TEN MINI TIPS

Lightroom:

1. ## Optimize your RAW images first in LR or ACR:

   Make this your *first step in editing your RAW images, doing as much as possible to optimize them here* and then edit in Photoshop if/as needed. LR (or ACR) is where you have access to your RAW data, so take full advantage and get as much as possible out of it here. Your image is never altered, LR (or ACR) creates a database and changes are saved as data files (metadata, adjustments, etc.), a set of instructions to interpret your RAW files. Your edits are only applied when you export an image, by creating a new file. Bonus: LR and ACR are completely nondestructive and processing here can save hard drive space as the added data files don't use too much space. LR also creates a database for cataloging your images.

2. ## Neaten your Lightroom view:

   Right click on any edit panel title/header to switch to **Solo mode**. All panels will collapse with the exception of the one you're currently using. Makes for more efficient workflow as panels are more visible and quicker to find. Especially helpful if working at a smaller screen such as a laptop.

3. ## Check your edits without distracting side panels:

   Click on **"L" for "lights out"** once to dim side panels, click "L" again to darken them completely, and one more time to return to your original screen. If you'd rather close the panels (more time consuming) click the little triangle to collapse them, again to expand. Alternatively click **"F" for "full screen"** to fill your screen with your image, and "F" again to return to your working screen.

4. ## Show Before and After: While editing you can quickly see before and after adjustments by clicking the **forward slash key**. You can also see before and after views at bottom on tool bar. For this you can select your default view under top menu "View → Before – After".

5. ## Mask overlay colors for adjustment tools (graduated filter, radial filter and brush):

   With tool of choice active click **"O" for overlay**, or at bottom on toolbar (if toolbar is missing click "T" to reveal it) click "Show Selected Mask Overlay". The overlay allows you to be precise when applying your adjustment. If difficult to see your mask due to similar colors in image, change your mask color by holding **shift plus "O" to cycle** through red, green, white and black overlay colors. To preview mask overlay without turning it on, hover over the active pin with your cursor.

6. ## Radial Filter: For a *perfect circle click and hold shift key while dragging* out area to mask. To resize an adjustment area and *maintain the same aspect ratio hold shift key while adjusting*. For an adjustment area that is *centered and covers the maximum area in your image hold Ctrl/Cmd* and double click* anywhere on image. If you have an existing radial filter you'd like to adjust to center and fill the maximum area, hold Ctrl/Cmd and double click *inside* the adjustment. To quickly exit the radial filter simply double click anywhere on image. Hit your "delete" key to delete an active radial filter, or right click the active pin to delete.   *Ctrl for PC, Cmd for Mac.

7. **Sensor dust or other spots to remove?**

While using the spot* removal tool (shortcut "Q")* check *"visualize spots"* (shortcut "A")* at bottom of image in tool bar (if tool bar missing click "T" for tools). You'll get a B&W image where dust spots will visualize better. Use the slider to adjust the sensitivity. If unhappy with sample area LR chooses, click your **backslash key to force another choice**. Or manually move to a sample area of your choice. If you accidently "dust out" a desired area of image step back in history panel or right click the pin over that area and delete it or simply hit the delete key with pin active.   Always check for spots before printing, especially large landscapes, to avoid a costly printing error. Dust spots you may not notice on your monitor screen can become quite prominent on an enlargement.

*Tip within a tip: During SPS Zoom meetings there's always a *spot* for *Q&A*!

8. **Crop Tool** (shortcut "R"), **need to switch orientation?**

Click "X" to flip back and forth. "O" cycles crop options, shift plus "O" changes orientation of crop options.   Shift key maintains proportions.

9. **If sharpening in LR:** *Use the mask feature to help control noise and sharpen only the areas you want sharpened*. Sharpening gives the illusion of sharpening by adding contrast to the edges in your image, increasing the further right you move the slider. The masking slider allows you to apply it to select areas only. If you don't mask the sharpening effect will be applied to your entire image and can increase noise. **Hold Alt/Opt* while moving the mask slider**, image view will be in B&W. Only the white areas will be sharpened, the black won't. Sharpening with masking helps control noise. If you wish to use the radius slider, it controls the thickness of the edge. Default setting is 1.0 meaning sharpening is applied to an area of one pixel around edges, can be increased to a maximum value of 3, or 3 pixels around edges. So increasing the value increases the thickness of the edge sharpened. The detail slider controls the amount of sharpening applied to details along the edges. A lower value sharpens only larger details; higher value sharpens smaller details too, and can result in increasing noise. Combine and adjust sliders as needed to fine tune a balance of sharpness and acceptable noise. Finish noise reduction if needed with luminance slider. Because this slider works by softening or smoothing pixels, use incrementally. Recommended zoom to sharpen images is 100%. *Alt PC, Opt Mac.

Photoshop:

10. **Is your brush preview missing? Have crosshairs only?** Check if *caps lock is on.*

Bonus tip:

11. **When shooting don't forget to take off your lens cap!**

Perhaps the most important, since without an image none of the above tips matter! This one is contributed by my husband.