

## Mainly Monochrome

Look for a picture that will provide a reasonable level of contrast. i.e think in black & white. B&W can give you quite a lot of impact and emotion.

Open Image and convert to mono: -

### Conventional RGB Mode

Could be Image Adjustments, B&W - but better as an Adjustment Layer. Unfortunately not available in Elements but you can use the 'Enhance' commands from the menu, more later.

This pane gives lots of options from the simple but effective presets or even Auto. The sliders allow a more personal edit. Assess the picture, what are the main colours and therefore the ones that will show the greatest impact. Adjust each slider to your taste but remember you are trying to achieve a range of greys from rich black to clean white.

Add a Levels Adjustment layer. Use the eye droppers on this panel to select a white point (bottom eye dropper make sure your sample size is shown as 11x11 or 5x5 in Elements) which is the brightest but still retains detail. Click on that point. Repeat with the black eye dropper (top one of the 3). If the changes result in loss of detail use the Gamma slider (middle slider) to adjust slightly. In Elements you can use 'Convert to B & W in the Enhance menu. Select a 'Style' and use the sliders if you wish but my advice is don't. You could also use a Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer to desaturate. Whichever you used add the Levels Adjustment Layer as instructed at the start of this paragraph.

Levels selections: - consider what are the constituent elements of the picture and making sure that you return to the last image layer start to select these elements one at a time and add them as an Adjustment layer, Curves or a Levels. Make sure that you add an appropriate Feather. Also label the layer so you know what it is. Some pictures can have multiples of these selections but this one probably doesn't benefit from one in CC but in Elements it does. As an example this landscape taken near Lulworth Cove shows multiple layers adjusting the contrast (see the labelled layers)



## The LAB approach.

Open Image and convert to LAB mode via the menu/Image/Mode/LAB. Copy the Background Layer (Ctrl +J). (Not available in Elements)

Make sure you can see the 'Channels'. Click on the Lightness channel. From the menu bar select Image/adjustments/Curves. Adjust the 'Curve' in the usual way to give the best result on screen to improve the image.

To further improve the image it's necessary to convert to Greyscale via the Menu/Image/Mode/Greyscale. If appropriate apply Curves/Levels Adjustment layers as with the RGB approach.

Also remember that the Adjustment Layers come with their own built in Mask so you can tweak the effect by partially removing the effect by selective masking or changing the opacity of the layer.

Compare the two images. They both have their positives and their negatives (LAB looks to give better results in highlight areas). Either way both can be improved using the traditional dark room practices of 'Dodging & Burning'.

As usual with Photoshop there are a number of ways to do this and 3 will now be demonstrated.

### Dodge & Burn: -

Tools, found in the tool box. Make a new 'crunch' layer and label it Burn. Assess what needs a little fine tuning in terms of emphasising and apply the Burn tool. Check the 'Range' and 'Exposure'(max 4%) and adjust brush size. Copy the Burn Layer (Ctrl +J) and label it 'Dodge'. Same approach as for the 'Burn' layer.

Curves Adjustment Layer. Add a Curves Adjustment Layer or a Levels in Elements) and pull up the middle of the curve (Middle slider, Elements). Label this layer Highlights. Repeat and label Shadows. Click on the highlights mask and with black as the foreground colour press Alt + backspace. Repeat for shadows. Choose a soft brush sized to suite and change opacity to approx. 15%. Ensure the mask is selected, change foreground colour to white and paint in the burning using the shadows layer and dodge with the highlights layer.

### Printing Black & White.

Remember that you are thinking in B&W but the file isn't B&W as far as the software is concerned. You are still in RGB or LAB mode so your image can have a slight tint which can be removed with a Levels Adjustment Layer and tweaking the appropriate colour/s. The easy way is to convert the image Mode to Greyscale or use the specialised B&W printing option in your printer's driver.

### Toning and Split Toning.

Toning can be achieved by adding a Photo filter adjustment layer in Photoshop CC or Elements and as presets in Elements Quick Mode

Effects where Split Toning is also available. Don't forget to go back into 'Expert Mode' and Layers to fine tune the layer just added in 'Quick Mode', if necessary. For CC users a 'Quick option is to use the Menu/Image/Mode/Duotone options (not available in Elements). Also a possible approach is to use the Graduated Tool or a Gradient Map layer but that just splits in two sections. Another easy way is to open the image in Lightroom if you have it and use the split toning sliders or use Google Nik filters (not available if you have already converted the image from RGB to Greyscale).