
How to Add a Lens Flare Effect in Adobe's After Effect



Introduction:

Lens flare is a common effect used in films and televisions to elevate the overall quality of cinematography. Many filmmakers use different types of anamorphic lens—a lens that allows a wider field of view by squeezing the image horizontally, to accomplish this grand effect. It is an effect that creates a light flare from a certain light source to add a cinematic element into the pictures.

However, anamorphic lenses are generally expensive to obtain, so many are left with a plainer result compared to their more ambitious vision. With Adobe's After Effect, now filmmakers, amateur to professional, can add a layer of complexity to their projects without costly expenses.

Require Materials:

Adobe Creative Cloud annual subscription.

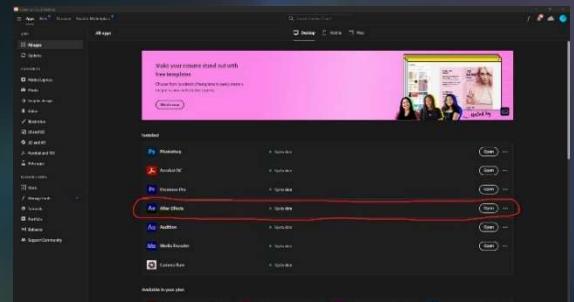
Any kind of videos with a bright light source.

A Windows PC (Windows 10 and up) or an Apple Mac (Mac OS Big Sur v11.0 or later).

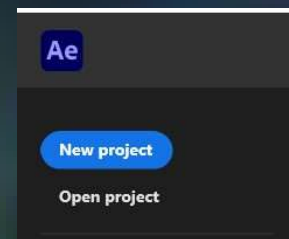
Instructions:

1. **LOCATE** **Adobe Creative Cloud** on the computer, whether on the desktop or search it up in the window tab.

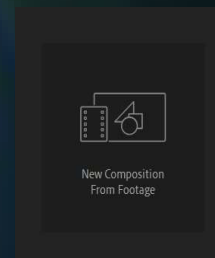
2. **OPEN** **After Effect** application within the Adobe Creative Cloud home menu.
WAIT for the application to load all of its assets.



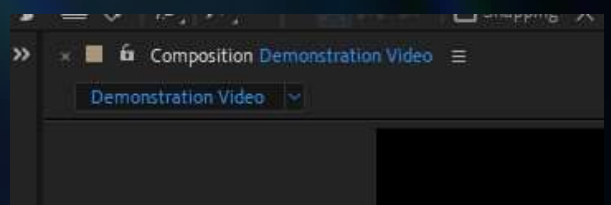
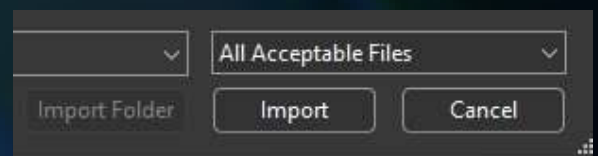
3. **CLICK** **"New Project"** on the top right after the application launches—the button should be in blue. A workbench station with five panels should pop up soon after.



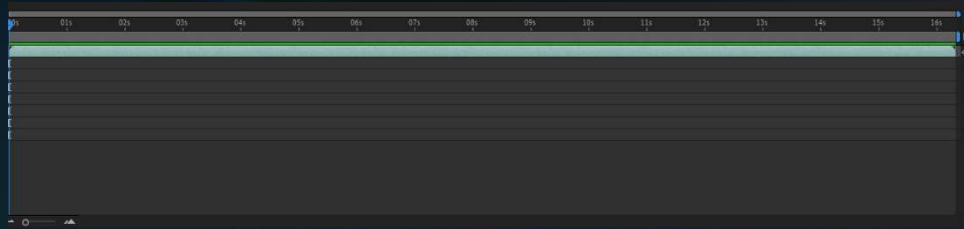
4. **SELECT** **"New Composition From Footage"** located in the middle of the application. A window should pop up; **SEARCH** up the videos that located within your computer.



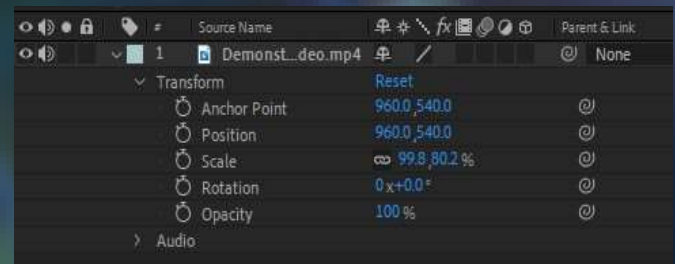
5. **CLICK** **"Import"** when done selecting the footage to edit. The footage's name should be located on the left side of the screen under **"Project"** as well as the panel below. The complete, original footage should appear in the biggest window **"Composition."**



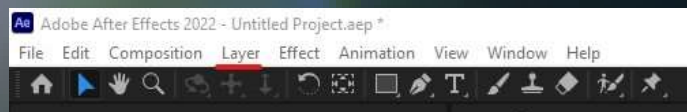
A time line should also appear underneath the video.



6. **ADJUST** the scale of the footage in “**Composition**” to fit the screen appropriately—using the dot corners; or, **USE** the little arrow pointing to the right, next to the footage’s name to reveal the dropdown menu in the bottom left tab.

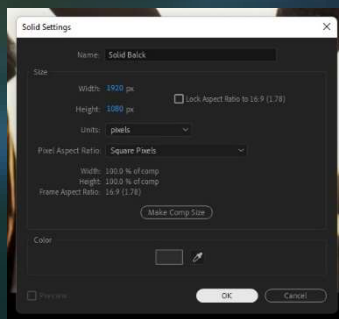
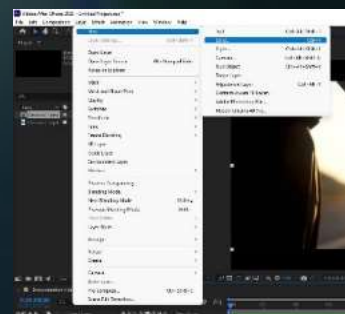


TAP “**Transform**” and **CLICK** on the number next to “**Scale**” to adjust the footage.

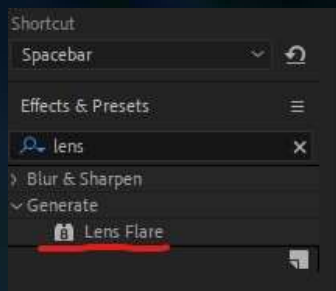


7. **HEAD** into “**Layer**” on the top bar of the tool bar/top of the screen and **SCROLL DOWN** to “**New.**”

SELECT “**Solid.**” A new small window appears.



CHANGE the color to **BLACK** by using the rectangle in the color tab—name the layer “**Solid Black.**” **HIT** “**OK**” when done. A new layer should appear above the footage’s name in the layer window below as well as the black screen in the middle.

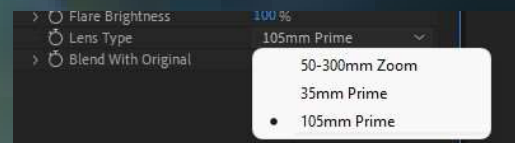


8. **HEAD** into “Effect and Presets” on the right side of the screen.
SEARCH up “Lens Flare.”

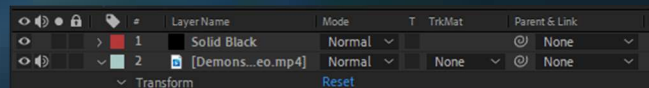
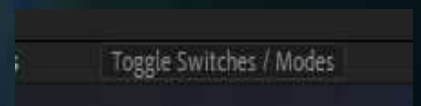
9. **HOLD** and **DRAG** the “Lens Flare” option onto the black screen in the “Composition” window. An editing tab should appear on the left-hand side of the screen (“Project Area”). A lens flare effect should appear in the black screen in “Composition” panel.



10. **SELECT** the option for “Lens Type” which contains three options (50–300mm Zoom, 35mm Prime, and 105mm Prime). Choose what is appropriate for the project.




11. **PRESS** the “Toggle Switches/ Modes” at the bottom of the screen, beneath the layer panel. **NOTE:** The button maybe be clicked beforehand; **MAKE SURE** the layer panel has tabs option bar that say **Normal**

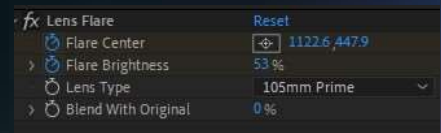


12. **GO** up the “Solid Black” in the layer panel.

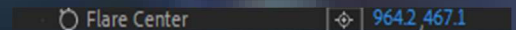
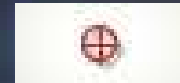
TOGGLE **Normal** to “Screen.” The footage should appear back into the main panel with the lens flare effect staying somewhere on the picture.



13. HIT the stopwatch icon  next to “Flare Center” in “Effect Control” to create a key frame—a beginning and end point of a smooth transition within the video to cause an animation effect.



CLICK on the lens flare effect (the red crosshair) on the main panel to adjust its position so it aligns with the light source; or, USE the coordination next to the “Flare Center” to perform transformations.



A small green dot should appear the above the timeline and below the “Current Time Indicator.”



NOTE: MAKE SURE the indicator is lined at the start of the timeline.

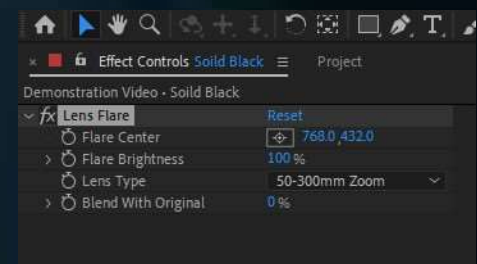


14. GO to the timeline of the video.

CREATE every key frame by adjusting the position of the lens flare effect (STEP 13) whenever the light moves in the video. This way, the animation of the lens flare is following along with the light source.

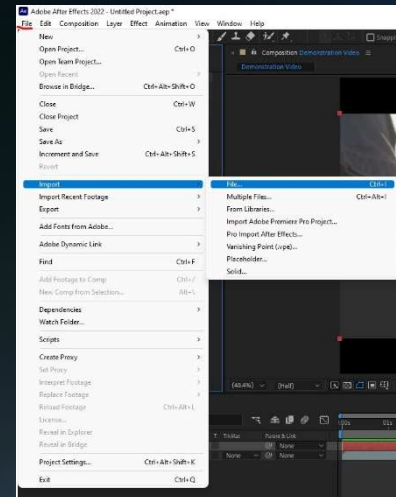
15. GO back to “Effect Control” and ADJUST the “Flare Brightness” accordingly by clicking on the percentage number so the effect will not be so blaring.

CREATE key frames as the light sources change their intensity during the video.



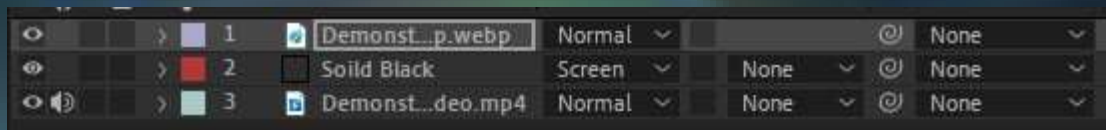
16. **HEAD** to “**File**” on the top bar of the screen, and **SELECT** “**Import.**” **CLICK** on “**Files.**” A window should appear.

NOTE: This step is optional, but will add a better visual into the final product: **DOWNLOAD** an image of a “fixed lens flare” with a black background.

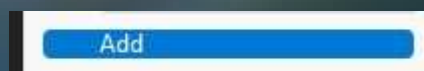


SEARCH the name of the image and **ADD** it into the project. The image’s name should appear in the “**Project**” panel.

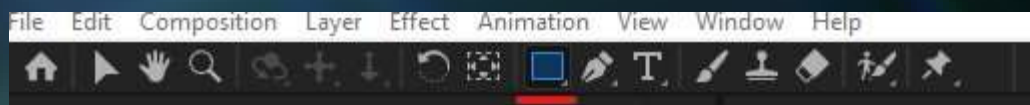
17. **HOLD** and **DRAG** the image’s name into the layer tab and put it above of the “**Solid Black.**” The image should appear in the “**Composition**” panel.



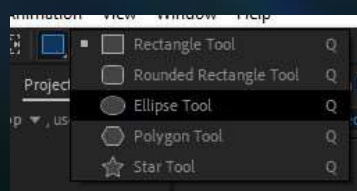
18. **TOGGLE** the option of “**Normal**” to “**Add**” of the image in the layer panel to blend the image into the video.



19. **GO** up to the **tool bar** (located right underneath the **functional tab**) and **CLICK** and **HOLD** on the **mesh tool** (the **rectangle icon**).




SWITCH it into an **eclipse icon** with the dropdown menu.




20. CREATE an eclipse circle around the light source of the footage, so the image will be confined within that area.

NOTE: The color of the perimeter will vary.



SWITCH back to the select tool  on the tool bar to adjust the size of the eclipse.

21. SELECT the image's name in the layer panel.

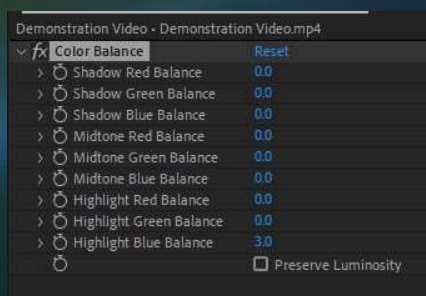
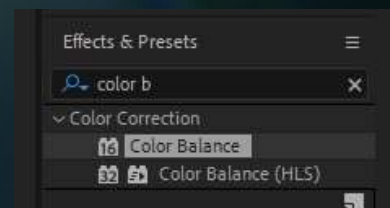
USE the crosshair  in the middle of the footage (belongs to the image) to align it with the light source and the lens flare; or, USE the dropdown menu to adjust the position (STEP 6, but with "Position").

CREATE new key frames that follow the animation of light source same as with the original lens flare effect (STEP 13 & 14).

22. REPEAT the same procedure (STEP 7 to STEP 21) for any additional light source that feature in the video.

23. GO to the "Effects and Presets" and SEARCH up "Color Balance."

DRAW and DROP the effect onto the original footage's name in the layer panel.



24. USE the dropdown menu in "Effect Control" tab to appropriately color correct the footage to further flush out the quality. TAP on the number to change the color of the footage.

NOTE: Keyframes can be created if animation for changing color is constructed.

25. Once done, the effect is complete, and you have yourself a nice cinematic clip to show off your filmmaking skills.
BE BOLD. BE CREATIVE.