

How to edit a photo in 5 minutes with Adobe Lightroom

Below follows a brief overview of my Lightroom workflow – by no means the only way, but it works for me and with some practice you can do an image in a couple of minutes. Feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions on alexrobinson202@gmail.com.

0. Photo Selection

Half the job is choosing the right photos to edit – only keep the best!

1. Cropping & Straightening

Use 'Crop' tool to crop and straighten image as required.

If needed, use 'Upright Transform' to remove any unwanted perspective.

2. Exposure

Use 'Exposure' slider to approximately set the exposure, if any changes are needed – likely that a fine adjustment will be needed later. Note if you click on 'Exposure' you can then use +/- keys to adjust (or indeed any slider).

3. White Balance

Often camera will choose appropriate white balance in camera, but always good to check at the beginning of the editing process.

4. Highlights & Shadows

Adjust 'Highlights' and 'Shadows' sliders to bring out any lost detail in the darker areas and turn down any overly bright areas.

5. Contrast

Adjust contrast between light and dark areas to bring emphasis to your image. Recommend using 'Tone Curve' to adjust contrast, can be followed by small adjustments in 'Contrast' slider. Don't over-do it!

6. Vibrance & Saturation

Use these sliders to enhance the colours of your image if needed. 'Vibrance' only impacts the non-saturated colours and so is more subtle, 'Saturation' impacts them all. Again don't over-do it!

7. White & Blacks

Set the white and black point to remove any blown highlights and give a good spread of white to black. For 'White Point', hold Shift key and double click to auto-set. For 'Black Point', hold down Alt key to adjust until a little pure black is evident

8. Texture / Clarity / Dehaze

Fine adjustments if needed. 'Texture' brings out detail in foliage / fur etc. 'Clarity' is used for adding or removing detail in larger-scale objects – don't be afraid to add negative Clarity to give your image a slight misty look. Dehaze can be very useful to recover lost contrast in hazy conditions.

9. Hue / Saturation / Luminance

Can be used to adjust the shade or prominence of certain colours as required.

10. Sharpening

Used to emphasise fine detail in images. Important to use the 'Masking' slider to remove the sharpening from unnecessary areas e.g. clouds etc.

11. Noise Reduction

Used to remove noise from an image – the higher the ISO, the more noise likely required. As a very rough rule, sum of Sharpening + Noise Reduction amounts should = 100.

12. Vignette

If desired, add a vignette to focus the attention on the centre of the image.

13. Local Adjustments

If desired, areas of the image can be lightened / darkened to give emphasis.

14. Healing

If desired, use 'Healing' tool to remove dust spots etc. Lightroom is not all that good at this – for anything significant Photoshop should be used.