

MASTERING SELECTIONS & MASKS IN LIGHTROOM CLASSIC CC 2023

UNLOCK YOUR CREATIVE POTENTIAL WITH THE
LATEST ADOBE LIGHTROOM V12 SELECTION
TOOLS

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INTRODUCTION



In October 2021, Adobe released version 11 of Lightroom Classic CC with significant changes to the selection tools. Then in 2022, Lightroom CC 12 was released with additional tools, all making working with Masks and Selections much easier. It's now possible, by using and combining different selection tools, to work in ways that were previously impossible in Lightroom.

This book will teach you how to use the features and tools in Lightroom Classic CC 12. This will allow you to create excellent Masks using the selection tools in Lightroom. Perhaps most importantly, you will learn how to combine the individual tools to produce extremely powerful Masks. But to achieve this, it's important that you do more than just read this book. It's vital that you follow along with the examples and exercises, particularly those towards the end of the book. To help you, please download the accompanying practice files from my website (<https://lenscraft.co.uk/learn-photo-editing-books/useful-downloads-books/>).

This book is intended as a guide for all skill levels. The only assumption is that you already know the basics of how to use Lightroom and are familiar with basic activities like importing and adjusting images. This

INTRODUCTION

book does not cover what the different Lightroom controls do or how to use them. This book is focused entirely on the process of creating Masks and using the selection tools.

Let's keep this introduction short and jump into the detail of making Lightroom selections. But before we do, it's important that you take a moment to read the next section.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION



AMERICAN/ENGLISH SPELLINGS

Many of the terms used in Adobe Lightroom have American spellings which may differ from the English spelling. As I was born and live in the UK, I use the English spelling in the book, **UNLESS** it relates to a feature of the software with an American spelling. For example, I may talk about making a Color Range selection. This is a feature of Lightroom and so use the American spelling. But when I'm referring to say the colour of an object or the colour red, I will use the English spelling of colour.

I do encourage readers to contact me with any errors you find, but please be sure the word is genuinely misspelled and not using the American/English variation for a reason. If you do find any genuine mistakes (and there will be some in a book of this length) please email me using robin@lenscraft.co.uk.

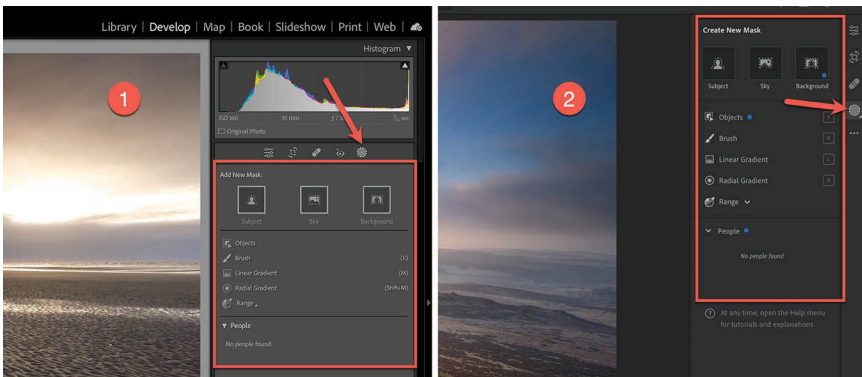
LIGHTROOM VERSION & LAYOUT

In creating this book, I have used the Mac version of Adobe Lightroom Classic CC, Release 12.1. This is the latest available version of Lightroom

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ClassicCC at the time of publication. As Adobe regularly releases updates to Lightroom, it's likely there will soon be a later version. This doesn't however mean that the book is out of date. Most changes to Lightroom tend to add features and it's rare for something to be removed or completely redesigned.

Whilst this book was written from the perspective of using Lightroom ClassicCC, similar tools also appear in Lightroom CC. The key difference is where you will find the selection tools in the interface. You can see the two versions of Lightroom in the screenshots below.



The Lightroom CC and Lightroom Classic CC interfaces

The image on the left (1) shows Lightroom ClassicCC with the tools located below the Develop Module Histogram. The image on the right (2) shows the same tools in Lightroom CC, but here they are in a narrow vertical panel on the right of the interface. Whilst it may be possible to follow this book with either version of Lightroom, there are differences that could make this difficult. It's therefore recommended that you use the ClassicCC version whilst learning from the book. Then later, you will be able to apply what you have learnt to Lightroom CC.

SUPPORTING IMAGE DOWNLOADS

At the end of this book, you will find several detailed editing exercises or examples. These are designed to help you understand how Selections

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and Masks work in Adobe Lightroom. To gain the greatest value from this book, please download the supporting image files and follow these exercises. You can download the accompanying images from my Lenscraft website. You will find these on the “Downloads for Books” page which you can access from the website menu, or directly using the link <https://lenscraft.co.uk/learn-photo-editing-books/useful-downloads-books/>.

This page contains the links to download files for all my books. Please scroll down the page until you find this book and then use that download button. The images will download in a single compressed zip file which you will then need to extract on your computer. Both Mac and Windows computers support the compressed zip file format used, so you should be able to access them.

NOTE FOR WINDOWS USERS

This book was developed using an Apple Mac computer and the Mac version of Adobe Lightroom Classic CC. If you are a Windows PC user, you may notice some minor differences between the screenshots and your own computer. The good news is that the versions of Lightroom are largely standardised across both operating systems. You should therefore have little difficulty following the book whether you use an Apple Mac or a Windows PC.

TRADEMARKS

Throughout this book, I may have referred to various organisations and their products. Where reference is made to any trademarks or product names it is purely in an editorial capacity. There is no intention of copyright infringement, and all trademarks are recognised and respected.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

DISCLAIMER

Whilst I have made every effort to ensure the information in this book is accurate and factual, it does represent my views and approach to photo editing. Some may disagree with the information I present but I have not intentionally made any omissions or errors. If you do find something you believe needs correcting, please contact me by email using robin@lenscraft.co.uk.

Thank you and I hope that you enjoy this book.

ONE

MASKING & SELECTION TOOLS OVERVIEW



When editing images in Lightroom, your adjustments are usually applied to the entire image. These are called global adjustments rather than local adjustments, which only affect certain areas. Whilst you need both types of adjustments when editing, there are limits to what you can achieve using global adjustments. If you want to edit photography to a professional level, you must work with both types of adjustments.

It's the Masking and Selection tools in Lightroom that make local adjustments possible. Being able to make a good selection is probably one of the most important editing skills you can develop. Creating clean and accurate selections with the Lightroom tools will make the difference between producing a poor or professional looking image. It's that important.

Historically, Lightroom had three selection tools, which were the Linear Gradient Filter, the Radial Gradient Filter, and the Selection Brush. These were accessed using three separate icons below the Histogram panel in the Develop module.

MASKING & SELECTION TOOLS OVERVIEW

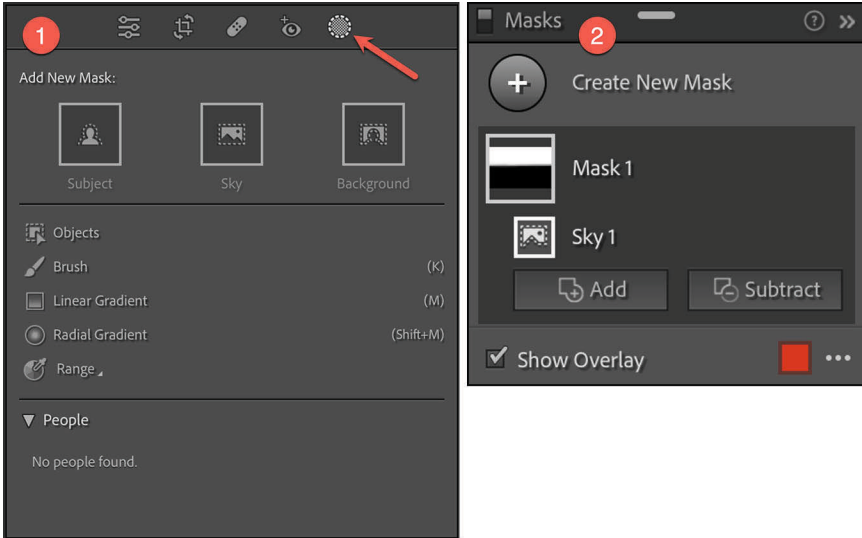


Historic position of the Lightroom selection tools

These tools were extremely useful when first introduced, and over time, further improvements were made. Then in October 2021 Lightroom Classic CC 11 was released which delivered a significant upgrade and redesign. The three icons below the Histogram were replaced with a single "Masking" icon. Additionally, some of the features like the Color Range Mask and Luminance Range Mask were removed from the three selection tools, to become separate tools. Finally, a new Masks panel was introduced, completely changing the approach to making and managing selections in Lightroom.

These exciting developments were then followed in October 2022 with the release of Lightroom Classic CC 12. This featured the introduction of exciting and new Artificial Intelligence (AI) based selection tools, making the creation of complex selections far easier.

MASKING & SELECTION TOOLS OVERVIEW



New Masking icon replacing the icons for the individual tools and the Masks Panel

Here you can see a screenshot (1) showing the new Masking icon indicated by the red arrow. This replaced the three old selection tool icons, making it easier to access all the masking and selection tools. The new icon still appears in a small toolbar, just below the Histogram panel in the Develop Module.

When the Masking icon is clicked, Lightroom displays the selection tools we can use to add Masks to an image. At the top of this section are three icons which are:

1. Subject – will select the dominant subject in the image, whether it's a person, animal, or object.
2. Sky – used to select the sky in a scene.
3. Background – will select the background in an image. Effectively, this is the opposite of the Subject selection.

These are AI based tools that can produce extremely accurate selections in seconds.

Then below the three icons we have a list of the other tools which are:

- **Objects** – an AI based brush which can be used to paint over objects to select them.
- **Brush** – the original Lightroom Selection Brush.
- **Linear Gradient** – the original Lightroom Linear Gradient selection .
- **Radial Gradient** – the original Lightroom Radial Gradient selection .
- **Range** – selections based on luminance, colour, or depth information. These were originally part of the Brush, Linear Gradient and Radial Gradient tools but have now become individual selection tools.

Finally, below these, is a section headed “People”. When you select an image for editing in Lightroom, it will scan the image using AI, trying to detect people. If it finds anyone, they are listed in this section for you to select and edit.

Over to the right side of the illustration (2) is a screenshot of the “Masks” panel. This displays a list of any Masks and Selections that have been created for the current image. The panel appears when you select to add the first Mask to an image. Masks are created separately for each image and are used to control where adjustments are applied.

Any Masks that you add to an image are saved with the image entry in the Lightroom Catalog. When you select an image and then click the Masking icon below the Histogram, the Mask panel opens if there are existing Masks for that image. This happens rather than displaying the dropdown menu containing the different tools that we’ve just looked at. The dropdown menu only appears when there are no Masks already created for the image you’re editing.

Now let’s examine the Masks panel in greater detail. This will help us understand how Masks and Selections are now implemented in Lightroom .

NAVIGATING THE MASKS PANEL

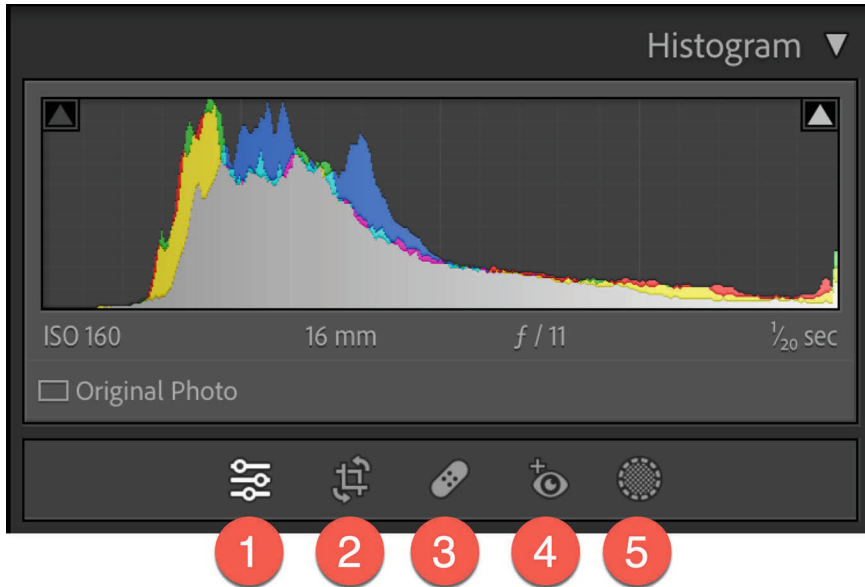
The first time you click the Masking icon for an image, the dropdown tools menu/panel appears below the icon. This lists the different selection tools you can use in Lightroom to create Masks. After using one of these tools, the menu is replaced by the Masks panel. The Masks panel is then used to:

- Manage the Masks and Selections you make.
- Edit existing Masks and Selections.
- Add new Masks and Selections.

If you decide to delete all the Masks attached to an image, the Masks panel closes, and the Masking icon reverts to its original behaviour of displaying the dropdown tools menu.

After adding a Mask to an image, clicking the Masking icon for a second time closes the Masks panel, switching you to the global adjustment controls. You can see the toolbar and icons indicated in the following screenshot .

MASKING & SELECTION TOOLS OVERVIEW

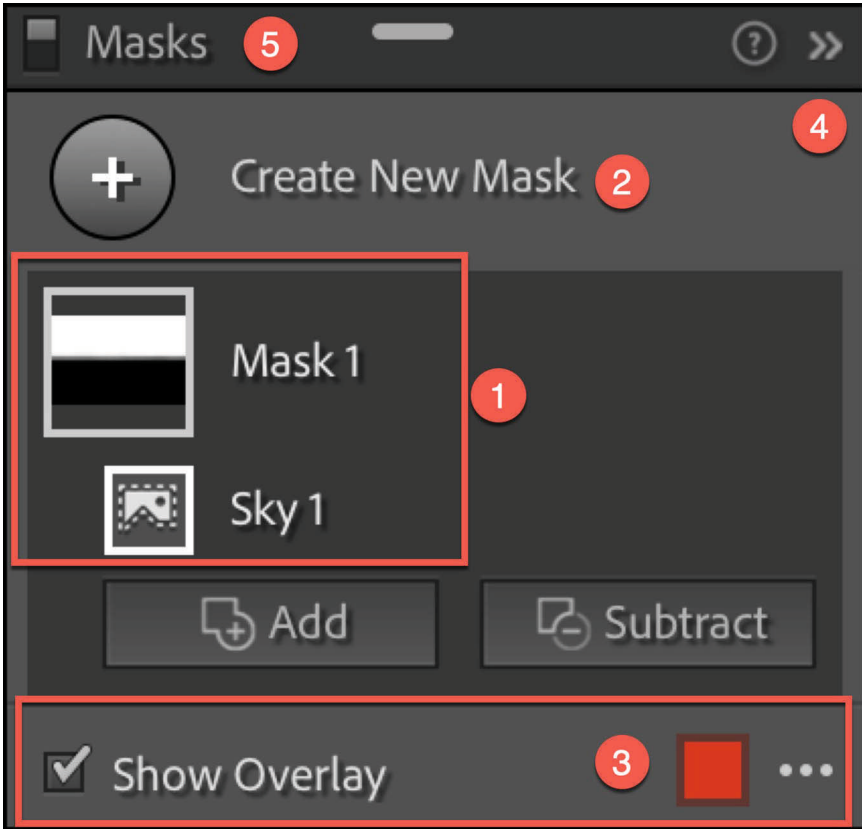


Icons in the Lightroom Toolbar

The icons in the toolbar are:

1. Editing controls
2. Crop Overlay tool
3. Healing and Clone Brush
4. Red Eye Correction tool
5. Masking

In the screenshot below you can see a numbered illustration of the new Masks panel. This is largely unchanged from Lightroom 11.



Components of the new Masks Panel

In the centre of the panel (1) you can see the thumbnail for “Mask 1”. Then just below this is a small thumbnail with the word “Sky 1” next to it. This is the selection created by the “Select Sky” tool. Here’s what happened to produce this.

When you first choose a selection tool in Lightroom, Lightroom creates a new blank Mask. That Mask appears in the Masks panel and by default has a solid black thumbnail. The thumbnail represents the Mask and is completely covering the image. It’s the Mask that controls which areas of the image will be affected by any adjustments we apply. With some of the tools like the Brush, the thumbnail remains black until you paint on the Mask. But with other tools like “Select Sky”, the selection is

MASKING & SELECTION TOOLS OVERVIEW

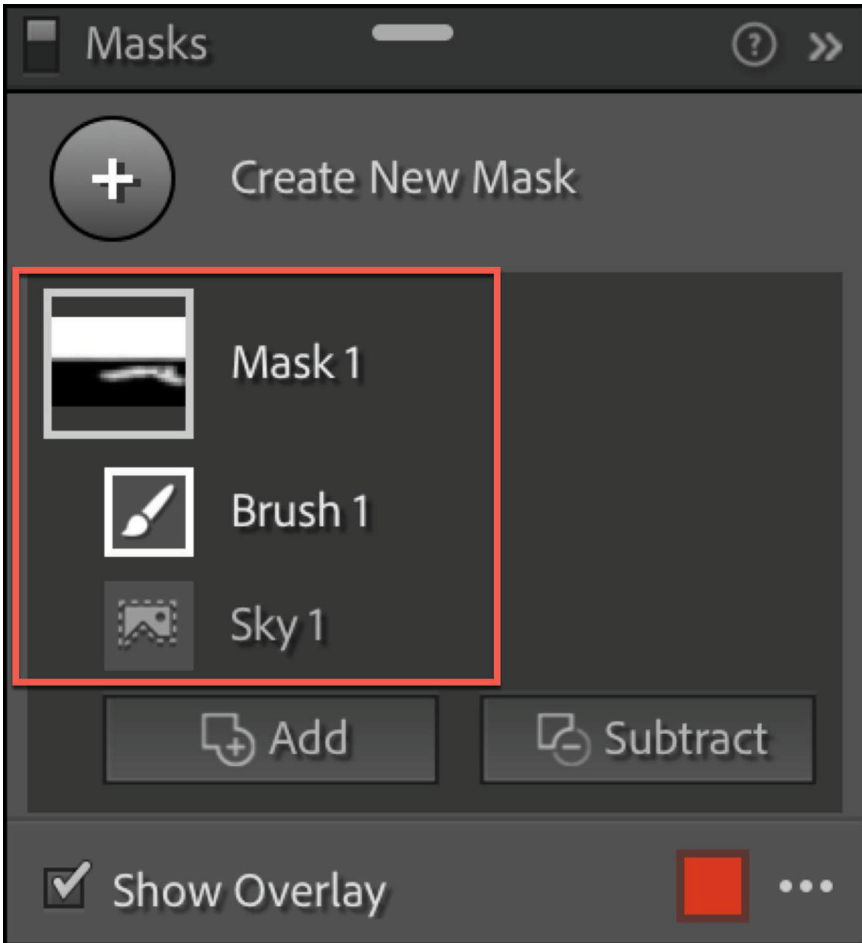
automatically created and applied to the Mask. When this happens, the thumbnail displays a black and white representation of the Mask that's been created.

The colour of the Mask thumbnail is important and shows what's selected by the Mask. White areas of the Mask show that the area is selected. It's these selected areas of the image that are affected when you apply adjustments using the controls in the Adjustments Panel (on the right side of the Lightroom interface).

Each Mask you create has one set of adjustment controls associated with it. But a Mask can be created from one or more selections. Whilst there is a one-to-one relationship between the Mask and the set of adjustment controls, there can be a many-to-one relationship between selections and the mask. Don't worry if this isn't clear, you will soon pick it up as we progress through the book.

In the screenshot above, the Select Sky tool was used to produce the Mask. This created a white area on the Mask thumbnail representing the sky in the image. The reason you see the small icon (Sky 1) below the Mask, is to show the Select Sky tool was used.

It's possible to apply multiple selection tools to the same Mask. For example, we could also add a Brush tool selection to "Mask 1" in this example to change the area affected. We will then see a Brush icon appear below "Mask 1" along with the "Sky 1" icon as shown below.



Using multiple selection tools to produce a mask

When using multiple selections, you can choose how the selections combine to produce the Mask. You can do this using the Add and Subtract buttons below the Mask. In the screenshot above, a Brush selection was added to the Mask using the “Add” button. You can see this was used to add an area of the image to the Mask which now appears in white in the thumbnail. If instead the Subtract button was used, it would be like painting with black on the Mask to prevent areas from being affected by any adjustments. We will cover this in detail later in the book.

MASKING & SELECTION TOOLS OVERVIEW

Because each Mask has a single set of adjustments associated with it, if you want to apply a different adjustment to another area of the image, you should create a new Mask. You can do this by clicking the “Create New Mask” icon (2) towards the top of the Masks panel. This displays the tools popup menu where you can choose the selection tool to use. You will then see a second thumbnail appear above the first Mask in the Masks panel. Here’s a different image with two Masks attached to it.

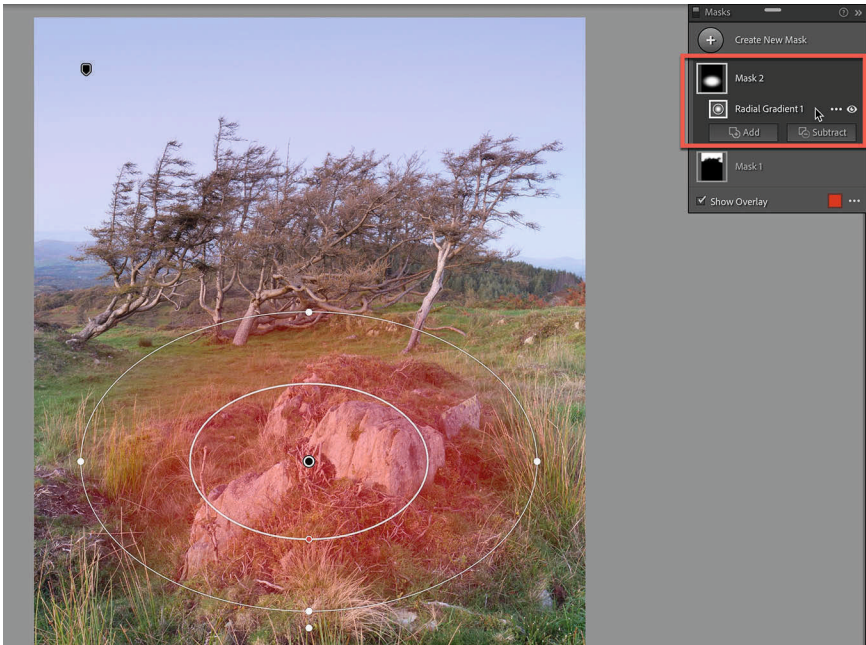


Image with multiple Masks for editing

Here you can see the new Mask has been created (Mask 2) in the Masks panel and below this is a Radial Gradient selection icon. Notice also that the view of Mask 1 has collapsed so that you only see the Mask thumbnail and its name. If you clicked on the Mask 1 thumbnail, it would expand to show the Select Sky icon and Mask 2 would collapse.

In the centre of the screenshot, you can see the Radial Gradient selection that was added. This shows a red overlay indicating the area selected by

End of Sample

The complete book can be purchased at

<https://lenscraft.co.uk/learn-photo-editing-books/lightroom-selections-book/>