Contrast and Exposure

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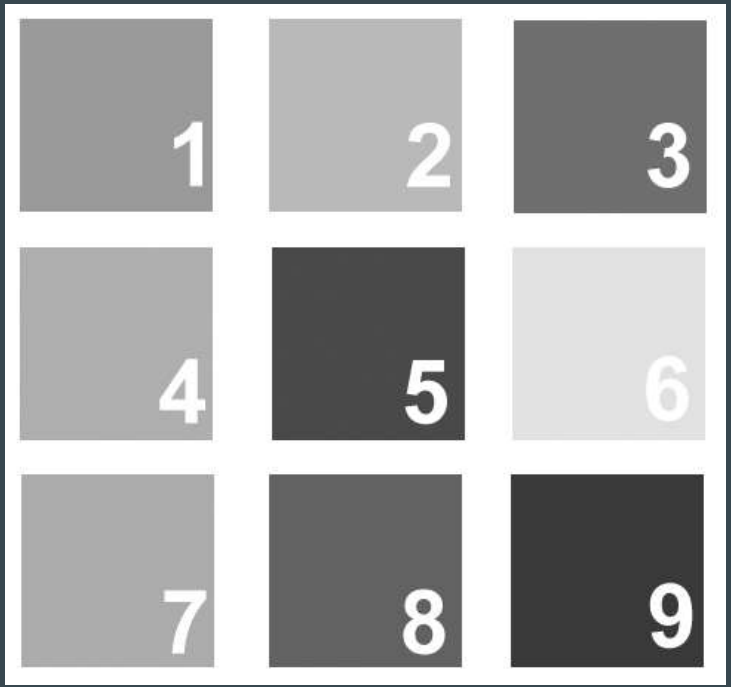
From Color to Black & White

While these changes from color to black & white aren't exactly how your camera's sensor would translate them, you can get the idea of how very different colors can produce similar tones and values in black & white.

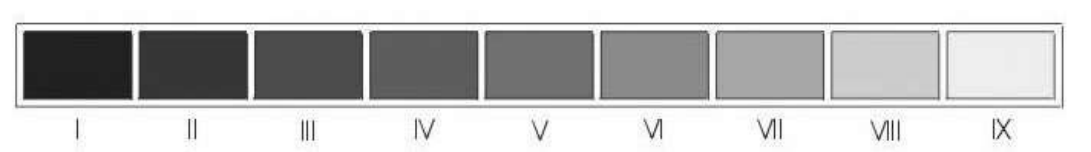


Value in Photography

All values, from deepest black to perfect white, and all the greys in between, should be present in your negatives (if using film), computer files (if using digital) and prints.

With very few exceptions, all of the following tones should be present in your photographs. The tones do not have to be evenly represented,but each one should appear somewhere in your image.

One reason you want all of the tones is because the light greys give you detail in your highlights, and the dark greys give you detail in your shadows.



"V" is equal to 18% grey, the tone that light meters use to determine the correct shutter speed and aperture f-stop combination.

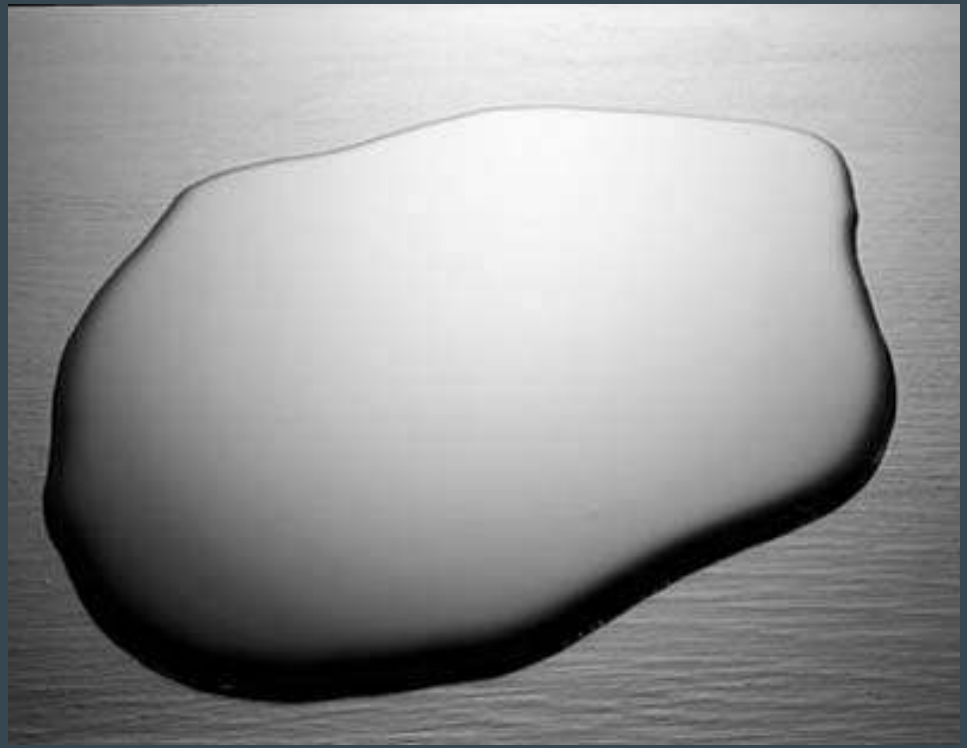
This scale is part of the ZONE SYSTEM.

Here are images with a full range of tones

Dave Anderson

Janet Ingram

David Goldes



An exception to the rule

Claudio Cambon

Exposure and Contrast in an Image

Too dark an image loses detail in the shadows



Exposure and Contrast in an Image

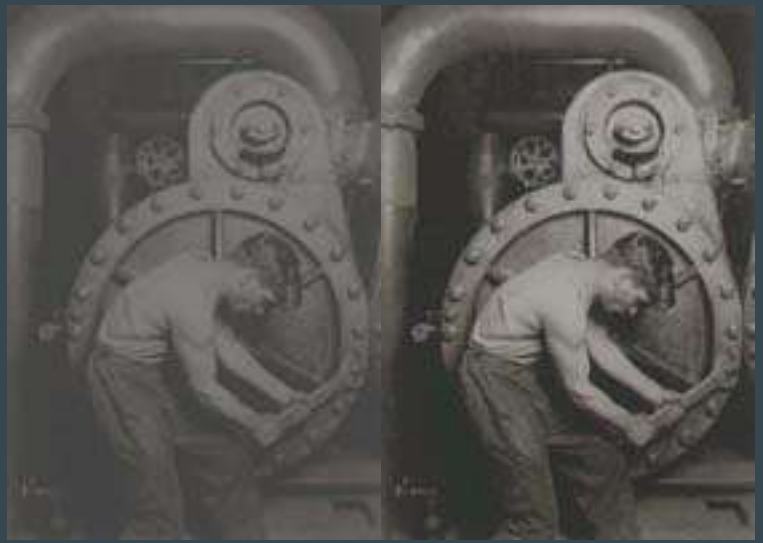
Too light an image loses detail in the highlights



Proper Exposure

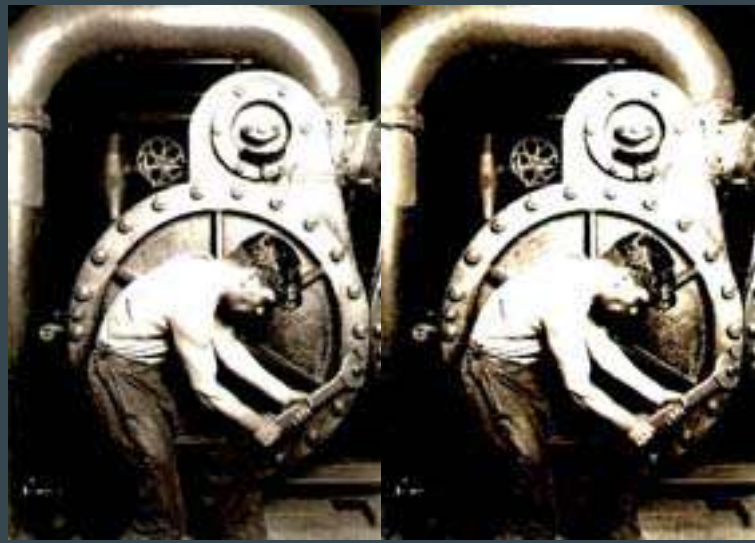
The proper exposure has details in the highlights and in the shadows, with a full range of tones in the middle.

Images without the full range of tones



Mostly middle grays,
lacking whites and blacks

Correct
Exposure
Full range of tones



Mostly whites and blacks,
lacking middle grays