

Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) 6.3

Why use RAW?

- A Raw file is all of the data from the camera's sensor without any interpretation or changes
- Over 3 times more colors available than jpgs. Makes for smoother transitions in color, such as a photo of a sunset.
- More flexibility and control for you to determine how an image appears
- Less noise than jpgs.
- Cameras always throw away data to create the jpg, so you are never starting with all the data possible
- Perhaps the biggest advantage to using ACR: Every year or two, ACR improves, an image that you processed several years ago can today, be made better.
- Changes are non-destructive. No pixels are changed, rather, instructions are created (located in a .xmp sidecar file) to tell ACR and Photoshop how to interpret the image.

Note on Camera Exposure

- When taking photos, monitor your exposure by frequently looking at the histogram. Don't overexpose - look for the telltale "blinking spots"

Making adjustments to your image

ACR 6.3 is only useable in Photoshop CS5 and Elements 9.0 or greater

Auto / Default – Auto lets Camera Raw determine what needs to be done to the image. Much better in versions 5.2 or 6.x than previous versions of ACR. A good first choice to improve your image.

Histogram

- Probably the second most important item to watch (after the image itself) while adjusting your image
- The far left (value 0) is pure Black and the far right value (255) is pure white
- Most printers should be capable of printing values from about 10 to about 245.
- Values outside the range of 1-254 are defined as CLIPPING, for practical use that will be outside the capability of your printer

Histogram clipping buttons

- Upper left checkbox is the shadow checkbox
- Upper right checkbox is the highlight checkbox

Color Balance

White balance

- Allows for the selection of various lighting conditions, note the setting on your camera does not change the data in camera raw, but it does pass thru the setting to ACR. I set my camera to AWB

White balance tool

- Sets the selected area to neutral gray (R-G-B all the same value)
- Select an area that is a light shade of gray. (Shadows in clouds are great)
- Best used on diffused white highlights that contain detail

Temperature slider

- Lets you select the temperature of the lighting in degrees Kelvin.(Daylight is approximately 5500 deg Kelvin).
- Moving the slider to the left lowers the color temperature and makes the image more blue (cooler)
- Moving the slider to the right raises the color temperature and makes the image more yellow (warmer)

Tint slider - Rarely used

- Moving the slider to the left (negative values) will add green

- Moving the slider to the right (positive values) will add magenta

Crop tool

- Lets you select a ratio, pixels or inches and auto adjusts to landscape or portrait, after cropping the selected area will switch to full frame when another tool is selected.
- To create a small file (maybe for web or email) hold the left mouse button as you click on the Crop tool and then select Custom. In the Custom field on the screen that appears, select Pixels or inches and enter the size you want. Then use Save Image to save a copy of the cropped image.

Straighten tool

- With the Straighten tool selected drag a line parallel to a line or subject in your image that you want to be vertical or horizontal. It will automatically determine if you're trying to straighten a vertical line or the horizon line.

Most used adjustments

Exposure slider

- Determines the overall brightness of your image, this affects the ENTIRE brightness range.
- Determines if any area in the image will be white
- Can be used to center the histogram and correct exposure errors

Blacks slider

- Determines how dark the darkest area of your image will be
- Adjust the Blacks slider before adjusting the Fill Light and fine tune with the Blacks slider again

Brightness slider

- Controls the overall brightness of the image by concentrating its adjustment in the middle range of the image. Moderate movement of the slider does not affect either ends of the histogram

Contrast slider

- Determines the amount of separation between light and dark areas

Vibrance slider

- Moving this slider to the right will increase saturation in the colors which are not very saturated to begin with
- It can prevent skin tones from becoming over saturated

Clarity slider

- Adds depth to an image by increasing local contrast. This setting is similar to a large-radius unsharp mask. When using this setting, it is best to zoom in to 100%
- Controls contrast in the middle tones
- New in ACR 5.x the Clarity slider now can be moved in the negative direction, which produces a softening effect.

Less used adjustments

Recovery slider

- This slider allows you to recover lost detail caused by in-camera overexposure or over aggressive adjustment of the exposure slider.
- This only affects the far right of the histogram (extreme highlights)

Fill light slider

- Controls the brightness of areas that are a little brighter than black, adding "fill light" to dark areas

Saturation slider

- Saturates all colors within your image

Finishing the image

Open image button

- Opens the image in Photoshop

Cancel button

- Does not apply any changes you have made

Done button

- Applies any changes to the ACR image file in Bridge

Working with JPEG or TIFF images

- **DANGER** – be aware that changes made to JPEG or TIFF files are metadata based and the changes cannot be seen in a print or from another viewer until you use the SAVE IMAGE button in ACR or the File>Save As command in Photoshop

Workflow options – located at the bottom center of the screen

- Allows for color space selection (Adobe RGB 1998 & sRGB) are used most
- Select 8 or 16 bit

Save image button

- Provides numerous saving options

ACR menu button – small button to the right of the TAB name

- Somewhat hidden – allows for numerous settings, defaults and previous conversions

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