

# Taking Lightroom on the Road

*Best Practices for Traveling Photographers*

Mark Fitzgerald

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You can press and hold your **space bar** at any time to temporarily unmute your microphone to make comments and/or ask questions.

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Lightroom is an intuitive program, but that doesn't mean it's easy to use. Small mistakes can lead to major headaches. If you need help sorting out your Lightroom catalog, I can help with live online support.

  
**Online Classes**  
Live online classes that enable you to learn from home while still being able to ask questions. I offer a wide range of Lightroom and Photoshop classes designed to help photographers improve their workflows.

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## *Today's Agenda*

1. Basic Concepts
2. Gear and Accessories
3. Backup Strategies
4. Traveling with a Laptop
5. Traveling without a Laptop

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# ***Basic Concepts***

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9

## ***3 Versions of Lightroom***

- ✓ **Lightroom Classic (LrC):** The desktop, full-featured version of Lightroom.
- ✓ **Lightroom (Lr):** Desktop-based web version. Photos are typically stored in Adobe Creative Cloud, though this can be changed. This version's user interface is very similar to the mobile version.
- ✓ **Lightroom mobile (LrM):** Lightroom for tablets and phones. Has the ability to synchronize with LrC. Synchronizes automatically with Lr.

 *Learn more about syncing LrC and LrM:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4tzpECmWhw>

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10

## *Lightroom Classic's Catalog*

- ✓ Lightroom Classic uses a catalog. You can have LrC installed on two computers (desktop and laptop) but each **has its own catalog**.
- ✓ If you have a **desktop at home** that has your main LrC catalog and you travel with a laptop, you will need to import to the laptop's catalog while traveling and then merge your travel catalog with your main catalog when you return home. (More on this later.)
- ✓ **Lightroom mobile** also uses a catalog, though it's not as obvious. This catalog can be shared by up to 4 mobile devices and LrC.
- ✓ When you import photos directly to Lightroom mobile, photos are **also copied to Adobe Creative Cloud (ACC)**. If your main LrC catalog at home is synchronized with your mobile catalog, those photos can be automatically downloaded to your home catalog.

 You can view your photos on ACC by logging into <https://lightroom.adobe.com>.

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11

## *Traveling Without a Laptop*

- ✓ Some people need or prefer to travel without a laptop. That's okay because many of today's mobile devices are perfect travel companions for Lightroom users.
- ✓ **Tablet:** This is a good option because you still have sufficiently sized screen for viewing and editing. iPad and Chromebook need to run the mobile version of Lightroom.
- ✓ **Phone:** You can also have Lightroom mobile on your phone and sync it with your main, home catalog. It has the same features of the tablet version, though the user interface is a bit different.
- ✓ Photo migration to your main, home catalog can happen automatically, though that may not be the best choice due to storage considerations in ACC and your mobile device.

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12

## *Adobe Creative Cloud's Role*

- ✓ Adobe Creative Cloud (ACC) functions as the connection between desktop and mobile devices to **synchronize uploads and develop settings** across all platforms.
  - **Photos in LrC** can be shared to mobile devices.
  - Photos captured with **mobile device camera** can be automatically copied to desktop LrC catalog.
  - Photos **imported to tablet** directly from camera card are copied to desktop computer and LrC catalog.
  - Edits and changes are universally applied!

13

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## *Monitor Your System*

- ✓ When traveling **make sure to check-in** on your photos regularly. I try to import and evaluate my photos daily when I'm on the road. This gives me the ability to make sure everything is okay.
  - Evaluate exposure
  - Zoom in to check focus
- ✓ **Check-in on your backups** to make sure they are functioning properly and your photos are being backed up.
  - Local drives
  - Cloud Backups

14

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# ***Gear and Accessories***

## ***Card Readers & Hubs***

- ✓ **A good card reader is a necessity.** Some laptops and tablets have integrated SD card readers. If yours doesn't, get one that is fast and good quality.
- ✓ **If you plan to travel with mobile devices only,** a decent hub may be necessary to copy files from media cards to an external drive for backup purposes. Some of these hubs have integrated SD card readers.
- ✓ **Make sure all plugs and adapters** match your needs.
- ✓ **If you are using USB C** on your laptop or tablet, bring along at least one USB to USB C adapter even if you don't think you will need one.

## *Other Gear*

- ✓ **Accessory Organizer Bag:** It's a good idea to organize all your cables, adapters and other small gear into one bag.  
<https://procase.com/collections/gadget-tech-organizers>
- ✓ **Personal Router:** Public WiFi at a hotel, coffeeshop, or other public place can be a big security problem. Consider purchasing a travel router so you can setup your own, private WiFi network. This is similar to what I use. <https://www.glinet.com/products/gl-mt300n-v2/>
  - **Be sure to test the setup** of your personal router before leaving because initial setup can be a bit tricky.
- ✓ **Passwords:** It's extremely frustrating to be on the road and need a password that you can't remember. Be sure you have access to any passwords you may need. Make sure they work before you leave.

## *Test Everything Before You Leave!*

- ✓ **Make sure everything is working properly.** Test your import and backup systems, especially if you are using anything that is new. (I have had brand new camera cards fail and I've seen new card readers malfunction.)
- ✓ **Make sure you have sufficient storage space** on drives and/or in the Cloud.
- ✓ **Format cards** before you leave. It can be annoying to begin shooting something new on a card that has prior photos on it.
- ✓ **If you are using adapters,** be sure they work because adapters are not all created equally.
  - ☞ *Also be aware that some adapters only support charging and do not support data transfer.*

## *Power Requirements*

- ✓ **What kind of power will be available?** If you are traveling to another country, be sure to have appropriate power adapters.
- ✓ If you travel a lot, consider purchasing a **separate laptop power** charger to keep in your travel kit.
- ✓ If you are planning to use a mobile device and an external drive, it's a very good idea to purchase a **high-power charger**. Standard chargers often don't have enough power for external drives and/or hubs. I purchased a 30-watt charger that works like a charm.  
[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07TWCMYL1/ref=ppx\\_yo\\_dt\\_b\\_asin\\_title\\_o06\\_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07TWCMYL1/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o06_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1)
  - You can buy a different cable if you need to use this charger with Lightning or micro USB connections. If you are using Lightning, make sure the cable is **Apple MFi Certified**.

# ***Backup Strategies***

## *Where Are You Backing Up To?*

- ✓ Backing up your work on the road is just as important as backing up at home. Make sure **you have a bulletproof system** to avoid potential disasters
- ✓ **Hard Drive:** This is the most common backup method for the traveling photographer.
- ✓ **Cloud:** Some people use a cloud service, such as Amazon or Dropbox to copy files when traveling. This system may not work if you encounter slow or unavailable WiFi signals.
- ✓ **Media Cards:** Many photographers refrain from formatting media cards while on the road as a backup. This is an okay system but I personally prefer to not depend on it because I may need to format a card. If it's my only backup I won't be able to.
  - ✍️ *Try to store and carry backups in a different bag than laptop/mobile device in case of loss or theft.*

## *Hard Drives*

- ✓ **Solid State Drives (SSD)** are preferred because they don't have moving parts and tend to be smaller and faster than traditional HDD (spinning drives). A large capacity thumb drive is an alternative as well.
- ✓ **WiFi hard drives** enable you to use a special WiFi network to transfer files wirelessly.
  - These are great for someone who is traveling light.
  - Some have a built-in card reader that will automatically import photos when a card is inserted.
  - Some use apps that enable you to view the photos on a mobile device after they are copied to the drive.
- ✓ **Proper formatting:** Most drives will work with Windows out of the box. If you are an Apple user and it's a new drive, make sure to format it correctly before adding anything. Formats supported by iOS 14: ExFAT, FAT32, HFS+, APFS.

## *WiFi Hard Drives*

**My Passport Wireless Pro Portable External Hard Drive, Wifi USB 3.0**

[https://www.amazon.com/Passport-Wireless-Portable-External-Drive/dp/B01F5LVTO4/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=sll1&tag=storage-hardware-20&linkId=bb800654232150cc18c1bca1a4cb09b4&language=en\\_US](https://www.amazon.com/Passport-Wireless-Portable-External-Drive/dp/B01F5LVTO4/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&linkCode=sll1&tag=storage-hardware-20&linkId=bb800654232150cc18c1bca1a4cb09b4&language=en_US)

**SSK Drive:** [https://www.amazon.com/SSK-Personal-External-Wireless-Auto-Backup/dp/B081CD34DP/ref=sr\\_1\\_8?dchild=1&keywords=memory+card+backup+devices&qid=1620762706&s=electronics&sr=1-8](https://www.amazon.com/SSK-Personal-External-Wireless-Auto-Backup/dp/B081CD34DP/ref=sr_1_8?dchild=1&keywords=memory+card+backup+devices&qid=1620762706&s=electronics&sr=1-8)

**Gnarbox 2.0 SSD:** [https://www.amazon.com/GNARBOX-2-0-SSD-512GB-Rugged/dp/B07L42SLW7/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?dchild=1&keywords=gnarbox%2Brugged%2Bbackup%2Bdevice&qid=1591406947&sr=8-2&linkCode=l11&tag=httpwwwpho006-20&linkId=e4f2bc683e54022408749f7adce6b169&language=en\\_US&th=1](https://www.amazon.com/GNARBOX-2-0-SSD-512GB-Rugged/dp/B07L42SLW7/ref=as_li_ss_tl?dchild=1&keywords=gnarbox%2Brugged%2Bbackup%2Bdevice&qid=1591406947&sr=8-2&linkCode=l11&tag=httpwwwpho006-20&linkId=e4f2bc683e54022408749f7adce6b169&language=en_US&th=1)

 *May not be able to see raw files with drive's preview app.*

## *Cloud Backup*

- ✓ Backing up to a cloud account has the **advantage of less gear**. But it can be tricky in some cases when access and speed are unreliable or nonexistent.
- ✓ **Adobe Creative Cloud:** If you are importing to Lr (web) or LrM, files are copied to the Adobe Creative Cloud. Be aware that it is easy to fill this up if you have the basic 20GB of storage.
- ✓ **Other:** Dropbox, Amazon, Google and other companies sell storage space as well. Just be certain you'll have enough space to create a full backup of your photos.
- ✓ Even if you plan to backup to the cloud, **it's a good idea** to bring along a small hard drive or thumb drive in case you have connectivity issues.

# ***Traveling with a Laptop***

## ***Before the Trip***

- ✓ If your laptop **already has a LrC catalog**, clean it up if needed. Some people make a separate catalog for the trip, but that isn't really necessary.
- ✓ Setup the option in LrC preferences to create **XMP Sidecar files** for your raw files. (See next slide)
- ✓ Create a **travel keyword list**. (See slide #28)
- ✓ Is this your synced catalog? If so, check to see if syncing with ACC is working properly.
- ✓ Check to see **how much storage** space you have available in case you need to do some clean-up before you leave.
- ✓ **If you are backing up your travel laptop at home**, make a new backup before you go in case something happens to the laptop while traveling.

## *Setting Up XMP Sidecar Files*

- ✓ By default, metadata (including labels, keywords, and develop adjustments) is stored in a **central database**.
- ✓ It's better to have metadata for raw files stored in an **XMP sidecar file** that stays with the parent file, (unless you use the DNG format for raw files).
- ✓ To activate this feature choose:
  - **Mac:** *Lightroom > Catalog Settings > Metadata > Automatically Write Changes to XMP*
  - **PC:** *Edit > Catalog Settings > Metadata > Automatically Write Changes to XMP*

## *Create a Travel Keyword List in LRC*

- ✓ It's quite handy to prepare a custom keyword set before you travel to facilitate adding keywords while traveling. This is most useful for location keywords for the places you plan to visit.
  1. In Lightroom Classic go to the **Keywording panel**.
  2. **Open the Keyword Set menu** and choose Edit Set at the bottom of the list.
  3. **Edit the keywords** to add your custom keywords.
  4. **Choose Save Current Settings As New Preset** from the Preset menu at the top of the Edit Keyword Set dialog and give your custom keyword set a useful name, such as Travel Keywords.
- ✓ Use this keyword set while on your trip. When you are ready for your next trip, edit the keyword set for that trip.
  - 🔍 *If you don't see the Keyword Set subpanel, click the disclosure tringle on the right side of the panel.*

## *Importing*

- ✓ Import photos **on a regular basis**. I prefer daily when on a photo trip so I can keep an eye on my results and be aware of any problems.
- ✓ Make sure your **backup drive is connected** before you import if you plan to use LrC's "Make a Second Copy To" feature during import. (See next slide.)
- ✓ **Import and organize** your photos using your usual method. I prefer to have each day's import in a dated folder for the day they were shot.
- ✓ **If you are backing up to the cloud**, make sure to leave your computer on long enough to facilitate the transfer.

## *LrC Backing Up During Import*

- ✓ LrC lets you create a backup of your photos as you import them.
  1. Go to the **File Handling panel** at the top of the Import dialog and select Make a Second Copy To.
  2. Click the small triangle to the right of **Make a Second Copy To** to open a location dialog.
  3. **Click Choose Folder** to navigate to the external drive you are backing up to.
  4. **LrC will create dated folders** on the backup drive for each of your imports.
- ✓ These backups can be deleted after you get home and make sure your travel catalog is safely merged with your home catalog.

## *Editing on the Road*

- ✓ Because you will be merging your travel catalog with your primary catalog at home, **you are free to** keyword and organize, and develop photos on your travel catalog.
- ✓ **Add keywords** while they are fresh in your mind. You'll thank yourself when you get home.
- ✓ This is also a **good opportunity to delete** photos you know you don't want. If you aren't sure, wait till you get home.
- ✓ Also look for photos you may **want to try reshooting** before you leave your location.

## *Merging Your Travel Catalog at Home*

- ✓ There are three main steps to merging a travel catalog with your main LRC catalog.
  1. **Export a temporary catalog** of your travel photos on the laptop using an external drive.
  2. Connect the external drive to the desktop and **import the temporary catalog** to your main Lightroom Classic catalog.
  3. Do **additional organization** of the travel folders on your desktop to make sure they are where you want them. This is almost always necessary.

 *Here's a blog I wrote to step you through the process:*  
<https://www.ddroom.com/merging-lrc-catalogs/>

## **Final Clean Up**

- ✓ **If your phone was synchronized** with your home computer and you were using its camera, check to see if there are any mobile photos you want to add to the trip folder(s) in your LrC catalog.
- ✓ **Check main system backups** before deleting travel catalog and any travel backups. You can always leave them in place until you prepare for your next trip.
- ✓ **Format your media cards** so they are ready for use again.

## ***Traveling w/out a Laptop***

## **How LR Mobile Syncing Works**

- ✓ When you import photos directly to LrM on a mobile device **that is synchronized** with your desktop LrC, your photos are:
  - Copied from the camera card to the mobile device.
  - Copied to your account at ACC.
  - Downloaded to your desktop LrC catalog.
- ✓ **When you are not synchronized** with desktop LrC, your photos are:
  - Copied from the camera card to the mobile device.
  - Copied to your account at ACC.
- ✓ When you add star & flag ratings and edit photos, those ratings and edits are synced across all devices and desktop catalog (if synced).
  - 👉 *Keywords are not synced between LrC and LrM. 😞*
  - 👉 *Necessary to open LrM on the device to help it sync.*

## **Setting Up Lightroom**

- ✓ **Before the trip:**
  - Use LrC preferences to designate where mobile photos will be stored in your LrC catalog. (See next slide)
  - Turn on syncing on your main LrC catalog after setting up storage location. (Click the cloud icon at the top-right and choose Start Syncing.)
  - Download the **Lightroom mobile app** on your mobile device(s). You are allowed to use it on up to 4 mobile devices.
- ✓ **After the trip:** After all photos are accounted for, you may want to turn off syncing – if you don't want automatic importing of mobile phone photos.

## *Setup Lightroom Classic Preferences*

- ✓ **Open Preferences:** *Lightroom Classic > Preferences* (Mac), *Edit > Preferences* (Win) and select Lightroom Sync.
- ✓ **Specify location** for Lightroom's Synced images: Use this to determine where synced images are stored on the desktop.
- ✓ **Use subfolders** formatted by capture date to segment photos into subfolders. If you choose the option that looks like this 2020/2019-07-04, dated subfolders are added inside of a year folder.

## *Mobile Syncing Tips*

- ✓ You can leave device **syncing on or turn it off** while you travel.
  - **Leaving it on** allows uploading to ACC while you travel. If you are importing to a device that is cellular enabled, it's a good idea to disable Use Cellular Data in the LrM Cloud Storage & Sync settings.
  - **If you disable syncing** while you travel, you will need to turn it on when you get home and then give LrM time to upload to ACC. This may take a couple of hours.
  - **Turn syncing off and on:** Tap the cloud symbol at the top-right in the Library section of LrM. Tap Pause Syncing.
- ✓ **If you shoot video** be prepared for slow uploads.
- ✓ **Collections and Albums:** LrC uses the term "Collections". LrM uses the term "Albums" for the same thing.

## **Essential Gear: USB C**

- ✓ Devices with USB C charging ports enable you to travel very light due to better power delivery from the device.
- ✓ **30 watt power charger:** Use this instead of normal device charger in order to provide the hub with plenty of power for the mobile device and external hard drive.
- ✓ **USB C hub** with power passthrough option: Plug the 30W power charger into this. (You can also use a powered hub.)
- ✓ **Card reader** if the hub doesn't have one.
- ✓ **Travel hard drive:** For backups. Solid state (SSD) is preferred due to small size and resiliency.

## **Essential Gear: Lightning and Micro USB**

- ✓ **30 watt power** charger - instead of normal device charger.
- ✓ **Lightning:** USB to Lightning adapter that has a Lightning port for charging. This provides the ability to connect a hub and supply power to the device.  
[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01F7KJDIM/ref=ppx\\_yo\\_dt\\_b\\_search\\_asin\\_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01F7KJDIM/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1)
- ✓ Travel-size USB hub with its **own power source**. (I have not seen a hub for Lightning that has passthrough power.)
- ✓ **Card reader** if the hub doesn't have one.
- ✓ **Micro USB is used with some Android Devices.** Look for a portable hub with power passthrough option, or use a powered USB hub with a Micro USB adapter.

## *Gear Links*

- ❖ **30 Watt USB C charger:**  
[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07TWCMYL1/ref=ppx\\_yo\\_dt\\_b\\_asin\\_title\\_o06\\_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07TWCMYL1/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o06_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1)
- ❖ **Anker USB C PowerExpand+ Hub with passthrough power:**  
[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07ZVKTP53/ref=ppx\\_yo\\_dt\\_b\\_asin\\_title\\_o07\\_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07ZVKTP53/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o07_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1)
- ❖ **Apple Lightning to USB Adapter:**  
[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01F7KJDIM/ref=ppx\\_yo\\_dt\\_b\\_asin\\_title\\_o02\\_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01F7KJDIM/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o02_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1)
- ❖ **Anker USB to Lightning Cable:**  
[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07H256MBK/ref=ppx\\_yo\\_dt\\_b\\_asin\\_title\\_o04\\_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07H256MBK/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o04_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1)
- ❖ **Anker 7 Port USB Data Hub 36 Watt:** [https://www.amazon.com/Anker-7-Port-Adapter-Charging-iPhone/dp/B014ZQ07NE/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?dchild=1&keywords=Roll+over+image+to+zoom+in+Anker+7-Port+USB+3.0+Data+Hub&qid=1621977369&sr=8-3](https://www.amazon.com/Anker-7-Port-Adapter-Charging-iPhone/dp/B014ZQ07NE/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=Roll+over+image+to+zoom+in+Anker+7-Port+USB+3.0+Data+Hub&qid=1621977369&sr=8-3)

## *Importing to Your Mobile Device*

1. Open Lightroom mobile and navigate to the Library. Tap the + symbol next to Albums and **create an album for the trip**. This is where you will be importing all of the trip photos.
2. **Select the album** and then tap the Import button at the bottom-right of the screen (next to the camera icon).
3. **Insert your media card** into the card reader. When you do, the Device Connected window opens. Choose Continue.
4. When the Import dialog opens, **tap the action button** at the top-right and choose Select All.
5. Tap the **Import button** at the bottom to begin the import.
6. **When copying is complete**, tap OK and disconnect the card reader/hub.

## *Importing to Your Mobile Device (2)*

- ✓ When you import directly to the tablet, photos are copied to the mobile device and uploaded to the Creative Cloud.
- ✓ **Tap the Cloud symbol** at the top-right to check on upload progress. Here you will also see versions stored on the device and in the cloud.
- ✓ **If you have limited Creative Cloud storage**, you can turn off syncing by tapping the Cloud symbol and tapping Pause Syncing.
  - ☞ *Tap the gear symbol next to Pause Syncing to check on how much space you have available on the device and in the Creative Cloud.*
- ✓ If you're using iOS and the option to select From Camera Device **is grayed-out**, change this preference:  
<https://feedback.photoshop.com/conversations/lightroom-mobile/lightroom-mobile-ios-direct-photo-import-not-working/5f5f46214b561a3d42751bb9>

## *Copying to External Drive (iOS)*

- ✓ Either before or after each import, take a moment to backup your photos to your external hard drive while the media card is still in the card reader.
  1. **Open the Files app** on the mobile device and use the sidebar to navigate to the media card. Drill down through the folders to find your photos. (Oftentimes there are in a DCIM folder.)
  2. Tap Select at the top-right and tap **Select All** at the top-left.
  3. **Tap More** at the bottom-right and choose Copy.
  4. **Use the sidebar** to navigate to your backup hard drive.
  5. Create and open a folder for the photos and then tap and hold. When the menu opens, **choose Paste**.

## *Editing and Sharing on the Go*

- ✓ **Just like traveling with a laptop**, you can edit and share photos while on the road with a mobile device.
- ✓ Lightroom Mobile **has nearly every slider and tool** that's in LrC. Take some time before your trip to familiarize yourself.
- ✓ Edits you do with LrM **will be automatically synchronized** with your home catalog if it has syncing turned on.
- ✓ However, **if you are not syncing** LrC and LrM, then your edits will not be carried over to your home LrC catalog. If that's the case it might be a good idea to limit your editing and wait till you get home.

## *Organizing Photos At Home: Syncing*

- ✓ When you get home, you have a couple of options of how to transfer your trip photos to your main LrC catalog.
  - **If you had syncing turned on** in LrM and it was completed, the photos should start to automatically download to your LrC catalog as soon as it connects to the Internet.
  - **If syncing was not complete** with LrM, give it time to complete and the photos will download to the LrC catalog automatically.
- ✓ The photos should download to **the folder you specified** in the LrC Lightroom Sync preferences. (Slide #37) You should also see them in a collection with the album name you used in LrM. It should be in a **collection set** named, From Lightroom.
- ✓ It's usually a good idea to **relocate the photos** to a more permanent location that fits your organizational structure.

## ***Organizing Photos At Home: Not Syncing***

- ✓ If you didn't sync while traveling due to ACC space limitations, you will need to import from your external travel drive or import from your camera cards.
- ✓ Unfortunately any labeling or edits you did on the mobile device will not be visible.

## ***Mobile Device Clean Up***

- ✓ **After you have confirmed** all photos from the trip are on your computer and have been backed up by your main backup system, you can delete the photos from your mobile device.
- ✓ Select and delete individual photos or remove the album entirely. Both will result in the **photos being removed** from the mobile device and from the Creative Cloud. But the photos that were copied to your desktop LrC catalog will not be deleted.

# ***Final Thoughts***