

PRODUCTION TOOLS VOL. ONE *by Kevin Kubota*

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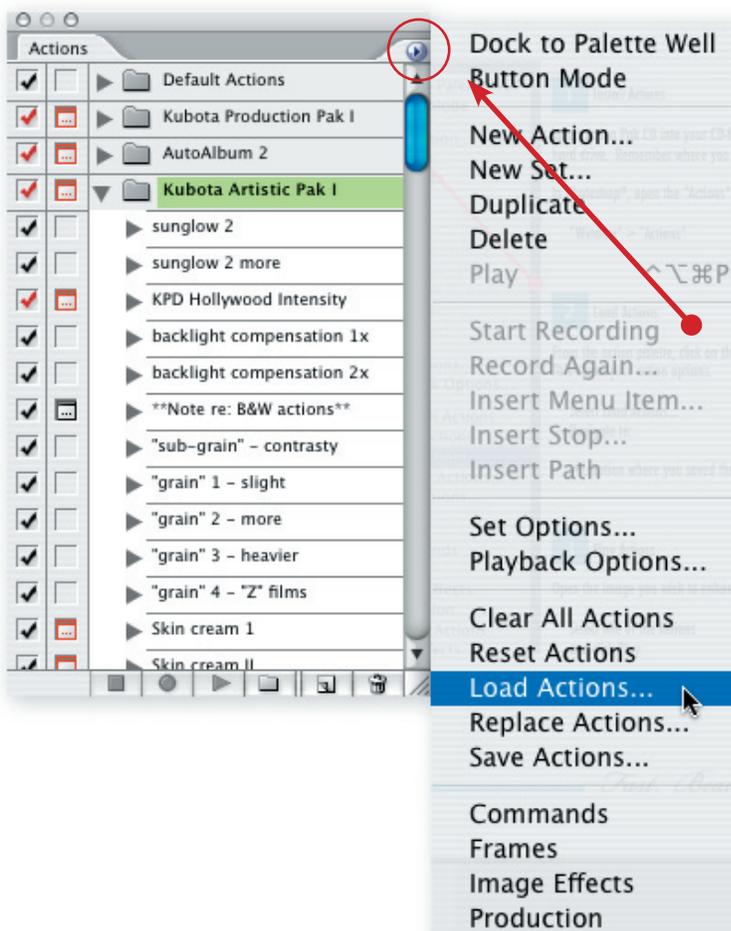
“What do you call the fear of driving through a dark passageway with 3 other people in the vehicle?”

“Carpool Tunnel Syndrome.”

Hey, so maybe making up jokes is not my forte, but I’m pretty darn good at writing actions. The moral of the story is: don’t do repetitive tasks in Photoshop®! Actions can save the day, and I’d like to be your Action Hero. We use these tools everyday in our studio and have saved ourselves countless hours of repetitive work. Heck, we’ve probably saved enough time to take an extra vacation every year - seriously!

To use these actions, you need to have Photoshop® 7 or higher. Actions are recorded sequences of events within Photoshop. Some actions are easy to record, some require complex steps, troubleshooting, and planning. All should save you countless hours of time over the long haul - giving you more time for the really fun stuff.

This brief manual will cover some basic info on using actions, things to look out for, and tips for using our actions on your images.



1 Install Actions

Insert Action Pak CD into your CD-ROM drive. Copy the contents onto your hard drive. Remember where you saved them!

In Photoshop®, open the “Actions” palette by selecting “Window” > “Actions”

2 Load Actions

From the action palette, click on the little triangle at the top right corner. This opens your action options.

Select Load Actions...
Navigate to:

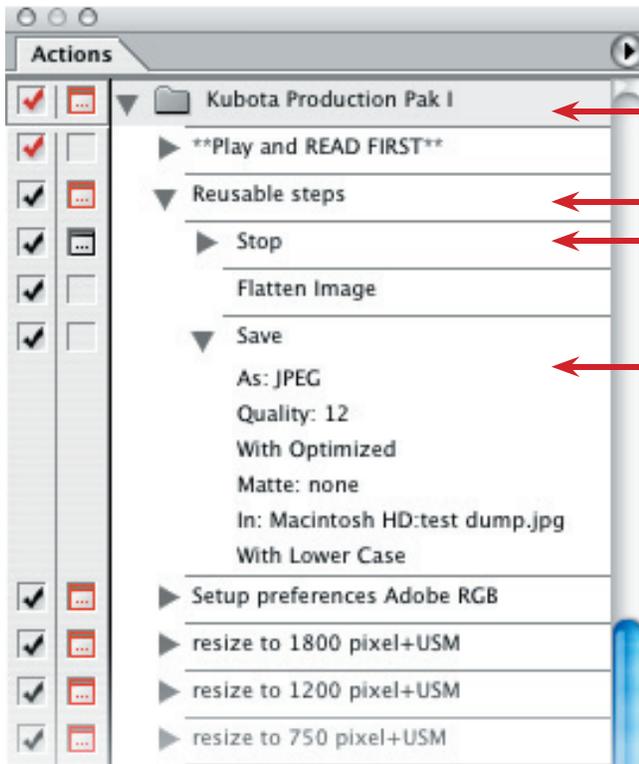
- Location where you saved the Action Pak in Step 1

3 Play Actions

Open the image you wish to enhance.

Select one of the Actions
and click Play.

The Actions Palette



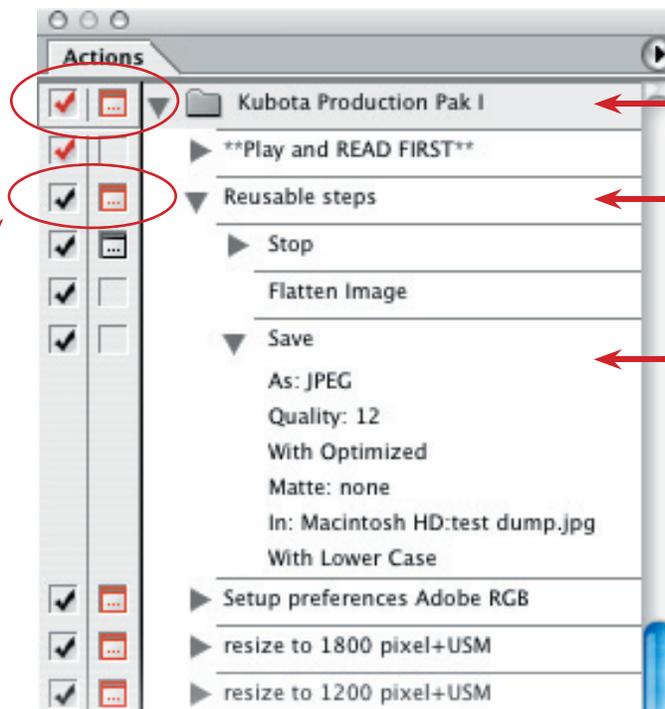
This is the action SET

This is an ACTION

These are the action STEPS
Each action can have numerous steps

These are the step SETTINGS
This is all the information about the settings that were recorded in a step.

Caution! Do not click in either of these columns unless you know what you are doing! If you click a box next to an ACTION or ACTION SET, you could inadvertently turn EVERY step OFF or EVERY dialog OFF. This is NOT undoable or reversible! Some actions need certain steps off and certain ones on. If it happens, you'll need to throw the entire set to the trash and re-load it from the original .atn file. Photoshop® CS2 will display a warning box before you are able to turn this option ON or OFF.



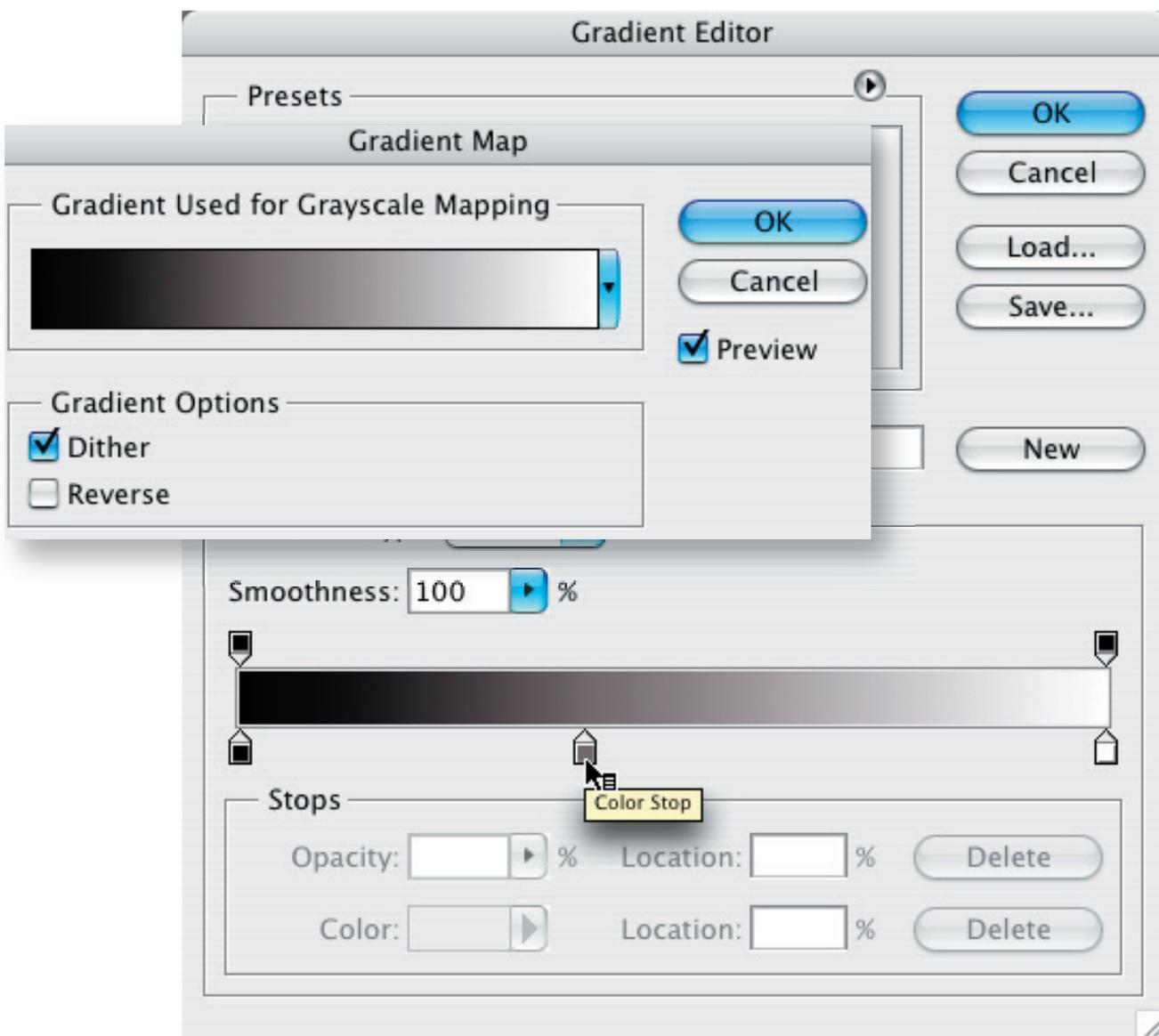
This is the action SET

This is an ACTION

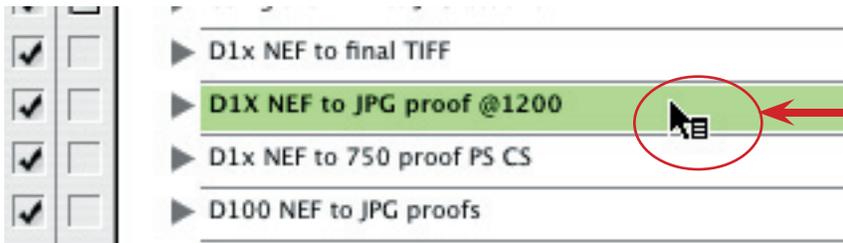
These are the action STEPS
Each action can have numerous steps

No Touchie!
Only click here, next to an individual STEP, when necessary.

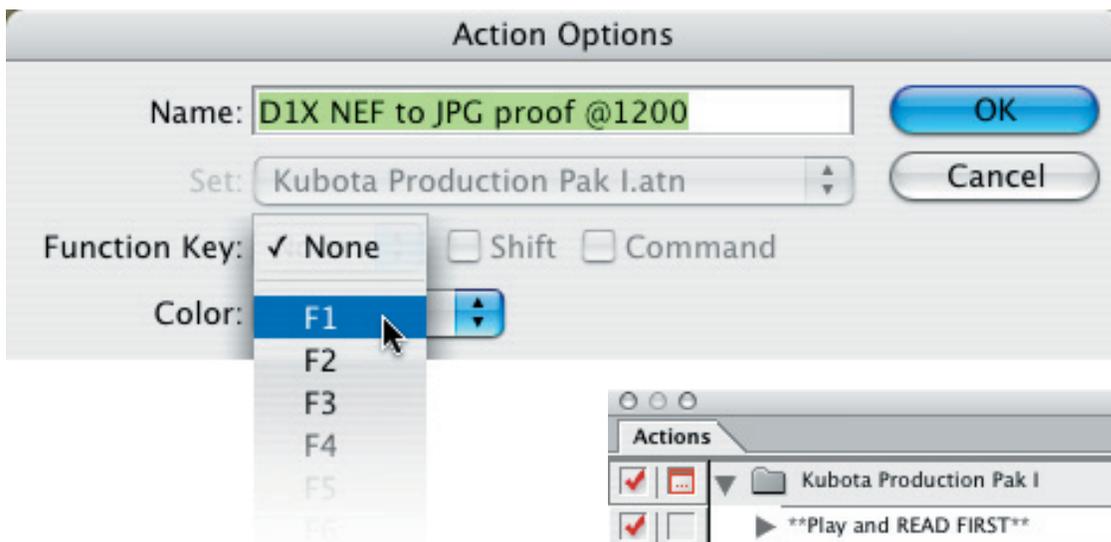
- Some actions have instructions in the form of a separate action in the palette. It is usually placed just before an action that needs some explanation or setup. Before running an action, see if there is a “*Setup” or “*READ” action just before it in the list. If so, run the setup/read action first.
- Many of the actions work great when you combine them. For example, you may run a B&W action that you like, followed by a warming gel, followed by a Film Grain, followed by a border and keyline. This is how you can mix-n-match to get a variety of unique custom looks. Actions that work well together are generally placed next to each other in the list.
- The base settings in the actions will usually give beautiful results. But, the beauty of it all is that you can tweak the settings to get just the look you want. A good example is the Gradient Map B&W actions. The gradient map adjustment layer can be double-clicked, which will open the settings for editing. Click on the gradient graphic to edit the gradient settings. Try moving the middle color stop left or right to change the middle gray values. Or, double click the middle color stop and give it a hint of warmth. This makes beautiful, rich B&W images or sepia/color tones.



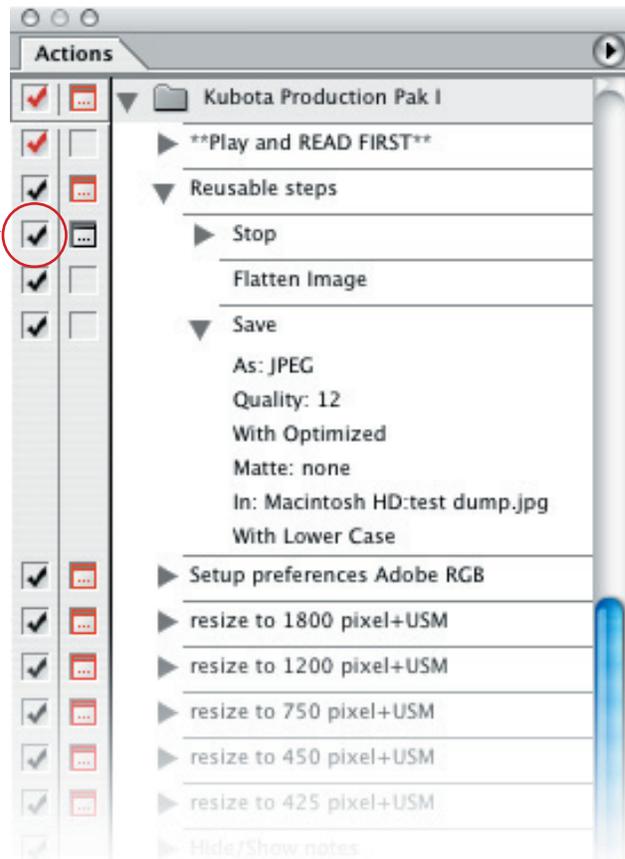
- Don't forget to assign hot keys to your favorite actions! This one step alone can save hours a month (OK, maybe one hour a month, but that's enough for an extra special long lunch!) If you find yourself using a favorite action all the time, double click next to the name of the action and assign it to a function key. We put labels on our keyboard showing what each F key does.



Make sure to double-click to the side of the name, here...



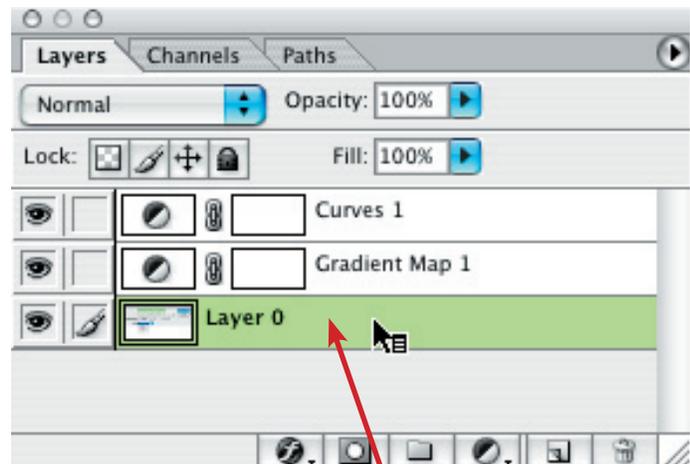
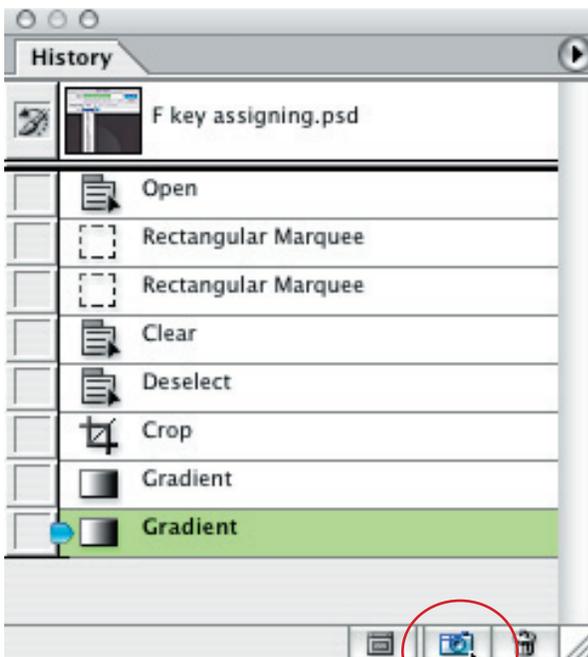
- Many of the actions have steps in them that stop and present a dialog with instructions on its use. After you have used the action a few times, you may not want the instructions to bother you any more. No problemo, you can disable any step by clicking the check box next to its name. BE CAREFUL to only click on the check next to the individual step, not the whole action. You would normally look for the STOP step and turn it off.



- If an action is stopped - because a stop step may ask you to do something before continuing, you can resume where you left off by simply clicking PLAY on the action palette again.
- Some actions have SAVE steps in them. They often need the save step in order to run correctly in batches. Make a habit of OPENING AN ACTION before running it to see what's inside. If it has a SAVE step, it will try to save your file (unsuccessfully). So, you must either turn OFF the SAVE step or customize it for your computer.

To customize a SAVE step, or any step for that matter, just DOUBLE CLICK on it. This will allow you to re-record THAT STEP ONLY. This is perfect for changing the location of a save step to a spot on your computer. If you plan to use the action in a batch, the actual LOCATION that was recorded in the save step is not important - as the batch dialog will allow you to over-ride the destination. However, the save step is important because it determines the FILE TYPE and COMPRESSION settings for the saved file. Don't disable save steps for actions that are to be used in batches.

- Some of the actions use complex layering schemes to achieve a result. If your document is already heavily layered. Things could get confusing. It might be a good idea to flatten your image first, before running the action, so the action can't get confused. You can always make a SNAPSHOT of your current image before running the action, so that you can restore it pre-action condition if you don't like the effect. If you don't flatten, at least make sure your main image layer is the ACTIVE layer before running the action.



The active image layer

Create a SNAPSHOT of your current document

Actions in detail

Action: ****Play and READ FIRST****

Just play it and do what it says!

Action: **Reusable steps**

Steps that can be copied into other actions by dragging and dropping.

Action: **Setup preferences Adobe RGB**

Set up your Photoshop® preferences to Adobe RGB color space and a few other preferences. Listed in action when it's run.

Action: **resize to 1800 pixel+USM**

Action: **resize to 1200 pixel+USM**

Action: **resize to 750 pixel+USM**

Action: **resize to 450 pixel+USM**

Action: **resize to 425 pixel+USM**

The above will fit the image to an imaginary box with the specified dimensions. Vertical and horizontal images are the same size. It is sharpened and saved as a high quality jpg for proofing and on-screen viewing. These are designed to work in batch processes to prepare your full size originals for efficient use in slide shows and proofing.

Action: **Hide/Show notes**

Will toggle the visibility of instructional sticky notes.

Action: **Portrait setup**

Automatically prepares the necessary layers for retouching portraits. Instructions for what to do with the layers are displayed as a sticky note. Use the previous action to hide this note while you work.

Action: **Clarify lite**

Cuts the "haze" in some digital images. Adds a bit of localized contrast and gives images just a little snap.

Action: **Clarify med**

Heavier version of above.

Action: **Sharpen USM 228, .8, 6**

A nice general sharpening setting for images 200-300 dpi.

Action: **Sharpen KPD Magic Sharp**

A variation of the above.

Action: **Sharpen CH**

Another sharpening variation without using USM. USM may be added afterwards if desired.

Action: **Sharpen custom hi-pass**

Another sharpening variation without using USM. USM may be added afterwards if desired.

Action: **Sharpen custom hi-pass +USM**

As above but with USM added. Great for those really soft or slightly out of focus images.

Action: **D1 magenta remove**

Removes the inherent magenta cast from skin tones.

Action: **D1x magenta remove**

Removes the inherent magenta cast from skin tones.

Action: D60 Magenta remove

Removes the inherent magenta cast from skin tones.

Action: Canon 1D Ultimate perfection

Just makes it better.

Action: rotate 90 CCW

Pretty self explanatory, don't you think! Assign a function key to this one!

Action: Canvas Horizontal 108/112

Increases the canvas size proportionately for adding borders. Use on horizontal images.

Action: Canvas Vertical 108/112

Increases the canvas size proportionately for adding borders. Use on vertical images.

Action: Canvas Horizontal w/ keyline 108/112

Increases the canvas size proportionately for adding borders. Use on horizontal images. Also adds a thin black keyline around the image area. The keyline size and color can be easily edited.

Action: Canvas Vertical w/ keyline 108/112

Increases the canvas size proportionately for adding borders. Use on vertical images. Also adds a thin black keyline around the image area. The keyline size and color can be easily edited.

Action: lighten via SCREEN 1/3 stop

Similar to a 1/3 stop exposure increase. Works differently than a simple levels or curves adjustment as it raises all levels like an exposure would, but keeps the image from washing out like "Brightness/Contrast".

Action: lighten via SCREEN 1/2 stop

As above - 1/2 stop

Action: lighten via SCREEN 2/3 stop

As above - 2/3 stop

Action: lighten via SCREEN 1 stop

As above - 1 stop

Action: KK shadow detail genie

Brings out shadow detail and raises shadow values without adversely affecting highlight detail. Adjustment is targeted primarily at shadow tones.

Action: Res up - how to use

Instructions for interpolation actions.

Action: DELETE sticky notes

A quick way to clear the sticky note instructions.

Action: Res up 110% method

The popular interpolation method for making over 200% enlargements.

Action: Res up 110% bicubic smooth PS CS

The popular interpolation method for making over 200% enlargements. Uses Photoshop® CS's new Bicubic Smooth method.

Action: Res up 5 steps

Plays Res up 110% 5 times in a row

Action: Res up 5 steps bicubic smooth PS CS

Plays Res up Bicubic Smooth 110% 5 times in a row.

Action: Res down 90% method

Same interpolation method for sizing down considerably. Best for web images from full sized originals.

Action: Res down 5 steps

Plays Res down 110% 5 times in a row

Action: Make full frame VERT within 8x10 @250 dpi

Places your full frame vertical image, without cropping, into a "matted" 8x10 page

Action: Make full frame VERT within 8x10 @250 dpi larger

Same as above but a slightly larger image (less matt area)

Action: Make full frame VERT within 8x10 @300 dpi

Same as above but at 300 dpi

Action: Make full frame VERT within 8x10 @300 dpi larger

Same as above but at 300 dpi

Action: Make full frame HORIZ within 8x10 @250 dpi

Same as above but for horizontal images

Action: Make full frame HORIZ within 8x10 @250 dpi larger

Same as above but for horizontal images

Action: Make full frame HORIZ within 8x10 @300 dpi

Same as above but for horizontal images

Action: Make full frame HORIZ within 8x10 @300 dpi larger

Same as above but for horizontal images

Action: add a keyline layer 6 px

Adds a nice simple keyline around the image area. Use alone or with the above actions.

Action: add a keyline layer 12 px

Same but a little larger keyline

Action: Using the RAW to JPG actions...

Instructions. Just play to read.

Action: D1x NEF to final TIFF

Action: D1X NEF to JPG proof @1200

Action: D1x NEF to 750 proof PS CS

Action: D100 NEF to JPG proofs @1200

Action: D2H NEF to JPG proof @1200

Action: Fuji S2 Raw to JPG proof @1200

Action: Canon 1Ds RAW to JPG proof @ 1200

Action: Canon 10D Raw to JPG @1200

All above will use Photoshop® CS's RAW converter to convert RAW images into lower resolution proofs in JPG format. This is very useful for creating copies to use in slide shows, image cataloging programs, proofs, etc. The different final sizes are noted with each. e.g. "@1200" means the image's longest dimension will be 1200 pixels. Note: You can duplicate any action step and change the final jpg size to suit your needs. Just select an action and choose "duplicate" from the action options menu. Then, with any image open, double-click on the "Fit Image" step and type in your desired dimensions. You can then rename the action by double clicking the name of it.

Action: *SETUP for "Save a PSD+JPG"

Instructions for using the next action

Action: Save PSD + JPG tweak

This action save mucho time when you are tweaking or working your final PSD (Photoshop® Document) and want to save the PSD as a master file and also flatten it, size it down, and save a JPG copy of it in a separate folder for placing in your slide shows, image catalogs, etc. This action does it all in one step. You need to setup the save locations once when you start working on a series of images. All subsequent images will be placed in the same two folders. Do the setup again whenever you start on a new series.

Action: Auto Match Mtns. no clip

Similar to Photoshop®'s "Auto Contrast" command, but modified to avoid clipping any detail.

Action: Auto Match Mtns. no clip mid bump

Same as above but with an added brightening of the midtones.

If you would like more information on other training products:
The Digital RAW Workflow for Photoshop® CS2, Photoshop® for Digital Photographers, The Digital PhotoFlow,
AutoAlbum, Mini-Tutorials, more Actions, or live workshops, please visit our website:

www.KubotaImageTools.com

info@KubotaImageTools.com

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