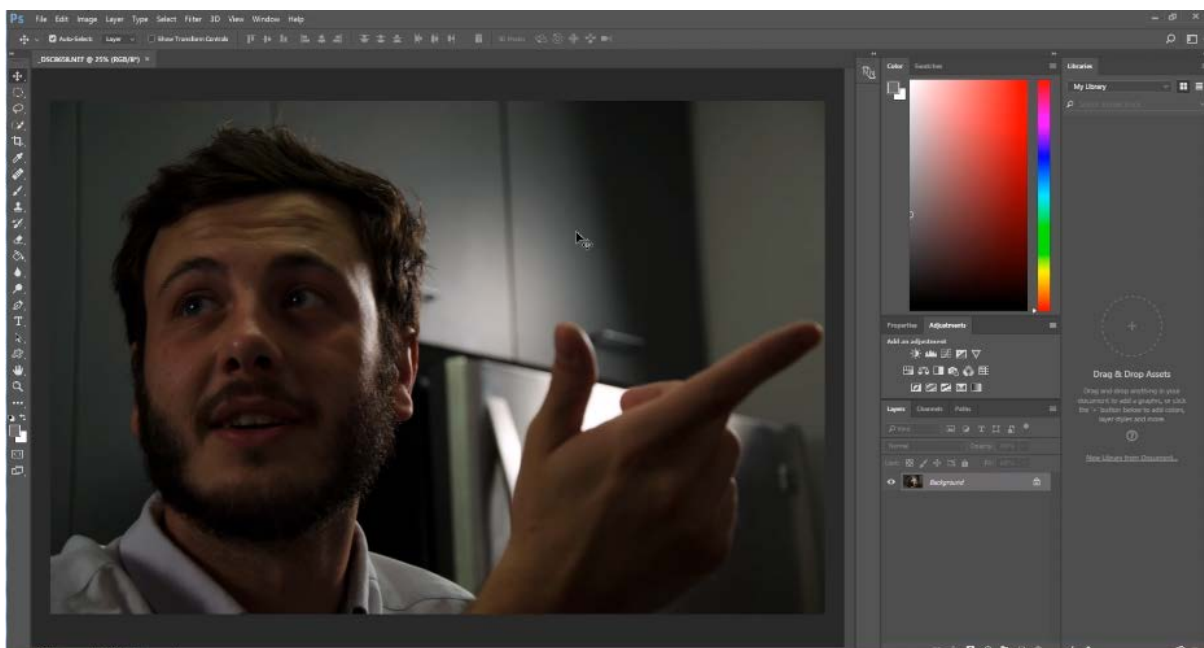# Photoshop and Lightroom
for Photographers

Topic 7 – Making Subtle changes in Photoshop

Learning Outcomes

In this lesson, we will take a photograph in Photoshop and do some quick touches to ensure that we maintain subtlety and that the image retains its realistic quality.

Adjusting Images

Photoshop works very well when you're working with RAW files. This is a N.E.F. or NEF file, which means that it is a raw image from a Nikon camera. Shooting raw photographs provides photographers with much more scope when it comes to editing the image. We have more range, to adjust our values, for options such as hue/ saturation or brightness/ contrast, before we begin to get noticeable pixilation.

Photoshop and Lightroom for Photographers

In this example, it is clear that the photograph is too dark. Let's go ahead and adjust some of these values to increase the brightness level, or exposure, within the scene. This is one of the many benefits to shooting in RAW. If this was a JPEG file, and I tried to bring back some of that detail by making it brighter, I would get a lot of noise and unpleasant pixilation. This is because JPEGS are heavily compressed while RAW files are minimally processed before we open them in Photoshop.

Let's adjust our curves. `
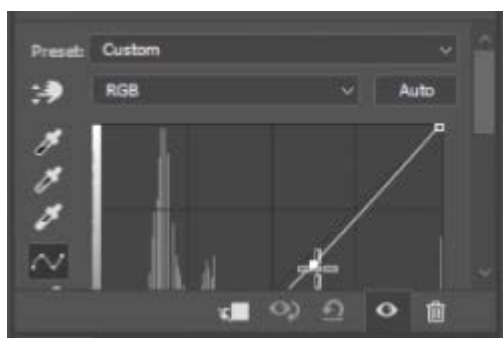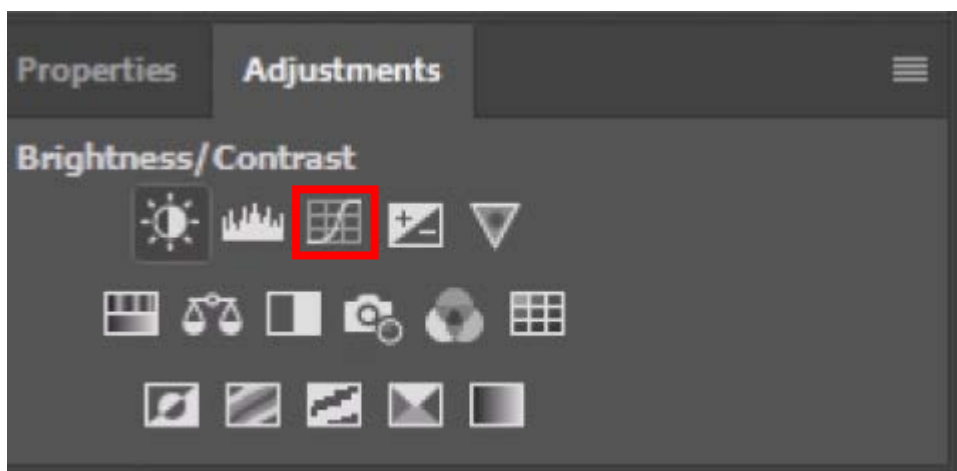
Let's see if we can do anything with hue or saturation. In this case, neither really adds anything beneficial to our photograph. Let's go ahead and undo that. Let's add a tiny bit of vibrance. Now, within a matter of seconds, we have significantly improved this photograph, albeit at a basic level. At this point, that's all we need to do because we are learning to use the program.

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We will be looking at more complex techniques within Photoshop at a later time. For now, it's important to remember that often, it's just a matter of adjusting some of these values, ever so slightly along the dial or slider. This is where the subtlety comes into play. You can see that when we altered a few colours and a few minor changes, we didn't go overboard and upset the realistic quality of the photograph.

For Photography, and for this course, we want to try and capture images, as we see them. **Remember, Photoshop cannot fix everything.** So, always ensure that you focus your time and energy on capturing the best shot possible when you're using your camera. Yes, Photoshop can be used to provide some touch ups and to enhance your work, but it's important to implement the skills and information that you are learning in this course and through your own practice as you work with your DSLR.

Our emphasis, as photographers, is always on getting the best possible picture on site. As a little task, and to keep you engaged, take some time out and capture some photographs yourself, preferably in a RAW file format. As you've seen, this will give you more scope in the post processing phase. Bring them into Photoshop and adjust some of these values and see what kind of effects that you can achieve. Feel free to add filters and experiment with as many styles as you please.

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What have we learned today? A Summary

We have had a valuable insight into working with a RAW file in Photoshop. We've also noted the benefits of subtle changes in Photoshop and the importance of capturing the best possible shot when on site.