



**Quarterly Lightroom Maintenance**

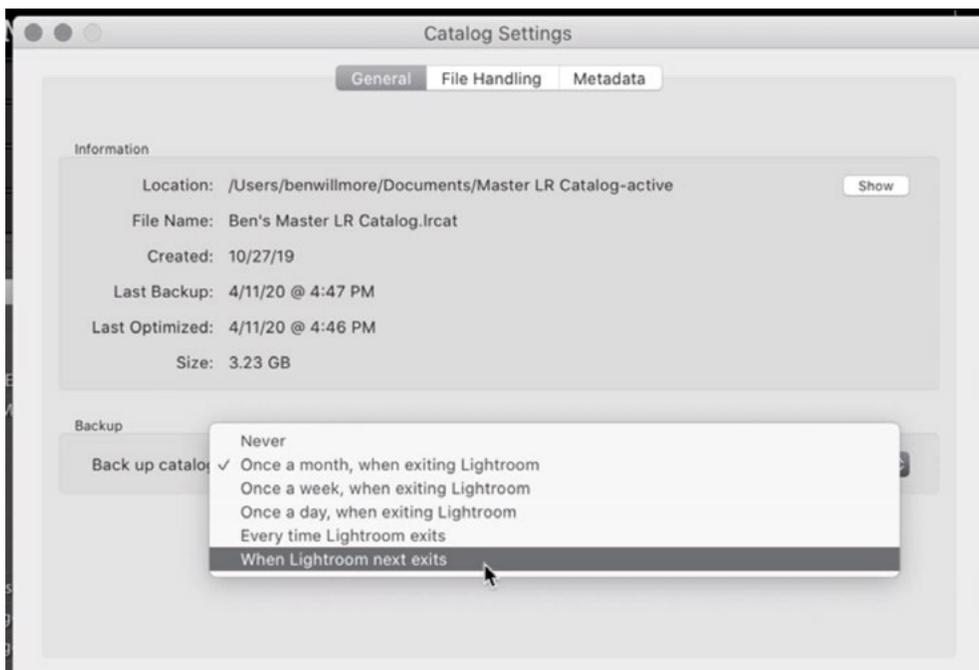
# Quarterly Lightroom Maintenance

In this lesson, I'd like to show you the maintenance that I try to do on a quarterly basis in Adobe Lightroom.

The reasons for this maintenance are to make sure backups are up to date and that you have more than one level of a backup, just in case something were to happen with the catalog file. I also try to get the contents of the Lightroom Catalog folder to be smaller so that it's easier for me to transition from desktop to laptop (and back again).

## Back Up the Catalog File (Timestamp 1:04)

Before making any big changes to the catalog, I will always back up the catalog file. That can be done by clicking on the Lightroom menu and choosing "Catalog Settings." (This will be under the File menu on Windows.) The Catalog Settings dialog will appear and you'll need to make sure the "General" tab is active, at the top of the dialog. Here, use the Backup menu to choose "When Lightroom next exits." You can then close the dialog.

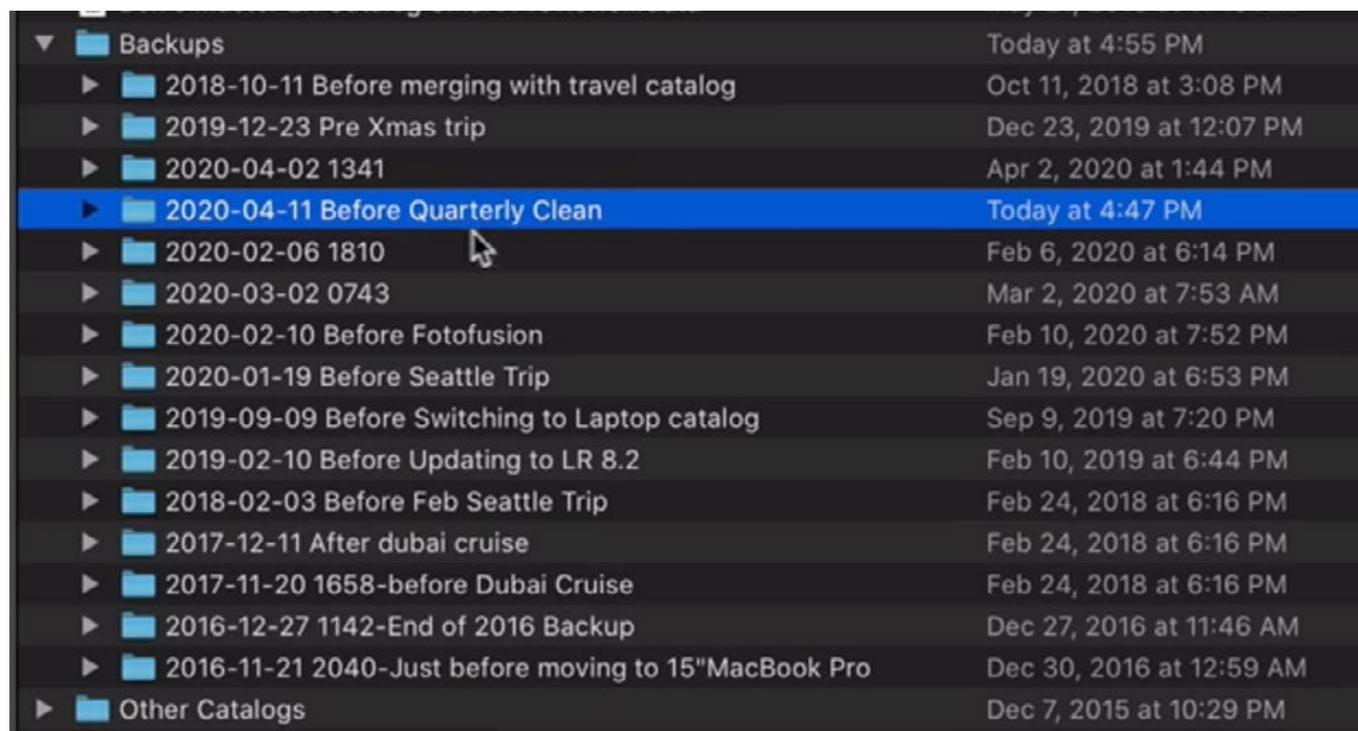


In the Catalog Settings dialog, we are choosing to back up the catalog when Lightroom next closes.

Next, quit Lightroom and the catalog will back up. When it's done, open Lightroom again and return to the Catalog Settings dialog. Make sure the "General" tab is chosen and click the "Show" button next to the field that lists the catalog's location. This will open a Finder window to the location where the catalog file is stored on your computer. In this file, there will be a folder called "Backups."

Click to expand the Backups folder so you can see all of the backups stored inside. Lightroom automatically names the backups with the date, followed by a number. I like to replace the number with some type of description of why the backup was created. In this case, I'll type in "Before Quarterly Clean."

Note that it's best to store these backups on an external drive and not the hard drive built into your computer (unless you have a separate system in place that backs up your computer).



After the backup was created, I renamed the backup file so that I can remember why it was created.

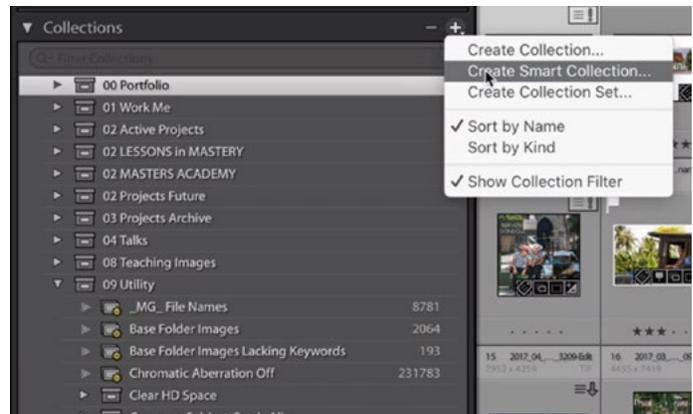
## Create Secondary Level Backup (3:25)

After backing up the catalog file, I like to make a secondary level backup of all the data that contains the adjustments that have been applied in Lightroom. This will also save out other things that have been applied to the images, like keywords.

I don't want these things to be saved only in the Lightroom catalog file. I also want to save them to the individual image files. There are two ways of doing that. If the image is a JPEG, TIFF, PSD or DNG file, then we can save them directly into the files themselves. If, instead, it's a RAW file, it will save a secondary file (an XMP file) in the same folder and this file will contain the adjustments that have been made and any keywords that have been applied to the image. This secondary file must be used because we can't make changes to the RAW file.

Now, I will find the images that have been adjusted in the last 90 days and save the adjustments that have been made, in the form of metadata. In the Library Module, I'll expand the Collections panel on the left side of the interface. Here, I have a special Smart Collection set up and it's called "Edited in the last 90 days Except Outtakes." This collection is designed to automatically include all of the images that I've worked on in the last 90 days. It will not include any images that are contained in folders titled "Outtakes," because those are images that I have deemed not useful. Let's look at how to set up a collection like this.

Click on the little plus icon ( + ) at the top of the Collections Panel and choose "Create Smart Collection" from the pop-up menu. A Smart Collection is essentially a saved search that locates a bunch of images based on a set of parameters. The Create Smart Collection dialog will appear. At the top of the dialog, there is a field where you can name the collection and the bottom area is where you create the search.

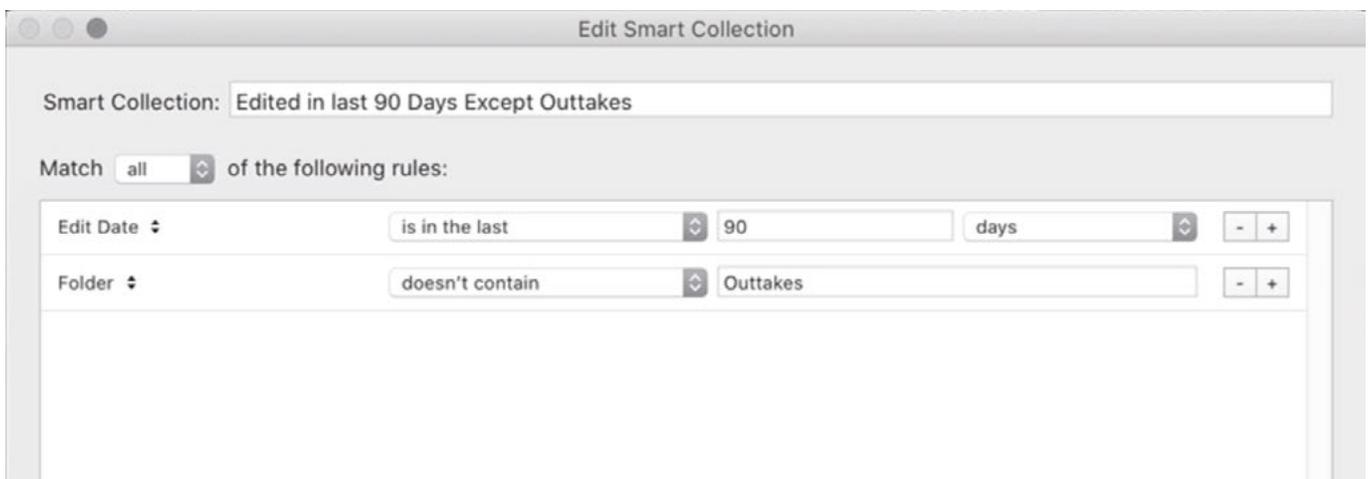


**We are clicking the plus icon ( + ) at the top of the Collection Panel and choosing to "Create Smart Collection."**

There is one search parameter visible by default, and you can add as many as you need. Click on the menu at the left side of that first search item and change the field to “Edit Date.” Then click on the menu to the right of that and choose “is in the last.” Enter 90 into the text field and set the last menu to “days.” This search parameter will now locate all images that have been edited within the last 90 days.

In my search, I did NOT want the search to include outtakes, so I added another search parameter to specify that. This will only work for you if you use my file organization system that includes an Outtakes folder. If you do not use an Outtakes folder, you can simply skip the next step.

Click on the little plus button ( + ) on the right side of that first search item and a second search set will appear. Set the menu on the left to “Folder.” Set the next menu to “doesn’t contain” and then type “Outtakes” into the text field. This parameter will tell the search to NOT contain images that are located in folders titled “Outtakes.” See the screen shot for a better, more visual, understanding of how this search is set up. Click the Save button to close the dialog and create the collection.

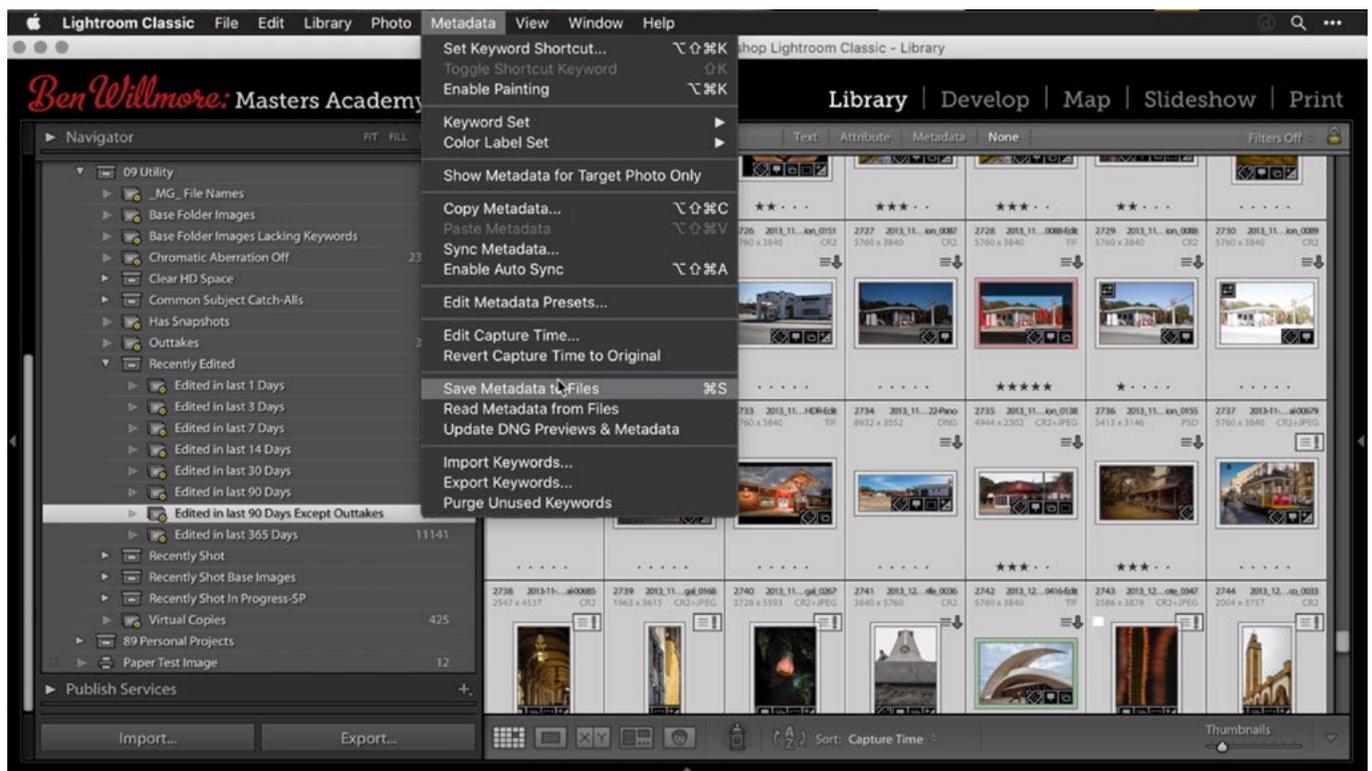


**Here, you can see the search parameters that were set up to create a Smart Collection that includes all images that were edited in the last 90 days and excludes images in the Outtakes folders.**

The new Smart Collection will appear and you can click on it to see all of the images edited in the last 90 days. With those images visible in the Library Module, select them all by using the keyboard shortcut Command+A (Ctrl+A on Win). With all the images selected, click on the Metadata menu at the top of the screen and choose “Save Metadata to Files.”

This metadata includes the adjustment settings that were done in the Develop Module as well as any keywords that were applied to the images. A status bar will appear in the upper left, and this could take a good amount of time, depending on how many images you have selected.

This creates another level of backup and makes it so you don’t need to completely rely on the Lightroom catalog file to save the adjustments. If that catalog file were to become corrupt, you would still have all of the information contained within the individual image files. If you were to import those images into a brand new Lightroom catalog (or simply view them in Bridge), all of the adjustments will be included.



All of the images in the collection are selected and we are choosing to “Save Metadata to Files.”

## Make the Preview File Smaller (8:12)

The next bit of maintenance I like to do is minimize the size of the Previews folder. You can see where the Previews folder is stored by clicking on the Lightroom menu and choosing Catalog Settings. In the Catalog Settings dialog, click on the Show button to the right of the catalog location listing. A Finder window will pop up and it will be pointing at the Lightroom Catalog folder. Here, there are two files that end up becoming quite large. These are the Catalog Previews file and the Catalog Smart Previews file. The Smart Previews file is the one that allows you to adjust your images even when the hard drive containing the original files is not connected to your computer. When you transition from desktop to laptop (when you're traveling, for example), you will copy these two preview files, along with the Catalog file, onto your laptop. When the files are absolutely huge, it takes forever to copy them over. Additionally, the larger these files are, the greater is the chance that they will slow Lightroom down.

Name	Date Modified	Size	Kind
Backups	Today at 4:55 PM	21.97 GB	Folder
Ben's Master LR Catalog Helper.lrdata	Today at 4:50 PM	5.6 MB	Adobe...om Data
Ben's Master LR Catalog Previews.lrdata	Today at 5:02 PM	177 GB	Adobe...om Data
Ben's Master LR Catalog Smart Previews.lrdata	May 21, 2018 at 11:13 AM	128.78 GB	Adobe...om Data
Ben's Master LR Catalog Sync.lrdata	Today at 4:50 PM	9.7 MB	Adobe...om Data
Ben's Master LR Catalog.lrcat	Today at 5:02 PM	3.47 GB	Adobe...cument

You can see that the file sizes for the Previews and Smart Previews folders are quite large.

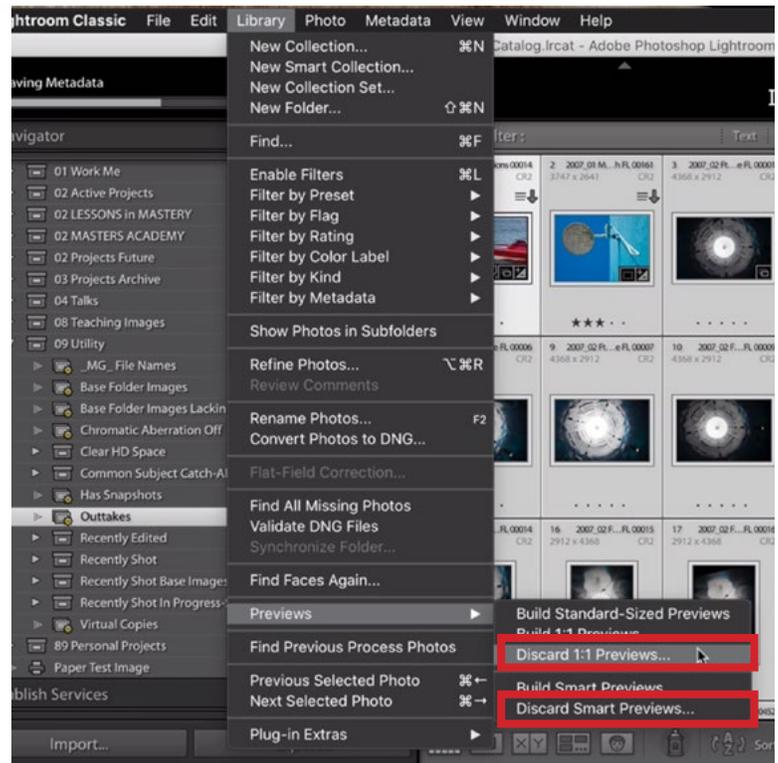
Let's look at how to minimize the size of these files. In the Library Module, I have a Smart Collection set up, titled "Outtakes." This includes all of the images contained in the Outtakes folders for each particular shoot. When creating the Smart Collection, I set up the search by setting the first menu to "Folder," the second menu to "contains all" and I typed "Outtakes" into the text field. This tells the Smart Collection to contain all images in folders named "Outtakes."



The Smart Collection is being created to include all images contained in Outtakes folders.

Note that there is a separate Masters Academy lesson on file organization and this lesson shows you how I set up my folder structure in Lightroom. Every shoot has it's own folder and there are a series of subfolders inside of it. One of these subfolders is called "Outtakes" and it contains the images I deem unusable.

**Remove Previews** I don't really need these outtake files to have previews or Smart Previews attached, and they're only going to hog space on my hard drive. I will click on the Outtakes Smart Collection to view all of the images in the Library Module. Then I will select all of the images by using the keyboard shortcut Command+A (Ctrl+A on Win). With all images selected, I'll click on the Library menu and choose Previews > Discard Smart Previews. I'll also select this menu option a second time and choose "Discard 1:1 Previews." This will reduce the file size on these images considerably.



The Outtakes images are selected and we are discarding the Previews and Smart Previews.

If you wanted to take things to an extreme, you could simply remove the outtake images from your Lightroom catalog. You could still store them on your hard drive. They just wouldn't be taking up space in the catalog. If you choose to do this, I would recommend that you first save the metadata into the image files themselves, via the process described above.

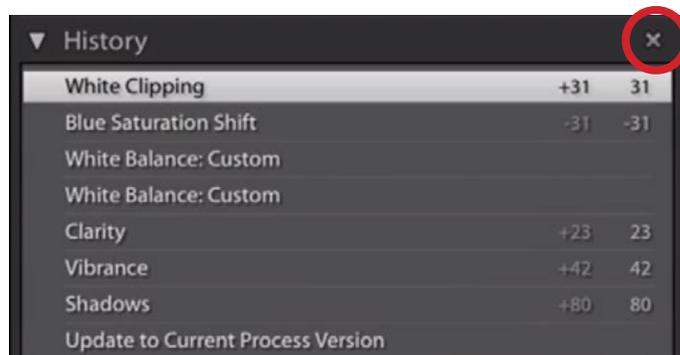
**Remove images from catalog** To remove images from the catalog, first select all of the images you'd like to remove. Then, click on the Photo menu and choose "Remove Photos from Catalog." This will not delete the images from your hard drive. It will just make it so they no longer show up in Lightroom.

**Clear History from Outtakes** When an image is adjusted, Lightroom records every step in the editing process and these steps are stored as History. You can see all of the steps within the History Panel in the Develop Module. These History steps take up space on the hard drive. When it comes to the Outtakes images, I don't need the saved History steps because I am not likely to use the images again. By removing the History data, I can make the catalog file size smaller. When the History data is removed, it doesn't change the adjustments made to the images in any way. It just doesn't know the order in which the adjustments were applied.

To remove history steps, select all of the images from which you want to remove the History. This is all of the images in the Outtakes folder. Then, move to the Develop Module and make sure that the Auto Sync setting is turned on (in the lower right corner of the interface). This will make it so any changes are applied to ALL selected images, and not just the active image that you're currently viewing. Expand the History Panel on the left side of the screen. At the top of the panel, there is a little X icon. Click this icon to remove all recorded History steps.



**Make sure the Auto Sync setting is turned on in order to remove history from all selected images.**

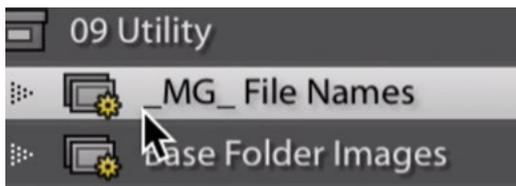
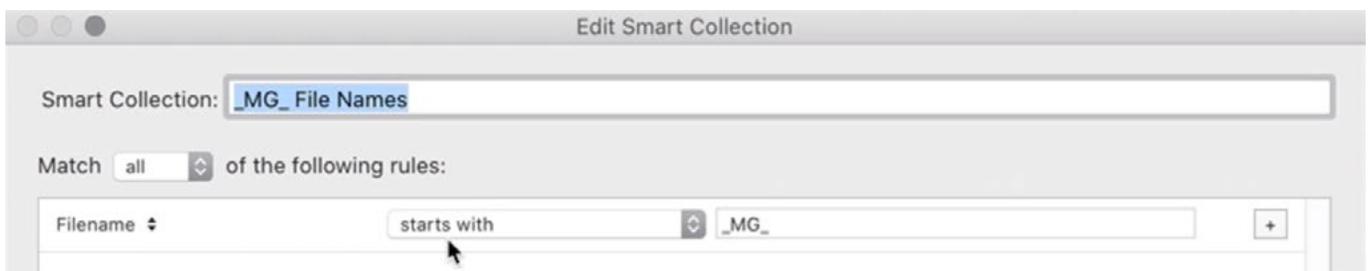


**Click the X icon to remove the History from all selected images.**

## Rename Images with Default Names (15:58)

When importing images into my Lightroom catalog, I always like to give these files unique names. This helps me to keep them organized and to easily find them when needed. There may be instances, however, where I make a mistake and images get imported with default file names. These default file names are generally a long number assigned by the camera. Not only does this make images hard to find, but it creates the risk of having duplicate file names.

One of the things I like to do, as general maintenance, is look for any images with default file names and rename them. I locate these files by use of a Smart Collection. When I import images, my camera always starts the file names with `_MG_`. This is followed by a long number. Well, this Smart Collection is programmed to seek out images containing `_MG_`. If you choose to use this technique, you will just need to replace this text with whatever text your camera uses at the start of its file names. When setting up this Smart Collection, I used the first menu to choose “Filename.” I set the second menu to “starts with” and then I typed `_MG_` into the text field. This tells the collection to look for all images with file names starting with `_MG_`.

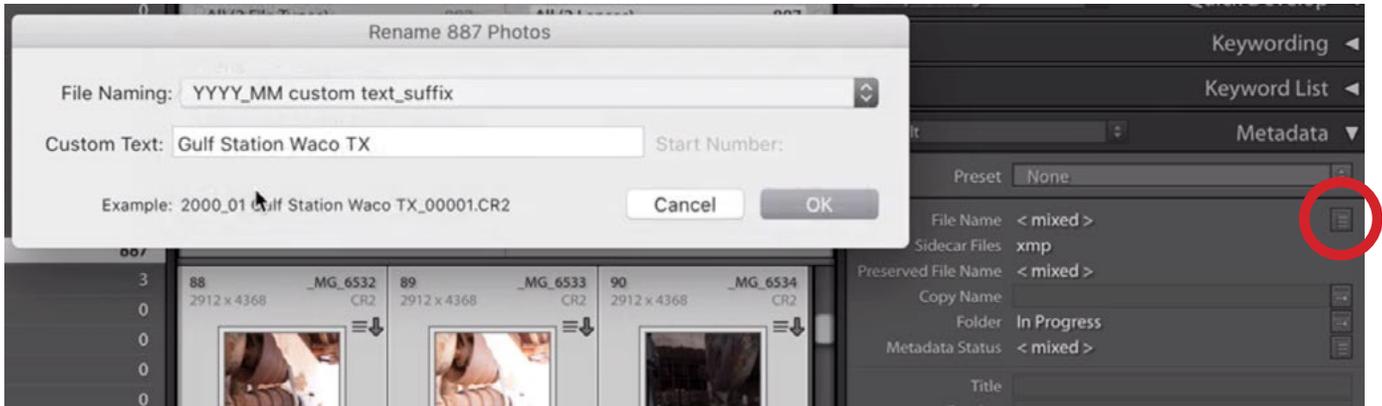


**This Smart Collection is set up to include all images whose filename starts with `_MG_`.**

When I click on this Smart Collection to view its contents, I will see all of the images that are using default file names. I can then go in and assign unique names to them, based on where and when they were shot. If I'm not sure where or when the images were shot, I could right-click on an image and choose “Go to Folder in Library” from the pop-up menu. This will bring me to the folder that contains the images, and the name and location of this folder will give me a good idea of where and when the images were shot.

To rename a series of images, first select all of the images in the set that you want to rename. Then, expand the Metadata Panel on the right side of the Library Module. The top of the panel contains a File Name field. If you click on the icon to the right of this field, it will bring up the Batch Rename dialog. Here, the File Naming menu contains many options for filename presets.

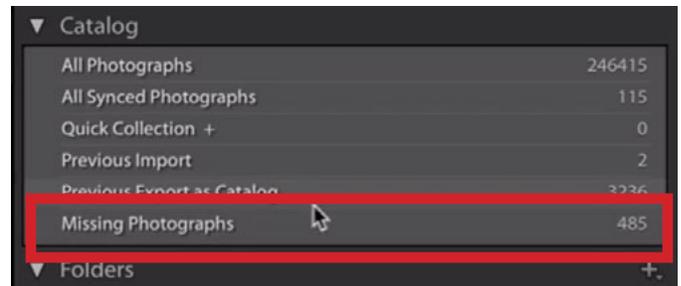
If there is not a preset that you want, you could create your own filename preset by choosing the “Edit” option. This will call up the Filename Template Editor where you can use the options available to create the filename formula that you desire. After clicking OK in the Batch Rename dialog, it will start to rename all of the selected files. These files will then be removed from the Smart Collection because they no longer begin with `_MG_` (or whatever text your camera uses) .



A series of images were selected and then we clicked on the Batch Rename icon (circled) to bring up the Rename dialog.

## Search for Missing Files (21:58)

Another maintenance task is to look for any files that have gone missing. Click to expand the Catalog Panel on the left side of the interface. Here, there is a “Missing Photographs” collection. There is a number to the right of this collection title and this indicates how many images Lightroom believes to be missing. However, this number may not necessarily be up to date. You can force Lightroom to reexamine the catalog and update this number by clicking on the Library menu and choosing “Find All Missing Photos.”



The Missing Photographs collection can be found in the Catalog Panel.

Click on the Missing Photos collection to view all of the images in the main image window. Now, it is a matter of figuring out why these images are missing. Click on an image to make it active. If you want to know where it was originally stored on the hard drive, right-click on it and choose “Go to Folder in Library” from the pop-up menu. This will navigate to the file’s location in the Library Module. Viewing the file hierarchy will commonly provide clues as to why the image is missing.

If you decide that you don’t need the folder containing the missing images, you can right-click on the folder and choose “Remove.” This will remove the folder from the Lightroom catalog. Before doing this, however, I would look through the contents to make sure that there are no images that are contained within collections. If an image is contained within a collection, it means that I might be saving it for a particular reason. You can tell if a file is contained within a collection because it will have a little collection icon in the bottom right corner of the thumbnail. (It looks like two overlapping rectangles.) If this icon does appear, you can right-click on the thumbnail and choose “Go to Collection” from the pop-up menu. This will show what collection the image is contained within, and you can decide whether or not you really want to remove it.

If an image file, or entire folder, has a question mark icon next to it, this means the image or folder is missing. If you know where that file is, you can right-click on the file and choose “Find Missing Folder.” This will prompt you to navigate the hard drive to the file’s location. After doing this, the question mark will disappear and it will no longer be considered a missing file.



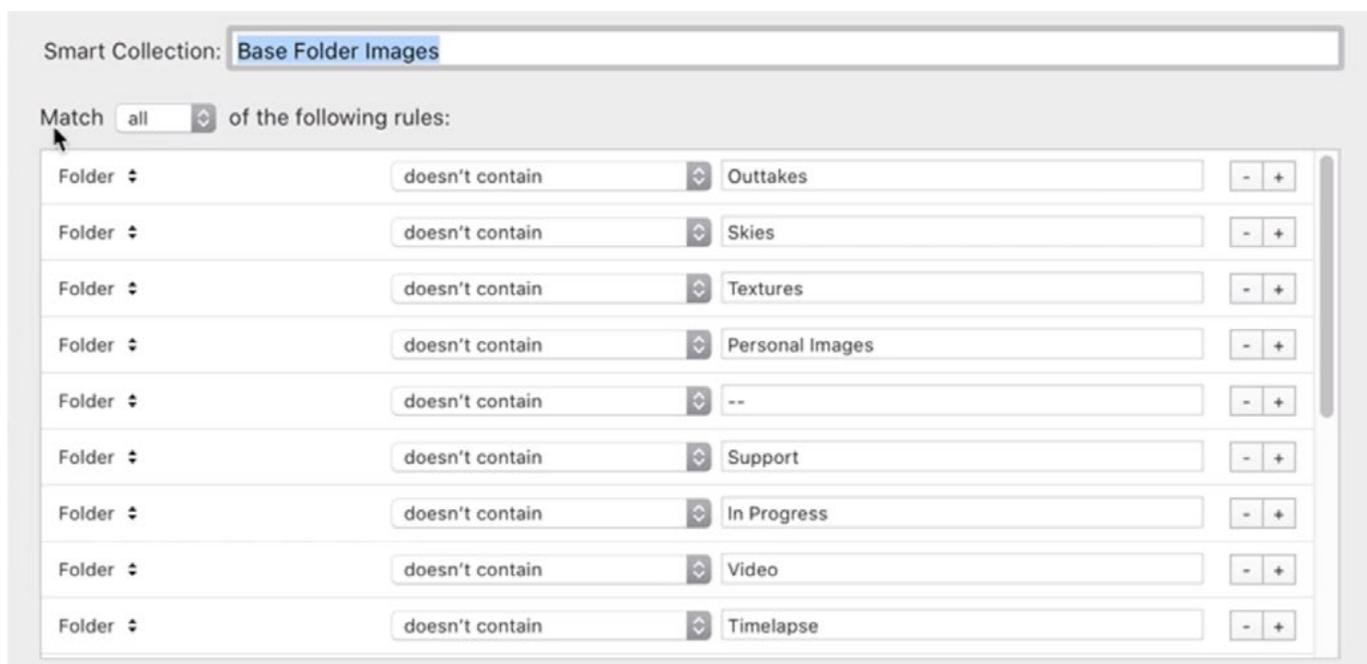
**If a folder or file has a question mark next to it, this means that Lightroom thinks that the folder (or file) is missing.**

## Review Base Level Images (26:13)

In my file organization system, the images that are contained within the base level folder for a shoot are the only ones that I consider to be finished and ready to show the public. I want to go and look through those to make sure that I have applied keywords to them so that they can be easily found. I might also want to consider moving some of those images to various portfolio collections. I also want to make sure that there are no images that don't belong in this base level folder.

To review these base level images, I have a Smart Collection that is set up to include only images contained within base level folders. I can click on this collection to view those images that I consider to be done and ready to show the public.

I am able to set up this rather complicated Smart Collection because I use very standard subfolder names to organize my images. I have subfolders named "In Progress," "Support," "Personal," etc. When setting up the Smart Collection, I create individual parameters excluding the contents of each of these subfolders. (See screen shot) This eliminates all images except for those in the base level folders.



**This complicated Smart Collections contains parameters to exclude all images in the various subfolders. This only leaves the images in the base level folder.**

After opening this Smart Collection to view all of the base level images, I now want to find all of the images that don't have keywords and that were edited within the last 90 days. To do this, I'll first duplicate the Smart Collection by right-clicking on the collection name and choosing "Duplicate" from the pop-up menu. The duplicate collection will appear below the original collection. I'll double-click on the name to open the "Edit Smart Collection" dialog. Here, I'll change the name to "Base Folder images Last 90 Days no Keywords" so that the purpose of the collection is clear.

I'll scroll to the bottom of the list of search parameters and I'll click the little plus icon ( + ) to add a new one. I'll set the left-most menu to "Edit Date." I'll set the next menu to "is in the last," I'll enter 90 into the text field and then use the last menu to choose "days". This tells the collection to include all images that have been edited in the last 90 days. I'll click the little plus icon again so that I can add one more search parameter. Here, I'll set the left-most menu to Other Metadata > Keywords and I'll set the next menu to "are empty." This tells the collection to include images with no keywords. I'll click Save to close the Edit Smart Collection dialog.



**A copy of the base level image collection was created and the above search parameters were added so that the collection only includes images that were editing in the last 90 days and do not have keywords.**

Now I can go through this collection and apply keywords to the image. I can also evaluate the image to decide whether they should be contained within any portfolio collections.

## Scan Base Level Images for Files that Don't Belong (32:21)

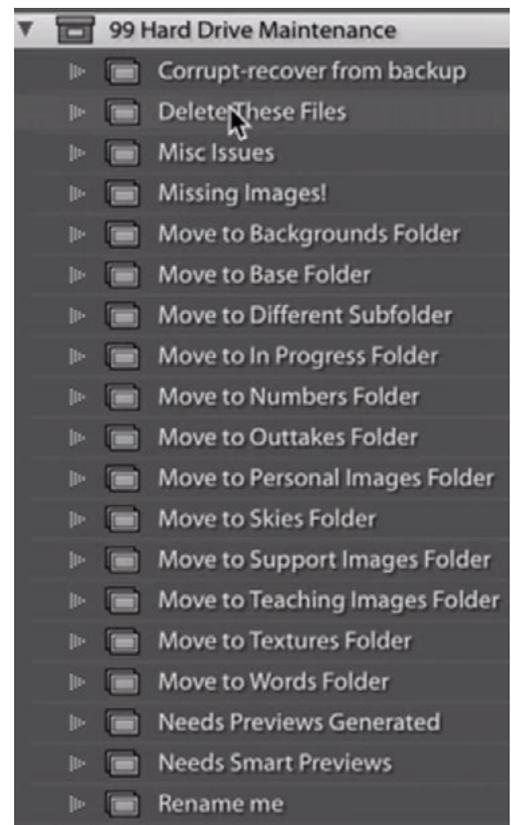
I also like to take a quick scroll through the Smart Collection of base level images to see if there are any sets of images where it is obvious that they are not done and ready to show the public. If I find images like this, I will right-click on them and choose “Go to Folder in Library” from the pop-up menu. Here, I can move the images to the appropriate folder[s].

## Collections for Moving from Travel to Home (34:10)

I have some other collections that I use primarily when I'm traveling and I don't have the hard drive that contains my original images. I keep all of these collections in a collection set called “Hard Drive Maintenance.” One of these collections is called “Delete these Files.” I might put images in this folder while I'm traveling because I can not delete these images without the hard drive attached. This folder is designed to remind me to delete them when I return to that main hard drive.

I also have a collection titled “Move to Base Folder” and this contains images that I finish while I'm traveling and I want them to be eventually moved into the base level folder. I can't move the files without the hard drive attached, so I move them into this collection instead. Once I have that main hard drive attached, I can open this folder and move the images to their appropriate base level folders.

I have other collections that remind me to move certain images into specific folders, once the hard drive is attached.



**I have a Hard Drive Maintenance collection set that is used to remind myself of things that need to be done when I return to my main hard drive.**