

Adobe Studio on Photoshop CS2

Use the raw power of Camera Raw

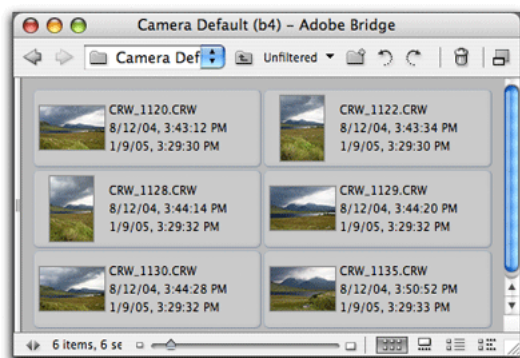
With Adobe Camera Raw 3.0, you're no longer limited to editing images one at a time. Instead, you can select multiple images in Bridge, and load them all into Adobe Camera Raw for editing. The Camera Raw plug-in is hosted by Bridge, so you can continue to work in Photoshop while Camera Raw processes your images. Camera Raw's new Auto default settings provide an excellent starting point for each image, but you can quickly and easily fine-tune them to get the best from your raw images.

When you make edits in Camera Raw, you aren't editing pixels as you would in Photoshop. Instead, you're tailoring the conversion from the raw file to a color image, allowing you to do things that you simply can't do after the fact in Photoshop. The work you do in Camera Raw lets you get the best quality from your raw images, and leaves you less work to do in Photoshop.

Here's how you can edit images quickly and effectively in Camera Raw.

Select thumbnails to edit

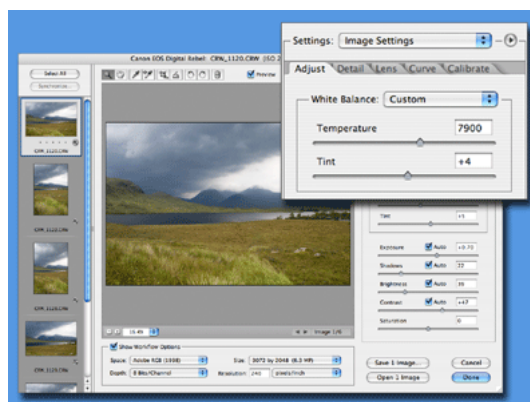
Select the thumbnails of the raw images you wish to edit in Bridge by clicking their thumbnails. You can be especially productive by choosing a series of images that need similar edits. Shift-click to create a contiguous selection, or Command/Ctrl click to select discontinuous thumbnails. Then choose File > Open in Camera Raw.



Select thumbnails in Adobe Bridge.

Edit the images

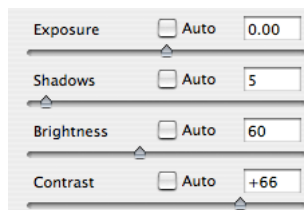
Now you're ready to edit the images. Start with the white balance controls: Temperature controls the blue/yellow balance, Tint controls the magenta-green balance. For accurate white balance, you can click the white balance tool on a light gray or diffuse white area in the image, but for more creative control, use the sliders. In this case, I warmed the images a little by increasing the temperature value.



Adjust the white balance using the Temperature and Tone sliders.

Shape the overall tonality

The four tone controls, Exposure, Shadows, Brightness, and Contrast, let you shape the overall tonality of the image. Exposure and Shadows set the white and black points, respectively, Brightness adjusts the midtone, and Contrast increases contrast around the midtone set by Brightness. Together, the four controls let you apply a five-point curve to the image to shape the overall tonality.



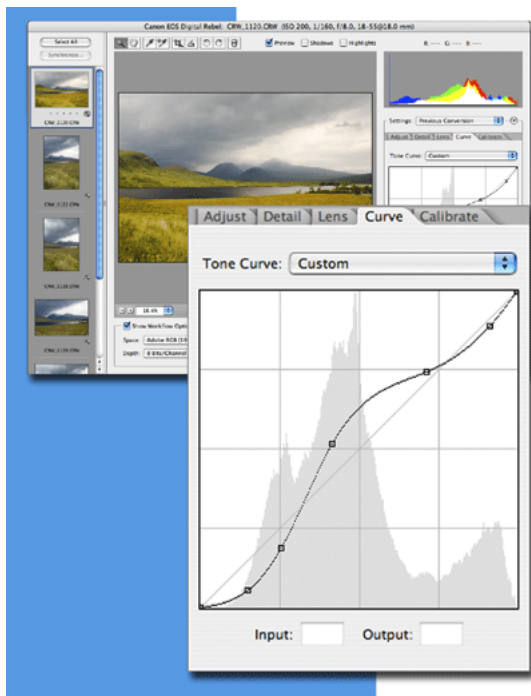
The four tone controls

Start with Exposure. You can check for highlight clipping by holding down the Option/Alt key as you move the slider. Then do the same for Shadows—the clipping display works here, too. Then adjust the Brightness and Contrast sliders to produce the overall tonality you want.

In this case, I wanted to hold more detail in the skies and brighten the foreground, so I reduced the Exposure and Shadows values from their defaults, and increased the Brightness and Contrast.

Fine-tune the tonality

Fine-tune the tonality with the Curve tab in Camera Raw. To find where on the curve a point in the image lies, hold down the Command/Ctrl key as you mouse over the image—a small white circle appears on the curve, indicating the values under the cursor. To place a point on the curve, Command/Ctrl-click. You can move the selected curve point either by dragging or by using the up, down, left, and right arrow keys.

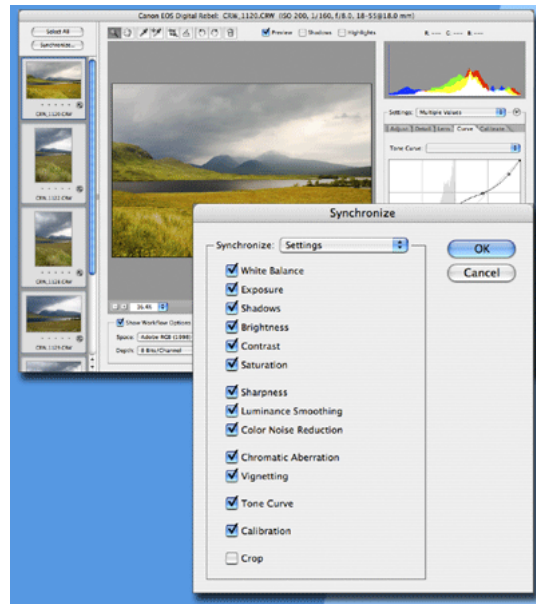


Use the Curve tab to fine-tune the adjustments you made on the Adjust tab

The Curve works best as a fine-tuning tool, because it operates on the results of the adjustments you make in the Adjust tab. You'll obtain smoother gradations, with less risk of posterization, if you use the controls in the Adjust tab to do the initial tonal shaping than if you try to do everything using the Curve tab.

Apply edits to other images

Apply the edits to the other images. Click Select All, and then click Synchronize. The Synchronize dialog box lets you choose which settings to apply to the other images and then click Synchronize. The Synchronize dialog box lets you choose which settings to apply to the other images if you want to skip the dialog box and apply all the settings, hold down Option/Alt when you click the Synchronize button. Camera Raw then updates the thumbnails to reflect the new settings for the other images, and writes the new settings to the Camera Raw database, or to xmp sidecar files in the same folder as the images, depending on the settings you've chosen in Camera Raw Preferences. These settings will be used whenever you open the images in future.



Use the Synchronize dialog box to apply settings to other images

Once you've applied the settings, Camera Raw offers you several choices for workflow flexibility. You can click Done to return to Bridge, click Open x Images to open the images in Photoshop, or click Save x Images to save the raw images in the DNG format, which includes the Camera Raw settings and hence does not require xmp sidecar files.

Written by Bruce Fraser for the "Adobe Creative Suite 2 Design Guide" © 2005 Adobe Systems Incorporated. All rights reserved.

Bruce Fraser is a San Francisco-based writer, teacher and consultant. Fraser is author of "Real World Camera Raw with Adobe Photoshop CS" and co-author of the "Real World Photoshop" and "Real World Color Management" series. For information on books from Adobe Press, visit www.adobe.com.

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