

A dramatic, dark storm sky with multiple bright lightning bolts striking down. In the foreground, there is a dark, flat landscape, possibly a field or road, with a utility pole and power lines visible on the right side. The overall mood is intense and powerful.

Storm & Weather Photography

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it's moments like
these you need...



Intro

- **What is It?*
- **Safety First**
- **Camera Settings**
- **Tools for Storm Photography**
- **Positioning Yourself**
- **Tracking a Storm**
- **Composition and Timing**
- **Post-Processing Tips**
- **Q&A Session**



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What Is It?

Weather photography involves capturing images of atmospheric conditions and meteorological phenomena such as clouds, rain, snow, and fog to visually document the ever-changing nature of the Earth's climate. Lightning photography focuses specifically on capturing the dramatic and fleeting bolts of electrical discharge in the sky, showcasing the awe-inspiring power and beauty of lightning storms.

Safety



- When photographing storms, safety should always be the top priority.
- Lightning is a significant risk. Avoid open areas, high ground, and metal objects. Seek indoor shelter or a hard-topped vehicle.
- Lightning can strike even before a storm is directly overhead, so don't wait until it's too late to find safety.
- Storms can bring strong winds and hail. Be cautious of falling debris and trees, and stay away from windows.
- If photographing near water bodies, be aware of flash floods that can occur due to heavy rainfall upstream.
 - Have a first aid kit and emergency supplies
 - Beware of sensationalism

Camera Settings



- Common camera settings for storm photography
 - Overexposure or underexposure
- Shutter Speed: Use long exposures (5-10 seconds) to capture multiple lightning strikes within a single frame. Experiment to find the optimal duration.
- Aperture: Choose a mid-range aperture (f/8 to f/11) to balance depth of field and sharpness. Adjust based on the desired focus range.
 - ISO: Keep ISO low (around 100-400) to minimize noise in your images.
 - White Balance: Use "Daylight" or "Cloudy" settings to retain natural colors.
- Manual Mode: Shooting in manual mode provides full control over settings for consistent results.

Extra Tools & Equipment



- Tripod: A stable base is essential for long exposure shots. A sturdy tripod minimizes camera shake.
- Remote Shutter Release: Reduces camera shake caused by pressing the shutter button. Can be a wired or wireless remote.
- Lightning Trigger: Detects lightning and triggers the camera to capture lightning strikes. Increases the chances of capturing the right moment. See: <https://shop.iceinspace.com.au/shop/dslr-lightning-trigger/>
- Camera Protection

Positioning Yourself



- The side of the storm you choose affects the lighting and composition of your photos.
- The leading edge (front side) often has dramatic clouds and lightning. It's also where the storm's most intense weather is located.
- The trailing edge (rear side) offers a view of the storm receding, potentially revealing a clearer sky and secondary lightning strikes.
- Prioritize safety when positioning yourself. Avoid hills, open fields, and tall objects that can attract lightning.

Tracking

A weather radar map showing storm systems. The map uses a color scale from blue (light intensity) to red (heavy intensity). A red rectangular box highlights a specific area of interest in the center of the map. The background is dark, and the radar data is overlaid on a grid.

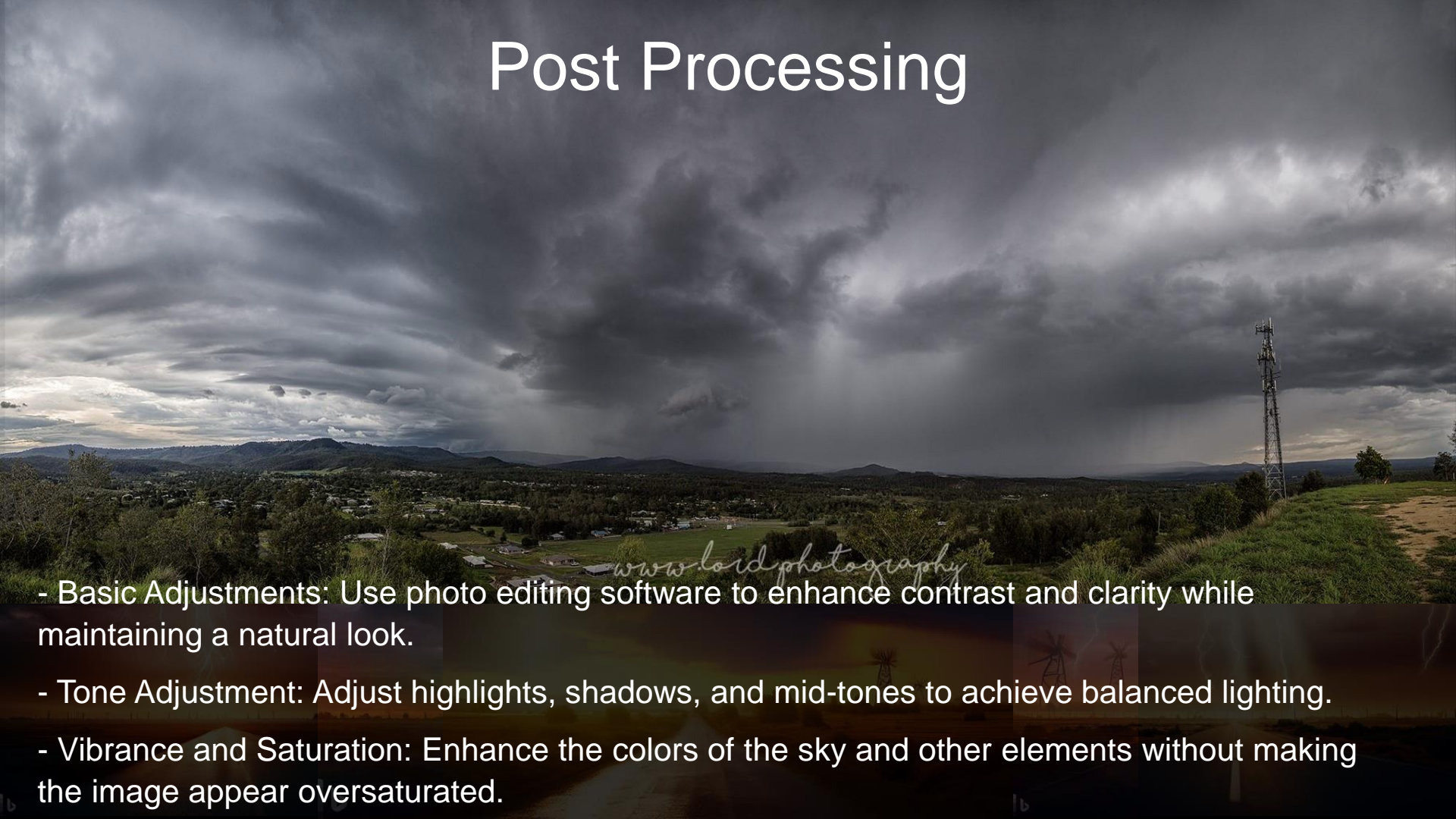
- Weather Apps: Use apps like "BOM Weather" in Australia to track storm movement and get real-time radar data. Windy, Blitzortung, Lightningmaps.
- Radar Websites: Websites like the "Australian Bureau of Meteorology" provide radar maps showing storm movement.
- Wind Patterns: Observe wind direction and speed to predict storm movement. Storms often move with the prevailing wind.
- Self Observation

Composition



- Composition: Use leading lines, such as roads or rivers, to guide the viewer's eye into the image. Frame the storm with natural elements like trees or structures for context.
- Timing: Timing is crucial for capturing lightning strikes. Use long exposures during the night or low-light conditions to increase the chance of capturing lightning bolts.

Post Processing

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- Basic Adjustments: Use photo editing software to enhance contrast and clarity while maintaining a natural look.
 - Tone Adjustment: Adjust highlights, shadows, and mid-tones to achieve balanced lighting.
 - Vibrance and Saturation: Enhance the colors of the sky and other elements without making the image appear oversaturated.

Your Work & Tips



- Share some of your own storm photography examples
- Discuss the stories behind your shots and the challenges you faced
- Highlight the emotions and impact that storm photography can convey

Questions?

Ask any questions now, or you can email me at travis@lord.photography

How can I Improve?

There are several ways you can find resources to improve your photography. At the Toowoomba Photographic Society we offer several ways to do this.

- Post your image to our Facebook group and ask for feedback:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/TPSClosedGroup>
- Use critique corner on MyPhotoClub
<https://toowoomba.myphotoclub.com.au/critique-corner-home/>
- Put your images into our monthly competitions
- Ask one of our members to be your mentor