

10 11 Things you MUST know about FCP

The purpose of this is to get you started in the happy world of Final Cut Pro. Actually not really 'started' but sort of up to a mid level of efficiency in basic editing. The idea for this page came to me in June 2002 when a very good friend of mine, an audio engineer by trade, got sucked into editing a video on a clients TiBook. He had used iMovie on his kids home movies and frankly, he didn't know what he didn't have until he had the opportunity to use Final Cut.

In the next 15 minutes on the phone while I was driving home I probably saved him what took me a couple of months of screwing around to figure out. So this is the summary of that conversation.

Assuming of course you have figured out how to plug in your camcorder and CAPTURE your clips and you have a couple of clips in your bin, let's take a look at some ways to edit and arrange them, efficiently.

1. TRIMMING CLIPS

First double click on any clip in the bin. It will pop up in the VIEWER. Hit the SPACE BAR, it will play. Press the "I" key to mark your in point and the "O" key to mark your out point. This works great if you want to edit on action. Sometimes however you want to edit to music. We'll get to that later. If you double click on another clip the edit points you made on this clip will stay there. If you want you could just fire thru your clips and mark in and out points.

Pressing "SHIFT I" will jump to the IN POINT.

Pressing "SHIFT O" will jump to the OUT POINT.

2. ZOOM

With the TIMELINE window highlighted (dark grey not light grey bar at top) press "APPLE +" and "APPLE -". This is totally important if you are doing fine work. HOT TIP. Sometimes if you zoom in you will zoom past where the PLAYBACK HEAD is. If you do just hit the SPACEBAR twice, once to play and once to stop. It will immediately center the timeline on the PLAYBACK HEAD if you do this.

3. SNAP TO...

Drag a couple of clips down to the timeline and try to butt them up against each other. It will either be "snappy" or "squishy". Try hitting the "N" key and drag the clips around again. (Notice the icon in the upper right corner of the TIMELINE window changing.) This will toggle on and of the SNAP TO... feature. It will allow you to snap to the end of clips, markers, overlays all kinds of stuff. Basically sometimes it's a pain. You can turn it on and off with the "N" at anytime.

4. SLICING CLIPS

Put your cursor anywhere in the timeline and press "CTRL V" all the TRACKS with yellow highlights (on the far right side) will be cut into. This is a great way of trimming off some crap at the end of a clip if it is already in the timeline.

5. SHIFT DELETE

Anyone can select a clip in the timeline and hit the delete key. But when you hit SHIFT DELETE it will delete the clip AND ripple everything down to fill the gap left behind. Killer shortcut.

6. Next/Previous Edit

Try hitting the semi colon and apostrophe when you are in the timeline window. It will cause you to jump forward and back to the next or previous edit. Very cool if you are jumping round in a project.

7. LOCKED CLIPS

"SHIFT L" look at the other icon in the upper right corner of the timeline window. This is really important if you are editing clips in the timeline. With LOCK ON the associated audio for any video clip will drag with the video. With LOCK OFF it will allow you to drag the video separately.

8. NORMAL MODE

If for some reason your curser turns into some foreign creature press the letter "A". it will return you to the familiar arrow pointer.

9. SLIP MODE

Imagine a piece of cardboard with a hole in it. And then imagine slipping that back and forth across a larger photo. This is what "SLIP" is all about. Put three clips back to back to back. They should be trimmed down a bit to include only the part you think you want. Now press "S" and click and HOLD on the middle clip. You will see an outline of how large the rest of the media of that clip is and be able to drag right and left to select the part you want to "see through the hole in the cardboard".

SLIP MODE will NOT effect the location of the edit on the timeline which is great if it has been set to the beat of music. SLIP MODE will however allow you to slips something back and forth in time within that hole.

10. ROLLING EDIT

Press "R". Click right on the line between two clips and drag left or right. If you drag LEFT it will make the first clip shorter and the second clip longer. If you drag RIGHT it will make the first clip longer and the second clip shorter. Play with it. Very Cool.

11. AUDIO WAVEFORM

To view the audio waveform in the timeline press "APPLE-OPTION-W". This will toggle on and off the audio waveform. It will slow down your ability to scroll so you may want to leave it off unless you really need it.

Anyway, these are my TOP 10 things you must know about Final Cut Pro if you want to edit efficiently. There are GREAT resources available. I would suggest you purchase the DV Companion. It's really great and will help you tons.

PAYBACK TIME. If you read this and found any part of it informative, Please eMail me and let me know. If I find that people use this, maybe I'll write another.