

Getting Started with Camera Raw

Can your camera shoot in RAW? If so you paid good money for that feature. Come to this workshop to learn to unleash its power. Shoot for and process your pictures in RAW for increased control of your images. Think of RAW as a digital negative, the camera does not process it at all. When you shoot in jpg you allow your camera to decide how the image is processed. Some people think a jpg image is what the camera really saw and therefore represents "pure photography." Not true, it is just what the camera manufacturer programmed into the camera to make a nice picture most of the time. The fact you can influence how the jpg will look (sepia, vivid color, black & white, etc.) indicates that jpg is not a pure image. Some people think you have to use the full Photoshop CS series to use Adobe's Camera Raw program. Not true, it works perfectly with Elements, too!

You take great images and they are improving all the time. Now take the next step to unleash the power of RAW! You will be surprised at the ease of the process of the results you can achieve.

Shooting in RAW lets you recover from mistakes you might make at the time you press the shutter button.

Wrong White Balance



White Balance incorrectly set to incandescent

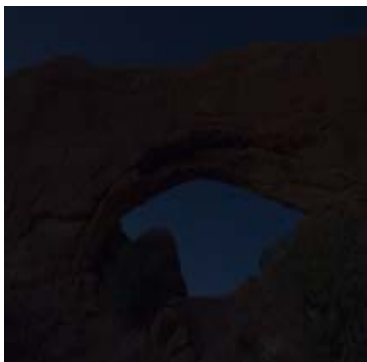


White Balance corrected in Camera Raw to Daylight.

Recently I pushed the wrong camera button and accidentally changed the white balance to incandescent. Far left is the jpg picture that was the result of this error. Luckily, I shot the picture in RAW format. To the right of the incandescent image is the image after about 30 seconds of processing in Adobe Camera Raw.

Exposure

More often than I would like to admit I miss the exposure.



Exposure much too short. This is the jpg image.



Exposure correct in Camera Raw by adding 2 stops of light.

Your once in a life time trip could be ruined by exposure problems. You can recover **SOME** exposure mistakes by shooting in RAW.

If you were shoot only jpg, highlights and shadows could help a little. But you could not recover all of this shadow detail.

If you this image using only jpg, you could never recover the lost highlight detail. Adjustments would just make the blown out areas appear gray rather than white.



Image as shot. Exposure was much too long.



Image from Raw capture after adjusting the exposure.

Dynamic Range

Another huge benefit of shooting in RAW is the ability to increase dynamic range.

JPG is produced by the camera

JPG after processing with Camera Raw and Photoshop.

Camera Raw was used to make the colors brighter. Also, two layers were made with one layer brighter than the other. The darker background was used with the brighter colored bird.



If you look very carefully, you can see that there is more detail in the birds wings. Often the difference between a good image and a better image is very subtle.



Dappled light in a forest is always a problem because the range of brightness exceeds the limits of a camera. The left image has burned out areas—no detail in the white areas. Using camera raw, the right image retained detail in all areas of the image. Both images need to be seen full size to fully appreciate the difference.



If a picture is worth keeping, it is worth spending a little time to optimize the image. The RAW image format gives the best and usually the quickest way to do the optimization.

Resources

<http://tv.adobe.com/watch/visual-design/whats-a-camera-raw-image/>

Gabriel Powell introduces you to the Camera Raw feature.

This tutorial is taken from Adobe Photoshop CS4 Learn by Video

<http://www.adobe.com/digitalimag/tips/phs7rbrawbasics/index.html>

Camera Raw basics

Learn the advantages of working with raw camera files and

Adobe® Photoshop® Camera Raw plug-in.

Russell Brown shows you how to open and

process raw files from certain digital cameras.

http://www.northlight-images.co.uk/article_pages/why_use_raw.html

The RAW digital image format - Why you should consider using your camera's raw format

BOOKS

Real World Camera Raw with Adobe Photoshop CS4 ~ Bruce Fraser, Jeff Schewe

Camera RAW 101: Better Photos with Photoshop, Elements, and Lightroom by Jon Canfield

Getting Started with Camera Raw: How to make better pictures using Photoshop and Photoshop Elements (2nd Edition) by Ben Long

RAW files may be viewed on a PC by downloading the free IrfanView and IrfanView Plugins from:

<http://www.irfanview.com/>

When you want to just view a raw file, right click on the file then select **open with IrfanView** from the list of programs. I have not found a free viewer for Apple computers.

Pictures and words by Ron Addison