



EasyS Sharpening Toolkit (PC only)

Sharpening solution by Digital Outback Photo

As we now know sharpening is needed for digital images and there are many good ones to choose from. In 2004 we introduced our first own sharpening tool [EasyS](#) that many people love for high resolution nature photographs.

EasyS Sharpening Toolkit is based on the same technology used in EasyS but uses a very flexible toolkit approach.

EasyS Sharpening Toolkit now improves on EasyS:

- File size only limited by Photoshop
- More easily scriptable
- Fast operation
- Flexible tuning

Sharpening by the numbers

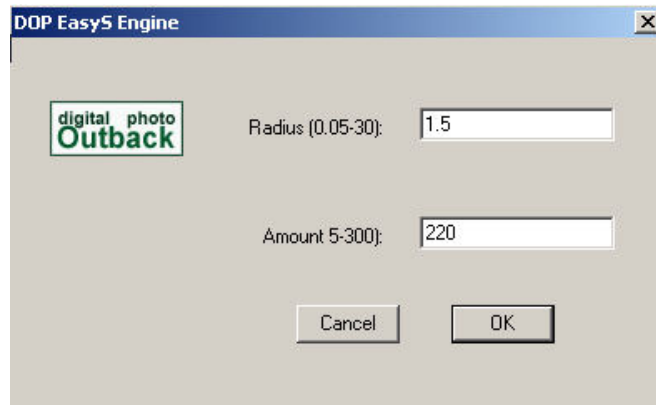
The EasyS Sharpening Toolkit does not support an interactive user interface with sharpening preview. This sounds limiting, right? But actually we work for a very long time with sharpening actions and create sharpened layers that we then tweak via opacity changes. Also if you use additional techniques like edge masking and/or halo tweaking then what you see in the (sometimes even small) sharpening window is not what you will get.

EasyS Sharpening Toolkit

EasyS Sharpening Toolkit consists of two parts:

- EasyS Sharpening Engine (a Photoshop automation plugin)
- EasyS Sharpening actions (intended to be tweaked for your own optimal results)

The EasyS Sharpening Engine



With the EasyS Engine you can actually only choose two parameters:

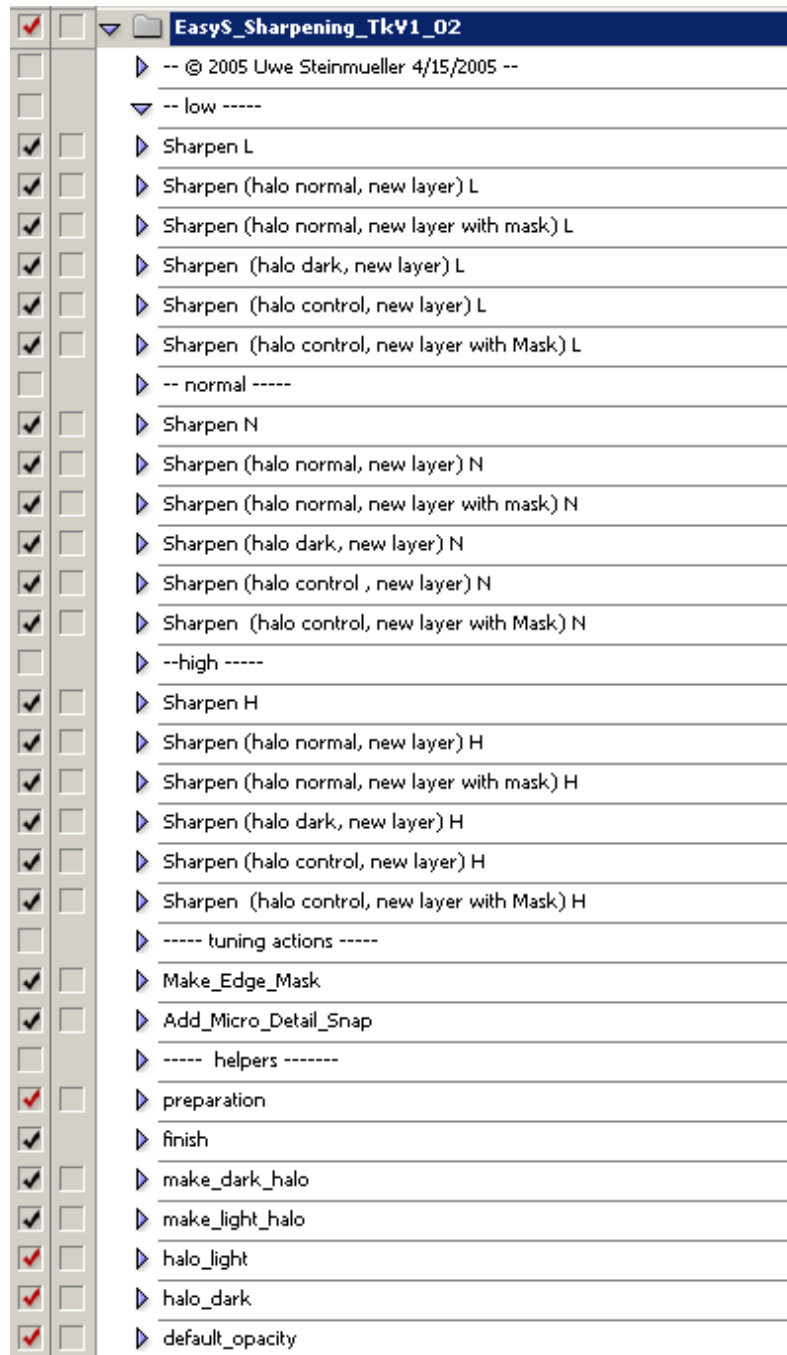
- Radius (0.05-3.0)
- Amount (5-300)

But the EasyS Engine is not just using plain USM

Don't expect huge differences but looking at fine detail will show that our engine works smoother and still captures the finest details available. EasyS Sharpening Toolkit also manages to produce very low halo levels.

EasyS Sharpening Actions

Note: Do not rename the action set!



EasyS Sharpening Actions

The actions come in 5 sections:

- User actions with levels L(ow), N(ormal) and H(igh)

- Tuning actions
- Helper actions

These levels are thought to be tweaked by the user and we will show how later. You also can copy the actions and create your own combinations. That is why we have called it a toolkit.

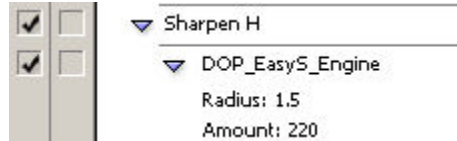
Each level consists of 6 actions:

- (1) Sharpen (L,N,H) which defines the base sharpening for the level and sharpens on the currently selected layer
- (2) Sharpen (halo normal, new layer) (L,N,H) creates a new layer with the content of all visible layers and then uses the sharpening defined in (1)
- (3) Sharpen (halo normal, new layer with mask) (L,N,H) creates a new layer with the content of all visible layers and then uses the sharpening defined in (2) and adds an edge mask
- (4) Sharpen (halo dark, new layer) is like (2) but only shows dark halos
- (5) Sharpen (halo control, new layer) is like (2) but and then tweaks the dark/light halos which are the result of the sharpening process (see below in more detail).
- (6) Sharpen (halo control, new layer with mask) (L,N,H) creates a new layer with the content of all visible layers and then uses the sharpening defined in (5) and adds an edge mask

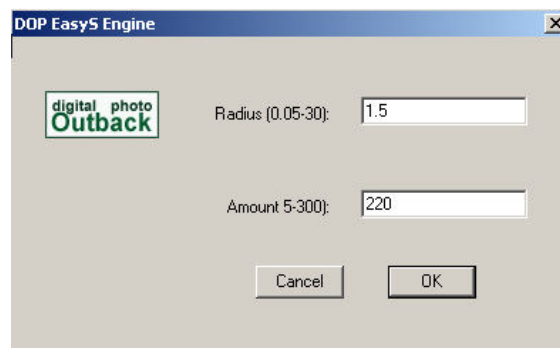
Tweaking the actions

Setting the sharpening strength

You just need to double click on the filter entry in the base sharpening actions (1)



and this will open the EasyS Engine dialog:



There you change the value to the ones you prefer and the EasyS Engine will be executed. After that the new settings will be recorded in the action. Undo the last step and these settings will be used by all the other actions of the same level.

Note: If you make specialized versions for different camera settings then it is best to roll you own actions from a copy of the standard actions.

Changing the light/dark halo levels

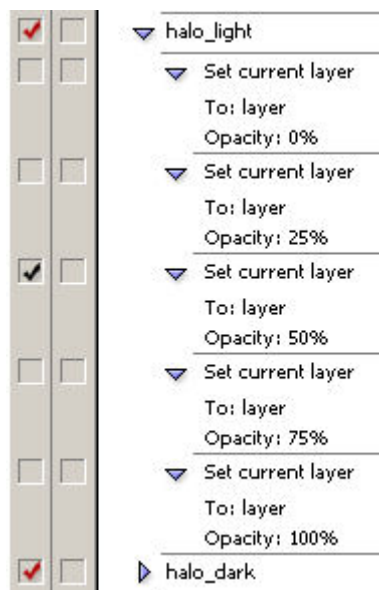
What does sharpening actually do? It adds the impression of more sharpness by increasing the contrast at edges. This means some of the pixel will get lighter and some darker.

Note on sharpening and halos: We actually follow the philosophy that artifacts that don't show up at 100% cannot be visible in print. We know you can sharper stronger than that for most inkjet printers. But does it look natural? Try to avoid over sharpening and concentrate on the content message. Halos you see on screen may show up on print and best you try to minimize them at nearly any cost.

We allow you to control how strong you want to have the lighter pixels and the darker. We always find the lighter pixels more an issue than the darker ones.

There are two actions that help you to control this behavior:

- halo_light
- halo_dark



Halo settings

Both actions have 5 predefined settings: 0, 25, 50, 75, 100%. Only one setting should be active as otherwise the last on in the action will be chosen. We use 100% for halo_dark and 25,50,75 for halo_light.

For some images you may want to use only the hard halos and set the halo_light to 0%. A more efficient way it to turn the generation of the light halo off entirely:



▼ finish

Play action "make_dark_halo" of set "EasyS_Sharpener_Toolkit.atn"

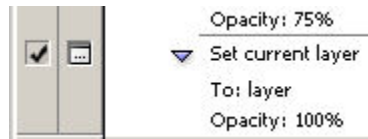
Play action "make_light_halo" of set "EasyS_Sharpener_Toolkit.atn"

Turning off light halo generation

Default opacity

We most of the time use slightly too strong sharpening then control the real sharpening by tuning the opacity of the layer. Our “opacity default” action allows you to set a default value for your own standard opacity settings.

You can even popup a dialog and tweak opacity when the actions are executed:



Activate the little dialog icon

Tuning actions

There are 2 tuning action provided:

- **Make_Edge_Mask** (adds an edge mask that suppresses some sharpening of noise). You can add the mask later after the sharpening.
- **Add_Micro_Detail_Snap** adds some USM to get even more micro detail snap. Run this action as an optional step at the end of your sharpening.

Summary

With EasyS Sharpening Toolkit we provide a sharpening solution that is very flexible and for the demanding photographer.

Best you try yourself on your own images. We provide a full working demo version that is only limited by the image size of 2000x2000 pixels. Try before you buy.

You can [order the EasyS Sharpening Toolkit here](#).