

Luminosity Masks – Workflow Process

(Simple Method using Keyboard Short Cuts)

Note: Mac users should substitute the Cmd for the Windows based Ctrl key given in the instructions below.

1. Open image. Go to Channels and press Ctrl/Alt/2 on the keyboard. A selection then appears.
2. Click on the second left icon at the bottom of the Channels palette (*it looks like a circle in a rectangle and if you hover over it it tells you that this is the "Save selection as a Channel"*) to save the channel. Rename the title from Alpha 1 to **"Light"**. You have just created your first luminosity mask!
3. Whilst the selection is still active hold down the Shift/Ctrl/Alt keys and click on the "Light" channel. You should see that area selected by the "marching ants" reduce in size. Again create a new channel by clicking on the second left icon at the bottom to save this channel mask. This time rename the channel **"Lighter"**.
4. Whilst the selection is still active hold down the Shift/Ctrl/Alt keys and click on the "Lighter" channel. Create a new channel rename the mask **"Lightest"**.
5. Note that you can carry on doing this until all the whitest whites only remain but make sure the terms you give when naming the selection is obvious. You could, for example call the channels Light>Lighter>Lightest>LightestMore>LightestMax.

The above selections deal with grabbing the lighter tones in the image. You can now do the reverse where the dark to darkest tones are selected. Here's how:

6. Hold down the Ctrl key and click on the first channel you created called "Light".
7. Press Shift/Ctrl/i to inverse the selection.
8. Create a new channel from this selection and name it **"Dark"**
9. Whilst the selection is still active hold down the Shift/Ctrl/Alt keys and click on the "Dark" channel. Create a new channel by clicking on the "Save selection as a Channel" icon and this time rename it **"Darker"**.
10. Whilst the selection is still active hold down the Shift/Ctrl/Alt keys and click on the "Darker" channel. Create a new channel and rename the channel **"Darkest"**.

So you now have three channels for the highlight areas within the image and three for the shadows. What's left??? Only the Midtones. It may be useful to create a mask of the midtone areas as well. This is the final step in creating a full set of Luminosity Masks.

11. Whilst still in the Channel palette click on the RGB channel at the top of the stack. Hold down the Ctrl key and press A on the keyboard to select All.
12. Subtract the highlight areas from the selection by holding down the Ctrl/Alt key and clicking on the "Light" channel. Now subtract the shadow areas from the selection by holding down the Ctrl/Alt key and clicking on the "Dark" channel. You may then get a warning appear to say that not more than 50% of the pixels has been selected and you might not see the edges. Don't worry about this and just click okay.
13. Finally save this channel and rename it **"Midtones"**

Luminosity Masks have many uses and depending on the task at hand are far superior than other methods because of the subtlety and ultra-smooth transition of the tones within the masks. They are terrific for dealing with tonal control and adjustment within an image. They can also be used for selectively sharpening parts of an image, blending selected part of a group of layers together, etc, etc.

To use, whilst on the appropriate layer simply goto Select > load selection. Pick the appropriate mask and load it. Whilst the selection is active, to lighten or darken parts of an image click on the Curves Adjustment layer and pull the curve up to lighten or down to darken. Repeat the process with other luminosity masks as appropriate.

The Midtones layer has a different use to the other layers and is useful for applying subtle colour or lighting effects with other adjustment layers.

One final thing. With each Curves Adjustment Layer you have control over its opacity plus it also gives you a layer mask. You can reduce the opacity of the layer and/or paint on the mask to reduce all or parts of the effect of the layer. It is this element that is the key in fine-tuning your final image.

Loading Roys LM Action Set

I am using Adobe PhotoShop CC and to install the action set is very easy.

1. Make sure that PhotoShop is not running.
2. Place a copy of the "Roys LM Action.atm file on your desktop and then simply double-click the file. In so doing it opens up PhotoShop and the action set should be clearly seen in the Actions palette and ready to use.

It is possible that on older versions of PhotoShop that this auto- install method doesn't work. In this case simply copy the file into the Actions file located in the sub-directory of your version of PhotoShop (the path on my machine is as follows: C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop CC 2018\Presets\Actions). Having done this open up PhotoShop. Go to the Actions palette and from the drop-down in the top right-hand corner select "Load Action". Navigate to the "Roys LM Actions" file you have just placed in the Presets> Actions folder, select the folder and then simply click the Load button to install it. Hopefully its job done and you are now ready to play.

Additional Information

1. Set colour space in both PhotoShop, LightRoom, etc all to the same matching colour space and associated grey space. In PhotoShop this is under Edit>Colour Settings and in LightRoom it is under "Edit>Preferences>External Editing".
For ProPhoto the required grey gamma setting is "gray gamma 1.8", for Adobe RGB it is "grey gamma 2.2" and in an sRGB space it is "sGray".
2. Tony Kuyper free Luminosity Basic Action Panel, which also includes details on its use, can be found and downloaded from here: <http://goodlight.us/specialoffers.html>
3. Further information on Luminosity Masks can be found here:
<http://goodlight.us/writing/luminositymasks/luminositymasks-1.html>

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