



AI Haze Reduction

This lesson details a technique for reducing haze in photographs using the Reflection Removal tool in Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) or Lightroom. This method is presented as an alternative to traditional de-haze and black level adjustments, especially for images with uneven haze or those shot with lenses lacking lens hoods.

The Problem: Haze

Haze in photos often occurs when shooting towards a light source, such as the sun, without including the sun in the frame. Light enters the lens from the side and bounces around, causing a reduction in contrast and a milky or washed-out appearance. This is exacerbated when using lenses without lens hoods. Haze makes the darkest parts of an image appear gray instead of black.

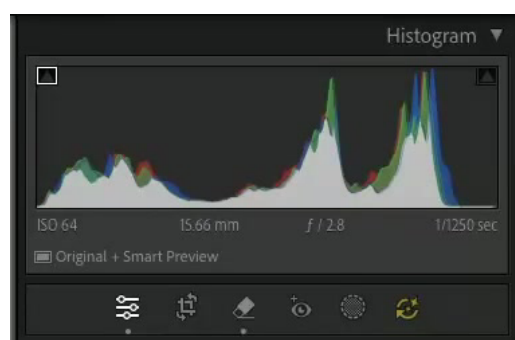
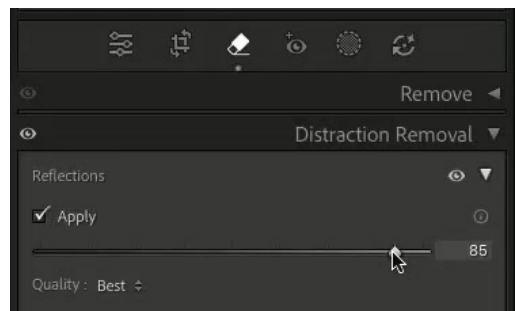
Traditional Methods and Their Drawbacks:

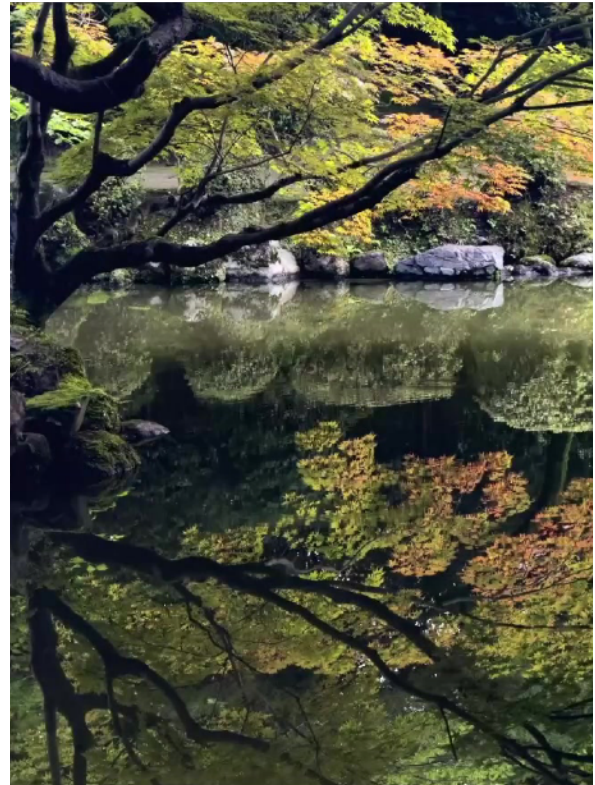
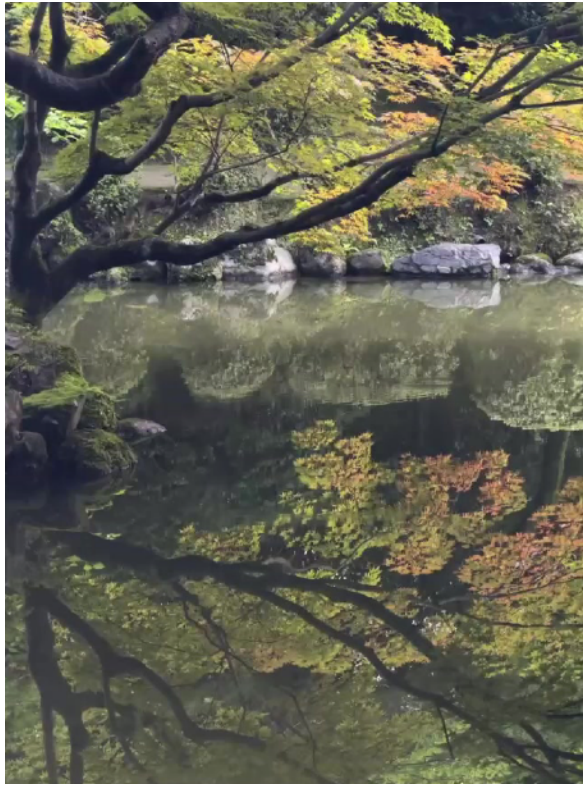
- **Blacks Slider:** Lowering the Blacks slider can add density to the dark areas, but it may not effectively address haze in the mid-tones.
- **Dehaze Slider:** Increasing the Dehaze slider can remove haze, but it often introduces halos or artifacts around the edges of objects.

The Solution: Reflection Removal

I use the Reflection Removal feature as an alternative method for reducing haze. This feature, not originally designed for haze removal, can effectively reduce overall haze in images, especially those from phone cameras.

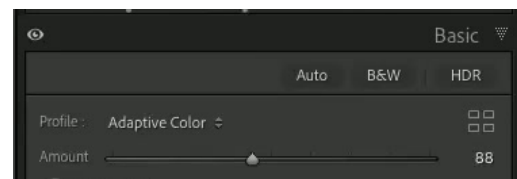
1. Open the Image in Lightroom's Develop Module (the same feature is available in Adobe Camera Raw if you prefer).
2. Select the Remove Tool, expand the Distraction Removal section and click the Apply checkbox under Reflections. (3:36)
3. The Reflection Removal tool often applies a strong effect by default. Reduce the intensity of the effect by adjusting the amount slider.
4. Use the histogram to avoid clipping the blacks (making them completely black with no detail). The histogram displays the tonal range of the image, with black represented on the far left. Look for the small triangle in the upper-left corner of the histogram. If the triangle is gray, no detail is being lost in the dark areas. If it's colored (e.g., blue or red), it indicates that detail starting to be lost but is not completely black yet. If the triangle turns white, then an area has become solid black with no detail. Hovering over the colored triangle will highlight the clipped areas in the image. Click the triangle to enable the highlight clipping overlay which will display blue where you are losing detail. (4:52)
5. Fine-Tune the Amount Slider: Continue adjusting the amount slider until only a tiny speck of the clipping overlay remains. This ensures that the darkest areas are close to black but still retain some detail.





6. Switch back to the basic adjustment sliders (e.g., Blacks, Dehaze, etc) to further refine the image's overall look.

7. If working with iPhone photos, experiment with the Apple ProRAW profile and Adaptive Color profile settings. Adjust the "Amount" slider for these profiles to fine-tune the image's brightness and shadow detail. (9:44)



8. After applying Reflection Removal, a small yellow/orange icon may appear below the histogram, indicating that the adaptive color profile needs to be updated. Hold down the Shift key and click the icon to update the profile. (11:08)



9. Finalize Adjustments: After adjusting the profile, you may need to revisit the Reflection Removal amount and other basic adjustments to achieve the desired result. Shift-double click the Blacks slider to ensure a small portion of the image is black.