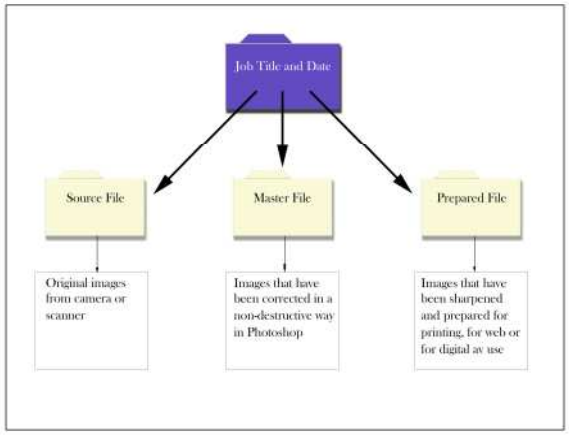
**Adopt an organised file structure**

To make it easier to keep track of your digital images, it's a good idea to adopt a consistent file structure. The diagram that follows shows a possible approach that might be adopted…




In this approach, a "Job Folder" is prepared for all the images from a particular "shoot". This file should be given a name that clearly identifies its contents and when the images were taken;

e.g. 20090115-Selby-CC-Example

This top-level folder contains three sub-folders:

1. Source File – this will contain the images from the digital camera or scanner in their original, unedited form. Once this has been done, it's a good idea to make a backup of these images on CD/DVD together with a contact sheet. Photoshop makes easy work of preparing a contact sheet. For convenience, the file names can be printed with the images.

   Master File – all images will require some manipulation, typically levels and colour adjustment, spotting-out dust & hairs (particularly on scans) and maybe some cropping of unwanted detail. This preparation can all be done non-destructively by using adjustment layers. This edited image will form the master image that will be the source-file for printing, publishing on the web or use in AV etc.

2. Resizing and sharpening are destructive processes that should only be performed on copies of the master images, never on the originals.

**File Names**

It's good practice to adopt a consistent approach to file naming. A useful structure is to use filenames with four parts:

1. The first part identifies the date when the image was taken, in the form: YYMMDD
2. The second part – the original, camera assigned name
3. The third part (optional) indicates the subject of the photo
4. The fourth part identifies the folder in which the image belongs, e.g. source, master, prepared.

Each of these is separated by an underscore ( _ ) or hyphen( - )

Example: 090115-B123460-selbypic-source

**The Source File**

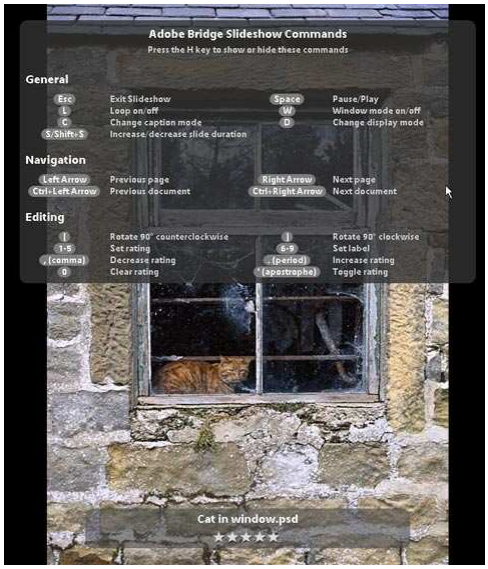
Some general points:

- Images from a digital camera may be either JPG or RAW. If using JPG, it's a good idea to resave as TIF or PSD immediately after download to avoid inadvertent multiple compression. As JPG is a lossy format, it's bad practice to resave an edited JPG.
- Scanned images should ideally be at the maximum resolution and bit-depth that the scanner can handle. The majority of functions in Photoshop can handle 16-bit per pixel images.
- Adobe Bridge makes easy work of rotating, copyrighting, ranking and keywording images.

Once images have been sorted in this way, they can be backed-up onto CD/DVD and a contact sheet made for convenience.

**Rating the images in Bridge**

1. With the images visible in the preview pane, press Ctrl L to switch to slide show view.
2. Pressing the letter H displays help, showing the options available.




The arrow keys are used to move through the images.

Pressing a number 1 – 5 will add a star rating to an image. Pressing a number 6 – 9 will add a colour label to an image.

HINT – use a Red Label to identify rejects.

Press Esc to return to Bridge.

**The Master File**

As soon as you open an image from the Source File into Photoshop, save a copy in the Master File. From now on, all work on this image is done in a non-destructive way by using adjustment layers.

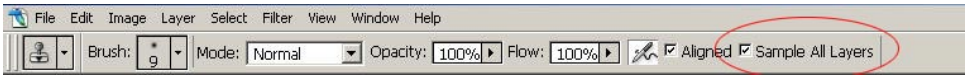
(If tools such as Shadow/Highlight that do not offer adjustment layers are used, make a copy of the background layer for this purpose – shortcut: with the background layer highlighted, press Ctrl J).

**Straighten, crop & retouch**

Every image will benefit from some basic adjustments:

1. If necessary straighten sloping horizons then crop unwanted edge detail – particularly in the case of scanned images.

2. Clean up the image to remove dust, scratches and hairs – particularly in the case of scanned images.
   The spot healing brush works well in areas of fairly even tone, e.g. skies.
   When using the clone stamp tool, it's good practice to do this on a new blank layer. Make sure "sample all layers" is ticked.



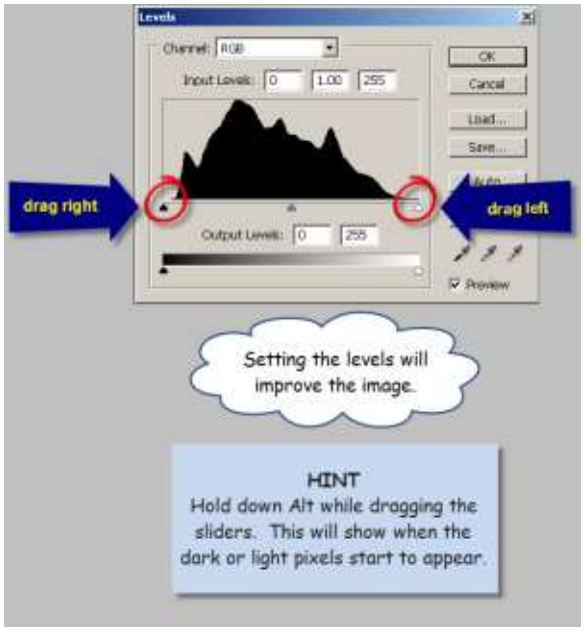

**Adjust using "Levels"**

3. Use a levels adjustment layer to establish the image white and black points (high and low values.)

   This will improve image contrast.

4. If necessary, the image can be darkened or lightened using the centre slider.

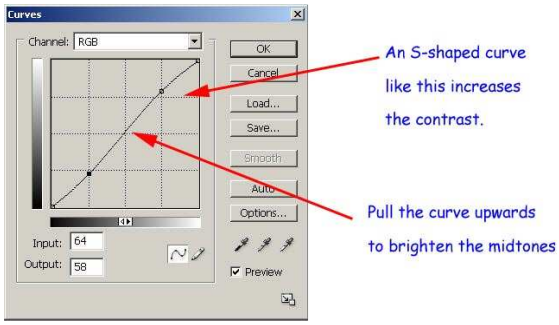
   For more control, use a curves adjustment layer for contrast adjustment. (See below).




**Adjusting Contrast using "Curves"**

5. Add a curves adjustment layer to adjust the contrast and midtone brightness of the image.

   Set the blending mode for this layer to "Luminosity"




**Adjust Colour Balance**

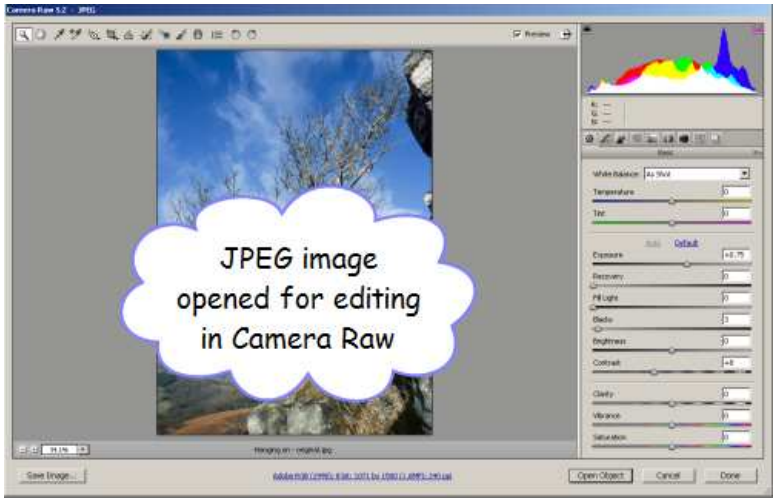
6. Add another curves adjustment layer and use it to correct any colour balance problems. To do this, click the drop-down arrow next to "Channel RGB", choose the channel to adjust, and try moving the mid-point of the curve up or down slightly to change the colour balance. It's a good idea to use the cursor arrow keys on your keyboard for fine adjustment.

7. Add a Selective Colour adjustment layer to make small corrections to individual colours.

8. Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer. Use the Saturation slider to make minor adjustments to individual colours, e.g. to make them "pop".

   Make sure that the corrected Master Image is saved before making any changes that actually alter the pixels, e.g. resizing, sharpening. These should be done on the Prepared File only.

## Alternative technique - using the Raw Processor




Newer versions of Photoshop allow adjustment of images that are not in Raw Format, via the Raw Processor.

You may find this a more intuitive way to adjust the levels and colour balance of your images.

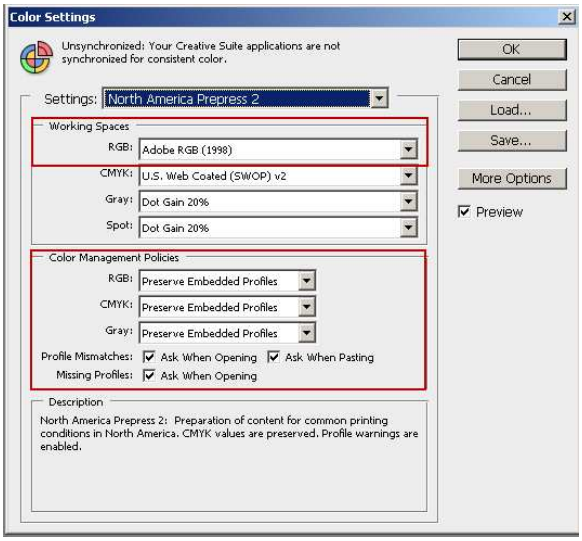
## Photoshop Customisation

From the Menu Bar, choose

Edit > Colour Settings

## Colour settings

The important things to check are highlighted in red in the screenshot opposite.




## Cursors

From the Menu Bar, choose

Edit > Preferences > Cursors

Recommended settings are shown opposite.