

Final Cut Pro Essentials

With RICHARD HARRINGTON



Richard Harrington

Richard Harrington is a certified Project Management Professional, Adobe Certified Expert in Photoshop and After Effects, and Apple-certified instructor in Final Cut Pro. Additionally, he has completed Avid's Master Editor Workshop and the Avid Certified Instructor Program. His visual communications consultancy, RHED Pixel, creates motion graphics and produces video and multimedia projects. He is a faculty member at The Art Institute of Washington, a popular speaker at conferences, and an instructor for Future Media Concepts. He is the author of *Photoshop for Nonlinear Editors* as well as a moderator for Creative Cow's Photoshop Forum. Richard can be reached at <http://www.rhedpixel.com>

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So you've made (or are thinking about) coming over to Final Cut Pro? This session is for those who've used other video editing packages as well as 'newbies.' We'll guide you through major features such as the Editing Interface, Color Correction, Audio mixing, and more. Even if you've been using Final Cut Pro for a while, Apple Certified Trainer Richard Harrington will show you new efficiencies and hidden secrets.

There's a lot to editing in Final Cut Pro. Fortunately all of the skills build on one another. I've pulled a few of my favorite tips together here for newer users. These were co-written with Abba Shapiro, a lead trainer for Apple. These come from our new book, *Final Cut Pro 4 On the Spot: Timesaving Tips and Shortcuts from the Pros*, published by CMP Books.

Dynamic Interfaces

One of the coolest new features of Final Cut Pro 4 is the dynamic resizing of the interface. You can now quickly adjust the size of windows using dynamic resizing. Clicking between two windows or at the intersection of multiple windows allows you to drag and resize all windows. You no longer have to resize one window at a time.

Need more space in the timeline, just grab the top edge and pull upward. Want to see more in the viewer, grab the edge and pull to the right. It's simple to quickly change the size of a window and view exactly what you need.



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That's the spot!

You've perfectly configured your windows. Every palette is exactly where you want it. The timeline has just enough room and you've got the audio meter exactly where it should be. Now save that window arrangement.

Long-term storage

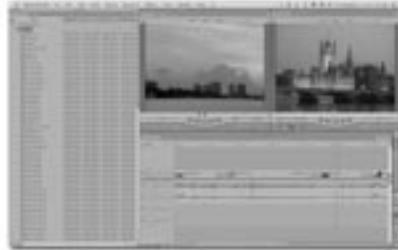
1. Choose Window>Arrange> Save Layout.

This setting is stored by default in your Window Layouts folder.

2. Under FCP4 also adds custom layouts to the bottom of the list with a new keyboard shortcut automatically assigned.

3. Now call up your Button List (Tools>Button List) or Option + J and type the word window. Grab the Window Layout button and drag it to a convenient button well.

*** Note that the Custom layout is an alphabetized list. Number your layouts when saving them. Example 1. Effects, 2. Compositing, and so on.)



Short-term storage

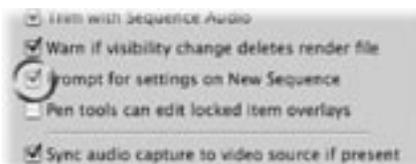
Still testing the layout to make sure you like it? You can save it temporarily in one of two custom positions.

1. Hold down the Option key and Choose Window>Arrange> Set Custom Layout.

2. The setting is stored into 1 of 2 temporary spots.

Get it Right from the Start

If you working with multiple formats and resolutions this is a critical preferences. It is very easy to create a new sequence and have it set up improperly for the media you are working on. Check the Prompt for settings on New Sequence checkbox and Final Cut Pro will ask you to set your sequence settings each time you create a new sequence.



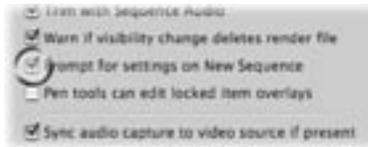
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Psychic Powers

Want to quickly learn the name and shortcuts for your tools? That's what tool tips are for. Just hover over an unknown button and you will often find out its name and keyboard shortcut. If this isn't working, be sure to check that the Show Tool Tips box is checked in the general preferences panel.



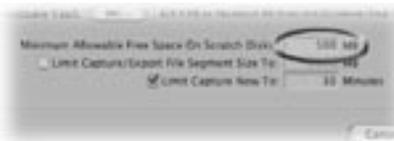
Seeing Red

If you are getting red bars across all your footage as soon as you add to the timeline, you are probably not configured correctly. It is likely that the last project worked on used a different configuration (such as Widescreen or Offline RT). Check your sequence settings (Command + 0).



How to Kill a Hard Drive

The best way to kill a drive is to fill it up so much that it essentially locks up. Final Cut Pro seems to have a death wish when it comes to hard drives. Call up your system settings and check the Minimum Allowable Free Space on Scratch Disks field.



You'll notice that the default setting is that your scratch discs will fill up to within 10mb before being seen as full. This is like driving in the desert with less than a 1/4-gallon of gas. Be sure to change this number to 500 MB or 5% of a drive's capacity, whichever number is bigger.

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Place your hands 'here'

When editing on a desktop system, it's important to think ergonomically. Proper hand position improves your speed and cuts down on work-related pain. When editing, try placing your hands in the following position.



step one: Place the mouse in your preferred hand

step two: Offset the keyboard so they J-K-L keys fall directly under your opposite hand.

Why? Well 90% of the edit commands can be accessed from this position.

J – Play Reverse. Tap J to go faster.

K – Pause. Hold K down while using J or L to play in slow- motion.

L – Play Forward. Tap L to go faster.

I – In

O – Out

F9 – Insert

F10 – Overwrite

Add the Shift, Option, and Command keys for several additional options that speed up editing. In fact, the neighboring keys all hold key commands by default; this is definitely 'prime real estate' in the editing world.

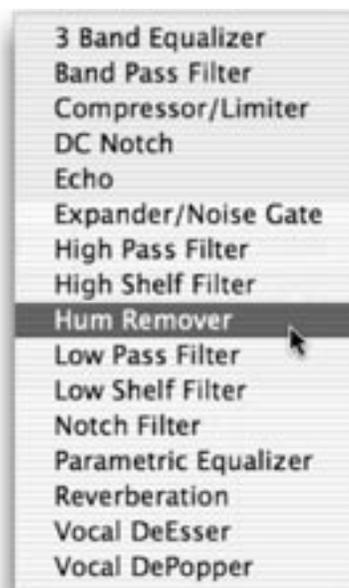
Hum Remover

This is a great little filter to remove AC noise from a track. Usually this happens because a power line was running parallel (as opposed to perpendicular) to your audio cable when you recorded your scene.

- Leave the frequency set to 60 (as in 60 cycles) if you were shooting in the US or set it to 50 if you were shooting in a country where the power is a 50 cycles.

- Q is the attack time and a gain is sound pressure level AKA how loud the audio is.

What about all those harmonics? Think of them as reflections or echoes of the original 60-cycle hum. Use only the harmonics you need...since you may start removing frequencies that you want in your audio.



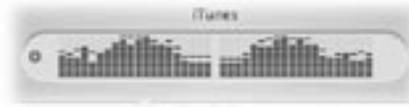
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That music is HOT...too hot!

We talked about mixing to -12 db when you edit to DV (-18 or -20 db for digibeta)...but people often forget that music that they convert and insert off music CDs is mixed to -0db. (Yes we meant to say the - before the zero.



That's because music CD's are mixed and compressed so they sound nice and loud in your car and on your iPod; they peak right below Zero db.) Remember when ever you use music from a CD, to pull its levels down so they hit the appropriate (-12 or -20db) target levels of your show.

Get the Drop on Digital Audio

FCP can handling using different imported audio (almost always CD's or MP3's), but by converting them to the same rate as your project (DV would be 48Khz, 16 bit, Stereo) it's possible not to use up any of FCP's real time audio abilities for the conversion. This will free up RAM for other purposes. Let's make a Droplet, so all of this in the future becomes drag and drop.



- 1) Launch compressor and Press the Presets Icon
- 2) Add an AIFF Preset (alternatively you could add a folder to group any custom compressor settings you make.)
- 3) Double click to rename the New preset (something like Audio 48khz conversion)
- 4) Click on the Encoder tab
- 5) Click on the settings button
- 6) Adjust the settings to No compression, 48 kHz, 16 bit, Stereo
- 7) Press Ok and you now have a Prebuilt setting. All that's left is to make a droplet.
- 8) Press the Save selection as droplet (with the new converter selected).
- 9) Choose where you want the droplet to be saved and where you want it's output to go
- 10) I couldn't get the droplet "drag and drop" feature truly working. I had to double click the droplet and drag the groups of files to the source window and click submit to get my custom droplet to work reliably. The reason is OSX doesn't know that the MP3 or AIFF format might belong to this droplet. If you make a mistake in what you drag into the droplet, just quit it and relaunch it.

By Jeff Greenberg, Future Media Concepts

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Got snaps?

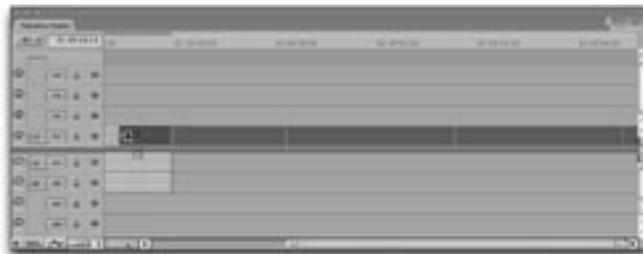
Sometimes you want things to quickly jump into their proper place. Final Cut Pro refers to this as snapping. When turned on, items will 'snap' directly to the playhead, an edit point, Markers, Keyframes, or In and Out points. This makes it easier to align clips (especially when keying graphics on a higher track).



- Look for a small gray arrow that appears above or below the point which indicates the item has snapped into place. But what if snapping is getting in the way of your edit or composite? Turn it off!
- You can turn snapping on or off at any time, even as you're dragging a clip. Simply press the N key to disable snapping. You'll notice the snapping icon change on the right edge of the timeline.
- Snapping affects several areas besides the timeline. You may want to turn it off when scrubbing, trimming, or using motion controls. Even the Viewer and the Canvas can be affected.

DO NOT DRAG AND DROP.

Professional editors edit from the keyboard. Don't believe us? Ever see a concert pianist use a mouse?



Let it Roll

Too many tracks in your timeline and want to scroll up and down quickly? No need to grab the scroll bar on the right edge if you have a three-button mouse. Put the cursor over the timeline and use the third button to scroll up and down. It gets better, hold down the shift key and you can scroll left and right. Don't stop now, place the cursor over the viewer or canvas and you can scrub backwards and forward. If you aren't impressed yet by Apple's thoughtful engineers... go try these shortcuts in a bin and on effect sliders.



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Fly!

It is possible to trim on the fly. This way you can listen for an audio edit or look for a particular visual cue.

1. Enter trim mode and press the space bar to cycle your trim.
2. When you reach the desired edit point, press the I key to move your in-point.
3. Press the up or down arrow to move through the timeline to your next edit point.



Like a guy asking for directions

- Have you ever needed to go on a road-trip across state lines or to a location out of town? Some people forget the first rule of video (PLAN) and just jump in the car and try to go instantly. This option is prone to many issues.
- Several editors I meet do not harness the power of Batch Capture. They rely on the very inefficient Capture Clip, or worse, the potentially dangerous Capture Now. So what's the big deal you say... the video goes into the computer.
- Getting into capture mode takes time. You will see increased stability and efficiency if you do all of your capturing at once. Plus a batch capture let's you put the computer to work while you change gears. Let the computer spend 30 minutes capturing on it's own and you can work on picking music, switch to a second machine and work on graphics in LiveType or Photoshop, or even just return voice & e-mail.



step one: Define which bin is your logging bin. This is where clips will be stored. It is a good idea to have a separate bin per source tape. This makes it easier to batch capture and archive.

step two: Review and Log your footage. Mark In and Out points like always. When a clip is defined Click the Log Clip button or press F2.

step three: Before a batch capture, SAVE your project. Bringing video in is one of the most demanding tasks on the application. You are most likely to crash during capture.

step four: When ready, click Batch Capture or press Control + C. You can only batch capture if your camera or deck supports device control. Most firewire devices and professional video decks are supported. You may need to get a special deck control cable and USB to serial adapter to use older professional decks.

step five: The best part of batch capture is that it is an automated process. You can leave your system unattended while it captures the logged clips. So your system will not hiccup, you will need to change a few preferences. Under the General Settings tab be sure to uncheck the Abort capture on dropped frames and Abort capture on time-code break boxes.

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