



ACO Converter v1.5 – Quick Reference



Overview

Turn a single colour swatch into a fully structured cinematic look using a **two-stage engine**: 1. **Luminosity Sculpt (Zones 0–10)** 2. **Colour Injection (Swatch + Strength)**



60-Second Workflow

1. Drop **Image**
2. Drop **.ACO Swatch File**
3. Select a **Swatch Name**
4. Adjust:
 - Exposure
 - RGB Balance
 - Filter Strength
5. Click **Bake (.CUBE)**



Core Engines (What's Really Happening)

1. Luminosity Engine (Structure)

- Converts image → brightness map (Luma)
- Maps tones into **11 Zones (0–10)**
- Smooth transitions (no banding)



Result: Clean tonal foundation (like B&W darkroom)

2. Filter Engine (Colour)

- Applies swatch using **multiplication (not overlay)**
- Colour follows brightness (not flat wash)



Result: - Shadows stay dark - Highlights stay bright - Colour feels “embedded”



3. Strength Control

- Blends between:
 - Base (clean tones)
 - Filter (colour result)

👉 Use low values for subtle looks, high for stylised



Key Controls (Fast Guide)

Control	What it Does	Safe Range
Exposure	Overall brightness/density	0.8 – 1.3
Red	Warms / pushes toward red/orange	0.9 – 1.2
Green	Balances skin / natural tones	0.9 – 1.1
Blue	Strong mood shift (use carefully)	0.8 – 1.1
Strength	Colour intensity	0.2 – 0.7



Zone Audit Ribbon (v1.5)

What it shows - 11 segments (black → white) - Live colour mapping per tonal level

How to use it - If right side is solid colour → highlights clipping - If left side is crushed → shadows too dense

👉 Aim: smooth gradient across all zones



“Try This” (30-Second Cinematic Look)

Goal: Film-style red-tinted monochrome

1. Load any landscape or street photo
2. Load Material Palette.aco
3. Select swatch: **Red 200 (4th one down)**
4. Set:
 - Exposure: **1.05**
 - Red: **1.10**
 - Green: **0.95**
 - Blue: **0.90**
 - Strength: **0.45**
5. Watch the **Zone Ribbon**:
 - Ensure highlights stay detailed
6. Click **Bake**

 **Result:** - Strong tonal depth - Controlled red atmosphere - Film-like contrast

Repeatable Workflow (Beginner → Pro)

Step 1 – Build Structure

- Start with Exposure only
- Get a clean tonal balance

Step 2 – Add Colour

- Pick swatch
- Adjust RGB slightly ($\pm 10\%$)

Step 3 – Control Strength

- Dial colour back until detail returns

Step 4 – Verify

- Check Zone Ribbon
- Avoid clipping (far right)



Step 5 – Export

- Bake as **.CUBE (33×33×33)**



Pro Tips

- Start subtle → build up
- Blue slider = strongest visual impact
- Use Reset often (safe baseline)
- Rename swatches before export



Common Mistakes

Problem	Cause	Fix
Muddy image	Too much exposure/strength	Lower both
Flat highlights	Clipping	Reduce exposure
Harsh colour	Over-adjusted RGB	Stay within $\pm 10\%$
Banding	Extreme values	Reset + rebuild



Output

- **.CUBE LUT** → for Premiere, Resolve, Photoshop
- Matches preview exactly (WYSIWYG)



Mental Model (Keep This in Mind)

Tone first → Colour second → Blend last

If it looks wrong: 👉 Fix tone before touching colour



PHOTOEDIT**HELP**

www.photoedithelp.com