BLENDERLIGHTING

Snapshot

Documentation

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1. Saving Snapshots

Press `Shift + \` or click **Save Snapshot** in the N-panel. This captures the current state of your scene — lights, camera, world, materials, object transforms, collection visibility, and render settings.

Every save creates a new snapshot. Nothing is ever overwritten. Your full exploration history is always there.

Snapshots are named with relative timestamps — "just now", "5 min ago", "2 hours ago" — so you always know when each one was taken.

A preview thumbnail renders in the background after each save — first a fast draft, then a high-quality pass. You can keep working while it renders.

2. Restoring Snapshots

Click any snapshot card in the N-panel to restore it. Snapshot puts every light, camera setting, material, and object transform back exactly where they were, and switches the viewport to Rendered shading so you immediately see the restored look.

If you've made unsaved changes, you'll be prompted to either **Save & Restore** (saves your current state as a new snapshot first) or **Discard & Restore**.

After restoring, you're in a "draft" workspace — any changes you make won't modify the snapshot. Save again to capture your new state.

3. A/B Comparison

Press `Alt + \` or click the **Cycle A/B** button in the N-panel to cycle between visible snapshots directly in the viewport. Each press restores the next snapshot so you can compare looks live.

Requires at least two visible snapshots. In the Image Editor, the same shortcut flips between the last two snapshots you viewed — a preview-only comparison that doesn't touch your scene.

4. Snapshot Viewer

Click the **Preview Snapshots** icon in the N-panel to open the viewer in the Image Editor. Your snapshots appear as a filmstrip of thumbnails along the bottom edge, with the selected snapshot filling the view above. A control bar between them switches the viewer between its two modes.

Detail mode

Shows one snapshot at a time with Blender's native zoom and pan. Step through snapshots with the `←` `→` keys, hold `\` to peek at the previously viewed snapshot for a quick before/after, and press `S` to star the one you're looking at. On-image tools flip the image horizontally or vertically to check your composition with fresh eyes, or switch it to **B&W** for judging values and **False Color** for reading exposure.

Compare mode

Puts two snapshots up as A and B. View them **Side** by side, as a **Wipe** with a draggable divider between A and B, or as a **Difference** view that highlights exactly what changed. A swap button exchanges A and B.

Thumbnails and layout

Right-click any thumbnail for a context menu: star it, restore it in the viewport, render it, or delete it. Stars can also be toggled directly on the thumbnails.

Drag the top edge of the filmstrip to resize it. When there are more snapshots than fit on screen, scroll with the mouse wheel, a trackpad swipe, or the scrollbar.

Press `Shift + Tab` in the Image Editor to toggle between Snapshot Result and Render Result. Any preview can be saved to disk via Image → Save As.

5. Elimination Rounds

Star your favorite snapshots, then click **Narrow Down** to advance to the next round. Unstarred snapshots drop away. Repeat until you've narrowed it down to your best option.

You can go back to a previous round at any time — nothing is deleted, just hidden.

When exactly one snapshot is starred, **Render Winner** appears — it restores that snapshot, finds an empty render slot, and launches the render.

Round navigation also lives in the Snapshot Viewer's control bar, so you can run an entire elimination from the Image Editor.

6. Managing Snapshots

Rename	Click the dropdown menu on any snapshot card and choose Rename.
Delete	From the card dropdown or the viewer right-click menu.

Multi-select	Toggle Selection Mode in the N-panel top bar to select and delete multiple snapshots at once.
Render	Render any individual snapshot from the card dropdown or viewer right-click menu. Snapshot restores it, picks an empty render slot, and starts the render.

The N-panel options menu lets you toggle Newest First (default on) and Dense Grid for a more compact layout.

7. Preferences

Access settings at `Edit > Preferences > Add-ons`, then select "Snapshot".

Preview Quality	Resolution and render quality of preview thumbnails: Standard (768px), High (1440px), or Ultra (1920px). Higher tiers show finer detail but take longer to render in the background. Applies to snapshots saved from then on.
Hide Viewport-Hidden Objects	Previews skip objects hidden in the viewport, so thumbnails match what you see instead of a full render. Restoring re-applies the hidden state to match. Off by default.
Switch to Solid on Save	Briefly switches the viewport to Solid shading while saving, so a running Cycles or EEVEE viewport render doesn't restart. On by default.
Keyboard Shortcuts	The main shortcuts are remappable directly in the addon preferences.

8. What Gets Saved

Snapshot captures everything that affects how your scene looks — not the geometry itself, but the look built on top of it.

Lights	Full fidelity — positions, settings, colors, intensities, shader nodes
Camera	Framing, focal length, DOF and focus object, sensor, clipping
World / HDRI	Environment lighting, background, all nodes
Materials	Complete shader trees, textures, nodes, slot assignments — exact reproduction
Objects	Positions, rotations, scale, visibility, selection

Collections	Visibility states
Light linking	Light and shadow linking, plus constraint targets
Viewport	View position, camera view, lens, clipping
Render settings	Engine, samples, resolution, color management, compositor state

9. What Doesn't Get Saved

Snapshot captures the look of your scene, not its geometry. Mesh edits, sculpting, applied transforms (Ctrl+A), and modifier changes are not captured — with one exception: Geometry Nodes inputs and node group assignments are restored.

Objects added after a snapshot was taken are hidden when that snapshot is restored. And if you try to delete an object that existing snapshots reference, Snapshot warns you first so you don't break them by accident.

10. Works With Other Addons

Snapshot runs standalone in Blender 4.0–5.2 and detects these addons automatically — no setup needed.

Light Wrangler	Flags, reflectors, and gobo stencils are captured with your lights, along with every per-light look setting — HDRI adjustments, gobos, scrims, IES. Snapshots taken while a light is isolated restore correctly.
PolyDome	The dome, its controllers, scene settings, and compositor adjustments are all captured and restored.
LensSim	Lens rigs and their helper objects survive restore, including focus setup and lens settings.
Gaffer	Light solo state and world visibility toggles are captured and restored.
Photographer	Per-camera and per-light settings ride along with the camera and lights automatically.
Poly Haven	Applied HDRIs, materials, and models are standard Blender data and restore cleanly.

11. Keyboard Shortcuts

The 3D View and Image Editor shortcuts are customizable in addon preferences.

3D View

`Shift + \`	Save snapshot
`Alt + \`	Cycle A/B comparison

Image Editor

`Alt + \`	A/B the last two viewed snapshots
`Shift + Tab`	Toggle Snapshot Result / Render Result

Snapshot Viewer

`← / →`	Previous / next snapshot
`Hold \`	Peek at the previously viewed snapshot
`S`	Star the viewed snapshot

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