

Local Adjustment Tools ACR and Lightroom

Not long ago, the advice was “Do everything global in Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) and local adjustments in Photoshop”. Now much/most of your local adjustments can be done in ACR or Lightroom.

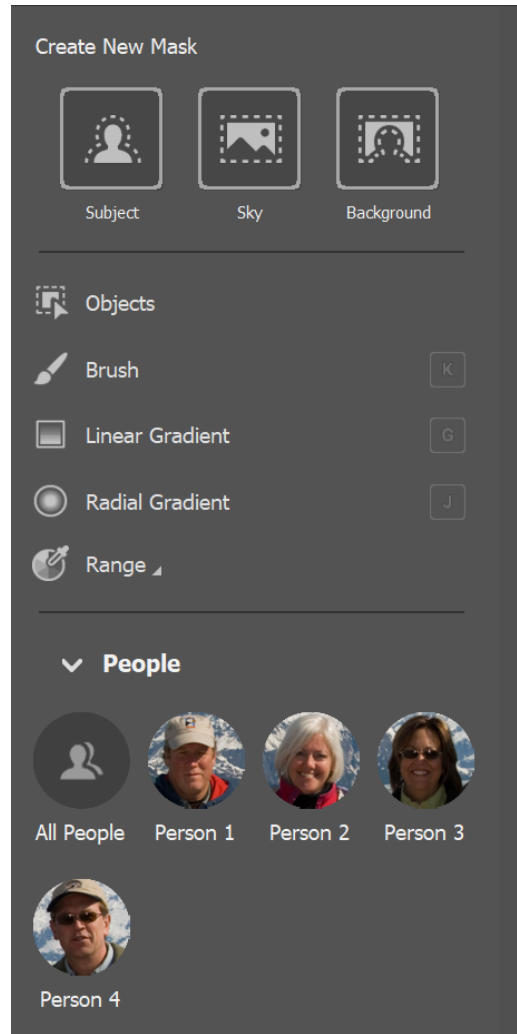
Start by clicking on the Masking icon in ACR or LR

Selection presets can help

- Select Subject
- Select Sky
- Select Background
- People
- Objects

The basic tools are

- Brush
- Linear Gradient
- Radial Gradient
- Color Range



- These tools work best with RAW files but easily work with jpgs
- You can apply multiple masks to any single image. Even multiples of the same mask

Selecting any mask preset usually does a good job of finding the Subject, Object(s), Sky, Background and even people.

Linear Gradient

Allows you to apply edits across an even gradient.

- Click on the Linear Gradient icon (the square)
- The Mask panel appears and the Linear Gradient panel opens up below, showing the sliders that you can adjust.
- Hold the left mouse button down and drag the mouse across the image to place the Linear Gradient. A “pin” or dot will appear to mark the mask’s location.
- The pin can later be dragged to a new position
- The Linear Gradient is marked by three lines that move further apart as you move the mouse across the photo. The lines represent the softness of the mask – the further they are apart, the more graduation you get.
- If you hold the Shift key down while creating the mask, it is placed parallel to the edge that you started from.
- In Lightroom, the top of the panel has a field called “Effect:”. It has a number of presets that you can use (click the word “Custom” to see the pull-down menu).
- Adjust one or more of the color and tone sliders for the effect you want
- If the adjustment amount isn’t right, you can change the sliders after drawing the Linear Gradient.
- To rotate the pin, hover the mouse near the pin until the curved double arrow appears. Then left click and hold the button while moving the mouse
- The beginning and ending lines can also be dragged and changed at any time
- To delete a mask, click on the three-dot icon to the right of the mask name. Select Delete.
- You can Add or Subtract from the mask. Select the mask in the mask panel and then click on the appropriate button. The most common tool to use for adding or subtracting is the Brush. Once the tool is selected, wherever you brush on the image, it will add or subtract from the mask.

Brush

The Adjustment Brush is for creating an odd shaped mask – one that can’t be made easily with the Gradient or Radial masks.

- Click on the Brush icon. The Mask panel appears and the Brush panel opens up below, showing the sliders that you can adjust.
- In Lightroom, the top of the panel has a field called “Effect:”. It has a number of presets that you can use (click the word “Custom” to see the pull-down menu).
- Set an appropriate sized brush for the area you wish to adjust.
- Set feather to an amount that will make a smooth transition
- Flow controls the opacity of the mask. 100 is full strength. Try starting at 50-75%
- Density sets the maximum strength of the effect.
- The difference between Density and Flow is this. If you set Flow to 25% and repeatedly brush over part of the image, each brush mark builds on the one below it, increasing the strength of the effect until you reach 100%. If you set

Density to 50%, and flow to 25%, then repeatedly brush, the maximum strength you can reach is 50%.

- Check the Auto Mask box to limit the edges of the mask to any edges in the photo. It tries to automatically find the edges of objects in the photo and stop at the edge rather than painting over it.
- Brush in the areas you want to adjust
- Adjust one or more of the color and tone sliders for the effect you want
- Some uses of the Adjustment brush:
 - Portrait retouching – Use the brush to select the model’s skin and apply Skin Soften preset or just slide the Clarity slider to the left. You could also enhance the eyes by increasing Clarity and/or Exposure
 - Enhancing black and white photos. Many black and white images rely heavily on texture for impact. Use the Adjustment Brush to select the textured areas you would like to have the most impact, and increase Clarity to enhance them.
 - Selectively desaturating the background to add impact to portraits.

Radial Gradient

The Radial mask is for creating circle or oval shaped masks. Great for vignettes

- Click on the Radial mask icon. Mask panel appears along with the adjustment sliders just like the other tools
- Use the Feather slider to set the softness of the gradient at the edges of the Radial mask. The default setting of 50 seems to work well for most masks, but you can change it if you need to.
- Hold the left mouse button down and drag the mouse across the photo. Guide the mouse to create the rough shape you need. Let the mouse button go when you are done.
- Change the size and shape of the Radial mask by clicking and dragging the four white circles at the compass points of the mask.
- Rotate the Radial mask by moving the cursor to the white dot on the “handle” of the mask until it changes from a hand or plus icon to a double curly arrow. Click and drag to rotate.
- By default, the adjustments are applied to the area inside the Radial mask. Check the Invert Mask box to apply the adjustments to the area outside instead.
- Then change one or more sliders to get the effect you want
- Here are some uses for the Radial mask:
 - Portrait retouching. Select eyes or lips and enhance using exposure and Clarity sliders.
 - Making portrait backgrounds darker. Place a Radial mask over the model’s face and make the background darker.
 - Add a vignette to off-center subjects. When you create a vignette in the Effects panel, it is always centered. With the Radial mask, you can place it wherever you need.

Multiple Masks

- An image can have many masks, of all different styles (linear, radial, sky, brush, etc). They can even overlap
- To add a new mask, click on the Create New Mask button on the top of the Mask panel and follow the same steps as above.
- You can even have multiples of the same mask