

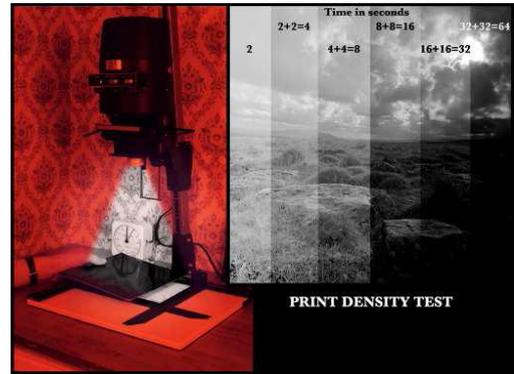
Preparing an exposure test print using Lightroom

It's easy to make a print from a digital image. It's not so easy to make a decent print!

In the darkroom

Any competent darkroom worker appreciates the need to do tests to get the best out of a negative.

The digital worker needs to take a leaf out of the same book... here's how.



The digital problem

More often than not, a print made from a digital image tends to be darker than the image seen on screen. Using a correctly calibrated monitor and good print profiles will help a great deal but, for best results, some extra adjustment may still be needed.

Fortunately for the Lightroom worker, using virtual copies and quick develop makes the production of a test print a straightforward process.

The following assumes that you have a calibrated monitor and that your original image looks fine on-screen. We then use virtual copies to produce three identical image which we can then adjust.

Create virtual copies

1. with the right-hand button on your mouse, click on the image you wish to use
2. choose "Create virtual copy".
3. repeat this twice more to give four identical versions of the same image.

alternatively, use the keyboard shortcut Alt and ' to produce the virtual copy.

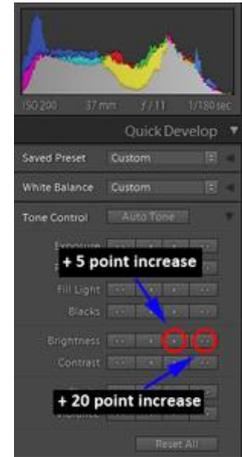
Lightroom's film strip will show the images. Virtual copies are indicated by the page-fold icon (circled in the screen shot).



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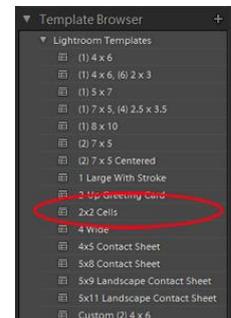
- Adjusting the brightness of each copy by a different amount
1. switch to Lightroom's Library view
 2. choose "Quick Develop"
 3. click on the first virtual copy
 4. increase the brightness of the image by clicking the right-facing arrows shown in the diagram.

Useful starting values are +10 for the first copy, +20 for the second and +30 for the third.

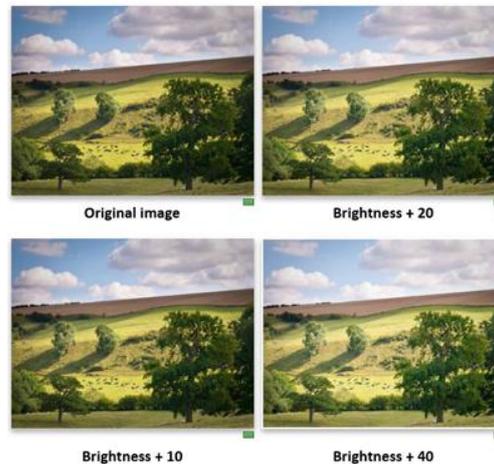


- Getting the four images onto a single sheet of paper
1. with all four images selected, switch to Lightroom's Print module
 2. in the left-hand pane, choose 2 x 2 cells from the templates

You should now see a page like the one below (without the labels). This is your test-print ready to send to the printer.



An example of a test print



After printing

All that remains is to print the test print, allow it to dry, then choose which of the virtual images gives the best result. Choose this virtual copy and print it full-size.

