

Simplified Lightroom Workflow

By Rob Sheppard

Note: this is not a complete description of everything possible in Lightroom – it reflects my approach as a working photographer to using Lightroom to optimize my images.

Library (keyboard G):

- Import photos with Import button or automatically when memory card detected
 - Choose to copy photos to a new location if from memory card
 - Set location for photos
 - Use a system that helps YOU organize and find your images
 - Choose to leave photos in place if already on hard drive
 - Set metadata
 - Include keywords
 - Edit good and bad pictures
 - Add specific metadata
 - Use Collections, Smart Collections and Quick Collection like virtual storage bins
 - Select images for processing
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Develop (keyboard D):

- If cropping needed:
 - Adjust cropping
 - Straighten photo
- Start in Basic
 - Set Blacks
 - Use Alt/Option key as moving slider to see blacks
 - At least find a minimum
 - Beyond minimum is very subjective
 - Tweak dark tones (Fill)

- Check whites (Exposure)
 - Watch histogram (Alt/Option less useful)
 - Be cautious
- Recovery may help bright areas, but often not
- Choose Clarity amount
 - Watch out for harsh midtones
- Choose Vibrance
 - Be cautious
 - Watch sky color and warm color casts
- Go to Tonal Curve
 - Choose linear or moderate for most photos
 - Strong contrast for extreme effects
 - Work the parametric sliders to affect specific tones
 - Watch tonal and color changes
- Go to White Balance Eyedropper if needed for color correction
 - Click on things in image that should be neutral
 - Watch overall image color
 - Tweak Temperature and Tint as needed
- Go to HSL to work specific colors
 - Use Targeted Adjustment (“magic button” to activate cursor)
 - Click on colors, drag cursor up or down
 - Correct specific color Hue (color of color) where there are problems
 - Optimize individual color Saturation (intensity of colors) – one color may need more, another less to make image better visually balanced
 - Adjust individual color brightness with Luminance
- Go to Vignette
 - Set darkening of edges

- Go to Detail
 - Set sharpening (numbers depend on content of photo)
 - Click on photo to magnify and use Alt/Option key for black-and-white version of photo to better see effects
 - Amount
 - Radius
 - Detail
 - Masking
 - Set noise reduction
- Fix spot problems
 - Clone
 - Heal
 - Revise by clicking and dragging
 - Keyboard H to hide and reveal guide circles
- Look at photo for local adjustment needs
 - Look to balance photo visually
 - Darken large areas (I prefer - Brightness for darkening) with graduated filter
 - Lighten large areas (I prefer + Exposure for lightening) with graduated filter
 - Darken or lighten specific areas with adjustment brush
 - Fix local color and other problems
- Readjust brightness if needed because of local area changes
 - Tonal curve
 - Brightness (Basic)

Export:

- Right click photo (Mac users should have a right click mouse)
- Choose Export from menu that appears
 - Or choose Edit from Photoshop if you want to go to Photoshop
- Set a destination for your photo

- Name your photo
- Size your photo if needed
- Set output sharpening if needed
- Tell Lightroom what to do with the photo after Export, if needed

Print:

- Page Set Up – choose your paper size to start
- Template Browser is a good place to begin
 - Maximize Size template good for single image print
- Image Settings
 - Choose stroke border (the default is okay)
- Layout for sizing your image
 - Cell size is your photo size
 - Margins affect the outside, unprinted area of the paper
- Guides
 - Click and drag guides to size and place an image on a page
- Overlays
 - For any text or other identification on image
- Print Job
 - Default resolution okay for most printers
 - Print sharpening different than image sharpening
 - For output to a specific paper type
 - Choose amount and paper
 - Set color management
 - Set by printer is obvious ... or use
 - Other – color management by paper profiles

- Print Settings button
 - Choose a paper type
 - Mac – Print Settings
 - PC – Properties
 - Check how color is managed
 - Mac – Color Management
 - PC – Properties
 - Leave color management on if the printer is managing color
 - Turn color management off if using profiles
- Print One button
 - Sends data to the printer
- Print
 - Calls up the printing dialog boxes again before sending data to printer

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