



HUMPHREY
& GRACE

ON EDITING PHOTOS

So you have the photo's. Some are looking great, but perhaps not quite the way you had hoped? Well that's usually how I feel about my photos - but I can see the potential. I look at photos straight off the camera as only half finished.

Then how can you make the most of them? Why editing, of course.

I completely adore editing. It has taken me a few years to find my style and I am constantly tweaking it a little, but the process has been so much fun!

Editing is where you can get creative. Fix things, apply filters and add effects. You can turn your photographs into digital works of art.

So let's get started...

HOW TO EDIT - THE WORKFLOW

Let's begin with a few simple steps from which most photographs will benefit, although the amount and exact technique is subjective. Editing is a huge topic and one I will be covering in depth on one of my eCourses, so for now here are the basic steps to start your editing off.

Below is a version of my basic editing workflow. Feel free to tweak it, it work's for me this way but you may prefer to edit in a different order.

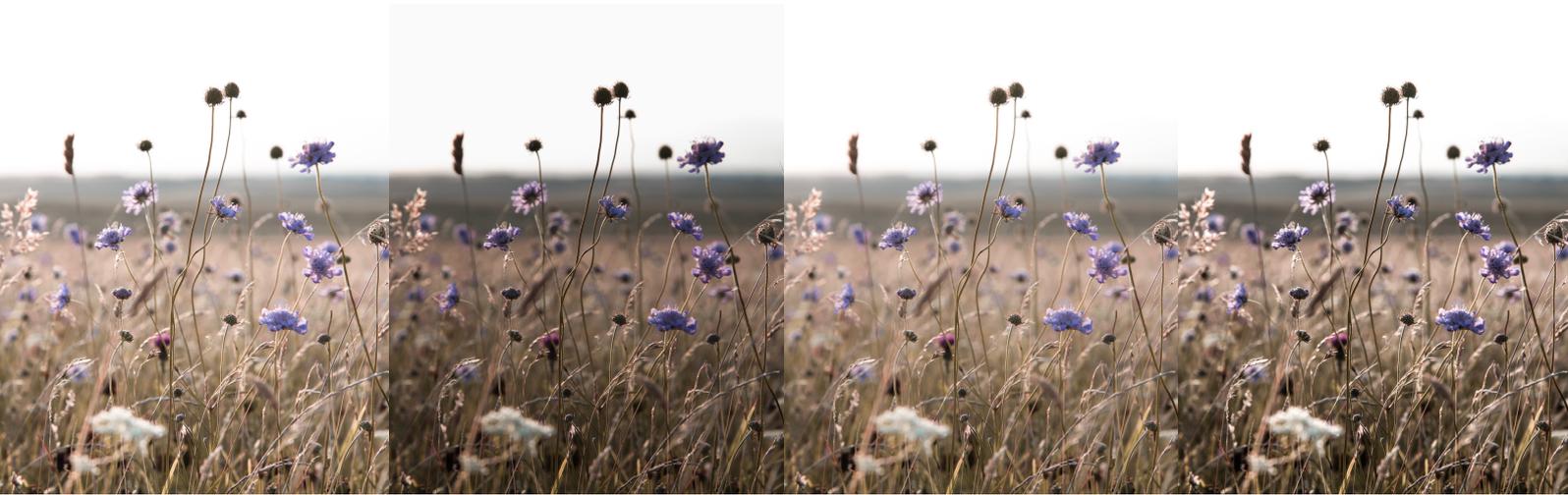
EXPOSURE

Bright and cheerful? Dark and moody? Here is the biggest step. Just be careful not to over expose and make your highlights blown out. Or under expose and lose your detail to the shadows. There will be the perfect point for each photo and finding it is key.

You want to ensure that you can see all the details in the image whether in the lightest part of the image or the darkest, There will be a range of exposures in which this point happily sits.

It is then up to you where, in this range, you leave the exposure. I usually sit my exposure at the upper end of this scale simply because I like brightness but that doesn't make any other point less right!

The two images to the left below demonstrate the range of exposure for this particular photograph. All of the subject is clear and visible in both images, any brighter and the definition begins to fade in the white areas of the photo. Any darker and the stems in the shadows become less defined.



SHARPEN

Take a moment to fix focus and define your subject, most photographs benefit from this regardless of the type of camera you are using.

CLARITY

Sometimes labelled differently, detail is another name for it. Aptly so. The two images to the right above demonstrate clarity. Think of it as picking up the detail in a photograph. Low clarity is less defined and perhaps a little dreamy, higher clarity picks up the details. I like to turn them up just a little bit to define my subject.

STRAIGHTEN

I've said it before and will say it again, straighten those horizons! Adjust your photo so that lines which should be vertical or horizontal are just that. Perspective is great as long as you have a straight line parallel with the edge of the frame as a reference point.

CROP

Putting aside the size and shape you want the image to be, cropping is also useful to re-position your subject in the frame. For example if you are photographing subjects that move (like the wild flowers above which all but dance in the wind) or have miscalculated your positioning, cropping is a great way to fix it. It is also a handy way to remove any vignetting (or darkening) around the edges from lens hoods or filters attached to a camera lens.

WHITE BALANCE

Try to make your whites, well, white. It is more pleasing to the eye to have a natural colour rather than a tint. The tint will actually apply to your whole photo but it is easiest to see it in areas which are white.

So here is an exaggerated version of the photo on the front page to demonstrate what I mean. I have adjusted the white into the most obvious tints and colour casts you will find on your photos. They are, in turn, blue, yellow, pink and green.



These colour tints can be further categorised into pairs, blue + yellow and pink + green. Now I am simplifying terms here as different apps use different names, magenta anyone? Temperature? Essentially they are the same pairs whatever the name and if you would like the technical reasons, they sit opposite each other on the colour wheel so each cancels the effect of its partner.

To edit your white balance you simply need to determine the colour cast on the white areas of your photo. Now this may take a little practise when the tint is subtle, but to get you started here are a few tips.

- Try squinting at the photo, detach your focus from the subject and look at the frame as a whole.
- Look at your photo next to a white background. The easiest way to do this is simply by looking at the photo in the photo roll on your phone - for iPhone at least - as the background is white. Another way to check is to pop it on Instagram without posting, and use the white background in the editing section as a guide.

Once you have decided which tint is most obvious, simply adjust it by turning up the opposite colour. For example, if your photo has a pink tint, turn up the green. You may then find, when this is fixed, that you will also need to adjust the other colour pairing to get to a true white.

It's revolutionary though and will change the look of your photos entirely.

APPS FOR EDITING

Recently I asked on an Instagram post what apps people use to edit. Rather than simply share my favourites - although I will include them too - I wanted to share with you what others use and recommend for editing.

Most editing apps do involve an initial purchase and some have in-app purchases to add additional features, these can really vary in what they give you and how expensive they are. I would say though that editing is one of the few things I think it's worth spending a little bit of money on...

So how to choose which app is for you? Well, trial and error plays a large part of it. As a starting point I would suggest choosing apps that your favourite photographers use, those that you know you like the effect of already. If you are following them on Instagram, check out their hashtags, or simply ask them in the comments if you feel you can.

Have a good read of the description on the app store, they often include screenshots and you may like the look of one more than another after a peek behind the scenes.

Most apps have a distinctive style and are fairly recognisable once you learn the indications. Afterlight? VSCO? ColorStory? Although their filters can be turned down in intensity they do have their own signatures.

As for me? I'm not a huge fan of filters for exactly the reasons above. They present a uniform whole no matter which photographers image you are viewing. Ways around this are many, you

could layer filters to create a unique look. Or use more than one app. Or simply create your own style with a more detailed editing app such as Lightroom or Photoshop.

Most apps use a slider function to adjust the intensity of the edit. Play with turning them up and down until you achieve the look you are happy with.

This is obviously not an exhaustive list of apps, it is compiled by your recommendations and ones I use often. I have an iPhone and all these apps are available for it, however after searching online, it looks like PicTapGo and Priime may not be available for android users.

Opinions are mine after having had a play with all of them!

APP	PROS	CONS
APPS FOR PHOTO EDITING		
<u>Lightroom</u> extensive editing tools for an app, minimal filters	OK I am completely biased here as this is my go-to app. The editing tools are amazing with only a few gaps that would be useful. If you like the flexibility of tweaking each aspect of your image individually in detail, this is the app to use.	To enjoy the full editing suite for Lightroom and PS Express you will need an Adobe Creative Cloud subscription - though there are also more basic versions available without subscription
<u>PS Express</u> a streamlined version of Photoshop software for computers	A close second, though I find Lightroom easier to use, but PS Express also includes extra elements such as blemish removal and red eye correct. It also has a great range of filters.	
<u>Snapseed</u> Google's own photo editing app	Easy to use, no sliders, you simply move your finger across the screen to adjust. There are some intermediate editing tools too on top of the basic functions.	basic filters and a tendency to save photos with a colour tint
<u>VSCO</u> with a community of it's own - via the app	One of the original editing apps and a firm favourite with many for good reason. It has great editing tools and adjustable filters to suit lots of styles.	filters tend to soften detail in photographs, clarity and sharpening will compensate to a degree
<u>PicTapGo</u> simple and easy, includes layering of filters	The first editing app I used and still perfect as a first step into editing as it's options are fewer than some apps. Easy sliders for filters. Very basic editing tools.	it's really quite basic
<u>A Color Story</u> editing and filters with a focus on colourful results	A great all in one app, edit with basic tools, add filters, light leaks and other creative effects. A sound place to begin. If this had been available when I started editing I think I would have loved it. Actually I do love it now!	it's all about the in app purchases for filter packs. There are filters to suit all sorts though

<u>Prime</u> Filters designed by Instagrammers, for Instagrammers	Standard basic editing tools which are easy to use. The filter pack I bought has some lovely choices. There's a lot of filter packs to choose from too!	each filter pack is an in-app purchase, only 99p but it could soon add up!
<u>Instagram</u> It's not all about photo sharing!	Not to be overlooked, Instagram's editing tools and filters have improved massively over time. As a place to start learning how to edit, Instagram is actually great	Instagram tools are the perfect place to start but are limited
<u>Afterlight</u> basic editing and filters are the main attributes	Add light leaks to your photos, adjustable in strength and colour, add filters by layering onto your existing photograph, this is having a revival on Instagram with its 'old photo/dust' filters	it's subjective, but I prefer a real light leak and the skill it takes to capture it well
<u>SKRWT</u> perspective and lens corrections	Easily straighten, adjust perspective and fix lens distortion with basic sliders	there aren't many, it does exactly what it says it should!
APPS FOR ADDING TEXT		
<u>Spark Post</u> for adding text and graphics	One of my apps of choice for adding text with excellent flexibility and a huge range of options and templates. The cover image on this post was done - in part - with this app. I also use it to watermark and add frames for Instagram stories	a little fiddly to get the hang of all the functions and finding the basics took me a while... Both apps are incredibly flexible and allow you to save your own templates
<u>Canva</u> similar to above	Similar to the above, including numerous adjustable templates, I regularly use this for the white frames on my Instagram stories	
<u>Word Swag</u> the font app of the moment, Instagram Stories are full of this	A user friendly app with poster style font and options, this is the app I use for most of my Instagram stories. From calligramphy to modern fonts, it is easy and quick to use	there is no option to save your templates, each post is started from scratch
<u>Hype Type</u> for adding animated text to your photos & films	This app is perfect for adding animated text, it is easy to adjust font, design and for how long the text stays on the frame. Another favourite for Instagram Stories.	It can squash the resolution of films a little
<u>Rhonna</u> for adding text and graphics	Slightly more creative than Spark Post, Rhonna is also good fun to use for creative text and borders	in app purchases for fonts and designs soon add up
APPS FOR CREATIVE EDITING		
<u>Lumyer</u> animated effects for your photos	Add a moving layer to your photos, creating the effect of a cinemagraph with a simple filter. There are many filter choices from weather, to wildlife with many more besides.. It's good fun!	The effect is sometimes pretty unrealistic and it can alter the resolution of photos so they appear blurry.

<u>Plotagraph</u> animates photographs	This one has been all over Instagram for a while now. Used well it can add movement to your photograph, think clouds, waves, water. Worth playing around with if creative editing is your thing!	Used badly it just looks a bit confusing, and it can jump
<u>Photoshop Mix</u> creative editing, cut out and layer several images	This is a brilliant app for creative editing, I haven't played with it much yet but it has great potential if creative edits are your thing. So much fun layering bits of photos!	it's a bit fiddly
<u>BokehCamFX</u> adds bokeh to your photos	The most editable bokeh I have found, you can select size, colour and opacity of each individual spot of light as well as exact placement on your image	it's time consuming to use
APPS FOR EDITING FILMS		
<u>iMovie</u> basic edits	it's always worth mentioning the app that comes with your phone if you are an iPhone user...	the app is so basic that it isn't really adding much to your editing arsenal
<u>VidLab</u> from basic edits to adding filters, most need are covered by this app	This falls into both photo and video editing, you can add layers to photograph very much like Lumyer but with the added bonus that you can add them to existing films too. It also allows basic video editing, creating sequences of different clips, collages, text, filters, recording sound.	keeps the original dimensions and does not allow cropping, filter packs are in app purchases
<u>Video Editor</u> the one that will crop your frame size	Perhaps not snappily titled, but this the app I go to to crop videos in portrait format. It also has basic editing capabilities.	it does compress videos
<u>Cinemagraph</u> for moving elements on still pictures	The single best suite for making cinemagraphs in my opinion, something worth investing in if you produce a lot of films though	the annual subscription is really pricey
<u>KiraKira</u> adds a glitter effect to your photo/films	OK so when I was looking for an app to add sparkle/bokeh to a new years post, this is the one I found. It does just that, adds sparkle to photos/films	the app selects what will glitter, it doesn't always get it right

The following photo has been edited with a basic edit in Lightroom, followed by filters applied from L - R : A Color Story, Snapseed, Afterlight, Priime

One thing to bear in mind though - after all that - is that the basic editing can be achieved with many of the above apps. Including Instagram. And I do believe that is a great place to start experimenting.



FURTHER READING

On photo editing with apps

<http://www.humphreyandgrace.co.uk/photo-editing-with-apps/>

On editing white balance with apps

<http://www.humphreyandgrace.co.uk/editing-white-balance-with-apps/>

I am launching more eBooks and eCourses soon so be sure to check back to

<http://www.humphreyandgrace.co.uk/learn/>

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