

Working with Camera RAW

JPEG vs. Camera RAW

JPEG: Advantages and disadvantages

- Camera makes tonal decisions for you
- Limited to 24-bit
- JPEG files are small
- Fast, no manipulation

Camera RAW: Advantages and disadvantages

- No preprocessing (no sharpening, color or tonal adjustments) just RAW data
- Up to 48-bit
- Photoshop's Camera RAW Filter (or any other RAW filter) is always making a copy of the original RAW file which means it's nondestructive
- Slow, requires individual handling of each file

How to identify RAW from JPEG

By its Extension (keep in mind, Camera RAW extensions are proprietary)

- Canon: .cr2
- Nikon: .nef

Working with RAW Files

1. Open Camera RAW File from Bridge (double click file or command-R)
2. Under the "Basic" adjust tab, select the "White Balance" which best matches your lighting condition ("As Shot" means you don't know the lighting condition and want the camera to decide this for you. "Auto" means you want Camera RAW to make its best guess. Any White Balance preset, however, can always be further customized via the "Temperature" and "Tint" sliders)
3. Make further adjustments to "Exposure," "Recovery" (Highlights), "Fill Light" (Midtones), "Blacks" (Shadows), "Brightness," "Contrast" and "Saturation" if needed. To aid in your adjustments, hold down the *Option* key when dragging the adjustment sliders, this will illustrate where clipping is occurring and reduce the chance of inadvertently deleting pixels.
4. Set your "Color Working Space," "Bit Depth," "Size" and "Resolution."
 - The best general Color Working Space is Adobe RGB (1998)
 - The best general Bit Depth is 8 Bits/Channel
 - Select desired size keeping in mind it's best to up sample or down sample within the Camera RAW Dialog Box, not from within Photoshop
 - Set desired resolution remembering this only modifies print dimensions, not pixel dimensions
5. "Open" button, opens the file within Photoshop
"Save" button allows the file to bypass Photoshop and be saved in a Digital Negative, JPEG, TIFF or Photoshop format.
"Done" button will close Camera RAW dialog box and apply changes to file (you can see the modified file in the Bridge dialog box)
6. To apply the Camera RAW settings to multiple files, control click on the adjusted file within the Bridge dialog box and drop down to "Copy Camera RAW Setting." Select desired files, Control click on anyone of them and drop down to "Paste Camera RAW Settings," click OK.