General Notes on Exporting from Lightroom for Clinics

DPI

Why use a low dpi? Great question — this trips up a lot of photographers because *dpi* (dots per inch) is one of those settings that sounds important but actually isn't for screen viewing. Let's break it down:

📺 **Screen vs. Print**

- **Screens don't use dpi**: Monitors, projectors, and Zoom calls all display images in terms of *pixels*, not inches. A 2000-pixel image will always be 2000 pixels wide on screen, regardless of whether you set it to 72 dpi, 300 dpi, or 1000 dpi.
- **Print does use dpi**: When you're preparing for physical prints, dpi matters because it determines how many pixels get packed into each inch of paper. That's where 300 dpi (or higher) is the standard for sharp prints.

🎯 **Why 72 dpi?**

- Historically, 72 dpi was the resolution of early Macintosh screens in the 1980s. It became a kind of shorthand for "screen-only" output.
- Today's monitors are much higher resolution (often 100–200+ dpi), but the dpi metadata in a file doesn't change how it looks on screen. It's just a tag.
- Setting 72 dpi is basically a way of saying: *this file is intended for screen viewing, not printing*. It keeps reviewers from accidentally trying to print it and expecting high-quality results.

Quality Setting and sRGB

Let's unpack the **Quality slider** and your choice of **sRGB**:

🖼 **Quality Setting (JPEG compression)**

- **What it does**: The Quality slider controls JPEG compression. Higher values mean less compression, larger file sizes, and slightly more detail retained.
- **100 vs. 80–90**:

    - At **100**, Lightroom uses minimal compression. File sizes can be *much* larger, but the visual difference compared to 80–90 is usually imperceptible on screen.
    - Many pros recommend **80–90** as the sweet spot: excellent visual fidelity, but smaller files that upload faster and stream more smoothly (important for Zoom or websites).
- **Why not always 100**: It's overkill for screen sharing. You're sending more data without gaining visible quality. For print, you might push higher, but for Zoom/web, 80–90 is plenty.

🌐 **Color Space (sRGB)**

- **Correct choice**: sRGB is the safest and most widely supported color space for screens and the web.
- **Why not AdobeRGB or ProPhotoRGB**:
    - Those spaces can hold more colors, but most browsers, projectors, and Zoom sessions don't interpret them correctly. You risk dull or shifted colors.
    - sRGB ensures consistency across devices — what you see is what others see.

Image Sizing and Sharpening

How do I resize for the Club's 1400x1050 requirements without distorting the image?

Our club sets a **maximum bounding box** for images: 1400 pixels wide × 1050 pixels high. That's a very common competition standard. Let's break down how Lightroom handles this and why your "Width & Height" approach works:

📐 **How Lightroom's Resize Works**

- In the **Export dialog**, if you set both a maximum width and height, Lightroom will scale the image proportionally until it fits inside that box.
- It **never distorts** the aspect ratio — it just shrinks the image until neither dimension exceeds the limits.

- Example outcomes:
    - A wide image (3:2 ratio) might export at **1400 × 933**.
    - A tall image (4:5 ratio) might export at **840 × 1050**.
    - A square image would be **1050 × 1050** (since both sides must fit inside the box).

🖼 **Why "Width & Height" Works**

- When you set both width and height limits, Lightroom interprets them as a bounding box.
- So "1400 × 1050" means: *fit the image inside this rectangle without stretching*.
- That's why you get results like 1400×900 or 800×1050 — the aspect ratio is preserved, but the image is scaled down to fit.

✅ **Best Practice for Club Submissions**

- **Resize to Fit**: "Width & Height" → 1400 × 1050.
- **Resolution (dpi)**: irrelevant for screen, but 72 is fine.
- **Quality**: 80–90 for efficient file size.
- **Color Space**: sRGB (perfect for web and projection).
- **Output Sharpening**: "Screen" (optional but helps with crispness on projectors).

The "Width & Height" method ensures every image respects the club's max dimensions without distortion.

Why the 1400x1050 club requirement?

Our club's screen is squarish, in a 4:3 ratio, so 1400x1050 fills it perfectly When you set a **maximum bounding box of 1400 × 1050**, Lightroom scales each image proportionally so neither dimension exceeds those limits. Here's how the most common aspect ratios fit:

Aspect Ratio	Native Ratio (W:H)	Resulting Dimensions	Notes

3:2 (classic DSLR)	1.5:1	1400 × 933	Width hits 1400, height scales to 933. This is the "1400×933" you often see.
4:3 (Micro Four Thirds, some compacts)	1.33:1	1400 × 1050	Both width and height max out exactly — fills the scren perfectly.
16:9 (widescreen)	1.78:1	1400 × 788	Width hits 1400, height scales down to 788. Lots of "letterbox" space compared to 1050 max.
1:1 (square)	1:1	1050 × 1050	Height maxes out at 1050, width scales to match. Doesn't reach 1400 because square.

🥏 Why uncropped images often show 1400 × 933

- Most cameras shoot natively in **3:2** (DSLRs, many mirrorless).
- When you export with the 1400 × 1050 bounding box, Lightroom scales the long side (width) to 1400, and the short side (height) lands at 933.
- Unless you crop to 4:3 or square, you'll almost always see 1400 × 933 for uncropped shots.

✅ Takeaway

- **3:2 shooters** (uncropped): expect 1400 × 933.
- **4:3 shooters**: you'll fill the box exactly at 1400 × 1050.
- **Square crops**: 1050 × 1050.
- **Widescreen crops**: 1400 × 788.