Aligning color and brightness across multiple images with Normalize tool

The **Normalize** tool is perfect when you want to align images where the color and brightness of a specific subject needs to stay constant. It works great for keeping a product color persistent in the studio or editing event photography where the lighting conditions change all the time, and you need a certain part of the subject – like a wedding dress – to maintain the same white balance and exposure throughout several images. The **Normalize** tool can also be used to enter a specific target color value from a color checker chart and then conform the white balance and exposure to a patch on the color target.

The tool works by adjusting the **Exposure** slider in the **Exposure** tool as well as the **Kelvin** and **Tint** sliders in the **White Balance** tool. Keep this in mind.

The **Normalize** tool replaces the **Skin Tone** feature from the **White Balance** tool in previous versions (Capture One 11.0 and earlier). The tool is by default positioned below the **White Balance** tool in the **Color** Tool Tab.

Selecting a color target
Select the **Pick Normalize Color** cursor from either the **Normalize** tool or the cursor toolbar. You can also use the keyboard shortcut N. Then click on the subject in the image that contains the desired color and brightness.
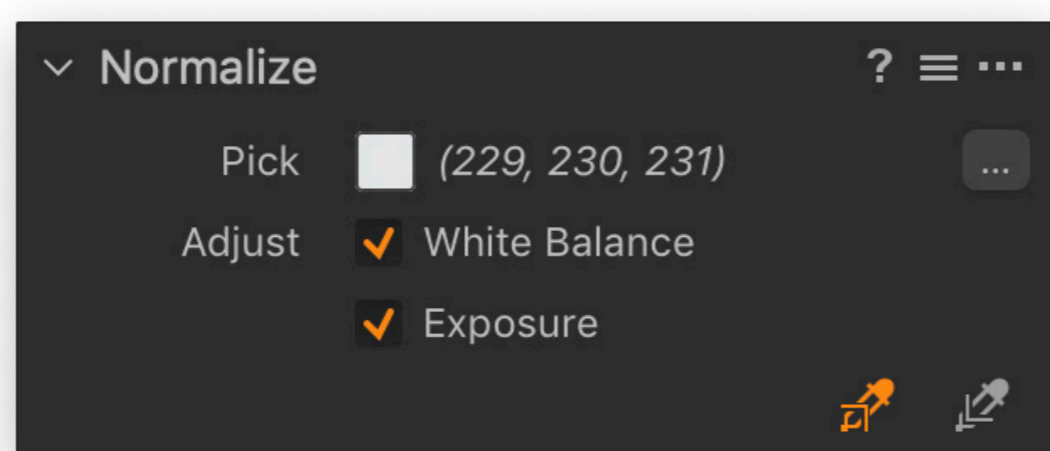

The target color as well as the red, green, and blue color values will now be shown next to **Pick**. You can click on the color patch if you want to check or tweak the values. This opens the **Color Selector** dialog box which we will cover later in this chapter.
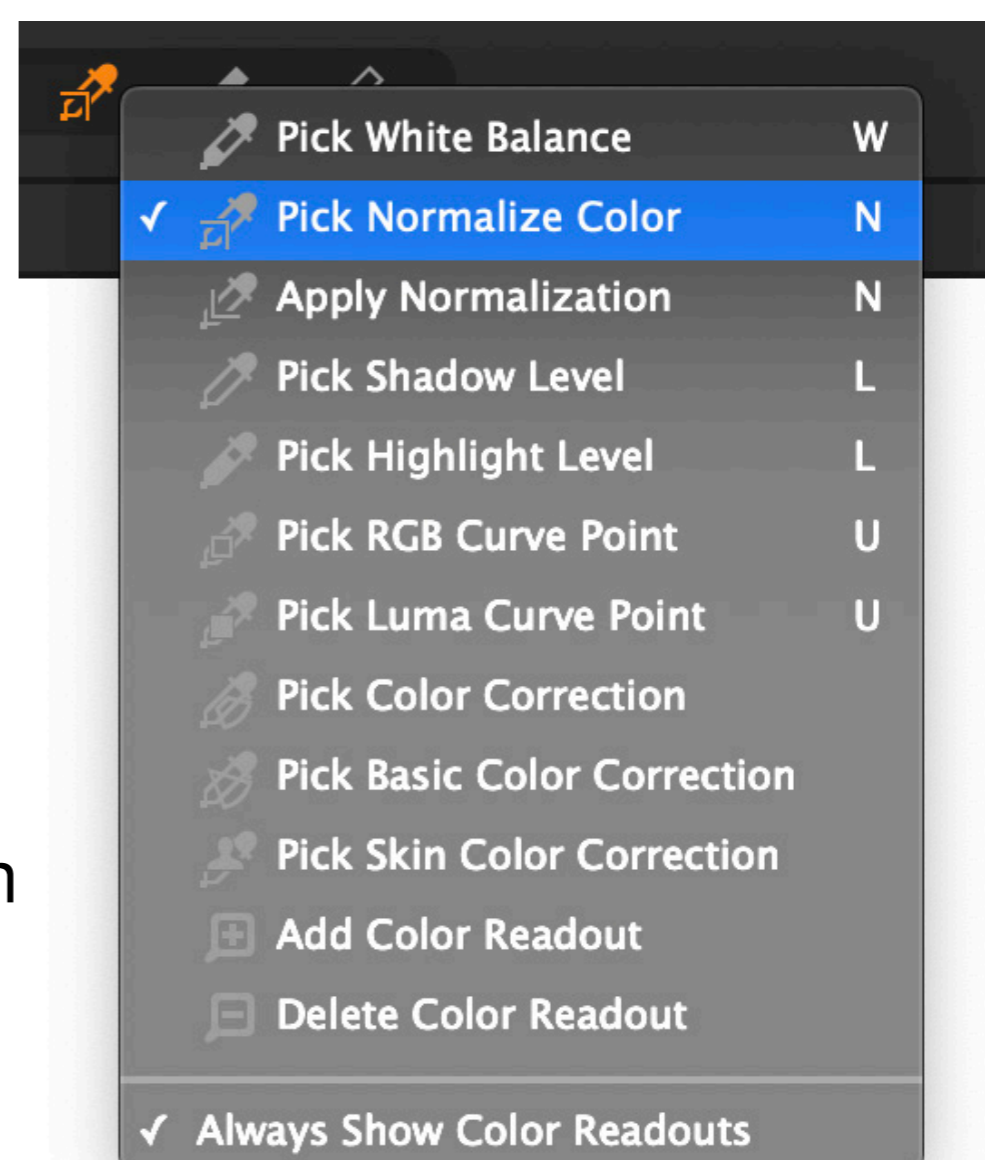
Applying a normalization target

The tool will adjust both the **White Balance** and **Exposure** from those tools by default. You can deselect either option if you only want to normalize one of them. Then select the **Apply Normalization** cursor from either the **Normalize** tool or the cursor toolbar. If the **Pick Normalize Color** cursor is already selected, you can use the keyboard shortcut Shift + N.
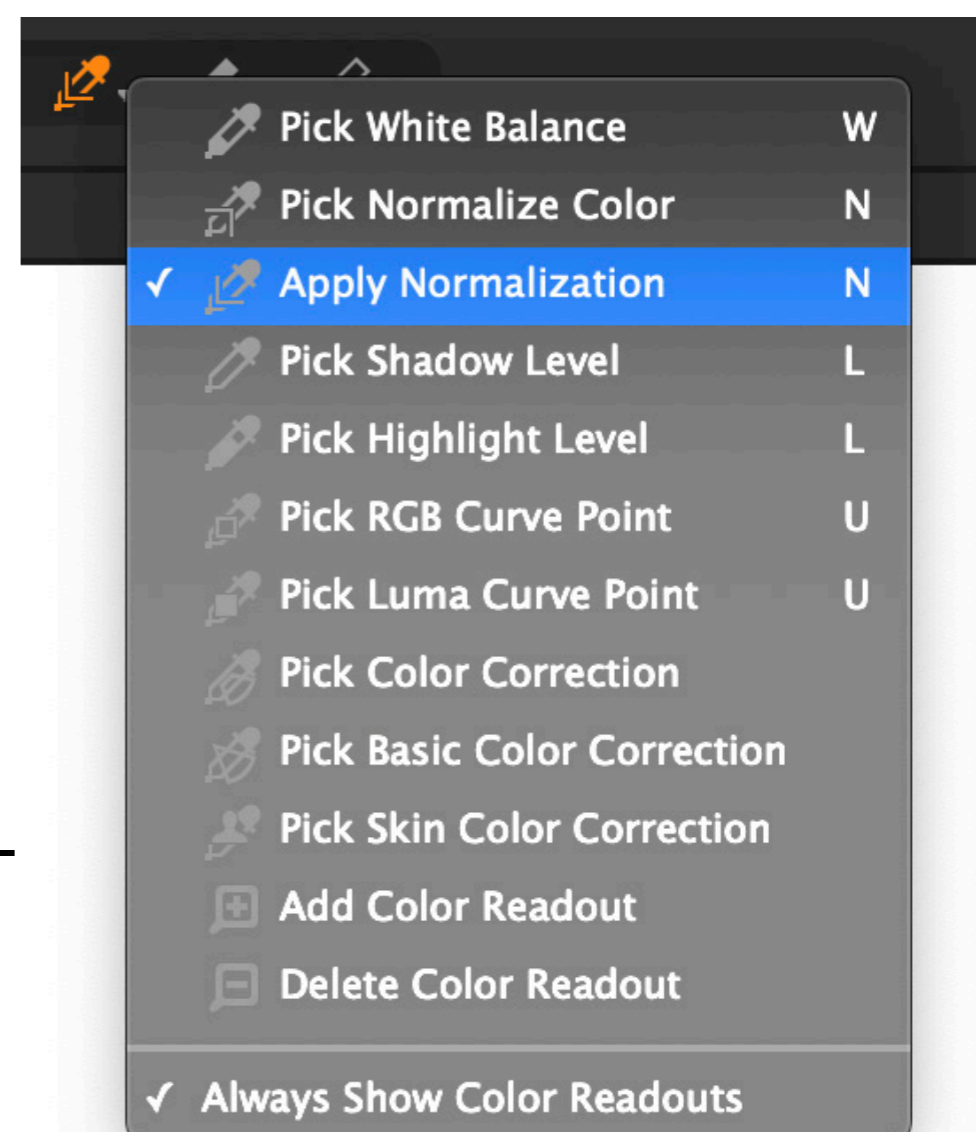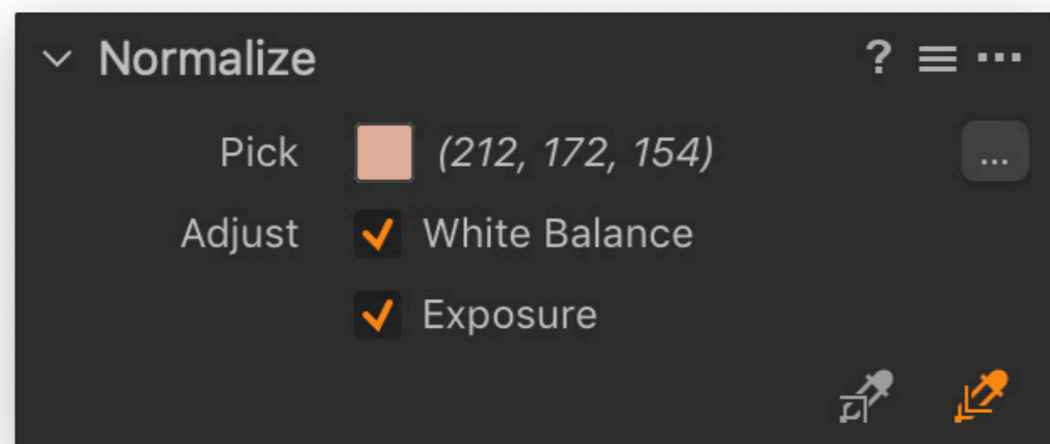
Then click on the subject in the image that should match the desired color and brightness, and the image will be automatically adjusted. You might need to try a few different spots on the subject before the result is perfect. It is worth to point out that the tool can change the overall white balance quite dramatically if the difference between the picked color and the target color is large.

Tip: Once you have selected either of the Normalize cursors, you can switch quickly between picking and applying a normalization target by hitting Shift + N or switch temporarily by holding down Alt.

Resetting a normalize adjustment

You should be aware that the **Normalize** tool does not have a reset feature, so if you want to undo the adjustment later on, you will have to reset the **Exposure** slider in the **Exposure** tool as well as the **Kelvin** and **Tint** sliders in the **White Balance** tool.
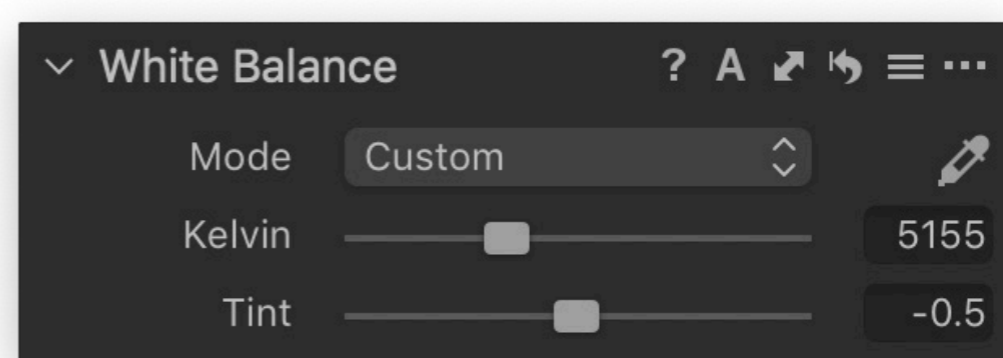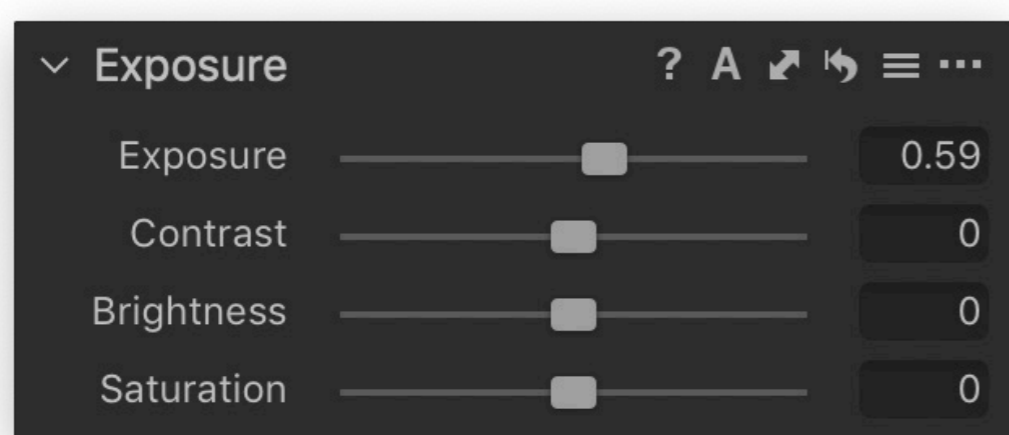
Entering a target value manually

You can manually enter a target color in the **Color Selector**. This can be handy if you need to match color and exposure of a color patch on a col-

or checker chart, for example. You open the **Color Selector** dialog box by clicking on the color patch next to **Pick**.

You can now enter the required **R**, **G**, and **B** values for the patch target. Notice how you can also enter a color with **HSB**-values based on the hue (**H**), saturation (**S**) and brightness (**B**).
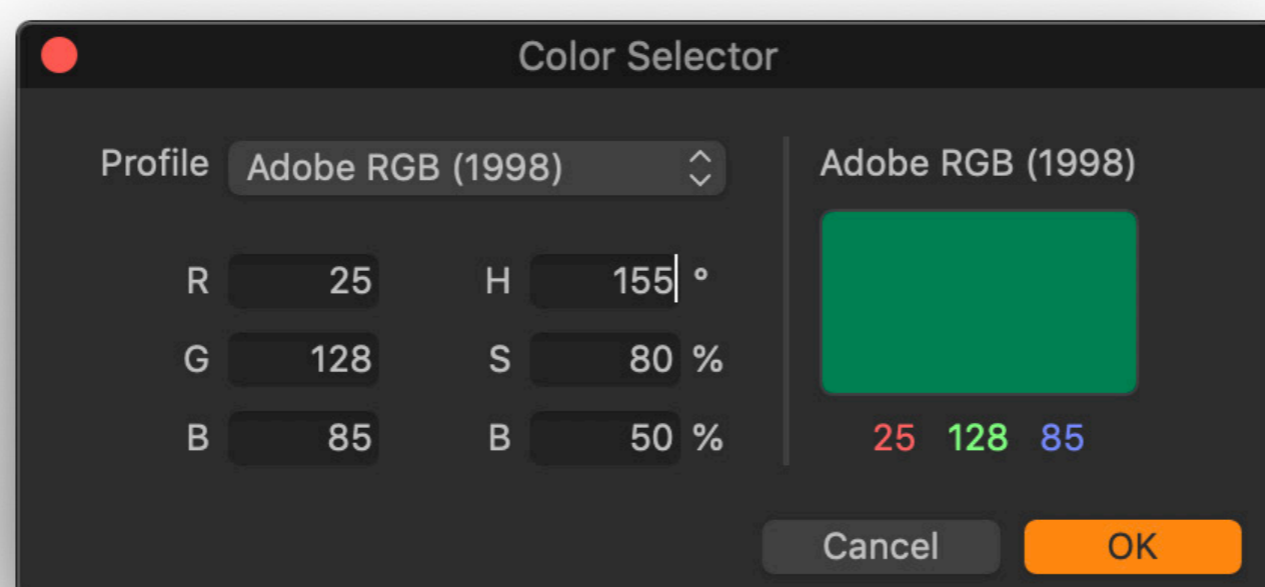

Click **OK** when done. Then choose the **Apply Normalization** cursor, click on the target patch, and let Capture One do the work.

No copy adjustments
The **Normalize** tool does not have a feature to copy the adjustments from one image to multiple other images since the tool needs a target area that is **specific to each image**. You can copy the **Exposure** and **White Balance** from those two tools as a workaround, but this solution only makes sense if the target images need exactly the same adjustments to Exposure and White Balance.

Saving and reusing a Preset
You can save and load a target color by clicking on the Preset icon and choosing **Save User Preset...**.
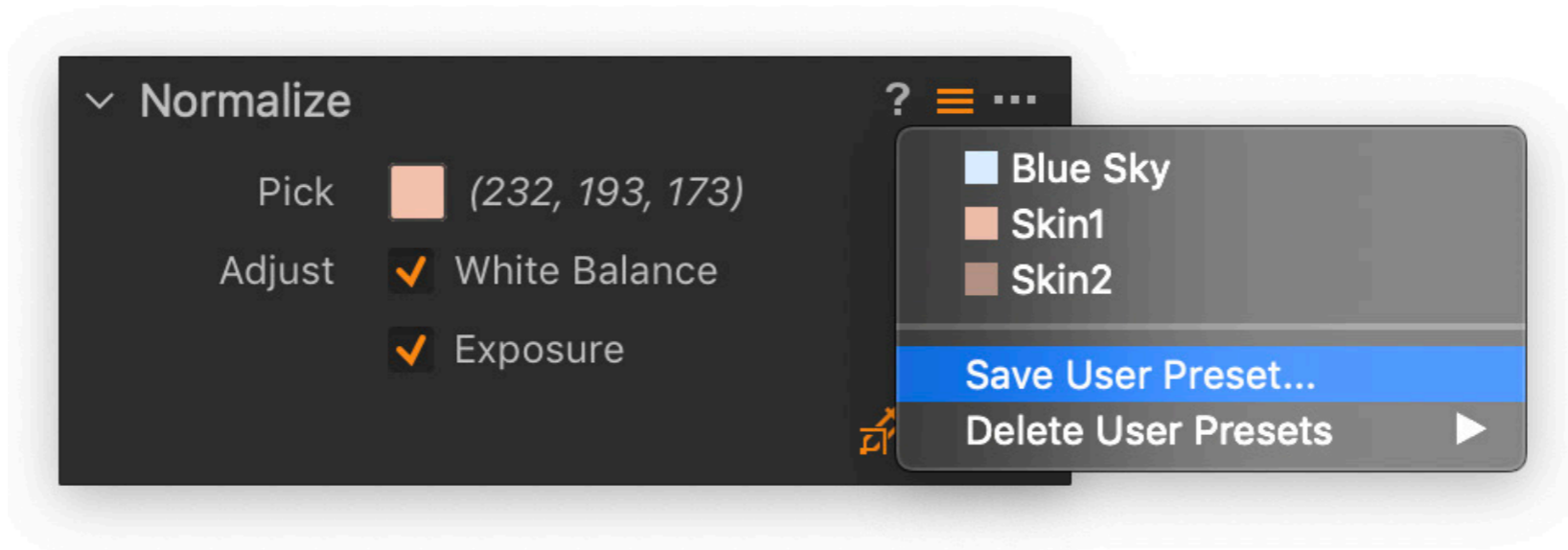
Be aware that a Preset will not be applied to an image just by selecting it. You will need to load the Preset color target first, then select the **Apply Normalization** cursor, and click on the subject in the image that should be adjusted to match the color and brightness from the Preset. Note that the tool will import any presets that you may have created with the old **Skin Tone** feature.

Using Normalize with Layers
The **Normalize** tool does not work on Layers. It will, however, take all the different adjustments done on layers into account when you select a color value with the **Pick Normalize Color** cursor. In other words, it will pick the sum of all color adjustments from the layers.

When you use the **Apply Normalization** cursor, the adjustment will always be applied to the base Background layer, regardless of whether you have selected a layer in the **Layers** tool.

It would be very handy to be able to use the Normalize tool on a layer and limit the effect with a mask, right? So here is a workaround:

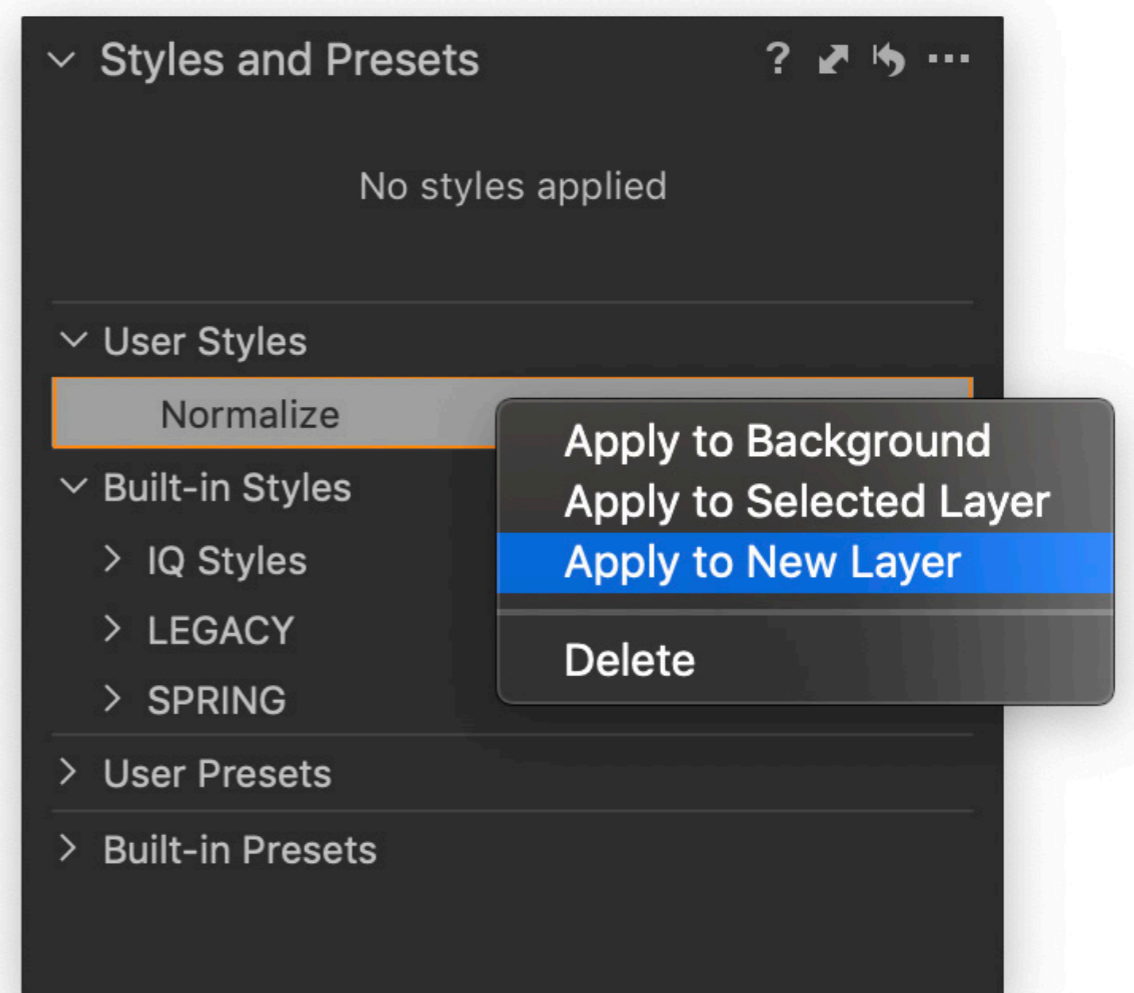Apply a normalization target on the desired image as usual.

Then go to the **Styles and Presets tool** in the **Adjustments** Tool Tab, click on the options icon and select **Save Style...**.
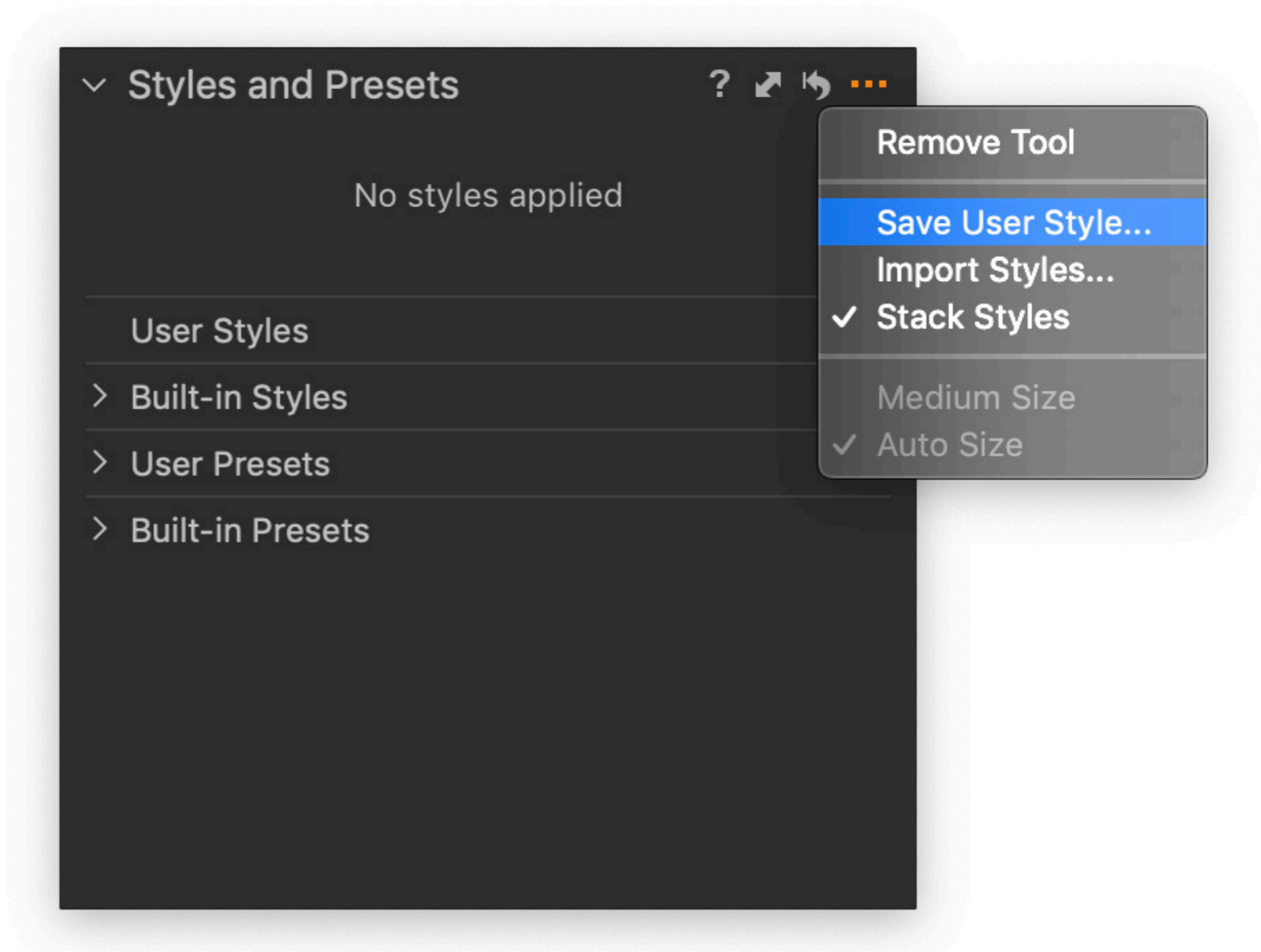
Make sure you only select **White Balance** and **Exposure**, then click **Save**.
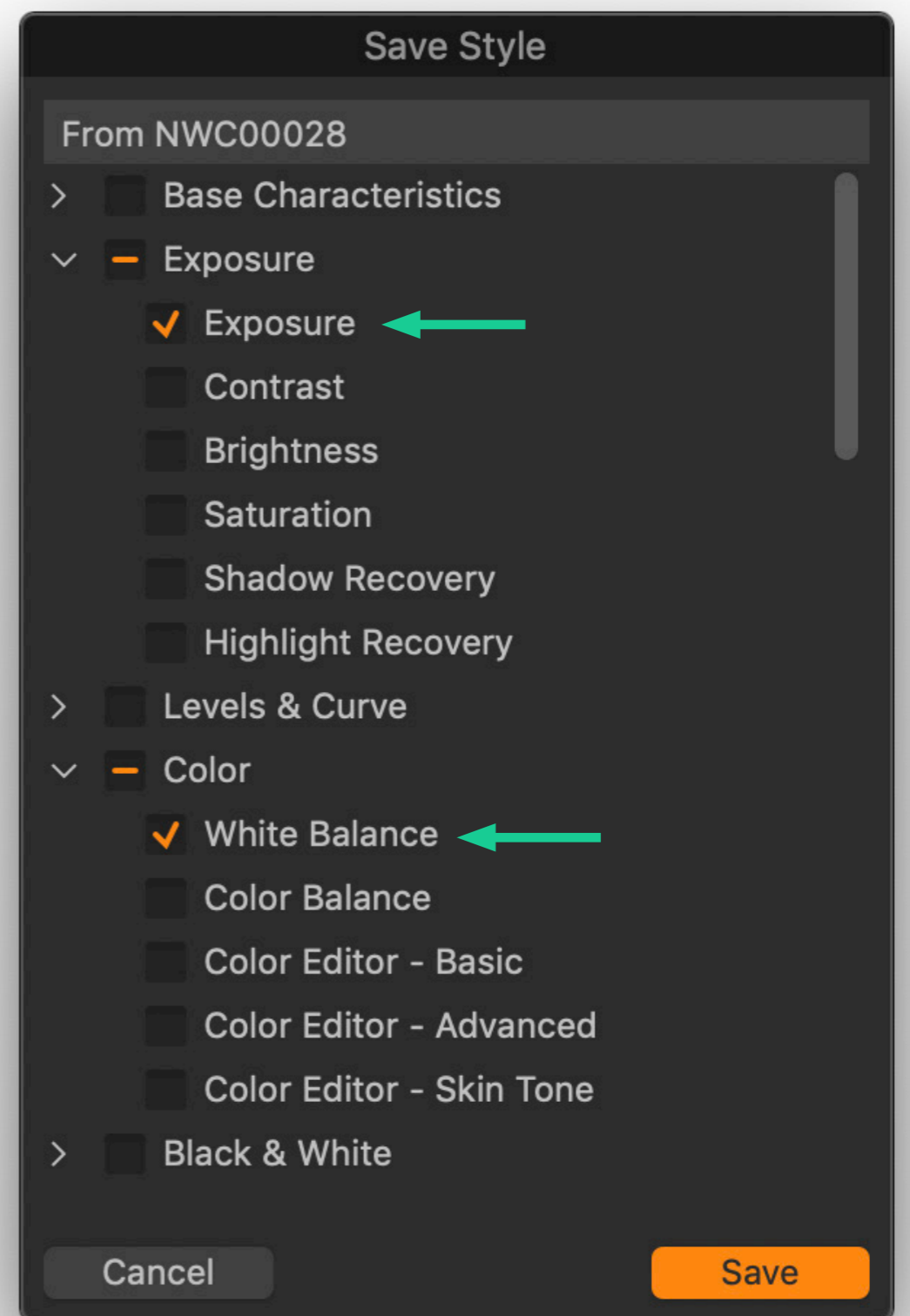
Find your new style under **User Styles**, and right-click on it. Select **Apply to New Layer**.

The white balance and exposure adjustments are now copied to a new layer in the **Layers** tool, and you can limit their effect with a mask.

You will, however, still need to select the base Background layer and reset (or readjust) the **Exposure** slider in the **Exposure** tool as well as the **Kelvin** and **Tint** sliders in the **White Balance** tool for this trick to work.