

IMAGE CORRECTION // BACKLIT PHOTOS

The **Shadows/Highlights** adjustment in Photoshop is a tool that offers a quick and easy method of correcting the lighting in your photos. It allows you to correct over and underexposed areas in your image. This command works well with subjects photographed with the light source coming from behind (**backlit**) and consequently have a dark foreground. This adjustment is also helpful for bringing out the detail in harsh shadow areas in subjects shot in bright, overhead light. This command doesn't really correct overall exposure. Instead, it lightens or darkens pixels according to the luminance (brightness) of the surrounding pixels. You must have **Photoshop CS or later** to be able to do this feature.

Shadows / Highlights

1) OPEN AN IMAGE AND CHOOSE IMAGE> ADJUSTMENTS> SHADOW/HIGHLIGHT.

When the dialog box appears, it automatically applies the correction to your preview. If you don't see any change, make sure you have selected the Preview check box. The default settings found in the dialog box are meant to correct backlit images, so they may or may not do the right correction job for you as they are set.

2) MOVE THE AMOUNT SLIDER TO ADJUST THE AMOUNT OF CORRECTION FOR YOUR SHADOWS AND/OR YOUR HIGHLIGHTS.

The higher the percentage, the lighter the shadows and the darker the highlights. You can also enter a value in the percentage box.

3) IF YOU'RE HAPPY WITH THE RESULTS, CLICK OK AND BE DONE WITH THE ADJUSTMENT.

If the image requires further adjustment, click the Show More Options check box at the bottom of the dialog box.

4) DRAG THE TONAL WIDTH SLIDER TO INCREASE OR DECREASE THE RANGE OF TONES ADJUSTED IN THE SHADOWS OR HIGHLIGHTS.

The lower the percentage, the narrower the range of tones that will be affected. For example, by using a very low percentage, only the darkest parts of the shadow or the lightest parts of the highlight are corrected. The appropriate percentage to use varies among images, so start with the default setting of 50% and work in small increments from there.

5) DRAG THE RADIUS SLIDER TO INCREASE OR DECREASE THE NUMBER OF PIXELS USED IN THE LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD.

This command uses the luminance of surrounding pixels, called local neighborhood, for adjusting the shadows and highlights. The best local neighborhood size depends on the particular image, so play with this slider and view the results. If the Radius is too small, your main subject may lack contrast. Conversely, if it's too large, your background may be overly bright or dark.



Before //



After //

6) MAKE ADDITIONAL ADJUSTMENTS AS NEEDED:

- **COLOR CORRECTION:** Available for color images only, this control enables you to correct the colors in only the adjusted portions of your image. Higher color correction values make colors more saturated, whereas lower values make colors more desaturated.
- **BRIGHTNESS:** Available for grayscale images only, this command adjusts the brightness of the image. Move the slider left to darken and right to lighten.
- **MIDTONE CONTRAST:** This control adjusts the contrast in the of the image. Move the slider left to reduce contrast and right to increase contrast.
- **BLACK CLIP/WHITE CLIP:** These values specify how much of the shadows (black) and highlights (white) Photoshop clips. Higher percentages create greater contrast, but when the value is too high it causes lack of detail in the shadows and highlights.

8) CLICK OK TO APPLY THE ADJUSTMENT.