

READY-TO-PRINT

A TUTORIAL ON BASIC PRINTING WORKFLOW

INTRODUCTION

PLEASE READ BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The number one mistake we see with submitted print orders, are dark files. Turning down the brightness on your monitor around halfway or a few clicks above, when editing, will help counteract this issue. It must also be noted that working on an uncalibrated monitor can pose inconsistencies in what you may be viewing and the actual file information.

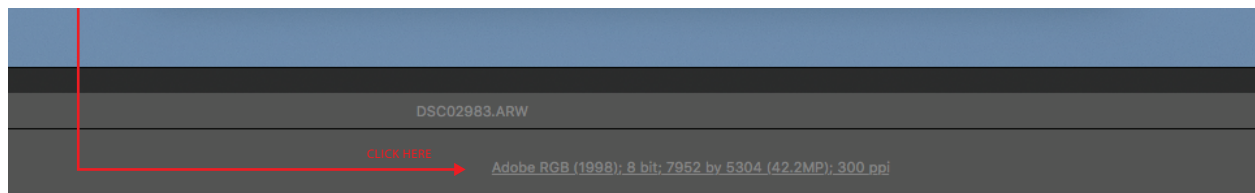
Light reflecting off of paper looks very different and much less luminous than a backlit screen (especially Mac screens which are designed to be bright and high contrast). A piece of paper does not inherently carry this aesthetic, and herein lies the skill of printmaking; the art is not the print settings, it is almost exclusively in the file preparation. This takes a dedicated print-calibrated monitor and years of practice to perfect.

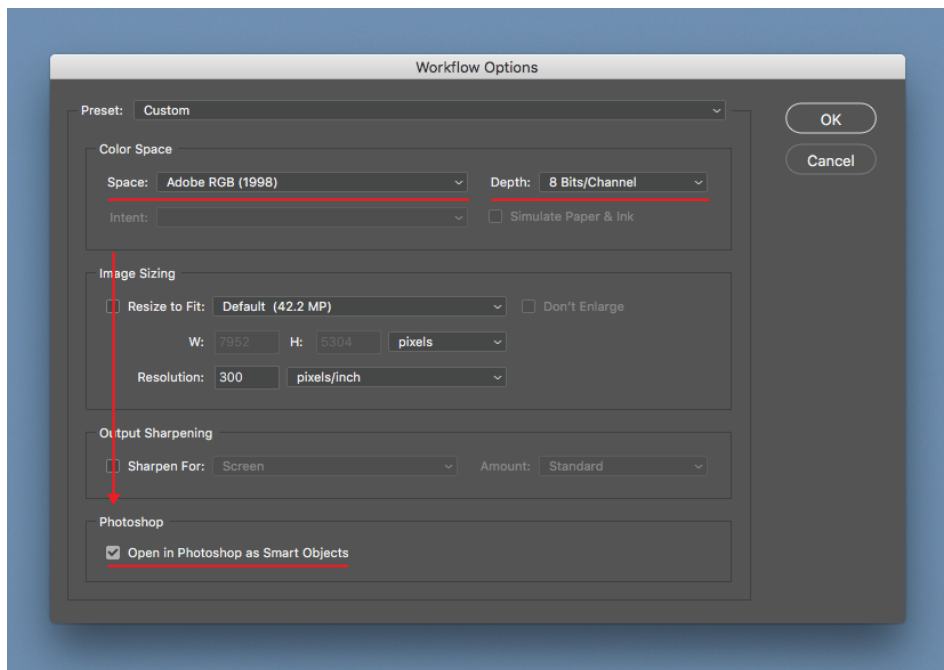
The steps below will get you started, but practice and further research will only better-develop your printing skills. Do not forget that we can do this part for you. If you have any doubts about your files, mark them as "No, files need assistance", and we'll take care of it.

STEP ONE

RAW IMPORT

The first step is to open your RAW files directly into Photoshop. The *Camera Raw Interface* will open. Below you will notice a line of text stating the color profile, size etc. Click on this information to open a window called *Workflow Options*. Align the settings in this window to match our example on the next page.





STEP TWO

HISTOGRAM

While editing, it is very important to have *true blacks* in your image while staying away from clipping* both the blacks & whites in your file. If you want shadows to be completely black or the image simply does not have the information to pull out detail, don't worry. In classic printing technique however, detail throughout the image is sought primarily as a means of creating the most immersive and complex viewing experience.

If you do not know how to read a histogram, here is a handy video to check out...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htY_ZzvEUTc

...as well as Camera Raw editing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lt-huZRerxE>

SHOOTING TIP:

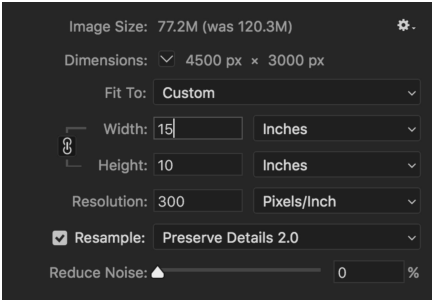
While shooting, locking down the correct exposure is key. You'll want to under expose by about 1/2 stop or more, depending on the lighting - as you can pull out much more detail from your shadows than you can in your highlights.

* Clipping: Areas of an image that have been processed until you are effectively losing detail in either the shadows or highlights.

STEP THREE

SIZING YOUR IMAGE

Files for our ready-to-print service must be sized to the exact pixel dimensions for printing. After editing, go to Image > Image Size and click the *Resample* box. Change the resample algorithm to *Preserve Details 2.0* (only choose this latest version, otherwise choose bicubic smoother or bicubic sharpener). Now just type in the length you would like the long edge to be, set at 300 dpi, then click *OK*. *Photoshop* will figure out the rest.

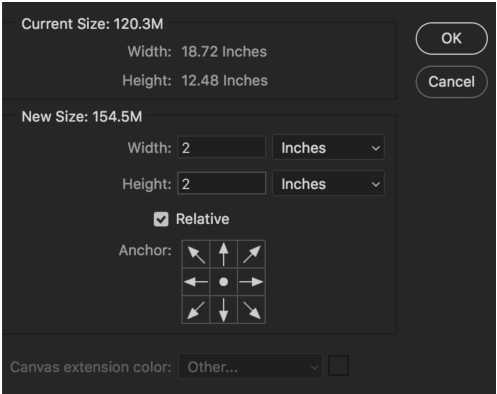


Note* If your dimensions are not matching the desired print size, you will first have to crop to the desired aspect ratio before continuing with the instructions above.

STEP FOUR

ADDITIONAL BORDERS

If you were looking to include white borders around your image for framing and/or matting, go to Image > Canvas Size. Check the *Relative* box and type in DOUBLE what you would like your borders to be; if you want 2 inch borders you would type in 4, if you want 1" enter 2, if you want .25" enter .5, etc.



STEP FIVE

SAVE YOUR FILE

To save, go to File > Save As > TIFF. This 16bit TIFF will allow us maximum flexibility to optimize the file with further edits, if necessary. Once you are well acquainted with creating perfect print ready files, you can save high quality Jpegs - no print quality degradation will be visible between a high quality Jpeg exported within the Adobe RGB color space and a full size TIFF, the Jpegs just don't hold up to editing as well.

Congratulations, you're done!

We are happy to bring you this short tutorial on preparing files for print, and hope it brings valuable knowledge for future printing endeavors.

We wish you the best, however ask that you do not call for IT support or troubleshooting for the items listed above. These tools are here to get you started, don't forget that the internet is a fantastic resource for further information!

The printing world can seem quite intimidating, again, if any of this brings concern, we are happy to provide our professional file preparation to assure you take home a beautiful print.

Best of luck -
Printlab Team