

Review - camera raw

Peter Fitchett

Getting started with camera raw

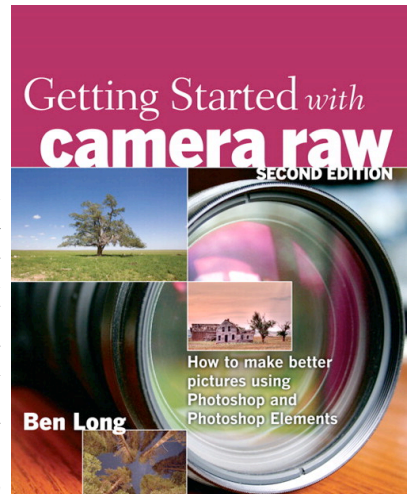
How to make better pictures using Photoshop and Photoshop Elements

By: **Ben Long**

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First printed

Ben Long is a professional photographer who has authored a number of interesting books and articles in the area of digital photography. Having previously read some of these, I looked forward to getting acquainted with *Getting Started with camera raw* - an introduction to everything raw images: what they are, why to use them, and most importantly, how to use them.



Ben starts right at the beginning with examples that illustrate that a camera doesn't really take a photograph; it produces a representation of the light detected, and this is then processed to yield the photograph that we see. In many ways this is like the old camera producing a negative that is then printed to produce the photo. There are actually many different photos that can be produced from any negative, depending on how you process the negative. In the digital world, we can identify similar concepts - there is the data captured by the photo-sensitive electronic detector in the camera which forms the "digital negative". This is then processed to produce the photo that we enjoy. More and more cameras are now providing the option to save this "digital negative" so that you can use different processing to fine-tune the photograph that you envisage. This image is known as the raw image.

This beginning is the subject of the first 2 chapters of *Getting Started with camera raw*, and provides a great introduction to the digital photographer who is wanting to start getting more into their photos. The intermediate photographer may already know much of this, but a good review of your knowledge is always useful to uncover a few previously overlooked details.

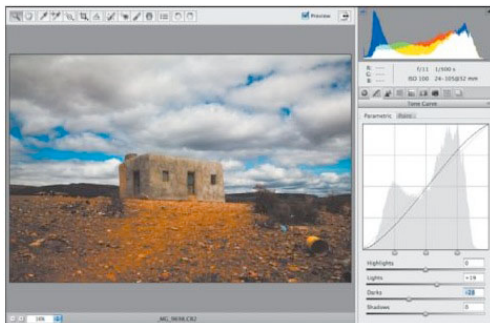
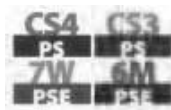
The next 4 chapters form the bulk of the book and turn your attention to more practical matters. There are two topics addressed, at both the basic and advanced levels. Editing is perhaps to be expected, and here Ben
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examines all the different factors that can be adjusted as you tailor the processing of the digital negative to produce your own interpretation of the image. The second topic is Workflow. This is a formalisation of the different steps that you need to follow as you progress each image from downloading from your camera to when you complete your final photographic image.

To some extent, Ben has made the Editing topic more easy to discuss, as the book is oriented to your using that popular Adobe software, Photoshop or Photoshop Elements. As this is well-known software, Ben can give excellent details and clear examples to lead the reader through the many aspects that are discussed, and the result is outstanding material for the beginner and intermediate raw image photographer.

The Workflow topics are not as easily discussed, as Ben has not prescribed what software will be used - and you will find that there are a number of different products available; each with different strengths and weaknesses. What you finally use will probably be a matter of personal preference. Ben attempts to provide a more general discussion of the various aspects of the topic, and the result is perhaps not quite up to the same standard as the Editing topics - but it is nevertheless still quite useful.

To ensure that this book is as useful as possible, Ben has written the material for both Mac and PC users, and for multiple versions of Photoshop software. A page sidebar, in addition to miscellaneous helpful tips and notes, includes icons identifying compatibility with Photoshop CS3 or 4, and Photoshop Elements version 7 (PC) and version 6 (Mac).



The book is produced in full colour on glossy pages to provide detailed examples that clearly illustrate the topics being discussed.

Figure 5.17 This simple S-curve darkens the shadows and lightens the highlights to yield more contrast in the image.

If you are perhaps thinking of how to move forward with your digital photographic interests, this book must feature high on any highly recommended list.

Thanks to Peachpit Press for providing a copy of this book for review.