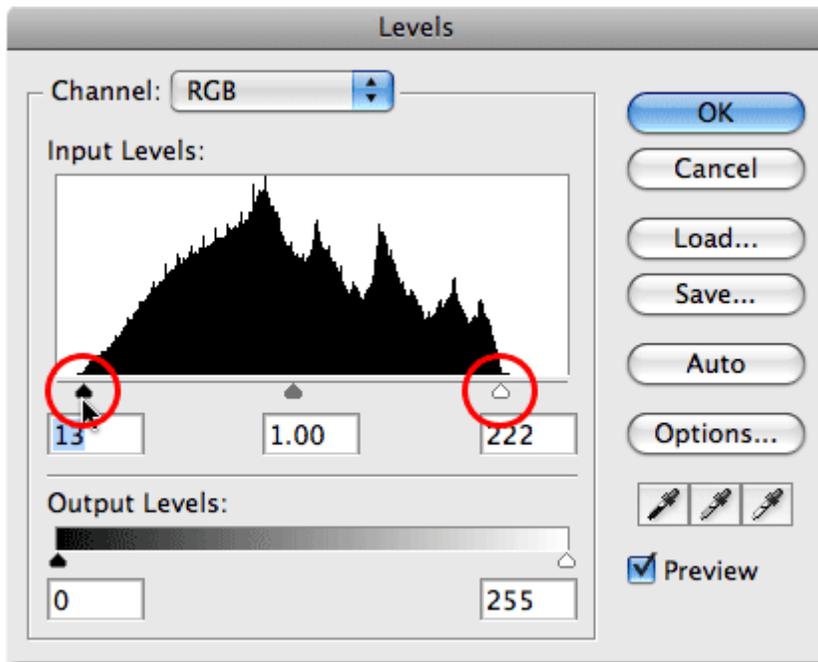# Basic Adjustments

Levels:

Levels can move and stretch the *brightness levels* of an image. It has the power to adjust brightness, contrast, and tonal range by specifying the location of complete black, complete white, and midtones in an image.

The levels control can improve 90% - 95% of all images.

The levels tool can move and stretch brightness levels using three main components: a black point, white point and midtone slider.

Levels dialog box:

Input Levels

Black slider - slides Black set-point along the image histogram

White slider – slides the White set-point along the image histogram

(Very similar to Exposure control in RAW converter)

Gray slider – Picks a new point for middle gray

- stretches and compresses Whites and blacks as appropriate
- Will **NOT** increase saturation at the end points

Adjustments to try first:
Drag the white point slider in towards the right edge of the histogram and the black point slider in towards the left edge.

Basic Adjustments

Levels dialog box – Plus Alt key (Option key on MAC)

> Click on Black slider + Alt key - Shows any black saturation in the image

> White slider + Alt key - Shows any white saturation in the image

Eyedroppers – be careful if you use these. It is much harder to get desired results with the eyedroppers than it is by using the sliders described above.

Adding a layer mask will let you adjust just part of the image.

If curves seem too vague, spend a lot of time with the **levels** control on different images, to see effects.

Basic adjustments

- Faded Colors (Improving impact)

    Some photos appear washed out, have too much of one color, or not enough contrast.

    The easiest fix is to let Adobe Photoshop do the work. Select Image > Auto Color and Photoshop will alter the photo to fits its definition of a good photo.

    You can also try to see if it's a contrast issue by clicking on Image > Auto Contrast.

    If you would like to adjust the colors manually, click on Image > Adjustments > Brightness and Contrast. Slide the arrows around to adjust the photo. Make sure the Preview box is selected so you can see the effect the adjustments have on your photo. Click OK when acceptable.

    If you feel your image has too much of one color, yellow for instance, you can change this by clicking on Image > Adjustments > Color Balance. There are 3 sliding rulers. Each slider shows a range of color. To correct for a certain color, pick the slider with that color in it and move it towards that color.

- Straightening

    (This is easier to do in Adobe Camera Raw converter)

    Select the Ruler tool (grouped with the Eyedropper)

    Draw a line following an object you want to be either vertical or horizontal. Click and hold with your mouse and drag a line that follows the edge of the object.

Basic Adjustments

From the menu select Image > Image Rotation > Arbitrary. The Angle should already be filled in, press the OK button. The image will now be tilted. Use the Crop tool to eliminate the borders. (You can also use the Straighten button in the Options bar instead – CS5)

- Too Much Background (Cropping)

    Often, photos will include very little subject with a great deal of background. Sometimes this is good, but if it's not what you want, you can trim away the excess background and center your subject.

    Select the Crop tool.

    Click and drag your mouse to select an area of the image to retain.

    When you release the mouse button, the selected area will have "handles" (little squares on the edges). Click and drag any handle to resize the area. When done, press the Enter key to accept the crop.

    If you are planning to print the photograph you may want a specific shape or size. i.e. 8" x 10" or 11" x 14". If so, in the Option bar, enter the Width and Height that you want. Resolution - If you want to make a print of the photo Resolution should be 200-240 pixels/inch. If you only want to use the photo on a web site or view it on your computer, Resolution can be 72-96 pixels/inch.

- Resizing

    You have a beautiful photograph and you want to put it on the web. It needs to be much, much smaller.

    Select Image > Image Size from the menu.

    Start near the bottom. If you like the current shape of the image, check the Constrain Proportions checkbox so the shape stays the same no matter what size you make it.

    Resample Image – If checked, Photoshop redraws the same image into a different sized space by adding or removing pixels, trying to preserve its appearance. If Photoshop does not resample, it increases or reduces the space between the pixels without changing the number of pixels.

    Select appropriate Resampling style for enlarging or reducing the size.

    - **Bicubic Sharper:** Use this option when resampling your image **smaller**
    - **Bicubic Smoother:** Use this option when resampling your image **larger**
    - **Bicubic:** Not really used much now that Bicubic Sharper and Bicubic Smoother are available

Basic Adjustments

Note: Scale Styles has to do with Layer Styles and how they're affected by resizing or resampling the image. It won't hurt to always have it checked.

Changing the width and height values in the Pixel Dimensions section of the Image Size dialog box is primarily used when optimizing images for the web. Change the Width and Height to desired size.

If you want to change the size of the image for printing, use the Document Size box in the middle. Enter the new Width, Height and Resolution desired. You would typically change the Width and Height in the Pixel Dimensions box or in the Document Size box, but not both places.

Press OK when done.