



Getting Started



Overview

This chapter provides the basic information you'll need to get started using Final Effects Complete.

This chapter covers the general procedure for applying effects. It also includes instructions for using the interface tools that are common among the effects. And it includes suggestions for working that will help you get the most out of the effects.

Using Effects

You'll apply effects to layers in an Adobe After Effects composition. Most effects work in a single layer. Some use data from a second layer.

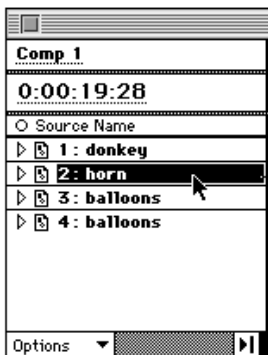
You can apply an effect to any type of layer—standard footage item, nested composition, or pre-composed layer.

To apply an effect:

1. Open the project where you want to work.

The composition needs at least one layer, where you'll apply the effect. You can create a solid color layer (to hold a particle effect, perhaps) by choosing **Layer > New Solid**.
2. In the Time Layout window, select the layer where you want to apply the effect.

You can click on the name of the layer or on its duration bar.

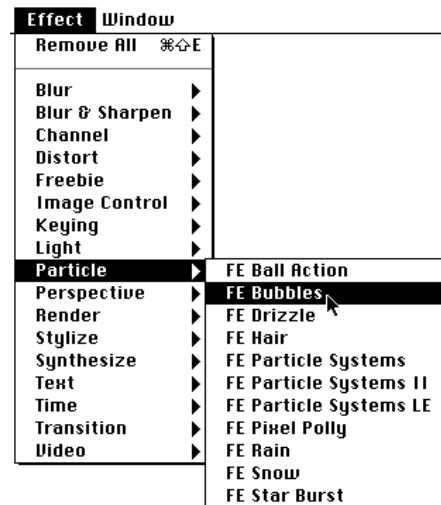


Select a layer in the Time Layout window.

Some effects obliterate layer imagery and create their own. In this case, it doesn't matter what's in the layer.

Some of the Time menu effects require a pre-composed layer.

3. From the Effects menu, choose the category and select the particular effect from the sub-menu.

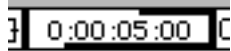


All of the Final Effects Complete names begin "FE —."

When you've selected an effect, After Effects applies it to that layer and opens the Effect Controls window.

When you apply an effect, or change its parameters, After Effects updates the preview in the Composition window. This may take a moment.

While the effect is rendering, a “snake” goes around the time code display in the Composition window. When the snake disappears, the effect is rendered.



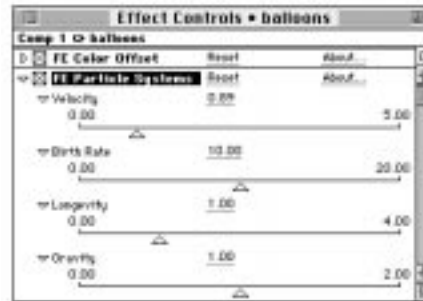
The “snake” shows the rendering progress of the effect.

By default, Final Effects plug-ins are installed in the standard sub-menu categories (alongside those that come with After Effects). As an installation option, you can choose to separate Final Effects Complete onto their own sub-menu.



The Effect Controls Window

The Effect Controls window lists the applied effects and provides the controls for changing them. What these controls mean is covered in the effects chapters, later in this guide.



Each layer has its own Effect Controls window. Callouts: Click to show/hide the effect's controls. Click to enable/disable the effect.

Effects may also be controlled in the Time Layout window. Refer to “[The Time Layout Window](#)” on page 15 for more information

If you have several Effect Controls windows open, you can bring forward the one you want by choosing it from the Windows menu.

If you close a layer's Effect Controls window, you can reopen it.

To re-open the Effect Controls window:

1. Select the layer in the Time Layout window.
2. Choose **Layer menu > Open Effect Controls**.

To remove an effect:

1. In the Effect Controls window, select the effect you want to remove. Click the name to select it.
2. Press Delete. You may also choose **Edit menu > Clear**.

To remove all effects from a layer:

1. Select the layer.
2. Choose **Effect menu > Remove All**.

Multiple Effects

You may apply multiple effects to any layer. All effects will be listed in the Effect Controls window.

When you make the movie, After Effects renders the effects in the order they are listed in the controls window. Each subsequent effect uses the result of the previous effect as its starting point. Often, the ultimate result depends on which effect renders first. To get the results you want, you'll need to arrange the effects in an appropriate order.

To change the rendering order of an effect:

In the Effect Controls window, drag the effect (by its name) into the position you want. The top of the list renders first.

You can also use pre-composing to enforce a particular rendering order.

Using Common Controls

The Effect Controls window provides the tools for changing effect parameters. These interface tools are found throughout the Final Effects Complete plug-ins.

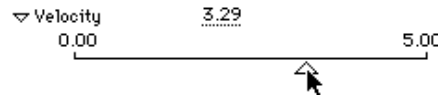
Hiding and Showing Controls

Some effects have quite a few controls. To save space, each control may be collapsed when you're not working with it.

Click the triangle icon to the left of a control to hide or show its parameters.

Slider

A Slider is a control that sets a value within a range. The lower and upper limits to the normal range appear at either end of the slider bar. The triangular marker identifies the current setting within the range.



Drag the marker to set the value.

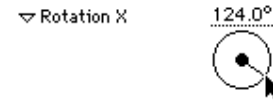
The current setting is shown numerically above the slider. You may click the value to open a dialog for setting the control numerically.



In some cases, numerical settings beyond the normal range are possible.

Radial

A Radial is a control for direction and, sometimes, rotation. The radial line indicates the set direction.



Click or drag within the radial to set a new direction.

For a control that accepts rotation, drag “around and around” to set the number of rotations. Rotations follow the direction you drag.

The current setting is shown numerically above the radial. The notation describes the “number of rotations and the number of degrees.”

For example:

“ $3x + 173^\circ$ ” means “three times around clockwise and another 173 degrees.”

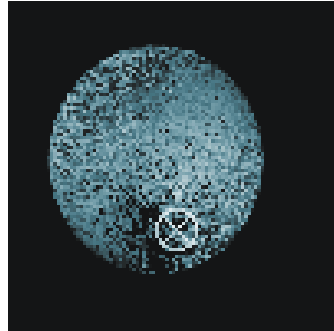
“ $-1x - 20^\circ$ ” means once around counter-clockwise and continuing ccw for another 20 degrees.

You may click the value to open a dialog for setting the control numerically.

Reference Points

Reference Points identify locations within the composition that set the origin, destination, center or some other control for the effect.

When the effect is selected, reference points appear in the Composition Window as a circle containing a cross-hair.



You can position a reference point within the image area or outside of it—depending on the type of reference and the effect you want to achieve.

To set a reference point:

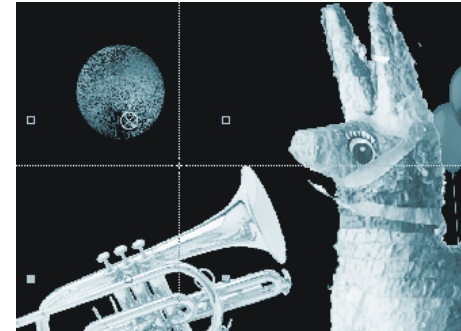
1. In the Effect Controls window, click the cross-hair button for the point you want to adjust.

End



Select the reference point.

2. Move the cursor into the Composition Window and click where you want to set the reference point.



Click where you want to place the reference.

To set a reference point by dragging:

1. In the Effect Controls window, select the effect whose reference point you want to move.
2. In the Composition window, drag the reference point marker.

As you drag the point, the Info palette updates with details of the move.

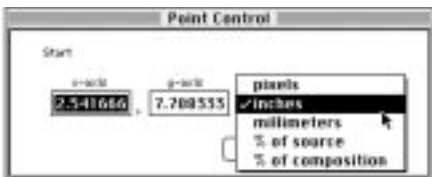
To nudge a reference point:

1. In the Effect Controls window, click the cross-hair button for the point you want to adjust.
2. Use the Arrow keys to nudge the point one screen pixel at a time.

Because the point moves in terms of screen resolution, the actual distance of a nudge depends on the Composition window's level of magnification. Above 1:1, the nudge is less than a (composition) pixel.

To set a reference point numerically:

The current coordinate of the reference point is shown to the right of the cross-hair button (x, y). You may click the values to open a dialog for setting the location numerically.



The numerical dialog allows you to choose the units for numerical adjustment—pixels, inches, millimeters or percentage of the source or composition.

Color

The Color control offers two methods of choosing a color: the system color picker and the Dropper.

To use the color picker:

Click the color chip. The system color picker opens, so you can choose a color.

To use the Dropper:

1. Click the Dropper icon.
2. In the Composition window (or a Layer window), click on the color you want.

Tip: With the Info palette open, you can get information on the colors the Dropper rolls over.

Reset and About

To return to defaults:

- ※ Click the Reset button to return all controls to the default.

To display information about the effect:

- ※ Click About to display the version number and copyright information for this effect.

Options

An Options button is provided for any effect that requires controls beyond the scope of the Effect Controls window.

Controls found in the Options dialog cannot be animated with key frames.

To set an effect's Options:

1. Click the effect's Options button to open the Options panel.
2. Click the name of the item you want to change.

A secondary dialog will open. Use it to make the change. When you've finished in the dialog, close it to return to the Options panel.



The Options panel leads to specialized dialogs.

3. Dismiss the Options panel by clicking one of the buttons at the bottom right.

Default closes the Options panel and returns all options to the factory settings.

Cancel closes the Options panel without keeping any changes.

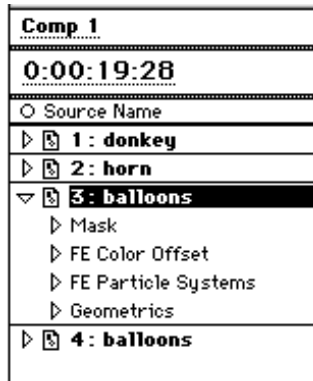
OK closes the Options panel and updates the effect with your changes.



The Time Layout Window

The left column of the Time Layout window lists the layers in the composition. The effects are listed as properties of the layers.

Just like in the Effect Controls window, you can expand the effect listing to see all controls or collapse it to conserve space.



An applied effect is a layer property.

The Time Layout window doesn't have sliders or the other graphical controls. It does show the values and you can click them to set controls numerically. Reset,

Options and check box buttons are also provided. Pop-up menu settings are listed, but you can't change them here.

A check box appears beneath the "E" for any layer that has effects. Use the check box to disable/enable all effects applied to that layer.


Changing Parameters Over Time

Many of the Final Effects are dynamic—it's in their nature to move and change. For example, FE Rain creates pelting rain for the duration of the layer.

Other effects are static. Whatever their effect might be, it remains constant. FE Toner, which changes the color of layer, is an example of this type.

However, using the key framing tools of the Time Layout window, you can add dynamic change to any effect. FE Rain could start with scattered drops, then build to a downpour. FE Toner could start with sepia tones, then fade into full color.

To animate an effect in this way, you'll set key frames for each effect parameter that needs to change. One key frame sets the initial value, the second sets the next value. The parameter values are



interpolated from the one to the next, and this leads to the change in the rendered effect.

To set key frames for an effect:

1. Display the effect controls in the Time Layout window.
2. Move the current-time marker to the moment you want to set the key frame.
3. Click the stopwatch icon immediately left of the control you want to change.

This sets a key frame at this point. A diamond marker appears on the time track for that parameter. You can drag the marker to move the key frame to a different point in time.

4. Now you can move to any other point in time and change the value or setting of that parameter to create another key frame.

You may double-click a key frame marker to set its parameter numerically.

Interpolation

When you key frame a parameter, After Effects adds the hide/show control to the left of the stop watch. Click it to show the Speed control graph, which controls the rate of change between the key frames. You can drag the control points on the graph to change the slope, and hence, the rate of transition.

For complete information on keyframing, Speed control and interpolation, refer to your Adobe After Effects documentation.



Nesting and Pre-composing

Nesting compositions and pre-composing layers allow you to group layers so that you can control them as a single object. This can provide tremendous advantages for using effects.

You can apply an effect to a pre-composed layer (or nested composition), and the effect will be apparent in all of the layer components. Of course, the result depends on which effect you use.

Refer to your Adobe After Effects documentation for more information on pre-composing layers and nesting compositions.