

**Note: This is not meant to be extensive. It is simply a few programs I have come across that are available for free that have some interesting features (and limitations)**

## Windows Photos

### Good

- Nothing to download and install
- Crop and straighten
- Lighting controls easy to use. Can control overall contrast, exposure, highlights, and shadows
- Colour temperature (warmth)
- Saturation (“Colour” slider) limited, but works
- “Clarity” useful for adding micro-contrast. Adds some sharpness.
- Red eye removal
- “Spot fix” useful but very limited
- Vignette useful and easy

### Bad

- Only available for Windows 10
- No histogram for lighting adjustments
- No local adjustments (dodging, burning, etc.)
- No clone brush/stamp. “Spot fix” a very poor substitute

## PhotoPad [www.nchsoftware.com/photoeditor/index.html](http://www.nchsoftware.com/photoeditor/index.html)

### Good

- Crop
- Lighting adjustments excellent using “Levels” on the “Color” tab. Can set black and white point and then adjust midtones.
- “Color curves” on the “Color” tab for precise control over lighting
- Colour temperature
- Saturation
- Red eye
- Sharpen / blur
- Clone stamp (“Retouch menu”, “Touch Up”)
- Local adjustments (colour, lighting, blur, sharpen, etc.)
- Very small footprint on your disk drive
- Extras: Operation stack allows you to modify or delete some aspect you changed earlier without affecting later operations. Also vignettes, local focus and some special effects like warping, and distortion

### Bad

- Somewhat jerky when rotating / straightening
- Somewhat difficult to learn how local adjustment tools work

**Get it Free.** PhotoPad free photo editing software is available for non-commercial use only. If you will be using PhotoPad at home, you can [download the free version here](http://www.nchsoftware.com/photoeditor/index.html). No signup required.

*Look for this on web page*

**PhotoScape 3.7** [www.photoscape.org/ps/main/download.php](http://www.photoscape.org/ps/main/download.php)



*Click this icon on web site*

Good

- Crop and rotate
- Luminance curve (under “Bright, Color” button), takes a bit to learn, but works well for precise control over lighting.
- Colour temperature
- Red eye removal
- Good “Mole Removal” (content aware eraser) and Clone Stamp
- Effects Brush allows dodging and burning
- Sharpen / blur (only blur can be done for a localized area)

Bad

- Difficult Saturation adjustments
- No histogram for lighting adjustments

**PhotoScape X** [www.photoscape.org/ps/main/download.php](http://www.photoscape.org/ps/main/download.php)



*Click this icon on web site*

Good

- Cropping
- Reasonable lighting tools **with masking**
- Colour temperature
- saturation
- Red eye
- Dodge / burn **with masking**
- Sharpen / blur **with masking**
- Spot healing / remove stain – not really clone brush but sometimes all you need
- Nice extras (not commonly found in free photo editors): perspective control, clarity, vibrance, dehaze, noise reduction, soften skin

Bad

- Rotate jerkier than regular PhotoScape
- No real clone brush (spot healing and remove stain marginal)

Overall

PhotoScape X is good for most things, especially the ability to add “local” effects by masking. Lighting controls are good. To me, the biggest drawback is no clone stamp. For cloning you can use Photoscape 3.7 (see above) or you can purchase Photoscape X (Pro) for about \$60 CDN that includes the clone stamp. Lots of specialty tools like adjusting perspective, noise reduction, clarity (micro-contrast) etc.

PhotoScape is good overall. For those who want to experiment, the “curves” section for lighting allows for very precise handling of lighting in all areas from shadows, through mid-tones, and highlights. It is the only editor here that has a decent clone brush.

PhotoPad has very easy-to-use lighting controls. It has a layer stack that allows you to go back and modify one effect without undoing all the edits you did afterwards. The paid version is inexpensive and adds some tools.

Windows Photos has some limitations such as no histogram to help with lighting adjustments and no clone brush. But what it does, it does quite well.