

Architecture & Interior Photography — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into repeatable practice for buildings and rooms. Each section maps to a course module: you will lock down your perspective-control gear and leveling, drill straightening verticals optically and in software, plan and blend bracketed exposures for bright windows, and run real mixed-light interior shoots. Fill the templates as you go so that within a few shoots you have a tested capture-and-edit system and a growing record of what bracket spacing, light setup, and correction settings deliver clean, editorial, vertical-perfect work.

Seeing Architecture: Gear, Lenses, and the Vertical Problem

Establish your perspective-control approach, focal lengths, and a precisely leveled setup so every later shoot starts from straight verticals.

Worksheet: My Architecture Gear and Perspective Plan

Fill this for the gear you actually own. Decide your route to straight verticals (a shift lens or shoot-wide-and-correct) and note the focal lengths you will reach for, so you stop improvising on site.

Camera body and sensor size (full-frame / APS-C)

Vertical-control route (tilt-shift lens / shoot wide + digital correction)

Tilt-shift or wide lens(es) and focal lengths owned

Go-to focal length for interiors (aim for 24mm, wider only if needed)

Go-to focal length for facades

Tripod and head type (geared / ball / leveling base)

Leveling tools available (in-camera dual-axis level / bubble level)

Headroom plan if correcting digitally (how much extra to frame)

Exercise: Level-vs-Tilted Vertical Test

Photograph the same building from one spot twice: once tilting the camera up to fit it in, once holding the camera dead level (cropping the top). Open both and pull a vertical guide along an edge.

- How far do the verticals lean inward in the tilted frame versus the level frame?
 - Which perspective did each frame produce (two-point with upright verticals, or three-point converging)?
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• What did you lose by keeping the camera level (top of the building), and how would shift or correction recover it?

• Which result looks like professional, editorial architecture, and why?

Checklist: Architectural Setup Check

- Tripod sturdy and locked; geared or precise head fitted
- Camera leveled on both axes (side-to-side and front-to-back)
- In-camera dual-axis level or bubble level confirmed, not eyeballed
- Shooting RAW in manual mode at base ISO (100 or 64)
- Aperture in the sharp range (f/8 to f/11), not past f/16
- Manual or single-point focus confirmed sharp across the frame
- Remote release or 2-second timer ready; mirror lock-up / EFCS on
- Composition locked so clutter can be removed between frames

Perspective Control and Straightening Lines

Get and keep dead-straight verticals using shift movements, digital correction, and deliberate one- and two-point composition.

Exercise: Shift (Rise) Drill

If you have a tilt-shift lens, level the camera with shift at zero, then dial in upward rise. If you do not, simulate the concept: shoot level with headroom, then plan the digital correction. Record what happened.

- With the camera level and shift at zero, how much of the top was missing before correcting?

- How much rise (or how much headroom) was needed to include the top while verticals stayed straight?

- At what point did the corners darken or smear (exceeding the image circle), if using a shift lens?

- Did re-checking level after shifting reveal any drift you had to fix?

Worksheet: Perspective Correction Recipe

Record the Lightroom / Photoshop steps that straightened one real frame, so your correction stays consistent. Lens profile first, then geometry, then crop.

Frame and lens used

Lens profile correction applied (yes/no)

Upright mode that worked best (Auto / Level / Vertical / Full / Guided)

Guided Upright lines drawn (which edges)

Manual Vertical / Horizontal / Rotate tweaks

Horizontal scale added to compensate stretch

Scale / offset used to recover framing

Resolution / quality lost at the top edge (note)

Exercise: One-Point vs Two-Point Room Study

Photograph one room two ways with verticals kept straight in both: a one-point shot square to the most important wall, and a two-point shot into a corner.

- How formal and symmetrical does the one-point (square-to-wall) version feel?

 - How open and three-dimensional does the two-point (into-a-corner) version feel?

 - Did any tilt to fit the ceiling create an accidental three-point lean you had to correct?

 - Which view suits this room and a likely client brief, and why?
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Checklist: Straight-Verticals Capture Discipline

- Camera back leveled before composing
- Verticals kept straight by rise/shift or by shooting wide with headroom
- Perspective chosen deliberately (one-point or two-point), not by accident
- Focal length started at 24mm; wider only when the room won't fit
- Important furniture kept clear of extreme frame edges
- Countertops, floorboards, and shelving squared to the frame
- Tripod height chosen for the room (often chest/hip height)
- Lens profile correction applied before any perspective transform

Exposure, Bracketing, and HDR for Bright Windows

Meter, bracket, and blend the huge range between a dim room and a bright window so the result holds both and looks natural.

Exercise: Measure the Window Range

In a room with a bright window in frame, spot-meter the dim interior and the bright outdoor view separately to learn how many stops apart they are. Use the histogram and clipping warnings, not the rear screen.

- What exposure correctly holds the room, and what exposure correctly holds the window view?

 - How many stops apart are the two readings?

 - Does that range fit one RAW frame, or does it demand bracketing?

 - Could shooting overcast or at blue hour shrink the range here?
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Worksheet: Bracket Capture Plan

Plan a bracket set before you shoot it. Change exposure by shutter speed only; keep aperture, ISO, and framing identical so frames blend cleanly.

Room / subject and focal length

Aperture (sharp range, e.g. f/9) and ISO (base)

Number of frames (3 / 5 / 7) and spacing (e.g. 2 stops)

Darkest frame shutter (holds the window, nothing pure white)

Middle frame shutter (overall room)

Brightest frame shutter (opens shadows, nothing pure black)

Trigger method (AEB / manual) and shake control (timer, MLU/EFCS)

Movement risks to time around (curtains, plants, people)

Exercise: Blend and Judge for Realism

Blend your bracket set by hand with luminosity masks in Photoshop, or with Lightroom HDR Merge. Inspect for halos and an over-cooked look, and judge by realism.

- Which method (manual masks or HDR Merge) gave the cleaner, more believable result on this scene?
 - Is there any halo or glow around the windows, and what caused it?
 - Does the window now show a real view while the room looks as it felt to stand in?
 - Could a viewer tell it is a blend, and if so, what would you dial back?
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Checklist: Bracketing & Blending Discipline

- Camera locked off; frames align perfectly
- Exposure changed by shutter speed only (not aperture or ISO)
- Darkest frame holds full window detail, nothing pure white
- Brightest frame opens the deepest shadow, nothing pure black
- Bracket count covers the full measured range (3-7 frames)
- Shot in a still moment, or de-ghosting planned for movement
- Blend is halo-free and natural, not grungy HDR
- Window view and room light both believable in the final frame

Lighting Interiors and Delivering the Edit

Balance mixed daylight, tungsten, and fluorescent, add supplemental light cleanly, and finish a color-true, straight-lined client set.

Worksheet: Mixed-Light Audit and Plan

Walk the room and log every light source and its color, then plan how you will reconcile them. Reducing the number of light colors at the source is often the cleanest fix.

Window / daylight present and approximate color (cool, ~5500-6500K)

Tungsten / incandescent fixtures (warm, ~2700-3200K) and which

Fluorescent sources (green tint) and which

LED sources and whether high or low CRI

Dominant light to set white balance to

Mismatched lamps to switch off or re-bulb to match

Gel plan for added light (CTO to warm flash to tungsten, etc.)

Reference frame plan (gray card / known white) for accurate WB

Exercise: Bounce-Flash Fill Test

In a dim or patchy room, bracket the ambient for the window, then add one flash bounced off a white ceiling, gelled CTO and kept at low power. Compare bare versus bounced, and ungelled versus gelled.

- How harsh are the shadows and hotspots with bare direct flash versus bounced?
 - How much more natural does the gelled (CTO) bounce look against the warm room light versus ungelled?
 - At what power does the flash lift shadows without announcing itself?
 - Blending the gelled flash frame with the dark ambient frame, does the room look lit while the window keeps its view?
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Worksheet: Interior Edit & Delivery Recipe

Record the finishing steps for one interior so your edits stay consistent and the set matches. Geometry and color globally first, then local retouching, then export to spec.

Lens correction + vertical straightening confirmed first

White balance source (gray card / known white) and any local cast fixes

Exposure evened across the frame (corners lifted, hotspots tamed)

Window view masked in from the correct bracket (yes/no)

Distractions removed (switches, cables, smoke detector, reflections)

Contrast / clarity amount (kept natural, not HDR-ish)

Sharpening and noise reduction amount

Export specs (resolution, color space sRGB/AdobeRGB, aspect, web + print)

Checklist: Mixed-Light & Delivery Check

- Number of light colors reduced at the source where possible
- Added flash/LED gelled to match the ambient color
- Flash/LED bounced or diffused, never bare at the room
- High-CRI light used if any people or accurate color matter
- White balance neutral; walls actually read white
- Verticals plumb and lines square in every delivered frame
- Windows clean and believable; distractions retouched out
- Whole set color- and brightness-matched, exported to client spec

Your Action Plan

1. Complete the gear and perspective plan and decide your vertical-control route (shift lens or shoot wide and correct).
2. Run the level-vs-tilted test on a building to see and measure how tilting up bends verticals.
3. Build a precisely leveled tripod setup and confirm it on both axes before shooting an interior.
4. Practice the shift (rise) drill, or shooting level with headroom, until you can include the top with verticals straight.
5. Straighten one frame in Lightroom (lens profile, then Upright/Guided Upright) and lock in your correction recipe.
6. Shoot one room as a deliberate one-point and a two-point composition with verticals kept straight.
7. Measure the window range in a sunlit room, then capture a clean 3-7 frame bracket using the capture plan.
8. Blend the bracket by hand with luminosity masks and again with Lightroom HDR Merge, and pick the more natural result.
9. Run the bounce-flash fill test: bracket ambient, add a gelled CTO bounce, and blend for a naturally lit room with a held window.
10. Audit and reconcile the mixed light in a real room, then finish and deliver three frames as a matched, spec-correct client set.

