

THE BASIC EDITS



GOAL

Make some basic edits to a raw file in order to make it pop.

SUMMARY

Once you have understood the basics of making a photograph and taken a few images, it is important to apply a few finishing touches to your images based on your artistic vision. When you are a beginner in photo editing, using the software can be a pretty daunting experience and time consuming because you are confused about where to start, what sliders to use and how much each slider needs to be moved for an effective output.



Sometimes despite all the efforts you put into editing an image, the photos may not turn out the way you want them to. If you know exactly where to start and how to go about the process, in no time, you will be editing images in a few minutes time and this is what we will be looking at in this project.



Photo by Rustem Baltiyev



Photo by Marc Noorman

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. SOFTWARE



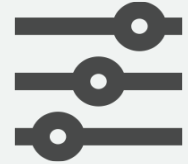
You do not need an expensive post processing application to edit your images. Even a free software that allows basic adjustments is helpful for a start.

2. RAW



You need to shoot in raw so you can bring out all the amazing details and colours out of the file.

3. SETTINGS



As much as possible, get the white balance, composition and exposure right in camera when shooting.

4. PLAN



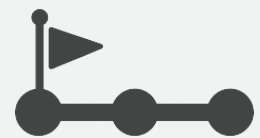
Before post-processing, draw a visual plan of what you want to achieve with the photo and do exactly that during the editing process.

5. ISSUES



Learn to differentiate between overexposed and underexposed images, unbalanced colors, wrong white balance, lack of contrast, etc. and then work from there.

6. STEP BY STEP



If you are confused where to start from, just try to follow the steps below and then work your way when you get an idea of the editing process.

Read on and find out what are the basic steps that should be followed when post processing images!



Photo by Fede Roveda

Photo by Iheb photographie

THE EDITING PROCESS:

1. STRAIGHTEN, CROP AND CLEAN THE IMAGES



Photo by Johannes Plenio

It is important to get the horizon, horizontals and verticals right in an image for a clean look. So the first step is to straighten the image. Next, crop the image if required to get the composition right if you did not get these right in the camera. Finally, look for unwanted dust specks, or other bits in the image that need cleaning up. Remove them using the clone or spot healing tool. If you are editing portraits, you may want to remove blemishes and spots using the spot healing tool.

3. REMOVE ANY DISTORTION AND VIGNETTING



Photo by Valeriia Miller

Depending on the lenses used, you may come across distortions and vignetting in your images. These can be corrected using the lens correction panel in your post processing application.

2. ADJUST VERTICALS AND HORIZONTALS



Photo by Todd Trapani

If you have shot architectural or similar images, you will want to get the perspective right by adjusting the horizontals and verticals. Use the transform tools if your application has them to achieve this. It's very easy to adjust verticals and horizontals in Lightroom - experiment with automatic (off, auto, guided, level, vertical, full) and manual options (vertical, horizontal, rotate, aspect, scale, X offset, Y offset) in the Transform panel.

4. ADJUST WHITE BALANCE IF REQUIRED



Photo by iRise Drink

It is always good to get the white balance right when shooting, but if for some reason you did not get it right in camera, then you can manually adjust the temperature and tint to get the white balance right.

5. ADJUST EXPOSURE AND CONTRAST

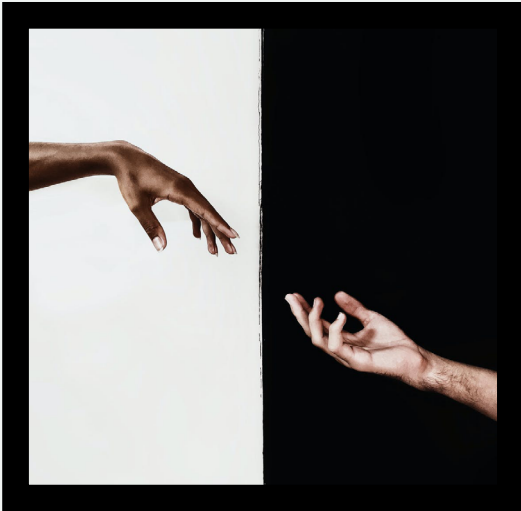


Photo by Matheus Viana

If you think that your photo is slightly underexposed or overexposed, you should use the exposure slider to get the correct exposure making sure you do not blow out highlights. Use the contrast slider to help bring out the darker and lighter tones and to make the image pop by showing the difference between light and dark tones. You will this way be able to distinguish different elements in the scene well. You can also add contrast to the image using the curves tool. Adding a hint of contrast can give a boost to a bland and boring image!

7. ADJUST VIBRANCE AND SATURATION

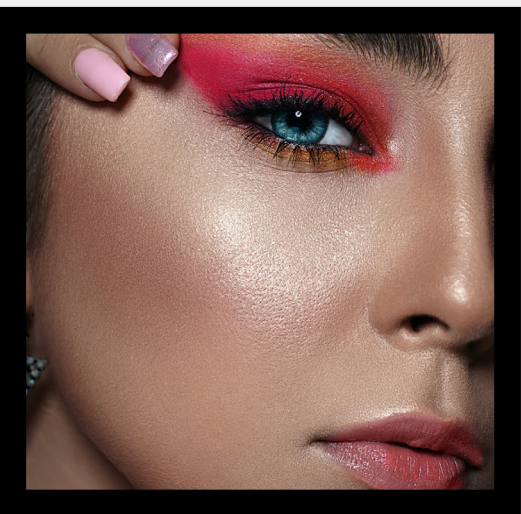


Photo by Amir SeilSepour

Look at your image and see if it lacks the pop in colours that you are looking for. Use the vibrance slider if you are looking to bring some pop to the neutral colours in the frame. Use the saturation slider if you want to bring in a colour pop to all the colours in the frame. Use these two sliders sparingly as they can leave artifacts if not used correctly.

6. WORK WITH THE SHADOWS AND HIGHLIGHTS



Photo by Nadi Lindsay

Observe your image closely and check to see if there are details lost in the shadows or in the bright areas of the image. To recover shadow details, use the shadows slider and to recover details in bright areas, use the highlights slider. You can also keep an eye on the histogram to see if there are any shadow / highlight clippings and make adjustments.

8. USE CLARITY AND DEHAZE TOOLS IF NECESSARY



Photo by Pixabay

Increasing the clarity helps to make the subject and other elements stand out. It helps to give a boost to the midtones in the image. Also, if your image has too much haziness, use the dehaze tool to give it some contrast and make it pop. For portraits, use these sliders sparingly.

9. SHARPEN THE IMAGES



Photo by Saints

Once the above adjustments have been made, if you think that your image lacks sharpness add it but make sure you don't overdo it. Use the masking tool if available so you know which areas or edges the sharpness applies to. Remember that sharpening cannot fix blurry shots.

10. REMOVE NOISE



Photo by Wendy Wei

Once all the edits have been made, if there is evident noise in the image, you may need to remove it using the noise reduction panel. Zoom in on 100% to see how reducing noise is affecting the image, because you do not want to overdo it and lose details.

◀ FINALISE THE IMAGES:

Once you are done with editing, examine your image at 100% zoom to look for any errors, specks and other imperfections. If there is need for further corrections, make them.

Depending on how you will be using the final images, for example, print, web, email, social media, you will need to export them accordingly.



Photo by Domenico Loia



POST YOUR RESULTS [ON THE FORUM!](#)

