

Photo Stacking

Create selection of images to stack:

- Use a tripod
- Use a cable release or set up a delay of several seconds
- If you have it, set your camera to mirror lock up
- Determine the depth of field you want. Very shallow would be f2.8 whereas f32 would provide more depth
- Take your first image after focusing on the closest part of your subject then move your focus inward taking images incrementally until you reach the part furthest from you. Your goal is to have enough images to record every portion of your subject in focus.
- A focusing rail allows you to move your camera in regular increments without handling the camera and focusing ring, thereby reducing the potential for error.

TAKE MORE IMAGES THAN YOU THINK YOU NEED!

Prepare your images:

- Make any necessary basic changes (ie white balance, exposure levels) syncing so all are equal
- If you want to reduce final image size and expedite processing time, change all images to either Jpeg or tiff. Place them in a folder so you can access them when processing. Alternatively, ensure you can find them in Lightroom when needed.

Processing in Photoshop:

- Bring into Photoshop as layers
 - From Lightroom
 - Highlight the images
 - Right click on images. In the dropdown menu, left click on Edit In>Open As Layers in Photoshop
 - From Bridge
 - Highlight the images in the folder
 - In upper toolbar Tools>Photoshop>Load Files Into Photoshop Layers

Files will now be loaded into Photoshop

- Highlight all layers
- In toolbar at top: Edit>Auto Align Layers. Photoshop will size all images to prepare for blending.
- In toolbar at top: Edit>Auto Blend Layers. Photoshop will combine the sharp portions of all images.
- Save the final image. You may want to flatten first to reduce size (Layer>Flatten Layers)
- If Photoshop fails in one segment of your stack (ie part of a petal) you can find the layer with the sharp petal and, using a mask, brush the sharp segment in.

Processing Software:

- Zerene Stacker and Helicon Focus can be downloaded from the internet.
- These programs will align and blend in one step and are quite accurate

You are now ready to work on your final image!

