



Ely Photographic
Club

LIGHTROOM CLASSIC OVERVIEW: PART 2 (October 2021 Update)

TOOLS ON THE RIGHT JUST BELOW THE HISTOGRAM

This includes the major October 2021 update where masking was introduced, which changed the tools panel quite a bit. The tools are similar to the previous versions, but masking has been added which has modified how some of these tools are used and notes on this are included here.

Tools

I generally use these after completion of the general adjustments listed in Part 1 but this is not always the case. Sometimes you may need to adjust something before the true colours / brightness are clear.

These are now split into four headings shown by icons. Crop Overlay (R); Spot Removal (Q); Red Eye Correction; Masking.

The first three are basically the same as before but masking is new in the October 2021 update and includes some of the older tools such as the brush and the graduated filter and radial filter.

The tools under the masking icon are as follows:-

Add New mask

Select Subject

Select Sky

Brush (K)

Linear Gradient (M) – Previously called Graduated Filter

Radial Gradient (Shift + M) – Previously called Radial Filter

Color Range (Shift + J)

Luminance Range (Shift + Q)

Depth Range (Shift + Z)

Letters in brackets are keyboard shortcuts.

When you have finished using a tool click on the tool again or click on close at the bottom of the tool panel or click on Done near the bottom of the image.

The Alt key on a PC is the Option key on a Mac.

Looking at these in the order they appear on the tool bar.

Crop Tool: This is the tool on the far left of the row.

I tend to leave this until last (or only do a partial crop) as generally its only when all adjustments are made you can see what you want to show in the final image. That doesn't mean it has to be the last step but if you do it too early and then go to Photoshop and make some changes when you save and come back into Lightroom you cannot expand the canvas, so be careful to leave enough wiggle room.

Cropping is to show the area of the image you want to retain and to discard the distractions etc at the edges. Therefore, it's often best if you use post processing to shoot slightly wider than required so you have a bit of wiggle room later. This, as everything else in Lightroom is non-destructive so you can go back and re-crop later.

It's also to move the subject to say a "Rule of Thirds" point or move a horizon to a "Golden Ratio" line.

To scroll though the on-screen guidelines to help line up the image press the O key

You can adjust level here as well not surprisingly using the level tool where you drag out a line that you want to set as the level line.

To crop either drag on the handles of the overall crop grid or click on aspect and drag a crop directly on the screen.

To maintain your aspect ratio, keep the padlock on the right side of the screen closed and when you drag on the handles it remains as shot.

To change the aspect ratio, click on the padlock to open it.

With the padlock closed you maintain the original ration as you crop. With it open you can then drag and change the aspect ratio as you crop.

There are pre-set aspect ratios in the small menu to the left of the padlock so you can just click on these to change ratio.

Once you have the crop size and ratio you want click inside the crop and drag the image around to get the best position. Re-crop and drag until it's just how you want it.

You can Restrain to Image (i.e. remove areas outside of the crop mainly when levelling shown as transparent) and it will re-crop to reset back to the full image.

Cropping obviously reduces the image size. Remember to toggle through the information on the top left by pressing the I key. This will show the original image size and the cropped image size as soon as you release dragging the crop handles.

Before you start to crop, check the full-size image; A full size from various cameras could be

A Sony a7riii output is 42 MP and is at 3:2 ratio;

A Sony a9 is 24 MP and a Canon EOS R5 is 45MP

Therefore, plenty of scope to crop especially as monitors only show the following: -

HD is 1280 x 720 px = 0.998 MP

FHD is 1920 x 1080 px = 2.07 MP (This is most current standard monitors)

4K UHD is 3840 x 2160 px = 8.29 MP (So a 65% reduction of a 24 MP image would fit to this size or an 80% reduction of a 42 MP image) and still provide information to every pixel on the monitor.

On a landscape photo you will hopefully never crop anywhere near this amount, or something is seriously wrong with how you took the original photo.

It's with wildlife and detail photos that this can happen. A photo taken of a bird a long way off and then cropping in to see the bird in more detail can lead to some less than perfect results.

If you must crop quite a lot, just be very careful and understand the process involved.

Most full frame cameras use a 3:2 ratio as standard output and examples of crop size outputs at 3:2 ratio are,

High res 4,950 x 3,300 = 16,335,000 px Say 16 MP

Good res 3,300 x 2,200 = 7,260,000 px Say 7 MP

General Use 2,200 x 1,460 = 3,212,000 px Say 3 MP

Facebook 2,048 x 1,365 = 2,795,520 px Say 3 MP

Camera Club 1,600 x 1,067 = 1,707,000 px Say 2 MP (Max size is 1,600 x 1,200 px, 4:3 ratio)

So, you can quickly see if we take a photo with the Sony a9, we have gone from 24 MP to 2 MP for a Camera Club image and significant detail will be lost but this may not be apparent depending on the monitor you view this on.

The crop itself can be ok and maintained at a good size but it's the later step when we export an image into JPEG that can reduce the image size and quality further still. So, although a crop may look ok now, it may not when exported and reduced again.

Therefore, Camera Club images can look ok on an HD or FHD monitor as the photo pixel dimensions are a reasonably close match to the monitor pixel numbers so the computer doesn't have to do too much to represent the photo on screen. The smaller screens of iPads can also make smaller crops look ok, even though the number of pixels may only match an HD or FHD monitor as the pixels are closer together on such a small screen.

However, remember some people may look at your photo on a 4K UHD monitor so be careful as to how far you crop.

This is because upscaling is difficult for the computer / monitor software to do. If you are using a 4K UHD monitor the image quality can start to degrade as the monitor needs to take for example a Camera Club photo from 1,600 x 1,067 pixels and display it at 3,840 x 2,160 pixels (2.4 x stretch horizontally and 2.0 x stretch vertically) and there isn't the information in the image to do this. The computer / monitor software must therefore fill in the gaps in this stretched image.

It's a bit like having a piece of cloth that looks quite tightly woven and then stretching it in both directions so you can see through the weave and the computer and monitor software are trying to fill in the gaps by guessing where the colours and edges etc are, so colour gradients and edges may become confused.

Working the other way around, so looking at a high-resolution image on a low-resolution display usually works reasonably well because the computer / monitor software has the information in the original image and is simply discarding it, so it knows where the colour gradients and edges actually are.

Spot Removal: This is the band-aid icon; it works reasonably well now but can take a little bit of work to get a good result. Personally, I only use this occasionally as I prefer to do this in Photoshop as the results are usually better and this is probably the main reason for jumping over to Photoshop as well as dealing with halos. If you don't use Photoshop, then use this tool to remove minor distractions and I have to say it has improved a lot in recent updates.

It's either a spot with a single dab or drag the cursor to create an area. With both move the selected replacement around until you have a good match.

There are two options to use. Clone and Heal. Try both to see which provides the best result. Also, if you are not happy with the result move the area that's automatically selected to another area of the image to see if that gives a better result. You may have to try several areas to get the best match. Generally small areas work best so keep it small and repeat.

You can alter the size by using the slider or use the control wheel on the mouse.

You can feather the edges or change the opacity with the sliders to get a better blend.

Red Eye Correction: There is a red eye correction tool; This is to correct red eye caused by direct flash or sunlight, that may be useful if you haven't dealt with this at the time of taking the photo.

There are two options Red Eye and Pet Eye. The second is not for Geordies.

Masking: This is the circular icon on the right. Make sure you name your masks as you go so you don't get confused which mask is which, as they can soon build up. To do this double click on the mask name and type in the new name.

A new set of adjustment sliders will appear that work with the masks. The sliders in other panels such as the basic panel will not work with the masks. Double click on the word “effects” at the top left of the sliders to reset them as you did before this update. Reset individual sliders by double clicking on the slider handle.

Once formed each mask has two boxes below it “Add” or “Subtract”. This enables you to have a sub-mask that works in conjunction with the main mask. To see these, click on the main mask in the pop out menu. When you click on the Add or Subtract all the mask types are available to use as sub-masks.

Select Subject: This is a tool from Photoshop, and it will find and select a subject in the image. It’s usually very good and reasonably accurate. However, you may need to tidy up the edges with the brush mask. Once selected you can carry out adjustments using the sliders.

If you want to work on the background, select the subject and invert it and then the subject will not be affected by the adjustments. Each mask has a menu accessed by clicking on the three dots to the right and invert is listed there. There is also an invert button on the top right of the mask slider panel.

If you work on a background and say change its colour or luminosity significantly, particularly if you darken a light background, there may be a halo around the subject (i.e. the previous background shining through the gap between the subject and the edge of the mask) so be very careful as removing halos in Lightroom is now possible with the brush but is quite difficult and fiddly as you don’t have the layer tools (such as the Darken blend mode) that you have in Photoshop.

Therefore, check the edges of the mask carefully before using it and make the adjustments with the brush mask as a “Subtraction” to bring in the edges a little before you work on the background.

Select Sky: Again, this is a tool from Photoshop, and it will select a sky enabling darkening etc. The same thing applies if you want to brighten the foreground select the sky and invert it. This has the same issues with halos so be very careful not just in the selection but in how far you adjust the sky. Make the changes slowly and watch out for those dreaded halos along the edge of buildings and mountains. If they appear just pull back on the adjustments until they have gone or are so faint that they are acceptable.

It may be they haven’t provided a halo removal tool as if it was here it dramatically reduces the need to go to Photoshop for many users.

Brush Mask: The next tool down is the brush. This again works as a mask with the same sliders so you can brush in the effect where you want it. The size of the brush is altered by the mouse wheel. This is where you can add a little more targeted exposure reduction, colour selection or sharpening, etc.

This is a very useful tool as it allows you to place adjustments exactly where you want them in whatever shape or pattern.

You can use it multiple times across an image.

Use the Auto Mask feature to avoid going outside the lines. As long as the + sign stays inside the the area concerned the brush mash shouldn't go outside.

The sliders control the brush properties. Feather is how hard the brush is at the edges; Flow is how solid the brush is on each brush stroke, so if you select 25% it would take four brush strokes to get 100%; Density is like opacity in Photoshop where a set amount is fixed so no matter how many times you brush it won't get any denser. These controls give great control of the brush.

You can use the brush with other masks to produce a combined mask. For example, use select subject and then add another mask with the brush for an additional area.

Linear Gradient (was called Graduated Filter): How this works has changed quite a lot as the range slider is now a mask tool itself. So, if the sky for example is too bright use the mask "Select Sky" first and then use the Linear Gradient (Graduated filter) as this will restrict it just to the sky.

Select it by clicking on the masking icon and selecting Linear Gradient or just press M (upper or lower case) on the keyboard and the Linear Gradient masking tool will open. To use the gradient it's as before in previous versions, just drag down from close to the top of the image (holding Shift if you want it level). Double click on the word "effects" at the top left of the sliders to reset them. Then adjust Exposure, Temperature, Tint and Dehaze as required.

To adjust or move the filter you go to the mask in the small panel, select it and if show overlay is checked this will show you the area covered by the filter. You can move the bars by clicking and dragging them in a similar way as before.

You can move the whole Graduated Filter by clicking and dragging on the Centre Button / Edit Pin (black & white square) in the middle of the Graduated Filter or rotate it by placing the hand to the bottom of the filter next to the handle.

You can also see the filter by hovering over the pin on the photo if the mask panel is open.

You can also move the sliders in a similar way to when using the basic panel to change the white balance, tint, etc.

If there is water or something else at the bottom that's too bright you do this in reverse by dragging up from the bottom. If it's at the sides drag from that side.

The range mask slider is now a tool itself (see below) so use this mask if you want to stop the effect spilling over onto adjacent areas of certain luminance that don't need this treatment. Once the mask is applied there is a slider that works in a similar way to before.

If you are darkening, move the right-hand luminance range slider to the left but if say you don't want to darken some whiter clouds but just the sky behind you can move the left-hand slider to the right. The box moves everything together.

I prefer to use the colour range mask as an addition or subtraction as this does seem a little easier to pick out items.

There is a brush available with this tool (separate from the brush tool) where you can brush in some extra treatment or hold down Alt and deduct the effect from areas.

You can have multiple Graduated filters on one image and can also overlap them.

Radial Gradient Mask: Then there is the Radial Gradient mask, which you select and drag out on the image. Use the sliders in the same way as for the Linear Gradient. Feather the effect as required. You can light streetlights or windows with this tool.

This can also be used to enhance the sky / sunlight.

There is a feather slider to adjust how the effect blends in.

Hold shift to maintain a perfect circle. You can adjust the mask by dragging on the handles.

Again, you can use other masks to restrict the areas affected and you can also have multiple Radial Gradient masks on an image.

Color Range: This mask works by allowing you to select a colour with a dropper and the mask will only affect that colour. To use the dropper just select color range and move the mouse over the image and the dropper will appear. Then just click on the colour you want. With the left mouse button held down you can drag out a box with the dropper to select a wider range of colours. Use the "Refine" slider to adjust the range and extent of the colours selected.

Then use the hue slider to adjust the colours as required.

You can add new colours by clicking on them with the dropper whilst holding down the shift key. To remove a dropper click on it whilst holding down the Alt key and a pair of scissors will appear removing the dropper.

An example would be you have darkened the sky, but the clouds are now too dark so use the colour range mask to pick out the clouds as a subtract from the main sky mask to deduct them from the darkening and return them to their original colour and brightness.

The Color Range mask is good for portraits and softening the skin. You can carefully refine the extent of the mask. If you use in conjunction with the Radial Gradient, it can work well. Select the face with the Radial Gradient, invert it so the face is not masked and then use the Color Range mask to work on the detail.

There are Presets under Custom which can be used.

To amend the effect, click on the little upside-down triangle on the top right of the slider panel and this allows you to move all the sliders together proportionally.

Luminance Range; Works in a similar way to the Color Range mask but on the luminance of the areas.

The slider can be used to adjust the area covered and the slider splits to create a gradient. To do this move the central box in the slider to suit, initially the small handles below the slider panel will move with the box. If you drag the handles left or right as required, the effect of the mask will change.

This can be useful to say pick out all the areas of an image that are too bright, say the bright surfaces of the sea. Click on a bright area and move the sliders until only the highlights are selected, then reduce by using the highlights or exposure slider. The opposite would also work to brighten dark areas.

Depth Range: This will be greyed out on a PC or Mac as its for mobile devices.

Masks Generally: Once you have a mask in use there are three small dots to the right of each mask (not the three dots next to the overlay colour selection box) plus an eye symbol. These only become visible when you hover over the mask.

If Add & Subtract are not visible, click on the main mask in the floating menu.

The eye symbol toggles the mask on and off.

There are two mask menus available both accessed by clicking on the three dots, one set with the main mask and one with each sub-mask. The menu with the main / header mask opens up a menu with various options such as Rename, Intersect mask with, Duplicate mask; Hide and Delete.

The menu with the individual masks has Invert added to these menu items.

Intersect works by bringing two masks together and only the area that intersects between the masks is active.

There is an issue with how invert works that I hope Adobe resolves and it's the lack of invert associated with the main mask.

This means you can't, at the moment at least, invert multiple masks under the main mask heading so they invert all together. To see what this means select subject and then subtract with say the brush. You will see an overlay covering everything, but you can now only invert the masks individually and this doesn't give the result you expect.

I am sure Adobe will resolve this with a future update but the way round it for now is as follows. Select subject and immediately invert it then extend this mask by selecting Subtract and adding to this inverted mask with the brush. Because the mask is inverted you use subtract rather than add to add to the mask.

The mask pop out menu is a floating menu so you can grab it by moving your cursor to the top and a hand symbol will appear. You can then drag the menu to where you want it. If you would prefer to have it as part of the right hand panels drag it to the panel just under the tool bar line and a blue line will appear and when it does let go and it will snap into place. You can drag it out again in a similar way.

Auto Sync and Copy

Copy

If you make some adjustments to a photo and think the same adjustments would work on another photo, click on the Copy button at the bottom of the left-hand panel.

This will bring up a Copy Settings menu page. Probably best to click on Check None and then tick the ones you want to apply and then click the copy button.

Now go back to the grid view and select the photo you want these adjustments to apply to or select a group of photos.

Now go to the Settings menu at the top and choose Paste Settings or use the key command Ctrl+Shift+V

If it's just the next photo to be developed and you want to have the same adjustments, select it in the film strip and click on the Previous button on the bottom of the right-hand panel and those adjustments will be applied to the selected photo.

The update has added masking to the list of items that can be synced, and this is where naming your masks can be even more important, as the various masks will be listed.

Auto Sync

If you want to edit several photos at once, select them in the film strip at the bottom and you will see the "Previous" button below the right-hand panels change to Sync. Click on the very small white & black switch to the left of the Sync button and the button will change to Auto Sync. Now any change you make to the first image displayed on the main viewing panel will be replicated to all the selected images.