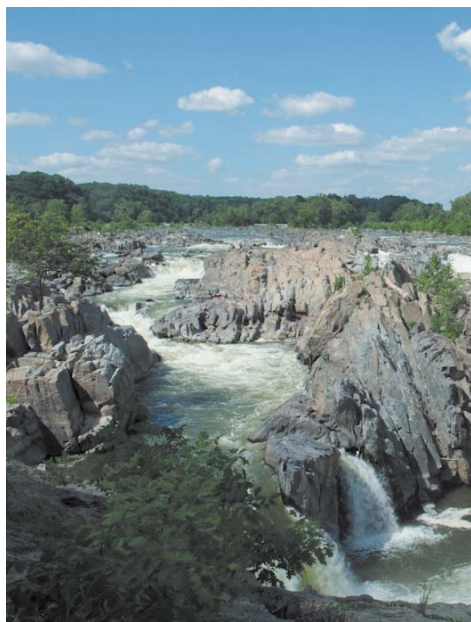
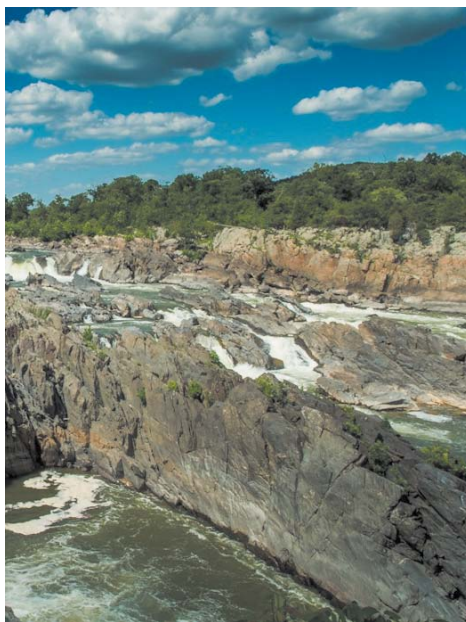


FIGURE 4.16

Start by clicking at the top, and then drag the Graduated Filter towards the bottom of the image.



Before



After

FIGURE 4.17

Here are before and after shots that show the dramatic effect a graduated filter can have.

WORKING WITH MULTIPLE ADJUSTMENTS

If you add more than one adjustment using any of the adjustment tools, you can always return to the previous adjustments and edit them. Every time you create a new adjustment, Lightroom applies a circular edit pin to show the location of the adjustment. The active adjustment pin will display a black inner circle; others will be solid white (**Figure 4.18**). To make changes to a different adjustment, just click the pin to make it active. If you want to hide the pins, press O or change the Show Edit Pins option at the bottom of the preview window.

FIGURE 4.18

Every time you add a new graduated filter or adjustment brush, a new adjustment pin is applied.



SELECTIVE FIXES WITH THE ADJUSTMENT BRUSH

Sometimes there will be variables in your photographs that you have no control over, and all you can do is capture the best exposure possible. This dilemma is a little less daunting when you know you can fix problem areas in your image using the Adjustment Brush. What is the Adjustment Brush? It's essentially like having the features in the Basic and Detail panels on a brush that you can selectively apply to your image (**Figure 4.19**). With the release of Lightroom 4, a few new brushes were added, but for the most part, they are the same as those available in version 3.

The general concept when using a brush is that you adjust the sliders to render the desired result—like darkening a particular area and perhaps applying some warmth to it—and then brush those adjustments onto the photograph. You can increase or decrease the size of the brush using the Size slider in the panel or by using the left and right bracket keys. You'll also notice a larger, dotted circle around the brush. This is the Feather for the brush, and it determines how smoothly the effect ends. So, if you want a very hard edge, you should use a very small Feather of 10 or less. As you move past 10 towards 100, the edges of the brush will get very soft, which can create a nice transition from the adjusted to the nonadjusted areas (**Figure 4.20**).

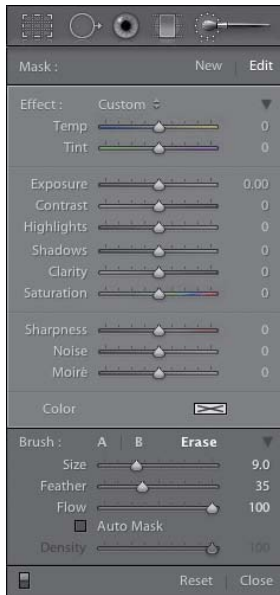


FIGURE 4.19
The Adjustment Brush panel.

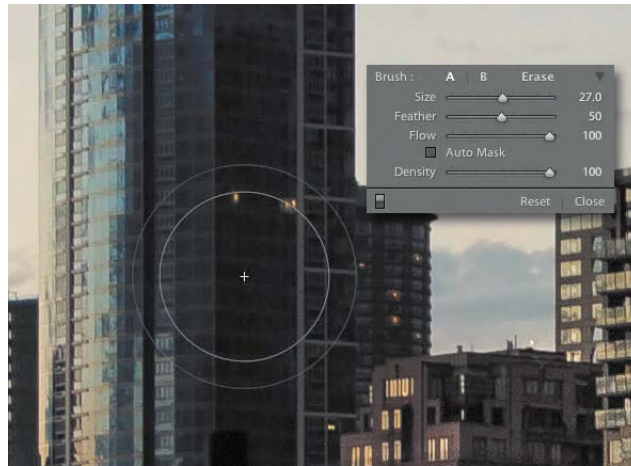


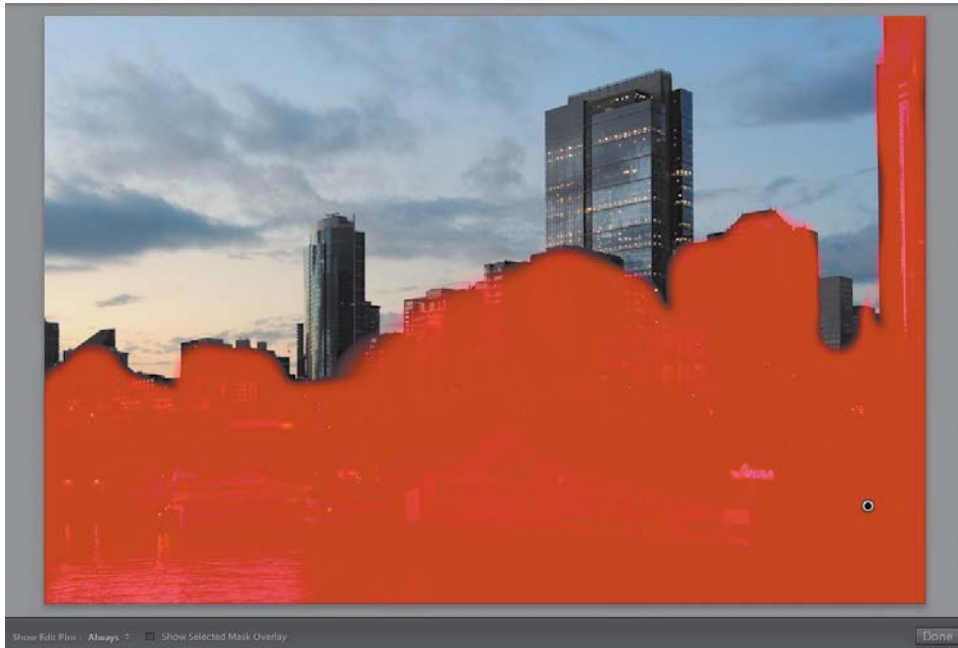
FIGURE 4.20
Use the Brush sliders to create the shape and behavior of your Adjustment Brush.

If you happen to make a mistake and brush over an area where you didn't want the adjustment, you can use the Erase brush to remove the change. The Erase brush works just like the Adjustment Brush in that it can be sized and feathered to your needs. You can access the Erase brush by clicking the word Erase in the bottom portion of the Adjustment panel, but I prefer to use the Option (Alt) keyboard shortcut. This shortcut does not turn on the Erase brush; it just makes it active for as long as you hold down the key. When you are done erasing, just release the Option (Alt) key and you are instantly back in the Adjustment Brush. If you choose to use the Erase brush by clicking it instead of using the keyboard shortcut and get confused as to which brush you are using, just look for the symbol in the middle of the brush. A plus (+) symbol means you are using the Adjustment Brush. A minus (-) symbol means you are using the Erase brush.

As you paint on your image, you will be creating a mask that only shows the effect in those areas you have brushed over. If you want to see exactly where that is, hover your mouse over the edit pin that shows where you started painting (these are the same edit pins created in the Graduated Filter tool). As you hover over it, a red overlay appears on all affected areas where you have painted (**Figure 4.21**). If you want to leave the mask on, you can select the Show Selected Mask Overlay check box at the bottom of the preview window. This can be helpful when you are painting over a large area and want to make sure you haven't missed any spots.

FIGURE 4.21

You can hover your mouse over an adjustment pin to see the mask you have created.



AUTO MASK FOR GOOD-LOOKING EDGES

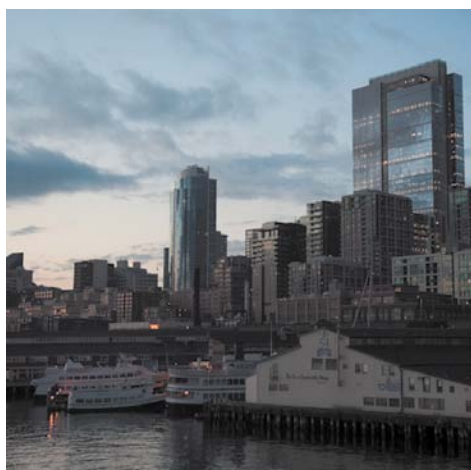
You can use several controls to get accurate adjustment masks, like fine-tuning the brush Size and Feather controls, but sometimes it is extremely difficult to get a clean line between subjects. That's where the Auto Mask comes into play. The Auto Mask confines the brush to areas of similar color, so even if the edge of your brush wanders into another colored area, the brush will only paint on areas that are the same color as that which is directly under the center of the brush. All you need to do is select the Auto Mask check box in the Adjustment panel and then start painting around the edges (**Figure 4.22**). It's best to paint any large areas with the Auto Mask turned off and only turn it on near edges.

When working with the Adjustment Brushes, it's important to remember that you can apply multiple adjustments to the same brush. So if you want to add Clarity and Sharpening, all you have to do is move the sliders for those adjustments and brush them on. You can always come back after the fact and readjust until you get just the look you're after. And just like the Graduated Filter, you can apply multiple brush adjustments to your image. Just click the word New at the top of the panel to create a new brush. Just remember to set up the adjustment sliders for this new brush, because it will default to the last settings used.



With practice and some experimentation, you'll not only correct your images using the Adjustment Brush, but you'll have the power to transform them into unique and compelling images (**Figure 4.23**).

FIGURE 4.22
The Auto Mask restricts the brush to painting on just one color.



Before



After

FIGURE 4.23
You can create very dramatic changes to your image by using the Adjustment Brush tool.

TIP

To reset an adjustment slider to its default zero setting, just double-click the adjustment name.

USING ADJUSTMENT PRESETS

If you aren't quite sure where to start with your Adjustment Brush edits, you can click the word Custom at the top of the panel to open the Presets Option menu (Figure 4.24). These presets give you a good starting point for whatever it is that you want to do with your image. There are even some specialized presets at the bottom that I'll talk more about in the next chapter. If you create a brush that you think might be handy in future editing sessions, you can open the Preset Options menu and click Save Current Settings as New Preset to bring up a naming dialog. Give your new preset a meaningful name, and then click Create to add it to the Presets list (Figure 4.25).

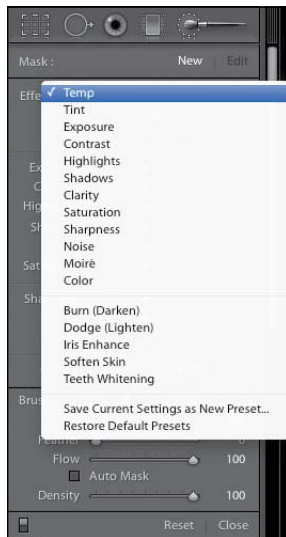


FIGURE 4.24

Several Adjustment Brush presets are available to get you started, or you can create your own.

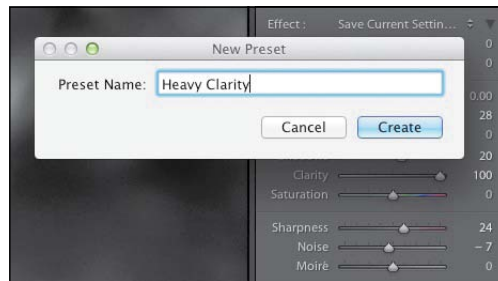


FIGURE 4.25

Creating your own preset is as easy as adjusting the sliders and then saving and naming it.

Chapter 4 Assignments

The great thing about Lightroom is that you can use the tools to do just about anything to your image and always be able to get back to where you started without ever damaging your original. So let's start playing.

Find the Photo Within the Photo

Cropping can completely transform the composition of your image or just help you remove clutter from the edges. Play with the Crop tool and learn how to resize and move your image within the crop guide. Try some new presets and maybe create one of your own. Also, flip the aspect ratio by pressing the X key and see if you can find a whole new perspective on your shot.

Try Some Spot Remover

If you have dust spots in your photos, try eliminating them with the Spot Removal tool. The nice thing about this tool is that you can also use it for removing blemishes in portraits. Open a photo with spots, press Q to jump to the Spot Removal tool, and start making those spots disappear. For spots in light areas, like the sky, you might want to try cranking the Blacks slider in the Basic panel to -100 to really make those spots visible. When you are done removing them, just set your Blacks slider back to normal.

Add a Graduated Filter, or Two

The Graduated Filter is one of my go-to tools when I'm working with landscape photos. I'll discuss some other techniques for enhancing skies in the next chapter, but for now try clicking the Graduated Filter tool and dragging one out on your photo to darken the sky. Don't forget to lower the Exposure setting a couple of stops first to really see where the filter is being applied. Then go back and adjust the setting until it looks just right. Also, try adding some other effects to the graduated effect you just created. Go ahead and get a little crazy. You can always reset the settings when you are done.

Let's Go Local

Go local with your edits, that is. Start with a simple adjustment, like lightening an area by setting a high Exposure or Shadow setting. Hold down the Option (Alt) key and erase a little of what you just did. Next, click on the Auto Mask and see how it works when painting around edges of differing colors. Don't be afraid to adjust the other sliders and really crank up the settings to get a good visual of how they affect your image. Click the New button and create a whole new adjustment. When you're done, click the pins and then press the Delete (Backspace) key to remove them one at a time or click Reset at the bottom of the panel.

Share your results with the book's Flickr group!

Join the group here: [flickr.com/groups/photoshoplightroomfromsnapshotstogreatshots](https://www.flickr.com/groups/photoshoplightroomfromsnapshotstogreatshots)

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