



10 Tips for Checking Your Photographs

1) Is the exposure correct?

Obviously you expect the image to be in around the right range of exposure. But, check if slightly lightening or darkening the image makes it look better. Often a portrait will benefit from being a little lighter for example. A landscape colour may improve by being slightly darker.

2) Check the whites are not burnt out

Check the skies especially as these are often burnt out to complete white. Use the highlights slider to see if you can bring a little details back into the whites.

3) Check the shadows are not blocked up

Check the shadow areas, is there actually any detail visible? Often shadows will block up into just a dark lump. Use the shadows slider to see if you can bring a little more detail in to the shadows.

4) Is it sharp and in focus?

If you've checked the image on the little rear LCD screen on your camera then often it can look very sharp, but when you view on a big screen you realise it isn't. Crucially your main subject has to be sharp and clear. It matters less – and may be a benefit – if the background is soft.

Especially for portraits check the eyes are sharp – if the eyes are out of focus this is a bad detriment for a portrait.

5) Are the horizon and other lines straight?

The horizon has to be absolutely correct – we are very sensitive to the horizon being wonky. Even if you have no horizon, are there other horizontal or vertical lines in the image? If there are can they be straightened up?



6) Is the crop correct?

Use the crop to remove unwanted details and concentrate on the main subject, Check around the edges of the crop and make sure everything that should be in is in. Avoid cropping things half in, half out.

7) Are there any distractions in the background?

Check round the background, is there anything there that is distracting. Look for bright colours and light areas especially. Use the spot healer or clone tools to remove or tone down anything that is there.

8) Are there any highlights near the edge of the frame?

Always check the edges of the frame. You are particularly looking for any highlights close to the edge of the frame as these are very distracting, but check that nothing else sits on the edge that shouldn't. Any geometrical shape cut at the edge of the frame will draw the eye away from the main subject.

9) Do any people need spots or red-eye removing?

Check the people in the photograph, do they need any clean-up. No need to keep temporary defects like passing spots, cuts or scratches. If it's a more permanent feature such as a mole, then decide whether it should go or stay.

10) Are there any spots or dust to clean?

Check round the whole picture to see if there are dust marks or other spots that need cleaning – whether in the main subject or in the background. Are there minor distractions like plug sockets, signs, switches or anything like that which can be removed.