

DxO PhotoLab

Tom Niemann, ePaperPress.com

This short document contains some nuggets of information you may find useful. Be sure to purchase the Elite version of PhotoLab. If you purchased Essentials you can easily upgrade for the difference in price. I also recommend two add-ons: **ViewPoint** and the **Elite** version of **FilmPack**. Note that **FilmPack** contains **Creative Vignetting** but the **Elite** version allows you to designate the center of the vignette.

Palettes

Click on Palettes (top menu bar) and you can create your own palettes to fill with tools of your choice. Just drag & drop. Here is an example where five user-defined Palettes are shown along with the tools they contain.

Exposure

Exposure Compensation
DxO Smart Lighting
Selective tone
Contrast
Tone curve

Colors

RGB white balance
Color accentuation
Style – Toning
Channel Mixer for black and white

Sharpening

Noise Reduction – RAW
DxO ClearView Plus
Contrast
Unsharp Mask

Automatic

Lens Sharpness
Chromatic aberration
Vignetting
Distortion
Color Rendering

Misc

Horizon
Perspective
Volume deformation
Creative Vignetting
Blur
Red eye
Repair
Crop

These five palettes fill the right column on my screen and include some tools from ViewPoint and FilmPack. Note that **Contrast** appears under both **Exposure** and **Sharpening**. That's because the sliders for Microcontrast and Fine Contrast sharpens images while the remaining sliders control contrast. The left column of the screen includes the **Preset Editor**, **EXIF**, and **Histogram** palettes.

The tools under **Automatic** are preset to values calibrated by DxO and are typically not changed unless you are working with a camera/lens that has not been calibrated. In fact I hide this palette.

Presets

Under **Customize > Palettes** choose **Preset Editor**.

To create a preset choose **1 – DxO Standard**, in the Preset Editor, for a clean slate. Make changes to your image. Then right-click on the image and choose **Create preset from current settings**. After you save the preset you can apply it to any image. Either double-click on the preset or choose the **Apply** button. The preset remembers all local/global adjustments and whether or not each tool is enabled. To process several images select the images and then run the preset.

To keep things orderly I suggest the following. In the Preset Editor right-click and choose **New preset folder**. Name your folder **0 – Personal** so it will appear at the top of the list. Place all your presets in this folder.

In my personal folder I created a preset called **1 - Initialize** that contains the following tools:

- **Noise reduction: PRIME**
- **Crop: Manual, Unconstrained**

To execute this preset automatically for new images choose **Edit > Preferences, General tab, Correction settings** and specify **1 – Initialize** for both Raw and RGB images.

Adjusting Exposure

There are several tools for this: **Exposure Compensation**, **Smart Lighting**, **Selective Tone**, **Contrast**, and the **Tone curve**. When I first started using PhotoLab I tried adjusting exposure using the sliders in **Selective Tone**. To my dismay they were too broad. Adjusting Highlights also adjusted Midtones!

As an experiment find an image with blown highlights. Open the **Histogram** and adjust highlights with the **Highlights** slider in the **Selective tone** tool. Reset it, then adjust highlights with the Intensity slider in the **Smart Lighting** tool. The **Selective tone** tool rescues highlights but modifies midtones. **Smart Lighting** rescues highlights without affecting midtones.

A good strategy is to use **Exposure Compensation** to get midtones reasonably correct. Then invoke **Smart Lighting** to retrieve blown highlights and unblock shadows. Once that is done you can use tools such as **Selective Tone** and the **Tone curve** to fine-tune these areas.

Alternatively use **Exposure Compensation** to shift the histogram to the left so there are no blown highlights. Then raise the Shadows in **Selective Tone**, and increase contrast using the Contrast sliders in the **Contrast** tool. This tool applies an [S-shaped curve](#), as found in the **Tone curve**, with the added benefit that you can control the strength with a slider.

When I first started using PhotoLab I was astounded at the [improvement](#) over results obtained from Adobe Photoshop. And this was without making any adjustments in PhotoLab. You may just find, as I did, that there's little else to do.

Local Edits

- Rotate mouse wheel to zoom
- Press spacebar and drag to another location
- Move cursor outside image to view effect of Local edits
- Shift-click or Control click on the left side of the **Equalizer** so all tools appear at once

Resets

- double-click on a slider in the **Equalizer** to reset the slider
- click on the circular arrow on the right side of the **Equalizer** to reset all sliders
- click on the **Reset** button in the **Radial Menu** to delete all local adjustments in the image

Moving the Equalizer

For the **Brush** and **Auto Mask** tools the **Equalizer** sometimes gets in the way. Here is a work-around.

- start by placing a small mark in another location
- choose Alt and draw to erase the mark
- continue to draw in the desired location

Compare

To see the difference local adjustments make, enable **Local adjustments** (top of screen), click on the **Compare** options and choose

- **All corrections except Local adjustments**: to see the effect of local adjustments only
- **No corrections with Geometry**: to see the effect of all adjustments

Then click **Compare**, **Split Preview**, or **Full Screen Viewer**. For full screen the controls are at the bottom of the screen. Press ESC to exit the comparison.

Miscellaneous

The bottom of the screen contains the **Image Browser**. Ctrl-U will undock the browser and you can place it anywhere you wish. Got an extra monitor?