



Interface & Basic Navigation

Workspace Basics

Project Panel:

- Import and organize footage, compositions, and other assets.

Composition Panel:

- Preview and manipulate the elements within a composition.

Timeline Panel:

- Arrange layers, apply effects, and control animation over time.

Tools Panel:

- Access essential tools for creating and modifying elements.

Navigation Shortcuts

Ctrl + Tab Cycle through open panels.

Spacebar Preview composition (RAM Preview).

Numpad 0 Start/stop RAM preview at current time.

+ / - (Numpad) Zoom in/out in the Composition panel.

Ctrl + ; Show/hide guides.

Ctrl + Shift + H Show/hide layer controls.

Composition Settings

Access:

*Composition > Composition Settings... or **Ctrl + K**

Key Settings:

- Preset:** Choose from standard video formats (e.g., HDTV 1080 24).
- Width/Height:** Define the composition dimensions in pixels.
- Pixel Aspect Ratio:** Usually Square Pixels for digital video.
- Frame Rate:** Frames per second (fps). 24fps for film look, 30fps for standard video.
- Duration:** Total length of the composition.
- Background Color:** Set the initial background color.

Keyframing & Animation

Basic Keyframing

- Select a Layer:** Choose the layer you want to animate.
- Reveal Properties:** Press **P** (Position), **S** (Scale), **R** (Rotation), **T** (Opacity), or **A** (Anchor Point) to reveal the corresponding property.
- Enable Keyframing:** Click the stopwatch icon next to the property to create the first keyframe.
- Move the Timeline:** Advance the current time indicator to a new point in the timeline.
- Adjust the Property:** Change the value of the property at the new time. This creates a second keyframe.

After Effects automatically interpolates between keyframes, creating the animation.

Keyframe Types

Linear Value changes at a constant rate.

Keyframes:

Easy Ease Smooth acceleration and deceleration.
Keyframes: **F9** or Right-click > Keyframe Assistant > Easy Ease.

Easy Ease In Slows down as it approaches the keyframe.
Keyframes: **Shift + F9** or Right-click > Keyframe Assistant > Easy Ease In.

Easy Ease Out Speeds up as it leaves the keyframe.
Keyframes: **Ctrl + Shift + F9** or Right-click > Keyframe Assistant > Easy Ease Out.

Hold Value remains constant until the next keyframe.
Keyframes: Right-click > Keyframe Assistant > Hold.

Graph Editor

The Graph Editor allows you to fine-tune animation curves for more precise control.

Value Graph: Adjust the value of a property over time.

Speed Graph: Adjust the rate of change of a property over time.

Use handles on the curves to modify the interpolation between keyframes.

Animation Shortcuts

U Show all keyframed properties.

Ctrl + Alt + T Add Time Remapping.

Alt + [or] Trim Layer start/end to current time.

Home / End Go to start/end of the Composition.

Effects & Presets

Applying Effects

- Select a Layer:** Choose the layer to which you want to apply an effect.
- Effects & Presets Panel:** Find the desired effect in the Effects & Presets panel (Window > Effects & Presets).
- Apply the Effect:** Double-click the effect, drag it onto the layer, or select Layer > Effect > [Effect Category] > [Effect Name].
- Adjust Effect Settings:** Modify the effect's parameters in the Effect Controls panel.

Common Effects

Blur & Sharpen: Gaussian Blur, Unsharp Mask.

Color Correction: Levels, Curves, Hue/Saturation, Color Balance.

Distort: Warp, Twirl, Wave Warp.

Generate: Gradient Ramp, Fill, Stroke.

Keying: Keylight (for green screen), Color Key.

Stylize: Glow, Find Edges, Mosaic.

Effect Presets

Effect Presets are pre-configured combinations of effects that can be applied to layers.

Applying Presets:

- Find presets in the Effects & Presets panel.
- Double-click a preset to apply it to the selected layer.

Creating Presets:

- Apply and configure effects on a layer.
- Select Animation > Save Animation Preset...

Expressions

Basic Expressions

Expressions are snippets of code that can be used to automate and link properties in After Effects.

Accessing Expressions:

- Alt-click the stopwatch icon next to a property to enable expressions.

Common Expression Examples

<code>time</code>	Returns the current composition time in seconds. Useful for creating continuously changing values.
<code>random(min, max)</code>	Generates a random number between <code>min</code> and <code>max</code> .
<code>loopOut(type="cycle", numKeyframes, numKeyframes=0)</code>	Loops the animation. <code>type</code> can be "cycle", "pingpong", or "offset". <code>numKeyframes</code> specifies the number of keyframes to loop. Default is 0 (all keyframes).
<code>wiggle(freq, amp)</code>	Randomly shakes the property value. <code>freq</code> is the frequency of the wiggle (wiggles per second), and <code>amp</code> is the amplitude (amount of wiggle).
<code>transform.rotation</code>	Refers to the rotation property of the layer. You can link properties between layers using this.

Linking Properties with Expressions

You can link properties of different layers using expressions.

1. **Pick Whip:** Use the pick whip tool (the spiral icon next to the expression field) to drag a connection to another layer's property.
2. **Manual Linking:** Type the layer name and property directly into the expression, e.g., `thisComp.layer("Layer Name").transform.position`