Manual

From photo to export, step by step; part 1: the ordinary route

kaaweewee.nl

SIXTEEN SHEETS · WORK THROUGH THEM IN ORDER; THE LAST ONE IS AN APPENDIX ABOUT YOUR FOLDERS

WHAT THIS IS ABOUT

A photo out of your camera is not finished. It is a *capture*: everything the sensor measured, with no decisions made yet. Developing means making those decisions: what goes black, what goes white, which color is right, where your eye should go.

This manual walks you through those decisions in the order KaaWeeWee offers them. That order is not arbitrary; part 2 explains why.

Part 1 covers the three panels you use on every photo. Know those in your sleep and part 2 is next: masks, lens profiles, noise, haze, retouching and the rest.

LESSON 1 · SETTING UP THE PRACTICE FOLDER

1 Make a folder somewhere, say *KaaWeeWee-practice*. Your desktop is fine.

2 Download the five practice photos into it. In the app they sit under the buttons below; if you are reading this on paper, you will find them in KaaWeeWee behind the **Manual** button, on this sheet.

3 Open KaaWeeWee in **Chrome or Edge** and click *Open folder…*. Choose your new folder. In that dialog you **pick a folder, not a photo**: on Windows you only see folder names, so a folder full of photos looks empty, and that is how it should be. On a Mac you do see the photos, but do not click them; choose the folder they are in.

3b Folders inside that folder appear on the left under *Folders inside*, with the number of photos behind each name, and *Parent folder* above them. One click either way, without granting access again. Copy a photo in while you work and it shows up by itself. Your previous folders are under *Opened before*; those do ask again, because that is a different corner of your disk.

4 You see five tiles. Click *lente.jpg*.

Feel free to follow along with your own photos. The numbers in this book belong to these five, but what you learn from them holds for anything.

> **Putting it on your computer**
>
> KaaWeeWee can run as a program of its own: a window without an address bar, with its own icon, that works offline. Open **Export** on the left; *Install on this computer* is in there, and if that button is missing the same spot says why.
>
> Your photos do not change by it: they live in your folders on disk, not in the app.

LESSON 2 · LOOK FIRST, THEN TURN

The temptation is to start pulling sliders right away. Do not. Learn to see what is going on first.

1 **The histogram**, top right. Black is on the left, white on the right, and the height is how many pixels have that brightness. In *lente.jpg* you see a mound running all the way to the right: plenty of light, and it touches the edge.

2 **The triangles** beside the histogram light up when image data is being lost. Click them, or press `J`: the spots that block up or blow out light up in your photo. Again switches it off.

3 **Hold down the space bar.** You see the untouched photo for as long as you hold it. This is your most important key; use it all the time.

4 **Zoom** with `+` and `−`, back to fit with `0`. Never judge sharpness on a scaled-down view.

5 **More room for the photo**: the narrow handles left and right of the image fold the folder column and the panels away. They stay as you leave them.

6 **Only the photo**: `F`, or *Full screen* at the top right. The panels disappear and the window fills the screen, so nothing steers your eye. `Esc` brings you back, and one button stays there in case you go looking for it.

In the right-hand column one group is open at a time; open another and the previous one closes. On a new photo *Basic* is ready: white balance and light together. The histogram does not join in: it stays open and stays at the top while the rest scrolls underneath, because that is what you watch while you drag. Click the open group again for the whole list: that is the table of contents of this book.

Light and color

Part 1, continued: light, white balance, color

LESSON 3 · LIGHT, THE LOWER HALF OF BASIC

Open *verval.jpg*: a ruin in the evening sun. The wall on the left sits in deep shadow, the sky is almost white. That is the classic problem: too much difference for one capture.

0 **Auto tone** is a starting point, not a finish. It measures where your tones are and sets exposure, highlights and shadows; contrast, whites and blacks it leaves alone. Click it by all means, see what it did, and adjust from there. Not to your liking? *Undo everything*.

1 **Exposure** makes everything lighter or darker at once. Start here, and set it so the subject is right: the wall, in this case. Try *+0.5*.

2 **Highlights** to the left brings the sky back without touching the wall. Try *−40* and hold the space bar for a moment.

3 **Shadows** to the right opens up the dark wall. *+35*. Watch what appears in the ivy.

4 **Contrast** only now. What you did above flattens the photo; *+15* puts it back on its feet.

5 **Whites** and **Blacks** are the far ends. Move Blacks slightly left until the first triangle just lights up, then take a step back.

Double-click a slider to put it back at neutral. The `?` beside it tells you what it does and how to overdo it.

> **The order within Light**
>
> Exposure first, then the far ends, then contrast. Working the other way round is possible, but then you keep correcting your own previous step: contrast moves where the highlights sit, so you would set those again afterwards.

LESSON 4 · WHITE BALANCE, THE UPPER HALF OF BASIC

Open *molen.jpg*. The mill stands in floodlights at night, and those are orange. Your brain corrects that away on the spot; your camera does not.

1 **Pick a gray point** is the quickest route: click the button, then click something in the photo that ought to be gray or white, and the two sliders are set. One click and it is done. If you find nothing neutral, do it by hand.

2 **Temperature** to the left makes it cooler, to the right warmer. Pull it far to the left for once, until the mill turns gray.

3 Then come back until it looks *good* rather than neutral. In a night shot you want to keep that warmth: that was the mood.

4 **Tint** corrects the other axis: green against magenta. You rarely need it, except under fluorescent light.

Temperature and Tint sit *above* Exposure in the same panel, and that is deliberate: shift the color after you have set the light and the brightness moves along with it, so you start over.

LESSON 5 · COLOR

Back to *lente.jpg*. Two sliders that look alike and are not.

`Saturation` Pulls at *every* color equally hard. The blossom gets prettier, but the blue sky turns into a poster.

`Vibrance` Takes mostly the colors that are still pale and leaves what is already saturated alone. Skin tones are spared on top of that.

1 Set **Saturation** to *+60*. Look at the sky.

2 Put it back to 0 and set **Vibrance** to *+60*. Look at the sky again, and then at the blossom.

3 In practice: vibrance as the main slider, saturation only to steer.

> **You are not changing your photo**
>
> KaaWeeWee never writes into your original file. What you set lands in a small text file beside it: next to *lente.jpg* appears *lente.jpg.doka.json*. It holds what you did, not what the result looks like.
>
> That means two things. You can never break anything: throw that little file away and your photo is back as it was. And you can always return: every slider is still there to move tomorrow.

Frame and export

Part 1, last: cropping and exporting

LESSON 6 · CROPPING AND STRAIGHTENING

verval.jpg was taken with a wide angle: the wall runs away and the horizon is crooked.

1. Open **Geometry** and switch on crop mode. You now see the whole photo with a frame over it.
2. **Straighten** with the angle slider. The moment you take hold of it a fine grid appears over the photo; lay the top of the hedge along a line, not the roof line: that really does run at an angle. Faster: *Straighten along a line* and drag along the hedge.
3. Drag the corners of the frame. With a fixed ratio it stays at 3:2; ⇄ tips that to 2:3 for an upright crop, and with *Free* you cut loose from any ratio.
4. Is a building leaning together towards the top? Add some **Verticals**, or click *Verticals from two lines* and drag along two facade edges. Fully upright often looks too strict: take some of it back.
5. If you were not standing square in front of a facade, one side runs away from you. **Horizontals** turns the image about its vertical axis. If you took it at an angle on purpose, leave it: there the depth is the subject.

LESSON 7 · EXPORTING

1. Open **Export** on the left. The button says what it will do: *Export this photo…*, *Export all 12…* in the gallery, or *Export 3 selected…* if you ticked photos.
2. Choose a **different folder** from the one with your originals: your export is called *lente.jpg* too, and beside the original that would overwrite your photo.
3. Pick a **preset**. For a club evening or a website 2000 px on the long side is plenty; for a print choose *Full resolution*.
4. Under **Format**: *JPEG* (the ordinary choice, opens anywhere), *PNG* (lossless and much larger, to carry on in another program) or *WebP* (smaller than JPEG at the same quality, for a website). The extension follows your choice.
5. Under **Sharpening** you choose where the photo is going: *For a screen* or *For print*. Scaling down makes things soft, and this sets the edges again at the size that comes out. Not scaling down? *No sharpening*.
6. Under **Color space**, *sRGB* stays the ordinary choice: right everywhere. On a modern monitor *Display P3* shows more saturated red and green; a photo lab often asks for *Adobe RGB*. The profile goes into the file, so every program knows what it has in front of it, except with WebP, and the dialog says so.
7. Quality around 85 is the point where, for JPEG, going higher mostly costs file size; with PNG that slider is absent. Does your club demand a limit in MB? Fill in **No larger than (MB)**: KaaWeeWee finds the highest quality that stays below it.
8. Fill in your name once under **Creator** and **Copyright**; those travel with every file, and nothing else: no camera, no lens, no location. Write *{jaar}* for the year the photo was taken.
9. A different name? Type it under **File name**; leaving it empty keeps the name of the original. In a series a number is appended: *Evening light-01*, *-02*, …
10. Always the same settings? Type a name at the bottom and click **Save as preset**. Next time it is under *Your own*, with size, quality and numbering and all.

> **End of part 1**
>
> With this you can develop any photo. Spend a few evenings on your own photos first; part 2 only makes sense once this comes naturally.

Part 2 · Onward

Why the order is what it is, and the lens profile

LESSON 8 · WHY THAT ORDER

The panels stand in the order in which KaaWeeWee actually computes them. That is the backbone of the whole program, and once you see it you understand why certain things do and do not work.

Beforehand Cropping, because it decides *what* you are judging: crop only at the end and you set light and color on image you throw away.

First Repairing what the equipment got wrong: lens distortion, dust, noise. That belongs out before you lay anything on top of it.

Then Developing: haze, white balance, light, color. This is making the photo you meant.

Then Local work: masks. Everything above holds for the whole photo; here you limit something to a part of it.

Finally The layer over the top: a look, sharpening, vignetting.

One example makes it clear: noise reduction comes before Light. Lift the shadows first and you magnify the noise along with them, and after that you are fighting noise you turned up yourself.

> **Blocks within a group**
>
> Two groups carry more than their name suggests. Under *Basic*, besides white balance and light, sits the **tone curve**; under *Color*, besides the color sliders, sit **color bands** and **color grading**. Scroll on within the open group: they are under a hairline with a heading of their own. Sheet 11 is entirely about them.

LESSON 9 · THE LENS PROFILE

Every lens distorts, every lens makes the corners darker, and most of them put red, green and blue not quite in the same place. That is not a fault of your particular copy: it is measured and it is known.

1. Open *verval.jpg* and open **Lens profile**. It says: *Tokina AT-X 116 PRO DX II*, 16 mm, ƒ/11.
2. Switch on **Distortion** and hold the space bar. Watch the straight lines of the wall and the trees at the edge.
3. Switch on **Vignetting**. The corners get lighter, above all at the top right in the sky.
4. Switch on **Color fringing** and zoom to 100% on a branch against the sky.

Now open *vlinder.jpg*. There it says: *no profile found for 105mm*. That is not a malfunction. That camera only wrote down the focal length, and there are dozens of 105 mm lenses. KaaWeeWee would rather correct nothing than correct with another lens's data: that mistake looks exactly like a successful correction.

LESSON 10 · RETOUCHING

A speck of dust on the sensor, a stain on a wall, a sign you could not walk out of the frame.

1. Open *verval.jpg*, open **Retouching** and click *Stamping*.
2. Click on something that may go: a light stone in the wall, for instance. Two circles appear.
3. The **white** circle sits where it has to go, the **dotted blue** one where the image comes from. Drag that second one to a piece of wall that looks the way it ought to become.
4. *Heal* is on: KaaWeeWee takes the texture of the source but the brightness of the spot where it lands. Switch it off for a moment and look at the edge.
5. **Red eyes** are in the same panel: click *Remove red eye* and then on the pupil. The circle falls around the red area by itself; dragging adjusts the size.

A few small stamps stand out less than one big one. With red eyes only what is *really* red changes: the catchlight, the iris and a flush on the cheek stay as they are. On animals it does not work: there the reflection is green or yellow.

Noise and haze

Two problems no slider in Light solves

LESSON 11 · NOISE

Open *molen.jpg*. It was shot handheld at night at **ISO 6400**, and you see that the moment you go looking.

1. Zoom to **100%** and go to a dark piece of sky or to the earthen bank under the mill.
2. Set **Shadows** to *+60* for a moment. Only now do you see how much noise is in there: it was already there, it was just dark.
3. **Color noise** first, at *50*. Those are the red and green blotches; they come out most easily and you lose almost no detail with them.
4. **Luminance noise** after that, and carefully. At *30* the grain is gone without the reed on the sails turning to plastic. At 100 it does.
5. Put the shadows back where you wanted them.

What you see on screen is an *approximation*: on export the noise reduction is computed again at full resolution. With *Check at actual size* you see the real result. With a RAW that takes a moment, because it is developed again for it.

> **Why noise comes before light**
>
> You saw it in steps 2 and 5: lifting shadows makes noise visible that was already there. Were you to set the light first and only then reduce noise, you would be working on noise you magnified yourself. KaaWeeWee therefore always computes the noise away first, whatever you touch last.

LESSON 12 · HAZE

Look across a distance and there is light hanging between you and the far side that does not belong there. It makes everything grayer and flatter the further away it is.

1. Open *verval.jpg* and find the row of trees behind the hedge: that is where it is.
2. Set **Dehaze** to *+50*: that slider is at the top of *Basic*. Look at that row of trees, and then at the wall in the foreground.
3. Notice the difference from a contrast slider: dehaze takes the distance hard and leaves the foreground nearly untouched. KaaWeeWee estimates from the photo itself how far away everything is.
4. Now pull it to *−60*. Then it adds haze. For mood, or to let a busy background sink away.

TWO THINGS TO KNOW

Too far to the right makes shadows black and colors hard. The calculation divides by a small number, and then the errors grow along with it.

And if there is no haze in your photo, this slider is no more than a coarse contrast booster. Try it on *vlinder.jpg* for once: that was taken indoors, there is not a meter of air in between. For that work you have *Light*.

Masks

Limiting an edit to a part of your photo

LESSON 13 · THE IDEA

Everything so far holds for the whole photo. But often you want something in one place: the sky darker, the subject lighter, that one green less shouty.

A mask is an area. Within that area you get a set of sliders of your own (exposure, contrast, white balance, saturation) and those apply only there.

There are five kinds, in two families. **Gradient** and **Radial** you point out on the photo. **Brightness** and **Color** choose for themselves, on the strength of what is in the pixel. **Brush** you paint by hand.

LESSON 14 · A GRADIENT ACROSS THE SKY

1. Open *lente.jpg*, open **Masks** and click *+ Gradient*.
2. **Drag across your photo**, from just above the trees downwards. Where you begin the mask works fully, where you let go it has run out.
3. Set **Exposure** within the mask to *−1*. The sky gets darker, the grass does not.
4. The moment you make a mask the area turns **red**, so you see at once where it takes hold. `M` switches that red off and on again: it is a switch, you do not have to hold it down (that is the space bar, for before and after).
5. Take hold of the lines to adjust: the outer ones move their own edge, the dotted middle line shifts the whole thing.

> **The trees get darker too**
>
> And you do not want that. A gradient is a straight band; it knows nothing about trees. We solve that in lesson 16.

LESSON 15 · A RADIAL ON THE SUBJECT

1. Open *vlinder.jpg*. It is too dark: the subject disappears into the background.
2. *+ Radial*, and drag from the middle of the butterfly outwards until the circle lies around the wings.
3. **Exposure** at *+1* within the mask.
4. Set **Feather** generously, otherwise you see the circle again. Drag the middle to move it, the edge to make it bigger.
5. A butterfly is wider than it is tall. Set **Radius (width)** larger than **Radius (height)** and you have an ellipse; with **Rotation** you lay it at an angle. Dragging at the edge moves the radius you take hold of: the side is width, top and bottom is height.

This is the same as adding a lamp that was not there, but without lighting up the background along with it.

LESSON 16 · COMBINING PARTS

Here is where it gets powerful. One mask can consist of several parts, and each part does something with the area so far.

`Add`	This area as well.
`Subtract`	This area off.
`Limit to`	Only what falls *inside* this too remains.

1. Back to your gradient on *lente.jpg*.
2. Under *Refine Gradient 1*, click ⊂ *Limit to* first and then *Brightness*.
3. Set that range to the light tones. Now the gradient applies only to what is light: the sky, that is, and not the dark branches sticking through it.
4. Press `M` and look: the red now runs *between* the branches.

This is the recipe for almost every sky: a gradient that says *where*, and a brightness range that says *on what*.

Masks, the panel

How it is put together

WHERE AND WHAT

Every mask has two halves, and the panel shows them under those names.

Where The area. One shape, or several that complement each other: a gradient plus a brightness range, for instance.

What The edit: exposure, contrast, highlights, shadows, whites, blacks, temperature, tint, saturation. One set per mask, however many shapes stand under *Where*.

That last point is the key to the next box: all the shapes of one mask share the same nine sliders.

ADD, SUBTRACT, LIMIT

If several shapes stand under *Where*, then every shape but the first carries a small dropdown. With it you decide what it does with the area so far.

Add This area as well. Two separate spots in one mask, with the same edit: two radials that add.

Subtract This area off. A gradient across the sky, minus a radial around the church tower.

Limit to Only what falls *inside* this too remains. The gradient of the sky, limited to the light tones.

Under *refine* you choose that operation **before** you choose a shape: first *+ Add*, *− Subtract* or *⊂ Limit to*, and only then gradient, radial, brush, brightness or color. All fifteen combinations exist: every shape works with every operation.

Changed your mind afterwards? Every part but the first carries a dropdown with which you can still switch the operation. The first shape has none: it is the base the rest works on.

New mask, or refine this mask?

There are two rows of buttons in the panel, and they do something quite different.

New mask, in the box at the top of the section, makes a mask that stands apart from all the others, with a set of sliders of its own. That is what you want when you put a second edit on a different part of the photo.

Refine <name>, indented under *Where*, makes *no* new mask: those buttons change the shape of the mask you already have open. A sky, for instance, is a gradient *plus* “only the light tones”.

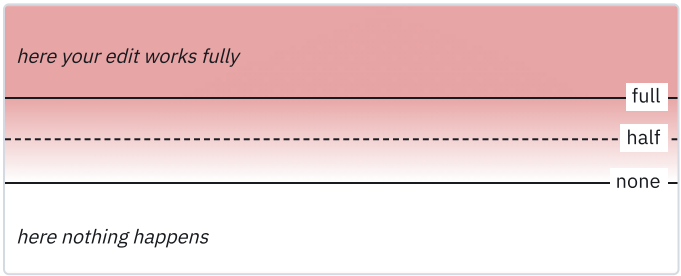
If you see your edit landing on the wrong mask, you clicked here where you meant *New mask*.

Masks, reading what you see

The lines, the red overlay and the checkbox

THE THREE LINES OF A GRADIENT

They mark the transition, not the area. From the top one to the bottom one the mask runs from full to nothing.



The working area is everything *beyond* the first line: so not the strip between the lines, but the whole half past it. With a sky gradient: everything above the first line gets your edit in full.

The two solid lines	Each moves its own edge. That is how you make the transition shorter or longer.
The dotted middle line	Shifts the whole gradient, with the same softness.
Dragging on an empty spot	Makes the gradient anew: where you begin is full, where you let go it has run out, and the direction of your drag is the angle.

Come close to a line with the mouse and you take hold of that line instead of starting a new gradient. Otherwise a gradient covering half the frame could never be adjusted again.

THE RED OVERLAY

It comes on as soon as you put a shape down; `M` switches it off and on again. The red shows where your mask bites, over your edited photo, so you see at the same time *what* your edit does. You can simply keep dragging sliders with the overlay on.

The overlay belongs to the *Masks* panel. Open another group and the red and the lines disappear from your photo: the mask keeps working, you are merely done adjusting it.

THE CHECKBOX AND THE CROSS

Checkbox off	The whole mask does nothing for a while, edit and all. The shape, the strokes and all the sliders stay; put the checkbox back and everything is there exactly as you left it.
Cross	Gone. Still to be brought back with `Ctrl` / `Cmd` + `Z`.

The checkbox is your comparison button: off, on, and you see what *this* one mask contributes, without losing it.

Masks, continued

Brush, color range and the magic wand

LESSON 17 · THE BRUSH

When no shape fits, you paint it yourself.

1. On *vlinder.jpg*: *+ Brush*, and drag across the wings.
2. **Brush size**, **hardness** and **opacity** are waiting as sliders. Soft and at low opacity in several passes gives the most natural result.
3. Overshot? Hold `Alt` and paint back: that erases.
4. Check with `M` whether your edges are right.

Your strokes are stored as strokes, not as pixels. That keeps the little file beside your photo small, and lets you adjust an edit tomorrow.

LESSON 18 · COLOR AS A MASK

A color mask chooses for itself: it takes everything that resembles a certain hue, wherever it sits.

1. On *vlinder.jpg*: *+ Color*, and set the center on the orange of the wings.
2. Press `M`. You see that the leaf is not in it but the wings are.
3. With **Range** you decide how many neighboring hues join in, with **Feather** how soft the transition is.
4. **Minimum saturation** keeps gray out the door. Gray has no hue, but the arithmetic yields one anyway: without that threshold a gray sky would suddenly join in.

LESSON 18B · THE MAGIC WAND

Where a color mask takes *every* blue in your photo, the magic wand takes only what is attached to the spot you point at.

1. On *lente.jpg*: *+ Magic wand*, and click in the sky at the top right.
2. Set **Tolerance** around *40*. Press `M`: the whole sky turns red, right through between the branches, and the trees, the grass and the buildings stay out.
3. Turn the tolerance up further. Around 50 the blossom starts to color along; turn back then. That boundary sits differently for every photo: it depends on how far apart the colors are, not on a fixed number.
4. Set **Feather** to *0.3%* or thereabouts, otherwise the edge looks cut out.

Click somewhere else and it starts again there. Dragging the point is allowed too: you see the area follow along.

That feather stays small, and not out of thrift. A blur works in both directions, so it also fills *in* whatever is narrower than itself. On *lente* the twigs are some three pixels across: open the feather wide and it does not soften the edge but smears the whole treetop shut. If you see more red than area, this is almost always the reason, and not the tolerance.

> **What the magic wand is good at, and what not**
>
> It follows resemblance in color and brightness. On **flat areas** it is strong: skies, water, a wall, an even sweater. There it does something no other mask can.
>
> On **texture** it gets stuck. On the brick wall of *verval* it does not even get away from its starting point at a low tolerance, and a moment later it bursts straight through the wall into the rest of the photo. And on *vlinder* there is no setting at all that separates the dark wing from the dark background.
>
> It recognizes no subjects: it knows no butterflies, only colors that resemble each other. If it does not work in two or three tries, take the brush.

Sky, Subject, Background

One button that looks, and two where you point

LESSON 18C · THE THREE BUTTONS

Under *Masks* there are three buttons that place the mask for you. *Sky* looks for itself; with the other two you point out what you mean.

1. On *verval.jpg*: *+ Sky*. Press `M`; the sky turns red and the building does not.
2. *+ Subject*: you then click *in the photo* on the object you mean. The first time, something is fetched once for it, so that first time takes a few seconds longer. Changed your mind? `Esc` stops.
3. *+ Background* works exactly the same, only inverted: you point out the object and everything outside it becomes the mask.
4. Not quite right? You touch it up, and the next sheet shows how.

The name of the mask says which button you used, and under *Where* it says the same. That way you still know later where a mask came from.

What they find and what they do not

Sky looks for three things at once: connection to the top edge, flatness, and colour. Across ten photos it found four out of four skies and six out of six times rightly returned nothing. On an evening shot it reports that there is no sky, and that is correct: it is nearly black.

Subject does not guess, it follows your finger: you get the object you clicked on. Point beside the subject and you get whatever lies there, and that is not a fault but exactly what you asked for. Clicking again somewhere else costs nothing, because the heavy work is already done.

If there is nothing to find at that point the app says so and places *no* mask. That is deliberate: a button that always puts something down leaves you tidying up instead of editing.

Touching up

Hints, and why the edge lands by itself

LESSON 18D · TOUCHING UP WITH HINTS

A hint is not paint. It is a statement: *this piece belongs to the side I mean*. An ordinary drag says "I want this"; with `Alt` it says "not this".

You do not have to drag accurately. Straight through the middle of a building is enough; following the roofline is not needed.

1. Does the mask run into something that does not belong? Put an `Alt` hint in the middle of that part.
2. Does something drop out instead? Put an ordinary hint there.
3. Is the edge just off? Put them **closer to that edge**, on both sides.

The third one matters most. A hint deep in the water adds nothing, because the app does not hesitate there anyway. What counts is one right next to the place where it has to choose.

Make *Brush size* smaller as you get closer to an edge. A thick hint falls across the edge, and then you point out the wrong side by accident.

> **Why the edge lands by itself**
>
> The app works out, for every pixel, how expensive the path to it is, from your ordinary hints and from your Alt hints. Expensive means: through a colour transition. Each pixel belongs to whichever side can reach it most cheaply.
>
> That is why the boundary falls on an edge in the photo and not on the line you drew. And that is why there is no feather to set: against a roofline it becomes hard by itself, and against an out-of-focus background it becomes soft by itself. *Softness* only sets how hard, not where.
>
> Where there is no edge, it cannot find the boundary. A white roof against a white sky is one surface to it. No better hint helps there; that is where the brush takes over.

Which mask when

Choosing, and everything together on verval

WHICH MASK WHEN

Gradient	Something that changes gradually across the whole width: skies, a foreground, light coming from one side.
Radial	Lighting up a subject, or letting the edges sink away instead.
Brightness	Only the light or only the dark tones, wherever they sit. Almost always as *Limit to* beside a shape.
Color	One color right through the photo: the green of grass, the blue of a sky.
Magic wand	One connected area that you point at: a sky, water, a wall. Not on texture, and not on a subject that resembles its background in tone.
Brush	When nothing else fits. Costlier in time, but there is nothing it cannot do.

> **A mask does nothing until you let it do something**
>
> A fresh mask is an area without an edit. You drag, you see nothing happen, and you think it is broken. Set a slider in the mask first (exposure is the clearest) and then you see what you are working with.

LESSON 19 · EXERCISE ON VERVAL

Everything together, on *verval.jpg*:

1. A **gradient** from the top, with a **brightness** part on *Limit to*, to temper the sky without the trees.
2. A **radial** on the bench in the foreground, with exposure slightly up.
3. A **brush** over the ivy, with saturation up.
4. Hold the space bar and see whether it still looks like a photograph.

Fine tuning

Tone curve, color bands, color grading

LESSON 20 · THE TONE CURVE

The curve is Light, but by hand, or with four sliders if you would rather not draw. Bottom left is black, top right is white, and the line between them decides what happens to each brightness.

1. Open *lente.jpg*, open **Basic** and scroll to the **Tone curve** block at the bottom. Click in the middle of the line and pull it up a little: the photo gets lighter.
2. Now pull a second point at one third down and the point at two thirds up. That is an *S*, and that is contrast, but contrast you aimed yourself.
3. Where the line runs **steep** you get more difference, where it runs **flat** less. Flat enough and two tones become the same tone: that distinction is then gone.
4. Click **Neutral** and make the same S again with the four sliders under **Region**: *Lights* up, *Darks* down. Each slider bends its own quarter of the line and reaches a way into the quarter beside it: no points needed.
5. The faint line in the field is what the sliders together with your points add up to. That *Highlights* and *Shadows* also sit under Light is no mistake: those look for *where* the light is, these always take the same quarter of the scale.

LESSON 21 · CURVES PER CHANNEL

Above the curve field are four buttons: *RGB*, *Red*, *Green*, *Blue*. The first is what you just did. The other three do the same with one color channel.

1. Choose **Blue** and pull the point at the bottom left up a short way.
2. Your shadows turn blue, your highlights stay. That is repairing a color cast that is different in the shadows than in the light: something white balance cannot do, because it takes the whole photo.
3. A channel that does something gets a colored dot on its button, so you find a forgotten curve again.

LESSON 22 · COLOR BANDS

Eight colors, each with three sliders: hue, saturation and luminance. Here you steer one color without touching the rest.

1. Open *vlinder.jpg*, open **Color** and scroll to the **Color bands** block.
2. Find the orange band and take the **saturation** up. Only the wings respond.
3. Now take the **luminance** of green down. The leaf sinks away and the butterfly comes forward, without a mask.
4. With **hue** you shift a color towards its neighbor. Carefully: that shows quickly.

A band you have touched gets a dot, just as with the curves.

LESSON 23 · COLOR GRADING

Here you give a color cast per tonal range: shadows, midtones and highlights separately.

1. On *verval.jpg*, in **Color** under the **Color grading** block: set the hue of **Shadows** around 220° (blue) and the saturation to *25*.
2. Set the hue of **Highlights** around 40° (orange) and the saturation to *20*.
3. Cool shadows with warm highlights: that is the recipe of almost every film look, and it works here because the evening sun is warm already.

Keep it low. Color grading works best when it is not the first thing you see.

Finishing off

Looks, finishing and judging

LESSON 24 · LAYING ON A LOOK

A **LUT** is a color table: for every color it holds which one takes its place. That is how film simulations work; 296 of them come along.

1. Open **Look**, choose a **category** (black and white, slide, polaroid) and then a style.
2. Step through the category with ‹ › while you watch your photo. That is how you compare them.
3. A style you keep using? Click the ★ beside it. With the category *Favorites* you keep only those: out of 296 styles that is the difference between searching and choosing.
4. Come down with **Amount** until it no longer stands out *that* there is a style on it. Out of the box they are almost always too strong.

Your own *.cube* files go in a folder that you point at; subfolders become categories. The style lies over your masks but before sharpening: that way a steep table does not magnify your grain.

LESSON 25 · FINISHING

1. **Sharpening** you judge at 100% and nowhere else.
2. **Texture** takes the fine structure: skin, bricks, bark. **Clarity** takes the coarser transitions.
3. Sharpening amplifies noise along with it. So always take a look at a flat piece of sky.
4. **Vignetting**, at the bottom of the same panel, darkens the corners. A little is enough.
5. At the bottom is **Grain**: the reverse of noise reduction. A digital photo is clean in an irritating way; a fine structure makes a flat sky calmer to look at, and under a black and white or a film style it simply belongs there. *Grain size* runs from fine (modern film) to coarse (pushed 400 ISO), *Grain roughness* makes it lumpier, and so older. Judge it at 100%.

Grain comes over the photo last, after the sharpening, and it scales with the export: what you see on screen is what comes out.

LESSON 26 · STARS AND FLAGS

In a folder of two hundred photos the first question is not how you edit them but which ones are worth it.

1. Under every tile in the gallery is a row of five stars. Click the third and the photo has three.
2. Clicking that same star again takes them off. There is no separate button for it.
3. With a photo open the row is at the bottom left. The digits `1` to `5` work there too; zero does not, that stays *zoom to fit*.
4. Beside the stars are two buttons: ⚑ means "this one is in", ✕ "this one is out". That is a different question from the stars: how good against whether. With a photo open you do it with `P`, `X` and `U`; the same letter again takes the mark off too. Switch on `Caps Lock` and it moves on to the next photo right after every mark, as in Lightroom. That way you go through a whole series with one key per photo. (If you would rather hold `⇧` each time, that does the same.)
5. In the gallery one tile has a frame around it: that is where the keys work. Move it with `←` `→` and `↑` `↓`, mark with `P`, `X` or a digit, and open it with `Enter`. That is how you sift a whole folder without the mouse.
6. Torn between two photos? `C` or the **Compare** button puts them side by side: on the left what you are keeping, on the right the candidate. `←` `→` change the candidate, *Keep the right one* promotes the right. Tick exactly two in the gallery and those are the two.
7. With *Actual size* you look at both at 100% (that is how you see which is sharper) and drag in one half to move; with *Move together* the other follows. Stars and flags work as usual, editing you do not do there. `C` or `Esc` brings you back.
8. At the top of the gallery is *all · 1★ · 2★ … · edited · ⚑ · ✕*. Click *3★* for everything with three stars or more, *edited* for what you already had in hand, ⚑ for your choice, and ✕ to take one more look at what you had written off.

A star goes into the same little text file as your edit, and so travels with your backup. But it sits *beside* it: copy an edit onto another photo and the rating stays where it belongs.

To finish

A series in one go, and when something goes wrong

LESSON 27 · A WHOLE FOLDER

Twelve photos from the same evening usually need the same correction.

1. Develop one of them completely.
2. Open the next one: click it in the filmstrip under your photo, or walk along with `←` and `→`. Click **Paste the edit** on the left, or press `Ctrl` / `⌘` + `⇧` + `V`: the edit of the previous photo is waiting there, with its name underneath.
3. What comes along is everything except the framing: that is different for every photo, and a crop from an upright photo on a landscape one yields nonsense.
4. If it concerns a whole series, tick them in the filmstrip or the gallery and click **Apply the edit to … photos** in the left-hand column. You get the question first, with how many of those photos already have an edit.
5. Every photo **keeps its own crop, straightening and stars**. Only light, color, masks and finishing are replaced.
6. If it went wrong, **Undo** stands right there afterwards. That puts all the photos back as they were, but only at that moment: go and do something else and it is gone. This works outside `Ctrl` / `Cmd` + `Z`, because that only covers the photo that is open.
7. A check mark at the top right of a tile means: there is an edit in here; stars do not count. You tick with the box at the top left, or all at once with *Select all*.
8. Export from the gallery in one go: the whole folder, only the *edited* ones, or your selection. Every photo takes its own edit along.

WHEN IT GOES WRONG

Back
`Ctrl` / `Cmd` + `Z`, and with `Shift` forward again. Further back? Click **History** in the bar: all your steps are there, and one click brings you ten of them back.

All the way back
⟲ **Undo everything** in the bar puts the photo back in one click to how it arrived: crop, masks, stamps and all. It is one step in the history, so `Ctrl` / `Cmd` + `Z` simply brings your work back if you change your mind.

Back, and gone
Throw away the *.doka.json* file beside your photo. Then the edit has disappeared from disk as well.

Asking for the folder
The browser asks for access again every session. That is not a malfunction but the security model.

Nothing to see
Is there a mask open without an edit? Or is stamping mode still on? That catches your clicks.

Another language
KaaWeeWee speaks Dutch, German and English. Behind the **?** at the top right you choose one; it remembers. Each language also has an address of its own: *kaaweewee.nl/de* and *kaaweewee.nl/en*. Pass such an address on and the app opens straight away in that language for the other person.

Shortcuts

Everything on one sheet, and a last word

SHORTCUTS

The same list is in the app behind the **?** at the top right, beside the version number.

`space`	the original, for as long as you hold it down.
`Z`	look at 100%, and fit again. Always judge sharpness and noise this way.
`+` `−` `0`	zoom in and out, and fit to the screen.
`J`	mark burnt out and blocked up areas.
`M`	where the mask bites, in red.
`R`	cropping on and off; the Geometry group opens along with it.
`V`	black and white on and off.
`F`	just the photo, filling the screen. `Esc` brings you back.
`G`	to the gallery, and back again to the photo that was open.
`C`	compare two photos side by side; again closes it.
`T`	show or hide the filmstrip.
`←` `→`	the previous and the next photo from the strip; in the gallery the tile beside it.
`↑` `↓` `Enter`	in the gallery: a row up or down, and open the tile with the border around it.
`1`–`5`	give stars; the same digit takes them off again.
`P` `X` `U`	flag, reject, and take the flag off again.
`Caps Lock`	with it on, `1`–`5`, `P` or `X` moves straight on to the next photo. With `⇧` you do the same just once.
`B`	tick this photo for the export.
`Ctrl` / `⌘` `⇧` `C` `V`	copy the edit of this photo, and paste it on another one.

The letters come from Lightroom, where they are already in the fingers. If your attention is in a slider or an input field, they do their ordinary work there.

A last word

You have now seen everything KaaWeeWee can do. What remains is practice, and that goes fastest on your own photos, preferably on a few you have edited once before, so you can compare.

Run into something, or missing something? Mail it to **feedback@kaaweewee.nl**. That same address is behind the **?** at the top right in the app, where the version number is put into the subject for you. That saves going back and forth: the number shows which version you were using.

KaaWeeWee is free and stays free. If you want to help with the domain and the hosting, there is a button with a **€** in the bar: there you can donate € 3, € 5 or € 10. How you pay you choose at Mollie: on your computer, or by scanning the code with your phone's camera.

Keeping what you worked out

Presets and versions

LESSON 28 · PRESETS

Taking an edit over is about *this* evening. A **preset** you keep forever (your black and white, your winter look) and put on a photo again next year.

1. Edit a photo the way you want it, open **Presets** on the left and click **Save this edit…**. Give it a name, and a group if you are going to make more of them.
2. The check marks are already right: on for what really does something in *this* photo. Switch off what you do not want to take along. The crop, the straightening and the stamps are not among them: those belong to this one photo.
3. Masks are off by default. A radial that happened to lie over a face here is nonsense on the next photo; a vignette mask you *do* want along, and that is why it is a check mark.
4. Open another photo and click the preset. Its own crop and straightening stay as they are. In the *History* it stands there by name, so one `Ctrl` / `Cmd` + `Z` and it is gone again.
5. With the arrow behind a preset you save it as a small file, and with *Read a file…* you bring one in. That is how you pass one on to someone else: it is a few kilobytes and goes along as an attachment.

They live in this browser on this computer. If you want to secure them or take them to another PC, keep them as a file. Behind the **?** it says whether the browser may hold on to them; *Install on this computer* under **Export** makes that most likely.

LESSON 29 · VERSIONS

Torn between color and black and white? Keep both, under the same photo.

1. Open **Versions** on the left and click **+ Version**: you get a copy of what is there *now*. Make your second take out of that.
2. The versions stand there as buttons. Click back and forth and you see them alternate; double-clicking renames, ✕ removes the one you are in. *Original* stays.
3. Stars and flags are per version, which is how you choose which take it becomes.
4. In the gallery the photo carries a **×2**. They live in the same little file beside the photo, so they are still there tomorrow.

Exporting does the version you have open. Put a whole series away and the *Original* comes out of it, unless you tick **Include every version** in the export dialog; then each version gets its name after the file name.

LESSON 30 · FINDING THINGS BY CAPTURE DATA

Which photos did you take with the 70-200? And which at ISO 6400, when it got dark?

1. Open **Filter on capture data** on the left and click *Read the capture data*. KaaWeeWee only reads it when you ask; with a large folder that takes a moment, and you can carry on working or stop in the meantime.
2. After that it lists what occurs in *this* folder (camera, lens, focal length, ISO) with how often behind it. One click and you see only those photos.
3. Several values within the same group are allowed: click 3200, 6400 and 12800 and you have everything from ISO 3200 up. Another group starts over.
4. It counts together with the stars and the flags: *3★* plus *200 mm* shows what you meant on both counts. *Clear the filter* puts it back to everything.

The second time it is there straight away: what has been read is kept until the file changes.

Your photos in order

Appendix · where you put them and what you call them

ONE MAIN FOLDER, THE SESSIONS UNDER IT

Point KaaWeeWee at one folder with all your photos in it, and put every session under it as a folder of its own.

```
Photos/                        ← this is what you point K
   2026-10-04 Autumn Slangenburg/
   2026-10-12 Club evening portrait/
   2026-11-02 Birds Zwarte Veen/
Export/
   2026-10-04 Autumn Slangenburg/
```

That saves a system dialog every time: the permission for the main folder holds for everything under it. Your sessions are on the left under *Folders inside* with the number of photos behind them, and one click takes you there.

Keep it to two levels. The column shows the folders one level deep, so with *Photos / 2026 / October / Autumn* every switch costs two clicks and you pass folders with zero photos on the way.

THE EXPORT FOLDER BESIDE IT, NOT INSIDE IT

KaaWeeWee never exports next to the original, because that would overwrite your photo, and it remembers both folders separately. Put *Export* beside *Photos* and not inside it, and your session list stays clean.

NAMES THAT KEEP MAKING SENSE

1. **Date first**, as in *2026-10-04 Autumn Slangenburg*. Then your list sorts itself; with *4 October* or *04-10-2026* it does not.
2. **Let the name stand on its own.** In *Opened before* there is no path to be seen, so two folders both called *RAW* cannot be told apart there.
3. **Rename before you edit.** Your edit lies beside it as *DSC_4821.NEF.doka.json*, the full file name plus a suffix. Rename the photo later and the edit comes loose. Move a photo, and take that little file with it.

Avoid \ / : * ? " < > | in folder names and do not let a name end in a period or a space; Windows refuses those. Spaces themselves are fine.

WORKING LOCALLY, AND THE BACKUP

Keep your working folder on a disk inside your own computer. OneDrive, iCloud and Dropbox rewrite the modification date, and that is what KaaWeeWee recognizes a photo by: then it asks on opening whether the old edit may still go on it, photo by photo.

A backup of your photo folder takes your edits along, because they lie beside them. One thing it does not: your presets and export presets live in the browser. Keep those as a file, in your main folder for instance.

For a backup, syncing is exactly right. Just not as a *working* folder.