Getting Started with Video Transitions and Effects in Premiere Pro

To dissolve, or not to dissolve — that is the question. And we've got the answer. Actually, we've got answers and info on all kinds of transitions and effects found in Adobe Premiere Pro. So whether you're dissolving your clips in a montage to mark the passage of time, flipping through pages on your video for a comic-book feel, or paying homage to those infamous *Star Wars* wipe transitions, then read on.
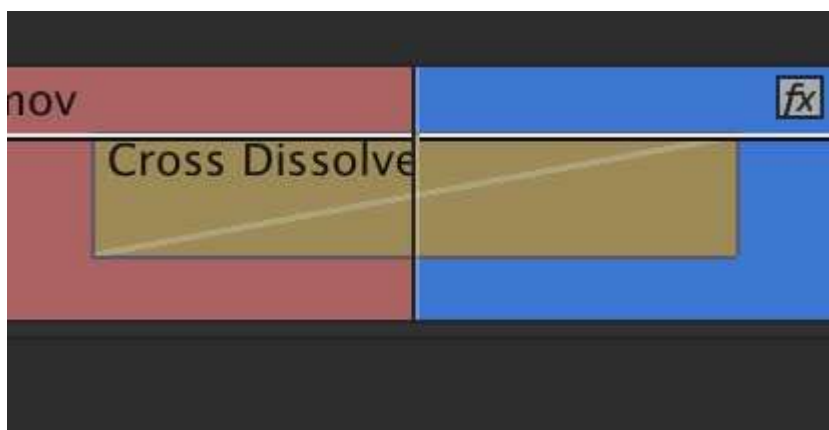
Video transitions

Generally, an editor will use a simple cut to move from one shot to another — the most basic and common type of transition. In some instances, you can smooth out or stylize your edit by applying transition effects in between clips, at the beginning, or at the end of a clip. Transition effects can also be used as a storytelling device.

There are a variety of transitions available in Premiere Pro. In the Project window, choose the "Effects" tab and open the "Video Transitions" folder. Here, you can find anything from basic dissolves to wipes, slides, and zooms.

Applying a dissolve transition

The most commonly used transition is a dissolve, in which two clips overlap each other, with one shot gradually replacing the previous one. Let's look at the different ways we can apply a cross-dissolve transition onto our clips on the timeline. (This applies to all other transitions, as well.)

1. Under "Dissolve" in "Video Transitions," drag the "Cross Dissolve" transition in between two clips on your timeline.

2. The Cross Dissolve is your default video transition (note the blue box around the icon). This means you can right-click in between two clips and apply the transition by choosing

"Apply Default Transitions" (CMD+D / CTRL+D). Even better, you can highlight edit points (using shift) and apply the transition to multiple clips.

3. If you have multiple clips on your timeline that need transitions, you can also select the clips and choose "Sequence > Apply Default Transitions to Selection" (SHIFT+D).

Tip: To change the default transition, right-click on a transition in the Effects panel, and choose "Set Selected as Default Transition."

Fade In

Fade Out

In order to fade in or fade out, place your dissolve transition at the start or end of a clip. These clips should not contain any clips before or after them.

Customizing transitions

Adjust transition length: After placing a transition on the timeline, you can adjust its length by placing your cursor on one of the outer edges of the transition. Your cursor will then change into a red bracket tool with a transition icon. Now you can customize the duration of the transition by shortening or extending it. The longer the transition duration, the longer the effect will be visible.

Adjust transition alignment: Once applied, the transition can also be repositioned over the cut. Just select and drag the transition left or right. This will determine how many frames from each clip are used for the transition.

Customize transition using Effect Controls: Each transition has its own set of options. As an example, let's look at the "Iris Round" transition. After you apply it on a cut, highlight the transition on the timeline by clicking on it. Open up the "Effect Controls" tab in the Source Monitor window. Here, you'll find customizable preferences (Duration, Start/End, Border Width/Color, Reverse). You can also tweak the transition length and alignment in this window using the timeline ruler on the right.

Change/delete transition: If you'd like to change a transition, simply drag the new transition over the current transition. To delete a transition, right-click on the transition and choose "Clear" (DELETE or BACKSPACE).

Note: For videos, the maximum length of a transition depends on the amount of available "head" and "tail" footage on both clips.

Video effects

The list of video effects available in Premiere Pro runs a bit longer than the transitions list. Let's start by going over some of the more basic effects. In the "Effects" tab, open up "Video Effects."

Tip: Create bins of your favorite effects (or transitions) using the custom bin feature.

Applying and removing effects: Similar to transitions, there are several ways to apply effects onto your clips.
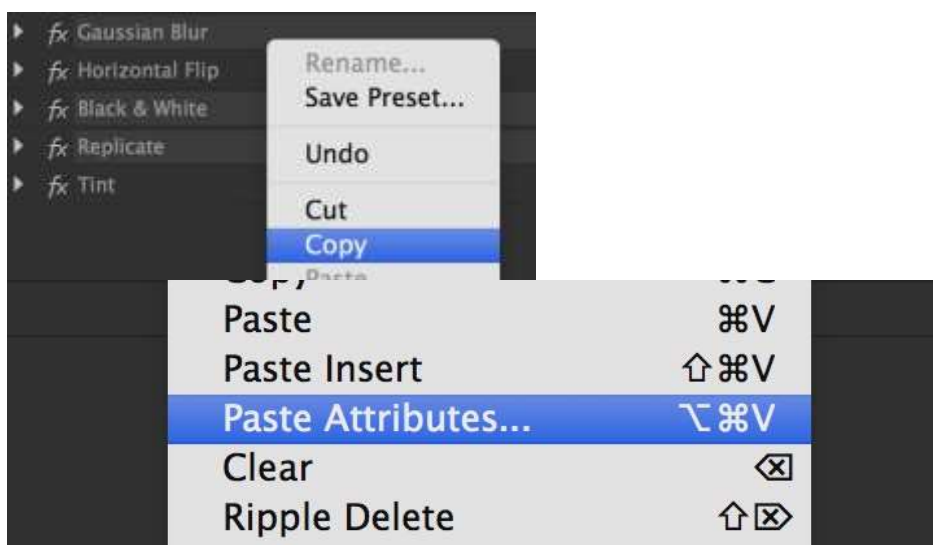
1. Drag an effect from the "Effects" panel onto a single clip or multiple selected clips on the timeline.
2. Select a single clip or multiple clips on the timeline and double-click on the effect in the "Effects" panel to apply it.

You can enable/disable effects in "Effect Controls" by clicking on the "fx" icon to the left of the effect title. This will allow you to quickly preview your clip with and without the effect.

Copy/paste effects: You can easily copy effects from a clip on the timeline and paste it onto several others. Here's how:
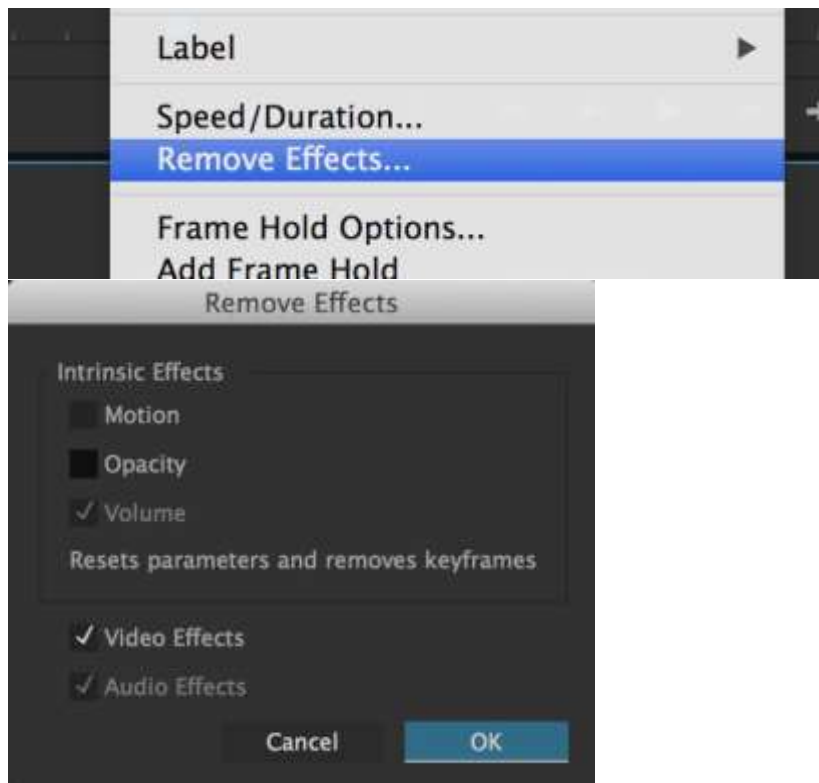
1. On the Timeline, select the clip that contains the effect(s) you want to copy.
2. Choose "Edit > Copy (CMD+C / CTRL+C).
3. Select the clips you want to paste the effect(s) onto.
4. Choose "Edit > Paste Attributes" (OPT+CMD+V / CTRL+ALT+V).

You can also copy multiple effects from a clip. Just select the clip on the Timeline and go to "Effect Controls." Select the effects you would like to copy (holding CMD/CTRL to select multiple effects). Once copied, you can select the clips on the timeline to paste onto and choose Edit > Paste (CMD+V / CTRL+V).

Remove effects: For selected effects, select the clip on the timeline and go into "Effect Controls." Now select one or more effects you would like to remove and hit DELETE or

BACKSPACE. For all effects, select clips on the timeline, right-click, and choose "Remove Effects."

Simple effects to get started

Here are five simple effects you can get started with:

Black and White: Under "Image Control," choose "Black & White."

Blur: Under "Blur & Sharpen," choose "Gaussian Blur." You can specify the blurriness in the Effect Controls.

Horizontal/Vertical Flip: You can find both of these options under "Transform."

Replicate: Under "Stylize," choose "Replicate." You can specify the count in Effect Controls.

Tint: You'll find Tint under "Color Correction." In the Effect Controls, specify your choice of colors in "Map Black/White To."
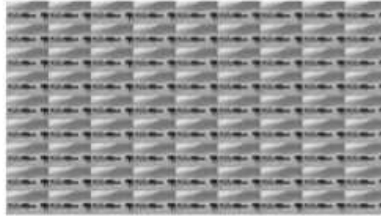
ORIGINAL   BLACK & WHITE   BLUR

HORIZONTAL FLIP   REPLICATE   TINT

Using any of these transitions and effects can completely change the way your project looks and feels, so while they're a great tool to have when used correctly, they can also have a negative impact if used incorrectly or used in excess. It's important to find out what works best for you and experiment a little bit at a time, figuring out your style along the way. That way you don't overwhelm your project, and you don't get too far away from the most important part of your editing — which is telling a great story!