

## 8. Fixing underexposed photos using the Levels dialog box

At the end of this lesson you will be able to demonstrate how to correct an over or under-exposed photograph by adjusting the tonal range of the image using a command called Levels in Photoshop CS3. The Levels command has control over the highlights, midtones and shadows of an image. Adjusting the levels by dragging the input slider under the histogram to the edge of the first group of pixels on either end of the histogram will achieve this.

Step One:

Open originalImage1.jpg

Step Two:

To open the levels dialog box go to **Image > Adjustments > Levels** or hit **Ctrl+L**.

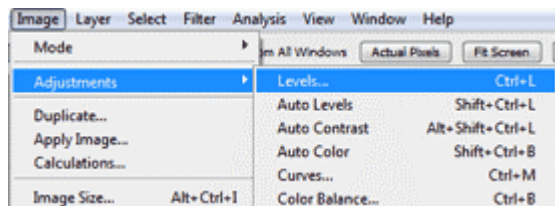


Figure 8.1 Levels command.

Step Three:

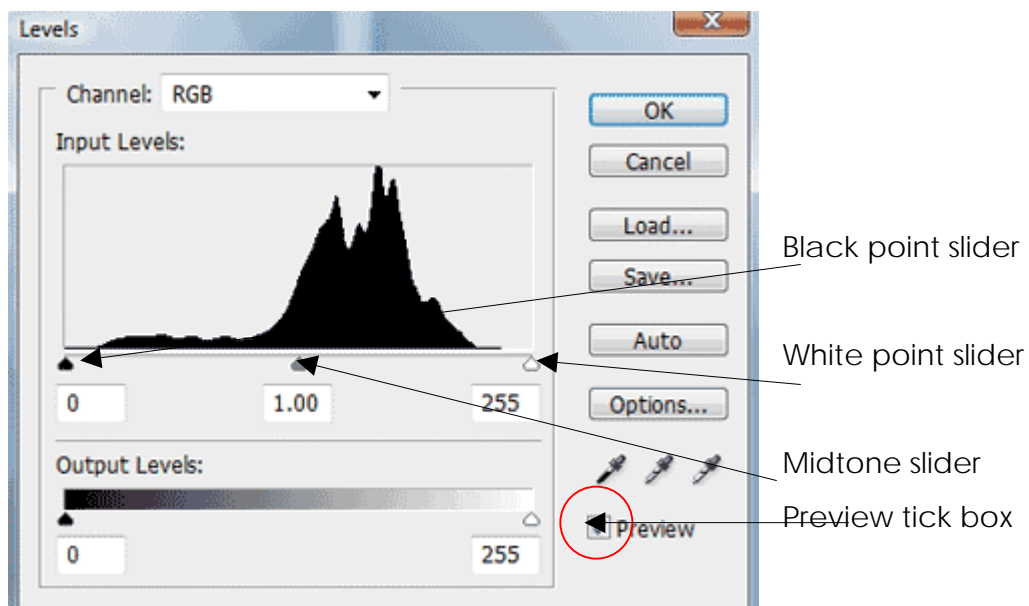


Figure 8.2 Level dialog box.

When the dialog box opens make sure that the **'Preview'** tick box is ticked so that you can see how your image is affected when you make the changes.

The dialog box displays a histogram; the histogram shows you the data within your image. You will also see that the distribution of pixels for this image are clumped in the middle and there are gaps where there are no pixels at all at either end of the Histogram. Refer to figure 8.2. The ideal histogram is one that extends across the full width of the graph with reasonably uniform peaks and valleys in the middle portion.

We are going to adjust the left and right sliders inwards to meet the Histogram to improve the image. We are then going to adjust the midtone slider to change the intensity of the midtones without making dramatic changes to the highlight and shadows. Refer to figure 8.3

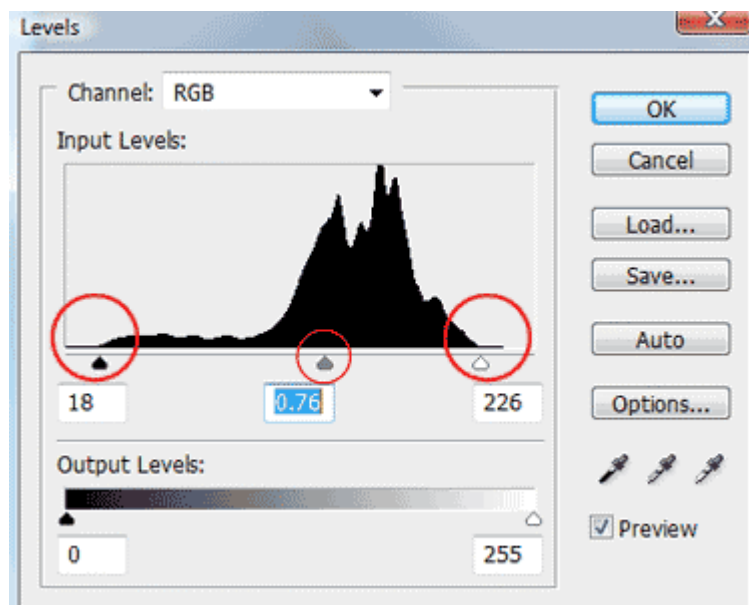


Figure 8.3 Level dialog box with the sliders adjusted

When you are satisfied with the result click **OK**.

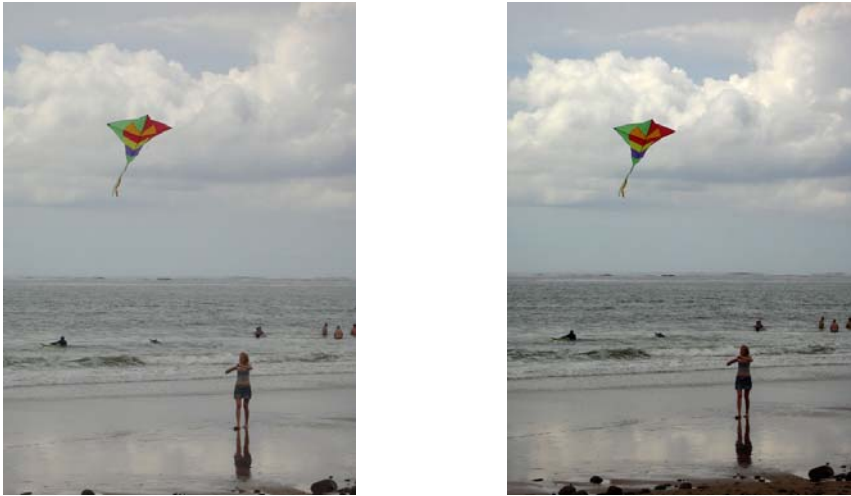


Figure 8.4 Original image and adjusted image

Step Four:

Save your image. Select **File > Save As** and give it a name e.g. Lesson 8.jpg

In the next lesson we will be fixing underexposed photos using the Exposure dialog box.