

## Expose to the Right: A Strategy for Better Digital Exposures

Blown or over exposed highlights have no detail and are major distractions in an otherwise good photograph. I found an article on the Luminous-Landscape website to help avoid these. The source of this information is Thomas Knoll, one of the creators of Photoshop.

To be able to use this technique, you need to have a digital camera that will display a histogram of your exposure. And, you need to understand exposure compensation and be willing to use it.

A digital image has the ability to capture 5-6 f/stops. According to Knoll, 50% of the pixels of a digital image are in the first f/stop of the image. The following table shows how the pixels are distributed in a 5 f/stop exposure:

Highlights	2048 levels available
Lights	1024 levels available
Mid-Tones	512 levels available
Dark	256 levels available
Darkest	128 levels available

The solution is to adjust your exposure to force the histogram to the right without touching the edge. To accomplish this you must view your histogram and retake the photo with one or more exposure compensations to move it right or left as needed. If you can use Auto Exposure Bracketing and take several exposures, these will help zero in on the best exposure.

Using Levels or adjustments in a Raw image converter will not accomplish this, you would be just redistributing or expanding the tonal range. Any blown highlights would still be there.

The following URL will explain this in further detail.

<http://www.luminous-landscape.com/tutorials/expose-right.shtml>

<http://www.luminous-landscape.com/tutorials/understanding-series/understanding-histograms.shtml>

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