

# A General Image Editing Workflow

There are many different ideas as to what steps are required for editing images and in what order they should be carried out .

This document is not intended to be definitive and there is no reason why one should not experiment with adding, removing and generally shifting the stages around as long as this is done prudently. What it is intended to be is a simple starting point on which one can build with experience.

With each step is a short description of what it involves and it should be used with reference to your image editing program's manual.

*Defining Highlight and Shadow*

**Step 1: Setting the Black and White Points.**

To maximise the range of shades within an image it is necessary to define which parts of the image are white and which are black.

*Adjusting Curves*

**Step 2: Setting the Relative Levels of Light and Dark.**

Can be done in 'Levels' by adjusting the Gamma (middle) slider. The 'Curves' adjustment is more versatile but more difficult to use well. The image can be lightened or darkened without moving the black and white points.

*Colour Correction Overall/Selective*

**Step 3: Adjusting the Image Colours.**

Any overall colour casts need to be removed and any individual colours changed as necessary.

*Specific edits*

**Step 4: Individual Image Edits.**

Including spot and dust removal, removal or repositioning of items within the image, red-eye correction etc.

*Size adjustments*

**Step 5: Ensuring the Image is the Right Size.**

The correct size of an image is defined by its use. Size has three parameters, width and height, number of pixels and number of pixels per unit of measurement. The three are all inter-dependant and knowing any two allows the calculation of the third.

The size of an image needs to relate to its use, an image for printing will normally be much bigger than one intended for screen use.

*Sharpening (Unsharp Mask)*

**Step 6: Sharpening.**

The clarity of an image may be improved by sharpening using one or more of the several methods available. This should normally be done as the last editing step.

*Output Image (file type)*

**Step 7: Saving the Image as the Right Sort of File.**

If an image is to be re-saved as is often the case during editing, it is important to use a file type which does not damage the image on saving. Saving as JPEG will damage the image so should only be used as a last resort. Use TIFF and PSD (PhotoShop's own file type) during editing.