



iOS Photo Editing Cheat Sheet

HOW PHOTO EDITING EFFECTS WORK:	WHEN TO USE:
<p>Exposure</p> <p>Mimics the effect of increasing (or decreasing) the amount of light striking photo film. This tends to affect the highlights more than the mids or darks, introduce grain, and clip (and therefore lose detail).</p>	<p>USE WITH CAUTION</p> <p>Useful for correcting the auto-exposure of an image, especially in high contrast compositions like with pale skin against dark clothes or dark skin against pale clothes, or when there is a light source (such as a window) in the photo.</p>
<p>Brilliance</p> <p>Brightens (or darkens) the image without allowing the whites to clip. Darks may clip if brilliance is lowered.</p>	<p>FAN FAVORITE</p> <p>Useful for increasing the overall shine and light of mid-tones, reducing grayness without changing the colors.</p>
<p>Highlights</p> <p>Only brightens (or darkens) the upper-third of the histogram (see histograms on page 2), ignoring the mid-tones and dark-tones.</p>	<p>Useful for correcting over-exposed areas like white t-shirts or the sky.</p>
<p>Shadows</p> <p>Only brightens (or darkens) the lower-third of the histogram, ignoring the mid-tones and bright-tones.</p>	<p>Useful for correcting low-light areas like dark jeans or the shadows cast by direct sun.</p>
<p>Contrast</p> <p>Makes the brights brighter and the darks darker, skewing the middle of the histogram out toward the ends. (Lowering contrast crushes the histogram to the middle).</p>	<p>USE WITH CAUTION</p> <p>Useful for adding drama and intensity but can easily be overdone.</p>
<p>Brightness</p> <p>Like Brilliance, applies a targeted, clipping-resistant brightening (or darkening) but with more color. (Lowering brightness results in extra vibrant dark colors.)</p>	<p>If you want to turn Brilliance down to darken an image, try Brightness first.</p>
<p>Black Point</p> <p>Increases what is defined as absolute black, causing dark grays to become black (Conversely, decreasing Black Point will make blacks more gray).</p> <p>Lets you add or remove detail from the darkest parts of your image.</p>	<p>CULLEN'S FAVORITE TRICK</p> <p>Useful for making the dark parts of an image really pop with true black.</p>

HOW PHOTO EDITING EFFECTS WORK:	WHEN TO USE:
<p>Saturation</p> <p>Increasing saturation subtracts grays from the colors of the image, making the colors more “pure.” Decreasing saturation substitutes grays for the colors.</p>	<p> Helpful in controlling the intensity of the colors, to affect the emotional character of the image.</p>
<p>Vibrance</p> <p>Applies a saturation boost (or reduction) but only to the mid-tones, which often have less saturation.</p>	<p> Essentially a smarter version of saturation because it doesn’t have as adverse effects on skin tone.</p>
<p>Tint</p> <p>Increasing the dial applies faint magenta tinting, decreasing will add green tinting.</p>	<p>Useful for counteracting the subtle green coloration of light reflected through foliage.</p>
<p>Sharpness</p> <p>Moving the dial up increases the difference in brightness between each pixel and the ones around it.</p>	<p>Useful to make the image grittier and more detailed, but adds noise.</p>

CORRECTIONS FOR COMMON CONDITIONS:

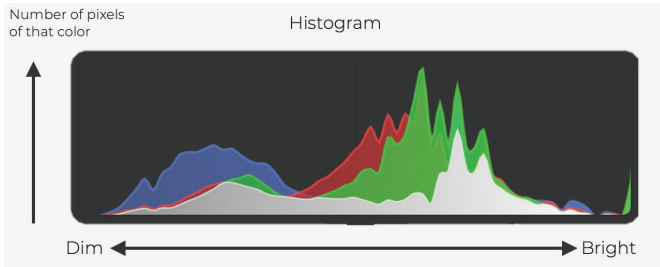
- **For photos shot on cloudy days** (or in a shadow) that feel flat and gray, start with a little contrast, add a little vibrance, and a touch of warmth.
- **For a backlit subject**, crop out any extreme brightness first, then raise the shadows, reduce the highlights, and use some definition to restore contrast.
- **For harsh, direct sunlight**, try turning brilliance up, shadows up (brightening the dark shadows), increasing contrast slightly to compensate, turning down the brightness, and then playing with vibrance.
- **For portraits getting lost against colorful backgrounds**, try turning saturation up a little and vibrance down a little. This may help create separation between the skin-tones of the subject and the background tones.
- **A touch of magenta** (tint) improves a photo more often than you might think. Green tinges creep into a huge number of photographs from reflecting off plant life, from fluorescent lights (which are also a little green), and from the greenish shades of concrete and city haze.

CREATE PHOTOGRAPHIC STYLES FROM SCRATCH:

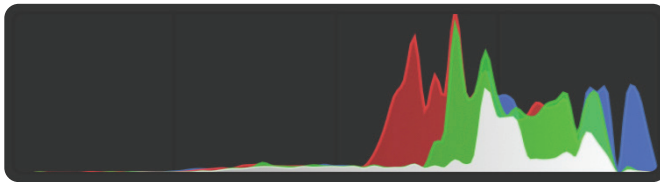
- **For a hazy nostalgic look**, lower the blacks slider to add gray to your blacks, making them look hazy. Try reducing vibrance while compensating with saturation. Then, increase the brightness of the image (usually through a combination of exposure, brilliance, brightness, and/or highlights, depending on the subject), reduce the contrast (not always with the contrast slider specifically) and try a white vignette.
- **For a bold colorful look**, increase exposure a little, crank brilliance way up, and plunge brightness way down to create a shining stained-glass saturation in your green tones and sky colors. Then, to correct skin colors, add some warmth, reduce saturation, and increase vibrance. To make it pop, darken your black point and add definition for more contrast.
- **For a silvertone or tintype look**, turn up the brilliance, brighten your shadows, and possibly reduce your highlights before turning saturation all the way down, this leaves more detail in the greytone. Then tune the black point, and add sharpness and vignette to taste.

EXAMPLE HISTOGRAM:

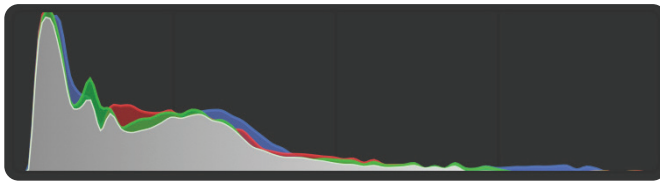
Histograms are bar graphs with brightness in the X axis and number of pixels in the Y. Histograms offer a quick way to visualize your exposure.



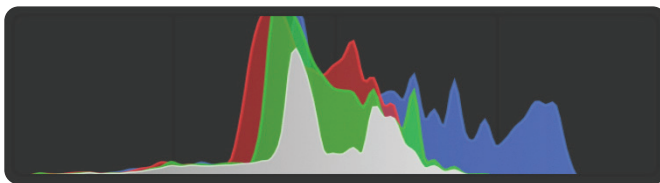
In the histogram below, the photograph is overexposed. You can tell because all the pixels are shown to be very bright.



The below image is probably too dark: most of the pixels are at the left. This leaves a great deal of usable color-space unused.



The histogram below might benefit from more contrast: most of the pixels are in the middle. The brights and darks are mostly unused.



RECOMMENDED APPS:



Photoshop Express (\$4.99/month)

Top features of Photoshop Express include excellent filters, the ability to edit foreground and background separately, and top-notch denoising.



Lensa AI (\$7.99/month)

This app offers a great collection of AI-powered filters for photos and videos. Adding filters doesn't start them at 100% intensity (this is convenient because we almost never use filters at full intensity). It can also do sky replacements and face adjustments.



Darkroom (\$6.99/month)

We love Darkroom's filter collection and how it adds filters and effects to the existing photo without needing to duplicate the photo. Darkroom can even add effects to Live Photos.



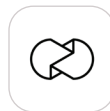
Diptic (\$2.99)

Quickly create collages from a huge library of templates.



GoDaddy Studio (Free)

Photos can easily be set into white space to create reels that don't crop the image. Quickly add text or titles to images or use images as overlays. Crop directly to sizes appropriate for different social media platforms.



Unfold (Free)

Combine images into beautiful layouts from a ton of great templates. Add text to create multimedia collage-like scrapbook arrangements.



Cullen Thomas is a Video Producer and Senior Instructor at iPhone Life, creating tips and guides to help users unlock the full potential of their iPhones. Cullen spent nine years as an instructor in media and communications at Maharishi University, lecturing on technical and artistic subjects. Cullen is a film-maker, a game designer, a sci-fi author, a coffee connoisseur, and an obsessive nerd for all things tech.