A years worth of Lightroom Tips from the Image-Space in one easy to read and printable collection.

Thirty plus pages of Lightroom Tips and tricks.

Library, Develop Module and General Tips.
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SIMPLE AND EASY FOLDER STRUCTURE

An often asked question is *How should I structure my folders in Lightroom?*

One approach is to create a structure around the shoot date. This is good, but can get quite confusing unless extensive key wording is used.

A simpler approach is to create a main Photos folder with three sub folders called: Locations, Objects and People.

![Simple Lightroom folder structure](image)

I have found that I can place any of my shoots or individual images into a sub-folder with a descriptive name under one of these three headings. Before this I spent a long time structuring my images by event and date. A date based naming convention can then be used if required within the sub folders.

![Lightrooms metadata date browser](image)

Lightroom has an excellent metadata date browser so strict filing by date is not as important as it used to be.
SHOW FILMSTRIP RATINGS AND PICKS

The default Filmstrip displays has very little information other than just the thumbnails themselves. You can show additional Filmstrip information by right clicking on the Filmstrip.

You will then see a number of menu items including Show Ratings and Picks, Show Badges, Show Image Tootips and Show Photos in Navigator on Mouse-Over.

Filmstrip view options

You can now choose to display any combination of star ratings, pick information and icon badges.

Filmstrip with star ratings

Note that the vertical size of the filmstrip will determine how much additional information is displayed.

Very useful when you are working in the Library or the Develop module.
VISUAL KEYWORD USAGE INDICATOR

Lightroom allows you to assign keywords which is great for quickly finding images by simply clicking on the keyword in the *Keyword Tags* section of the left hand Library module.

What you may not be aware of are the *check marks* which appear next to other keyword groups when you select a specific image. After selecting the boat image, right, Lightroom will show a check marks against all the other keyword groups that contain the same boat image.

Now if you click on any one of the *check marked* keyword groups Lightroom will display the group and highlight the selected image.

This can be very helpful when checking your keyword usage and relevance.
DISPLAY EXPOSURE BIAS ON THUMBNAI LS

If you blend exposures, or shoot multiple shots, before making HDR images then determining which are the correct sets of images to blend can be quite confusing. Especially if you have many tens of images from one shoot.

An easy way to identify sets of bracketed images is to set Lightrooms View Options to display only the capture time and exposure bias on the thumbnail.

The information on the thumbnails allows you to identify and ensure that you include the right exposure biased images.

You can further refine this technique by grouping the images using Stacks with capture time. The images are then displayed in groups and you can easily see which images belong together.
FIXING MISSING METADATA DATES

Lightroom has a great Metadata browser which allows you to see your images sorted by date. It uses the EXIF Date Time field to do this.

The problem occurs when you add images to the Lightroom database which do not have data in this field. i.e if you have scanned a negative or imported a file which has not come from a digital camera. The library below has 245 files with an unknown date.

Select images with unknown date

To the rescue is a feature of lightroom called Edit Capture Time.

Editing Metadata capture time

All you have to do is select all the photos which have an unknown date, using the Metadata date browser, and then use the Edit Capture time command to reset the date on each file to the file creation date.
THUMBNAIL ICON TRICKS

Thumbnails in Lightroom show one of three different icon badges in the bottom right hand corner. The icon badges shown depend on what editing or key-wording has been done to the image.

Icon Badges are added whenever you do any of the following:

- Change the image using the Develop Module
- Crop the image
- Add Keywords

All very interesting but there is more!

Click the Develop Icon. The Develop Module will then open with image selected and you can fine tune the edit.

Click the Keyword Icon. The Library Module will open with the image selected with the Keyword highlighted in the Keyword editor.

The Crop Icon will open the Develop Module with the image shown and the last crop edit is displayed.

Note the icons are always shown in the Filmstrip panel and clicking on them from there works as well. This means that you can click an icon no matter which Module you are working in.
USE THE LIGHTS OUT MODE

The *Lights Out* mode in Lightroom is a very easy to use as well as a powerful way to view and isolate images. On any screen in any of the modules you can press the *L* key. The display will dim showing only the selected image or thumbnail. This works for a selection of images or thumbnails as well for an individual image.

The amount of the initial dimming can be set in the Preferences menu. I like to use 50% for the initial dimming as I can still see, and use, Lightrooms other tools.

Press *L* again and it will dim right down and just leave the selected image. Keep pressing *L* to cycle through all the *Lights Out* modes.
USE TYPOGRAPHIC FRACTIONS FOR EXPOSURE

It is worth turning on *Use Typographic Fractions* which can be found under *Tweaks* the in the *Interface* section of Lightrooms *Preferences*.

This ensures that the exposure information is shown as an easy to read fraction, which is more usual, rather than 1/125 as below.

![Exposure metadata box with fractions turned off](image)

Below is the same metadata box with the fractions option turned on.

![Exposure metadata box with fractions turned on](image)

It's a matter of preference of course, but useful to have this option.
I shoot in RAW as I want to ensure I can always return later to the original untouched version of an image as well as alter the white balance if necessary.

This is good practice, but there are some good reasons why you may want to shoot both a JPEG and RAW for each image. I set the camera to generate a large (100%) JPEG.

**Why?**

Because often the JPEG is good enough and I can avoid much post processing. In addition I still have the RAW image if needed.

Imported RAW files can lack contrast. It is helpful to see a JPEG which will look same as the original preview on the back of the camera.

It can be difficult to exactly duplicate the cameras JPEG settings on an imported RAW file. So having the JPEG allows you to match it if you need to.

**So what's the Tip?**

Lightrooms default setting is to ignore additional JPEGs which are stored in the same folder as the RAW files. You will have to import them manually unless you select the preference option to *Treat JPEG files next to raw files as separate photos*.

This approach can use up much space on your storage card but that is the tradeoff for less post processing.
DELETE OLD BACKUPS TO SAVE GBITS OF DISK SPACE

I like to backup my Lightroom library regularly.

The backup Catalog Setting, which can be found under the File menu in Lightroom prompts me to backup once a week when I launch Lightroom to backup my Lightroom Library.

![Lightroom's automatic Backups dialog]

It’s a good idea to have this reminder, and to do the backup, but if you have been doing so over many months, then a considerable amount of disk space will be taken up with backups.

I checked my `/Lightroom/Backups/` folder recently. There were over 5 GB of backups!

![Lightroom Backups folder, many old backups!]

You have to delete the backups manually so make sure you leave the last couple in place.

Worth doing if you are short of disk space!
TOGGLE THE LIGHTROOM TOOLBAR

I was working in the Library Module the other day and I could not remember how to change the size of the thumbnails in the Library Grid view. Cycling through the views by pressing the J key switches between three fixed thumbnail views but does not let you make other alterations to thumbnail size.

I knew it could be done, but how?

The answer was to press the T key.

Pressing T in any of Lightrooms' modules will bring up a module specific toolbar. Below is the toolbar for the Library Module.

Lightroom remembers if the tool bar is on or off for each module so it is easy to turn it off and forget all about it.

In addition the little downward facing triangle at the end of the toolbar allows you to turn on and off the individual tools available for each toolbar.
USE LIGHTROOMS FULL SET OF QUICK DEVELOP TOOLS

When you are working in the Library Module using quick develop, make sure you toggle the little black triangles on the right hand side of the Quick Develop box. The default mode only shows you Tone Control, Exposure, Clarity and Vibrance.

Click the little black triangle, next to the Tone Control item, and the rest of the settings will appear for you to be able to quickly modify an image whilst staying in the Library Module.

Try clicking the other triangles. Controls will appear for additional white balance and other preset settings.

This is a somewhat obvious Tip but I had forgotten that I could access these adjustments from the Library Module.
TURN OFF AUTO HIDE AND SHOW

In Lightrooms default mode the interface is set to *Auto Hide and Show* the side panels.

If your mouse touches the side, top or bottom of the screen then the panel will appear and cover up part of your working area. I find this very distracting.

Try turning off *Auto Hide and Show* and setting it to *Manual* as follows.

You should see a small triangular dotted icon at the side of the panel. This indicates ‘Auto Hide and Show’ is active.

Right click on this icon and select ‘Manual’

Now you can move you mouse to the edge of the screen without problems. When you want the side panels to appear just click on the now solid icon.
LIGHTROOM SYNCHRONIZE FOLDERS OPTION

Lightroom now has a fully functional and working synchronize folders ability. Versions before 1.2 lacked this and it was very time consuming to have to manually add new images to the folder structure.

Now all you have to do is highlight the folder you want to synchronize, right click and select Synchronize Folder. This can be done at any level within the folder hierarchy.

After the scan starts you get a dialog box which will then allow you to set options. See below.

Once the scan has finished you get an import dialog box which will allow you to set metadata and key words, etc.
QUICK KEYWORD ENTRY USING THE ALT KEY

Lightroom shows keywords as sets which can be customized, as in the set of Rivers keywords below.

A quick way to apply one of the keywords in the set to a single image, or selection of images, is to hold down the Alt key. The numbers 1 to 9 will appear in front of each keyword in the set.

Holding down Alt and pressing one of the numbers from 1 to 9 will apply the keyword to whatever images you have selected. Depending on your method of working this can be much quicker than clicking on the individual keyword with the mouse.

Note this only works in the Library module as that is where you enter keywords. Pressing Alt in Develop will let you reset the individual develop tool sliders.
USE VIRTUAL COPIES TO AVOID DUPLICATING IMAGES

Lightrooms Virtual copy capability is really powerful. If you want to produce image variations, say black and white or a toned versions, you can do this without duplicating the original file and wasted disk space.

Just right click on the thumbnail and select Create Virtual Copy. You can do this from the Photo main menu item as well.

The virtual copy is identified with a small page-turn icon in the bottom left hand corner of the thumbnail.

Lightroom will automatically put a new virtual copy into a stack with the original image.

You can now select the virtual copy and edit away whilst keeping your original intact. This is great for making black and whites an other variations.
LIGHTROOM MULTIPLE IMAGE DUST SPOT REMOVAL

Lightroom has useful clone tool which can be used to remove dust spots caused by small particles on the cameras sensor. This can be time consuming, especially if you have many images to clean up.

You can use Lightrooms Copy function in the Develop Module to semi-automate the removal of sensor dust spots from multiple images. Note this works best with similar images, such as those taken for blended or HDR shots exposures. It is also better with shots which have similar proportions of sky and mid or foreground.

Here is what you do.

Select the images you want to clean up. Ideally group them together in a stack as you will want to move between each one in turn using the left or right arrow key.

In the example, left, I have selected two images which have a large amount of sky and have a series of dust spots which I have cloned out, shown by the circles.

Once you have finished cloning click on the Copy button and the dialog above will open.

- Select Spot Removal as shown and close the dialog box by clicking Copy.
- Then move to the next photo using the left or right arrow.
- Finally click the Paste button and the same clone edits will be applied to the new image.

This works because the sensor dust spots are in the same position on each image.

Take care in case a portion of the foreground is unintentionally corrected.
KEEPING LIGHTROOMS WHITE BALANCE TOOL ACTIVE

Pressing the $W$ key in Lightroom whilst in either the Library or the Develop Module will switch to the Develop Module and make active the White Balance Tool.

You can then move the Eye dropper over the image to set a white (grey) point. Once set the white balance the Eye dropper disappears.

If you want to redo the white balance you have to repeatedly press the $W$ key. That is unless you have unchecked the Auto Dismiss Box on the Toolbar. You also need to make sure the Toolbar is active by toggling the $T$ key.
QUICKLY SWITCH BETWEEN COLOR AND GREYSCALE

If you want to take a very quick look to see if an image works in black & white just select the image and press the V key. You can then quickly toggle back and forth and between color and grayscale. There is a menu item to do the same under the Settings menu.

The V key works in both the Develop and Library Module. It also works in the Grid mode of the Library Module. Where this really becomes very useful is when you select a set of images in the Library Module and can instantly see which will work well in grayscale.
BEFORE & AFTER EDITING TRICKS

Lightroom has a very useful Before/After function, the \ key, which allows you to switch back and forth in the Develop Module between the original, and the edited image.

The default behavior of Before/After is to switch between the current state and the unedited image. What you may not know is that you can choose which individual Lightroom history state you want to switch between!

There are many other Before/After views available from the Toolbar, including top-bottom, left-right splits plus the same views but with a split-screen.

So how do you select intermediate states?

If you right-click on any of the History states you will see a menu and you can select Copy History Step Settings to Before, as shown below. This allows you to switch back and forth between an intermediate editing state.

This is particularly useful when you are working on black and white image conversions. If you use the default you will switch back and forward between a color and a black and white image.

You can set the Before/After point to switch between the Convert to Grayscale State and your current edit. Much more useful. Especially for black & white work.
CYCLE THROUGH LIGHTROOMS CROP OVERLAYS

The crop tool in Lightroom has some interesting overlays which are worth exploring. These overlays can be used to crop and position image elements in the frame to aid composition. As well as the usual grid there are a number of other overlays which can be cycled through. Type R from anywhere in Lightroom and you will be taken to the Develop Module and placed into the Grid mode. Now cycle through the available overlays using the O key. The available overlays are:

Lightroom will remember your last overlay selection.
RESET INDIVIDUAL DEVELOP TOOLS AND SETTINGS

If you use Lightroom a lot then you can easily overlook some of the easy workflow shortcuts. I often find myself using the main reset button, at the bottom right of the Develop Panel, even when I only want to undo the last adjustment. I then have to repeat the whole develop process.

There is a much more flexible way.

You hold down the *alt* key whilst clicking the tool name. In the example below the tool name changes from 'Tone' to 'Reset Tone'. Now only this individual adjustment is reset.

Lightroom allows you to change the default settings for how Camera Raw converts specific file types and camera models.

After you have made changes to the sliders in the Develop Module you hold down the *alt* key whilst clicking the Reset button (bottom left). The Reset button changes to *Set Default*...

Depending on the selected image type, and camera, you will get a dialog which allows you update the current settings. They then become the default for that image and camera combination.

You can restore the default Adobe settings for an individual image and camera by using the same dialog box.
VISUAL SHARPENING MASK

Lightroom has new sharpening functionality which means that a round trip to Photoshop is now not often required.

The all new sharpening tools can be found under the Detail section of the Develop Module. They apply sharpening and noise reduction to the image file post capture and are not intended for final print sharpening, which is performed from within the Print Module or Photoshop.

Lightrooms new Detail Sharpening Tool now has a number significant changes. The old dialog box just had a sharpening Amount slider plus the Luminance and Color noise sliders.

The new one has:

- A warning triangle which appears if you are working with a zoom less than 1:1. Sharpening is best done at 1:1 or greater zoom and clicking on the warning triangle will auto zoom the image for you.
- Radius control; similar to the pixel Radius setting in Photoshops Unsharp Mask.
- A Detail slider which is great for improving the sharpening of high frequency details such as foliage. Reduce the amount of Detail sharpening to avoid over-sharpening grass for example.
- Masking slider similar to the Threshold Photoshop slider.

The new sharpening tool is very powerful but what I find very useful is the visual response you get when you hold down the Alt key whilst using the Masking Slider. A threshold view of the image is shown which details exactly where the sharpening will be applied. The white edge areas are the ones which will be sharpened in the example on the right.
CHAPTER 2
LIGHTROOM DEVELOP MODULE TIPS

SPLIT SCREEN GRAYSCALE CONVERSION

Lightroom has a very powerful grayscale conversion tool which allows you to adjust the color sliders just as if you were applying different amount of color filtration to a black and white image.

If you use the Develop Modules before and after split view it becomes much easier, and more effective to make slider adjustments.

Once you convert the image to grayscale you can then see both the original color image and the converted grayscale.

Now suppose you want to darken the blue sky it becomes much easier to see the effect with both views in screen.

The color side of the viewer shows that the foreground is best lightened using the Orange slider and you can see the effect whilst keeping the original color image in view.

Very powerful.
THE TARGETED ADJUSTMENT TOOL

There is a very powerful new tool in Lightroom called the Targeted Adjustment Tool which offers incredible control over color and grayscale correction.

It is started by clicking on a small circular icon in the top left hand corner of the curves box in the Develop module. Note that the same tool is also available for HSL / Color / Grayscale adjustments.

It is simple to use:

- You decide what you want to adjust in the Photo, say the Tone Curve as shown above;
- Select the Targeted Adjustment Tool. Notice the cursor changes to a cross with the tool icon slightly below and to the right of it;
- Select a part of the image with the color range that you want to adjust;
- Hold down the left mouse button whilst moving the mouse up and down.

As you do this, in the Tone Curve example, you will see that the curve has a point on it which is representative of the color range you are interested in. When you move the mouse you are then selecting and adjusting only the required part of the curve.

You are able to easily fine tune the mid-tones or the shadows as well as a host of other image adjustments which would require much guesswork, and experience, to be sure of picking the right point on the curve.
CLONE TOOL OPTIONS

The Clone Tool in the Develop Module has much flexibility. It is very quick and easy to click on a dust spot and remove it. The tool makes a very good guess at the texture and color that you are repairing and selects an area adjacent which it thinks will give the best result.

This is how Photoshop does it as well. The difference is that Photoshop does not show you the area from which is selecting the new texture.

In the picture below the red circle is the area being repaired and the green circle is the area selected to provide the repair.

What you may not have noticed is that you can select the green circle and change both its position and size to obtain a better result. This can be done with either the mouse or through the keyboard arrow keys. *Shift arrow* is a course move and *control arrow* is a fine move.

On a Mac use *command arrow* to change the size of the tool.
HOW TO CHANGE THE DEFAULT BACKUP LOCATION

It is not obvious how to change the default backup location, say to an external drive. The default backups are kept in:

/Pictures/Lightroom\Backups \(\text{(Mac)}\)
/My Documents\My Pictures\Lightroom\Backups \(\text{(PC)}\).

You cannot change this location directly by a Preference or Options setting. You have to do it through the Scheduled Backup dialog box which will pop up when it is time for your next backup.

To force it to open sooner and make the location change do the following.

1. Open Lightroom and select Catalog Settings from the File menu
2. Select *Every time Lightroom starts* from the backup section
3. Restart Lightroom
4. When the Back Up Catalog box opens you can then set a new location for the backup folder.

This allows you to backup to any drive, internal or external, even an USB key drive or iPod.
CONTEXT SENSITIVE POPUP LIGHTROOM HELP

If you want a quick display of the key commands in any of Lightroom's Modules press command //.

This will bring up an overlay screen with all the key combinations for the currently selected Module.

Above is the overlay for the Library Module.

To clear the help screen just click on it.
KEEP YOUR USER PRINT PRESETS UPDATED

If you use Lightrooms *Print Presets* feature you will have seen that you can add your own presets using the *Add* button under the template browser; in the example below I have added a preset for the UK A3+ paper size.

You need to be aware that if you make further changes to any of the print options associated with your new user preset they will not be automatically saved.

To keep your user preset in synch with any changes you make to the print settings you have to 'right-click' on the preset name and select *Update With Current Settings*. Note this only works with user presets and not the built in Lightroom presets.

I spent much wasted effort, paper and inks until I worked this one out!
USE A LOCAL PRINTER TO AVOID PROFILE PROBLEMS

If you are having problems printing from Lightroom make sure you connect your printer directly to your PC or Mac.

I had all but given up with Lightroom printing and had reverted to using Photoshop CS3.

Whenever I used Lightroom with Epson profiles, or any other custom profile, I always obtained bad results; the images were almost black in places.

The only way I could get an acceptable print was to let Lightroom use the Epson built in printer driver rather than a profile.

The problem turned out to be that my printer was connected to a network server rather than directly to my Mac. i.e. the custom profiles are not on the network server so it defaults to the standard Epson driver or something else on the server.

I have now have my printer connected directly to my Mac and guess what, great prints from custom profiles.
**USING CUSTOM TEXT IN SLIDESHOW MODULE**

In the Slideshow Module press T to bring up the Toolbar and select the ABC button. This will allow you to enter a variety of text information which can be displayed as the slideshow plays. Depending on your choices you can display a custom text string about you, or your company, image numbering, image name or a selection EXIF or IPTC data.

The Edit selection from the drop-down dialog box allows you to build up any combinations of the above. You can have as many of these text boxes as you like and they can be positioned anywhere in the frame or image surround.

I like to place a Caption text field in the lower right which changes as the individual images are viewed.