



Basic IR Image Adjustments II

Black & White Image Conversion Guide



We're often asked for tips to convert color IR files into a great Black & White image. There are a few simple post processing techniques that can improve your final images when shooting with different IR filters.



Want to create great Black & White IR Images?
Our B&W Image Conversion Guide provides instructions for converting your color IR images to black & white along with additional adjustment tips for better results.

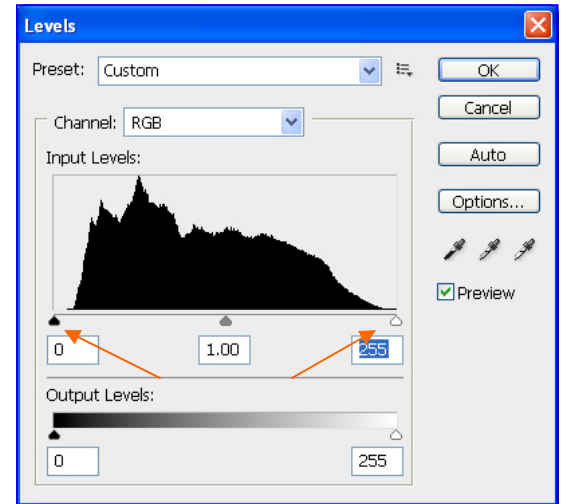


Levels:

As mentioned in previous tips, the first adjustment we recommend making to most IR images is the levels adjustment. This will eliminate a lot of the washed out look that some images have straight out of the camera. Start by opening your image in Photoshop and click Image>Adjustments>Levels or simply press Ctrl+L. (For this tip we are using Adobe Photoshop CS4®) The levels adjustment window will open and display a graph resembling the image to the right. Immediately below the graph there is a slide adjustment bar with 3 arrows. Locate the dark and light arrows at the ends of the graph adjustment bar. (You may want to use the “Auto Tone” function instead and compare the results.)

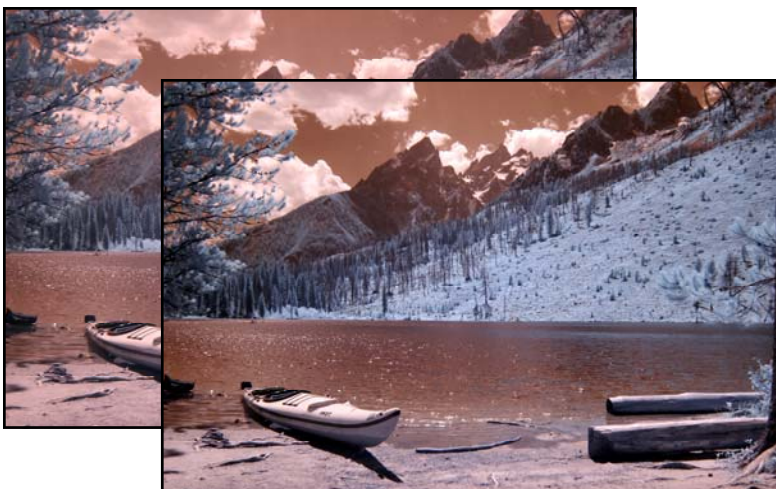


Original Image - Amplified Filter (665nm)

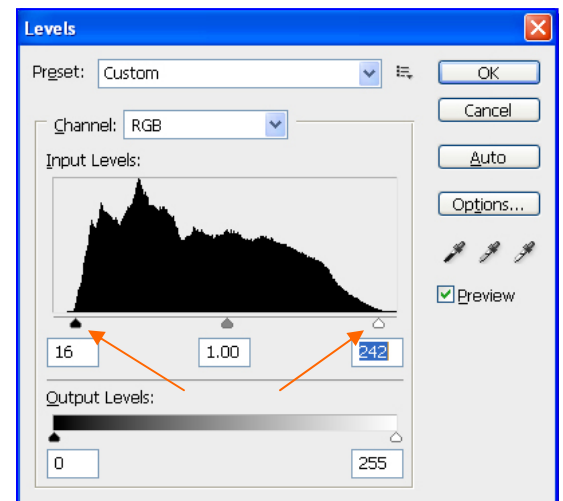


Levels Adjustment Window
Before adjustments

Drag the dark and light arrows at the bottom of the graph inward until they are at the edge of the incline on both edges of the graph. This will cut off some of the unwanted data from the image file leaving you with more accurate color, deeper darks and cleaner highlights. Overall the image will be cleaner and more pleasing to the eye. The difference is subtle but very important and beneficial when making other adjustments down the road. (You may want to use the “Auto Tone” function instead and compare the results.)



After Levels adjustments.



Levels Adjustment Window
After adjustments



Black and White Adjustments:

You can simply “desaturate” the image using Photoshop but it will most likely leave you with an image lacking in nice contrast and crisp whites. We prefer to use the Black and White function within Photoshop. This function will give you more control with each color channel and how much you want the specific color to be lightened or darkened.



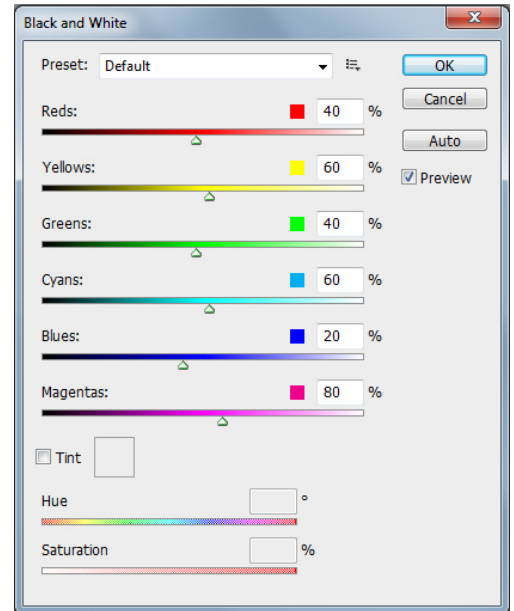
Before Black and White adjustments.

Black and White Adjustments:

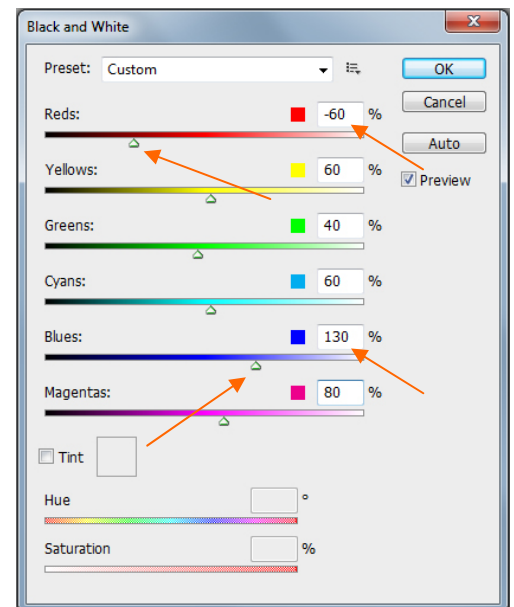
Click Image>Adjustments>Black and White. Adjust the “Reds” slider in the negative (left) direction until you see your desired dark result. For this image we chose a negative 60 setting. Next, adjust the “Blues” slider in the positive (right) direction until you see your desired white effect. For this image we selected a positive 130 setting.



After Black and White adjustments.



Black and White Window—Before Adjustments.



Black and White Window—After Adjustments.

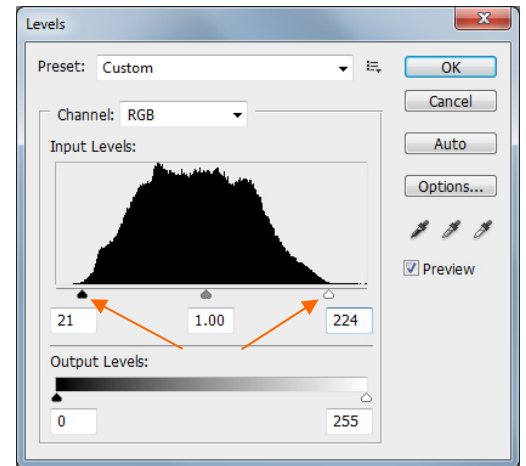
Note: Adjustment values will vary between different IR filter types, exposure, camera model and amount of color in the image. Experiment with the black and white tool to find the best results for your specific circumstances. Also, adjusting the Brightness/Contrast settings can improve the overall results of the image.

Another Example:

In this example we are using an image taken with the Extreme Color IR filter (590nm). First, we adjust the Levels as mentioned earlier.



After levels adjustments.



Levels Adjustment Window
After adjustments

Next, using the black and white function select the desired Reds and Blues settings of your choice. Finally, adjust the Brightness/Contrast settings to fine tune the final results.



Final Image—Black and White adjustments completed.

