

Lightroom Workflow Shortcuts

As a parent and amateur photographer, I want to maintain my inventory of photographs in the most efficient way possible. Stress-free workflow and editing is the goal.

Deleting photos. When I began using Lightroom, I began to delete the bad photos from my catalog by clicking on the photo and hitting the delete key. Deleting unwanted photos using this method results in Lightroom to ask if you want to delete the file from the hard drive or remove it from the catalog. On occasion, it's not bad, but if you have dozens of photos to delete, it adds up quickly. So here is a more efficient way to delete your photos.



How to delete photos in Lightroom using keyboard shortcuts:

1. Use Auto Advance to automatically move forward to the next image once you've applied a label by choosing Library from your top menu, then selecting Auto Advance.
2. View a small portion of your library catalog at a time by viewing one folder's worth of photos in Fit or 1:1 magnification mode. Using this view, you may evaluate your photo for sharpness, lighting, etc. DON'T do any minor edits to your photos yet! Focus on deleting first.
3. Start by clicking on the first photo. Add a red label to those photos you wish to discard by highlighting the photo and hitting the "6" key. Add a green label (by hitting the "8" key) to the pics you want to keyword eventually. The images that remain unlabeled are the ones you would be sad to see deleted. It's okay to not waste time on them as these photos most likely will never be printed. If you aren't labeling the photo, you will need to click the right arrow to progress to the next photo. (Auto advance only works when you apply a label.)
4. Use the same red/green labeling system throughout your catalog. Be consistent. Red labels should always mean "to delete".
5. If you have more than one copy of the photo, be sure you're not retaining the photo image that is missing the file. In other words, if you have two images in your catalog of the same file, but one is missing the file (it's been moved or not connected, for some reason), be sure to mark the image "red". Thereby retaining the thumbnail with an accurate file link and setting that image as "green".
6. Once finished with labeling your folder or set of photos, filter to see only the red labeled images, go to the Library Filter at the top of the Grid view. (Note: this filter is ONLY available during Grid view. To get to Grid view, hit the "G" key.) To find only the photos with red labels:
 - Go to the Attribute pane on the library filter
 - Click the red label to only show photos with the red label
7. Select all the red photos by hitting "Command+A" or "Ctrl+A"
8. Review the images one last time. You may change your mind. For example, I ask myself "Although this image is blurry, it's the only one I have with my son smiling." I then may decide to remove the red label.
9. Double check the number of photos selected to be sure it's within reason. No need to delete 10,000 photos by mistake!
10. Hit Delete or Backspace key.
11. Answer the "delete or remove" query only then. Yay!
12. Before you conclude your deleting session, be sure to keyword your last photo "STOPPED RED/GREEN LABELS HERE", so you may pick up where you left off next time.

Star-rating photos. Applying star ratings is so helpful when deciding which photos to edit and print. So, in general this is my next step after culling out the “bad” photos. Thankfully, Lightroom has keyboard shortcuts for this endeavor as well.

How to star-rate photos in Lightroom using keyboard shortcuts:

1. Make a note of where you are starting. For example, star-rate your latest import or choose one folder at a time. Following Stacy Julian’s Library of Memories workflow, I set up Smart Folders to curate photos from one season and tackle keywording one season at a time.
2. Remember, be sure you’ve set up Auto Advance. (see step 1 in How to Delete Photos, if you still need to set this up.) We will use this to our advantage again.
3. Use the Library Filter bar (see step 5 from How to Delete Photos to remember how to filter) to filter/display the photos with green labels.
4. Click on the top left photo (or the first photo) to select it and then click “1” for one star, “2” for two stars, “3” for three stars and so on. Stacy Julian’s recommendation is:
 - 1 star = don’t delete, probably won’t scrapbook/print
 - 2 stars = may use as a context photo, won’t print until further notice
 - 3 stars = want to print for sure, most likely needs to be cropped/edited in the future
 - 4 to 5 stars are “on reserve” for future notice (i.e. I use it for a temporary project.)
5. NOTE: clicking “0” will apply no star rating, but will auto-advance your photo. So, you may want to choose “0” instead of using the arrow key to advance to the next image.
6. Use the same star-rating system throughout your catalog. Be consistent.
7. Before you conclude your star-rating session, be sure to keyword your last photo “STOPPED STAR-RATING HERE”, so you may pick up where you left off next time.

Keywording photos. After star-rating photos, you will be able to cull down to a smaller amount to advance to the next stage: keywording. Keywording takes time, so it’s to your advantage to only keyword as few photos as possible. But, remember you can only scrapbook in the way you are organized. So, be thoughtful about your keyword system. Below are some tips to consider.

How to keyword photos in Lightroom using keyboard shortcuts:

1. Make a note of where you are starting. What selection of photos are you going to tackle this session? Set a timer for 15 minutes to see how quickly you can keyword in that amount of time.
2. Before beginning, think about how you want to search for your photos. By year? By event? By project? Consider making a bubble chart and refining your list of keywords to AS FEW AS POSSIBLE.
3. Start with less than ten keywords. You can always refine and add more keywords. The important thing is to be able to recall your keywords. If you have too many, this will make it difficult to do.
4. I use Stacy Julian’s method which is centered around four key areas: FAMILY, PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS. In addition to these four main keywords (which are in BOLD letters), I also add the year of the picture’s origination. (This helps if the origination metadata has become compromised when migrating files from PC to Mac, for example.)
5. Before you conclude your keywording session, be sure to keyword your last photo “STOPPED KEYWORDING HERE”, so you may pick up where you left off next time.
6. When you begin again, search for this keyword and so you can begin where you left off. (Be sure to delete your “STOPPED” keyword before beginning. And, don’t hit the delete button before you highlight the keyword; you may accidentally delete your photo!)

For a complete listing of Lightroom shortcuts, go to Adobe’s [website](#).