

Quick Start >



KNOW HOW TRANSFER

the photography knowledge hub



What's New

Install

Tutorials

Open Next

The Panel

Sliders Behavior

Local Contrast

Radius

Masking

Actions

FAQ

Product Page

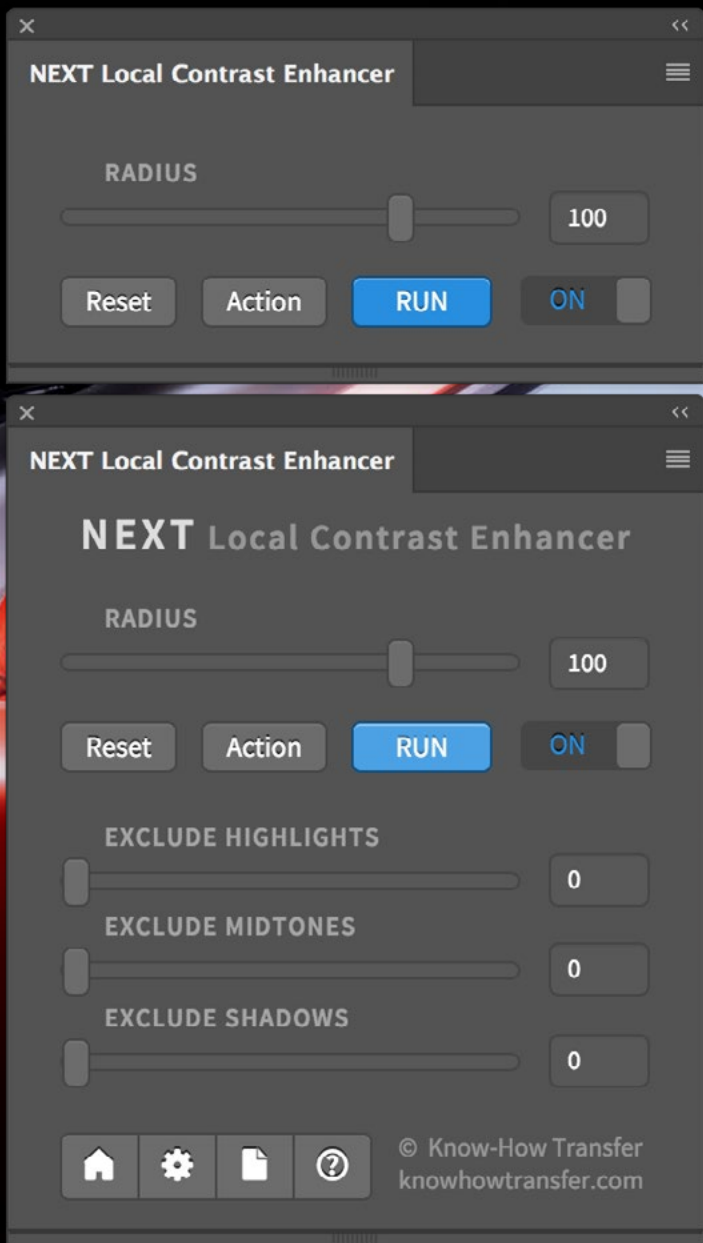
Training

Italiano



NEXT Local Contrast Enhancer

User Manual - Version 1.0.4 - November 2016



What's New in Next Compared to ALCE2

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

ALCE missed the preview. Its routine was very complex and it has been necessary to consistently improve the speed.

NEXT is at least three times faster compared to ALCE at 8 bit and eight time faster at 16bit. It means virtually live preview.

Masking

ALCE missed the preview. Its routine was very complex and it has been necessary to consistently improve the speed.

NEXT is at least three times faster compared to ALCE at 8 bit and eight time faster at 16bit. It means virtually live preview.

Compatibility

Photoshop CC and above
MAC OSX 10.7 Lion and above
WIN 10 and above (64bit only)

Halos Control

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.

32bit / Quad-Core Processing

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

Read More

Install NEXT

The install files are downloadable from the download email links logging' in your ["My Account"](#) page
You can download the dedicated installer or the folder document that contains the user manuals in more languages and extra content as actions or test files.

Download 1: NEXT for MAC
Download 2: NEXT for WIN
Download 3: Documentation

Double click or right click to install

MAC users that have the security preference tab checked on "Allow apps downloaded from "Mac Apps Store" will receive an alert that this app is not downloaded from Apple Mac Store. OK and proceed to install.

WIN users will be asked "Do you want to allow this app from an unknown publisher to make changes to your PC?
Ok and proceed to install.

Double click or right click to uninstall

Same procedure using the Uninstall,app button

Install



Additional step for pre-CC 2014 users

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

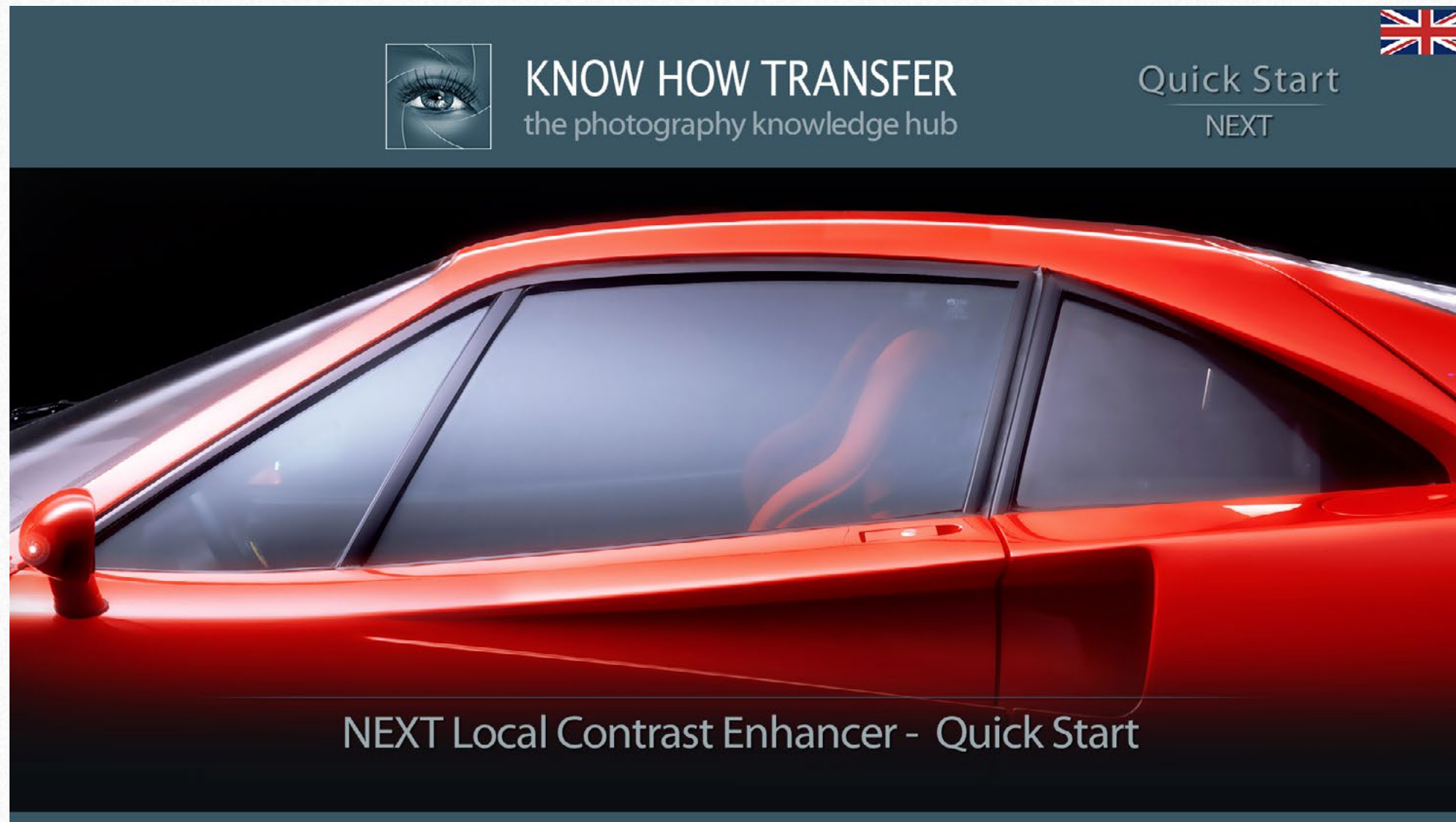
[To complete the installation please go to FAQ page >](#)

Compatibility

Photoshop CC and above
MAC OSX 10.7 Lion and above
WIN 10 and above (64bit only)

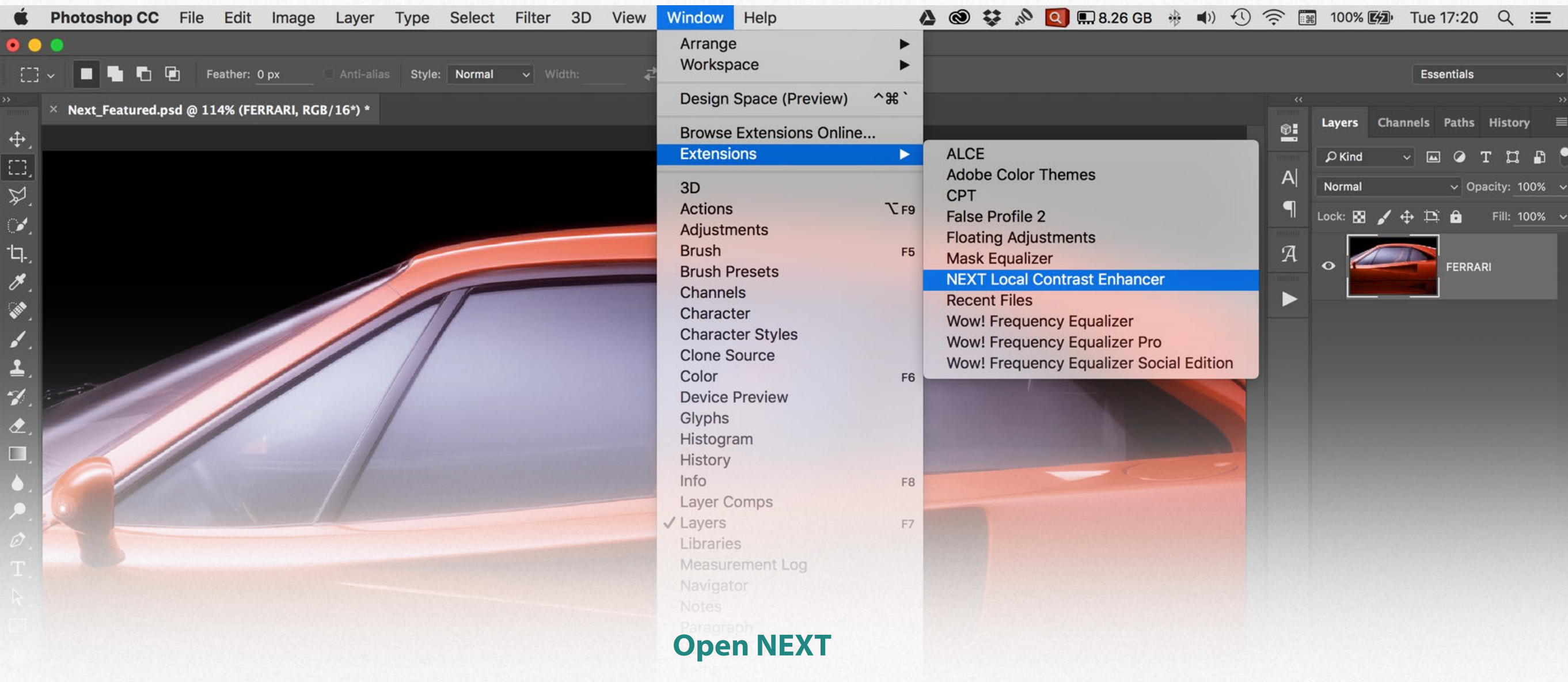
Install Tutorial

Quick Start Tutorial



[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 is only for internal use

The Next Panel

The Panel

Compact and extended mode

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

Radius

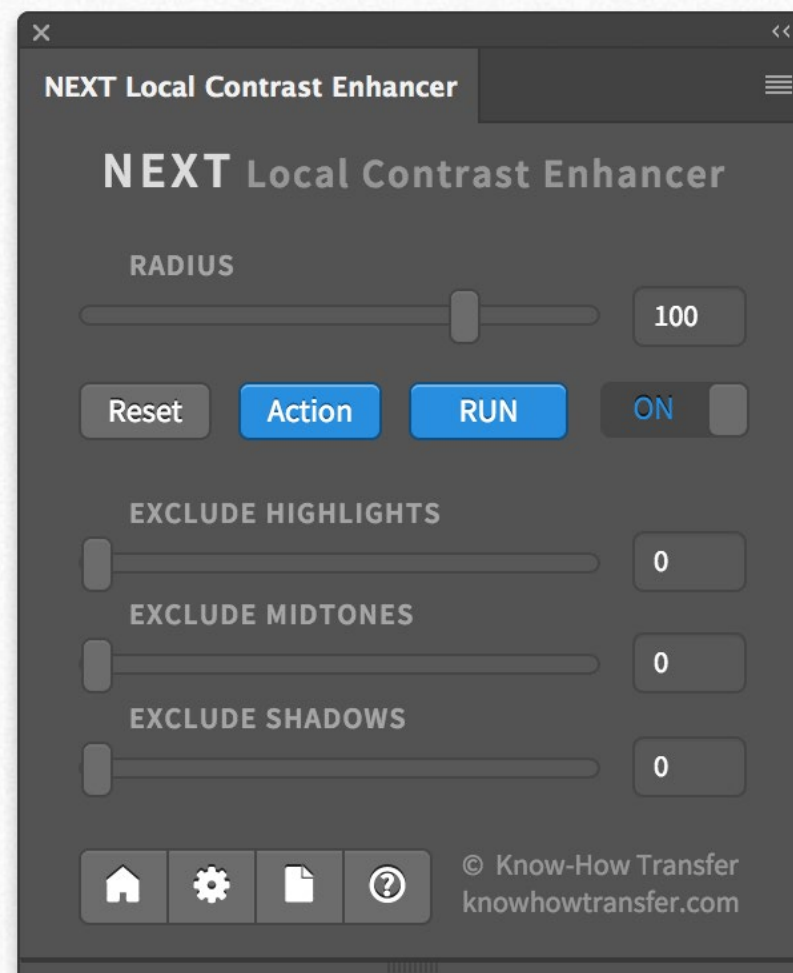
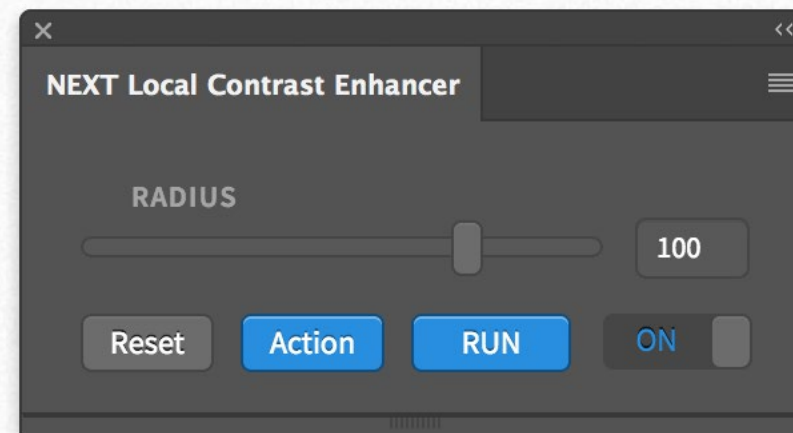
The core function of NEXT.
Ranging from 1 to 500 it sets the amount of local contrast.
The default value is 100.

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



Use this small handle
to open or close the panel

Action

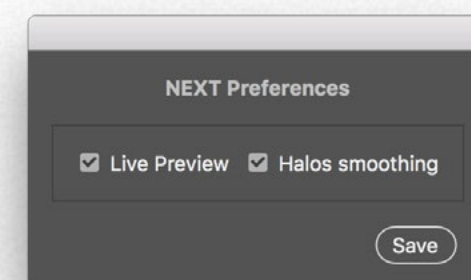
Save the current setting, masking and preferences as a Photoshop action.

Masking sliders

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

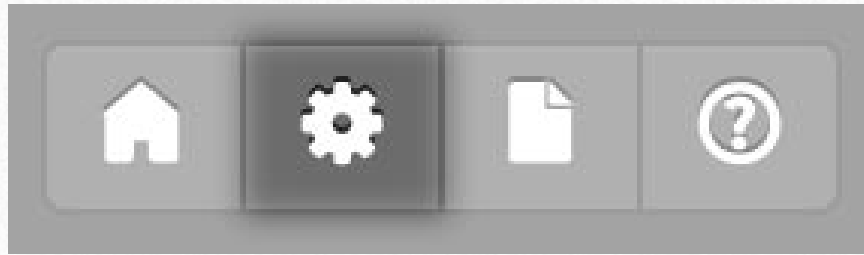
Footer buttons

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

The Panel



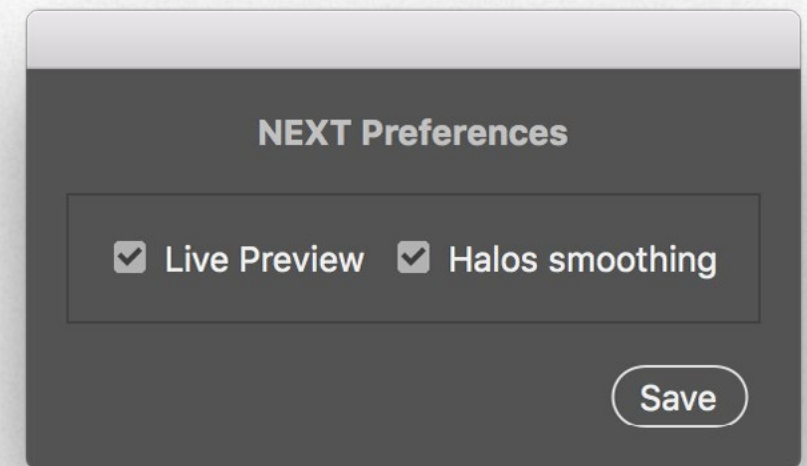
Live Preview to manual mode

By default Next works in live preview and any time you change the radius value, the exclude layers or change the halos smoothing preferences the preview is updated. Unchecking this tab you can make your change and then press “Run” to apply.

Deactivate “Halos smoothing”

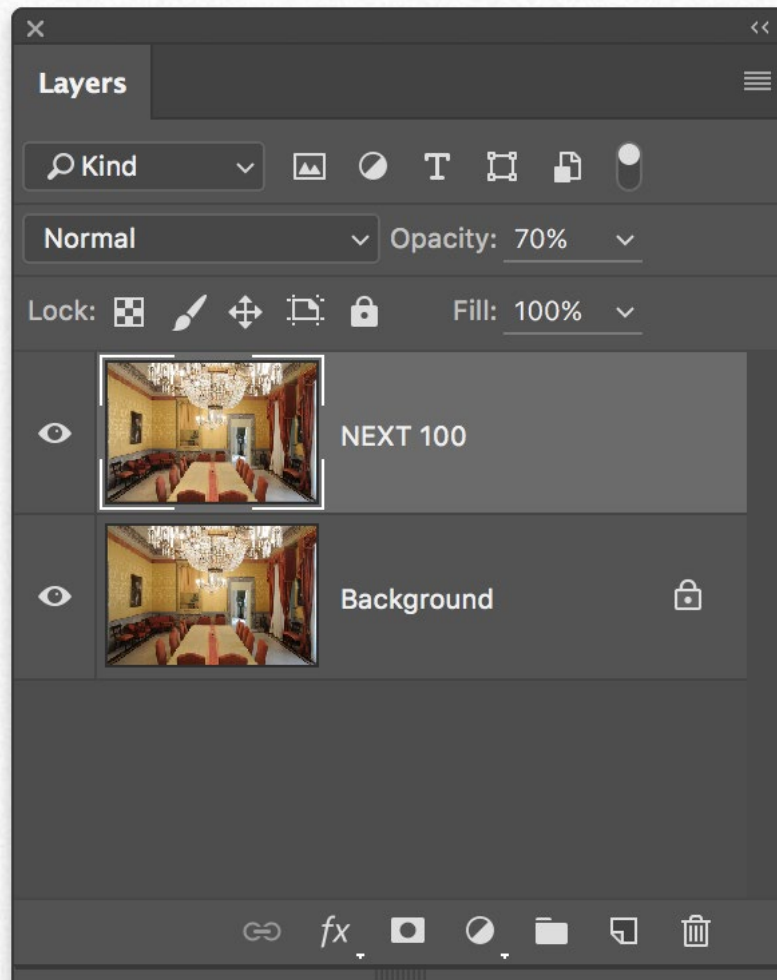
ALCE embedded an halos suppress tool. We have consistently improved it but, when needed you can deactivate it to get even further contrast. Unchecking this tab the halos smoothing will be deactivate. The result in general is not nice. However sometimes may better than default.

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.



How NEXT deals with layers

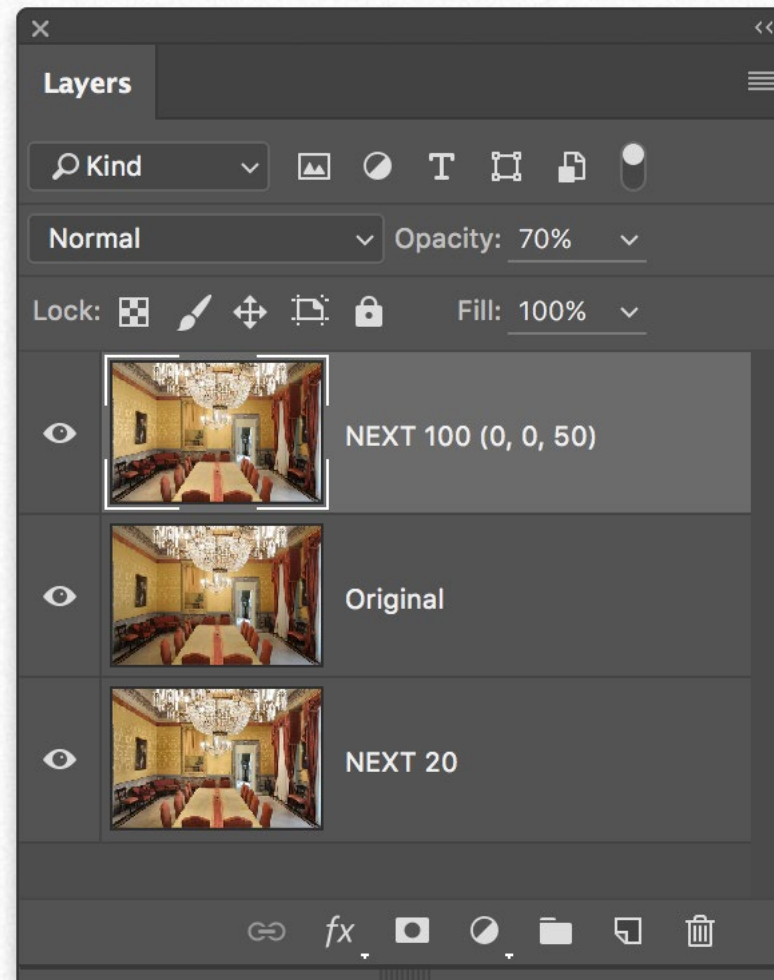
Sliders Behavior



NEXT goes on a duplicate layer

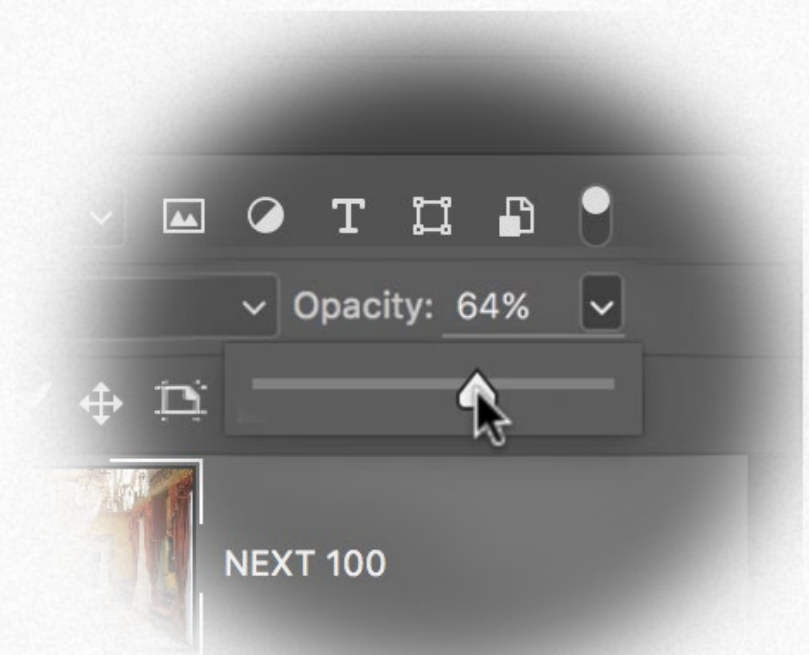
By default NEXT apply his effect on a duplicate layer that is named with the radius value . In this case: NEXT 100.

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 get another version.



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 tri-dimensionality 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.



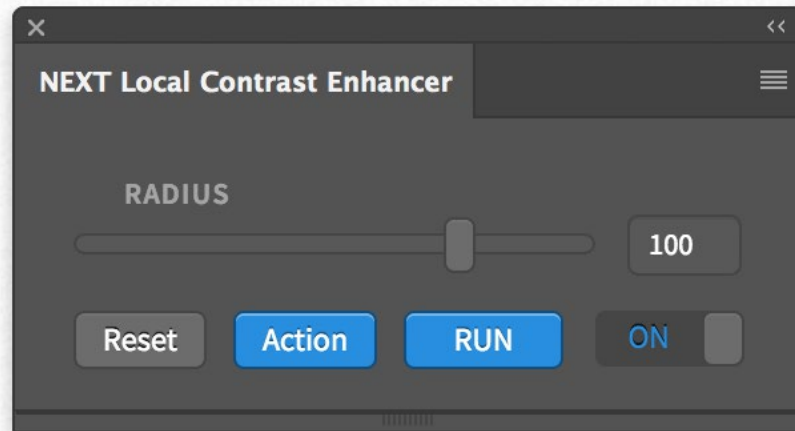
Improvement of local contrast

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

Three ways to ways really understand what radius is about.

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

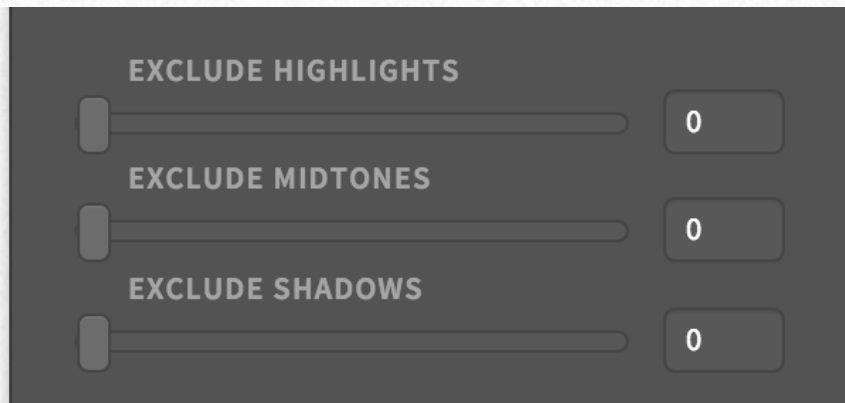
You may also download a very interesting test file.

Next Sample File

Visit NEXT' training page. We are adding a lot of before/after, videos and extra contents

Training Page

Masking Sliders



Exclude highlights, midtones 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, midtones and shadows. Works well in shadows and to remove halos in flat backgrounds.

How sliders works

Each of them creates a selection of of highlights, midtones 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.



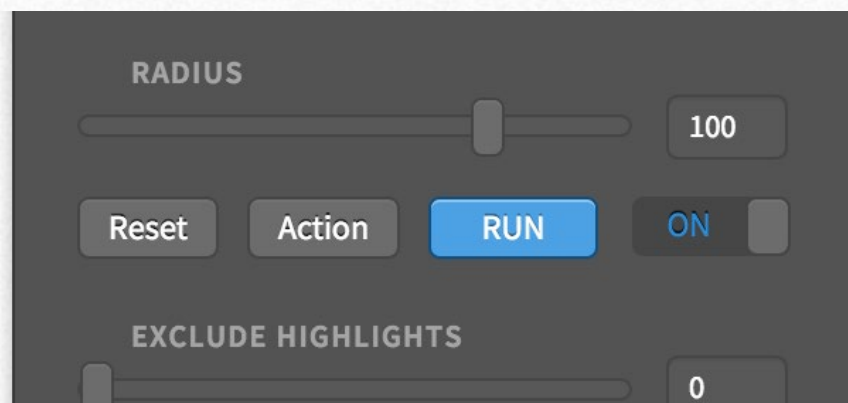
Masking

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.

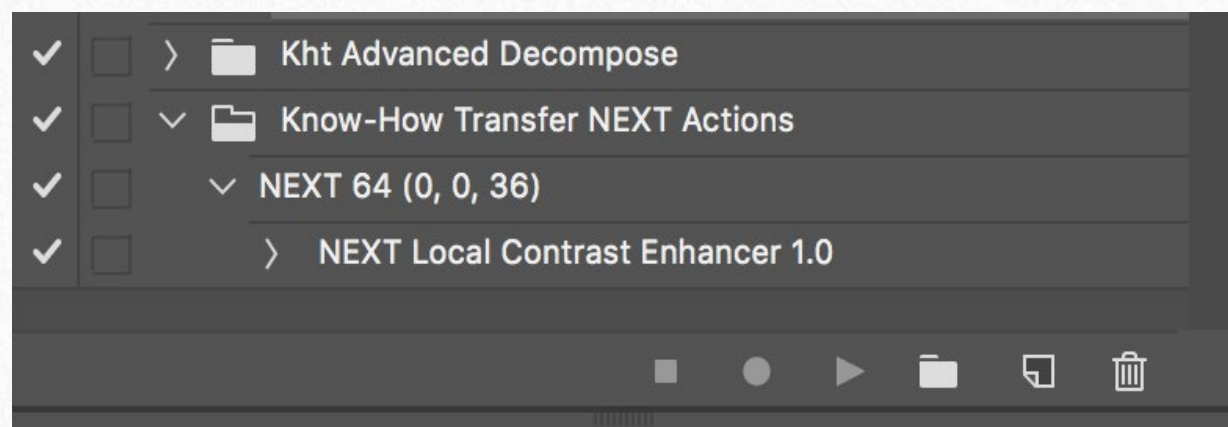
About Mask Equalizer

Save Actions Button



Save an action with your custom setting

Whatever is your setting 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



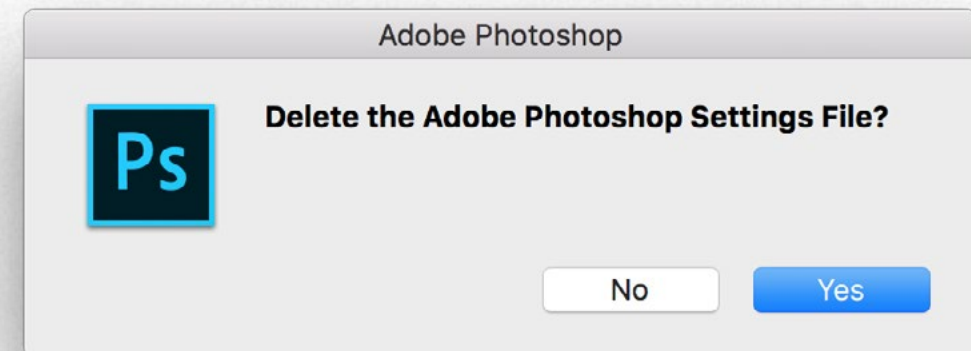
Photoshop crashes using NEXT

Probably the Photoshop preferences has been corrupted, you must delete them; actions and anything saved will be preserved.

As you start Photoshop.

MAC: Press and hold Command+Alt+Shift

WIN: Press and hold Alt+Control+Shift



NEXT used with Mask Equalizer crashes PS

Please upgrade Mask Equalizer to the latest version 1.1.0

Additional step for pre-CC 2014 users

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.

Still have problems?

[Go to FAQ page](#)



KNOW HOW TRANSFER

the photography knowledge hub

About Know-How Transfer The Photography Knowledge Hub

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.

[Read more about our team.](#)

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”:

Watch the About Us Video

La Dolce Vita. An Era Ends By Dan Margulis

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.

Professional Plugins for Photoshop



Mask Equalizer

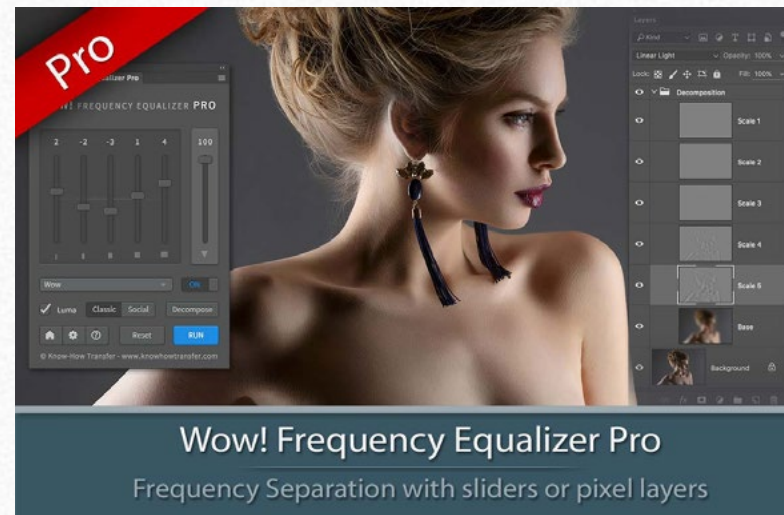
Creates Masks From Multiple Tonal Ranges

[Mask Equalizer - Create Masks from Multiple Tonal Ranges](#)

Start from one preset and, with just one click, create a mask, modify it using sliders or manually create a custom one from scratch. Preview live both the mask or the image with the mask applied.

PS CC and Above - MAC & WIN.

[Buy €30 >](#)



Wow! Frequency Equalizer Pro

Frequency Separation with sliders or pixel layers

[Wow! Frequency Equalizer Pro Edition](#)

Same features of Wow! Classic plus the new Decomposition button You can now turn each frequency into its own pixel layer for a better and more precise frequency based retouching.

PS CC and above - MAC & WIN.

[Buy €40 >](#)



VitaminBW

Single and Triple Tone Black & White Converter

[VitaminBW - Single and Triple Tone Black&White Converter](#)

An original approach to B&W Conversion with a very clean and simple interface. Simply press the "Single Tone" or the "Triple Tone" button to be quickly introduced to advanced conversion techniques.

PS CS6 and above - MAC & WIN.

[Buy €28 >](#)



Wow! Frequency Equalizer Social

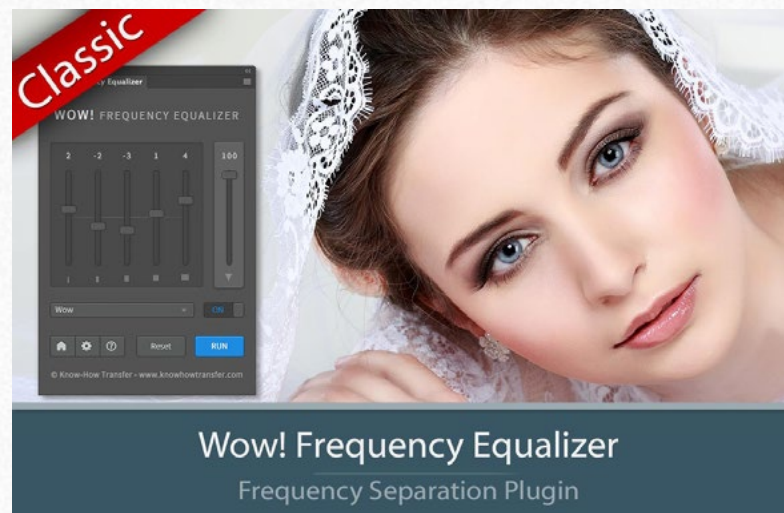
Get the Wow! Factor- Optimized for Web and Social

[Wow! Frequency Equalizer Social Edition](#)

A miniaturized version of Wow! with a re-designed algorithm with shorter range sliders and dedicated preset optimized for sizes from 800 to 1500 px. Works with files up to 1920x1920 px.

PS CC and Above - MAC & WIN

[Buy €15 >](#)



Wow! Frequency Equalizer

Frequency Separation Plugin

[Wow! Frequency Equalizer Classic Edition](#)

Boost and soft an image in one step detail scales through five dedicated sliders. Positive values, which add detail or shape. Negative value remove detail and create great, soft transitions.

PS CS6 and Above - MAC & WIN

[Buy €30 >](#)



Channels Power Tool

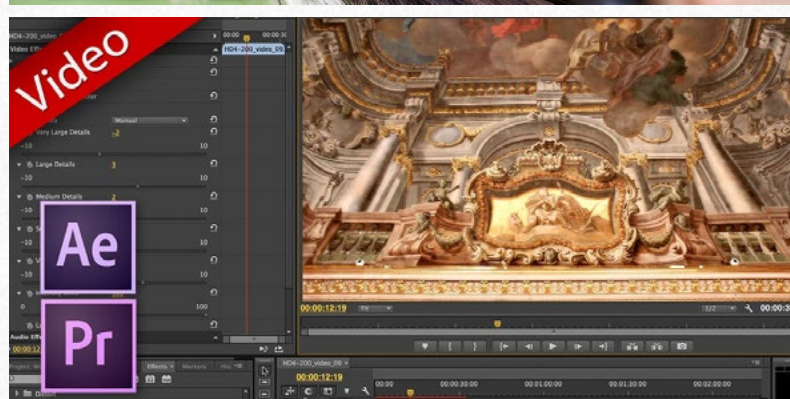
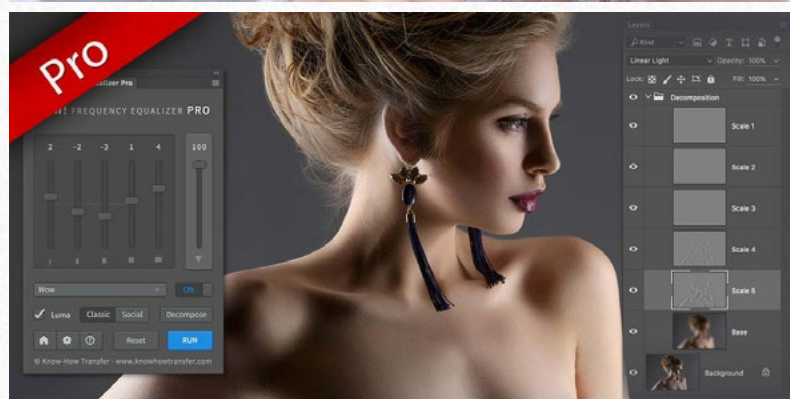
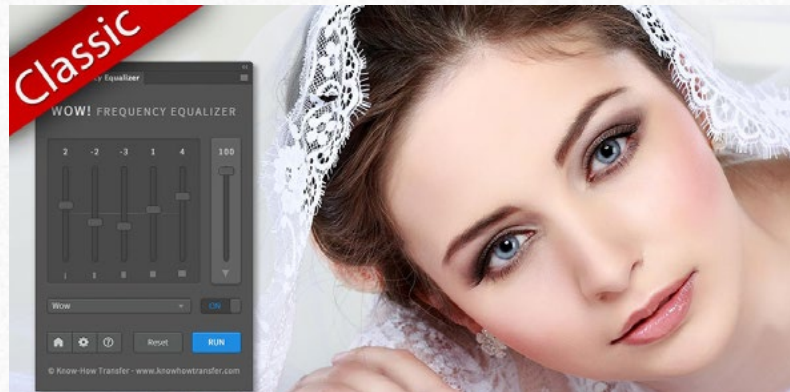
Advanced Mask Editing and Workflow Optimizer

[Channels Power Tool - Advanced Mask Editing](#)

Easily get a preview or create masks out of all available channels. Use the powerful Apply Image option to precisely recover the details of your files. CPT will enhance your color control precision and productivity. PS CS5 and Above - MAC & WIN.

[Buy €24 >](#)

The Wow! Range. Classic, Pro, Social and Video Edition



Wow! is an exclusive Photoshop extension that improves images with a magical combination of sharpening, shape and smoothing – we call this the “The Wow! Factor.”

Wow! adds style, image sharpness and three-dimensionality together with incredibly smooth transitions. Use our easy presets with just one button, or take full control with the high quality live preview to add and remove details by tweaking our five dedicated sliders.

There are four versions of Wow!, three for Photoshop and one for video.

Wow! Frequency Equalizer Classic Edition (Former Wow! Tonal Equalizer)

Our Premium Frequency separation Plugin. Five detail scales working independently with positive (add contrast sharpening and local contrast) and negative (remove contrast and smooth) values.

PS CS6 and above MAC & WIN. **Buy €30>**

Wow! Frequency Equalizer Pro Edition

Same features of Wow! Classic plus the new Decomposition button You can now turn each frequency into its own pixel layer for a better and more precise frequency based retouching.

Works with two different engines: Classic and Social

PS CC and above - MAC & WIN. **Buy 40>**

Wow! Frequency Equalizer Social Edition

A miniaturized version of Wow! Classic with a re-designed algorithm with shorter range sliders and dedicated presets optimized for sizes from 800 to 1500 px. **Works with files up to 1920×1920 px**

PS CC and above MAC & WIN. **Buy 15>**

Wow! Frequency Equalizer Video Edition for Adobe Premiere and After Effects

Works with the same powerful engine of Wow! Classic. Same ease of use and tuning effect. Wow! generates an instant video preview and the export process is very fast. It's easy to use.

PS After Effects and Premiere CS6 and above - MAC & WIN. **Buy €30>**

Specifications for all versions

Works on 8,16 and 32bit files - New wavelet based algorithm

Multi CPU accelerated. - 32bit color depth internal processing.

Wow! Home Page

Freeware and Professional Raw Scan Service



Floating Adjustments

Restore the Old CS3 Style Floating Window

Floating Adjustments - Restores the old CS3 floating window

Restores the Adjustment Layers' bigger, floating windows look and behaviour which was the norm back in CS3. It allows the creation of 10 Adjustment kinds as big, floating windows, and the modifications of existing adj.

PS CS6 and above - MAC & WIN.

Get Free >



False Profile

Luminosity Control Using Gamma

False Profile - Tonal range control with low or high gamma

A Photoshop extension to automate the assignment of false RGB profiles for a full control of the luminosity. Brings new features and refinements to the process of assigning false profiles. Works in conjunction with the Dan Margulis' PPW Tools.

PS CS5 and above - MAC & WIN.

Get Free >



Hasselblad 3F 16bit Raw Scan

The Best Service on the Market. For your Analog Workflow

Hasselblad 3F 16bit Raw Scan Service

3F is a raw file obtained from an analog original. We will scan your film with the Hasselblad hi-end scanners. Send us your originals from a 35mm to a 13x18cm/5x7", color or black and white, negative or positive. All PS Versions, MAC & WIN. Buy 3F 16 bit R

CS2 and above, MAC & WIN

Buy Raw Scan €7each.>

Photoshop Plugins Page

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the photography knowledge hub

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Plugin developed by KnowHowTransfer

GUI Panel Design by Davide Barranca

Images credits:

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other images © Roberto Bigano

Visit Know-How Transfer