



# JR Macros: Photographic Retouching

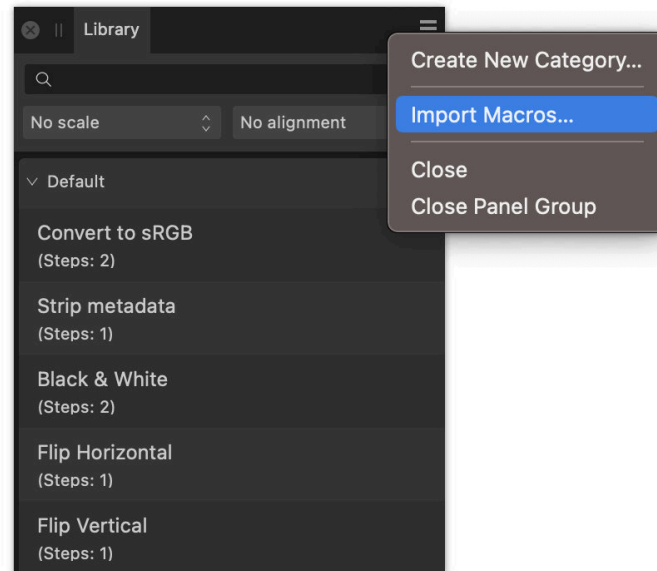


# Introduction

This macro pack contains various functionality to enhance photography post-production workflows.

This functionality includes luma-masked curve adjustments (typically known as 'luminosity masks'), various tonal manipulations such as matte contrast lift, foreground/sky separation, warm sunset and autumnal foliage, structural enhancement, diffuse glow effects, exposing dust spots for retouching, highlight compression and more.

Many of the macros are intentionally non-destructive, preventing the need to continually merge layers—this is especially useful for complex documents as it maintains smaller file sizes and allows for changes to be made quickly to underlying layers.



# Installation

1. Extract the *.afmacros* file to a directory of your choice.
2. In Affinity Photo, you will need to expose the **Library** panel. Go to **Window>Library**.
3. Click the small icon at the top right of the **Library** panel and choose **Import Macros**.
4. Navigate to the directory containing the *.afmacros* file and select it, then click **Open** (or double click the file).
5. The **Library** panel will then be populated with the macros from that category. If you are installing any other macro packs, repeat the process for those categories.

Tip: you can also drag-drop the *.afmacros* file onto a blank area of the app and it will immediately import and be shown on the Library panel. You can bulk import multiple *.afmacros* files this way.



Lift & Desaturate

# Macros

## Macro

## Functionality

### Foreground/Background Masking Setup

*Run this with an active selection. Takes a selection of the subject in your image and creates a series of masked adjustment layers in Foreground and Background groups.*

This macro automatically sets up a live noise reduction filter that is applied to the background (so the subject or initial selection is unaffected). You can then use Curves and HSL adjustments to modify the foreground and background independently.

### Colour & Luminosity Separation

Takes the selected layer and splits it up into a colour layer and a luminosity layer. The luminosity layer is calculated using a weighted intensity conversion and 'sits' above the colour layer.

This setup allows you to retouch colour information without affecting overall brightness and clarity of the image, simply by working underneath the **Luminosity & Detail** layer. You can also blur the colour layer to reduce optical aberrations or other artefacts: this can be achieved non-destructively by using a live filter layer.

### Luminosity & Frequency Separation

Merges a new layer and splits it up into three layers: **Colour & Tone**, **Luminosity** and **Detail**.

This separates colour and tone from high frequency detail, allowing you to work on them separately. It also introduces a luminosity layer that maintains brightness of the image whilst you work on the colour information below it.

When you run the macro, you will be prompted to configure the low and high pass radius values. For the most effective workflow, you will want to ensure these are the same. The default value of 4px is usually sufficient for most workflows, but you may need to increase this for higher resolution imagery (e.g. 40MP and greaster), or decrease it for lower resolution imagery (e.g. less than 16MP).



Luma Masked Curves (Weighted)



Luma Masked Curves  
Luma Masked Curves (Weighted)

Adds three Curves adjustment layers that target shadows, mid-tones and highlights. This allows you to make very specific changes to each tonal range.

The **Weighted** version will ensure the adjustments only affect weighted luminosity and not colour intensity.

Luma Masked Saturation Curves

Adds three Curves adjustment layers that affect saturation, targeting shadows, mid-tones and highlights. Use these for an interesting approach to changing saturation of distinct tonal regions.

Luma Masked Colour Curves

Adds three Curves adjustment layers that affect colour intensity and balance, targeting shadows, mid-tones and highlights. Like the saturation curve macro above, this provides an experimental way of changing colour balance and intensity in the image.

Luma Masked HSL

Adds three HSL adjustment layers that target shadows, mid-tones and highlights. This lets you make more specific adjustments to colour range intensity and luminosity.

Luma Masked Painting Layers

Produces three pixel layers with an Overlay blend mode, 50% opacity. The layers are blended to shadows, mid-tones and highlights respectively.

This allows you to dodge and burn non-destructively using the Paint Brush Tool (B), but keep the brush work restricted to these three tonal regions depending on the pixel layer you paint onto.

0-100 Range Curves  
0-100 Range Curves (Weighted)

Creates a group structure with several Curves adjustment layers, each targeting a 20% region of the image's tonal range. This is similar to Luma Masked Curves but more granular, allowing you to make even more specific tonal changes.

Be careful with this approach, however, as extreme changes restricted to smaller tonal regions may produce bad results.

The **Weighted** version will ensure the adjustments do not affect colour intensity.



Luma Masked Saturation and Colour Curves

Painting Layer (Overlay)  
Painting Layer (Reflect)  
Painting Layer (Glow)

Quickly sets up a new pixel layer with the labelled blend mode so you can non-destructively paint onto it with the Paint Brush Tool.

**Overlay** is set to 25% opacity and is best for tonal dodging and burning with greyscale colours.

**Reflect** is set to 10% opacity and is best for enhancing areas of reflected/bounced light with coloured brush work.

**Glow** is set to 10% opacity and is best for subtle enhancement of bright areas with both greyscale and colour brush work.

Weighted Shadow Boost

Boosts shadow (and lower midtone) detail whilst completely preserving highlight detail.

Click the ***Weighted Shadow Boost*** thumbnail to open the settings dialog. This allows you to control the strength of the shadow boost, and also modify individual weighting for the R, G and B channels.

Enhance Shadow Contrast

Raises shadow contrast in a controlled fashion, using a luminosity mask with gaussian blur to prevent unnatural looking transitions in highlight regions.

Altering the opacity of the ***Enhance Shadow Contrast*** layer will allow you to control the strength of the effect.

Enhance Midtone Contrast

Provides a decent luminosity boost targeting the midtones. The result tends to enhance 'perceptual' contrast and sharpness.

Subtle Midtone Contrast

As the name suggest, provides a very subtle enhancement of mid-tone detail and contrast. Useful near the end of editing to enhance edge detail slightly without it looking deliberately sharpened.

Midtones Lift

Produces a very subtle luminosity boost to mid-tone regions. Good for generally brightening dark mid-tone areas in contrasty images.



Enhance Shadow Contrast



### Highlight Preserving Tone Boost

Boosts both brightness and contrast whilst protecting bright highlight detail.

### Highlight Preserving Gamma Boost

Boosts gamma (making the image appear more 'washed out' and brighter) whilst protecting bright highlight detail.

### Landscape & Sky Separation 01 Landscape & Sky Separation 02

Two different approaches to tonally 'separating' landscape and sky detail. These generally assume sky detail is blue and landscape detail is red/yellow/green.

Method 01 is less intense and tends to also affect colour intensity. Method 02 is more intense (you can control its strength by altering the opacity) and tends to affect luminosity more than colour.

### Saturate Blues & Greens

Uses a non-destructive procedural texture equation to increase the intensity of blue and green channel values. Don't forget you can control the strength of the effect by modifying the *Saturate Blues & Greens* layer opacity.

### Lift & Desaturate

Provides a non-linear gamma boost that also reduces colour intensity.

### Punchy Sky 01 Punchy Sky 02

Two different approaches to isolating and improving contrast of sky detail. Do experiment, as the results may be suitable for one type of image but unsuitable for another.

### Flatten Contrast 01 Flatten Contrast 02

Two different methods for 'flattening' (reducing) global contrast across the image. Method 02 is generally more aggressive and will produce a flatten result compared to method 01.

### Reduce Highlights

Uses a luminosity-blended Curves adjustment to reduce global highlight intensity. This will also affect colour intensity (typically saturating tones).

### Highlight Compression

Compresses highlight tones using a logarithmic function. This is really useful near the end of editing if highlights are a little too intense and difficult to manipulate without altering overall contrast of the image.



### Matte Contrast Lift

Useful as a starting point for further editing: creates a 'matte' black crush effect that is pleasing for most imagery, and boosts general contrast in the scene.

You can change the opacity of the *Matte Contrast Lift* group to control the strength of the effect.

### Matte Black Look

Produces a 'matte' black appearance that lifts and compresses black levels and also reduces colour intensity.

Click the *Matte Black Look* layer thumbnail for configurable options such as Per Channel Offset, Min/Max Blend and a Gamma transform slider.

### Matte Black Lift

Provides a straightforward black lift effect that is more isolated to the shadow tones compared to Matte Black Look.

Clicking the *Matte Black Lift* layer thumbnail will allow you to control the black level offset using a slider.

### NEW: Faded Matte Effect

Provides another option for achieving a matte black effect using Lighten blending.

Click the *Faded Matte Effect* layer thumbnail for **Matte Strength** and **Matte Clamping** options.

### Luma-Weighted Matte Look

Creates a less dramatic 'matte' soft contrast look that only affects luminosity (perceptual brightness) and leaves colour alone.

### Warm Sunset

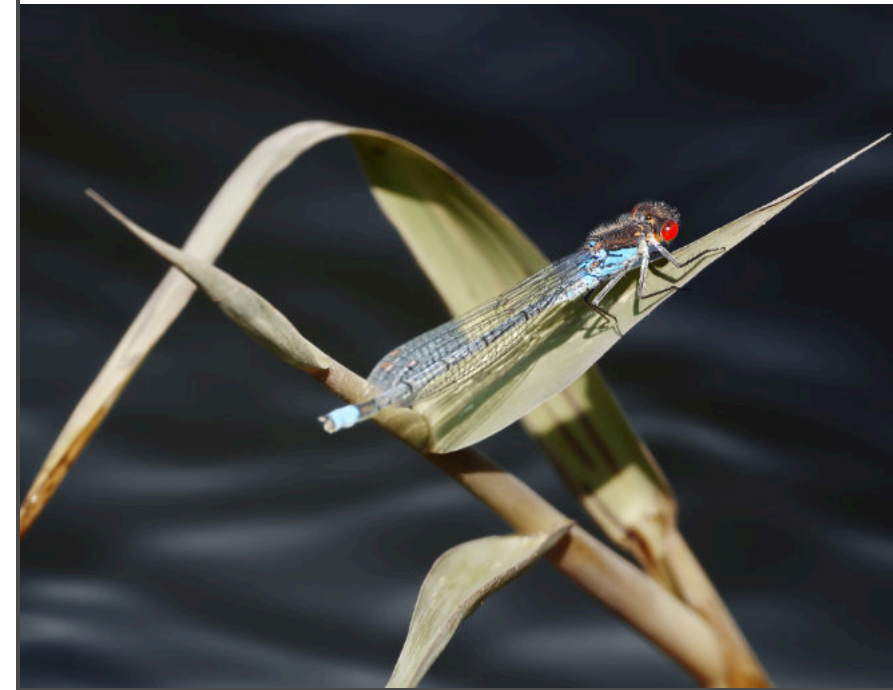
Bathes the entire image in a warm colour cast without looking too unnatural. You can change the *Warm Sunset* group opacity to control the strength of the effect.

### Autumnal Foliage

A quick way to shift yellow and green foliage tones so they look more autumnal (red/orange).

### Low Light Muted Tones

Intended for use with low light photography that contains difficult artificial lighting. This boosts shadows and mid-tones generally and produces a highlight saturation roll-off. The effect may be too strong by default, so do experiment with the layer opacity.



Matte Black Look



## NEW: Enhance Structure & Contrast

Performs structure and local contrast enhancement simultaneously, giving the image much more texture.

You can change the opacity of the **Enhance Structure & Contrast** group to control its strength.

### Structure Enhancement (Foreground) Structure Enhancement (Sky)

Non-destructively enhances structure or texture. The **Foreground** version blends predominantly into shadow and mid-tone detail, whereas the **Sky** version blends into highlight detail.

### Local Contrast & Texture (Merge) Local Contrast & Texture (Single Layer)

Attempts to produce a result similar to the Tone Mapping Persona's Local Contrast slider: produces more micro detail than Structure Enhancement.

This macro also creates a mask layer and selects it so you can immediately start applying the effect selectively (as it can be very strong). You can easily use CMD+I / Ctrl+I to invert the mask and paint back in with white over the areas you want to structurally enhance.

The **Merge** macro will create a merged layer at the top of the layer stack with all your work so far. The **Single Layer** version only enhances the layer you currently have selected.

### Super Texture (Merge) Super Texture (Single Layer)

Creates an even stronger contrast & texture enhancement.

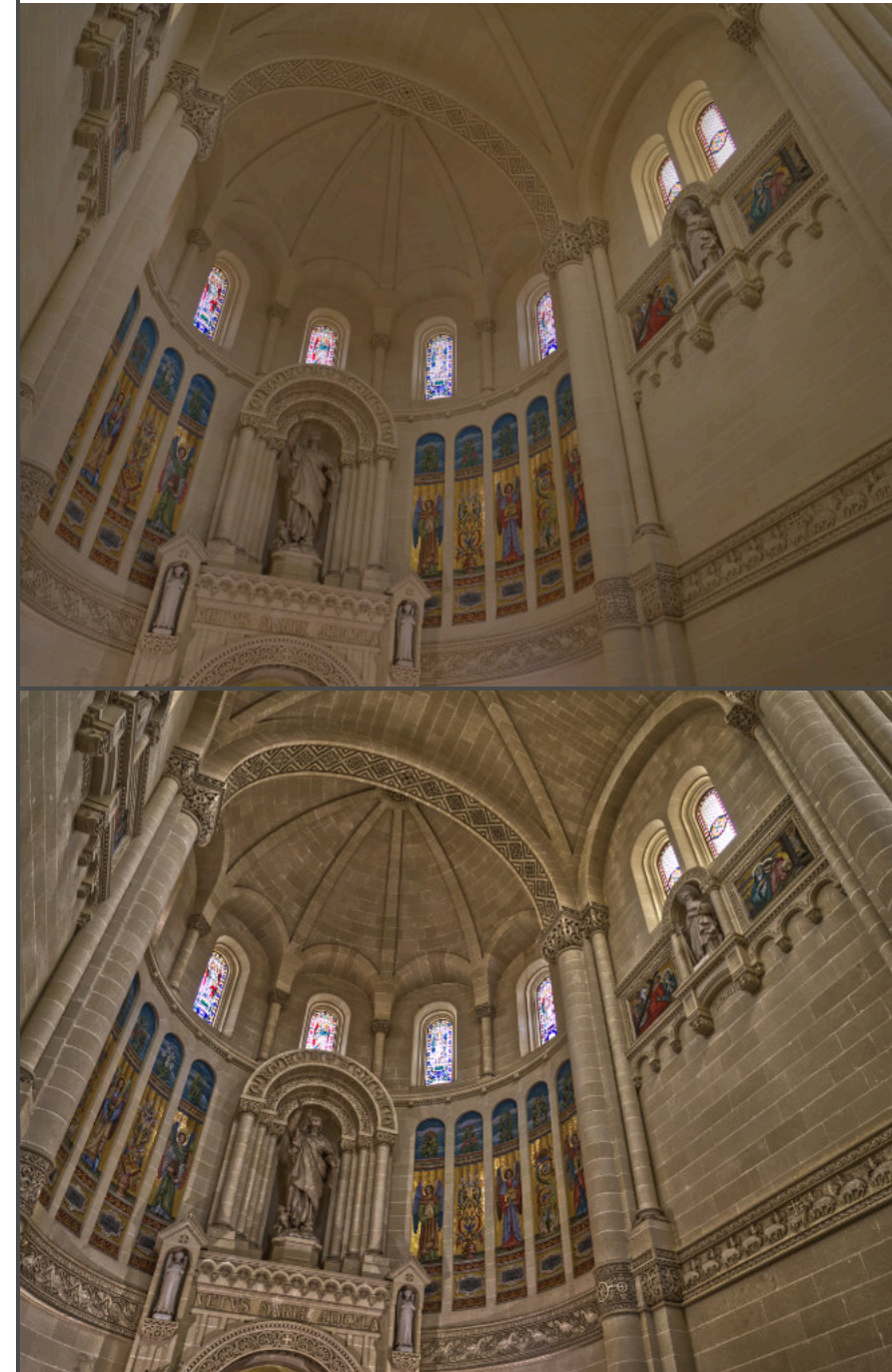
This macro also creates a mask layer and selects it so you can immediately start applying the effect selectively (as it can be very strong). You can easily use CMD+I / Ctrl+I to invert the mask and paint back in with white over the areas you want to structurally enhance.

The **Merge** macro will create a merged layer at the top of the layer stack with all your work so far. The **Single Layer** version only enhances the layer you currently have selected.

### Extreme Clarity

Create a new merged pixel layer and applies two different filters for maximum structural enhancement. The effect will almost certainly be too strong by default, so do experiment with the **Extreme Clarity** layer opacity.

This macro also creates a mask layer and selects it so you can immediately start applying the effect selectively (as it can be very strong). You can easily use CMD+I / Ctrl+I to invert the mask and paint back in with white over the areas you want to enhance.



Local Contrast & Texture



**NEW:**

Laplacian Structure Enhancement  
Laplacian Structure Enhancement (Mild)

Uses a laplacian pyramid technique to generate multiple detail maps which are then blended to enhance detail in the image. This macro will create a new pixel layer at the top of the layer stack.

The **Mild** version is less aggressive—try both and see which you prefer!

**NEW:** Super Grit

Creates a more textural and stylised structure enhancement effect compared to the other methods above. Do experiment with reducing the opacity of the resulting group to fine tune the effect.

**NEW:** Gaussian Clarity

Similar to Laplacian Structure Enhancement, but flattens out contrast more and highlights smaller edge details.

Reduce the opacity of the *Gaussian Clarity* group if the effect is too strong.

**NEW:** Gaussian Difference Structure Enhancement

Enhances brightness selectively in detail regions using a DoG (Difference of Gaussians) technique.

**NEW:** Gaussian Shadow Enhancement

Enhances shadow detail using a subtractive Gaussian Blur technique. If the enhancement is too strong, simply reduce the opacity of the *Gaussian Shadow Enhancement* group.

**NEW:** Shadow Contour Enhancement

A more advanced version of Gaussian Shadow Enhancement that enhances shadow detail locally around distinct edges.

You can expand the Shadow Contour Enhancement group for configurable options, including an optional Denoising layer if too much image noise is being amplified.

Smooth Shadow Grain

Mainly intended for imagery that has been denoised with machine learning.

Imagery processed with denoising (e.g. PureRAW, iPhone ProRAW output) can sometimes look *too* clean and lacking in texture. This introduces a very fine, very subtle layer of bright grain to shadow and midtone detail in order to help infer some extra texture in darker areas.



Gaussian Shadow Enhancement

## Blurry Grain

Adds an organic-looking, slightly softened grain effect to the image.

Change the **Blurry Grain** group opacity to alter the overall strength.

Expand the **Blurry Grain** group and click the **Blur** layer thumbnail to alter the direction and strength of the blur effect.

## NEW: Subtle Contouring

Produces a really nice softening effect by enhancing local contrast detail on a low-pass copy of the image.

## Light Diffusion Effect

Creates a non-destructive pleasing light 'bloom' or diffusion effect.

## Diffuse Glow

Creates a non-destructive softening and brightening of highlight detail. Compared to **Light Diffusion Effect**, bright areas tend to lose more colour intensity (potentially providing a more realistic result).

## Bloom

Renders a non-destructive intense 'blooming' of highlight detail. This provides a more dramatic look compared to the options above.

## Expose Dust Spots Expose Dust Spots (Extreme)

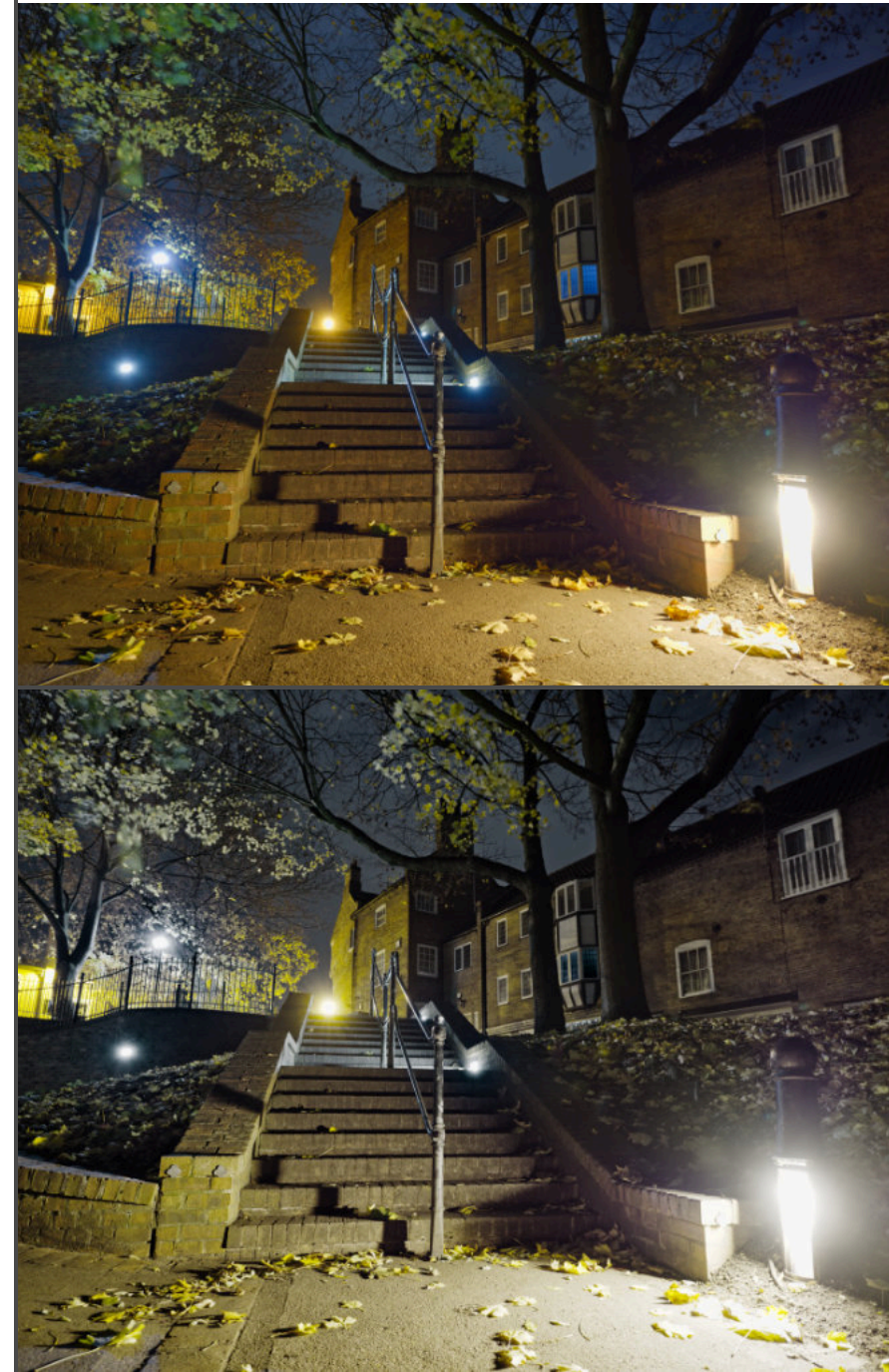
Intended for temporary retouching purposes: run this macro and retouch the layer/s below it, then delete the Expose Dust Spots layer before exporting or continuing with editing.

This will expose annoying dust spots usually present on the sensor or lens typically, exacerbated by stopping down the aperture on the lens. You can then retouch them using the Inpainting Brush Tool, Blemish Removal Tool or other methods.

The **Extreme** version will really expose every imperfection on your sensor and lens: not for the faint of heart. If you are a mirrorless full frame user who changes lenses frequently, revealing what's really on the sensor may upset you slightly!

## Weighted Greyscale Conversion

Applies a quick weighted greyscale conversion, which typically produces more balanced results compared to using a Black & White adjustment.



Low Light Muted Tones



**NEW:**

Bandpass Sharpening (Micro)  
Bandpass Sharpening (Fine)  
Bandpass Sharpening (Regular)  
Bandpass Sharpening (Wide)

Performs overall detail enhancement based on wavelet decomposition. The image data is decomposed with multiple high pass filters, and these results are then blended.

The result is a pleasant sharpening that enhances meaningful detail without exacerbating noise in the image.

The regular version is best used for more subtle, fine detail enhancement.

There are five variants (**Repetitive** is covered below) which each use different progressions for the bandpass values. **Micro** offers very fine detail enhancement, **Fine** offers slightly more enhancement, **Regular** is suitable for most imagery and **Wide** will produce a stronger or 'wider' contrast enhancement around edge detail.

The layer stack is non-destructive, so do expand the group and experiment with each **Pass** layer or modify the group opacity value to tailor the sharpening to your taste.

**NEW:** Bandpass Sharpening (Repetitive)

Uses multiple bandpass filters all set to the same value.

Each pass gradually enhances detail and sharpness in a very subtle and refined way.

If the sharpening is too strong, click any of the **Bandpass** layer thumbnails and change the **Radius** value to taste—this value is linked between all the filters.



Bandpass Sharpening (Micro)

# Credits

Photography by James Ritson.

