

11. Choose File > Save to save your project.

Optimizing performance in After Effects

How you configure After Effects and your computer determines how quickly After Effects renders projects. Complex compositions can require a large amount of memory to render, and the rendered movies can take a large amount of disk space to store. Search for “Improve Performance” in After Effects Help for tips that can help you configure your system, After Effects preferences, and your projects for better performance.

Rendering and exporting your composition

When you’re finished with your masterpiece—as you are now—you can render and export it at the quality settings you choose, and create movies in the formats that you specify. You will learn about exporting compositions in subsequent lessons, especially in [Lesson 14](#), “[Rendering and Outputting](#).”

Customizing workspaces

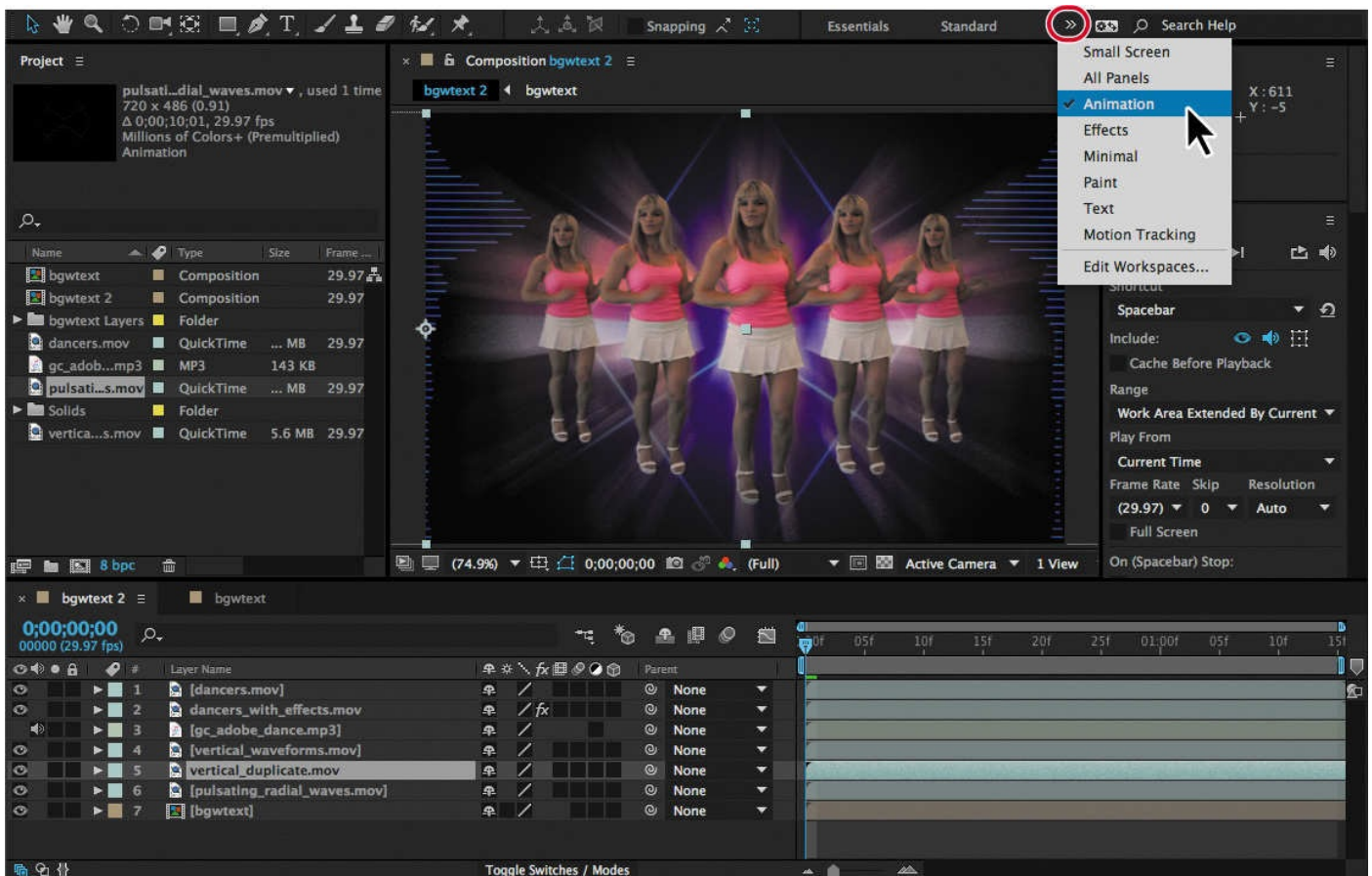
In the course of this project, you may have resized or repositioned some panels or opened new ones. As you modify a workspace, After Effects saves those modifications, so the next time you open the project, the most recent version of a workspace is used. However, you can choose to restore the original workspace at any time by choosing Window > Workspace > Reset “Essentials” To Saved Layout.

Alternatively, if you find yourself frequently using panels that aren’t part of the Essentials workspace, or if you like to resize or group panels for different types of projects, you can save time by customizing the workspace to suit your needs. You can save any workspace configuration, or use any of the preset workspaces that come with After Effects. These predefined workspaces are suitable for different types of workflows, such as animation or effects work.

Using predefined workspaces

Take a minute to explore the predefined workspaces in After Effects.

1. If you closed the Lesson01_Finished.aep project, open it—or any other project—to explore the workspaces.
2. Click Animation in the Workspace bar, which is next to the Tools panel. Click the double arrows to see workspaces that don’t fit in the Workspace bar.



After Effects opens the following panels at the right side of the application window: Info, Preview, Effects & Presets, Motion Sketch, Wiggler, Smoother, and Audio.

You can also change workspaces using the Workspace menu.

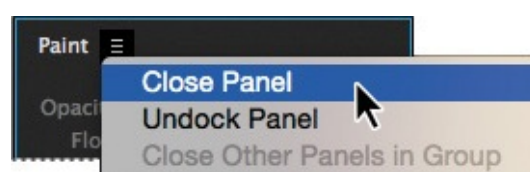
3. Choose Window > Workspace > Paint.

Different panels open. The Composition panel is replaced by the Layer panel, for easy access to the tools and controls you need to paint in your compositions.

Saving a custom workspace

You can save any workspace, at any time, as a custom workspace. Once saved, new and edited workspaces appear in the Window > Workspace submenu and in the Workspace bar at the top of the application window. If a project with a custom workspace is opened on a system other than the one on which it was created, After Effects looks for a workspace with a matching name. If After Effects finds a match (and the monitor configuration matches), it uses that workspace; if it can't find a match (or the monitor configuration doesn't match), it opens the project using the current local workspace.

1. Close a panel by choosing Close Panel from its panel menu.



2. Choose Window > Effects & Presets to open that panel.

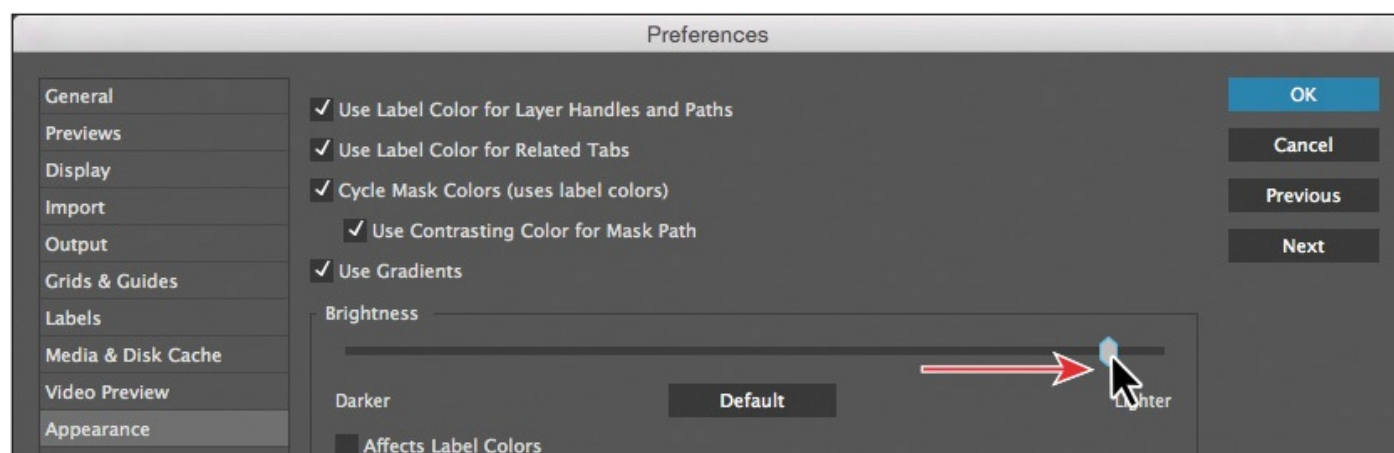
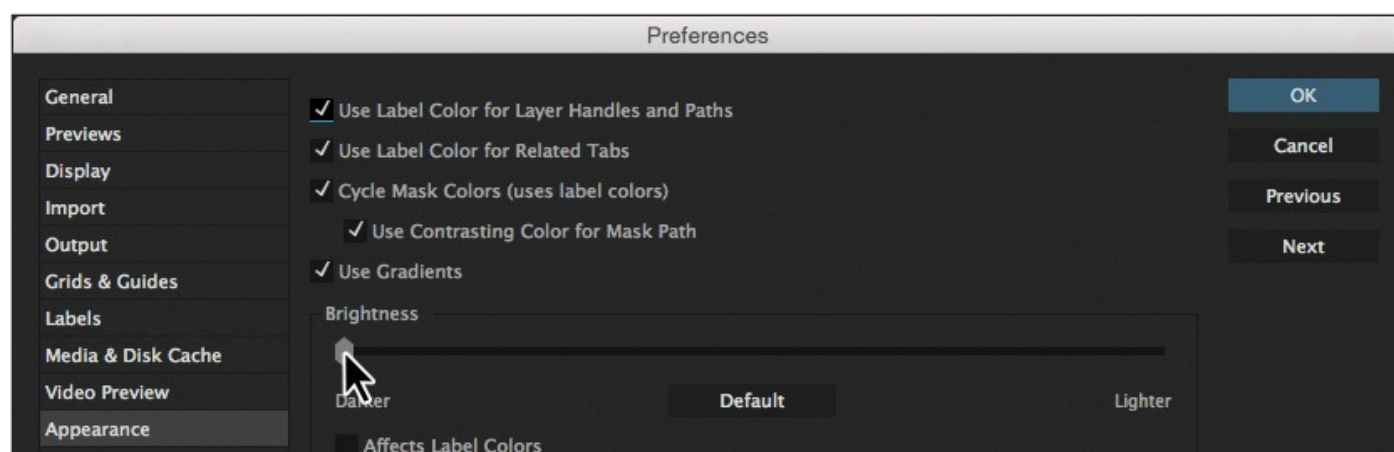
The Effects & Presets panel is added to the panel stack.

3. Choose Window > Workspace > Save As New Workspace. Enter a name for the workspace, and click OK to save it, or click Cancel if you don't want to save it.
4. Click Essentials in the Workspace bar.

Controlling the brightness of the user interface

You can brighten or darken the After Effects user interface. Changing the brightness preference affects panels, windows, and dialog boxes.

1. Choose Edit > Preferences > Appearance (Windows) or After Effects CC > Preferences > Appearance (Mac OS).
2. Drag the Brightness slider to the left or right, and notice how the screen changes.



3. Click OK to save the new brightness setting or Cancel to leave your preferences unchanged. You can click Default to restore the default brightness setting.

Finding resources for using After Effects

For complete and up-to-date information about using After Effects panels, tools, and other application features, visit the Adobe website. To search for information in After Effects Help and support documents, as well as on other websites relevant to After Effects users, simply enter a search term in the Search Help box in the upper right corner of the application window. You can narrow the results to view only Adobe Help and support documents.

The Start window that appears when you open the application provides access to video tutorials and other information to help you get the most out of After Effects.

For additional resources, such as tips and techniques and the latest product information, check out the After Effects Help And Support page at helpx.adobe.com/after-effects.html.

Congratulations! You've finished [Lesson 1](#). Now that you're acquainted with the After Effects workspace, you can continue to [Lesson 2](#) to learn how to create and animate compositions using effects and preset animations, or you can proceed to another lesson in this book.

Review questions

1. What are the basic components of the After Effects workflow?
2. What is a composition?
3. How can you find missing footage?
4. How can you preview your work in After Effects?
5. How can you customize an After Effects workspace?

Review answers

1. Most After Effects workflows include these steps: importing and organizing footage, creating compositions and arranging layers, adding effects, animating elements, previewing your work, and rendering and exporting the final composition.
2. A composition is where you create all animation, layering, and effects. An After Effects composition has both spatial and temporal (time) dimensions. Compositions include one or more layers—video, audio, still images—arranged in the Composition panel and in the Timeline panel. Simple projects may include only one composition, while elaborate projects may include several compositions to organize large amounts of footage or intricate effects sequences.
3. To locate missing footage, choose File > Dependencies > Find Missing Footage. Or type **Missing Footage** into the Search field in the Properties panel.
4. You can manually preview your work in After Effects by moving the current-time indicator, or you can press the spacebar or click the Play/Stop button in the Preview panel to preview your composition from the current-time indicator to the end of the composition. After Effects allocates enough RAM to play the preview (with audio) as fast as the system allows, up to the frame rate of the composition.
5. You can customize an After Effects workspace by dragging the panels into the configuration that best suits your working style. You can drag panels to new locations, move panels into or out of groups, place panels alongside each other, stack panels, and undock a panel so that it floats above the application window. As you rearrange panels, the other panels resize automatically to fit the application window. You can save custom workspaces by choosing Window > Workspace > Save As New Workspace.

2. Creating a Basic Animation Using Effects and Presets

Lesson overview

In this lesson, you'll learn how to do the following:

- Use Adobe Bridge to preview and import footage items.
- Work with the layers of an imported Adobe Illustrator file.
- Apply drop-shadow and emboss effects.
- Apply a text animation preset.
- Adjust the time range of a text animation preset.
- Precompose layers.
- Apply a dissolve transition effect.
- Adjust the transparency of a layer.
- Render an animation for broadcast use.



This lesson will take about an hour to complete. Download the Lesson02 project files from the Lesson & Update Files tab on your Account page at www.peachpit.com, if you haven't already done so. As you work on this lesson, you'll preserve the start files. If you need to restore the start files, download them from your Account page.