

SHARPEN IMAGES

Just as bright areas of a picture's composition draw the eye, the sharpest parts will attract and hold a viewer's attention.

To keep blur at bay, there is a wide range of techniques you can employ, both while shooting and later in postproduction. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when sharpening your images "in post."

- **Don't sharpen a photo in the camera.** Even if your camera gives you the option, reserve this job for the sharpening tools in image-editing software, such as Smart Sharpen or Unsharp Mask. And apply the sharpening as a final step after resizing, just prior to output.

- **Never sharpen the original.** Always work on a duplicate so you have the original file to go back to.

- **Be careful not to overdo your sharpening.** Inevitably, you'll wind up producing crispy, artificial-looking edges in the photograph.

Adapted from Perfect Digital Photography: Brilliant Pixels from the Digital Darkroom by Jay Dickman and Jay Kinghorn (McGraw Hill, 2009; \$40)

FIX DISTORTION

If your shots of buildings look like they're falling towards each other, or your images seem to squish or expand in the middle, either your lens or your angle of view may be at fault. Here are two different types of distortion and how to correct them using Adobe Photoshop.

- **Lens distortion:** Blame this culprit when you see lines bowing inward or outward around the center. To fix it, use the Lens Correction filter to apply the opposite radial distortion weighted between the center and edges. Lens distortion will need the most correction on images that have long, straight lines.

- **Perspective distortion:** When lines that are parallel in reality converge in your image, either vertically or horizontally. Try using Edit > Transform > Perspective.

Adapted from Pro Photographer's D-SLR Handbook by Michael Freeman (Lark Books, 2008; \$25)

—Adapted by Kathleen Davis