FotoCatalog

User Manual

PART 3

Photo editing

The FotoCatalog editor lets you adjust catalog photos and external files, using a non-destructive workflow while editing and explicit control over the final file.

1. Open a photo in the editor

From any catalog view, you can open a photo and enter the editor. FotoCatalog works with the logical photo: if several related files exist, such as RAW + JPG, the photo still appears as a single item in the catalog.

You can also open an external photo from the external editing option in the top bar. This lets you edit a file that is not yet part of the catalog.

2. Editing philosophy

While editing, FotoCatalog keeps adjustments separate from the original photo. Changes are previewed immediately, but the original is not modified until the user chooses to save or export.

- Controls can be adjusted and readjusted without progressively degrading the image.
- The editor preview reflects the active adjustments.
- Local and geometric adjustments are part of the same editing workflow.
- Save or Save As creates or updates the output file according to the selected option.

This workflow lets you experiment freely before creating the final result.

3. Sidebar structure

The editor sidebar is organized to keep the main functions within easy reach while avoiding too many open controls at once.

- Save: options for saving the result.
- Histogram: visual representation of brightness and color channels.
- Tools: editing sections grouped in an accordion.
- Information: photo data and EXIF information, normally collapsed.

Tools contains six main groups:

- Light
- Color
- Detail
- Geometry
- Local adjustments
- Clone / Heal

You only need to open the section you are using. This simplifies the interface and leaves more room for the photo.

4. Histogram

The histogram shows the tonal distribution of the photo and updates when adjustments are changed.

- It shows whether too much image information is concentrated in shadows or highlights.
- It displays overall brightness and RGB channel information.
- It is useful for detecting clipping at the extremes and evaluating the effect of light adjustments.

The histogram is a visual aid. There is no need to aim for a particular shape: a correct photo can have very different histograms depending on the scene.

5. Light

The Light section groups adjustments related to the tonal intensity of the image. Controls work around a neutral value, usually 0, and can accept positive or negative values.

Depending on the available control, you can adjust aspects such as:

- Overall brightness or exposure.
- Contrast.
- Recovery or treatment of bright and dark areas.
- Other tonal adjustments available in the installed version.

For example, a value of +20 increases the control effect and a value of -10 moves it in the opposite direction. A slider should not be interpreted as a positive-only scale.

6. Color

The Color section contains chromatic adjustments. It also uses bidirectional controls when required by the parameter.

- Temperature: shift toward warmer or cooler tones.
- Saturation: increase or decrease color intensity.
- Other color controls available in the editor.

Moderate corrections are recommended, and the result should be checked at actual size when preparing a final result.

7. Detail

Detail groups controls intended to affect perceived sharpness, texture and other fine image adjustments.

With RAW photos, it is especially useful to work moderately, because a reduced preview may make a detail adjustment look softer or stronger than it will in the final file.

8. Geometry

Geometry lets you correct photo orientation and framing.

- 90-degree rotation when needed.
- Fine straightening.
- Crop.
- Straighten by line.

8.1. Manual straightening

The straightening control lets you tilt the image slightly to either side. When applied, FotoCatalog calculates a safe crop so that black triangles do not appear in the corners.

This means that horizon correction may lose a small part of the image at the edges. This is expected behavior.

8.2. Straighten by line

The “Straighten by line” tool lets you draw a line along a horizon or a vertical reference in the photo.

- Activate Straighten by line.
- Draw a line following the element that should be horizontal or vertical.
- FotoCatalog automatically calculates the nearest correction angle.
- The photo is straightened and a safe crop is applied automatically.
- The resulting value is also reflected in the manual straightening control.

The geometric transformation follows the editor’s intended internal order: 90-degree rotation, straightening and finally cropping.

9. Local adjustments

Local adjustments let you modify a specific area of the photo without applying the same change to the entire image.

FotoCatalog uses intelligent control points. Each point analyzes the color and brightness of the selected area to give greater weight to pixels similar to the source point.

9.1. Create a control point

- Open the Local adjustments section.
- Activate the option to add a point.
- Click the area you want to modify.
- Adjust the influence radius.
- Modify the local exposure, contrast or saturation controls.

Several control points can be created on the same photo. Each point retains its own adjustments.

9.2. Tolerance

Each point has a Tolerance control from 0 to 100. The initial value is 50.

- A lower tolerance restricts the effect to colors and brightness values more similar to the selected point.

- A higher tolerance expands the area considered similar.

Tolerance is not simply a geometric radius: it helps separate different objects or surfaces that are physically close to one another.

9.3. Show mask

The “Show mask” option displays in grayscale which parts of the photo will receive the control point effect.

- Light areas: more influence from the adjustment.
- Dark areas: less influence.

This view is especially useful for adjusting radius and tolerance before modifying exposure, contrast or saturation.

9.4. Reset local adjustments

Reset removes all local control points from the photo, deselects the active point, exits add-point mode and hides the mask.

Use it when you want to return completely to a state with no local adjustments.

10. Clone / Heal

The Clone / Heal tool is used to repair small imperfections or replace an area with information taken from another part of the photo.

- Clone: copies information from a source area to a destination area.
- Heal: blends the correction while trying to preserve the appearance of the destination area.

It is suitable for removing small spots, isolated elements or local defects. For large corrections, it is preferable to use several small interventions.

11. RAW file editing

FotoCatalog can open and edit several RAW formats directly without requiring prior conversion.

- The preview is generated internally.
- Adjustments are processed through the FotoCatalog editing pipeline.
- When lens information is available, the editor can use Lensfun data for compatible corrections.

The original RAW is preserved. The final result is saved in the selected output format.

12. Before / After

Before / After comparison lets you quickly check the effect of adjustments against the unedited photo.

It is advisable to use it during editing to avoid accumulating excessive adjustments and to judge whether the result genuinely improves the image.

13. Undo and reset

Editing operations maintain a history that lets you recover earlier states according to the functions available in the editor.

Actions such as Straighten by line are added as coherent operations in the history, so they can be undone without manually reconstructing previous values.

When a tool provides Reset, that option returns that part of the edit to its neutral state.

14. Save and Save As

Save options are located at the top of the sidebar.

14.1. Save

Save is used when a working destination has already been defined for the edited photo. Before confirming, always check which file will be created or updated.

14.2. Save As

Save As lets you choose a new file and output format.

By default, FotoCatalog keeps the base name of the original file and replaces the extension with the selected format. For example, if the original is “2030.NEF” and it is saved as JPEG, the suggested name will be “2030.jpg”.

- JPEG
- PNG
- TIFF

The name can be changed manually before confirming the save.

15. Export a photo

Export lets you create a copy intended for external use without necessarily changing the normal save workflow.

Export options may include:

- Output format.
- Original size or long-edge limit.
- Quality.
- Copy confirmed tags.
- Whether or not to add the exported result to the catalog.

If “Add export to catalog” is disabled, FotoCatalog simply creates an external copy, useful for sending, publishing or copying to a USB drive.

In this case tag copying is disabled because the exported file will not become part of the catalog.

16. Edit an external photo

The top bar lets you open an external photo directly in the editor.

This function is useful when you want to edit an individual file without scanning its folder first. When saving or exporting it, the user can choose the final destination.

17. Recommended workflow

A simple and safe editing workflow can be:

- Open the photo.
- Check the histogram.
- Correct Light and Color first.
- Adjust Detail only after the overall appearance is resolved.
- Apply Geometry corrections and crop.
- Apply Local adjustments only where needed.
- Use Clone / Heal for isolated defects.
- Compare Before / After.
- Review the result at an appropriate size.
- Save, Save As or Export according to the intended use.

18. Best practices

- Avoid extreme adjustments unless they are necessary.
- Use the control-point mask to check what is being affected.
- Remember that straightening involves a small automatic crop.
- With RAW files, judge detail at sufficient magnification.
- Use Before / After frequently.
- Do not confuse Save with Export: Export is intended especially for creating final or external copies.
- Always keep original files within your normal backup system.

19. Part 3 summary

- The editor maintains a non-destructive workflow while adjustments are being made.
- The sidebar is organized into Histogram, Tools and Information.
- Sliders can work with positive and negative values around the neutral value.

- Geometry includes manual straightening and Straighten by line with safe cropping.
- Control points provide intelligent local adjustments with tolerance and mask.
- Clone / Heal can repair isolated defects.
- RAW files can be edited directly.
- Before / After helps control adjustment intensity.
- Save As keeps the original base name by default and adapts the extension.
- Export creates final copies with control over format, size, quality and catalog inclusion.