

Crop Tool Overlay Options in Photoshop, Lightroom and Adobe Camera Raw

Cropping is the most important photo editing step anyone can take. Cropping a picture can strengthen the composition and eliminate distractions. It can also change a landscape format picture to a portrait one (and vice versa) or turn the normal camera format image into a square or letterbox/panoramic format. Adobe includes a crop tool in Photoshop. The tool comes with some overlay options to help you with the layout of images.



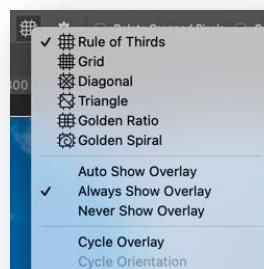
Crop Tool In Photoshop showing Rule of Thirds Overlay

Photoshop Overlays

When the Crop Tool is selected in Photoshop CC, a border with "handles" appears around the whole image automatically, (See above).

- To see any of the overlays, use the handles to change the cropping frame to something slightly smaller than the entire photo, these overlays can then be seen by pressing the "O" key and cycling through the overlays.
- Alternatively to see the different overlays, left click inside the active crop area, then press the "O" key and cycle through the overlays.

There are six different styles of overlay patterns to choose from, first always ensure that this setting **Always Show Overlays** is ticked in the overlay options dialogue:



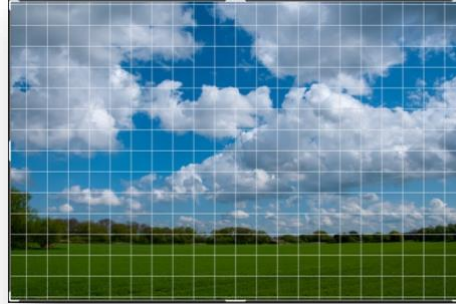
Crop Tool Overlay Options in Photoshop, Lightroom and Adobe Camera Raw

Overlays available in Photoshop:

- Rule of Thirds
- Grid
- Diagonal
- Triangle
- Golden Ratio
- Golden Spiral



Rule of Thirds



Grid



Diagonal



Triangle



Golden Ratio



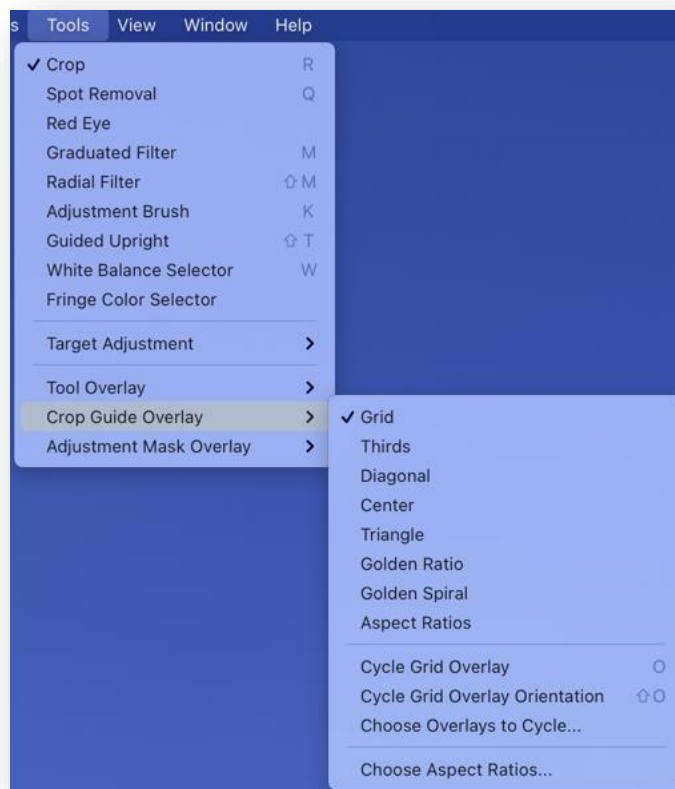
Golden Spiral

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In addition, there are settings in the overlay options so that Photoshop can display the overlays automatically, always or never. If **Auto Show Overlay** is chosen, an overlay appears only when dragging one of the sides or corners of the cropping frame in from the edges. If **Always Show Overlay** is selected, the last overlay design selected appears as soon as the Crop tool is selected. If **Never Show Overlay** is chosen, no overlay lines will be seen.

Lightroom Overlays

Crop overlay selector in lightroom:



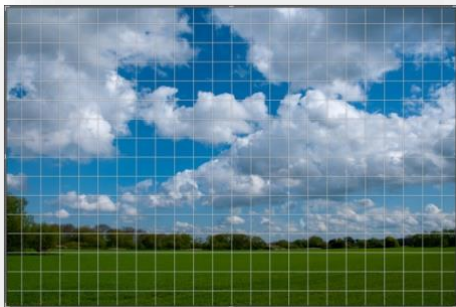
In Lightroom, the Crop tool in the Develop module has similar overlay choices as Photoshop. While Lightroom includes two additional overlay options:

- Centre
- Aspect Ratios, this contains three common print proportions: 2x3, 5x7 and 4x5, these are useful when cropping to fit a particular print or frame size with these proportions, 2x3 is the usual image proportions from camera, 5x7 is a print frame size, the 4x5 is the proportions of an 8"x10" print/frame

Crop Tool Overlay Options in Photoshop, Lightroom and Adobe Camera Raw

Eight overlays available in Lightroom:

- Grid
- Thirds
- Diagonal
- Centre
- Triangle
- Golden Ratio
- Golden Spiral
- Aspect Ratios



Grid



Thirds



Diagonal



Centre

Four more grid overlay options in Lightroom are shown on the following page:

Crop Tool Overlay Options in Photoshop, Lightroom and Adobe Camera Raw



Triangle



Golden Ratio



Golden Spiral



Aspect Ratios

Camera Raw Overlay

If you frequently use **Adobe Camera Raw** to edit images, the only overlay available is the Rule of Thirds. To see it, click the Crop tool icon in the toolbar and the overlay will be shown.