

Cheat Sheet

This cheatsheet is designed to be a quick reference while processing your images in Lightroom. Print it out and keep it next to your computer to use as a checklist :)

IMPORTING

1. Select your source: this could be your camera, external drive, or your internal drive inside of your computer.

Images available to import from your source will appear in your grid view. If images are “greyed out” and are not selectable, this means that they are already inside of Lightroom - this is very handy!

If Lightroom is mistaken and you KNOW these images haven’t been imported yet, uncheck the “Don’t Import Selected Duplicates” box in the right panel.

2. Adjust your thumbnail size as needed and select the images you want to import. Remember: an image will NOT be imported unless the check box is present in the upper-left corner of the thumbnail.

3. Choose your importing method. Add will simply add the images to your Library and not do anything with the original source files. Copy will add images to your Library AND copy the files to the destination you choose in the right panel. Move will add images to the Library and simultaneously move (not copy) your source files to a new location.

Next, move over to the right panel to customize your import.

4. Under the File Handling panel, select the preview size. For most cases, Standard will suit you fine.

5. If your images are being stored on an external drive, check the Build Smart Previews box so you can process images while disconnected from that drive.

6. Choose a second destination for your source images if you wish make another copy (for example, if you want to place the images onto your computer and back them up to your external drive).

7. File Renaming tab: this is where you can develop your own system to automatically generate a customized file name for your photos. You can also save your new naming system as a preset!

8. Apply During Import tab: This is where you can batch-process your images with any saved develop or metadata presets, and add keywords. You can also save metadata presets for future imports.

I usually keyword in the Library module, but this is a great place to quickly add keywords that you KNOW you’ll be using for all images being imported.

Keep in mind that the options you choose here will affect ALL of your images that you are importing, so best to keep it general. You can segment your import later to apply more targeted metadata info and keywords in the Library module.

9. Choose your destination if you are copying or moving your source files.

Now you’re ready to import. If you’ll be using these settings again in the future, save them as an import preset so you can easily load these options for your next import.

Congratulations! You’ve added your images to the Library. Let’s jump over there and get organized :)

Cheat Sheet

CULLING

Cull your images: decide which photos you want to keep and which ones you want to get rid of.

Note: Deleting images from Lightroom will NOT remove the source files unless you specifically tell Lightroom to do so.

YOUR CULLING TOOLS:

- Flags: quickly decide if an image should be flagged as a pick (P), rejected (X), or not at all.
- Ratings: Use the number keys 1-5 to assign a star rating.
- Color labels: Use the number keys 6-9 to assign a color label (purple does not have a shortcut).
- Library Filter: Use this to quickly filter out images you want to group together. This can be based on metadata, attributes (color labels, rating, etc.), or text fields.
- Quick Collections: A great place to put similar frames together; a temporary holding place that you can put your “maybes” in as you cull, and then go back to look closer and make a final decision.

KEYWORDS

Under the Keywording panel, you can add more keywords that only apply to a certain part of your import (Remember: keywords added during import will apply to ALL of your imported photos).

1. Decide the best keywording system to use for these images. Location? Client name? Unique attributes?
2. Select the image(s) you want to apply these keywords to. You can select as many as you'd like, or just one.
3. If you would like to use a saved keyword set, load that now.
4. Enter your keywords via the Keywording panel, or select which keywords to use from your keyword set. You can also use the Painter tool to spray keywords onto images in your grid view.
5. Adding a lot of new keywords? Organize them in the Keyword List panel. Want to use this group of keywords again in the future? Save them as a keyword set.

Tip: Check the “Without Keywords” smart collection every now and then to see any photos that do not have keywords.

Tip: If you want to copy keywords from one photo to another, you can sync your keywords for a quick and easy application.

COLLECTIONS

Once your images are culled and keyworded, you can begin to organize them into collections.

Note: Smart collections are covered extensively in the course but will not be a part of this cheatsheet. Smart collections are active, meaning that they would not be a part of your normal workflow since images are added automatically.

Note: This cheatsheet assumes that you've already developed a collection naming system. For tips on how to come up with your own collection names, watch the “Collections and Folders” lessons.

1. First decide if you will be adding images to an existing collection or creating a new one. Create your new collections and organize them using collection sets (if necessary).
2. Set your collection as a target collection if desired; this will allow you to quickly add images to that collection by pressing B.
3. Go through your grid view and begin to segment images into collections. You can select multiple images and drag + drop them into a collection, or press B to send them to a target collection.

Cheat Sheet

RECOVER

Once your photos are culled and organized, you can select an image and move into the Develop module. This is where you can recover your photo and apply your creative vision.

1. Turn on lens corrections. This is where you can reverse any impurities from your lens (barrel distortion, chromatic aberration) and also adjust your perspective.
2. Crop your image with the Crop Overlay tool. Make sure to use guides to create a better composition and aspect ratios to adhere to any dimensions needed. Also level out the horizon line with the Straighten tool.
3. Evaluate your exposure using the histogram and clipping indicators. Use the graduated and radial filters to adjust larger group of tones, and the adjustment brush to target specific areas.
4. Fine-tune your exposure adjustments with the tone panel if needed.
5. Remove any noise with the Noise Reduction sliders under the Detail panel. Luminance will remove black/white noise, while Color will smooth out any blotchy areas.
6. Evaluate your image for any spots by using the Visualize Spots feature under the Spot Removal tool. Switch to Clone to remove any unwanted elements like electrical wires or stray branches.

FLOW AND BALANCE

1. Dodge and burn your photo. Evaluate your composition for any areas of interest and use dodging and burning techniques to enhance these areas.
2. Use the Point Curve tool to target specific groups of tones and enhance areas you wish to bring more attention to.
3. Add texture and contrast. Use filters and/or the adjustment brush to target specific focal points and enhance the texture and contrast.
4. Do you want to add a vignette? Use the radial filter and/or adjustment brush to add a soft vignette. You can also use the Post-Crop Vignetting sliders under the Effects panel.

COLOR SHIFTING

1. Decide on your global white balance (warm or cool) by adjusting the Tint and Temperature sliders under the Basic panel.
2. Do you think your image will benefit from split toning? If so, open up the Split Toning panel and adjust your highlights and shadows. Remember: keep the saturation low for a natural look.
3. Target specific color groups with the HSL panel. Make sure to use the target adjustment tool (color picker) instead of randomly adjusting sliders.
4. To work with specific color channels, open up the Point Curve tool under the Tone Curve panel and set/adjust new anchor points.

REFINE

1. Make one final pass over your image. Does anything strike you as being out of place? Zoom out to get a global view and evaluate how well your composition flows.
2. When finished, add Sharpening from the Detail panel. Make sure to use the Masking slider by holding down the ALT key, and apply local sharpening with your adjustment brush if needed.

Cheat Sheet

EXPORT

Now that you've finished creating your image, you can open up the Export window to create different file types depending on where you would like to send your photo.

1. Select your final image, right-click and select Export > Export....
2. Export Location: Here you can designate where to export your image and whether or not you want to add the exported image back into your catalog (with the exporting changes applied).
3. File Renaming: If you need to create a file renaming system for this export, you can do it here.
4. File Settings: This is where you choose the file format, color space, and quality.
5. Image Sizing: You can adhere to certain dimensions and resolution here; this is great for uploading to the web where you do not want to use a full resolution copy.
6. Output Sharpening: This is entirely optional and should only be used if your printer produces slightly soft prints. You can also use this if you want to sharpen your image for web display.
7. Metadata: Here you can edit metadata info specifically for this export. It's very handy for when you're exporting for a client who has specific metadata requirements.
8. Watermarking: Create your own watermark or use a standard one. You can also save your watermark and easily apply it to future exports.
9. When finished, save these settings as a preset if you plan to use the same export options in the future.

PRINT

If you're printing at home and don't need to export your file into another format, you can send your images off to your printer directly through the Print module.

1. Select the image(s) you want to print and switch over to the Print module, or you can manually navigate to the collection which contains your prints through the film strip or Collections panel.
2. Select Page Setup and choose your page/paper options. Depending on your printer, these options can be vast or very limited. Repeat the same for Print Settings.
3. Decide your layout style: Will you be printing one image or multiple? A contact sheet? Picture package? Or do you want to go full-custom and pick and choose your photos and print sizes?
4. Image Settings: Here you can choose to zoom to fill if your image dimensions do not match the cell dimensions, and also if you want Lightroom to rotate your image to match the cell orientation. Here is where you can also choose a stroke border if desired.
5. Layout: This is where you decide how many cells you want per page and what images go into each cell (depending on your layout style). Start with choosing a layout template via the Template Browser panel to your left and adjust those dimensions to taste using the sliders in the Layout panel.
6. Guides: Here you can choose your (non-printable) guides to help you lay out your print project.
7. Page: If you want to add an identity plate or watermark, this is where you can apply one. You can also choose other variables to print, such as Page Options and Photo Info. You can really customize what you want to print here, and then save these options as a preset to use in the future.
8. Print Job: This is where you decide to either send this to your printer or save this print job as a JPG file. You can also fine-tune your print quality, such as color management and sharpening.
9. Once you've finished with your print options, you can save them all as a template so you can instantly load these options for a future print job.