

Editing Photographs with



PhotoScape is the photo editor I have used since 2012. It is free and safe (according to Norton 360) to download at <http://www.photoscape.org/ps/main/download.php>. I am sure it does not have all the features of Adobe Photoshop, but it is much faster and easier to use. And it does not try to force you into saving your final product as other than what it originally was. In PhotoScape, once a JPG, always a JPG, unless you decide to change it to another type of file (PNG, for instance).

There are four main steps that I use:

- 1) Auto Level – computer color and brightness correction,
- 2) Crop,
- 3) Resize,
- 4) Save.

Once in a while I also have to do additional steps:

- I) Bright, Color,
- II) Gamma bright,
- III) Sharpen.

Opening the photo in PhotoScape

This is not as easy as one may think, initially. Whoever makes your computer wants their photo editing software to open photographs.

The hardest way, for me as a constant PhotoScape user (to the point I have donated some money to them), is to open PhotoScape, choose the “Editor” option at the top of the “Circle of PhotoScape” menu (as I call it – and at some point look at the “Combine” option), the use “File,” “Open” etc. as you would open any other file.

I want PhotoScape to open all of my photos, so I set it up as my default photo editor in my “Control Panel,” or I set it up by right clicking the image, which prompts how one wishes to open a file of a certain extension (JPG in this case). PhotoScape probably will not be on the initial list of options. It may appear when you hit “Choose another app.” If not, then go to Windows Explorer and find “C:/Program Files/PhotoScape” and hit “PhotoScape.exe.” Windows should ask if you want to open all files of the same type (JPG) in PhotoScape. Check the box, if so.

After going through all of that, then when you double-click a photograph it should open in PhotoScape. Then start the processes list below:

1) Auto color and brightness adjustment

If the photographer was anywhere close to setting the correct speed for the aperture of the lens he used, hitting “Auto Level” will fix minor lighting problems. If the photograph is in focus but still a little too bright or too dark, first, crop the photo, and then see below for “I) Brightening or Darkening.”

2) Crop the photograph

It took me a couple of years to learn that PhotoScape will crop photos to specific ratios, such as the ones that fit most frame: 4:6, 5:7 or any square possibility such as 1:1 or 5:5. Do not worry about the actual sizes of the photographs now. The ratios will allow you to instruct your printer to print 4"x6", 5"x7" or square photos. The size of the photo you are editing is more than large enough, even when resized down to something useable on a website.

[Look at the size of the image on your monitor, and then look just below the photo on the right side. You will see a percentage amount. That is the percentage of the photograph shown on the screen at the time. Remember this later when saving the photographs, in the event you want to print a poster or the like.]

When I am cropping a photo I am looking to highlight something in the photo, such as a kid's face, whether it shows determination or grimacing. Sometimes I will eschew a facial contortion for contorting muscles in someone's arms or legs. I look for something that shows action (a lift, for example) or shows the steps prior to putting opponents on their back. I want to highlight the kids, and thus I want to make sure I get rid of photos in which the camera decides to focus on the official's shirt in front of the wrestling or a coaches face on the other side of the mat. (Sometimes those show some great emotions and are worth saving.) I want something better than kids on top of each other not performing an actual move, albeit I know full well that controlling someone on the mat does not necessarily mean always attempting a pinning combination. But if you are going through this process you want something you can frame that will catch the eyes of others or remind you of your child's accomplishment.

I usually use a 4:6 ratio, horizontal for kids prone to the mats, or vertical if they are clinched and on their feet. Sometimes a 5:7 is better, or a square. The "Crop Freely" option lets you determine the part of the photograph you like, even though it might require a custom frame. But it may just be something to have on a computer, or on a phone, as I have heard some people keep photographs on their cell phones.

When you have made your "Crop Box" on the screen, hit the "Crop" button to see the cropped photo.

If you do not like the crop you chose after seeing it, hit the "Undo" button on the bottom right of the screen. Like most other software, the "Undo" option negates the last action you performed. If you hate everything you have done hit "Undo All."

"Undo" works on everything you do on PhotoScape.

3) Resize

If you like what you have done, then it is time to "Resize" the photo. I hit the dropdown arrow and "Resize the longer length to 1600 px." This will reduce the size of the photograph from 5-10 megabytes to 300-600 kilobytes.

4) Save

When you hit the "Save" button on the bottom right you will be presented with three options. "Save" will save the image under its current name (at this point whatever the camera named the image), as the same file type (JPG at first) and in the folder from which the photo was opened. "Save in the designated folder" allows you to save the image in another folder. (I do not recall ever using this option.) "Save As" allows you to rename the file and to save it as a different file type if you need to do so. You can save the photos with names like "113 your child-opponent" or something of that sort.

It is a good idea to check the “Creates a backup of the original...” box. Unedited versions of the image will be saved in a folder called “Originals.” These “originals” are good to have in the event you make mistakes and do not realize it until after you have saved the photo. You can start new with the file in the “Originals” folder.

NOTE: If you save a lot of files from a particular match, do not name them when saving them. When you are done editing them all, look at the folder in which they are stored. It should contain an “Originals” folder and then the edited photos with the names assigned to them by the camera. Rename the “Originals” folder with something akin to “106 My child-Opponent – 0” or along those lines. Then, block and copy that entire name. Hit the “Tab” button and the cursor will block the name of the next file, which should be the first file you edited (and first timewise). “Paste” the copied name over the highlighted current name of that photo, and then you can just type “1” to designate it as the first of your photos. Hit “Tab” again and the cursor blocks off the name of the second file. Hit “Paste” and type “2” behind the name. Continue to the end of your photos. After #9, after hitting “Paste” on the tenth photo, backspace over the “0,” type “10,” and then copy the name of the file to the end, stopping at the “1” in “10.” Continue as you did previously and you just have to add a single digit to make photos 10, 11, 12 and so on.

I) Bright, Color

There will be times when “Auto Level” will still leave a photo too light or too dark. Hit the “Bright, Color” button (not the dropdown arrow). This opens a menu that allows you to brighten or darken the photo.

Sometimes playing with the other options on this menu will yield better results,

II) Gamma Bright

I really do not know why it is called “Gamma Bright” but I know why I use it. It is often difficult to see facial features of very dark-skinned African Americans. I first suggested this was due to physic – optics, actually. Black, defined as an absence of color, absorbs light rather than reflecting it. Hence less light is reflected off of darker skin tones. My daughter suggested another theory which also pans out. The technology use to take photographs of people is sexist. It was designed for taking photographs of models in the 1970s, and there were very few African American models at that time, at least not the so called “Supermodels” which merit photographic research and development projects.

I do not know how or why, but I found that increasing the “Gamma Bright,” usually +.40, albeit +0.20 and +0.60 are sometimes better, will enhance the facial figures of darker skinned wrestlers.

III) Sharpen

I rarely use this, for one because I really do not know how and my camera should take care of making photographs sharp. But when one is just a tad out-of-focus, it can be used to make the image a little better. After that, framing it as a 4”x6” or 5”x7” photo will usually get rid of any sharpening issues.

Of course, you may use whatever photo editor you like, but I have found this one to serve my purposes fine for a decade.