



Software

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Getting Started

# HDR EFEX PRO™

Pure. Unlimited. HDR.

for Photoshop®, Lightroom®, and Aperture™

**UPOINT**  
TECHNOLOGY

# HDR Efex Pro

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Experience all the power, control, and creative expression your camera has to offer with HDR Efex Pro™, the essential new high dynamic range imaging standard designed to help photographers quickly and easily achieve the full spectrum of HDR enhancements from the realistic to artistic.

By combining innovative and best-in-class technologies, including unrivaled tone mapping algorithms, proprietary U Point® technology, and powerful ghosting control, HDR Efex Pro provides the power, control, and precision for anyone to create stunning high dynamic range photographs.

## Features

- Complete all-in-one HDR imaging toolkit with intuitive, fast, and easy operation.
- U Point technology powered selection tools for fast precise enhancements of contrast, shadow, structure, and saturation adjustments permit localized fine-tuning for a completely finished look.
- Multiple proprietary tone mapping algorithms with powerful adjustment controls yield a wide variety of HDR styles and superior results.
- Scores of presets organized into categories enable amazing one-click HDR image processing.
- Advanced technology for automatic image alignment and ghosting removal.
- Ability to create the HDR “look” from single images.

## Installation

### Windows:

- 1 Close all open applications.
- 2 Insert the HDR Efex Pro CD.
- 3 When the auto-run installer appears, click the Next button within the installation interface.
- 4 Accept the License Agreement.
- 5 Click the Install button to accept the installation path. It is recommended to install the software default path, as the software will automatically create the appropriate folders and links for each of the host applications found in the next step.
- 6 A list of the found compatible host applications will be displayed, click Next to complete the installation process.
- 7 Click Finish to close the installer window.

### Macintosh:

- 1 Close all open applications.
- 2 Insert the HDR Efex Pro CD and double-click on the installer icon.
- 3 When the installer window appears, click the Continue button within the installer interface.
- 4 Click Continue and then Agree to accept the license agreement.
- 5 The installer will display all compatible host applications that were located. Click Continue and then Install on the following screen to begin installation.
- 6 Click close to close the installer window.

### Register your Software:

It is strongly recommended that you register your software purchase. Product registration enables you to receive alerts when new versions of your product are available and helps provide you with highest level of customer support.

### Benefits of Registration:

- Receive free personal support
- Access free daily webinar training
- Receive email notification and special pricing on product upgrades
- Receive download access for the lifetime of the product
- Protect yourself in case you lose your product key

To register your software visit: [www.niksoftware.com/register](http://www.niksoftware.com/register)  
Please have your product key available at the time you register.

## Select an image series or a single image to edit in HDR Efex Pro

### Accessing HDR Efex Pro in Lightroom:

- 1 Launch Lightroom.
- 2 Highlight a series of images that you wish to merge and edit.
- 3 Right-click on the image series and roll over **Export**.
- 4 Click HDR Efex Pro in the popup menu to launch the application.

*TIP: The software can also be accessed from File > Export with Preset > HDR Efex Pro*

### Accessing HDR Efex Pro in Aperture:

- 1 Launch Aperture.
- 2 Highlight a series of images that you wish to merge and edit.
- 3 Right-click on the image series and roll over Edit with Plug-in.
- 4 Click HDR Efex Pro in the popup menu to launch the application.

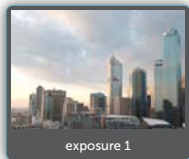
*TIP: The software can also be accessed from Photos > Edit with Plug-in > HDR Efex Pro*

### Accessing HDR Efex Pro in Photoshop:

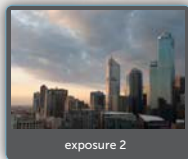
- 1 Launch Photoshop.
- 2 Click the File > Automate menu > Merge to HDR Efex Pro.
- 3 Select your image series from the Merge Dialog and click OK.
- 4 To select your image series click on the Select button and choose your images.
- 5 Next, select the Alignment and Ghost Reduction settings.  
(See page 6 for more information on Alignment and Ghost Reduction)
- 6 Finally, click OK and your image series will be aligned, merged and opened in HDR Efex Pro.

*TIP 1: Use the Smart Object option in the Merge dialog to enable you to open and adjust your edits at a future date, including the position and adjustments made with control points.*

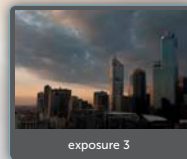
*TIP 2: To tone map 32-bit images, launch the software by clicking on Filter > Nik Software > HDR Efex Pro*



exposure 1



exposure 2



exposure 3



View Tools

Alignment & Ghost Reduction

Zoom Functionality

Preset Categories

Preset Browser

Create a Preset



Tone Compression

Global Adjustments

HDR Method

U Point powered  
Control Points

Loupe & Histogram

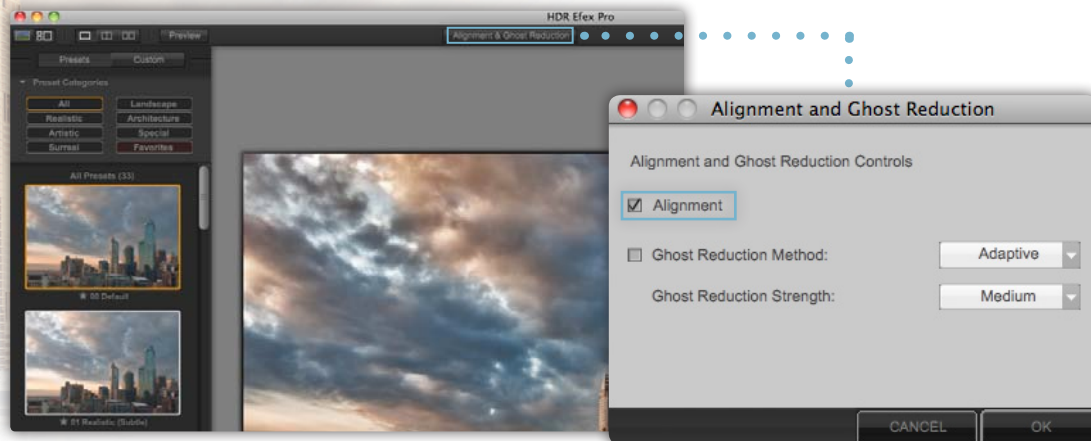
## HDR Efex Pro will automatically align and merge the image series and display the HDR image

To access the Alignment and Ghost Reduction controls click on the **Alignment & Ghost Reduction** button in the top bar of the application.

### Alignment:

When the Alignment check box is selected, HDR Efex Pro will automatically align and merge your exposure series.

In cases where you have aligned your images in another application or you are confident that your images were shot in a consistent state, un-checking alignment will disable this function.



## Ghost Reduction

Ghost artifacts are typically created by moving objects in a scene such as people, clouds, trees, or water, that are captured throughout the image series. When possible, it is best to avoid moving objects when shooting HDR images.

HDR Efex Pro has advanced Ghost Reduction tools that automatically detect moving objects and remove them from the scene.

### Ghost Reduction Method:

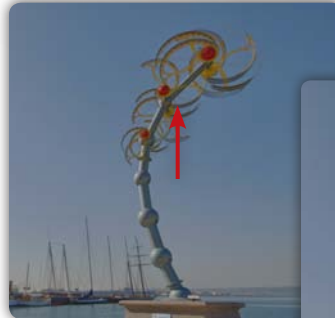
Global is best used in a scene where moving objects are present and appear twice in the scene, for example, moving people and cars. Global tries to produce a consistent scene where every object that was moving during capture only appears once in the final image.

Adaptive is best used for small movements of small objects, like tree leaves, birds, people or cars moving in the distance.

### Ghost Reduction Strength:

It is recommended to start with the Ghost Reduction method that is appropriate for the image series with Medium setting and review the image. If there are still moving elements remaining, try using the High setting.

In some rare situations, the Low strength option may be needed in order to reduce unwanted artifacts created by the Ghost Reduction algorithm. Alternatively, if unwanted artifacts are visible, try using the other Ghost Reduction method.

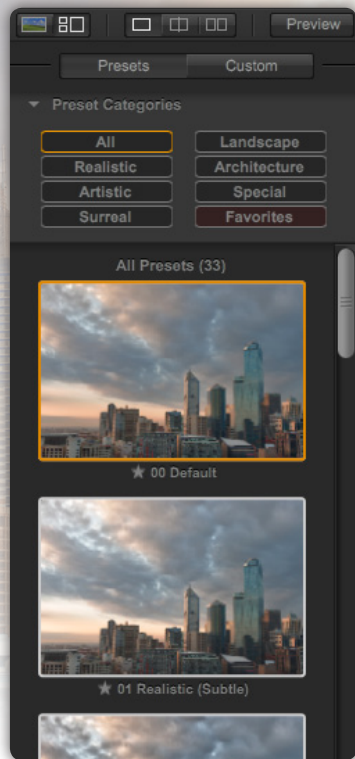


Ghost Reduction: OFF



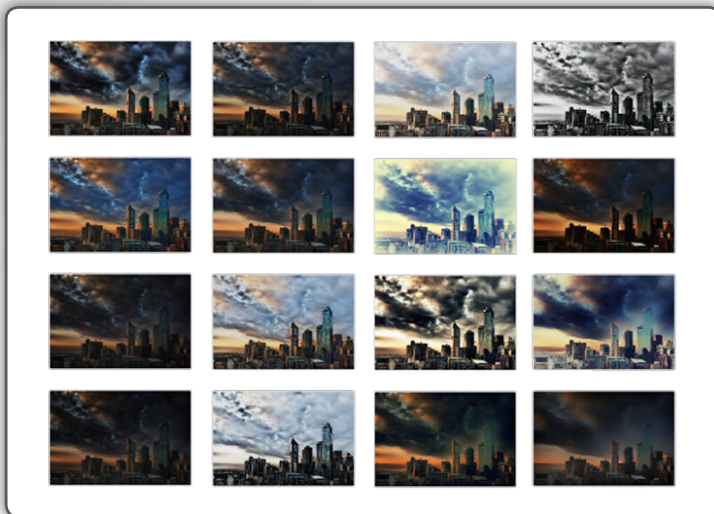
Ghost Reduction: ON - Global, High





## Choose your desired style from the Preset Browser

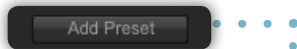
The Preset Browser acts as a starting point for your editing experience. Presets have been categorized based on different styles of HDR photography. Start by selecting a category that fits your image series. Next, select from one of the over 30 presets that will help guide your image editing.



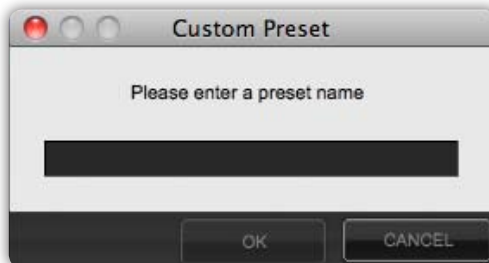
## It's fast and easy to create your own Custom Preset

After you have fine-tuned your image and have created a style that you would like to save for future images, follow these simple steps to create your own Custom Presets.

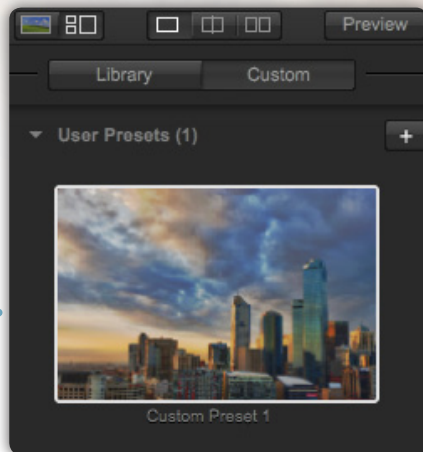
First, click on the **Add Preset** button at the bottom of the Preset Browser



Enter a name for your preset and click OK



To view your Custom Presets click on the **Custom** button at the top of the Preset Browser





## Perform global adjustments to balance detail and tonality

### Tone Compression:

- The Tone Compression slider increases or decreases the Dynamic Range of the image.
- Moving this slider to the right compresses the tonality of the image, lightening dark values
  - and darkening bright values. This is the main HDR effect, allowing bright scenes to be
  - compressed leaving a full range of tonality and color.



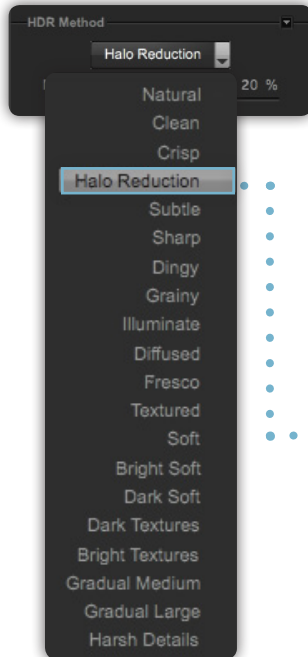
Tone Compression -100%



Tone Compression 50%

## Make advanced tonality and detail adjustments with the HDR Method

HDR Method allows you unlimited control of your image by providing access to the core algorithms only found in HDR Efex Pro. To select an HDR Method, choose the desired option from the drop down and fine tune by increasing or decreasing the Method Strength slider.

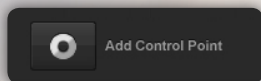


Halo Reduction 0%



Halo Reduction 20%

## Use patented U Point Technology to selectively edit your photo



The control points within HDR Efex Pro enables powerful selective control without the need to create complicated masks or selections.

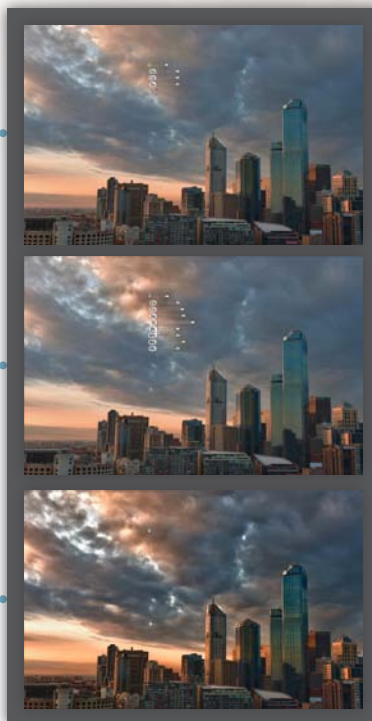
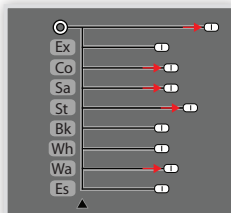
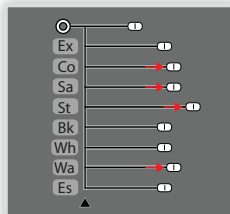
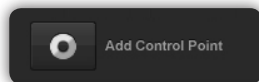
Control points work by identifying unique color, tonality, and texture of the object they are placed upon. Each control point communicates with every other control point in the image to ensure a precise and natural selection.



Before



After



First a control point was added to the clouds by clicking on the Add Control Point button and then clicking on the sunset tone in the clouds.

Next, the Contrast slider was increased slightly and the Structure slider was increased to 80%. The Saturation and Warmth sliders were also slightly increased to 30%.

Finally, the Size slider was increased to cover the entire sky.



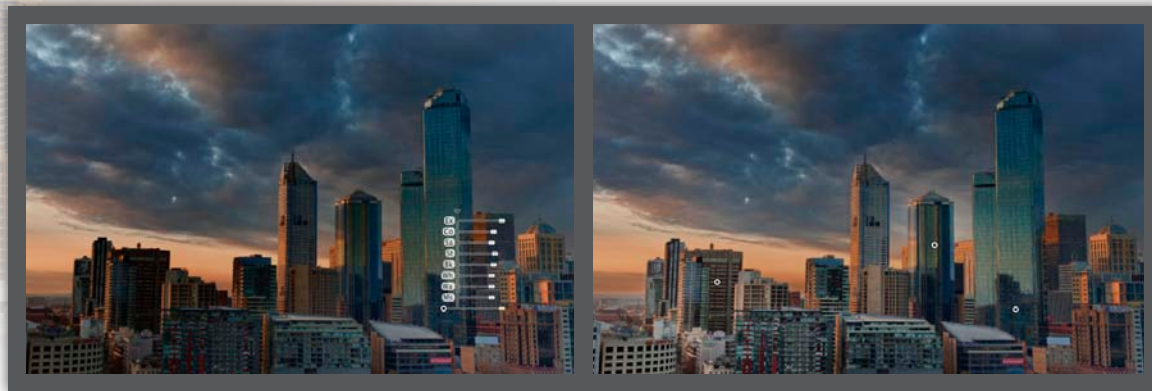
## Use patented U Point Technology to selectively brighten your image

One great advantage to using U Point technology is that you are able to selectively adjust the tonality within areas of your image, with full access to the entire range of color and tonality found in the 32-bit per channel image.

First, a control point was added to the dark areas by clicking on the Add Control Point button and then clicking on the dark area of the building.

Next, the Exposure slider was increased slightly to +1EV. Also, to maintain the detail areas several minor adjustments were made including: Contrast +5%, Structure +10% and Blacks +5% and the Size slider was increased as well.

Finally, the control point was duplicated (Alt/Option+Drag) and moved to other areas of the image where shadow adjustments also were necessary.



Before

After

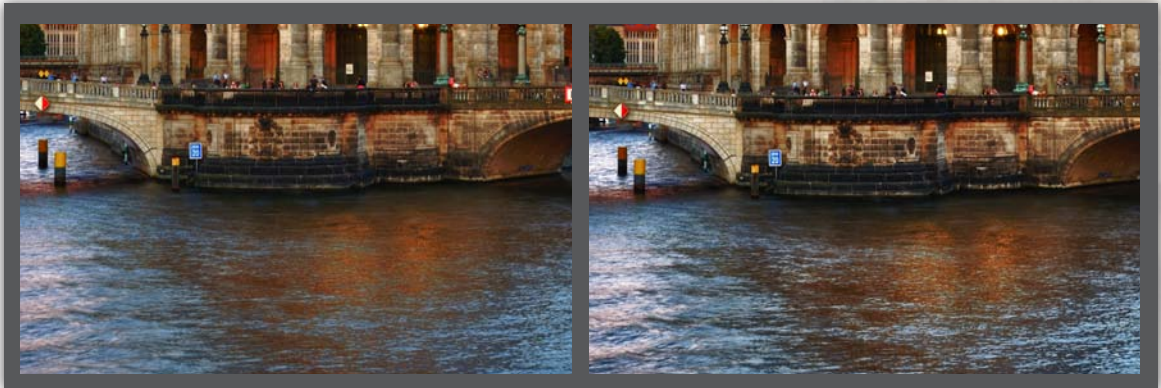
## Selectively adjust details with U Point technology

Control points enable you to selectively add local detail to your image using the Structure slider. In this example, the stone work and water in this image were enhanced using control points.

First, a control point was added to the museum by clicking on the Add Control Point button and then clicking on the area where you would like more detail.

Second, the Structure slider was increased to 80%, Contrast to 25%, Blacks to 5%, and the Size slider was increased to cover the entire building.

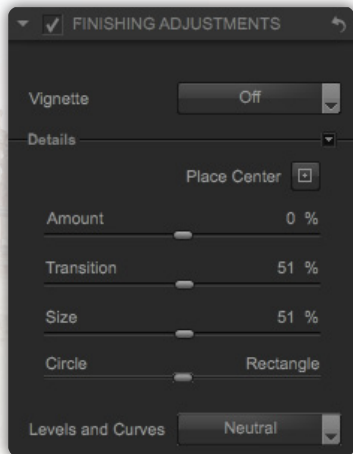
Finally, the Control Point was duplicated (Alt/Option+Drag) and placed on the water in the foreground and the wall on the right side of the image to add additional detail to those areas.



Before

After



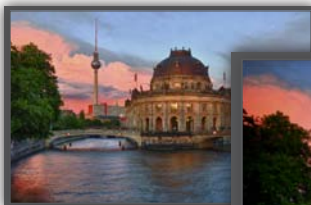


## Vignette

Adding a Vignette to your image creates a nice finishing effect by directing the viewer's eye and adding depth to the image.

### Vignette Presets:

Select from one of the included Vignette Presets to add that effect to your image.



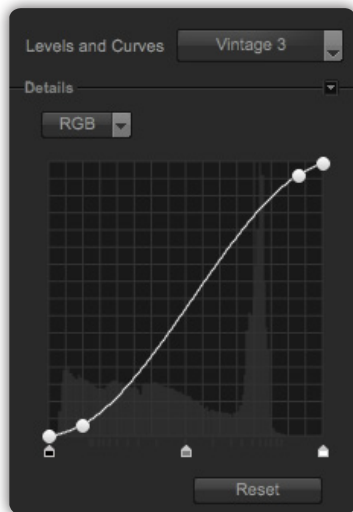
Vignette Off



Vignette Preset: Lens 4

### Create your own vignette:

First place the center of your vignette by clicking on the Place Center button and then clicking on your main image where you want the center of the vignette to be located. Fine-tune the Amount, Transition, Size and Shape to create your desired effect.

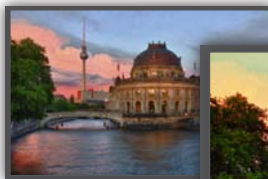


## Levels and Curves

The Levels and Curves adjustment provides more advanced control over tonality and contrast in the image, with the ability to adjust different color channels independently, all while working with the 32-bit per channel image.

### Levels and Curves Presets:

A number of Levels and Curves presets have been created for you to choose from. Selecting one of the options from the drop down menu will apply that effect to the image.



Curves Off



Curves Preset: Vintage 3

### Manually adjust your curve:

To create a custom curve, click on the details twirler within the Levels and Curves sub-section of the Finishing Adjustments section. Next click on the curve to add a point and move that point to affect the tonality of the image. Typically, two points are added, one at the top and one at the bottom, and then adjusted to create the typical photographic S-Curve.



### Choosing the best HDR scene

The best HDR scenes contain very strong contrast or a wide range of tonalities from the shadows to the highlights. These situations are when HDR is most beneficial. The most common scenes include architectural, landscape, and night scenes.

### Essential Tools for HDR Photography

#### Camera:

A Digital SLR with Auto Exposure Bracketing is recommended but not required. A camera with manual exposure capabilities will also work.

#### Tripod:

A steady tripod is a highly recommended. It is important that your camera remains still and in the same position for each of the multiple exposures in order to properly align stationary objects in your image.

*TIP: Hand Held Shooting - In situations where you do not have a tripod available ensure your camera is as stable as possible. Try to set your camera on a hard surface, fence railing, automobile hood, or lean up against a building or tree to help stabilize the camera.*

## Camera Setup

### Mount Camera on Tripod

The best results will be achieved if the camera is steady and does not move during the exposure series.

*TIP: A cable release or remote control camera release will limit camera shake, optimizing your image in the combined exposure(s) and minimize any potential alignment problems during the edit process.*

### Camera Settings

- Switch settings to manual such as white balance, flash, autofocus etc.
- Set camera in Auto Exposure Bracketing (A.E.B.) mode
  - a. Choose number of exposures in the series.
    - b. Typically a series of 3 exposures (-2...0...+2) is sufficient.
- Shoot in Aperture Priority mode. Aperture Priority mode ensures that the depth of field remains consistent throughout the entire exposure series.
- Turn on Continuous Shooting Mode for fastest shooting.
- Set the ISO to as low a setting as possible to help control noise.

## Contact and Support

### United States

Contact Nik Software, Inc. by phone at  
(619) 725-3150 Monday - Friday from 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM (PST)  
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- Receive download access for the lifetime of the product
- Protect yourself in case you lose your product key

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[www.niksoftware.com/register](http://www.niksoftware.com/register)

Please have your product key available at the time you register

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Protected by one or more US Pats. 6,728,421; 6,865,300; 7,031,547; 7,602,968; 7,602,991 and other patents pending.



# Keyboard Shortcuts

## INTERFACE:

	WINDOWS	MACINTOSH
Undo	Ctrl + Z	Cmd + Z
Redo	Ctrl + Y	Cmd + Y
Full Screen	F	F
Preview	P	P
Show / Hide Control Palettes	Tab	Tab
Apply Filter	Enter	Return
Cancel Filter	Esc	Esc
Zoom	Spacebar	Spacebar

## CONTROL POINTS:

	WINDOWS	MACINTOSH
Add Control Point	Ctrl + Shift + A	Cmd + Shift + A
Delete Control Point	Delete	Delete
Duplicate Control Point	Ctrl + D Alt + Drag Ctrl + C (to copy) Ctrl + V (to paste)	Cmd + D Option + Drag Cmd + C (to copy) Cmd + V (to paste)
Expand / Collapse Control Point	E	E
Group Control Points	Ctrl+ G	Cmd + G
Ungroup Control Points	Ctrl+ Shift + G	Cmd + Shift + G