Basics of Working in the Final Cut Pro Interface

There are four main windows in Final Cut Pro that you use while you are making your movie. You may want to open Final Cut Pro so you can view these windows and familiarize yourself with them.
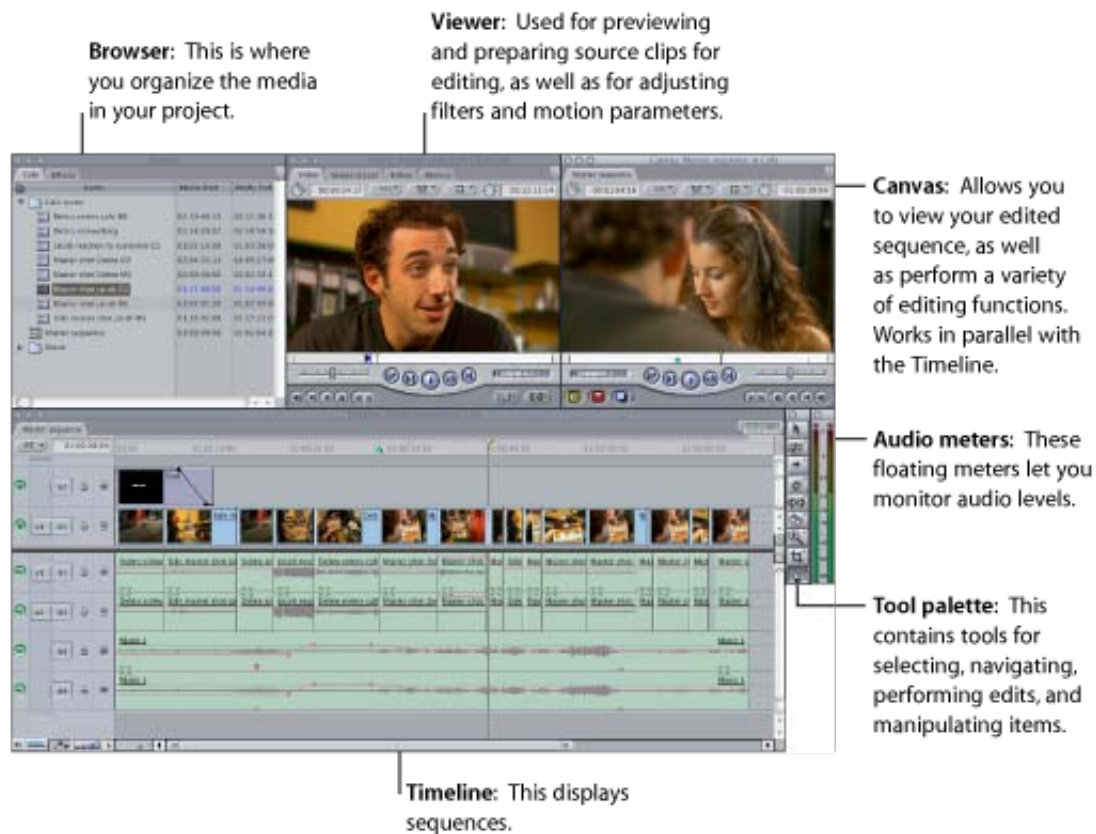
Note: If you're opening Final Cut Pro for the first time, you're prompted to choose an Easy Setup (a collection of settings that determines how Final Cut Pro works with your editing system) and a scratch disk (the hard disk where you'll store your captured media files). For more information about these settings, see Opening Final Cut Pro and Choosing Your Initial Settings.

To open Final Cut Pro

■ In the Finder, double-click the Final Cut Pro icon in the Applications folder.

You can also add the Final Cut Pro icon to the Dock for easier access. For more information, see Mac Help.

You see these windows when you open a sequence with clips already in it. These windows are covered in more detail in the chapters that follow.

Browser: This is where you organize the media in your project.

Viewer: Used for previewing and preparing source clips for editing, as well as for adjusting filters and motion parameters.

Canvas: Allows you to view your edited sequence, as well as perform a variety of editing functions. Works in parallel with the Timeline.

Audio meters: These floating meters let you monitor audio levels.

Tool palette: This contains tools for selecting, navigating, performing edits, and manipulating items.

Timeline: This displays sequences.

Before working in a window in Final Cut Pro, you must make sure it's the currently selected (or "active") window. Otherwise, your actions and commands might trigger actions in another window.

Important: Menu commands and keyboard shortcuts apply to the active window.

To determine the active window

- Look for the highlighted title bar.

  To make a window active

  Do one of the following:

- Click anywhere in the window.

- Press one of the following keyboard shortcuts:

  - *Browser:* Command-4
  - *Viewer:* Command-1
  - *Timeline:* Command-3
  - *Canvas:* Command-2
  - *Audio meters:* Option-4

  Note: There is no keyboard shortcut to open the Tool palette.

- Choose Window, then in the submenu, choose the window you want to display.

Learning Commands by Using Tooltips

When you move the pointer over a control in Final Cut Pro, a small box called a *tooltip* appears with a description of the control. Next to the description is the keyboard shortcut for using the control. You can turn tooltips off and on in the General tab of the User Preferences window.

This tooltip appears when the pointer is over the Play button in the Viewer.

To turn on tooltips in Final Cut Pro

1. Choose Final Cut Pro > User Preferences.

2. In the General tab, select Show Tooltips.

Shuttling Through a Clip or Sequence

While using the scrubber bar is a great way to quickly navigate to different parts of your clip or sequence, sometimes you want to play through your clip or sequence smoothly at varying speeds as you make decisions about where to place your edit points. The shuttle control gives you this kind of smooth control, playing back your video and audio at various speeds in either direction, much as the shuttle of a video deck does.

In particular, the shuttle control is useful for playing back at less than 1x speed. As the audio slows down, it's sometimes easier to distinguish individual words, and to set your In and Out points more accurately.

The shuttle control can play your clip or sequence at five speeds in each direction: 1/4x, 1/2x, 1x, 2x, and 4x. The shuttle control snaps to the closest available speed. When the shuttle control is at 1x speed, or 100 percent, the slider turns green.

To play clips or sequences at varying speeds using the shuttle control

■ Drag the shuttle slider to the left or right.

Dragging to the right moves the clip or sequence forward; dragging to the left moves the clip or sequence in reverse. The farther you drag the slider from the center, the faster the clip or sequence plays in that direction.

Drag to the right to play forward; drag to the left to play in reverse.

You can also use the J, K, and L keys on your keyboard to shuttle through your clip. When you use the keyboard shortcuts, the only speed available under 1x is 1/3x. However, you can use the keyboard commands to speed playback up to eight times normal speed, faster than you can play back using the shuttle control.

◀ Moves through reverse speeds   ‖ Pause   ▶ Moves through forward speeds
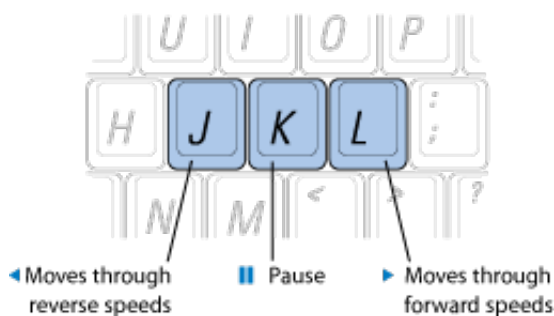
To begin forward playback at normal (1x) speed

■ Press L.

To begin reverse playback at normal (1x) speed

■ Press J.

To pause playback

- Press K.

To double the current playback speed

- Press L or J again.

  You can play back up to eight times normal speed, switching from 1x to 2x to 4x to 8x normal speed (pressing either key a total of four times).

  Pressing the key for playback in the opposite direction halves the playback speed, slowing playback in that direction down until it reaches 1x playback. Playback then begins doubling in reverse, starting from 1x.

To immediately reverse the playback direction

- Press K to pause, then press the key for the direction you want.

To move the playhead one frame at a time

- Hold down the K key, then press J or L.

To move the playhead at below 1/3x speed

- Hold down the K key, then press and hold down J or L.

  Note: When using keyboard shortcuts for device control, the speed of forward (L) and reverse (J) may differ depending on your video equipment.

Jogging Through a Clip or Sequence

To move through a clip or sequence more precisely, you can use the jog control. The jog control offers a one-to-one correspondence between the mouse and the playhead's movement, but also provides frame-by-frame accuracy that's not dependent on the duration of the clip or sequence. It's a good tool to use to play through a section of a clip or sequence very slowly, looking for the right frame to cut on.

To move forward or backward using the jog control

■ Drag the jog control to the left or to the right.

The playhead moves with a one-to-one correspondence to the movement of your mouse. Moving your mouse slowly moves the playhead slowly, even frame by frame. Moving the mouse faster moves the playhead faster. If you stop dragging, the playhead stops instantly.

To move precisely through a clip, drag the jog control.

You can also move the playhead one frame at a time or one second at a time, by using the arrow keys on the keyboard.

To move forward one frame at a time

■ Press the Right Arrow key.

To move back one frame at a time

■ Press the Left Arrow key.

To move forward one second at a time

■ Press Shift while you press the Right Arrow key.

To move backward one second at a time

■ Press Shift while you press the Left Arrow key.

Editing Controls

The Timeline editing controls determine which tracks are selected and turned on for editing and playback.
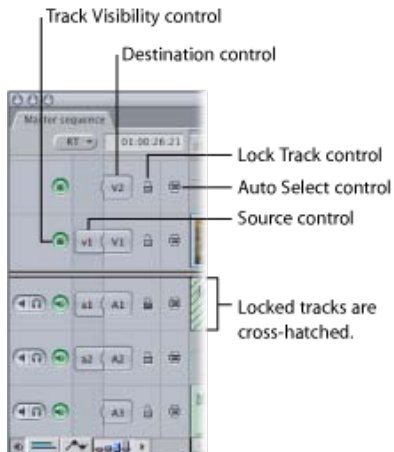
- *Source and Destination controls:* These allow you to connect (or *patch*) clip items of the source clip in the Viewer to tracks in the Timeline. These controls are primarily used in three-point editing to determine which source clip items' tracks are edited into your sequence, and where they are placed.

  The number of available Source controls corresponds to the number of clip items of the source clip currently open in the Viewer. For example, a typical DV clip has one video track and two audio tracks. In this case, one video and two audio Source controls appear in the Timeline. If, instead, you open a clip in the Viewer that has one video item and four audio items, then one video and four audio Source controls appear in the Timeline. For more information, see Three-Point Editing.

- *Track Visibility control:* Determines whether the contents of a track are displayed and rendered in your sequence. When a track is disabled, it appears darkened in the Timeline, but its contents remain in your sequence and can still be edited. When you play back your sequence, disabled tracks don't appear in the Canvas or on an external monitor, nor will they be rendered or output to tape with that sequence.

  Note: Render files for a track are deleted if the track is disabled. You can have Final Cut Pro display a warning before this occurs by selecting the "Warn if visibility change deletes render file" option in the Editing tab of the User Preferences window. For more information, see Choosing Settings and Preferences.

- *Lock Track control:* Prevents a track's contents from being moved or changed in any way. Overlays in locked tracks can also be protected by deselecting the "Pen tools can edit locked item overlays" option in the Editing tab of the User Preferences window. Locked tracks are cross-hatched all the way across the Timeline. Tracks can be locked and unlocked at any time. For more information, see Choosing Settings and Preferences.

- *Auto Select control:* Enabling the Auto Select controls of specific tracks in the Timeline limits which tracks are affected by various functions such as copying, pasting, deleting, the Match Frame command, and so on.

  Note: You can think of In and Out points as limiting your edits in the horizontal (time) dimension and Auto Select as limiting your edits in the vertical dimension.

Audio Controls

The following controls affect vertically working with audio in the tracks.

- *Audio Controls button:* Click to display the mute and solo buttons to the left of each audio track in the Timeline. By default, these controls are hidden.

- *Mute and solo controls:* Use to turn on or turn off audio playback on individual tracks for monitoring purposes. The track strips in the Audio Mixer have corresponding mute and solo buttons that work the same way. For more information, see Overview of the Audio Mixer.

  - *Mute:* Click to turn off audio playback for that track. The mute button affects monitoring during playback only. Muting a track does not delete panning or audio level keyframes for the clip items in that track, nor does it prevent fader automation.

  - *Solo:* Click to listen only to an individual track. When you solo a track, all others are muted except other tracks already soloed. For example, if you click the solo button on track A1, and it's the only track with solo selected, all other audio tracks are muted. If you turn on the solo button on multiple tracks, all tracks with solo turned on play back, while all other tracks are muted.

  Note: Mute and solo controls affect only playback in the Timeline. They do not suspend audio output during Print to Tape or Edit to Tape operations, or when exporting to a movie or audio file.

Using Shortcut Menus

Shortcut menus (also called *contextual menus*) are available in nearly every section of every window and offer a quick way to perform various tasks. The commands available in a shortcut menu depend on the location of the pointer. For example, a shortcut menu in the Browser shows options different from those available in a shortcut menu in the Timeline.

To view and use a shortcut menu

1. Press the Control key and click an item (this is called *Control-clicking*), or Control-click an area in a window in Final Cut Pro.

2. In the shortcut menu that appears, choose the command you want, then release the mouse button.

Note: If you have a multibutton mouse, clicking the right mouse button is the same as Control-clicking by default.

Using Keyboard Shortcuts

Keyboard shortcuts let you perform commands in Final Cut Pro by using the keyboard instead of by pointing and clicking. These shortcuts can help you work more efficiently. For example, to create a new sequence, you press Command–N; to zoom in, you press Command–Equal Sign (=).

Note: The default keyboard shortcuts for tasks are presented throughout this documentation, as well as in menu commands and tooltips. Tooltips appear when you move the pointer over a control in Final Cut Pro and show the name of the control, as well as the current shortcut key(s) assigned to that control.

Final Cut Pro allows you to change the default keyboard shortcuts to better suit your needs. For example, if your style of editing requires a particular set of commands that isn't readily available by default, you can modify the default keyboard layout with your own set of commands. You can also create different keyboard layouts for different tasks. For example, you may find it useful to create different keyboard layouts for editing, color correction, multicamera editing, and audio mixing.

For more information on how to customize keyboard layouts in Final Cut Pro, see Customizing the Interface.

Working with Tabs and Tabbed Windows

The Viewer and Browser contain tabs that let you access different functions. The Browser also contains tabs for open projects. Tabs in the Timeline and Canvas represent open sequences.

The Browser contains tabs for open projects and effects.

The Viewer contains tabs that specify functions within clips.

The Canvas contains a tab for each open sequence.

Like the Canvas, the Timeline contains a tab for each open sequence.
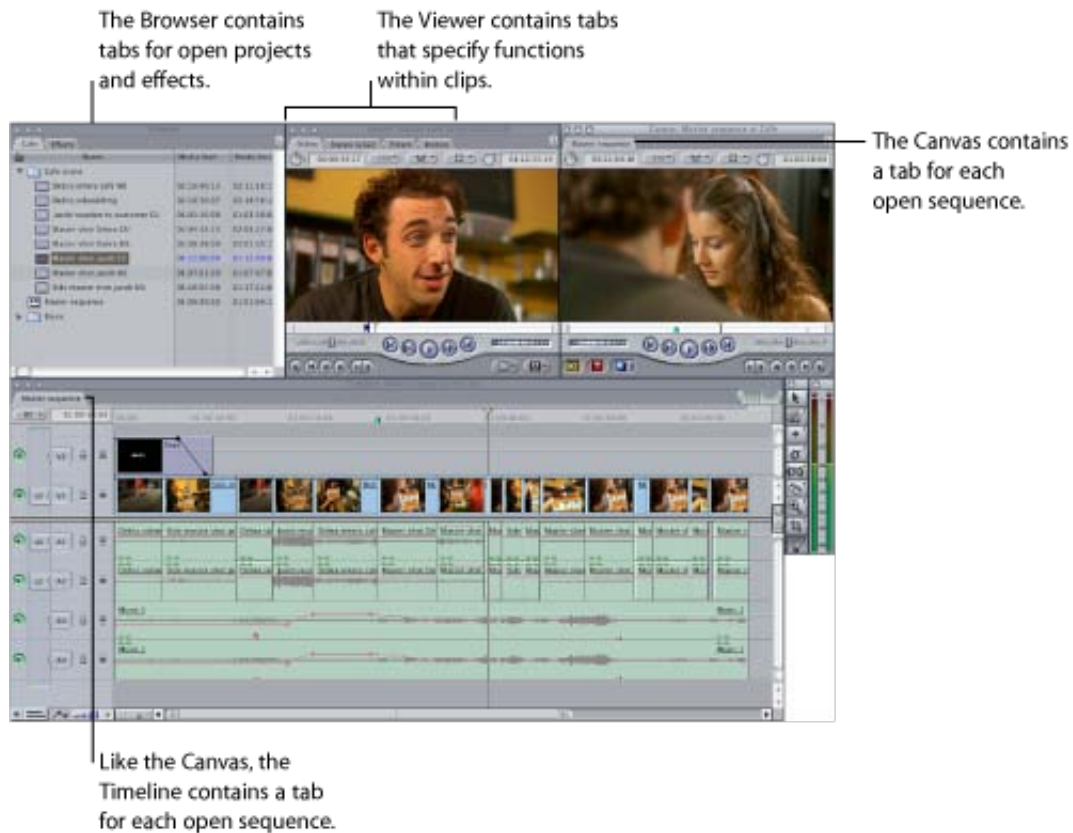
To make a tab active

■ Click the tab.

To close a tab

Do one of the following:

■ Click the tab to make it the frontmost tab, then choose File > Close Tab.

■ Control–click the tab, then choose Close Tab from the shortcut menu.

■ Click a tab to make it the frontmost tab, then press Control–W.

When multiple tabs appear in a Timeline or Canvas window, you can have Final Cut Pro close all the tabs except the active one.

To close all tabs except the active one in the Timeline or Canvas window

Do one of the following:

- Click the tab you want to keep open to make it the frontmost tab, then choose File > Close Other Tabs.

- Control-click the tab, then choose Close Other Tabs from the shortcut menu.

  Tip: The Close Other Tabs command is available in the Keyboard Layout window (for assigning a keyboard shortcut) and in the Button List window (for assigning a shortcut button).

  In the Browser, you can also close all open bins that are represented as tabs.

To close all bin tabs in the Browser window

- Control-click a bin tab, then choose Close All Bins from the shortcut menu.

To switch between tabs of the active window

Do one of the following:

- To select the previous tab, press Command-Shift-Left Bracket ([).

- To select the next tab, press Command-Shift-Right Bracket (]).

  When multiple tabs appear in a window, you can reorder them by dragging a tab at the top of the window.

To reposition a tab at the top of a window

- Drag the tab left or right to the new position.

  You can also assign colors to tabs that represent bins and sequences by assigning a color label to the bin or sequence icon in the Browser.

To assign a color to a tab that represents a bin or a sequence

Do one of the following:

- In the Browser, Control-click a bin or a sequence, choose Label from the shortcut menu, then choose a label from the submenu.

These are the various labels available.

- Control-click in the Label column of the bin or sequence, then choose a label from the shortcut menu.

  The corresponding tab displays the color you chose. For more information about assigning labels, see Using Labels to Organize Your Clips.

  When you hold the pointer over a tab, a tooltip appears showing the location of the tab in the hierarchy of tabs.

  You can drag tabs out of their main, or parent, windows so they appear in a separate window. This is useful when you are working on more than one sequence or project at a time.

To make a tab appear in its own window

- Drag the tab out of its parent window (Browser, Viewer, Canvas, or Timeline).
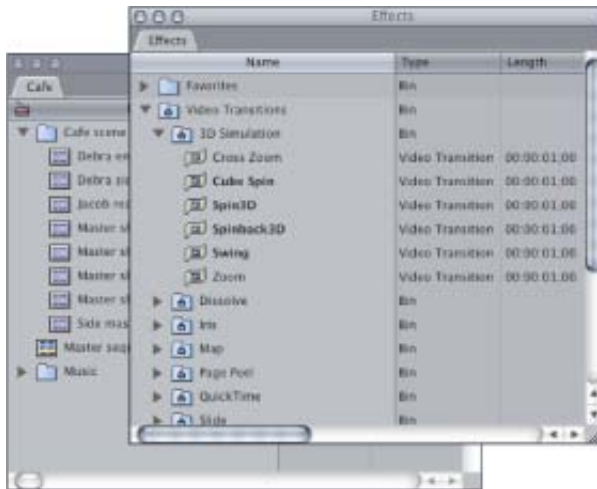
The Effects tab is dragged out of the Browser and appears in its own window.

To put a tab back in its original window

- Drag the tab to the title bar of its parent window.

Drag the tab to the title bar of the original window to put it back.
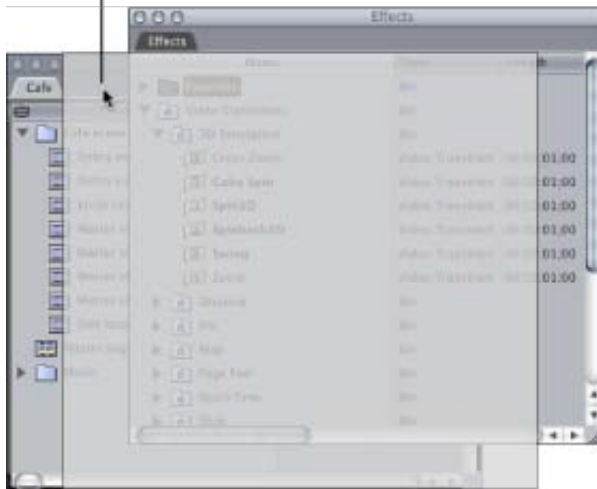
Changing Sequence Settings

You can change individual settings for a sequence, such as image height or codec, or you can change all the settings at once by loading a sequence preset (which is simply a set of predefined sequence settings).

To view and change individual settings for a sequence

1. Select a sequence in the Browser or in the Timeline.

2. Do one of the following:

   - Choose Sequence > Settings, or press Command–0 (zero).

   - Control–click the sequence's icon, then choose Settings from the shortcut menu.

3. In the Sequence Settings window, click a tab, change its settings, then click OK.
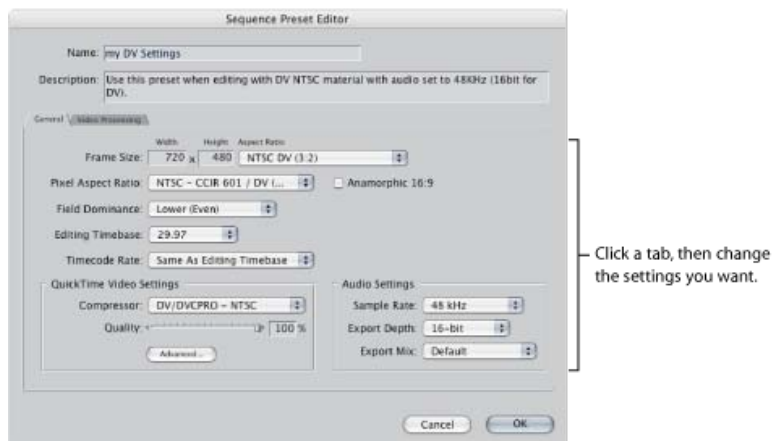
To change sequence settings using a new sequence preset

1. Select a sequence in the Browser.

2. Do one of the following:

   - Choose Sequence > Settings, or press Command–0 (zero).

   - Control–click the sequence's icon, then choose Settings from the shortcut menu.

3. Click the Load Sequence Preset button.

4. Choose a new preset from the pop–up menu in the Select Sequence Preset dialog, then click OK.

   Important: Final Cut Pro does not allow you to change the editing timebase of a sequence once it contains clips. If you load a sequence preset with a different editing timebase, the editing timebase remains unchanged.

General Tab for Sequences

The following is a list of General tab settings.

- *Name:* Enter a name for the preset. This name appears in the Audio/Video Settings window in two places: the Sequence Preset pop-up menu in the Summary tab, and the list of presets in the Sequence Presets tab.

- *Description:* Enter a brief description, or summary, of what the preset is to be used for.

- *Frame Size:* Choose the horizontal and vertical image dimensions from the Aspect Ratio pop-up menu. To use a different frame size, choose Custom, then enter a nonconstrained frame size in the Width and Height fields.

  Note: Even if you'll be outputting at a smaller frame size for multimedia use, it's best to edit your video at its full size and then scale it down later.

- *Pixel Aspect Ratio:* Choose a pixel aspect ratio that matches the format you are working with. The pixel aspect ratio determines the shape of each pixel, which affects the overall dimensions and aspect ratio of your video image.

  - *Square:* For multimedia and uncompressed high definition video.

  - *NTSC – CCIR 601 / DV:* For standard definition NTSC formats such as Digital Betacam, DV, or DVD.

  - *PAL – CCIR 601:* For standard definition PAL formats.

  - *HD (960x720):* For 720p HD video, such as DVCPRO HD and HDV.

  - *HD (1280x1080):* For 1080i60 HD video, such as DVCPRO HD and HDV.

  - *HD (1440x1080):* For 1080i50 HD video, such as DVCPRO HD and HDV.

- *Anamorphic 16:9:* Select this checkbox only if you're editing standard definition anamorphic 16:9 media. This setting only affects the way video is displayed on your monitor and does not actually rescale your media. For more information on anamorphic 16:9 video, see Working with Anamorphic 16:9 Media.

- *Field Dominance:* Choose the field dominance of your captured video. Most video is Upper (Odd) or Lower (Even) depending on the video capture interface you're using.

  For progressive (non-interlaced) video, set the field dominance to None. For DV NTSC and DV PAL, always set this to Lower (Even). For more information, see About Field Dominance.

- *Editing Timebase (frame rate):* Choose the frame rate of your sequence. For a list of common frame rates, see Choosing a Frame Rate.

Important: A sequence's timebase can be changed only if no clips have been edited into it. If there are clips in the sequence, they must be removed before you can change the timebase.

- *Timecode Rate:* This pop-up menu is available in the Sequence Preset Editor window, but not when you choose Sequence > Settings for an existing sequence. Use this pop-up menu to choose the timecode rate of your sequence. For most sequences, the timecode rate should match—or be directly related to—the sequence's editing timebase (frame rate). For example, a 23.98 fps sequence would normally use 24 fps timecode. Unless you have a specific reason, choose Same as Editing Timebase.

  If you need to change the timecode rate of an existing sequence, select the sequence and choose Modify > Timecode, then adjust the rate and format of your sequence's timecode. One of the main reasons for doing this is when editing a 24 fps sequence while using 25 fps timecode.

  Note: Some timecode rates are not available with some editing timebases.

Tools and Modifier Keys

The Tool palette contains tools for selecting, editing, zooming, cropping, and distorting items in the Timeline. All tools in the Tool palette can be selected using keyboard shortcuts.

Tool	Tool name	To select tool	Tool + Command key	Tool + Shift key	Tool + Option key
	Selection	A	Select Additional	Select Range	Link On/Off
	Selection on Point	A	Gear Down	Unconstrained	Delete Point
	Selection on Line Segment	A	Gear Down	Adjust Line Segment	Add Keyframe
	Edit Selection	G	Select Additional	Ripple Tool	Link On/Off
	Group Selection	G + G	Select Additional	Select Additional	Link On/Off
	Range Selection	G + G + G			Link On/Off
	Select Track Forward	T		All Forward	Link On/Off
	Select Track Backward	T + T		All Backward	Link On/Off
	Select Track	T + T + T			Link On/Off
	Select All Tracks Forward	T + T + T + T		Track Forward	Link On/Off
	Select All Tracks Backward	T + T + T + T		Track Backward	Link On/Off
	Roll	R	Select Additional	Ripple Tool	Link On/Off
	Ripple	R + R	Select Additional	Roll Tool	Link On/Off
	Slip	S	Gear Down	Select Clip	Link On/Off
	Slide	S + S	Gear Down	Select Clip	Link On/Off
	Speed	S + S + S	Gear Down	Scrub/Snap to 10%	Move Frame to Time
	Razor Blade	B		Razor Blade All	Link On/Off
	Razor Blade All	B + B		Razor Blade	
	Hand	H	Zoom In		Zoom Out
	Zoom In	Z	Hand Tool	Zoom In Maximum	Zoom Out

	Zoom Out	Z + Z	Hand Tool		Zoom In	
	Scrub	H + H	Selection Tool	Selection Tool		
	Crop	C	Opposite Sides	All Sides		
	Distort	D	Perspective		Resize	
	Pen	P	Smooth On/Off	Adjust Line	Delete Point	
	Pen on Point	P	Gear Down	Move Point	Delete Point	
	Pen on Line Segment	P	Gear Down	Adjust Line Segment		
	Delete Point	P + P			Pen	
	Delete on Point	P + P	Gear Down		Pen	
	Delete on Line Segment	P + P	Gear Down	Adjust Line Segment	Pen	
	Smooth Point	P + P + P				

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