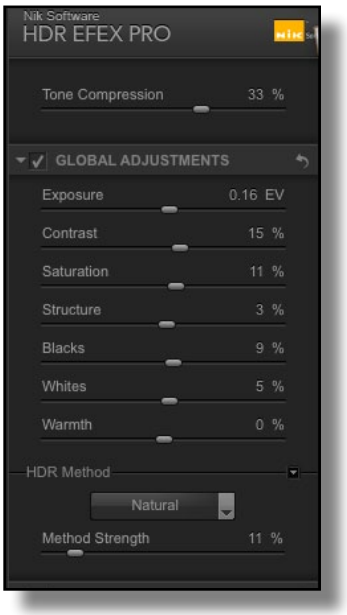
Natural HDR Recipes

The natural look in HDR-land has always been a bit elusive. Clouds can appear unnatural and blue skies can become patchy. One of the things we like the best about HDR Efex Pro is how easy it is to create natural HDR images.

Landscapes

Start with the Default HDR Efex Pro settings to retain a natural look.



With landscapes, the objective is to compress highlights and shadows enough to preserve detail, but present the scene as realistically as possible. To create a natural landscape, start with the HDR Efex Pro default settings **(page 100)**, which selects the "Natural" HDR Method and sets all sliders to zero.

We set the Tone Compression slider to +33% to bring the highlights and shadows closer together. It is important to not over-compress images when you want them to look natural. Consider that in most traditional landscape photographs, there will be distinct shadows and highlights, and some shadow clipping will actually give your image more "pop." We next set the Method Strength slider to 11% to slightly brighten the image and enhance micro-contrast. We then made increases to all global adjustment sliders except warmth to increase the overall visual impact. These settings were then saved as a preset called *Natural_Landscape_01*.

You may also wish to try variants of this recipe with different HDR Methods. We recommend choosing one of the Methods from the **Realistic Family; (page 80)**.

After making our Global Adjustments, we saved the settings as a custom preset called "Natural_Landscape_01."

Lastly, we added selective adjustments via Control Points **(page 82)**. For this particular image, we used two Control Points. The first Control Point was added to a small part of the sky where part of a cloud was too bright (reduced exposure slider), and a second Control Point was added to the open center of the image to increase contrast (increase contrast slider). Selective adjustments are unique to each image and are not saved when creating custom presets.

We added Control Points to local areas to boost contrast in the sky and modify local brightness for the final image.