SHADOWS OR BLACKS

Open the detail. Keep an anchor.

Shadow visibility and black depth can work together. Lifting every dark tone equally often weakens separation.

01	**Need**	Name the information that needs to become readable. Leave unrelated dark areas alone unless they interfere with the image.
02	**Shadow**	Lift shadows gradually while watching noise, color and local depth. Stop when the needed detail becomes legible.
03	**Black**	Check whether the photograph still has a convincing dark anchor. Avoid crushing important texture just to regain punch.
04	**Local**	If only one area needs help, use a local correction rather than lifting every shadow in the frame.
05	**Compare**	Return to the whole image. The subject should read more clearly without making the night or interior feel evenly lit.

Worked example

In a city night frame, a dark foreground may need just enough detail to establish the waterfront. Opening the sky and every building shadow as well can flatten the light hierarchy that made the scene work.

Keep in mind

Some images intentionally have few deep blacks. Judge the intended tonal character rather than forcing a full-range histogram.

Your decision

Detail needed

shadow lift

dark anchor

local alternative

depth after

Adapted from the PhotoMind source manuscript, section 6.3, pp. 81-84. Examples and worksheet are editorial applications.