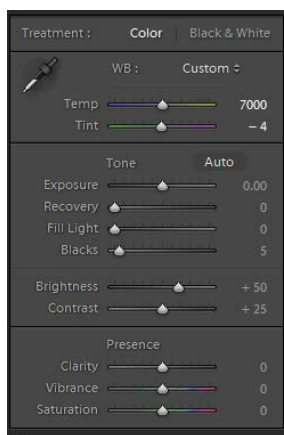




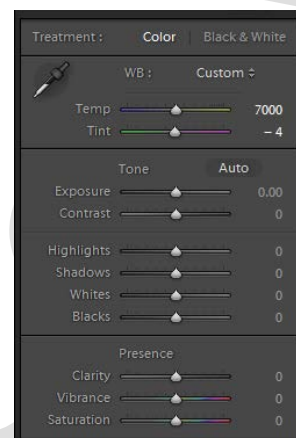
## Lightroom Bitesize: The Basics panel

When Lightroom 4 replaced Lightroom 3 there was much debate about the changes to the Basics panel. A couple of much-loved sliders were missing - replaced by imposters. However, time heals, and now it seems natural to use the new layout.

Old Basics panel



New Basics panel



The example image I'm going to use is this:





OK, it has to be said that this image is never going to win any prizes no matter how much image manipulation we do. The church is an exhibit at a nearby Victorian open-air museum and this shot was taken through a security grid that prevents access. The composition is spoiled by a distracting green notice on the left that reads "Please do not touch organ" - which is somewhat reminiscent of a saucy seaside postcard. However, the image is perfect to show the power that the Lightroom's basic editing tools have and the ease in which they can be used. In particular, the wood inside the church could do with some warmth and the inside is very dark.

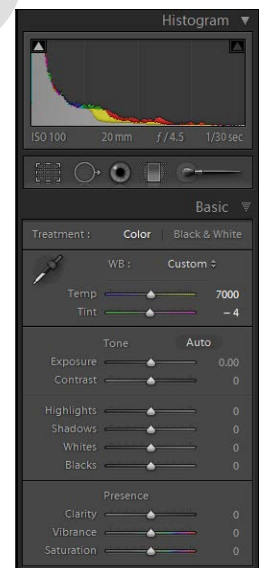
*It is at this point that I must stress that this tutorial is based on RAW files, not JPEG's. A RAW file has all the data available that was captured at the time and so allows much more flexibility in image manipulation. A JPEG, by comparison, has been compressed by 'stripping out' a lot of data in order to make the file size smaller - and you can't manipulate data if it isn't there. I urge you to take RAW files - you are wasting the power of Lightroom's editing potential if you don't.*

Open the photograph in Lightroom, go to the Develop module and click the down arrow next to Basic to open it up.

### Top Tip !

To stop the side panel getting cluttered when you start using the other panels just right-click on any panel header (e.g. next to 'Basic') and tick 'Solo Mode'. Then, as you open one panel, all others will minimise automatically.

We are now going to look at each section of the Basic panel, starting at the top and working down. Not all photographs will require adjustment of every option but we will try each one to see what they can achieve.



## Treatment

The very top section gives you the option of Colour or Black & White. Converting an image into Black & White in Lightroom will be the subject of a specific Lightroom Bitesize tutorial later on and so for now we'll just leave the image in colour.

## White Balance (WB)

Many photographers beat themselves up about setting the correct white balance in-camera. But if you're shooting in RAW, why bother? Yes, the full amount of data is still in the file and Lightroom allows you to change the setting after the event. (Ok, I agree that if you're taking hundreds of photographs on the same day it's probably better to get the white balance right in the first place so that you don't have to edit every image in Lightroom - but there's no need to worry if you forget).

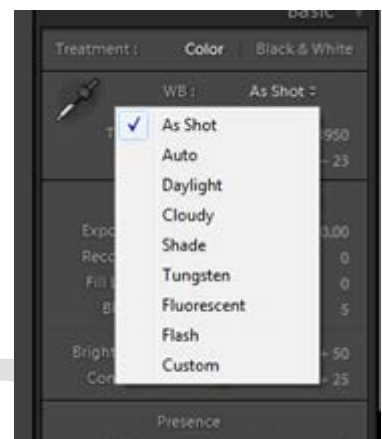


There are three ways of adjusting the white balance:

### 1) Presets

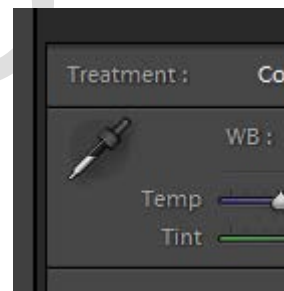
First, you will notice a drop-down box that, by default, is set on 'As Shot' and so the White Balance is exactly as your camera has been set. You will see that the options are exactly the same as on your camera and as you click each one the temperature of the image changes and the slider below moves accordingly (try them out and see).

*Note: If you have ignored my advice and are still using JPEG's you will only get one choice - Auto.*



### 2) Eye-dropper

To the left of the Presets you will see an eye-dropper tool. Click on it to remove it from the panel and you can then hover over the image on any part that is supposed to be light grey. If you tick the 'Show Loupe' box below the image you will get a helpful grid to assist in choosing the correct pixel.



#### Top Tip !

This is a time when maximising the left-hand panel is a good idea. At the top is a Navigation box and this shows a live preview of what the image will look like as you hover the eye-dropper over it.

When you think you have the correct pixel chosen, just click the mouse. If it doesn't look right just resample and click again. Click the eye-dropper back on the panel when you have finished.



### 3) Slider

You may have noticed that in both the above methods as you changed the white balance the two sliders marked 'Temp' and 'Tint' changed position to reflect the new settings chosen. Therefore, you may realise that you can just use these sliders directly to select the white balance of your choice.

In the example image I have moved both sliders slightly to the right to give the wood some warmth.







**Top Tip !**

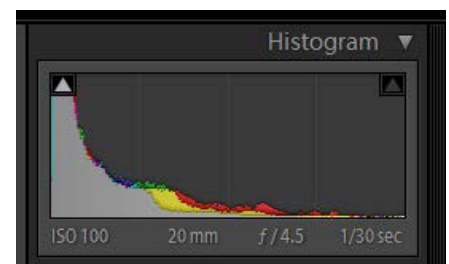
If you want to reset just one of the sliders to its 'as shot' position just double-click on the sliders title (e.g. Tint). This applies to any slider in Lightroom.

## Tone

First we need to be aware of the histogram at the top of the Develop module because this is a very important tool when we change the settings in the Tone panel.

Hopefully I don't need to explain how a histogram works because you use it on your camera. Right?

Anyway, you will see that the histogram for this image is heavily bunched to the left because it is too dark. In particular look at the triangles on the top corners. The one on the left is the Shadows clipping warning and the one on the right is the Highlights clipping warning. Ideally they should both be black with no triangle showing. If they turn blue, green or red it identifies that you are losing detail in one of those colour channels. If it is solid white it means that you are losing detail in all three colour channels at once - in other words the shadows and/or highlights have been clipped.





To see where the shadows are being clipped (and so detail is being lost) hover your cursor over the triangle. The areas where the shadows are being clipped will show in blue on the image.

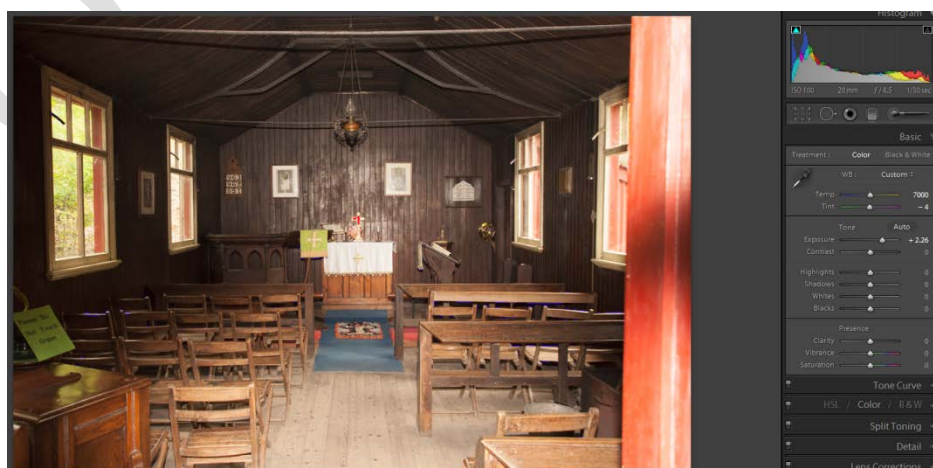


### Top Tip !

At any time just press the letter J key and the Shadow clipping areas will show blue and the Highlight clipping areas will show red.

## Exposure

So first we'll use the Exposure slider. Moving it to the left makes the image darker and to the right makes the image lighter. We want to move it to the right - watch how the histogram spreads out further to the right as you move the slider. However, because we were already slightly clipping the highlights, increasing the exposure is making things worse and the highlights are now severely clipped in the area of the cross in the centre of the image. We need to stop when the image looks good without any highlights looking too washed out. We will deal with the clipped highlights later.





## Contrast

The next slider down increases or decreases contrast. Personally I find that every digital image needs a slight boost in contrast.

## Highlights

This slider works only on the brighter tones in the image and can either make them brighter or more subdued.

## Shadows

This slider works only on the shadow areas of the image and can boost a little brightness into those areas.

## Whites

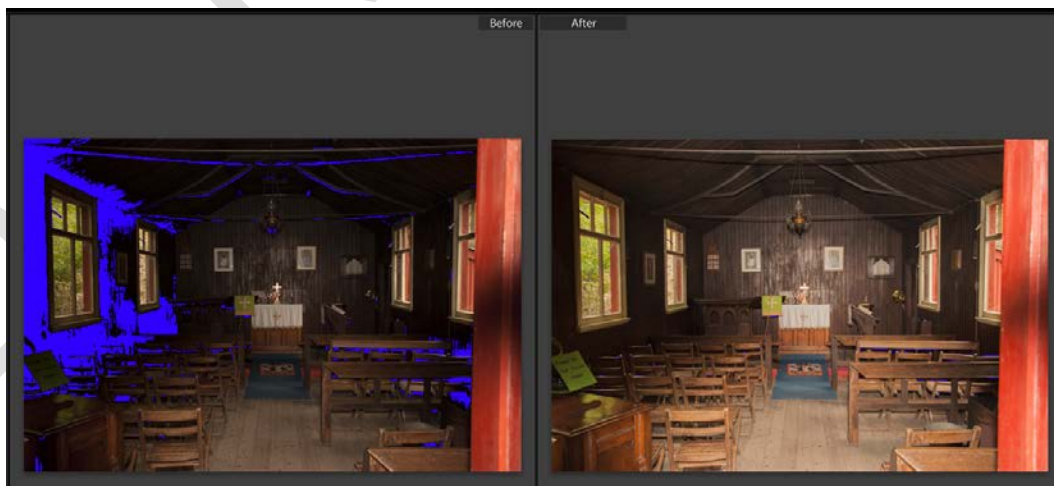
This slider only affects the brightest parts of the image (as opposed to the Highlights slider which affects all the bright areas). Using both in conjunction with each other is useful for rescuing clipped highlights.

## Blacks

This slider affect the darkest parts of the image (think of it as the exact opposite of the Whites slider). Together with the Shadows slider these are useful for rescuing clipped shadows.

*With all the above sliders, adjusting one can sometimes mean that Shadow or Highlight clipping occurs again. You may have to go back a 'tweak' the sliders again until you have the desired outcome. Sometimes you may decide to put up with a bit of clipping because it doesn't detract from the overall scene.*

If you want to compare the original image with the modified one, just press the key for the letter Y and both images will appear side-by-side.







## Presence

Finally we have a few sliders at the bottom which can really add a bit of 'wow' factor:

## Clarity

The Clarity slider adds contrast to the midtones and has a drastic effect (*I use this slider on every image*). For landscapes, increase the clarity to increase midtone contrast, but for portraits, decrease it to give a softened effect. The Clarity slider is quite aggressive so treat it with care.

## Vibrance

The Vibrance slider acts very much like the Saturation slider (see below) but only on dull colours and so makes it a very useful tool for boosting colour to give a rich, vibrant finish.

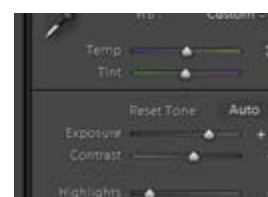
## Saturation

The Saturation slider increases colour saturation on all colours equally. So if you increase the slider to boost dull colours, the already saturated colours go wild. Leave it well alone and use the Vibrance slider above it.

So here we have a drastically improved image - and all it took was about a minute to adjust 11 sliders.



The best way of learning is just to have a go. At any time if you press the Alt key (Mac: Opt) you will see that the 'Tone' tab changes to 'Reset Tone'. Click on that and it resets all of the sliders back to where you started.



# Lightroom Bitesize

by  
John Hallett Photography



If you found this tutorial useful please let me know by leaving a comment on my Facebook page (or just 'Like' it) at <https://www.facebook.com/johnhallettphotographs/> . Thanks

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