



Lightroom/ACR Range Mask

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In this lesson, we're going to take a look at the Range Mask feature, which will allow you to limit an adjustment based on brightness or color. This will give you the ability to apply an adjustment to a certain brightness range or color range in your image.

The Range Mask feature can be found in Lightroom, Adobe Camera Raw and in the Camera Raw filter in Photoshop. In this lesson, we're going to be using the feature from within Lightroom.

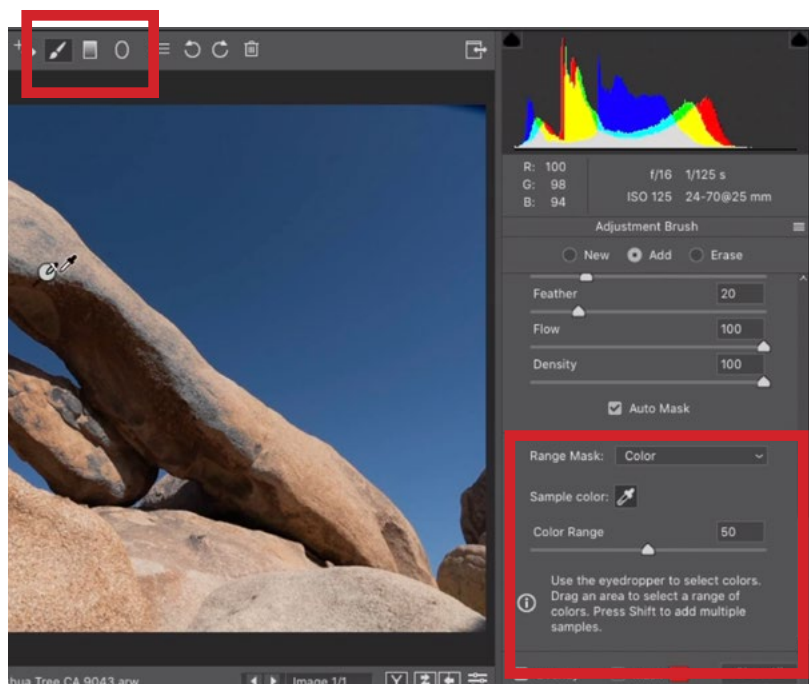
Where to find the Range Mask Settings The Range Mask settings will be accessible in Lightroom when you are using the Adjustment Brush, the Graduated Filter or the Radial Filter. These are all tools that allow you to apply adjustments selectively to different areas of your image. They can be found within the Toolbar, just below the Histogram in the Develop Module.

Whenever you activate the Adjustment Brush, the Graduated Filter or the Radial Filter, a series of settings will appear within the adjustment panel on the right side of the screen. Scroll down to the bottom of these settings and you will find the Range Mask menu. By default, this menu is set to "Off," which means the adjustment is not being limited based on color or brightness. Set this menu to "Color" if you only want the adjustment to affect certain colors in the image. Set the menu to "Luminance" if you want the adjustment to only affect a certain brightness range within the image.



In Lightroom, the Range Mask settings will be available when you are using the Adjustment Brush, the Graduated Filter or the Radial Filter.

In Camera Raw (or the Camera Raw filter), the Range Mask feature can be accessed in a similar way. Activate any of those same three tools (the Adjustment Brush, the Radial Filter or the Graduated Filter). In Camera Raw, these tools can be found within the Toolbar that runs along the top of the image window. When one of these tools is active, the Range Mask settings can be found at the bottom of the adjustment panel on the right side of the interface.



In Camera Raw, the Range Mask settings will be also available when you are using the Adjustment Brush, the Graduated Filter or the Radial Filter.

Isolate an Adjustment Based on Color (Timestamp 6:12)

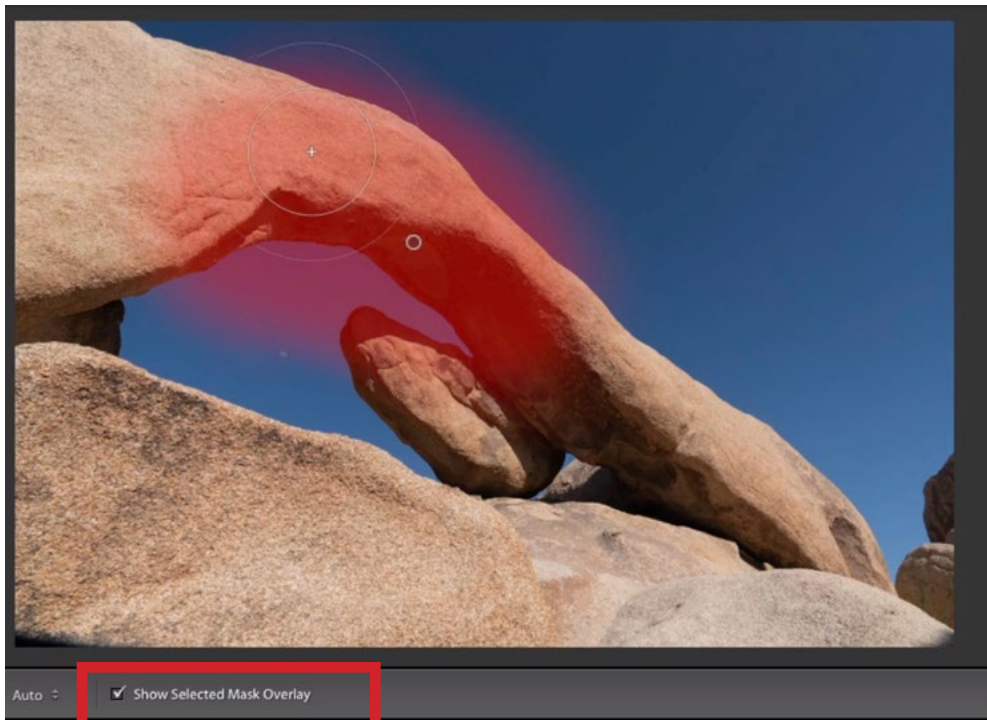
Let's first learn how to use the Range Mask feature in Lightroom to limit an adjustment so that it only affects a particular color in the image.

In the example image, we have a rock formation with a blue sky in the background. The blue sky is darker surrounding the rock formation and we're going to create an adjustment that lightens that area so that the entire sky is uniform in brightness.

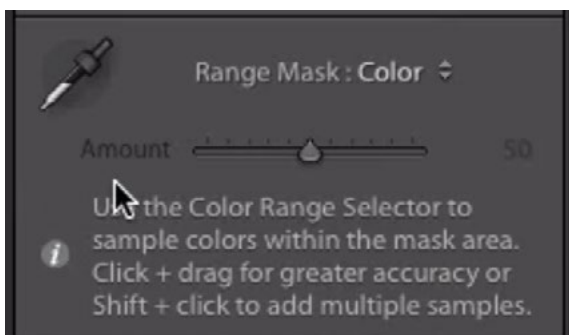
We'll activate the Adjustment Brush and all of the Adjustment Brush settings will appear on the right side of the interface. We're not yet going to use these to dial in an adjustment. We'll first use the brush to paint on the image in the area where we'd like the adjustment to appear. Because we have no adjustment dialed in, it will be difficult to see where we've painted, since there will be no change to the image. The "Show Selected Mask Overlay" setting will allow us to better visualize where we've painted. We'll turn on the "Show Selected Mask Overlay" check box, which

can be found below the image window. When this setting is turned on, a colored overlay will appear in the areas where we paint.

We'll use a soft, medium-sized brush to paint over the lower part of the sky. It doesn't matter if we paint over part of the rock formation because we're going to eventually limit the adjustment to affect only the blue areas.



The Adjustment Brush is being used to paint over the part of the sky we want to adjust. We turned on the “Show Selected Mask Overlay” check box, which gives us a red overlay in the area where we paint.



The Range Mask menu is set to Color and two settings appear: the Eyedropper and the Amount slider.

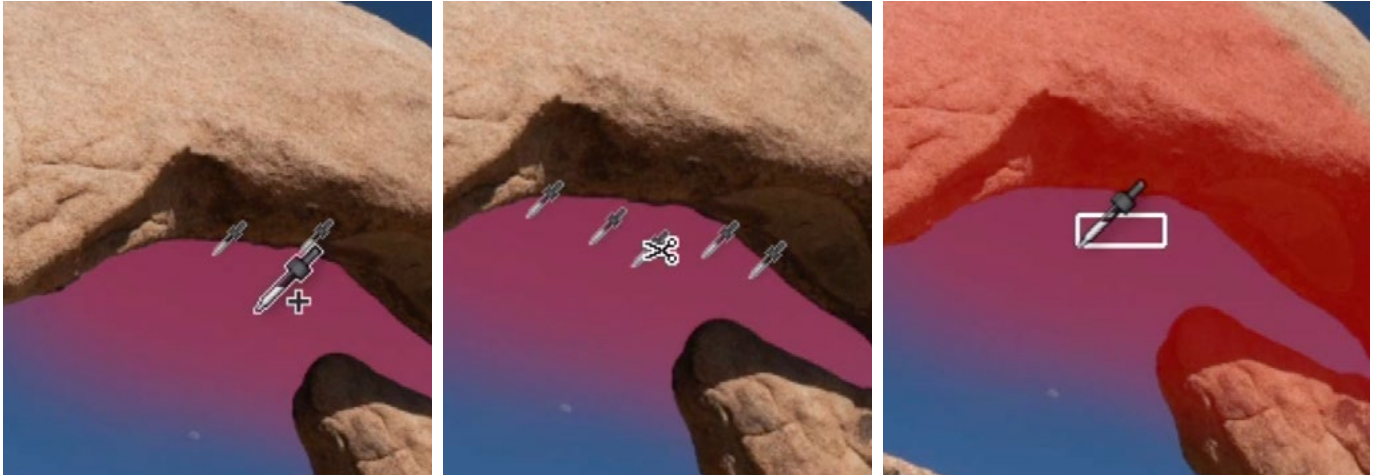
Now we're going to limit the adjustment using a Range Mask. At the bottom of the adjustment brush sliders, we'll set the Range Mask menu to Color. When we change the Range Mask menu to Color, two additional settings will appear: an Eyedropper Tool and an Amount slider. We won't be able to adjust the Amount slider until we've already used the Eyedropper.

We'll activate the Eyedropper and we'll use it to click on the color we want to work on. This is the darker part of the blue sky. When we click on a color, it will limit the adjustment so that it only affects that particular color. In the video example, we have the colored overlay that represents the area where we've painted with the Adjustment Brush. After we click on the sky with the Eyedropper, you can see that the overlay becomes limited so that it only covers the particular blue hue that we clicked on.



LEFT: The Range Mask menu is set to Color and we activated the Eyedropper. (We have not yet clicked on the image.) RIGHT: The Eyedropper was used to click on the blue sky and you can see that the overlay is now limited to that color. This overlay shows the adjustment area.

If you use the Eyedropper to click a second time, it will change the color being affected. If you hold down the Shift key and then click on another area, you will be expanding the range of colors being affected by the adjustment. You can hold down the Shift key and click to add up to five different colors. If you'd like to remove a color so that it is not affected by the adjustment, hold down the Option key (Alt on Win) and click on the Eyedropper instance that you'd like to remove.



LEFT: The Shift key is being held down while we use the Eyedropper to click in multiple areas. This expands the range of colors that will be affected by the adjustment. **CENTER:** The Option key (Alt on Win) is being held down while we click on one of the Eyedropper instances. This is removing that color from the adjustment. **RIGHT:** We are clicking and dragging out a rectangle with the Eyedropper, therefore targeting a larger range of colors.

If you'd like to target a larger range of colors, you can use the Eyedropper to click and drag out a rectangular shape on the image. All colors contained within that rectangle will be targeted and therefore affected by the adjustment.

After we've used the Eyedropper to isolate the color[s] that should be affected by the adjustment, we can use the Amount slider to determine how far it can deviate from the targeted colors. The more we move the Amount slider to the right, the more the tool can deviate from the targeted colors. This will allow the effect to fade out, slowly transitioning into the surrounding image.

After we have isolated the color[s] that we want to affect, we can use the Adjustment Brush sliders to dial in the actual adjustment. In the video example, we want to lighten the targeted part of the sky, so we'll increase the Exposure slider a bit, until that area matches the rest of the sky.

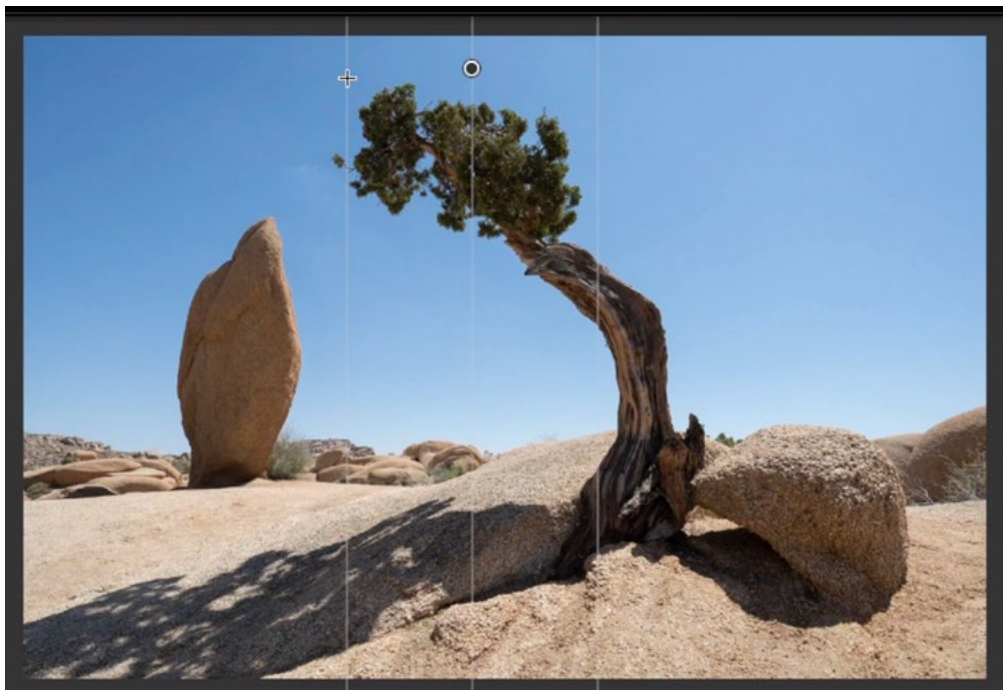


LEFT: You can see there is a rough transition between the area that will be adjusted (the red overlay) and the area not being adjusted. **RIGHT:** We raised the Amount slider to soften the transition.

Using the Range Mask Settings with the Graduated Filter (12:10)

In the last example, we applied the Range Mask feature while using Lightroom's Adjustment Brush. The Range Mask settings are also available when using the Graduated Filter.

In the next video example image, we'll use the Graduated Filter to even out the color in a blue sky. The Graduated Filter will take the adjustments that you dial in and apply them in a gradient across the image. When you click and drag out the gradient plane, the area where you initially click will get the full force of the adjustment. The area where you release the mouse button will get none of the adjustment, and the transition will happen in between. If you'd like the gradient to be perfectly horizontal or vertical, hold down the Shift key as you drag out the gradient.

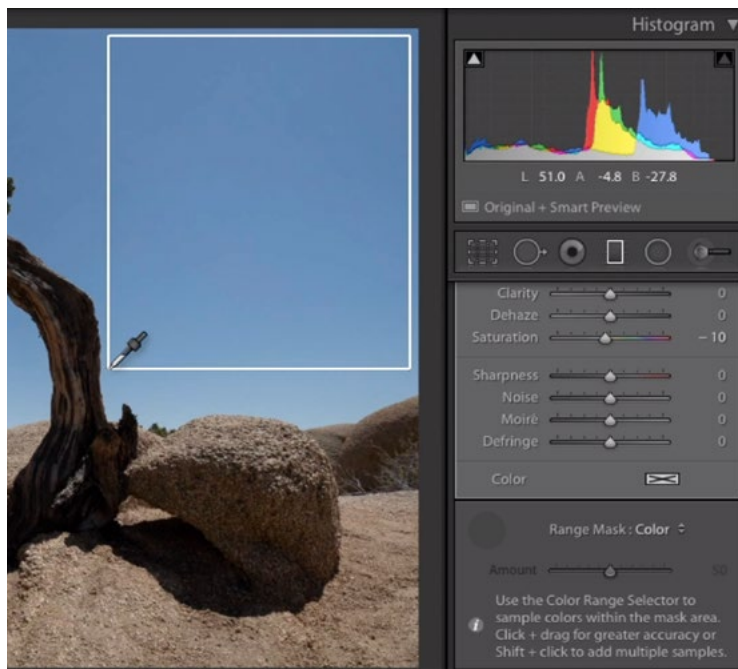


The Graduated Filter is being used to define the gradient where the adjustment will be applied.

After dragging out the gradient, we used the Exposure slider to darken the right side of the sky so that it better matches the left. As a result, the tree in the foreground was also darkened, and we don't want that. We'll use the Range Mask settings to remove the adjustment from the tree.



After defining the adjustment area using the Graduated Filter, the Exposure slider is being moved to the left, therefore darkening the right side of the image. As a result, the tree is darkened as well.



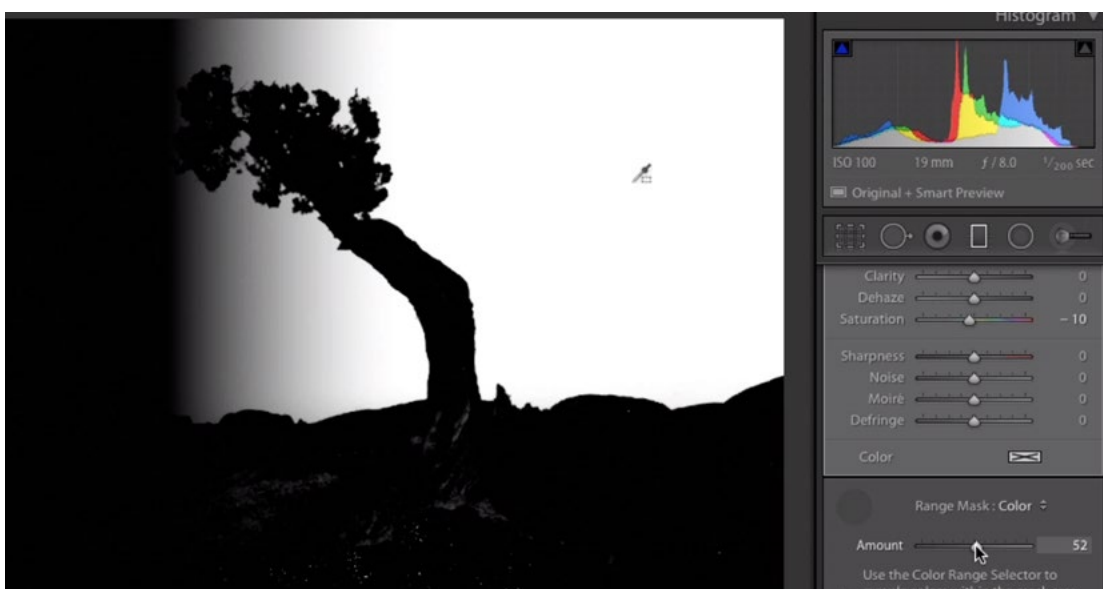
The Range Mask menu was set to Color and we are using the Eyedropper to click and drag around the colors we want to be adjusted.

We'll scroll to the bottom of the Graduated Filter settings to find the Range Mask settings as we'll again set the menu to Color. We'll use the Eyedropper tool to click and drag a large rectangle around the blue tones of the sky that we want to affect. This tells the filter to ONLY apply the adjustment to these colors. You will see that the adjustment is removed from the tree and the ground. We'll use the amount slider to create a smooth transition between the affected area (the sky) and the unaffected area (the tree and rock).



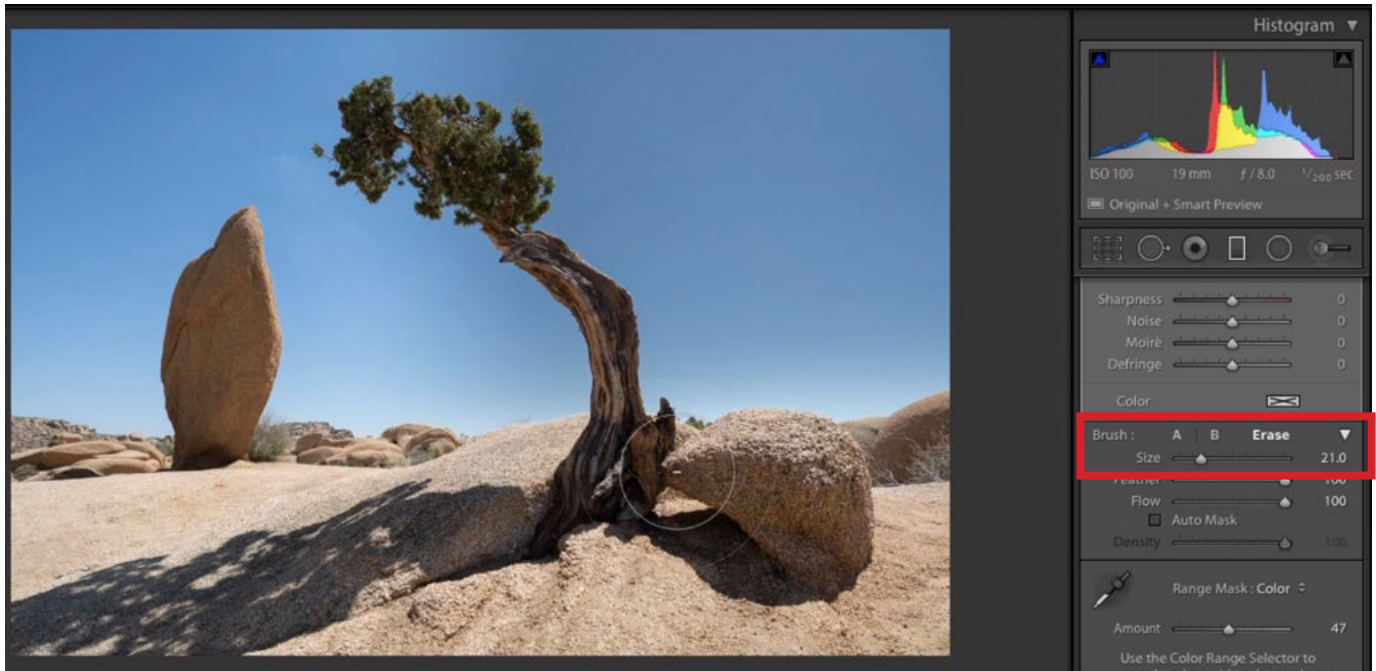
LEFT: Before using the Range Mask settings to limit the adjustment, the darkening effect was also applied to the tree. **RIGHT:** The Range Mask settings were used to limit the adjustment to the blues, and you can see that the tree is no longer darkened.

Preview mask with Amount slider When dragging the Amount slider, you can hold down the Option key (Alt on Win) to see a black and white preview of the mask that you have created. The white parts of the mask are the areas being changed by the adjustment and the black parts of the mask are the areas that are not being changed. This preview can help you find the Amount slider setting that creates the smoothest transition.



The Option key (Alt on Win) is being held down while we drag the Amount slider. This gives us a black and white preview of the mask.

Use Brush to modify Graduated Filter After creating an adjustment with the Graduated Filter, you may want to manually modify the areas being affected. You can do this by using the brush that is built into the filter. At the very top of the Graduated Filter settings, there is a Brush option. After clicking to activate the brush, scroll to the bottom of the Graduated Filter settings and you will find the Brush Options. Here, you can specify whether the brush should be adding the adjustment or removing the adjustment (Erase).



There is a brush build into the Graduated Filter and it allows you to manually add or remove things from the adjustment. Here, we are using the brush, set to the Erase setting, to remove the adjustment from the rock area.

Isolate an Adjustment Based on Brightness (18:30)

The Range Mask feature works the same when using Lightroom's Radial Filter. The Radial Filter will allow you to apply an adjustment in a circular, or oval, shape. Click and drag on the image to define the area where you'd like the adjustment to appear. Turn on the "Show Selected Mask Overlay" check box and a colored overlay will appear over the image. The areas with the overlay are the areas that will be changed by the adjustment.

Why is it important to see this preview with the Radial Filter? Because the filter can be applied to the area inside the circle OR to the outside of the circle. You'll want to make sure that the appropriate area is targeted. You can change which area is being affected by using the "Invert" check box, located below the Radial Filter sliders. There is also a Feather slider, which determines how soft the transition is between the area being adjusted and the rest of the image.

In the example image, we want to target the brightest part of the image, where the sun is located. This part of the sky is white and we'd like to give it a warmer color. This is a circular area, so we'll use the Radial Filter to target this area, adjusting the Feather slider to a high setting, which will make the transition very soft.



The Radial Filter was used to drag a circle around the area we want to adjust: the brightest part of the sky. The "Show Selected Mask Overlay" check box is turned on, so we can see the colored overlay that represents the area being adjusted.

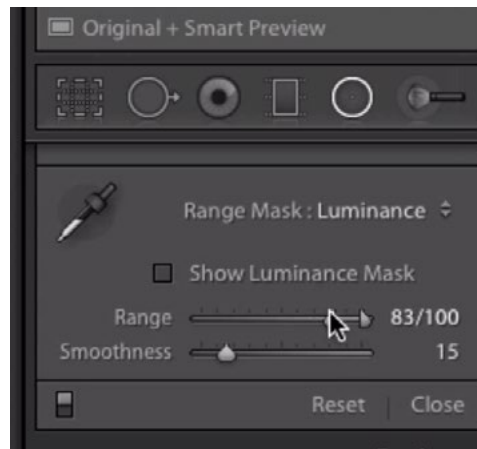


When the Range Mask menu is set to Luminance, the Range and Smoothness settings will appear.

In this case, it's the brightest areas that we want to affect, so we're going to set the Range Mask menu to Luminance. A different group of settings will appear when we set the Range Mask menu to Luminance. The Range slider represents the entire brightness range in the image. Black is on the left and white is on the right.

There are two handles on this slider and they can be used to specify the brightness range that should be affected by the adjustment. If these handles are positioned on the far left and right sides of the slider, the entire brightness range will be affected. If we move the left slider to the right, we will be removing more and more dark tones from the range that will be affected. If we move the right slider to the left, we will be removing more and more bright tones from the range that will be affected. The Smoothness slider controls the transition between the area receiving the adjustment and the area not receiving the adjustment.

In the video example, we want the adjustment to affect only the brightest area within the Radial Filter circle. This is the area where the sun is. We'll take the left handle on the Range slider and move it to the right, therefore removing the dark areas so they don't receive the adjustment. With the "Show Selected Mask Overlay" check box turned on, we can see the overlay that represents what is being adjusted and this will help us decide how far we need to move the sliders.



The Range Mask menu was set to Luminance and the Range slider is being used to remove the adjustment from the dark tones.



The Option key (Alt on Win) is being held down while we move the Range slider. This gives us a black and white preview of the mask.

Preview mask in image window As you move the Range and Smoothness sliders, you can hold down the Option key (Alt on Win) to get a black and white preview of the mask in the main image window. This will give you a better idea of what areas will be affected by the adjustment.

Show Luminance Mask The “Show Luminance Mask” check box can be found above the Range slider. If you turn this check box on, you will see the image as a black and white picture, which is essentially what the Luminance mask is looking at because it is thinking about brightness and not color.

After using the Range Mask settings within the Radial Filter to isolate that bright part of the sky, we can now use the Radial Filter sliders to adjust the area. We want that bright area to have some warmth, so we’ll move the Temp slider to the right, introducing some yellow. We’ll also move the Tint slider to the right, adding a bit of Magenta to the area.



The brightest part of the sky was isolated using the Radial Filter and the Range Mask. Now, we are moving the Temp and Tint sliders up a bit, adding some warmth to the targeted area.

Range Mask & Auto Mask (28:00)

When using the Adjustment Brush, there is a setting called Auto Mask. When the Auto Mask check box is turned on, the brush will look at the exact color and tone that is beneath the crosshair in the center of the brush tip and it will only allow the brush to affect that color/tone. This can help to prevent overspray in some scenarios.

This can be very useful and effective when there is a strong contrast in areas of brightness and color. When the difference in brightness or color is a smooth gradient, the Auto Mask setting does not work as well. In instances like this, you can either replace the Auto Mask feature with the Range Mask feature, or you can supplement, using both features at the same time.