

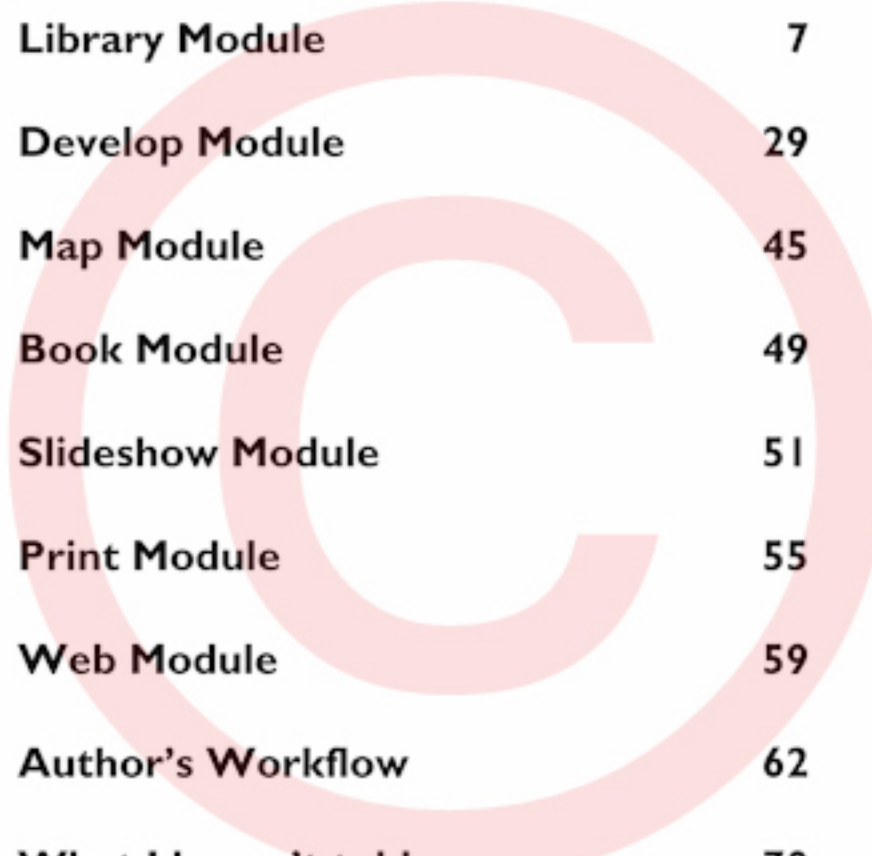
# Lightroom for Aviation Photographers

Organize and develop your photos like a pro!

*for Lightroom 4*



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### What is Lightroom?

Adobe Photoshop Lightroom, as it is officially named, is a workflow tool for digital photographers. Workflow is a defined series of tasks needed to produce a final outcome. The aim of a workflow is to increase efficiency when it comes to carrying out the necessary steps to complete a task. Built in a modular layout, Lightroom comes to your aid by providing a single interface to manage your photos in a lot of ways. It will assist you in sorting, selecting, deleting and developing photos, after which you can print single images or custom-made image layouts, create slideshows and even complete websites!

### Lightroom vs Photoshop

The most frequently asked question about Lightroom probably is how it differs from Photoshop. Although Lightroom is officially called Photoshop Lightroom, it is totally different from Photoshop. Photoshop is meant for detailed pixel-level editing and compositing, whereas Lightroom is a complete workflow tool. Photoshop is a graphics editing program, in which you open a photo, edit it, save the photo and close it. It is very good at what it does, but before Lightroom was introduced many photographers were missing something. In Lightroom you create a catalog containing all your images, which can then be compared, keyworded, labeled, processed, rated, renamed, viewed, etcetera. Unlike Photoshop, Lightroom was designed for photographers from the ground up.

Lightroom's image development tools are based on Photoshop's Camera Raw plugin (the dialog that appears when you open a Raw image in Photoshop), in which you can make overall adjustments like brightness,

contrast, saturation, image sharpening, noise reduction, straightening a horizon, cropping an image and removing dust spots or blemishes. By using Lightroom you can reduce your time spent in Photoshop with up to 90%. You will only need Photoshop to work with layers, masks, complex selections, paint and text tools. You can always export an image from Lightroom into Photoshop with just one press on the button.

### Non-destructive editing

A very important aspect about Lightroom is that all changes you make to an image are non-destructive. There is no possibility to ruin an image forever, even if you try it on purpose, because the original photo always remains untouched. If you open a JPEG image in Photoshop, convert it to black and white and save it, you will never be able to get the color back (unless you have a backup image). With Lightroom all image data is saved inside the program and you will only see adjustments you made to an image when browsing your photos in Lightroom or when you create a copy of the image during export. No matter what you do, you can always return to the image in its original state.

### Presets & Templates

Besides being fun, working in Lightroom is all about efficiency and time-management. You will save yourself lots of time by using presets and templates, which are available for a wide variety of functions and can be applied to as many images at once as you like. Amongst others you can let Lightroom import, rename, develop, watermark and export your photos, add metadata or create slideshows, print layouts and web galleries almost automatically while still maintaining full control.

### Catalog

The catalog is the file that contains all the information about your images in Lightroom. When you install Lightroom, a catalog is created for you. You can find your catalog's location by going to Edit > Catalog Settings > General. It is generally best to store your catalog on the same hard drive as your photos, especially if the photos are on an external storage device. Lightroom may otherwise experience difficulties finding your photos when you unplug an external device. Of course you can always find them back in a minute or so, but if you have to do this every-time on startup, it is something you may want to avoid.

You can create as many catalogs as you like, but the more catalogs you have, the more time you will need to switch between them instead of just working on your photos. I have one catalog for my aviation photos and another one for all other photos (family, holidays, nature, etc), which works great.

When you start up Lightroom, the last used catalog is automatically opened. If you want to switch to another catalog, hold the Ctrl key during startup or go to File > Open Catalog or File > Open Recent.

### Backups

Every once in a while Lightroom will ask you to back up the catalog. Please note that this will only backup the catalog file, not your actual photos! If something happens to your catalog, you need the backup file to get everything running again. All image data changed after the latest backup date will then be lost, so don't forget to backup your catalog frequently (at least once a week).



The Library module offers four different view modes:

- Grid View {G}
- Loupe View {E}
- Compare View {C}
- Survey View {N}

Each view mode can be activated through its own unique shortcut or by pressing one of the view mode icons at the left side of the toolbar {T}.

### Grid View

Grid View, where your photos are displayed as thumbnails, is the foundation of the Library module. Here is where you can quickly scan, rate, flag, group, remove and organize your images. Multiple images can be selected by holding the Ctrl button and clicking (one by one) or holding the Shift button (a sequence).

### Loupe View

From Grid View it is only a small step to Loupe View. Just select a photo and double-click it or hit Enter and you will see a large photo in Loupe View. The Navigator panel on the left shows the different zoom levels. Click the image to show it in 1:1 view (where you see the actual pixels), so you can better assess photo quality and especially sharpness. FIT and 1:1 are the zoom levels you will mostly be using, but other zoom levels can be selected as well.

### Library View Options

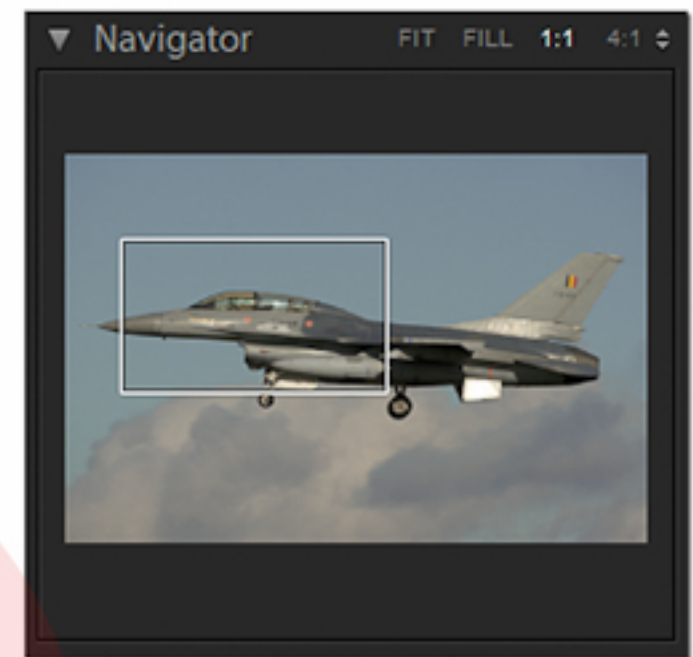
Grid View and Loupe View display several types of information including color labels, dimensions, filename and flag status. To customize what information is displayed go to View > View Options, or hit Ctrl-J. Press I to toggle the information on/off in Loupe View.

### Compare View

Compare View is very useful for deleting 'double' shots. Being aviation photographers we often take multiple photos of a single landing aircraft. I normally only keep one or two of these. Compare View is a great view mode to pick the best shots out of a sequence and delete the others. To activate this view mode, select two or more similar images in Grid View and hit the C button. Two images will be displayed side-by-side and you will notice that one is marked as Select and the other as Candidate. You should regard the Candidate as a candidate to replace the selected photo. To assess which of the shots is sharper, click the selected photo to zoom in to 1:1 view. Then click and drag the image to review different areas of the images, or hold the Shift button to move only one photo. Again, you may find the Navigator panel in the left panel group useful for navigating. So, when you decide which of the two images to delete, hit the reject flag at the left bottom of the image (the crossed flag) and move on to the next image by pressing the right arrow key (if you deleted the Candidate) or the arrow up key (if you rejected the Select). Of course, you can always decide not to delete any photo by not using the reject flag.

### Survey View

Survey View is great when you want to move away from Grid View to look at some photos by themselves. Select as many images as you like from the grid and activate Survey View by hitting the N key. All selected images will show up and you will be able to reduce the selection by hitting the cross (as you hover over a photo) or apply a flag, color label and star rating to your photos. It is a great view mode if you need to select a specific number of



*The Navigator panel displays the zoom level and location of the image shown in the main window. This photo is actually zoomed in at 1:1 (100% pixel view) to the front section of this Belgian F-16.*

photos from a larger selection. One by one you remove the worst photos, and you keep the best ones.

### Keyboard Shortcuts

By using keyboard shortcuts you will save yourself lots of time while browsing your images. Below are a few examples:

- Ctrl+ (plus) or Ctrl-- (minus) will zoom in or out in any view mode.
- In Grid View + (plus) or - (minus) will change the size of your thumbnails.
- I shows an info display on top of your image in Compare and Loupe View.
- L dims the lights around a selected photo, in three stages.
- Ctrl-Enter opens an Impromptu Slideshow.
- Ctrl-A selects all photos.
- Ctrl-D deselects all photos.



The main purpose of the Tone Curve panel is to adjust the amount of contrast in your photo. Unprocessed Raw images typically look a bit flat before you develop them, so the Tone Curve is a very useful and powerful tool to correct this. Lightroom's Tone Curve is very similar to Photoshop's Curves tool. The controls look a bit different, but their functionality is identical. The horizontal axis represents the original tone values of the photo, with dark values on the left and lighter values on the right. The vertical axis represents the output values, with black at the bottom and lighter values progressing to the top. A straight line from the bottom left corner to the top right corner means no adjustments are made because the values on the x-axis are identical to those on the y-axis.

### Regions

The Tone Curve divides your adjustments into four different regions: highlights, lights, darks and shadows. Each region has its own slider and each of them is also displayed on the horizontal axis of the curve graph. You can adjust the contrast in your image

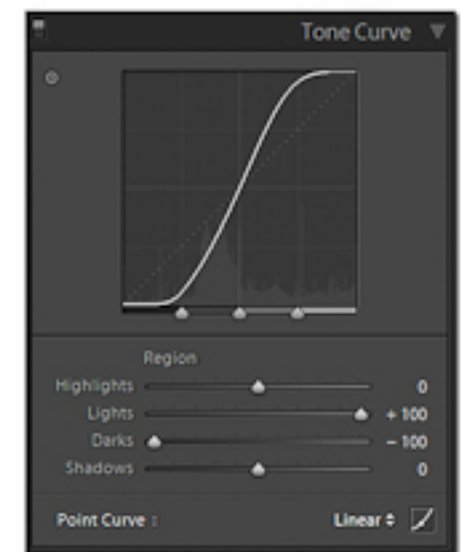
*A simple S-curve brightened up the light parts of the aircraft and darkened the dark background, making the C-130 stand out to the burnt farmland.*



by moving a slider or by clicking a point on the curve and dragging up or down. You will often want to increase the contrast, rather than decrease it. This is done by creating a so-called S-curve. The more you increase the brightness on the highlights/lights and the more you decrease brightness on the darks/shadows, the more the graph will start to look like a (slightly rotated) S. Using the Tone Curve will affect the Histogram. Keep an eye on it to make sure you don't clip any details by adding too much contrast.

### Targeted Adjustment Tool

You can also adjust the Tone Curve by using the Targeted Adjustment Tool in the upper left corner of the Tone Curve panel. If you select it, you can click on any part of the image and drag the mouse up (for brightening a tonal value) or down (for darkening). When you hover over a dark part of the image, darks or shadows will be adjusted. In the same way, highlights or lights will be adjusted when you target a light area of the image. The advantage of using the targeted adjustment tool is that you can hide all panels and you can focus your attention on the image, rather than on the sliders.



*Overexaggerated example of an S-curve. If you compare it to the curve in the image below, you will realize the curve above will probably create a very unrealistic image.*



- This image was cropped and leveled without using any of the panels:*
- 1) Press R to open the Crop Overlay.*
  - 2) Hold Ctrl and draw a line along the horizon to level the image.*
  - 3) Move the corners of the crop overlay to create a nice composition.*
  - 4) Press Enter to finish.*





Photoshop Lightroom is a photo management application developed by Adobe Systems. It was launched in February 2007 and has assisted many thousands of photographers in organizing, editing and viewing their photos ever since.

Lightroom for Aviation Photographers is a book aimed at aviation photographers, both hobbyists and (semi-)professionals, making use of Lightroom as their primary photo management software. Whether you have just started using Lightroom or have done so for several years, this book will provide you with a wealth of information and tips on how to manage your ever-growing collection of aircraft images in Lightroom. The book holds the middle between a step-by-step guide and a theoretical overview of the possibilities inside Lightroom.

Learn how to efficiently keyword your photos by operator, aircraft type and registration number, create smart collections so images are automatically sorted by location, edit your photos and create neat slideshows and the web's best-looking photo galleries. Lightroom does it all and this book will help you master all aspects essential to aviation photography!