

Lightroom Workshop #1

By Dan Hyde June 22, 2017

1. What is Lightroom?

Adobe Photoshop Lightroom is an Adobe software product for organizing, editing, and sharing photos. A large percentage of the world's advanced amateur and professional photographers use LR. And for good reasons -- it's a powerful tool for managing and manipulating photos. In a sample of 18 Lewisburg Photography Club members, eight state they currently use LR. Lightroom (LR) is available for both Mac and PC computers.

First the purpose of this document is to teach you a subset of LR's features to allow you to be productive in post processing your own photos. It's not to demonstrate the LR's neatest features!

2. How to acquire Lightroom

Note that Lightroom 6 and Lightroom CC are functionally the same, but differ in how you pay for the use of the software. If you want only the LR product, you can purchase Lightroom 6 on DVDs or digital download from B&H for a one-time cost of \$143. Or you can "rent" both Lightroom CC and Photo Shop CC for \$10/month. B&H has 12-month subscriptions to both Lightroom CC and Photoshop CC for \$120.

You can download a FREE 7-day trial use of Lightroom CC at <http://www.adobe.com/creativecloud/photography.html> Once the web page loads, click on "Free Trial" at the top menu and follow instructions.

3. Introduction to Lightroom and how to set up Lightroom

Before you import your first photos into LR, you need to know a little about how LR functions. This knowledge will help you do some planning on how to organize your photos and the necessity to set a setting or two.

LR is a non-destructive photo editor. This means it never alters the original image, but maintains in a special file called a **Catalog** any added metadata, e.g., keywords, and the adjustments you made to each photo, such as change in contrast. When LR needs to display the image, it uses the original image and runs through all the adjustments saved in the Catalog. Its true when you export an image, say, to a jpeg file. LR also saves a small "Preview" (thumbnail) image of the original image in the Catalog. LR allows several Catalogs but I strongly recommend that you use only one.

I strongly recommend that you place all your photos that you import to LR on an external hard drive. What I do is download my photos from camera to the computer's internal hard drive, then immediately copy the files to my specially reserved photo external hard drive. I only import into LR the photos from the photo external drive. LR will keep track of where on the external hard drive the photo is, the name of the photo, any additions to metadata, any adjustments to the photo, e.g., a crop you have made, and the small Preview image.

The reasons for such careful steps are several. First, LR needs to know everything you do to a photo file that you have imported to LR. For example, you should always delete or move a photo *within* LR. If you delete or move a photo that you have imported into LR *outside* of LR, LR becomes

confused. And if LR is confused, you will be confused! Therefore, I reserve an external hard drive only for photos, and always import into LR from it. And I never delete files or move folders on this external hard drive.

A second and very positive reason for importing the photos from the external hard drive is that LR will allow you to view (but not edit) your photos even when the external hard drive is not connected. LR's Catalog contains the image's metadata and the Preview image that it can display. It will tell you where the original image can be found. This way you can have hundreds of thousands of photos across many external hard drives. If you import into LR from your computer's internal drive and you run out of internal hard drive space, you will need to import all your photos again and probably lose all your photos' adjustments! A big mess! Best to start using an external hard drive reserved for your photos from the beginning.

Periodically, LR will ask you to backup the Catalog. It's a good idea to do a Catalog backup at least once a week. Note this backs up only the Catalog and not your original images. Therefore, I periodically backup my external photo hard drive with the original images to a second external hard drive.

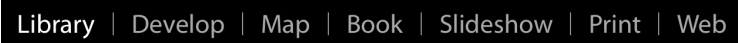
By default, Catalog backups are on the computer's internal hard drive. If your internal hard drive dies, you will lose your Catalog and all the Catalog's backups! That means any metadata added and images adjustments are lost, unless you have an automatic backup strategy such as Mac's Time Machine.

Since I'm paranoid, I like to save each image's metadata and adjustments in a "sidecar" XMP file in the same folder as the image. Unfortunately, this option is turned off by default in LR. To turn this option on, under the "Lightroom" menu, select "Catalog Settings." When the small dialog box opens, select the "Metadata" tag and check "Automatically write changes into XMP." Now close the Catalog Settings dialog window.

The first time I add metadata such as keywords or make adjustments to the image such as a crop, LR will create an .xmp file in the same folder as the image file and place all the metadata and adjustments in it. LR uses the image's file name with the new .xmp extension. Note that the metadata and adjustments are still placed in the Catalog. Now if my computer's internal hard drive fails, I have all the metadata and adjustments saved on my external photo hard drive. Note when I backup my external photo hard drive to my second external hard drive, I copy all the xmp files as well.

The more important reason for using the sidecar xmp files is that I can unplug my external hard drive and plug it into my laptop and I will see all the changes and additions I made to my photos. On my laptop I need to import into LR the new batch of photos that I have worked on. LR will use the xmp files to set metadata such as the keywords, the number of stars, and all my adjustments.

4. Getting starting in Lightroom

Start up LR. In upper right you will see:  Library | Develop | Map | Book | Slideshow | Print | Web From this main menu, beginners will use only the first two, i.e., **Library** and **Develop**. You can ignore the other five for now. **Library** mode is used to import, mark and find images as well as other things. **Develop** mode, as in "develop film in a darkroom," is for adjusting images, e.g., changing its

exposure. There are MANY options under both and it is easy to forget where an option is. If you remember an option but can't find it, look under both **Library** and **Develop** modes.

5. How to import files into Lightroom



Click on **Library** mode. In lower left, click on "Import" and in left panel, select the source (disk drive or folder) of the photos' location that you want to import. After clicking on the folder, you will see the images in the center window and you select the images you want by checking in the upper left of the image. After you have checked the images you want, click on "Import" in lower right.

While we are discussing importing, LR allows you to apply a preset to all your images as you import. For example, you may want to add a little saturation and clarity to every imported image. I do not do this, I prefer to adjust the images individually.



Also, you can add the same keyword phrases to every imported image. For example, if you are importing several hundred images of your trip to Italy, you might want to add the keyword "Italy" to every image and add additional keywords later.

6. Viewing and rotating your photos

After importing your images, double click on an image to change from Grid View (many images in a grid) to displaying a single image (Loupe View). You can use the left and right arrow keys to move through the images.

To return to Grid View, double click on the single image. You can also click on , the Grid View icon, or the Loupe View icon .

To view metadata about an image when in Loupe View (single image), select "View Options" from top "View" menu. When the small dialog box appears, click on "Loupe View" tab. Set "Info 1" and, under Loupe Info 1, then set three items you would like to see such as "File Name," "Capture Date/Time," and "Exposure and ISO."


If an image needs rotating, first make sure you are in **Library** mode, then click on the rotate icons  or .

7. How to add keywords

It's always a good idea to add keywords to your images so you can search for the keywords later. However, many photographers don't bother, therefore, LR has several features to make the task easier.

If not in **Library** mode, click on **Library**. After importing a bunch of images, select an image by clicking on it. On the right panel, click on little triangle near "Keywording" to open the keywording section. In the box, type in keyword phrases separated by commas.

Note your keyword phrases are added to "Keyword Suggestions." Click on a phrase in "Keyword Suggestions" to add it to a new image's list of keywords.

Near the bottom is a spray can icon  that you can use to add keywords to a random set of images in Grid View. Click on the spray can and make sure “Keywords” is selected, then add keyword phrases in the little box to the right (of the eye dropper). Use the mouse to click on the images to “spray” the images you want to add the keywords, then click “Done” near bottom right.

8. How to select “better” photos?

You’ve just imported several hundred images of your Italy trip and now are ready to rate the images such as poor, OK, good, and great. I recommend using LR’s star rating system where the images start out with no stars. You assign 1 to 5 stars where 5 stars is the best.

First make sure you are in **Library** mode. Under “Photo” in the top menu, set “Auto Advance.” Now when you assign a rating to an image, LR will automatically advance to the next image. This will save you some time.

Select the leftmost image on the bottom strip, and rate it as 1 star by typing a “1”, 2 stars by typing a “2” and so forth. If you decide to unstar an image, just type a “0.” Very quickly you can rate a large bunch of pictures this way. You might want to go through the batch again and adjust the number of stars on some images.

To see all the images rated 3 stars or higher, select the option “Filters Off” near bottom and to right of the grayed-out stars and colors and choose “Rated.” Now click on the stars starting from left to show three stars lit. Now the bottom strip will show only the images rated three stars or higher.

To turn off filtering for three stars, change “Custom Filter” or “Rated” to “Filters off” and the bottom strip will show all the images.

9. How to make basic adjustments to photos?

I don’t like to waste my time adjusting poor or so-so images, so I usually assign stars first (see previous section) and only adjust the good images, say, rated two stars and higher.

After filtering, for, say, two stars, click on **Develop** in upper right. The bottom strip will still show the same images rated two or more stars. However, the bar above the bottom strip, the right and left panels have changed! Ignore the left panel for now and focus on the right panel.


This new right panel can become pretty messy! To help reduce the clutter, *right* click with the mouse just to the left of word “Basic” and select “Solo Mode.” This keeps all the right panel’s options closed except for the one you are using.

Open the Basic group by clicking on the small triangle after the word “Basic.” This opens eleven different sliders that control different characteristics of the photo. Try adjusting each slider to see what they do. You can’t hurt the image! Remember LR is a non-destructive editor and doesn’t alter the original image but only saves the adjustments in the **Catalog** and, if you have it turned on, in the XMP file. You can always select “Undo” under top “Edit” menu. You can undo many times.

You can reset any slider to its original value by double clicking on its name.

Also, you can let LR analyze the image and try to adjust all the sliders for you by clicking on “Auto” just above the Exposure slider. Don’t like the results? Click “Reset” near bottom right to undo.

10. How to crop and adjust the horizon of a photo


Select an image and make sure you are in **Develop** mode. In the small tool bar above “Basic,” click on the Crop icon . Grid lines will appear over the image and you can drag a corner to crop the image. You can move the crop window around by holding the mouse button down *inside* the selected portion. If you hold down the mouse button *outside* the selected portion you will rotate the selected portion. Press “o” to cycle through different grid lines, such as rule of thirds, golden means, and golden spiral.

If you click the mouse just right of “Aspect:” a small menu will appear that will allow you to set the aspect ratio. Select “Custom” and unlock “Custom:” option if you want an unconstrained crop.

If you want to adjust the horizon, move the slider labeled “Angle.”

Click “Done” near the bottom right to exit the Crop tool.

11. How to remove spots from a photo

Make sure you are in **Develop** mode and click on the Spot Removal icon  next to the Crop tool. Adjust the “Size” slider to change the brush size if needed and click on the offending spot. LR will automatically select an area in the image that it thinks is clean to replace the offending area. Now you can clean another spot.

Click “Done” near the bottom right to exit the Spot Removal tool.

LR’s Spot Removal tool is rather limited compared to the features in Photoshop. LR’s version is useful for removing spots due to dust on your camera’s sensor, but if I have a complicated object to remove, I switch over to Photoshop.

12. How to export photos

In either **Library** or **Develop** mode, select one or a group of images you wish to export. From the top “File” menu, select “Export.” A dialog box will open with lots of options.

First, you need to choose the location of the new files. I like to select “Same Folder as Original Photo” then check the box “Put in Subfolder” and supply a meaningful name for the new subfolder. This way I can easily find the new exported files.

Second, you probably need to rename the new files. I like to choose “Custom Settings” and click on “Custom Settings,” then “Edit” to open a sub menu box where I specify “Custom Text-Sequence # (01)”. Click “Done” to return to the option box. I enter an appropriate Custom Text. If my Custom Text is “Italy,” my new exported files will be named “Italy-01.jpg”, “Italy-02.jpg”, and so on.

Third, you need to specify the file type, e.g., JPEG, the color space, e.g., sRGB, and Quality, e.g., 80.

Fourth, if you want to resize the image, you need to specify the size and resolution. The settings depend on how you plan to use the new exported files. If I'm creating exported files for email or for the web, I will check "Resize to fit:" and choose "Long Edge," 1024 pixels, and Resolution of 72 pixels per inch.

When your settings are what you wish, press "Export" near the bottom of the dialog box.

Note that the information entered in the export dialog boxes are sticky, meaning that they stay set that way until you change them.

13. Summary

This document should provide enough information so that you can be productive in using LR to post process your photos.

Lightroom has MANY more features. We will cover some in future workshop sessions.

A good self-study book is *The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom CC book for digital photographers* by Scott Kelby, New Riders, 2015. List price is \$50 but about \$28 at B&H.