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## What's New in Adobe Camera Raw 4.0

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Adobe Camera Raw 4.0 (ACR) inherits many of its new features from Adobe Photoshop Lightroom while still retaining the basic UI of previous versions. So, if you're moving from Photoshop CS2 to CS3, you'll be familiar with the location of most of the tools and settings. But after you start to explore, you'll find there are plenty of new goodies waiting for you behind the various tabs and buttons. Jon Canfield shows you the ropes.

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[Figure 1](#)

### New Look and Feel

One of the biggest additions to ACR 4.0 isn't to be found anywhere in the converter. You now have the option of working with JPEG and TIFF images as well as RAW files, all with the nondestructive editing that makes RAW so appealing to many photographers. To work with a JPEG or TIFF file, select File Open in Photoshop CS3 and then change the Format to Camera Raw. Instead of opening directly into Photoshop, the image opens in Camera Raw with all adjustments available.

To begin, let's start with the adjustment sliders. In the prior version of ACR, there were five tabs with various adjustments: Adjust, Detail, Lens, Curve, and Calibrate. The new version moves from text labels to buttons and adds in a couple of new panels: HSL, Split Toning, and Presets. Let's take a look at each of these panels.

### Basic

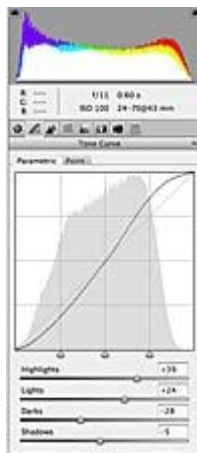
This panel looks very familiar because it contains all the controls from the Adjust panel of earlier releases. White Balance, Temperature, and Tint all remain and work as they did before. What's new, though, are the Recovery and Fill Light controls, which give you much more control over how shadows and highlights are handled in your conversions. Recovery helps to restore highlight details, while Fill Light opens shadows—essentially a midtone control to fine-tune your image with much greater control than the previous Shadows and Brightness adjustments alone could provide.



[Figure 2](#)

## Tone Curve

The Tone Curve panel gives you much more control over how the image is adjusted than the previous version of ACR did. A new tab, Parametric, enables you to make adjustments by using sliders for Highlights, Lights, Darks, and Shadows. One addition that is a big help for me is the live updating of the histogram as you make your adjustments. In version 3.0 of ACR, the histogram was updated only after making an adjustment. Now I can watch the histogram as I move the sliders to see what the effect is on my image. The Point tab works just like the previous release, with presets for different tone curves and the ability to add and drag control points directly.



[Figure 3](#)

## Detail

The Detail panel hasn't changed from version 3.0, still giving you the same Sharpening and Noise Reduction controls as before. As with earlier releases, I recommend setting Sharpening to apply to only the preview you see in ACR, saving the actual sharpening for the end of your workflow in either Photoshop or Lightroom.



[Figure 4](#)

## HSL/Grayscale

Now we get to the first of the all new panels in ACR 4.0, and it's a good one! HSL gives you complete control over color adjustments at a level that was possible only in Photoshop. The problem with waiting until Photoshop to make your adjustments is that you are now working with a converted file and don't have the flexibility to make nondestructive edits as you do prior to conversion from RAW. By adjusting Hue, Saturation, and Luminance on the RAW image, your conversion retains all the image information contained in the RAW file, and it lets you easily make adjustments when converting for other purposes.



[Figure 5](#)

In my RAW book, and in classes, I show how to do black-and-white conversions in ACR. With version 3.0, these conversions aren't at the same level as those that can be done with Photoshop using the Channel Mixer. But they're easier to do and have the benefit of being nondestructive. In ACR 4.0, though, I now have total control over grayscale conversions in the new HSL/Grayscale panel. By checking the Convert to Grayscale box, I have more control over color channels that Channel Mixer gave me, enabling me to get exactly the image I want for black and white work.



[Figure 6](#)

The Auto setting does a surprisingly good job of getting me close on many of my conversions, so I typically start with selecting Auto and then fine-tuning. As with the other Auto settings in ACR, you can quickly revert back by selecting Default to restore all adjustments to zero.

## Split Toning

I admit it—I'm a toned junkie. I love the look of a sepia-, platinum-, or selenium-toned black and white image. ACR 4.0 adds a brand new Split Toning panel that enables you to do exactly this. With controls for the Hue and Saturation of both Highlights and Shadows, I can now do my toned conversions right in ACR. The Balance control enables me to fine-tune where each of these adjustments will take effect.



[Figure 7](#)

Split toning isn't just for monochrome images, however; you can come up with some creative effects using the adjustments on a color image, too.

## Lens Corrections

Nothing new on this panel; you have the same Chromatic Aberration and Lens Vignetting controls as before, and they work in the same way.



[Figure 8](#)

## Camera Calibration

Again, there are no changes to the adjustments or the way they work on this panel, but the layout is easier to work with now that the labeling and grouping is more logical. Although it's not on this panel, you can now save these settings as specific to a camera or even an ISO setting, making it possible to fine-tune your calibration for all instances. ACR will read the serial number and ISO from the EXIF data and automatically make the adjustments to calibration if you enable this feature. If we could get that added to Lens Corrections, I'd be thrilled.



[Figure 9](#)

## Presets

The last panel in ACR, Presets, is also brand new to version 4.0. At first glance, it doesn't look like much, but once you've created some settings that you find yourself reusing, you'll quickly appreciate how useful this panel is in your workflow.



[Figure 10](#)

Working with presets enables you to quickly change the look of your RAW image in one location. As you select one of the presets, the Preview area updates to show the image with the selected settings.

## New Toolbar

There are three additions to the Toolbar in ACR 4.0, one of which is going to change your workflow tremendously and has been a requested feature for nearly as long as ACR has been around. I'll keep you guessing, though, and save that one for last.

## Preferences

Preferences simply moves the command from the popup Settings options to the toolbar. But given the new Presets panel, you're likely to find yourself using this option much more frequently, so adding it to the Toolbar makes sense.



[Figure 11](#)

You'll find new options for default image settings in the Preferences dialog box, including the option to make defaults specific to a camera or ISO setting as I mentioned earlier when talking about the Camera Calibration panel. The Auto settings have moved here as well,

with the addition of a grayscale mix default.

## Red eye

This option moves the same tool from Photoshop into ACR to let you work directly on your image without making destructive edits.



[Figure 12](#)

## Heal and Clone

Yep—healing and cloning is now in Camera Raw! Finally, we can do dust spotting and other corrections directly on the image before converting. Aside from the benefit of nondestructive editing, they can also be applied to all images if you're doing batch conversions. So, no more editing dust spots individually after the conversion.



[Figure 13](#)

Heal and clone work differently than what you're used to in Photoshop. Rather than selecting a source point, as you would with the Clone tool in Photoshop, you select the area you want to correct. You can either drag the mouse to set the radius of the adjustment or enter it in the Radius slider above the Preview. Once you release the mouse button, a red circle will be placed on the image with a green circle next to it. The red indicates the area you're editing, and you drag the green circle to the area you want to use as the source. You can place as many of these corrections on the image as you like, and they can be moved as needed.

When working with multiple images, the Synchronize option enables you to apply only spot removal if you like, making this a very useful tool regardless of your image settings because dust on the sensor is always in the same location.

## Other Changes

ACR 4.0 has made a few other minor changes, mostly in the layout of the dialog box, and all designed to give you more space to view your image while making adjustments. The **Workflow Options** have been removed from the dialog box and are now accessed via a link below the Preview. The link shows what the current selection is, and I find that I very seldom make changes to these settings, so this was a good move in my opinion.



[Figure 14](#)

## The Histogram

has also changed a bit. The Highlight and Shadow Clipping controls, which used to be checkboxes in the Toolbar, have been moved into the histogram itself, but function identically to the previous versions of ACR. You'll also find basic EXIF data for the selected image in ACR now, with aperture, shutter speed, ISO, and lens info displayed—all helpful if you fine-tune your images based on these settings (you can change the defaults for the way ISO is handled in the Camera Calibration panel).

Finally, a new **Full Screen** option has been added that toggles the ACR dialog box between normal size and maximized for your screen.

## Conclusion

The updates to Adobe Camera Raw 4.0 are the most significant to date and will be useful to anyone who is already using ACR, or who is considering a move to ACR from another converter. ACR has the largest list of supported camera types, and the new ability to work on JPEG and TIFF images in the converter really makes this a strong candidate for major image editing work regardless of your platform or shooting style. All these features are available in Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 1.0 and in Photoshop CS3.

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