

MASTERING THE NIK COLLECTION SELECTION TOOLS

THE ART OF PHOTO EDITING IN THE NIK
COLLECTION

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INTRODUCTION



Many photographers I speak to recognise the power of the Nik Collection to make photo editing easy when applying special effects to their photography. Surprisingly, far fewer recognise the power and flexibility of the Nik Collection Selection Tools. This is unfortunate, as the selection tools and the local adjustments we apply with them are the key to producing substantially better photographs

In the Nik Collection, local adjustments are used in many ways. For example, they can fix problems like excessive noise in an area or add additional sharpening and structure to make details pop. They can also target effects like a soft, warm glow around a light, change the colour of an object, or add natural-looking light to an otherwise dull landscape

Local adjustments are essential if you want your photography to stand out. This book is your detailed guide to using the Selection Tools in the Nik Collection. It is aimed at photographers who wish to improve their photography using the Nik Collection and already have a basic understanding of the Nik applications

INTRODUCTION

This book examines Nik Collection 7, which introduced several significant improvements and new Selection Tools compared to earlier versions. These tools will likely remain in future versions of the Nik Collection, making this book a sound investment for the future

But let's keep the introduction short other than for me to encourage you to take a moment to download the practice files that accompany this book from my website

PRACTICE IMAGE DOWNLOADS

Throughout this book, you will find practice exercises that you should complete, along with several full-length editing examples. These reinforce your learning using the information in the book; not everything can be described in words alone - some things are better experienced for yourself

Please take a moment to download the practice images from the following page of my website

<https://lenscraft.co.uk/learnphotoeditingbooks/usefuldownloads-books/>

The download also contains the images for the examples in the book's second section.

AMERICAN/ENGLISH SPELLINGS

Some of the terms in this book use American spelling, which may differ from English spelling. As I was born and live in the UK, I use the English spelling of words in the book **UNLESS** it relates to a software feature using an American spelling.

MAC AND WINDOWS USERS

The illustrations in this book were taken from the Mac version of the Nik Collection 7. This should not cause problems if you're a Windows

INTRODUCTION

PC user, as the software is consistent across Mac and Windows. Where I've mentioned keyboard commands or shortcuts, the Mac version is usually shown first, followed by the Windows PC version. Both versions are shown in the Shortcut Table in the Appendix.

TRADEMARKS

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DISCLAIMER

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

Thank you, and I hope you enjoy this book.

SECTION 1: THE NIK SELECTION TOOLS



This book is divided into two sections. The first examines the four Selection Tools in the Nik Collection 7 and their features. We also discuss how these differ from the earlier Selection Tools and the problems the changes could cause. This is intended to familiarise you with their operation and some of the other features of the Nik Collection that you may have overlooked.

In the second section of the book, we examine some examples of image editing using the Nik Collection. This section allows you to apply some of the learning from the first part of the book. I also hope the examples will provide you with new ideas about how to use the power of the Nik Collection tools

If you would like to download the practice files accompanying the examples in both sections of the book, please the following page on my website

<https://lenscraft.co.uk/learnphotoeditingbooks/usefuldownloads-books/>

This page contains the download links to practice files for all my books, including retired titles. You can use these images to follow the

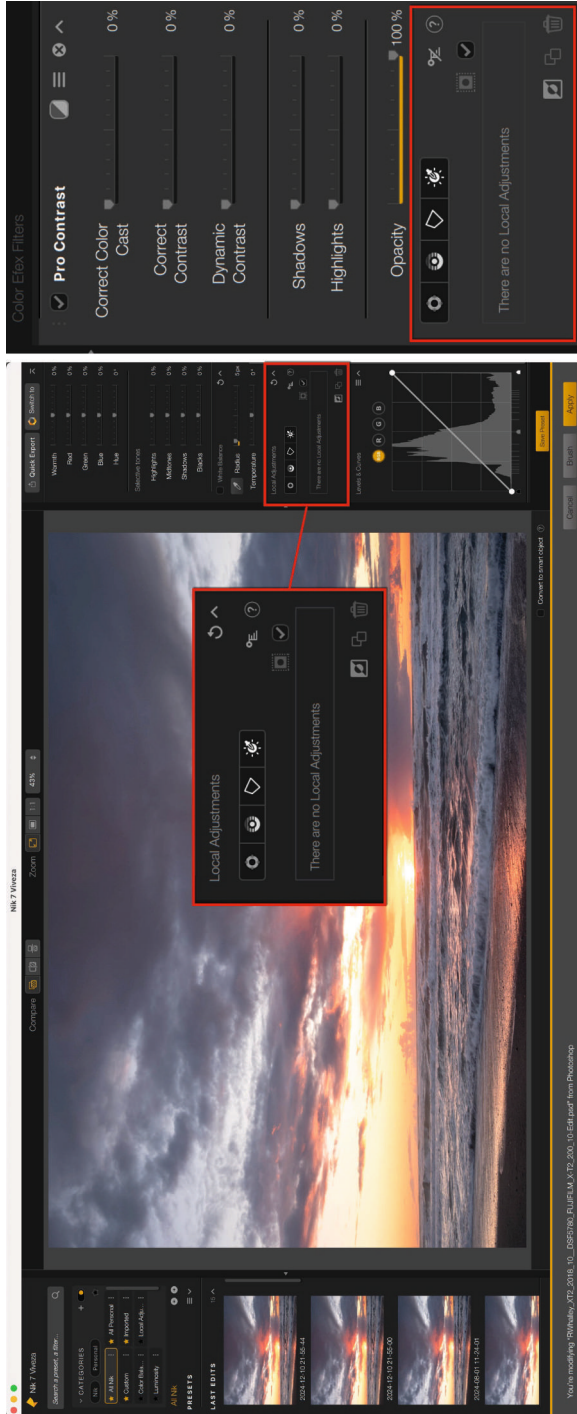
exercises in my books, but please do not sell or redistribute them in whole or in part

ONE THE CONTROL POINT



Nik Collection 7 is the first release with a standardised interface and consistent Selection Tools across all Nik applications. These Selection Tools are found in the Local Adjustments section of the Nik Application or, in some cases, attached to individual filters. The following screenshot shows an example of both.

MASTERING THE NIK COLLECTION SELECTION TOOLS

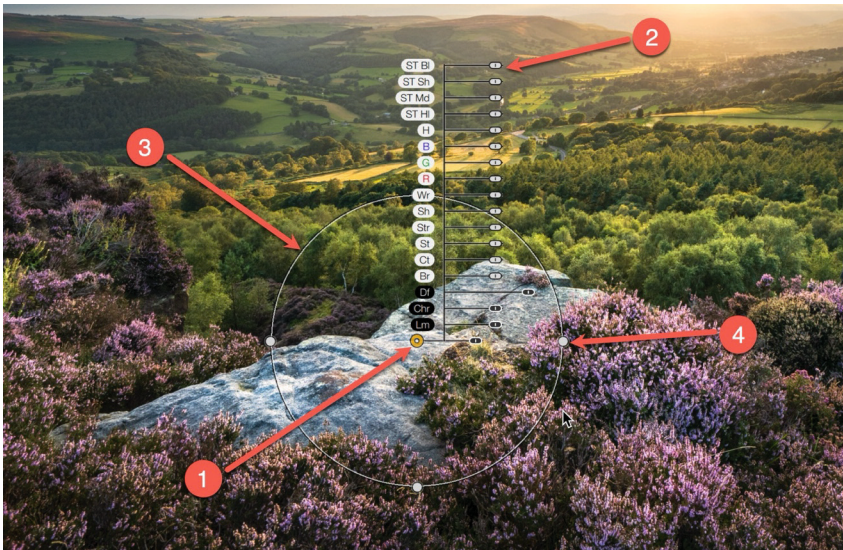


THE CONTROL POINT

We see the Nik Viveza 7 interface on the left, with the Local Adjustment section highlighted. On the right, we see one of the filters in Nik Color Efex, with the Local Adjustment section indicated. If you compare the two, you will see a row of the same four icons. These are the Selection Tools that we use to create Local Adjustments

The Control Point is the first of the Local Adjustment icons on the left. It was also the first Selection Tool introduced to the Nik Collection. It's incredibly flexible and probably one reason the Nik Collection became so popular. Previously, making selections in Adobe Photoshop was difficult and time-consuming but the Control Point made using the Nik Collection plugins easy and fast

When we add a Control Point to an image, it appears as a circle by default. The following screenshot shows an example



Here, we see a Control Point added to an image being edited in Nik Viveza 7. The Nik plugin we are using is important because the Control Point's features have changed, as we will discuss later. Nik

Viveza 7 provides a good introduction and is probably the best to understand.

The numbered features we see in the illustration are

1. Centre pin of the Control Point
2. Adjustment controls
3. Edge.
4. Drag handle

Having added a Control Point to the image, we can apply our local adjustments using the controls. These adjustment controls appear in two places. First, the controls extend from the Centre Pin, as seen in the above screenshot. Each adjustment has a small slider with a lettered abbreviation to identify it. For example, “Br” is the Brightness control

To use these controls, move your mouse pointer over the adjustment control you want to change. As you do this, the controls label will expand to show the complete name. This doesn’t, however, mean that you can adjust the control at this point. You need to watch the slider very carefully, as it changes slightly when the mouse pointer is over it. It’s only then, that you can click and drag it

Watching for the slider's change can be difficult, especially on high-resolution displays. It’s easy to miss the slider when you click and then wonder why it isn’t responding. Because of this, many photographers prefer not to use the adjustment controls extending from the Control Point but instead use the controls on the right side of the interface

Later, we will look at how to hide the adjustment control sliders on the Control Point. This is useful if you prefer to make your adjustments using the controls on the right side of the interface. Hiding the adjustments on the Centre Pin prevents them from getting in the way of other features

When using the adjustment controls on the Control Point or on the right of the interface, both sets of controls remain synchronised.

THE CONTROL POINT

Moving an adjustment control in one place also causes it to move in the other

POSITIONING AND RESIZING CONTROL POINTS

After adding a Control Point to an image, the only way to move it is to position the mouse pointer over the centre pin. The mouse pointer icon will then change. The control point can then be clicked and dragged using the mouse while holding the mouse button. When the Control Point is in place, release the mouse button to drop it, fixing its position.

Once added to an image, we can adjust the size of the Control Point in two ways

1. Using the size slider
2. Clicking and dragging the edge



The size slider extends from the centre pin and is grouped with the adjustment controls. It is always visible, even if you hide the adjustment controls. To use it, position your mouse pointer over the slider and click and drag. The other adjustment controls temporarily disappear when you adjust the Control Point's size with the slider

The other way to resize a Control Point is to click and drag its edge using the mouse. Move your mouse pointer over the edge of the Control Point. The pointer icon will change to a two-headed arrow.

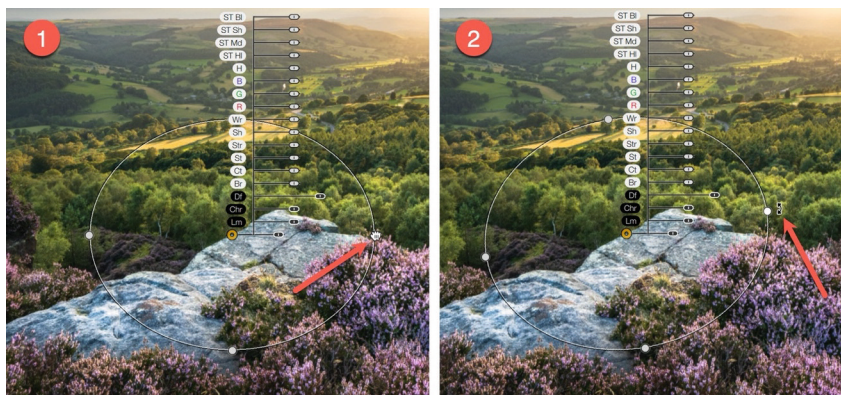
MASTERING THE NIK COLLECTION SELECTION TOOLS

When you see this, you can click and drag to adjust the size while holding the mouse button.

Using either of these methods will change the size of the Control Point without affecting its shape

CHANGING THE SHAPE OF CONTROL POINTS

Introduced in the Nik Collection 7 was the ability to change the shape of the Control Point to be oval. In previous versions, it was only possible to have circular Control Points. If you are familiar with the earlier versions of the Nik Collection, you may have noticed the new Advanced Control Points have four dots around their edge. As seen in the following screenshot, we can use these four dots to change the Control Point's shape



By clicking and dragging one of the four handles, we can change the shape of the Control Point from a circle to an oval. As we drag the handle, the opposite handle also moves, ensuring that the two handles remain an equal distance from the pin.

Once a Control Point is oval, we can still adjust the Control Point's size using the slider on the centre pin. Alternatively, we can click and drag the edge of the Control Point (away from the handles) to resize it

THE CONTROL POINT

without affecting the shape. If you click and drag on either of the four handles, you will only change the vertical or horizontal size, which also changes the shape

We can also use the four handles on the edge of the Control Point to change its angle. To do this, move the mouse pointer next to one of the four handles but a small distance outside the Control Point's edge. The mouse pointer icon then changes to show a small, curved arrow. When you see this, click, and while holding down the mouse button, drag. This rotates the Control Point around the Centre Pin.

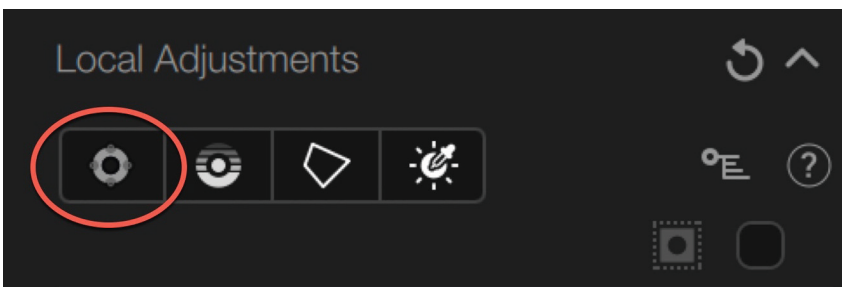
Having resized and rotated a Control Point, you may want to reset either of these adjustments

To reset the rotation, position the mouse pointer adjacent to the handle as if preparing to rotate it. When the mouse pointer transforms into a curved arrow, doubleclick.

To reset the size of the Control Point, place the mouse pointer over one of the drag handles on the edge and double-click. The height or width of the Control Point will be reset, depending on the handle you select

Exercise 01: Adding Control Points

- Open an image for editing in Nik Viveza
- On the right side of the interface, scroll down to the Local Adjustments section.
- In the Local Adjustments section, click the icon to add a Control Point



- Move your mouse pointer over the image and click once to add a Control Point
- Position your mouse pointer over the centre pin of the Control Point, then click and hold down the mouse button. While continuing to hold down the mouse button, drag the Control Point to position it on a new area of the image. You can then release the mouse button.
- Resize the Control Point to make it larger using the size slider, extending from the centre pin.
- Make the Control Point still larger again by clicking and dragging its edge between any of the four drag handles
- Change the Control Point's shape to be oval by clicking and dragging one of the four drag handles on its edge
- Rotate the Control Point by positioning your mouse pointer over the outer edge of one of the four drag handles and then dragging it
- Reset the Control Point rotation only by double-clicking the outside edge of the drag handle
- Reset the size of the Control Point by double-clicking both sets of drag handles on its edge
- You can then close the image to complete the exercise

HOW SELECTIONS ARE PRODUCED

There is a sample point at the heart of the Control Point, where the centre pin is located. This sample point captures the colour and brightness of the surrounding pixels. The U-Point Technology utilises this information to identify and select other pixels within and around the Control Point. Any adjustments made using the controls then affects only the selected pixels

Turning on the mask view allows us to view the selection created by the Control Point (we will look at this later). You can see an example of the mask view in the right-hand screenshot below

THE CONTROL POINT



In the above screenshot on the left, you can see the Control Point positioned over a rock. Then, in the right-hand screenshot, we see the mask view, which indicates what's being selected. When using the mask view, the white pixels indicate what the Control Point is selecting. These are the pixels that will be affected by the adjustments we apply. The pixels shown in black haven't been selected and won't be affected.

If we look at the mask view, we can see that the rock is selected, but very little else around it. This makes sense as very little of the surrounding area has the same colour and tones as the rock.

Something else you might notice about the mask view is that some of the pixels are shown in grey rather than pure black and white. These grey pixels indicate that the pixels are being partially selected. This works a little like an Opacity setting in that our adjustments are still applied to these pixels but at a reduced strength. The darker the pixel, the less the adjustment will affect it. This helps blend our adjustments with the rest of the image, producing a natural-looking adjustment

As we move the Control Point around the image, the position of the sample point moves with it. The U Point Technology is constantly using the sample change to update the pixels the Control Point selects. This also happens if we change the size or shape of the Control Point, and can help us in a couple of ways

END OF SAMPLE

The complete book can be purchased from Lenscraft by visiting:

<https://lenscraft.co.uk/project/mastering-the-nik-collection-selection-tools-book>