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GET OUT THERE AND TAKE SOME DAMN PHOTOS!

SELFHELPHOTOGRAPHER.COM

Processing A RAW Photo In Lightroom

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Processing A RAW Photo In Lightroom 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS 2

Importing Your RAW Files 3

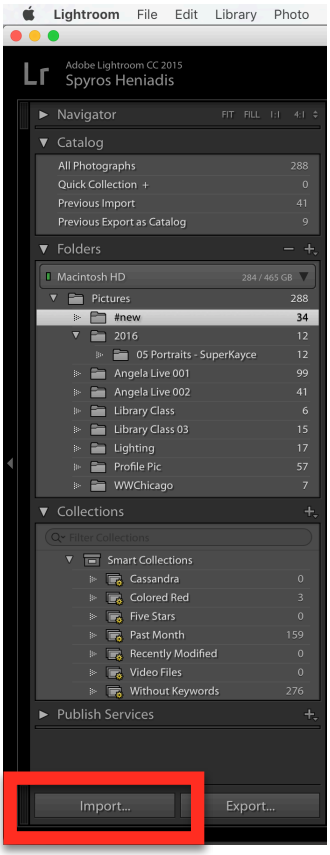
Processing Your RAW Files 5

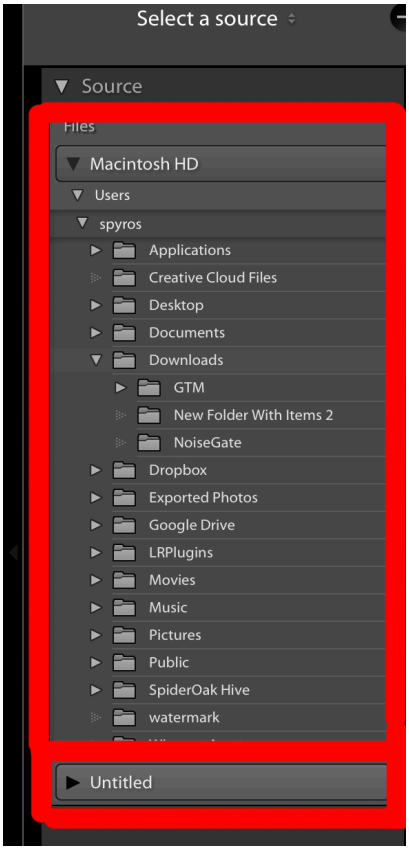
The RAW Processing Tools 6

Conclusion 8

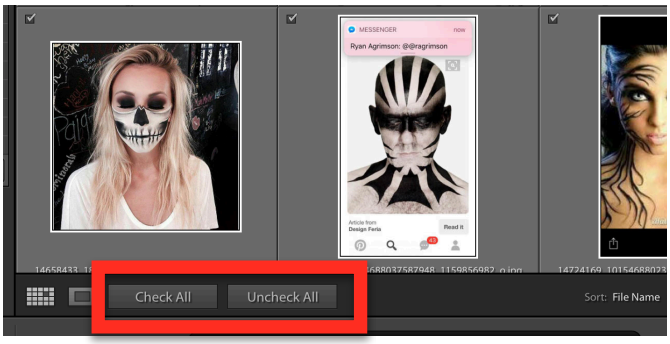
Importing Your RAW Files

1. Open Lightroom
2. Press the “g” key on your keyboard to insure you are in the Library module
3. Click the “Import” button on the lower left corner of your screen to open the Import Dialog
    1. Alternatively you can open the import dialog from the menu:
        1. Mac & WIN: File > Import Photos and Video
4. If importing from your camera’s SD card, then select the card from the list of locations
5. If Importing from your computer, select the folder on your hard drive





6. Review the images from your source for import you can:
    1. Import all photos (Click the “Check All” button at the bottom of the window)
    2. Select the photos to import (Click the “Uncheck All” button at the bottom of the window, and then individually checkmark the images you want to import.



7. At the top of the import dialog, choose whether to copy, move or add the photos when importing them to Lightroom.
    1. **Copy:** On import the photos are copied from the source (either your memory card or a folder on your hard drive) to a destination folder on your computer that you specify (Step 8)
    2. **Move**: On Import the photos are moved from the source (either your memory card or a folder on your hard drive) to a destination folder on your computer that you specify (Step 8)
    3. Add: On Import the photos are NOT moved from the source (a folder on your hard drive). They are added to the Lightroom catalog and remain in the original folder on your hard drive
8. If using the Copy or Move options, specify the folder you want the photos imported to using the folder selection dialog on the right side of the screen.

9. Click the “Import” Button to import your photos

Processing Your RAW Files

1. After import you'll be back at the Library module. To see the photos you just imported you can either navigate to the folder in the left hand pane, or click the "Previous Import" option near the top of the left hand pane.

2. Click to select the photo you wish to process.
3. Click the "Develop" at the top left of the screen to switch to the Develop module.

The screen will switch to a large view of the photo with your RAW processing tools in the right hand pane. There are a LOT of tools here. Do not get overwhelmed. Everything you do can easily be undone. Most of the tools are sliders and are very easy to use. You just adjust the slider until you hare happy with the result, but what's important is knowing what the different sliders do. The next section is a list of the different tools and sliders and what they do.

The RAW Processing Tools

1. **WHITE BALANCE TOOLS**
    1. **Temp:** This is a white balance adjustment tool and will warm or cool the colors in your image. Sliding the slider to the left will make the colors more blue. Sliding it to the right will make them more orange/yellow. If your image is too cool (blue) slide the slider to the right. If it's too warm (yellow/orange) slide the slider to the left.
    2. **Tint:** This is another white balance tool to adjust the green/magenta tint in your image. Like the temp tool slide it right or left to adjust the colors.
    3. **White Balance Eye Dropper:** Use the eyedropper for a "one click" white balance solution. Click the dropper to activate it, and then click an area of the photo that contains a neutral tone (white, black or neutral gray). Lightroom will then automatically adjust the Temp and Tint based on the sample you clicked on.
2. TONE TOOLS
    1. Exposure: Adjusts the exposure of the image. You can make the image brighter by moving the slider to the right, or make it darker by moving the slider to the left.
    2. Contrast: Increase or decrease the level of contrast in the image.
    3. Highlights: This slider allows you to recover some of the detail lost in over exposed areas of your image. How much detail you can recover depends on how over exposed the highlights are. Slide the slider to the left to recover detail in your highlights.
    4. Shadows: Works identically to the Highlights slider but instead recovers detail in your shadow/ underexposed areas.
    5. Whites: Making a highlights adjustment can muddy up the whites in your image. This slider allows you to adjust the whites to make them look whiter again
    6. Blacks: Identical to the Whites slider, but for your blacks.
3. PRESENCE TOOLS
    1. Clarity: This tool adjusts the micro contrast in your image. It looks like sharpening because it's adjusting the contrast of your fine details. I recommend zooming in to 100% while adjusting this slider. (click the image or press your spacebar to zoom in to 100%. Click again to zoom back out.)
    2. Vibrance: Helps bring detail back into clipped color areas (where colors approach full saturation). Can help prevent skin tones from becoming over saturated.
    3. Saturation: Adjusts the color saturation of the image from pure monochrome to double the saturation.
4. TONE CURVE TOOL
    1. This is almost identical to the curves tool in Photoshop.
5. HSL/COLOR/B&W TOOLS (each option is it's own set of tools/sliders)
    1. HSL: Hue, Saturation, and Luminosity adjustment sliders for individual colors in your image
    2. Color: An alternative interface for the HSL sliders for each color
    3. B&W Tools: Black and White conversion via color adjustment sliders to finely control what your black and white image will look like.
6. SPLIT TONING TOOL
    1. Highlights: Click the gray color box to the right of "Highlights" to bring up a color picker. Then move the mouse through the color spectrum to choose your desired color. This will tone the image highlight areas with the chosen color. (This technique is also known as color grading). After choosing the color you can further adjust the hue and saturation of the highlights.
    2. Balance: Adjust the balance between the toning of the highlight and shadow areas of the image.
    3. Shadows: Click the gray color box to the right of "Shadows" to bring up a color picker. Then move the mouse through the color spectrum to choose your desired color. This will tone the

image shadow areas with the chosen color. (This technique is also known as color grading). After choosing the color you can further adjust the hue and saturation of the shadows.

4. DETAIL TOOLS
    1. SHARPENING:
        1. Amount: Adjusts edge definition, increases overall sharpness of the image.
        2. Radius: Determines the amount of sharpening outside of the original pixel. Keep this around 1
        3. Detail: Helps minimize halos characteristic of over-sharpening. Lower is more suppression, higher is less.
        4. Masking: Masks the image to sharpen only edge areas, protecting areas of uniform tone. (Hold down alt/opt key while adjusting to see the mask)
    2. NOISE REDUCTION
        1. Luminance - Reduces luminance noise (Variation in pixel brightness)
        2. Detail: Recovers/preserves details that can be lost in noise reduction
        3. Contrast: Recovers/preserves contrast that can be lost in noise reduction
        4. Color: Reduces chroma noise (Randomized discoloration of pixels)
        5. Detail: Recovers/preserves details that can be lost in noise reduction
        6. Smoothness: Helps to reduce color blotching

Conclusion

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this guide. The important thing to remember when processing your RAW files is that you can easily undo anything you do, so feel free to experiment and get a feel for what tools you prefer to use. The most common set of tools I use are these:

White Balance
Exposure
Contrast
Highlights
Clarity
Vibrance
Saturation
Sharpening

I'm glad to be able to help you get more out of your photos with Lightroom, and, if you're still struggling with Manual Mode and understanding how your camera works, take a moment to check out my Guide to Shooting in Manual Mode video course. It has everything you need to help you take control of your camera so that you can start taking photos that are so good people will stop scrolling past them on Facebook and Instagram and just stare. Click here to check it out…

…and then