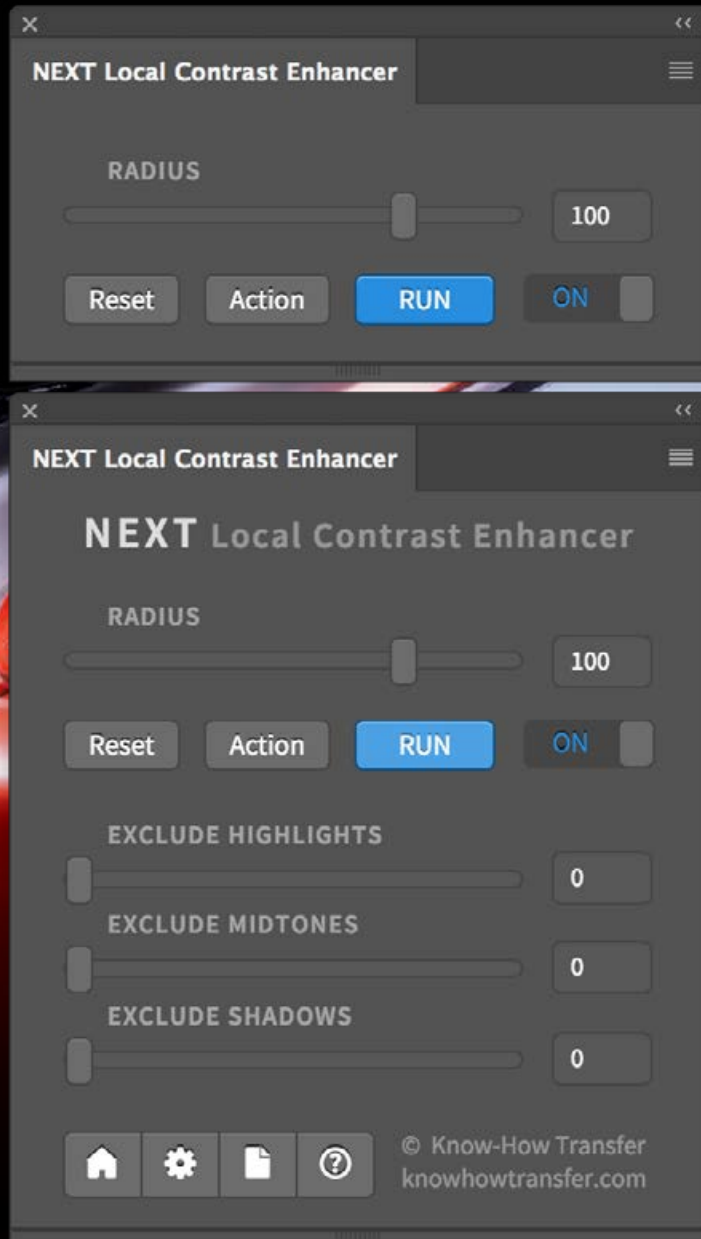


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## NEXT Local Contrast Enhancer

User Manual - Version 1.0.6 - March 2017

# What's New in Next Compared to ALCE2

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What's New

ALCE has been our bestselling product for many years and, since the release of ALCE2, its core functionality has not changed significantly. Recently, thanks to the know-how achieved developing plug-ins as Wow! and Mask Equalizer, we set out to make this outstanding product even better by improving on some of ALCE's weaknesses.

Specifically, we focused on creating a live preview, improving the embedded halos suppress tool, adding three masking sliders and last, switching to 32bit computing capabilities, not available in Photoshop and four core split processing.

The result was the Next Generation Local Contrast Enhancer, which we decided to rename NEXT.

## Live Preview

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ALCE missed the preview. Its routine was very complex and it has been necessary to improve the speed consistently. NEXT is at least three times faster compared to ALCE at 8 bit and eight times faster at 16bit. It means virtually live preview.

## Masking

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ALCE embedded an halos suppress tool. We have consistently improved it but, when needed you can deactivate it to get even further contrast. Despite this we still were not satisfied and added a brand new masking option.

## Compatibility

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Photoshop CC and above

MAC OSX 10.7 Lion and above

WIN 10 and above (64bit only)

For Photoshop versions from CS3 to CS6 you must buy [ALCE >](#)

## Halos Control

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ALCE embedded a halos suppress tool. We have consistently improved it but, when needed you can deactivate it to get even further contrast. Despite this, we were still not satisfied and added a brand new masking option.

## 32bit / Quad-Core Processing

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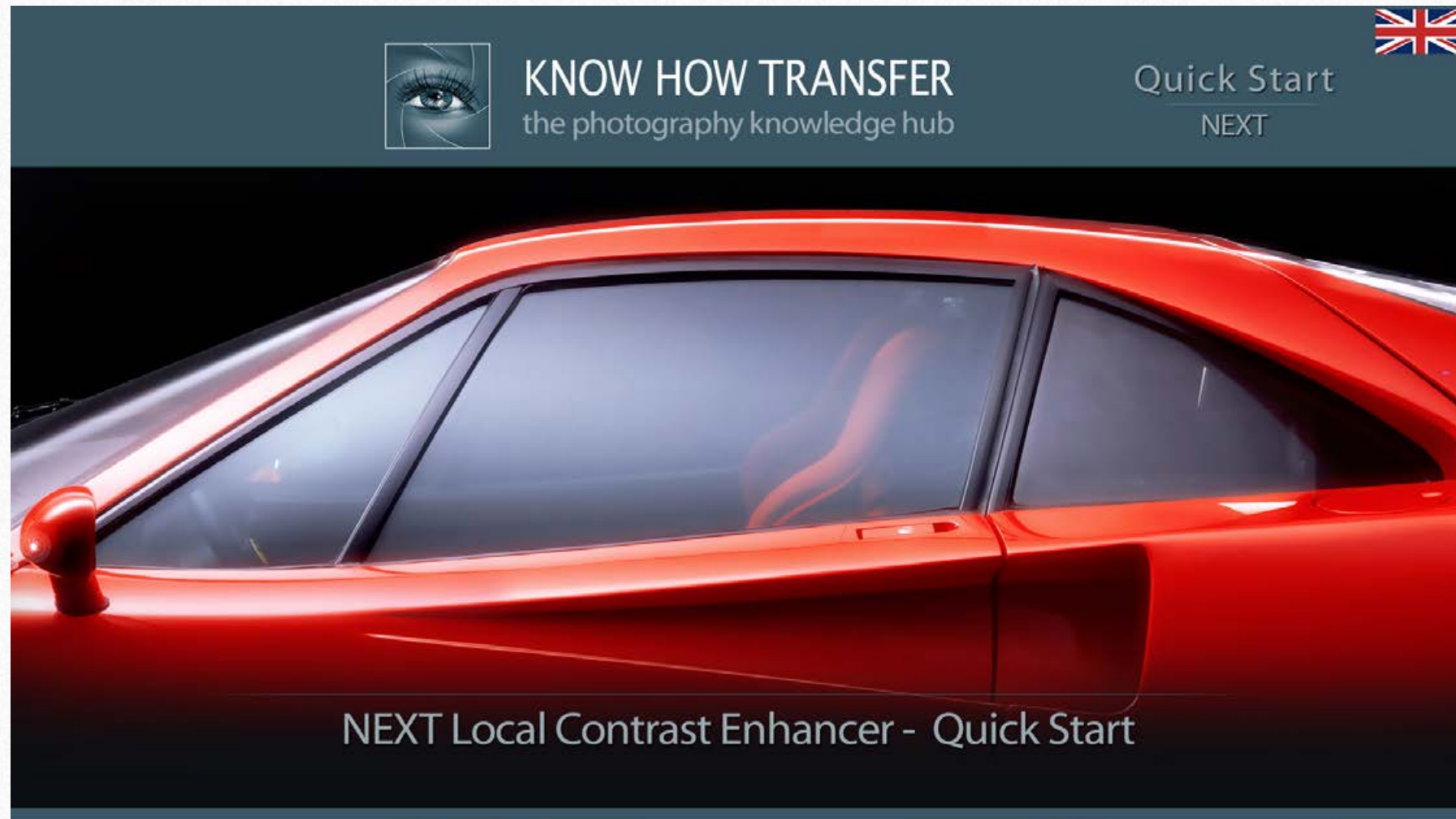
ALCE was a script, NEXT is a plug-in. It means that it uses its engine working in 32bit without color quantization and stretching the local histogram much better. With NEXT, gradations, highlights and shadows are smooth as never before.

Read More



## Quick Start Tutorial

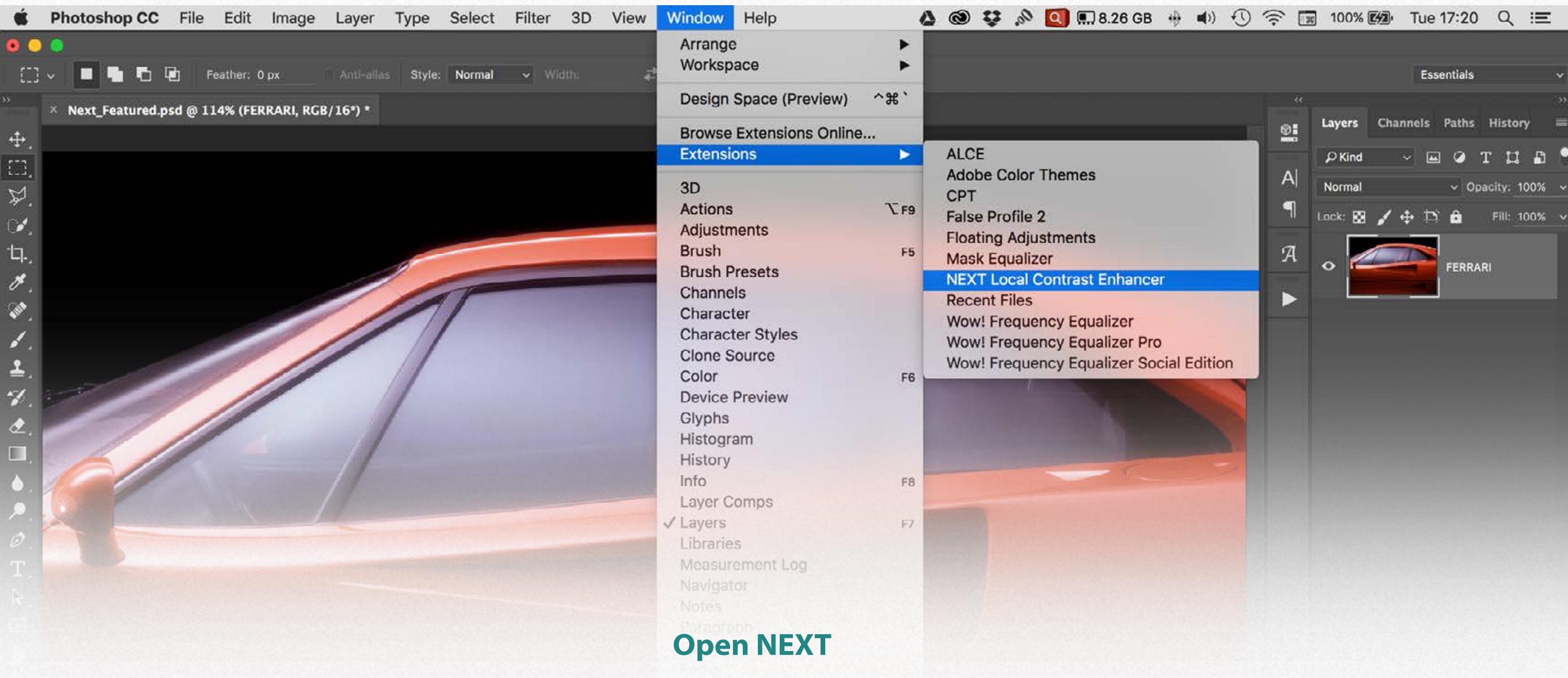
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[Watch Tutorial](#)



# Open Next from Photoshop / Window / Extensions



## Open NEXT

Photoshop/Window/Extension/NEXT Local Contrast Enhancer

## Do NOT open NEXT

Photoshop/Filter/Know-How Transfer/NEXT Local Contrast Enhancer

This menu item is only for internal use.



# The NEXT Panel

## The Panel

### Compact and extended mode

Here the panel in a clean, compact mode with the radius sliders and main buttons. It can be expanded in several versions. Below the panel in expanded mode.

### Radius

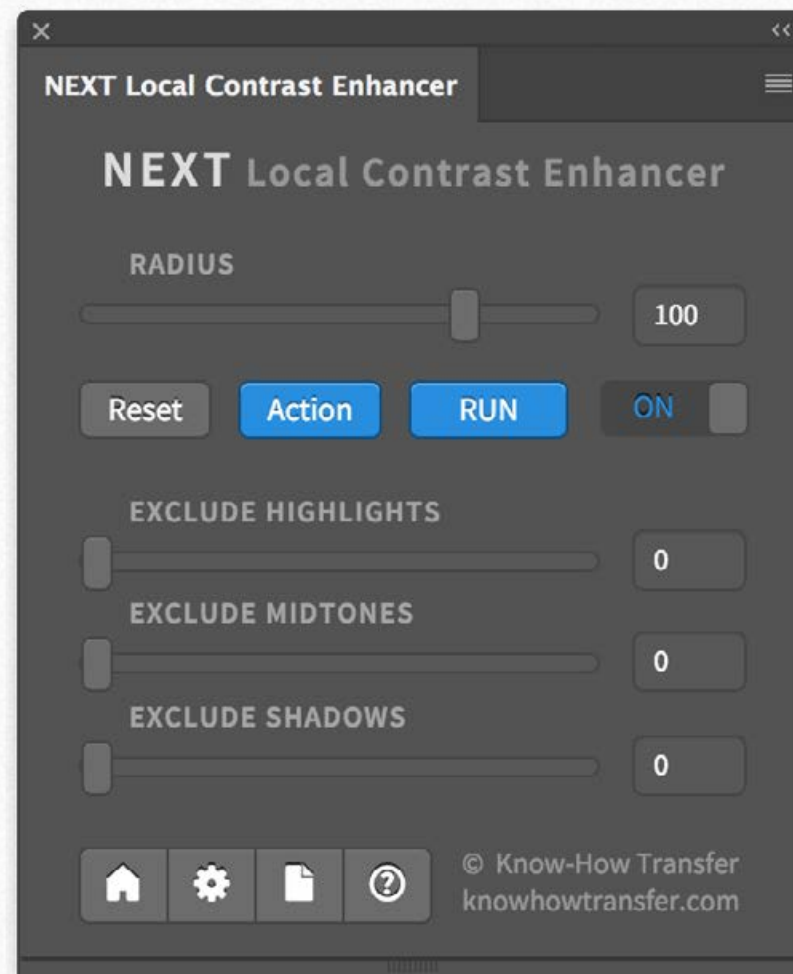
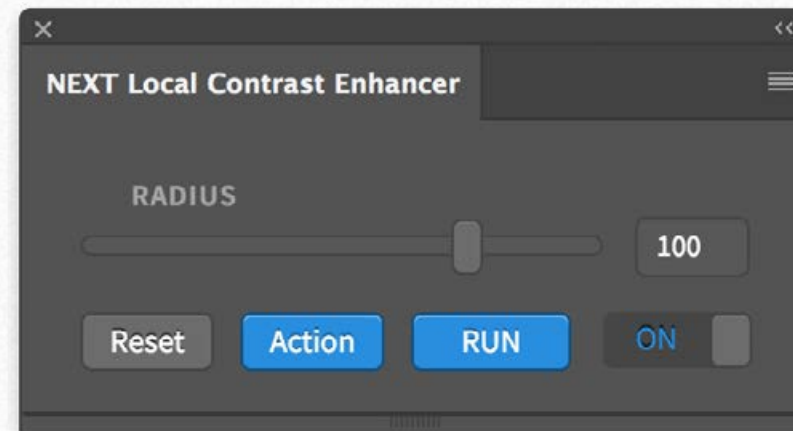
The core function of NEXT.  
Ranging from 1 to 500 it sets the amount of local contrast.  
The default value is 100.

### RUN

Used to start NEXT the first time or re-apply the current setting to another image or layer. If you change settings, the new version is automatically displayed.

### Reset - ON/OFF

Reset the values to default.  
ON/OFF Compare the before/after version.



Use this small handle  
to expand or contract the panel

### Action

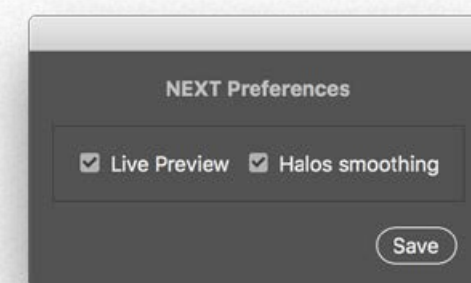
Save the current setting, masking and preferences as a Photoshop action.

### Masking sliders

The sliders progressively exclude the effect of NEXT on highlights, midtones or shadows  
Zero is no effect, 100 is full effect.

### Footer buttons

1. Links to NEXT page.
2. Open the preferences tab where you can deactivate the live preview or the halo-smoothing option.
3. Open the user manual.
4. Info on version release

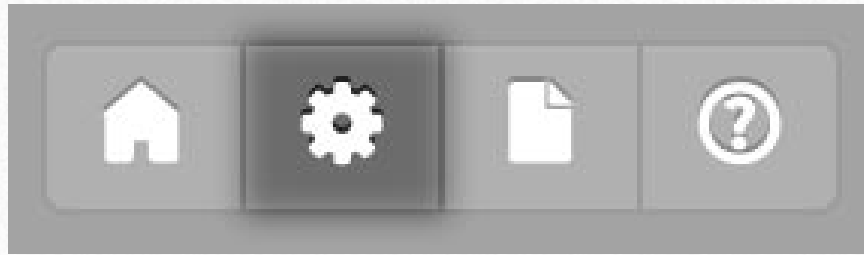




# Live View And Halos Smoothing Preferences

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## The Panel



## Live Preview to manual mode

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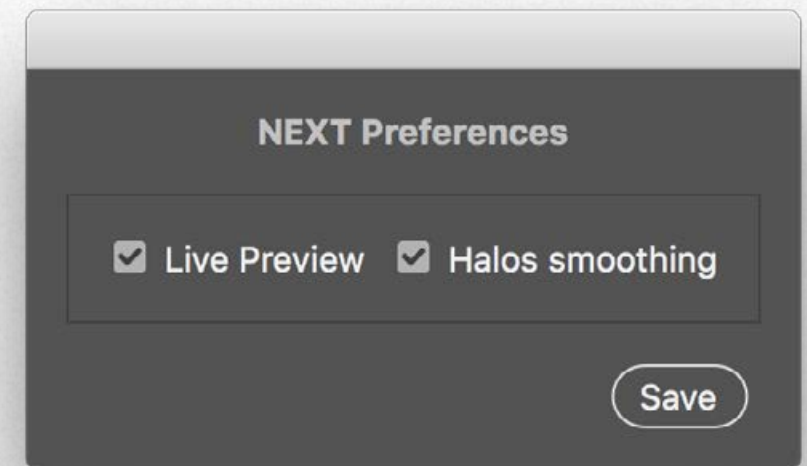
By default, Next works in live preview and any after change the preview is updated. Unchecking this tab you can make your change and then press “Run” to apply.

## Deactivate “Halos smoothing” option

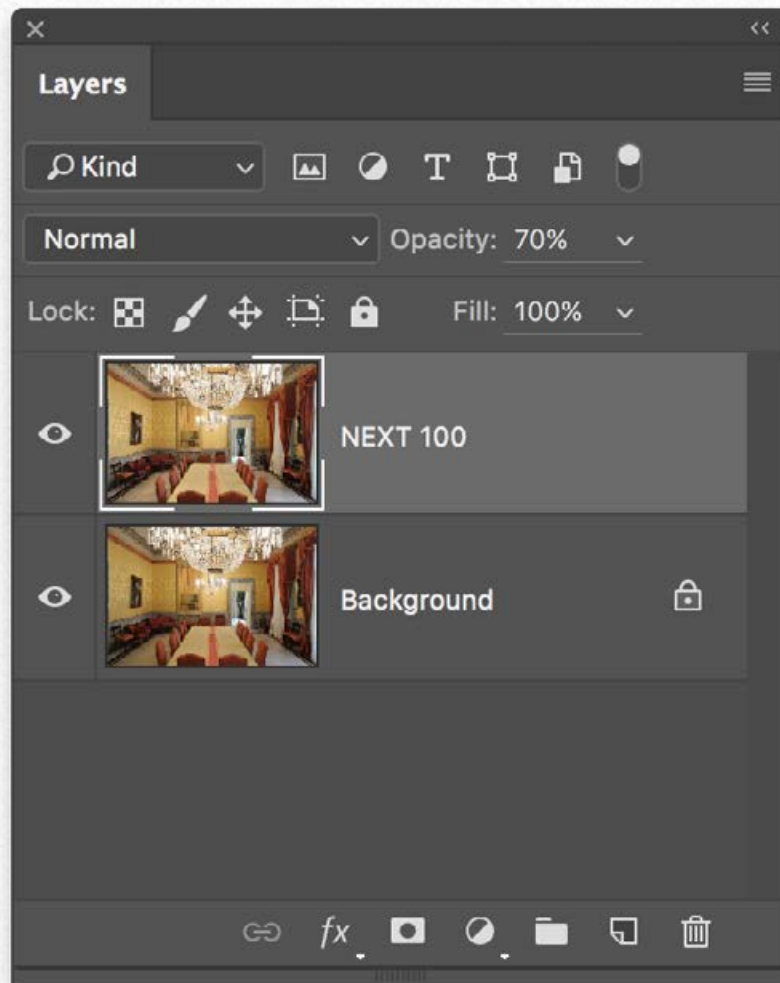
---

ALCE embedded a halos suppress tool. We have consistently improved it but, when needed you can deactivate it to get even further contrast. Unchecking this tab the halos smoothing will be deactivate. The result in general is not nice. However sometimes may better than default.

An interesting technique is to get two Next layers. A standard one below and a version without halos suppress on the tool, add a black mask to this last one and, using a white mask tool reveal parts that are better.

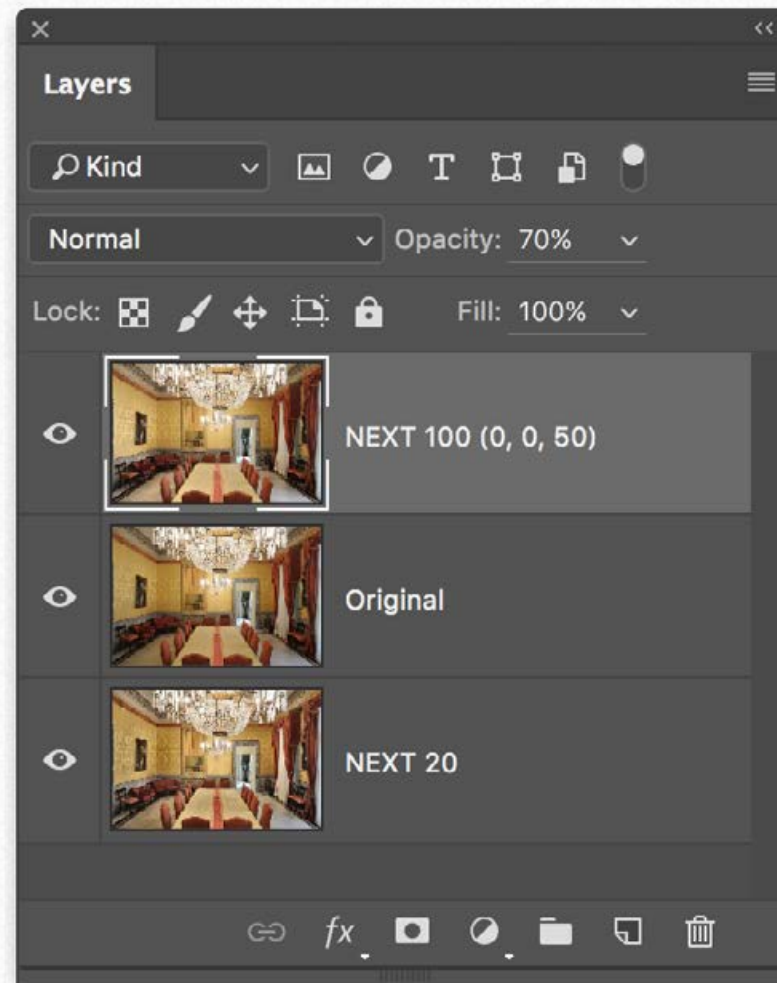






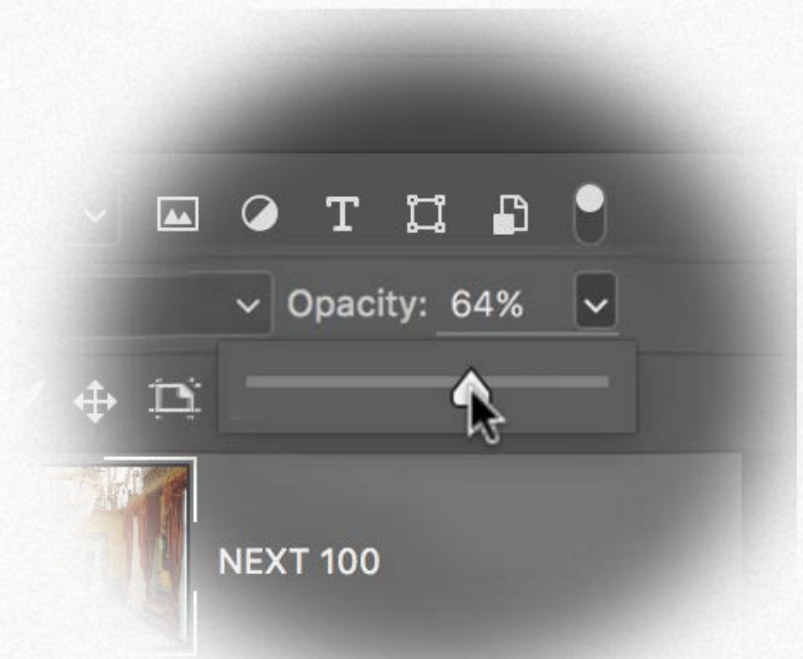
### NEXT goes on a duplicate layer

By default NEXT apply his effect on a duplicate layer that is named with the radius value. In this case: NEXT 100.  
If you change any slider the new version will reply the previous until you will not go to the next history state or flatten.



### Get different versions

If you want to compare different versions, you must drag the NEXT layer below the original. Now you will be able to apply NEXT again.



### NEXT layer opacity

NETX's layers are at 70% opacity.  
This will allow you to decrease or increase the enhancing effect.



### Global versus local

Whether used as a final touch-up tool or early in the workflow to set up the structure of an image, Local Contrast Enhancement is a processing technique which improves realism and tridimensionality in pictures: it's like being in front of the subject rather than a mere bi-dimensional reproduction of it.

We were gifted with a built-in local contrast enhancement routine which always runs, and that's why the comparison of the pictures shown below, before and after the application of our tool, are remarkable examples of successful image processing.



### Improvement of local contrast

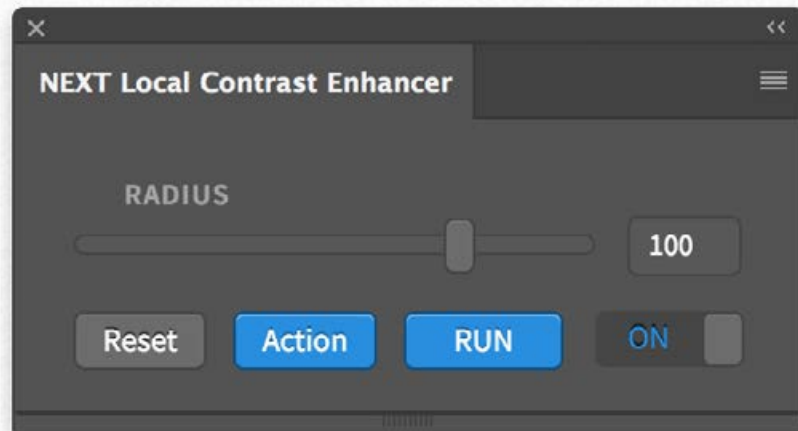
Humans don't see things like cameras do: the software running in our brain and constantly processing the visual information passed on by the eyes is enormously more sophisticated than any camera chipset. When we look at things out in the world, we're continuously calibrating and extracting detail depending on the subject we are looking at and also on its surroundings.

### But, what is local contrast?

Whatever tool we use for this, the fact is that a lot of contrast still lies, hidden and unexploited, in the image. We need to process every area of the picture separately to make the most out of it, so that all of the image's features may be greatly intensified.

**Watch "What is Local Contrast"**





## The Radius. The core feature of NEXT

Except for Radius 1 that is a powerful sharpener, the radius value defines how local the contrast will be. Easy to say, not so easy to understand.



## Understand how radius works

We offer you three ways to understand what radius is.

Watch the Radius tutorial. It's about ALCE but the working the principle is the same.

### Radius tutorial

Take a couple of your standard files. Apply NEXT with different radius values and compare them. Then reduce the file at 25% and re-apply the same values. This will help you to understand what file-size sensitive means in practice.

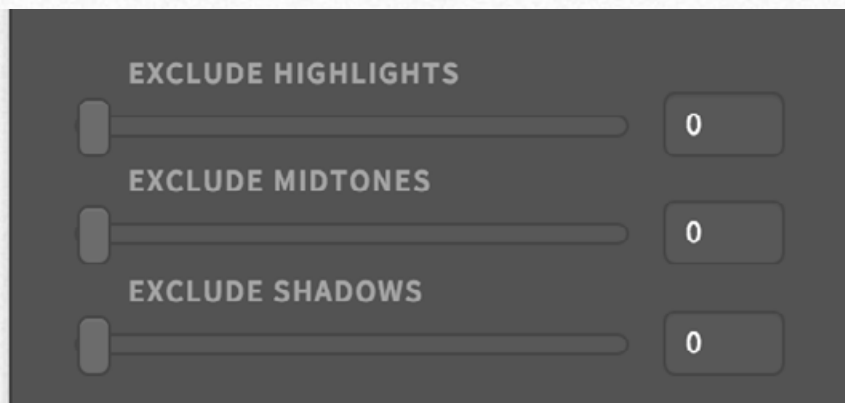
You may also download an instructive test file.

### Next Sample File



# Masking Sliders

## Masking



## Exclude highlights, mid-tones or shadows

NEXT has three masking sliders. They are hidden when you open the panel in compact mode.

With these sliders progressively exclude Next effects on highlights, mid-tones, and shadows. Works well in shadows and to remove halos in flat backgrounds.

## How sliders work

The sliders create a selection of highlights, mid-tones or shadows. These masks are similar to the corresponding presets of Mask Equalizer. 0 is no effect, 100 is full effect.

Moving the sliders you will not change the shape of the selection, but the intensity of the embedded mask.

The great advantage of these embedded sliders is that you can balance radius and exclude in one go.



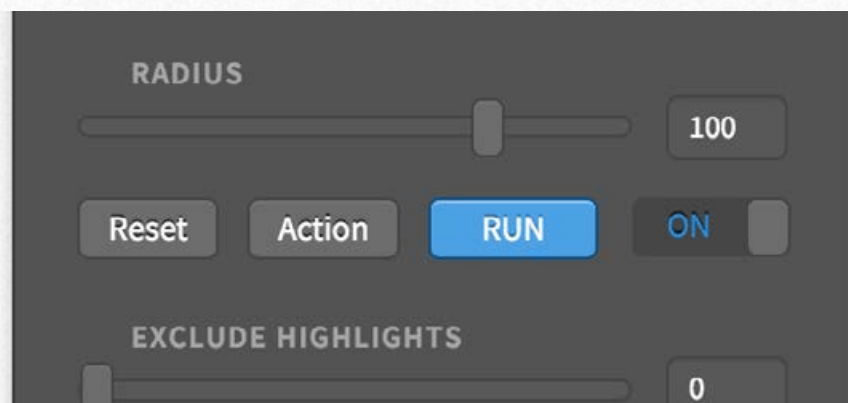
## Masking with Mask Equalizer

For a further control or to get a separate layer mask you should use Mask Equalizer, also available in a convenient bundle.

## About Mask Equalizer

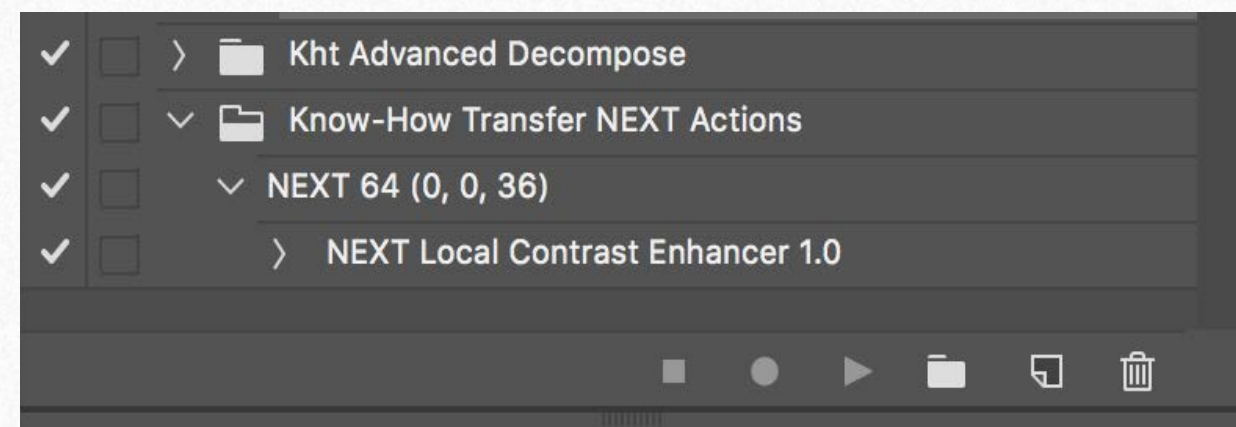


## Save Action Button



## Save an action with your custom setting

Whatever your setting are, you can save a custom action that will include the sliders setting and eventually the “Suppress Halos” mode. You can recall that action to apply later to another image, or you can add it to another action to create a custom batch option





### NEXT used with Mask Equalizer crashes PS

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Please upgrade Mask Equalizer to the latest version 1.1.0

### Launching NEXT from the filter menu nothing happens

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This menu item is only for internal use. Open NEXT from Window/Extensions/NEXT menu.

### After install there is no NEXT in the Extensions list

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1. You have not restarted Photoshop after the install
2. You are installing on Photoshop CS6 or older that are not compatible.
3. In WIN you are working on 32bit. Wow! Pro only works at 64bit.

### Install additional step for pre-CC 2014 users

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We mean the first version of. CC, released in 2013. 2014 and later are OK.

Move the in folder **com.knowhowtransfer.next**

from CEP to CEPServiceManager4 folder

This is the path for WIN

C:\Program Files (x86)\Common Files\Adobe\CEP\extensions\

C:\Program Files (x86)\Common Files\Adobe\CEPServiceManager4\extensions\

This is the path for MAC

Macintosh HD/Library/Application Support/Adobe/CEP/extensions

Macintosh HD/Library/Application Support/Adobe/ CEPServiceManager4/extensions/

If you don't see the folder **CEPServiceManager4** create it manually and inside create a folder named **extensions**. Please type them as they are. Names are case-sensitive.

### NEXT is very slow

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Probably you are using Photoshop CC or CC 2014 and dragging the layers cursor.

Because of an Adobe issue, while you drag the sliders the preview is continuously applied. This significantly slows down the process.

Simply point and click in the place where you want to stop the cursor.

Do not drag and release.

Watch the tutorial on this issue. It shows MASK, but NEXT is the same,

**Dedicated Tutorial**





# KNOW HOW TRANSFER

the photography knowledge hub

## About Know-How Transfer The Photography Knowledge Hub

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Everyone dealing with photography and digital imaging will find a unique mix of instructional and how-to content here. We offer applications specifically designed by photographers for photographers, as well as effective tutorials and free resources. Our mission is to create a community, a Central Hub of Photography Knowledge, where photographers can exchange experiences, share information and grow their skills.

Many of our team come from the school of the great Dan Margulis and still have a very special relationship with him. We are pleased to report here what he wrote about this group in his famous post “La Dolce Vita - An era ends”:

## La Dolce Vita. An Era Ends By Dan Margulis

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They say that Italians get emotional at times like this, and that Italians love beautiful things. I admit to feeling a bit Italian myself as I write this. I *\*have\** developed an emotional attachment to the country, no doubt. And the relationships I have entered into with several of my students in that country have evolved into something, well, profoundly loving. The old joke has it that in heaven, all lovers are Italian. Right offhand I can think of a couple of exceptions to this generality, but there is no need to go off-topic.

The truth is that it is a land of love and great beauty, made all the more beautiful professionally by seeing the new and sophisticated imaging algorithms being developed by Davide with Marco Olivotto, and by seeing how Alessandro, Daniele Di Stanio, Tiziano Fruet and others have brought first-class color instruction into a country where it was rarely found previously.





# KNOW HOW TRANSFER

the photography knowledge hub

## Links and Credits

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Plugin developed by KnowHowTransfer

GUI Panel Design by Davide Barranca

Images credits:

page 9 © Francesco Piras

other images © Roberto Bigano

**Visit Know-How Transfer**