Photo Editing Guide

In-Camera Processing Explanation

An in-camera JPG is a processed RAW file. The camera processor adds **saturation**, **contrast**, and **sharpness**. After **exposure** – which a camera leaves the way you have the camera set – those three factors are the three main factors for making an image look good. (The image on a camera's screen is a JPG image being rendered according to the way a camera is set – vibrant, neutral, high contrast, low contrast, etc.)

A camera's processor has greater bit depth than image-editing software and so can render JPGs more smoothly and precisely. So, if wanting to use JPGs right out of camera, adjust camera settings precisely, and don't do a lot of post-processing.

Technical Explanations

Light Levels

Exposure: lightens or darkens everything equally
Fill Light: lightens up the shadows – mostly leaving brighter areas alone
Brightness/Luminance: lightens up the mid-tones – mostly leaving brighter areas alone
(changes the amount of white and black mixed in)

Color

Hue: adds or takes away a particular color, in varying degrees
Saturation: makes colors less intense or more intense, by adding or reducing grey color
(saturation of zero = black and white image)
Vibrance: brings out only muted colors (good for leaving skin tones natural)
Temperature: adds or takes away cool colors or warm colors
(yellow, orange, red = warm; blue, green, cyan = cool)

Light & Color

Contrast: brightens highlights and darkens shadows, usually saturating colors a little

Basic Process

Make sure the computer monitor is color calibrated

1. Start with the RAW file – the master file

IMAGE REALITY
- Straighten the image (straightening crop)
- Correct **lens distortion**
- CORRECT LIFE COLOR
- Adjust the **white balance**

LIGHT
- Adjust the **exposure** (photo should have been exposed to the right in camera)
- Adjust the **light levels** of the **shadows**, **mid tones**, and **highlights**
- Adjust the **fill light**, if necessary (usually accomplished with light levels, above)
- Adjust the **contrast**, if necessary (usually accomplished with light levels, above)

COLOR
- Adjust the **saturation** or **vibrance**
  - Whole image
  - Subject pop – saturate subject and/or de-saturate background and/or saturate one subject color and one background color and/or desaturate all background colors except one
- Adjust the **color balance (hue) / temperature**

OBJECT CLARITY
- **Sharpen** (sometimes produces more noise)
- **Noise** reduction (usually not necessary if a photo is to be downsized for the Internet)

SPECIAL EFFECTS
- Adjust the **hue** radically to create a color cast, to bring out one or two colors, or to show only one or two colors (the rest of the image being black and white)
- Change to **black and white** if the image is not nicely colorful and sharp
- Apply any after-effects –**text, borders, watermark**

2. Produce the desired output file from the edited RAW file – JPG, etc.

- **Crop** the image.
- **Resize** the image.
- **Sharpen** a little if it seems necessary.

3. Put in the 'Processed' folder the <u>edited</u> RAW file and the output file – JPG, etc.

Special Techniques

Black & White Techniques

- B&W technique: boost the luminance of warm tones (yellow, orange, red), and reduce the luminance of cool tones (blue, red, cyan).

- B&W technique: clip the blacks and whites to produce an old-style effect.

- B&W basic tone adjustments: start with a straight line as shown in the table, and make adjustments from that. Usually, the highlights need to be pulled up slightly, and the greys pulled down slightly. This creates a sideways S-curve.

Light Levels				
Black	Greys	Mids	Hilights	Whites
				•
			•	
		•		
	•			
•				

Photo File Storage

Drive System

Store files in 3 drives, labeled **'Q'**, **'R'**, **'S'**.
- **'S'** is the primary storage drive, kept at home.
- **'R'** is a backup drive, kept at home.
- **'Q'** is a backup drive, kept in the Photography Bag.

Backup System

Copy files from the camera's storage card to the 'S' drive. From the 'S' drive, back up those files to the other 2 drives and to cloud storage. Format the storage card when copying is complete.

The 'Q' drive also serves as an emergency backup in case a storage card is full during a shoot. In that case, copy files from the storage card to the 'Q' drive. Format the storage card when copying is complete. Later, from the 'Q' drive, back up the files to the other 2 drives.

Storage Folder System

One folder is labeled 'Processed'. It contains only edited files – edited RAW files, and output files that the edited RAW files were converted to – JPG files, etc. The folder can be organized internally as desired.

The other folders contain the original files from the camera: RAW, or RAW + JPG. These folders can be created and organized internally as desired.