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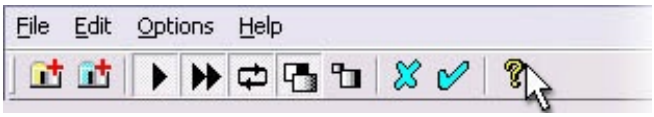
Before You Begin

Welcome to SpiceMASTER™ 2.5 TFX

Welcome! This help guide holds everything you need to know about Pixelan Software's **SpiceMASTER 2.5 TFX**. Although SpiceMASTER is powerful, it does not have a steep learning curve −− a key benefit. Thus there is no need for a thick manual or training tape, or a large time investment by you to use it effectively. (Hooray!) The easy, enjoyable way to learn is to step through this concise guide with SpiceMASTER visible on your screen.

To see how to APPLY SpiceMASTER 2.5 TFX, view the **Please Read FIRST** file in your Start > Program Files > Pixelan > SpiceMASTER 2.5 menu. **For a two−page SUMMARY of all SpiceMASTER essentials,** see the printable **Quick Start** in the same Start menu. We highly recommend that you look both documents over −− it will SAVE you time!

How to Use This Help System
This help guide includes basic info, tutorials, and tips. To access this help while using SpiceMASTER, click the **?** button at the top right corner of the SpiceMASTER window, or in the Library's toolbar. (Both are shown below.) Then click on any control where you need help.



Or (anytime) choose Help from your Windows Start > Program Files > Pixelan > SpiceMASTER 2.5 menu.

Throughout the help pages, hot links are provided to related topics. Words in this color are commands, buttons, or areas in the SpiceMASTER interface. **To browse through topics,** click any section at the left of this page, or click Contents atop this window. Or, click Index at the left (or top) of this page to see ALL entries for a specific topic.

Effect Examples
SpiceMASTER 2.5 TFX gives you three unique visual effects capabilities:
• Hundreds of USEFUL Soft/Organic Customizable Transitions
• Soft/Organic/Animated Reveals of Lower Tracks
• Customize/Animate ANY Other Video Effects in Your Editing System

Please click here to see many example images and movies at our web site. You also can view many more example effects via the HUNDREDS of cool saved settings and modular presets built into SpiceMASTER. (Click here to see how easy it is.)

The DEMO Version
If you have a **demo**, you can explore it for an unlimited time. The SM2.5 TFX demo is identical to the purchased version EXCEPT all effects have an X over their image, and new saved settings cannot be created. For all video editing systems except Pinnacle Studio and Unlead VideoStudio, also try the SM 2.5 PRO demo which was simultaneously installed and will appear as a second Pixelan SpiceMASTER 2.5 item in your editing program's effects and transitions list. Please try both the TFX and PRO demos to see which one is most appropriate for your editing needs. (For more about the PRO version, please see below.)

Upgrading to the PRO Version
If you have already purchased SpiceMASTER 2.5 TFX, you can upgrade anytime to **SpiceMASTER 2.5 PRO**. (For upgrade details, click here.) In the **PRO** version, you gain several additional effect capabilities −− such as fully customizable soft/organic title effects and soft/organic/animated PIPs (picture−in−picture effects). Plus you will get powerful bezier keyframing available for EVERY control in SpiceMASTER −− and HUNDREDS of award−winning OrganicFX spices to use as effect geometries (as many as 1,000 spices in total!). You'll also get several additional handy effect adjustments. Last but not least, PRO includes the powerful new MIXER control for FILM dissolves and the unprecedented ability to mix any spice with geometries already in your images. For a detailed comparison between TFX and PRO features, please click here.

Technical Support
We are dedicated to providing superb support. If you experience a problem, first look over the **Please Read FIRST** text file in your Windows Start > Program Files > Pixelan > SpiceMASTER 2.5 menu. Common questions are answered there. For prompt further assistance, visit http://www.pixelan.com/help/techsupport.htm for help. From there, you can submit a help form that we will answer promptly by email, usually within a few hours.

Enjoy SpiceMASTER 2.5 TFX!

Sincerely,
Pixelan Software LLC
Bellingham, Washington, USA

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Most video clip images used in this guide are from the terrific royalty−free stock footage collection offered by www.creatas.com

Special thanks to our amazing code wizard Ivan Ivanov for making SpiceMASTER's magic possible!

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Basic Steps

Introduction

This section walks you through the basics of applying and customizing SpiceMASTER. Although SpiceMASTER's intuitive interface gives you easy access to its deep power, please spend a few minutes to explore this section (ideally with SpiceMASTER open on your screen). After all, you don't want to miss the many cool features and conveniences we've included in SpiceMASTER!

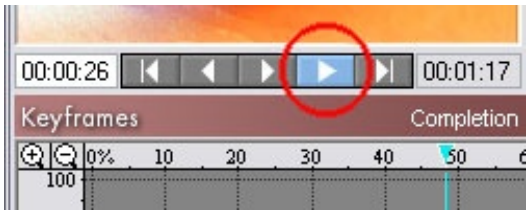
1. Apply SpiceMASTER in Your Timeline
2. Choose a Spice File
3. Flip, Reverse, or Move the Effect
4. Fine−Tune and Enhance the Effect
- Softness
- Texture
- Border
- Shadow/Glow

5. Preview REAL−TIME
6. Apply or Clear the Effect

Click here for a basic tutorial that summarizes the above steps.

While exploring, keep these tips in mind:

• **To loop−play SpiceMASTER while adjusting effects,** click the blue Play button. This can speed fine−tuning.



• **To choose from a huge collection of saved settings that will instantly configure ALL controls of SpiceMASTER,** click the blue Load Saved Settings button.

• **To access useful presets for an effect section,** click the light−bulb at the right edge of any section. Combining presets from different sections can quickly generate hundreds of new effects!

• **SpiceMASTER has 100+ undo/redo's available** so you can easily experiment. To undo one or more changes, click the yellow Undo button (or tap Ctrl−Z keys). To redo the change, click the adjacent green Redo button (or tap Ctrl−X keys). If either is not available, the button will be dim.

• **To see how to change SpiceMASTER's default transition or effect,** click here.

next page

Basic Steps

1. Apply SpiceMASTER in Your Timeline

Applying SpiceMASTER in the timeline of your video editing software is much like applying built−in effects. To see the steps, click the video editing software below that you use.

Adobe Premiere Pro
Adobe Premiere 6.x
DPS Velocity
Pinnacle Liquid Edition
Sony Vegas
Ulead MediaStudio
Ulead VideoStudio (6.0 or later)

How to Apply in Adobe Premiere Pro

As a transition: From the Effects window (Video Transitions > Pixelan folder), drag SpiceMASTER 2.5 onto a cut point between two clips in any track (as shown below) or onto the beginning or end of a single clip. The SpiceMASTER interface will appear. Click here for next steps.

As a video effect: From the Effects window (Video Effects > Pixelan folder), drag and drop SpiceMASTER 2.5 onto a clip. SpiceMASTER's interface will then appear. Click here for next steps. The video effect will softly/organically reveal ANY content in lower tracks, unlike the SpiceMASTER transition which will reveal an overlapping clip in the same track.

To animate OTHER Premiere Pro video effects in a clip: Sync two copies of the SAME clip in adjacent tracks Ñ one clip directly above the other copy. Next, apply the Premiere Pro video effect(s) you want to animate, such as Color Balance, to just one clip copy. Then apply the SpiceMASTER video effect (as described above) to the TOP clip. The video effect(s) will then appear only where the SpiceMASTER effect flows, as shown in the example below.

TIP: To set SpiceMASTER as the default transition (good idea), select SpiceMASTER 2.5 in the Effects window, then choose the Set Default Transition command in the window's menu.

How to Apply in Adobe Premiere 6.x

As a transition: From Premiere's Transitions palette (3rd Party section), drag SpiceMASTER 2.5 between two overlapped clips in Track 1A and 1B. The SpiceMASTER interface will then appear. Click here for next steps.

As a video effect: Select a clip in Track 2 or higher and turn on the Alpha Channel key. (In Premiere 6.x click the Setup button for Transparency in the Effect Controls palette. Or right−click the clip and choose Video Options > Transparency. Select the Alpha Channel key type; click OK.) Then drag SpiceMASTER 2.5 from the Video palette (Pixelan section) onto the clip. SpiceMASTER's interface will then appear. Click here for next steps. The clip effect will softly/organically reveal content in lower tracks, unlike the SpiceMASTER transition which will reveal overlapping clips in Track 1.

To animate OTHER Premiere video effects in a clip: Sync two copies of the SAME clip in adjacent tracks; one clip directly above the other. Next, apply the Premiere video effect(s) you want to animate, such as Color Balance, to just one clip copy. Then apply the SpiceMASTER video effect (as described above) to the TOP clip. The video effect(s) will then appear only where the SpiceMASTER effect flows within the image, as shown in the example below.

TIP: To set SpiceMASTER as the default transition in Premiere 6.x (good idea), use the Set Selected as Default command in Premiere's Transitions palette.

How to Apply in DPS Velocity

As a transition: Right−click a transition icon in your timeline, then select Rendered Transitions > Plugin Transitions. In the dialog that will appear, choose SpiceMASTER 2.5; then click the Custom button in the Transition Viewer. The SpiceMASTER interface will then appear. Click here for next steps.

As a filter: Right−click a clip and choose Video Effects; then choose Filter Categories > General Plug−ins in the Apply Effects dialog. Click SpiceMASTER 2.5 in the

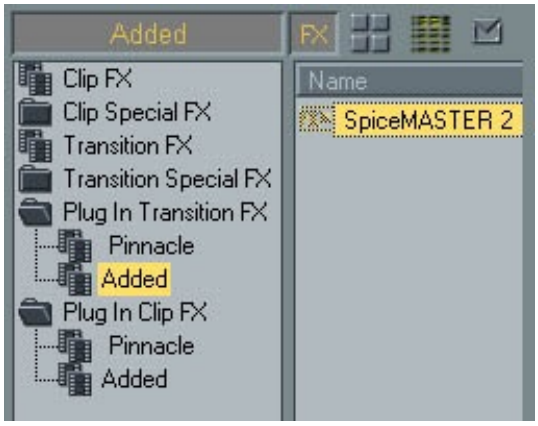
Available Filters list, then click Add. The SpiceMASTER interface will then appear. Click here for next steps. The filter will softly/organically reveal content in lower tracks, unlike the transition which will reveal an overlapping clip in the same track.

To animate OTHER Velocity filters: Sync two copies of the SAME clip in adjacent tracks; one copy directly above the other. Next, apply the filter(s) you want to animate to one clip copy. Then apply the SpiceMASTER 2.5 filter (as described above) to the TOP clip. The filters will then appear only where the SpiceMASTER filter flows within the image.

TIP: To save a particular SpiceMASTER effect for later use, set up the effect, then click the Save FX Macro button in the Apply Effects window. A new .flt file will be created that you can load by clicking the Load FX Macro button.

How to Apply in Pinnacle Liquid Edition

As a transition: From the FX tab of the Project window or Browser, choose Plug In Transition FX > Added, then drag SpiceMASTER 2.5 onto the cut point between two adjacent clips in the same track. Right−click that transition, then elect Edit. The SpiceMASTER interface will then appear. Click here for next steps.



TIP: Make sure the playback icon is ON for the track you are applying SpiceMASTER in, otherwise the effect will not be accessible. Also make sure the two clips you are transitioning have been trimmed to allow their content to overlap during the transition.

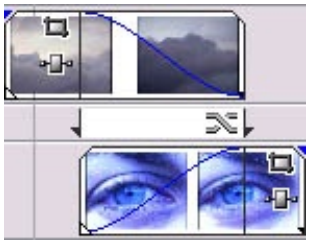
As a clip effect: From the FX tab, apply Clip FX > Keying Editor onto a clip that is above other track(s) of content you want to softly/organically reveal with SpiceMASTER. In the Keying Editor controls, for Key Type choose Chroma Key (with no settings). Now in the Project window or Browser, choose Plug In Clip FX > Added, then drag SpiceMASTER 2.5 onto the same clip. Right−click the * button in the clip and choose Edit. (Or right−click the clip and choose FX Properties, then double−click SpiceMASTER 2.5.) The SpiceMASTER interface will then appear. Click here for next steps.

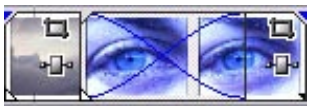
TIP: SpiceMASTER must be above Keying Editor in the clip's effect order or the effect will not appear on playback.
TIP: To repeat a SpiceMASTER effect, right−click the effect icon in the right upper corner of the first clip you applied it to, then select Copy. Then apply it to any other clip. To open a new project with pre−built favorite SpiceMASTER effects already on hand, in the Start > Projects menu save a project with the SpiceMASTER effects (and other often used elements) as a template. Then choose that template when you create a new project.

To animate OTHER Liquid Edition clip effects: Sync two copies of the SAME clip in adjacent tracks Ñ one clip directly above the other copy. Next, apply the clip effect(s) you want to animate to just one clip copy. Then apply the SpiceMASTER 2.5 clip effect (as described above) to the TOP clip. The clip effect(s) will then appear only where the SpiceMASTER effect flows within the image, as shown in the example below.

How to Apply in Sony Vegas

As a transition: Overlap two events in the SAME video track, automatically creating a crossfade transition, as shown below.


"Expanded" track view


"Collapsed" track view

Then drag Pixelan SpiceMASTER 2.5 from the Transitions (or Plug−Ins) window/pane onto the crossfade. Or right−click the crossfade and choose Transition Properties, then double−click Pixelan SpiceMASTER 2.5. In the Event FX window for SpiceMASTER that will appear (shown below), make sure the Sync Cursor button is off, then click

Open. SpiceMASTER's full interface will appear. Click here for next steps.

TIP: To preview in Vegas while making adjustments in SpiceMASTER, just click in your Vegas timeline. The Vegas preview will instantly update. You also can loop play real−time in the Vegas timeline over a SpiceMASTER effect while making adjustments Ñ highly recommended and very cool!

As a video fx: Drag and drop Pixelan SpiceMASTER 2.5 from the Video FX (or Plug−Ins) window/pane onto an event in the timeline. Or, click the Event FX button in an event's timeline icon, then choose Pixelan SpiceMASTER 2.5 in the Plug−In Chooser dialog. In the Event FX window for SpiceMASTER that will appear (shown above), make sure the Sync Cursor button is off, then click Open. SpiceMASTER's full interface will appear. Click here for next steps.

To animate OTHER Vegas video fx: Sync two copies of the SAME clip in adjacent Vegas tracks Ñ one clip directly above the other copy. Next, apply the video fx you want to animate to just one clip copy. Then apply the SpiceMASTER 2.5 video fx (as described above) to the TOP clip. The video fx will then appear only where the SpiceMASTER effect flows within the image, as shown in the example below.

TIP: Like other video FX in Vegas, you can drag SpiceMASTER onto a track (the effect will apply to every event in the track), a media file (the effect will apply to every instance of the file in a project), or a project (the effect will apply to every event in the project). Please see your Vegas manual for details if you are unfamiliar with this Vegas feature.

TIP: Vegas also has its own Presets submenu atop SpiceMASTER to save effects, which can be applied directly from the Transitions or Video FX tab without opening SpiceMASTER. To save a Vegas preset, first set up the SpiceMASTER effect as desired, then click SpiceMASTER's green Apply Current Settings 'check mark' button to OK the effect. Then enter a name in the Presets submenu above SpiceMASTER and click the adjacent disk icon to save the preset. Thereafter, it will be available in the Presets submenu and also appear graphically in the Transitions or Video FX tab after you click Pixelan SpiceMASTER 2.5 in the tab's list.

How to Apply in Ulead MediaStudio

As a transition: From the Transition Effect > Pixelan section of the Production Library, drag and drop SpiceMASTER 2.5 into the Fx track between overlapped clips. Then click Options in the Transition Options dialog. The SpiceMASTER interface will then appear. Click here for next steps.

As a filter: (Not possible with the current MediaStudio plug−in architecture.)

To animate OTHER MediaStudio filters: Sync two copies of the SAME clip in Tracks Va and Vb Ñ one clip directly above the other copy. Next, apply the filter(s) you want to animate to just one clip copy. Then apply the SpiceMASTER transition (as described above) between the clip copies. The filters will then appear only where the SpiceMASTER transition flows within the image.

How to Apply in Ulead VideoStudio (6.0 or later)

As a transition: Click the Effect tab, then choose the FX folder from the Library of VideoStudio. Drag the SpiceMASTER 2.5 icon onto the video track between two clips. Then click the Options button. The SpiceMASTER interface will then appear. Click here for next steps.

As a filter: (Not possible with the current VideoStudio plug−in architecture.)

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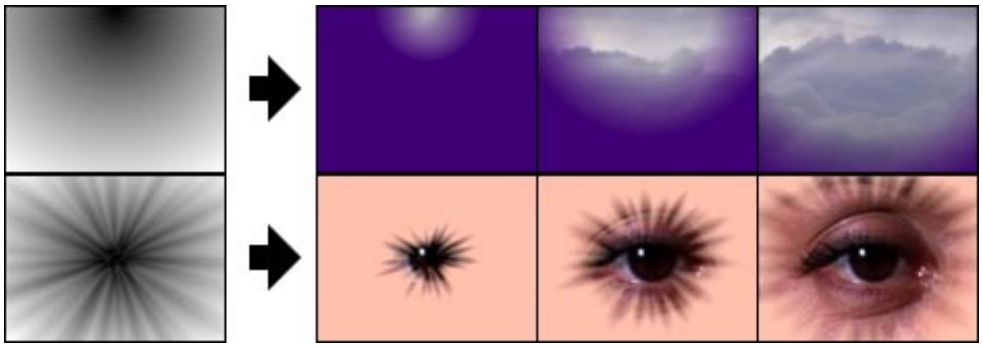
next page

Basic Steps

2. Choose a Spice File

Each 'spice' file is a specially−designed grayscale map that guides SpiceMASTER. The SpiceMASTER effect will begin where blackest pixels reside (in the spice file's image, not your content), then proceed to where lighter grays reside, and finally end where the whitest pixels exist in the spice image. It's simple in concept but incredibly flexible and organic in its creative possibilities compared to the usual hard−edged, limited−adjustment, standard algorithmic effects.



How to Choose a Spice File

1. Click the large Choose Spice File button located at the top middle of SpiceMASTER. SpiceMASTER's Library window will then appear.

2. Click a subfolder in the Library's left pane, as shown below. Thumbnail−size previews of available effects will then play side−by−side in the right pane so you can visually compare and choose the best effect design for your segment.

Note: To see subfolders, click the "+" next to a folder in the left pane, if necessary. Subfolders organize SpiceMASTER's huge quantity of effects into distinct styles.

3. Double−click a thumbnail in the Library's right pane to select the effect and close the Library. The grayscale image of the chosen spice will appear at the top center of SpiceMASTER, and its file name will be in the Choose Spice File button. SpiceMASTER's built−in preview will also immediately update to the effect. **Or, single−click a thumbnail** to load the effect while keeping the Library open. Then you can try different spices "live" while loop−previewing within SpiceMASTER! It's a powerful way to compare and match spice effects to your content.

Tips

• **To quickly choose a spice you have used recently,** click on the Prior Choices area below the Choose Spice File button. Up to nine prior choices will appear in a pop−up list −− most recent first. (Note: "Prior choices" are those that have been selected and applied in SpiceMASTER, not just viewed from the Library.)

• **To choose a spice but bypass the Library, Ctrl−click the Choose Spice File button** to get a standard Open dialog box. Then navigate to and select the file. This is how you can load a gradient/alpha wipe you have created (or have from other software) that you may not want to keep in the Library. (To see how to add a new file to the Library, click here.) For tips about creating such custom files, click here.

• **To combine spice designs to create a 'new' spice effect,** apply the SpiceMASTER effect more than once to the same clip, but choose different spice files each time (or invert, flip or move the same spice). This technique multiplies the spices in SpiceMASTER into an near−infinite range of effect designs!

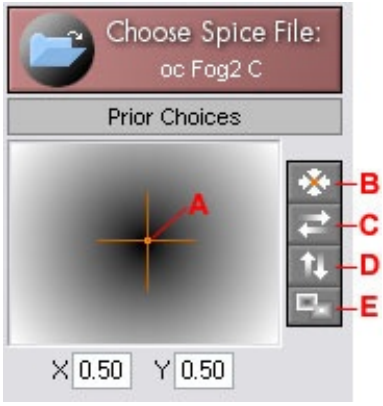
• **SpiceMASTER opens with a default effect. To change the default to a different effect,** choose a spice and adjust the effect as desired, then click the Set button in the Prefs pane. The new default will appear the NEXT time you apply SpiceMASTER.

next page

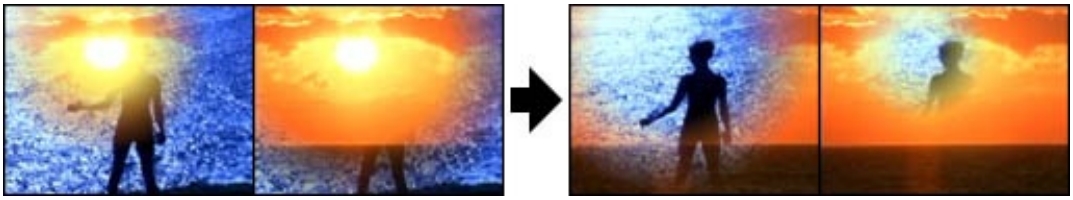
Basic Steps

3. Flip, Reverse, or Move the Effect

After choosing a spice file, it will appear at the top center of SpiceMASTER. Then you can adjust it several ways, such as flipping or reversing the effect or moving it to a new position. Use these controls to better tie the effect to your content, or to add variety when repeating an effect.

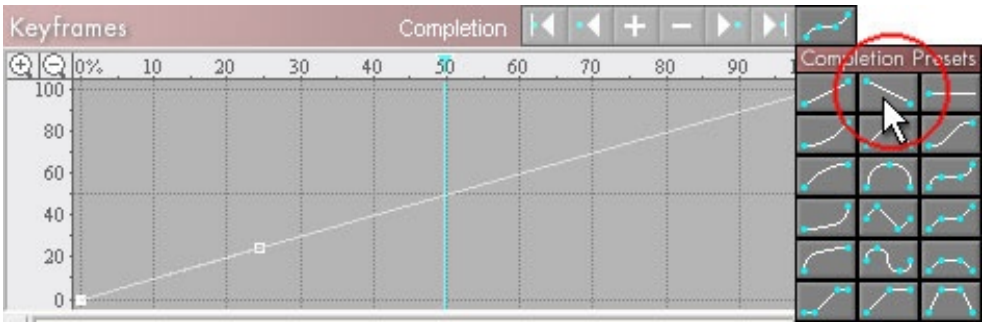


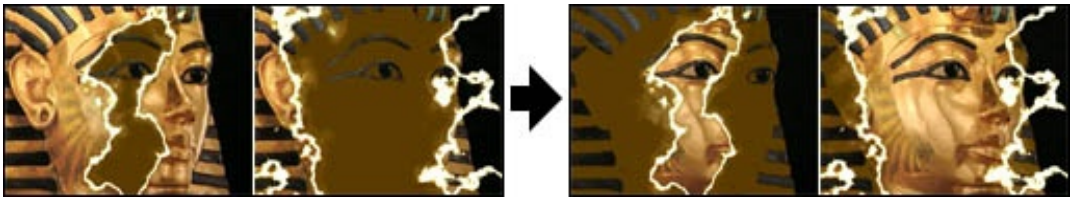
A. Position −− Drag the orange handle's center to move the effect. To move ONLY horizontally/vertically, Shift−drag.
B. Center (Alt−5) −− Click to re−center a moved effect.
C. H Flip (Alt−7) −− Flip the effect horizontally.
D. V Flip (Alt−8) −− Flip the effect vertically.
E. Invert (Alt−9) −− Reverse (invert) the effect's action.


Original versus reversed effect with the Invert button. The effect moves in the opposite direction.

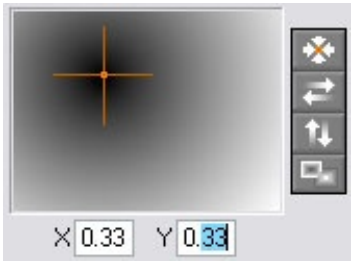
Tips

• **To switch clips in a SpiceMASTER effect** (not transition), turn on the Invert button (shown above) AND choose the downward−sloped Completion Preset in the upper right corner of the Keyframes area. (To switch clips in a SpiceMASTER transition, use the transition controls in your video editing software.)



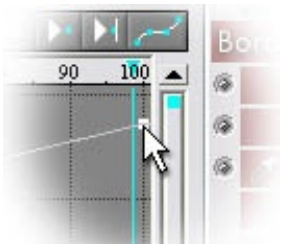

The SpiceMASTER effect direction remains the same; just which clip appears first/last changes.

• **To set a precise position,** enter X and Y coordinates under the spice image, as shown below. The top left frame corner is 0,0 and the bottom right corner is 1,1. To position an iris spice effect precisely at the top left third point, for example, enter X = .33 and Y = .33.



• **Note that iris−like spices enlarge slightly** as you move them toward the frame edge −− to ensure the spice effect will cover the entire frame.

• **Moving a spice's position** may reduce the range of grayscales in the visible frame. Thus the effect will not start or end exactly at the actual beginning or end of the effect. To compensate (especially if an iris−like effect), manually adjust the effect's first (and/or last) Completion keyframes up (and/or down, such as 20% − 80% instead of the default 0% − 100%) to fine−tune the effect's visual timing.



Click here for the next step of applying SpiceMASTER.

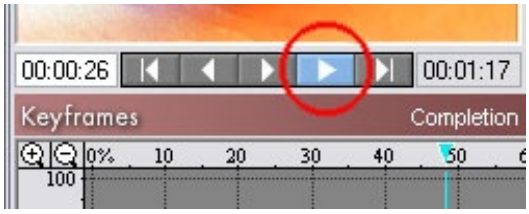
Basic Steps

4. Fine−Tune & Enhance the Effect

After you set the basic design of the spice effect by choosing a spice file, SpiceMASTER can do much more to fine−tune and enhance it. Use the powerful controls in the Edge and Depth panes to add softness, texture, border, shadow, or glow qualities. Click each one below for details and techniques.
• Softness • Texture • Border • Shadow/Glow

While exploring, keep these tips in mind:

• **To loop−play SpiceMASTER while adjusting effects,** click the blue Play button. This can speed fine−tuning.



• **To choose from a huge collection of saved settings that will instantly configure ALL controls of SpiceMASTER,** click the blue Load Saved Settings button.

• **To access useful presets for an effect section,** click the light−bulb at the right edge of any section. Combining presets from different sections can quickly generate hundreds of new effects!

• **SpiceMASTER has 100+ undo/redo's available** so you can easily experiment. To undo one or more changes, click the yellow Undo button (or tap Ctrl−Z keys). To redo the change, click the adjacent green Redo button (or tap Ctrl−X keys). If either is not available, the button will be dim.

• **To display two panes** of SpiceMASTER controls at once (handy when combining effect enhancements), click the white triangle button in the top right corner of SpiceMASTER.

• **To see how to change SpiceMASTER's default transition or effect,** click here.

next page
Step 4's Introduction

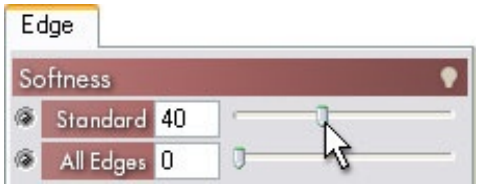
Basic Steps

4. Fine−Tune & Enhance the Effect: **Softness**

Softness is a simple but compelling treatment that is creatively useful for many types of SpiceMASTER effects. It is also one of SpiceMASTER's advantages over most standard video effects. Applying a spice hard usually doesn't cut it!

More examples

To apply softness, drag the Standard or All Edges slider in the Softness section of SpiceMASTER's Edge pane until you have the desired look. Or enter a percentage (from 0 to 100%) in the slider's box.



Use Standard softness to…
• Apply super−soft looks (its highest softness exceeds All Edges' highest).
• Soften only the active (moving) edge of a SpiceMASTER effect.
Use All Edges softness to…
• Soften all edges in SpiceMASTER effects −− active and inactive (see images below).
• Create the highest−quality slight or moderate softness.

Standard softness

All Edges softness

For a wonderfully blended softness, try applying **both** types of softness.

Try the many Softness presets −− by clicking the light−bulb at the right side of the Softness section. Mix and match with presets from other SpiceMASTER sections and various spice files to produce a huge variety of fresh effects! For more about presets, click here.

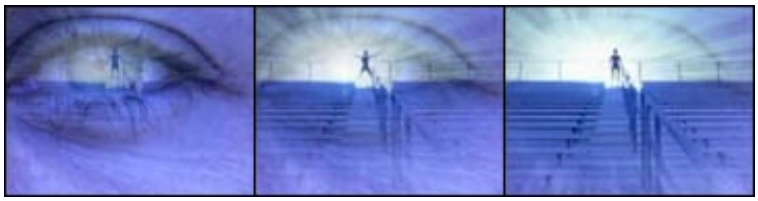
More Softness Examples

View movie at our web site

A SpiceMASTER directional dissolve emerges from the upper left corner to softly reveal the sunset clip, providing a subtle movement and curvature in the dissolve to match the arm action.

View movie at our web site

A very soft SpiceMASTER iris effect with a blue glow tracks the falling skier's movement, while revealing the abstract moving lights clip.


View movie at our web site
A softened EnergyFX/Radiant spice subtly adds "soft rays" to reveal the emerging athlete. The effect's center also is keyframed to move right slightly with the footage.

View movie at our web site
A softened spice with Texture added is used to position, organically animate and reveal a color effect within a single clip.

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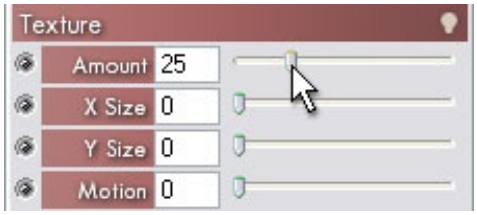
Step 4's Introduction

Basic Steps

4. Fine−Tune & Enhance the Effect: **Texture**

Texture provides additional organic edge control in your effect. It can add trailing sparkles, powders, visual noise, edge texture and animation to SpiceMASTER effects. It can also build organic, cutting−edge new looks from existing spice effects.

To apply texture, drag the Texture > Amount slider in SpiceMASTER's Edge pane to progressively increase the effect. Or enter a percentage (from 0 to 100%) in the slider's box.

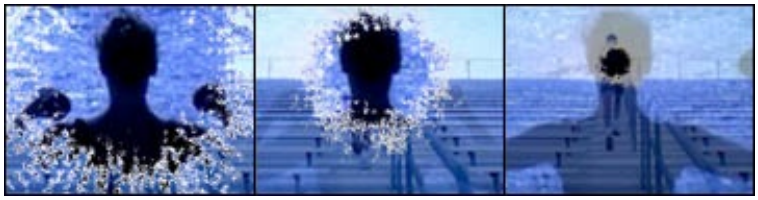


Then fine−tune the effect with:
X Size and Y Size to set the horizontal and vertical size of texture elements.
Motion to progressively add random movement/animation to the texture elements over time.

Try the many Texture presets −− by clicking the light−bulb at the right side of the Texture section. That will quickly show you many organic capabilities of Texture. Mix and match with presets from other SpiceMASTER sections and various spice files to produce a huge variety of fresh effects! For more about presets, click here.

More Texture Examples

View movie at our web site
In this action scene, the snow−like texture elements reveal the skier in a very dynamic manner.


View movie at our web site
Texture provides a sparkling shimmer to this organic transition's edge as it closes toward the subject. Also, the transparency of the first clip is subtly increasing during the effect −− all via SpiceMASTER.

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Basic Steps

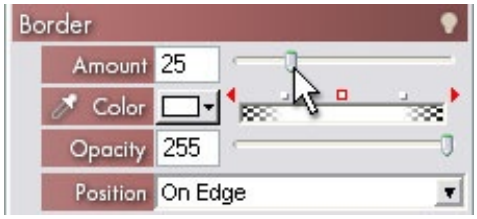
4. Fine−Tune & Enhance the Effect: **Border**

SpiceMASTER's powerful Border controls can create multicolor gradient borders that can seamlessly change width, color, softness, opacity, and position over time. The intuitive control shows a cross−section of the border, making fine adjustments easy. Adding a border can:
• visually separate transitioning scenes clearly when desired;
• more strongly define animated effect regions in an image;
• create flowing motion−graphic effects (see images below);
• create stunning abstract looks.

More about Border techniques are below:
How to Apply a Border and Adjust Thickness
How to Modify the Entire Border or a Point
How to Change the Border Color
How to Alter the Border Softness/Opacity
How to Alter the Border Position
Tips
More Examples

How to Apply a Border and Adjust Thickness

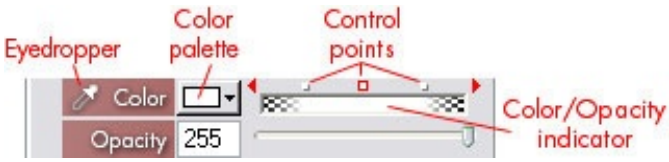
To apply a border, drag the Amount slider in the Border section of SpiceMASTER's Edge pane until you have the desired border thickness. Or enter a percentage (from 0 to 100%) in the slider's text box.



Try the many Border presets −− by clicking the light−bulb at the right side of the Border section. That will quickly show you many creative possibilities. Mix and match with presets from other SpiceMASTER sections and various spice files to produce a huge variety of fresh effects! For more about presets, click here.

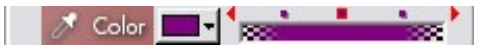
How to Modify the Entire Border or a Point

The checkered Color/Opacity indicator represents the border in cross−section. The checkered edges represent semitransparent to transparent areas. Above it are three adjustable control points that can create a wide variety of border looks. The active control point of the three is outlined in red, as shown below.



To alter the color or opacity of a single control point (thus only part of the border width), first click on the point to activate it. It will then be outlined in red. Then choose a color or drag the Opacity slider (or enter a value in the Opacity text box, from 0 to 255).

To alter the color or opacity of the entire border, Alt−click in the color palette or with the eyedropper. To change just the opacity of the entire border, Alt−drag the Opacity slider.



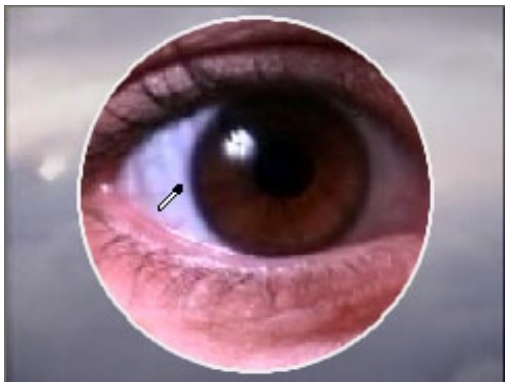
Note you can drag the three control points left or right to further fine−tune the border. Moving a control point closer to the outside edge of the indicator will produce a harder edged border. Moving outer control points toward the center will increase the border's softness. Moving two control points closer that have different colors or opacities will create a sharper gradation of values.

To quickly transfer color/opacity from an active control point to an adjacent point, click either red triangle at the side of the control (circled below).

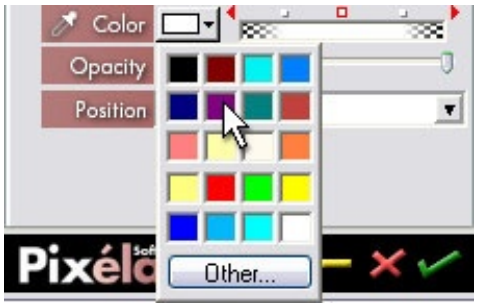
How to Change the Border Color

SpiceMASTER's initial default border color is white (you can change the default in the Prefs pane), but any color is possible, such as one that is already in your scene. SpiceMASTER provides two ways to change the color.

To match the border color to a color in your scene, click the Eyedropper in the Color control, then click in the SpiceMASTER preview (as shown below) −− or anywhere else on your monitor! **To apply the color to the entire border width** (not just an active control point), Alt−click the eyedropper.



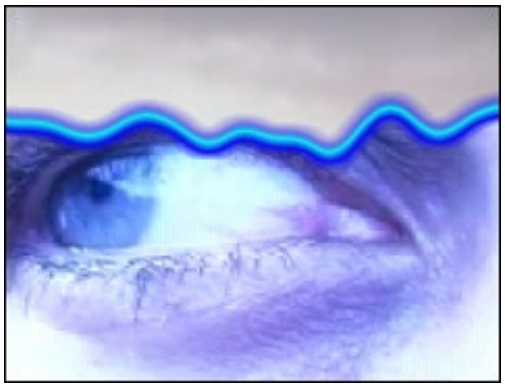
To choose a color in the standard Windows color picker, click the Color palette, which includes an Other button for custom colors (see below). **To apply a color to the entire border width** (not just a selected control point), Alt−click the color palette.



To create a multicolor gradient border, first click a control point, choose a color, then repeat for other points as desired.

How to Alter the Border Softness/Opacity

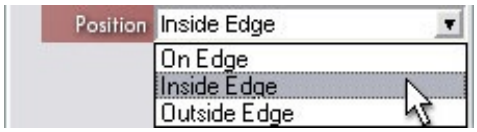
The chosen color will initially appear in the border with slight softness (thus less opacity along the edges). **To increase (or decrease) the border's softness,** drag one or both outer control points inward (or outward). To further soften the look, you can also decrease the opacity of that control point. In the example below, both steps have been done for the left control point, leading to a softer look in the top of the organic effect's border.



To alter the entire border's opacity, Alt−drag the Opacity slider.

How to Alter the Border Position

By default, the border you create will extend along BOTH sides of the effect's edge. **To have a border appear only inside or outside of the effect's edge,** choose Inside Edge or Outside Edge in the Border > Position submenu. Note this is the only Border setting that cannot change (i.e. be keyframed) during the effect.



Depending on other settings, choosing Inside Edge or Outside Edge may roughen the border along one side. To smooth that edge, apply some Softness.

Tips

• To see how to add an animated border ALONE without otherwise changing a clip, click here. Instant flowing energy wave!

• While the SpiceMASTER preview plays, you can adjust Border settings interactively.

More Border Examples

View movie at our web site
A multicolor border to a textured spice becomes much of the effect during the transition, forming a simulated blast ray outward from the eye that fades away toward the end of the transition. Note that the effect is also slowly tracking leftward with the eye as the statue pans left.

View movie at our web site
To accentuate the liquid−like geometry of the textured spice and theme, a soft, semitransparent white border radiates outward and grows stronger until the next clip is revealed.

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Basic Steps

4. Fine−Tune & Enhance the Effect: **Shadow/Glow**

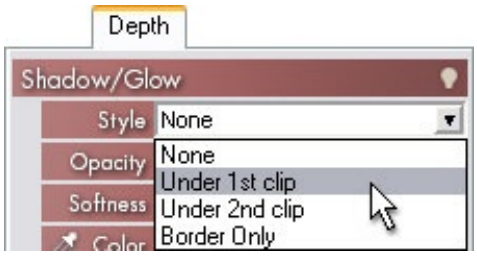
Placing a realistic shadow or glow along a SpiceMASTER effect's edge is easy. Such depth effects can:
• create the illusion of one image growing, flowing or eroding above another
• simulate thickness in an image (a powerful way to add depth);
• emphasize the dynamic edge of a spice effect or custom matte;
• add a keyframable shadow to titles, graphics and backgrounds.

You can control several shadow qualities: shadow style, opacity, softness, color and depth. All but shadow style are keyframable.

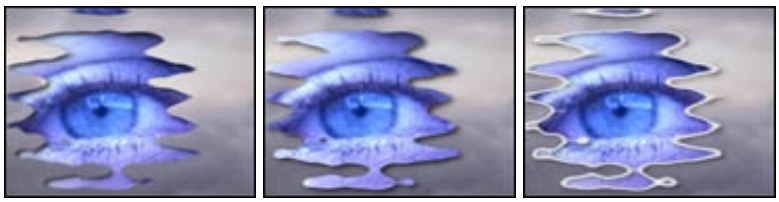
More about shadow/glow techniques are below:
How to Apply a Shadow
How to Change the Shadow's Strength, Depth or Angle
How to Change the Shadow/Glow Color
How to Apply a Glow
Tips
More Examples

How to Apply a Shadow

In the Shadow/Glow > Style submenu, select Under 1st clip, Under 2nd clip, or Border Only. The Border Only option only produces an effect if a Border is also visible.



Under 1st clip creates a "cutaway" effect that shows the 2nd clip under the first clip. Under 2nd clip flows the second clip over the background image. Border Only floats a border over the images.



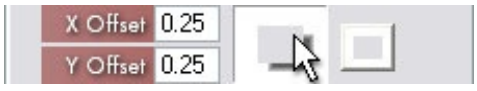
Under 1st clip | Under 2nd clip | Border only

Try the many Shadow/Glow presets −− by clicking the light−bulb at the right side of the Shadow/Glow section. That will quickly show you many creative possibilities. Mix and match with presets from other SpiceMASTER sections and various spice files to produce a huge variety of fresh effects! For more about presets, click here.

How to Change the Shadow's Strength, Depth or Angle

To adjust the shadow's strength, adjust the Softness and Opacity sliders. A soft, partially transparent shadow offset to the lower right and fairly deep is SpiceMASTER's initial default. (To see how to change default settings, click here.)

To alter the shadow's position or angle, drag in the representative Shadow box next to the X Offset and Y Offset controls, watching the preview until you achieve the desired depth and angle.

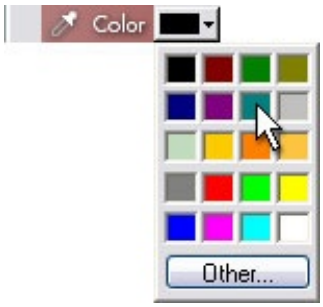


To constrain shadow movement to only horizontal or vertical, Shift−drag in the Shadow box. **To make exact adjustments,** enter values (from −1 to +1) in the text boxes. An X,Y value of 0,0 is no offset.

How to Change the Shadow/Glow Color

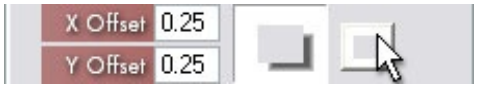
SpiceMASTER's initial default shadow color is black, but any color is possible, such as a bright color for a glow, white for special lighting effects, or a scene color for an abstract visual effect. SpiceMASTER provides two ways to change the color:

To match the shadow or glow to a color in your scene, click the Eyedropper in the Shadow/Glow > Color area, then click in the SpiceMASTER preview −− or anywhere else on your monitor! **To choose a color in the standard Windows color picker,** click the Color palette, which includes an Other button for custom colors.



How to Apply a Glow

You can create glows easily by applying a soft shadow with a bright color, then eliminating any offset (thus centering the shadow). **To center the shadow for a glow effect,** click the adjacent Center button, as shown below.



To adjust the glow's style, choose Under 1st clip to create an inner glow, or Under 2nd clip to create an outer glow. If a thick border is in the effect, Border Only can visibly glow in both directions around a border.

Under 1st clip

Under 2nd clip

Border Only

To adjust the glow's strength, adjust the Softness and Opacity sliders. Typically, high values for both will be most useful. **To adjust the glow's color,** use the tips described above.

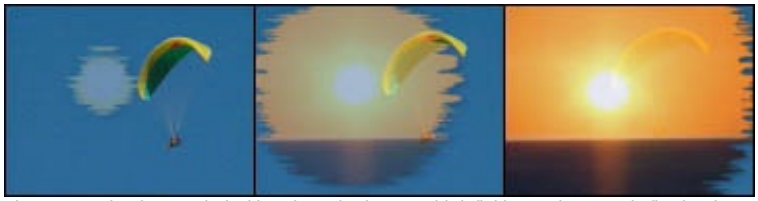
Tips

• A hard shadow that is only slightly offset can add the illusion of thickness to a flowing image or effect.

• While the SpiceMASTER preview plays, you can adjust Shadow/Glow settings interactively.

More Shadow/Glow Examples

View movie at our web site
A blue glow around an organic iris effect complements and shapes the color balance effect that eventually fills the image.


View movie at our web site
The sunset shot is revealed with a drop shadow to add definition to the organic flowing form. Note that the second clip (and its shadowed edge) increase in opacity during the effect −− all done in SpiceMASTER.

View movie at our web site

A drop shadow under the powdery border effect adds depth to the transition.

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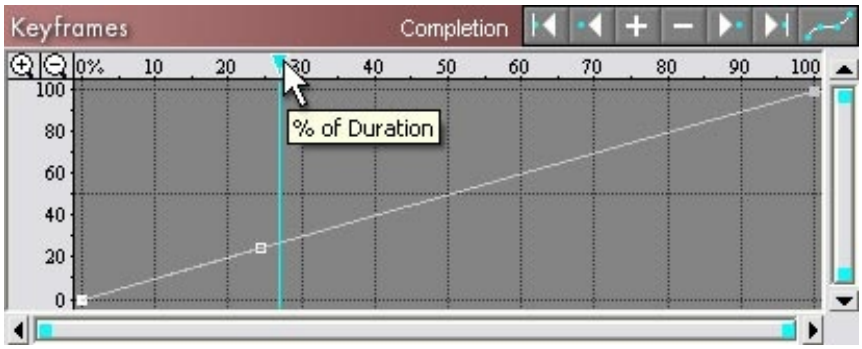
5. Preview REAL−TIME

Initially, SpiceMASTER's preview shows a frame that is midway (50%) in the effect's duration. **To play or stop the preview,** click the blue Play button that is under the preview (or tap the X key). **To jump to the beginning or end of the effect,** click the First Frame or Last Frame button (or tap the S or D key). **To advance or go back one frame,** click the Next Frame or Previous Frame button (or W or E key).

To scrub to any frame during the effect, drag the blue vertical frame marker left or right in the keyframes graph. Or, hold down the E key.



To go to a specific relative frame via timecode or frame count (a choice you can make in the Prefs pane), enter the frame in the white Current Frame box that is left of the preview buttons, as shown below.

How to Increase the Preview Speed

SpiceMASTER's built−in preview usually can maintain a real−time pace even on older/slower computers. If the preview appears too choppy, SpiceMASTER includes few ways to speed processing up. Please see the preview options in the Prefs pane.

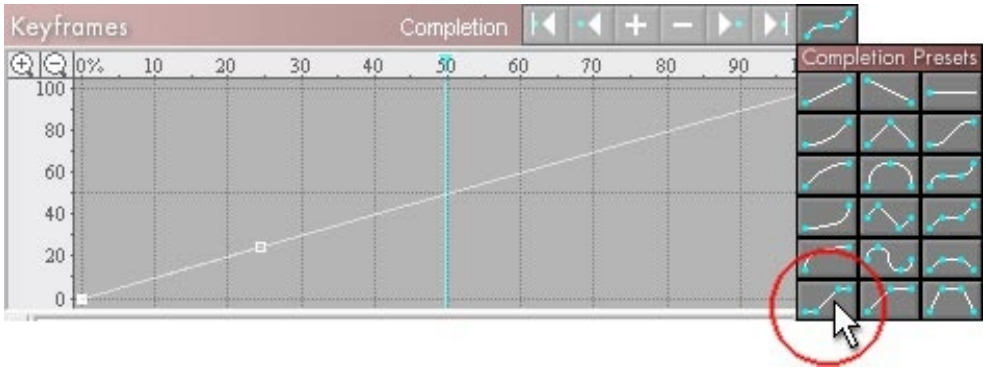
Tips

• Since SpiceMASTER's built−in preview is 240x180 pixels, it may not show an effect as cleanly as your final full−size output. And rectangular pixel content (i.e. DV, D1) will be slightly squeezed or stretched. **To see the effect most accurately,** preview at final output size in your video editing software.

• SpiceMASTER also can preview real−time from the timeline of Adobe Premiere 6.5/Pro*, Sony Vegas, and Ulead MediaStudio 7. Also, it background renders in Pinnacle Liquid Edition. *Certain RT video boards (i.e. Matrox) may require Premiere settings that defeat Premiere's native real−time previewing. In that case, SpiceMASTER's built−in preview can still be real−time.

• The effect's total duration is shown to the right of the preview buttons. The total duration of a SpiceMASTER **effect** is set in the timeline of your video editing software, not in SpiceMASTER. However, **you can shorten an effect within that total duration by using SpiceMASTER's Keyframes area.** Just choose the Completion Preset shown

below. Then drag the inner keyframes left or right to set the timing of the shortening.



If you already have other Completion keyframes set that you do not want to eliminate by choosing the above preset, you can manually do the above. Click on the keyframe line to add two new keyframes near the start and end of the effect, giving the keyframes 0% (and 100%) values vertically. Then drag the keyframes left or right to set the timing of the shortening.

Click here for the next step

Basic Steps

6. Apply or Clear the Effect

Go to the black button bar at the lower right corner of SpiceMASTER to apply (or clear) your effect, or to exit SpiceMASTER.

To apply the effect you've created, click the green Apply Current Settings 'check mark' button.

To exit SpiceMASTER without changes, click the red Exit Without Changes 'X' button in the black bar. (Clicking the standard Close button at the top right of the SpiceMASTER window also does this.)

To clear all settings back to your default SpiceMASTER effect, but retain the chosen spice file and NOT leave SpiceMASTER, click the yellow Clear '–' button. To clear all settings except the chosen spice file to the "factory" default effect, Alt–click the Clear '–' button. To also clear the chosen spice during either previously mentioned clear, also press the Ctrl key.

Tips

• When exiting without changes, SpiceMASTER will ask you to confirm that action. To skip confirmation (be careful!), go to the Prefs pane and turn OFF the Confirm before exiting w/o changes check box.

• **To clear SpiceMASTER default settings back to the "factory" default,** go to the Prefs pane and click the Clear button shown below. That button will NOT change the current settings −− it will change what appears the NEXT time you apply SpiceMASTER. Clear also will not change SpiceMASTER's preference settings, which are retained automatically when changed.

• **To set a new default effect anytime,** choose a desired spice file and adjust settings, then click the Set button.

• **To see what version of SpiceMASTER you are using,** click the Pixelan logo in the black bar area.

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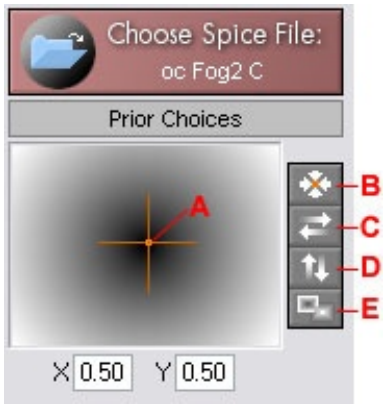
Tutorial: How to Apply a SpiceMASTER Transition

1. Apply the SpiceMASTER 2 transition in the timeline of your video editing software. Click here for the specific steps. SpiceMASTER's dialog will then appear.

2. Open SpiceMASTER's Library. Click the large Choose Spice File button located at the top middle of SpiceMASTER. SpiceMASTER's Library window will then appear.

3. Choose an effect design. Click a subfolder in the Library's left pane, as shown below. The hundreds of effect designs are organized into subfolders by style. Then double−click a desired effect design playing in the Library's right pane. Or SINGLE−click a thumbnail to load the effect into SpiceMASTER without closing the Library. By keeping the Library open, you can switch spices while continuously previewing within SpiceMASTER! It's a powerful way to compare and match spice effects to your content.

4. Adjust the effect. The grayscale image of the chosen spice will then appear at the top center of SpiceMASTER, and its file name will be in the Choose Spice File button. Use the controls below to better position and tie the effect to your content, or to add variety when repeating an effect.



A. Position −− Drag the orange handle's center to move the effect. To move ONLY horizontally/vertically, Shift−drag.

B. Center (Alt−5) −− Click to re−center a moved effect.
C. H Flip (Alt−7) −− Flip the effect horizontally.
D. V Flip (Alt−8) −− Flip the effect vertically.
E. Invert (Alt−9) −− Reverse (invert) the effect's action.

5. Set the effect qualities. After you set the basic design and position of the spice effect, SpiceMASTER can do much more to fine−tune and enhance it. Use the powerful controls in the Edge and Depth panes to add softness, texture, border, shadow, glow, bevel or ripple qualities. Click each one below for details and techniques.
• Softness • Texture • Border • Shadow/Glow

To access useful presets for any of the above, click the light−bulb at the top right edge of a control section, as shown below for Texture. Presets can be combined into thousands of fresh effects!

To easily experiment with different settings, SpiceMASTER has 100+ undo/redo levels −− click the buttons circled below (or tap Ctrl−Z / Ctrl−X keys respectively). If either is not available, the button will be dim.

6. Preview. To play or stop the preview, click the blue Play button that is under the SpiceMASTER preview. Note you can play SpiceMASTER's preview continuously while making adjustments −− even while changing spices! This can speed your fine−tuning of the effect.

7. Apply the effect. Click the green Apply Current Settings 'check mark' button.

Congratulations −− you are done!

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Basic Steps

TUTORIAL: How to Animate Other Effects or Keys

In addition to applying soft/organic custom transitions, SpiceMASTER can easily **animate other video effects in a single clip. SpiceMASTER therefore leverages the power of ALL visual effects (built−in or third−party) available in your video editing software.** Organically flow a color change from a moving subject outward to the frame edge (as shown below). Or softly wash a blur organically across the scene. Or accomplish any other animation you desire for an effect that otherwise would alter the entire image.

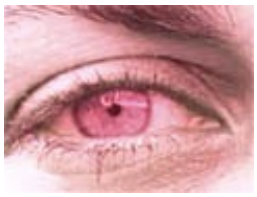
More examples

SpiceMASTER also can **softly or organically reveal/hide virtually any key in your editing software (such as a luminance, chroma, multiply, or screen key)**, adding fresh dynamics that can create subtle, gorgeous, and unique key looks.

How to Animate Other Effects

1. Synch two copies of the SAME clip in your timeline. One clip copy will therefore sit directly above the other copy.

2. To ONE clip copy (not both), apply the visual effect(s) you want to animate. They can be built−in or third−party plug−in effects. In the example below, a simple color−change has been applied.



Original clip

Clip with color change

3. Apply the SpiceMASTER transition between the clip copies (if they are in the same track). **Or apply the SpiceMASTER effect** (if available) to the TOP clip copy (and be sure to activate the clip's alpha channel key, if required by your editing software).

In the SpiceMASTER dialog, the spice file you choose and its position will determine where the animated effect(s) will appear. Fine−tune further as desired, using SpiceMASTER's Edge and Depth panes. In the example below, an softened elliptical iris spice animates the color change effect. Note the effect is positioned off−center with SpiceMASTER to open over the eye.

You can also use the technique to animate different settings of the same visual effect. In Step 2 above, apply the same effect to BOTH clip copies, but with different settings.

How to Animate a Key

Note: This technique is not available for Pinnacle Studio or Ulead MediaStudio/VideoStudio.
1. Synch two copies of the SAME clip in your timeline. One clip copy will therefore sit directly above the other copy. Both copies should sit in your timeline above the content you will reveal with the key.

Clip to be keyed

Background clip

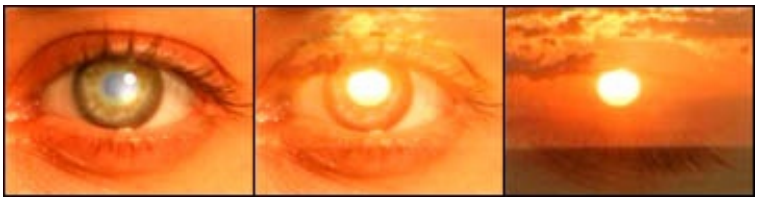
2. To the LOWER clip copy, activate the key you want to animate, such as a luminance, multiply, screen or chroma key. Any content passing 'through' the key will of

course then appear in the output.

3. To the TOP clip copy, activate the alpha channel key, if required by your editing software. **Then apply the SpiceMASTER effect to the TOP clip copy.**

In the SpiceMASTER dialog, the spice file you choose and its position will determine where the key will appear within the image. Fine−tune further as desired, using SpiceMASTER's Edge and Depth panes.

Clips in timeline


Screen key revealing the clouds is softly animated outward

Tips for Either Technique

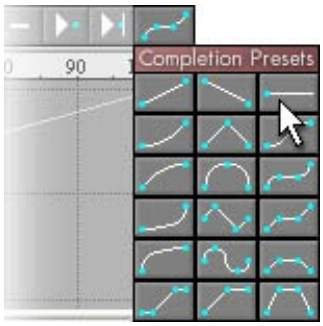
• Clip copies can be trimmed differently IF they remain in synch. If you applied the SpiceMASTER **transition**, the FIRST clip can optionally be trimmed to start and/or end earlier than the other clip, as shown below (left). If you applied the SpiceMASTER **effect**, the TOP clip can be trimmed to start later and/or end earlier than the other clip (see below right).

Trimming: SpiceMASTER transition

Trimming: SpiceMASTER effect (top clip)

• If you applied the SpiceMASTER effect, SpiceMASTER's preview will not show lower clips. Instead, a simple grid background will appear. To switch to a black, gray, or white background, right−click the preview and choose Background. To see the entire image, preview from your timeline.

• Prefer a fixed (non−changing) matte for an effect or key? Simply 'freeze' the SpiceMASTER effect by selecting the "flat" preset from the Completion Presets palette in the top right corner of the Keyframes area. Then drag the flat keyframe line up or down as desired to set the 'freeze' point.

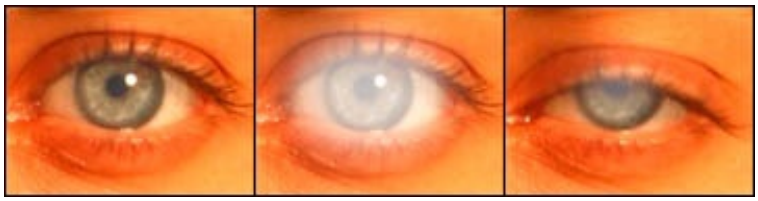


More Examples

Organically or softly animating other visual effects or keys is very useful creatively for a wide range of productions. Below are a few examples easily achieved in SpiceMASTER.

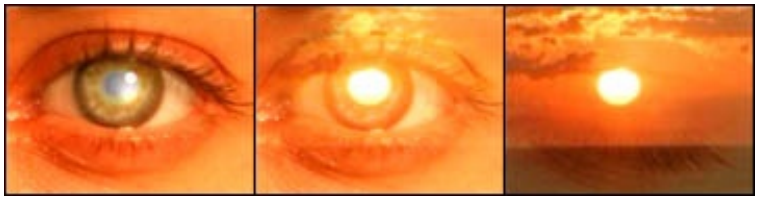
View movie at our web site
Organically introduce an effect on your subject, flowing the effect to the frame edge. In SpiceMASTER, you can easily drag to position where the effect will appear (in this example, opening over the head).

View movie at our web site
Another example of an organic, soft color change.


View movie at our web site
Softly open and close effects timed with your action. In the above example, a blur and color change strengthen over the eye and then disappear with the blink, using SpiceMASTER's bezier keyframing of Completion.

View movie at our web site
Enhance an effect animation with a glow along its edge as it opens. Or apply a shadow, texture, border or other edge enhancements.

View movie at our web site
Use SpiceMASTER to dramatize the center of action by softly animating where subtle brightness changes occur.


View movie at our web site
Softly flow a screen key outward from the eye to progressively reveal more of the lower clip −− a sunset.

View movie at our web site
Timed with the subject's arm action, SpiceMASTER introduces from the top corner a chroma key of the sky's blue to reveal the lower clip −− an abstract, blue streaky background.

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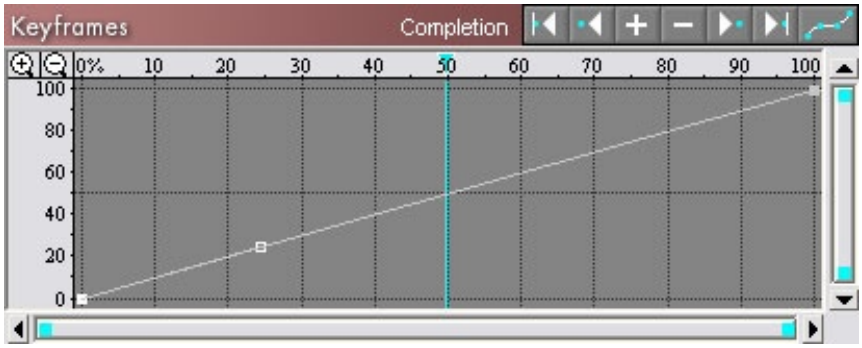
next page

Keyframing

Introduction

SpiceMASTER's powerful keyframer can smoothly accelerate, decelerate, hold, reverse, pulse, or set any special timing for your transition/effect. By default, Completion (the transition/effect's progress) appears with a straight inclined line, as shown below. That means the effect will be linear −− it will progress at constant speed for its entire duration. The horizontal scale of the graph represents duration, from 0% to 100%. The vertical scale represents the setting's value.



General Tips

• Before setting keyframes in SpiceMASTER, it is usually best to first make sure in your video editing software's timeline that the SpiceMASTER transition/effect's total duration is what you desire.

• To freely experiment with keyframe settings, use the Undo/Redo buttons in SpiceMASTER. **SpiceMASTER has 100+ undo/redo's available**. To undo a change, click the yellow Undo button (or tap Ctrl−Z keys). To redo the change, click the adjacent green Redo button (or tap Ctrl−X keys). If either is not available, the button will be dim.

• The maximum number of keyframes is 128.

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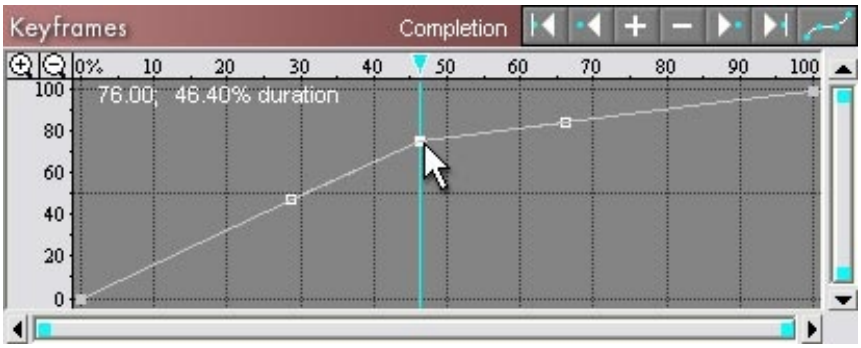
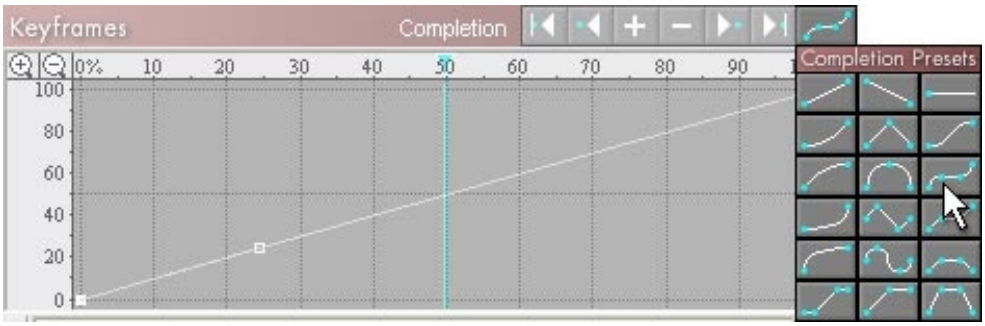
How to Add/Delete a Completion Keyframe

To add a Completion keyframe, do any of the following steps:

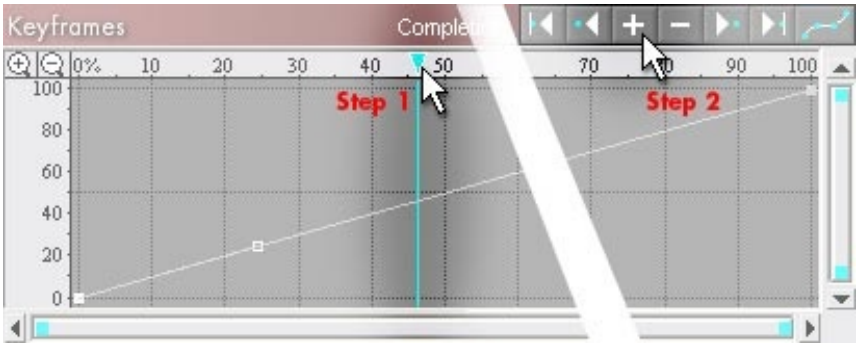
Click on the Completion graph line to create a new keyframe. Then drag the keyframe to a desired position, as shown below. As you drag the keyframe, its coordinates will appear in the top left of the graph, and the preview will instantly update.



OR, click the Completion Presets button and choose a keyframe profile. Eighteen are provided. After the profile appears in the graph, you can modify it further as desired.



OR, position the blue vertical playback marker near where you want a new keyframe (Step 1 below). Click the Add Key (+) button (see Step 2), then drag the keyframe up or down to a desired value. (To constrain its movement horizontally or vertically, hold down the Shift key.)



To delete a keyframe, right−click it and choose Delete keyframe. Or, click the keyframe if it is not already active (it will appear brighter when active), then click the Delete Key button (shown below).

Note: If you recently added the keyframe, you could also click SpiceMASTER's Undo button to revert to before that step.

To delete ALL new Completion keyframes, click the Completion Presets button to choose the default 0%−100% preset. Or click the keyframes graph's background area and choose Revert to default.

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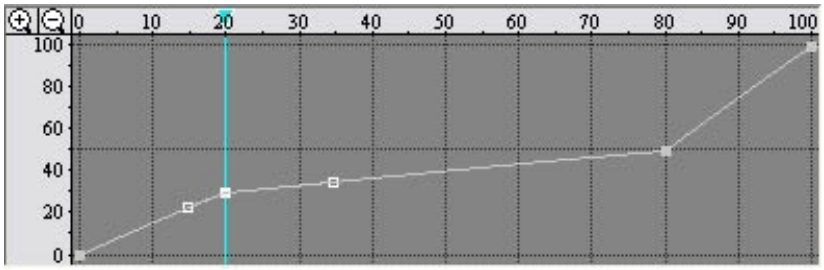
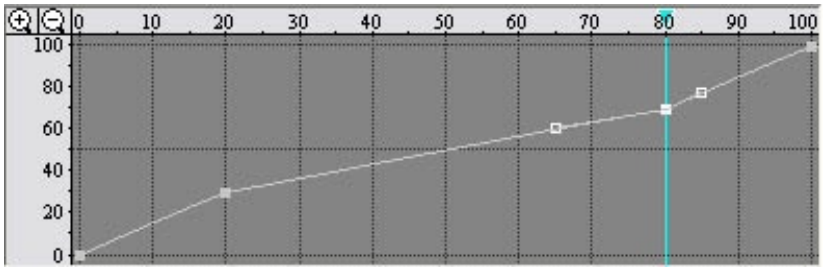
Common Completion Adjustments

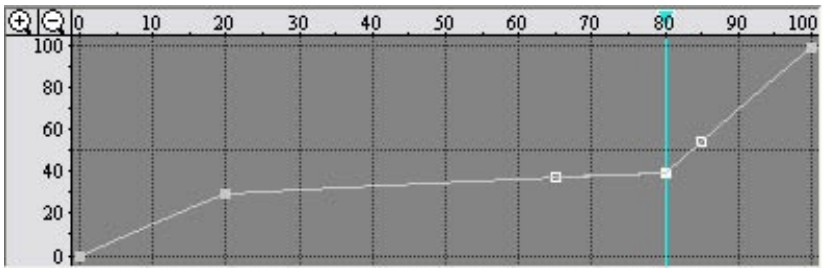
In the example below, two middle keyframes have been added at 20% and 80% Completion.



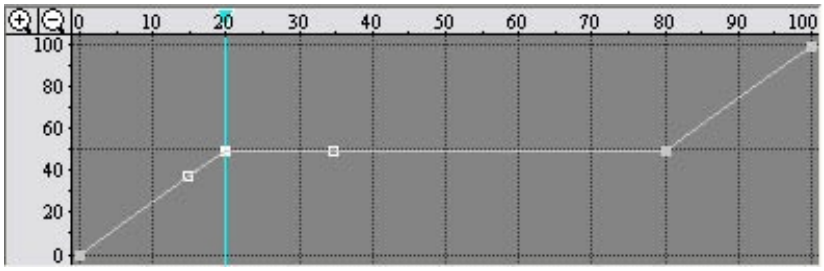
To increase the speed of part of the effect, drag one or more Completion keyframes to steepen the line's slope. In the example below, the middle portion of the effect now progresses faster by dragging the 80% keyframe higher.



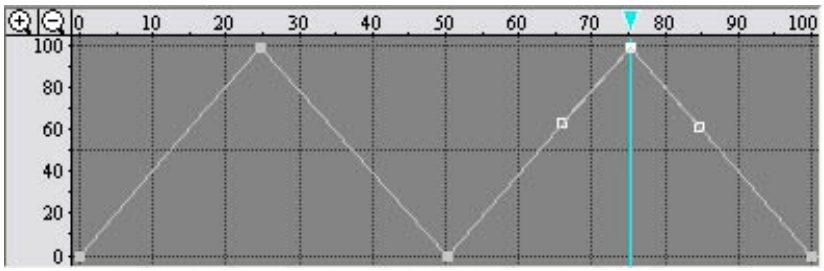
To decrease speed, reduce the keyframe line's slope. In the example below, the middle portion of the effect now progresses slower by dragging the 80% keyframe lower.



To hold/freeze the effect's progress, horizontally flatten all or part of the Completion line, as shown below.



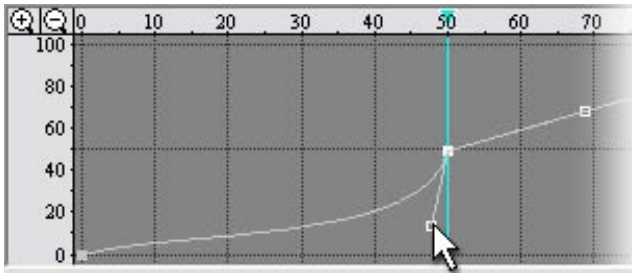
To repeatedly pulse the effect, create a "spiked" Completion line, as shown below.



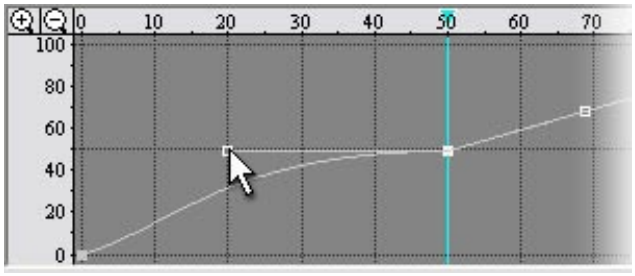
How to Accelerate/Decelerate Completion

Straight segments of a keyframe line represent a linear (constant) rate of progress (Completion) of the transition/effect −− thus no acceleration or deceleration. **To add smooth acceleration or deceleration, curve the keyframe line** −− a task that is very easy in SpiceMASTER. That is because each keyframe automatically comes with two bezier curve handles you can drag as desired. (Start and End keyframes only have one handle, of course.)

To accelerate Completion, drag the keyframe's bezier handle to create an upward curved line, as shown below.



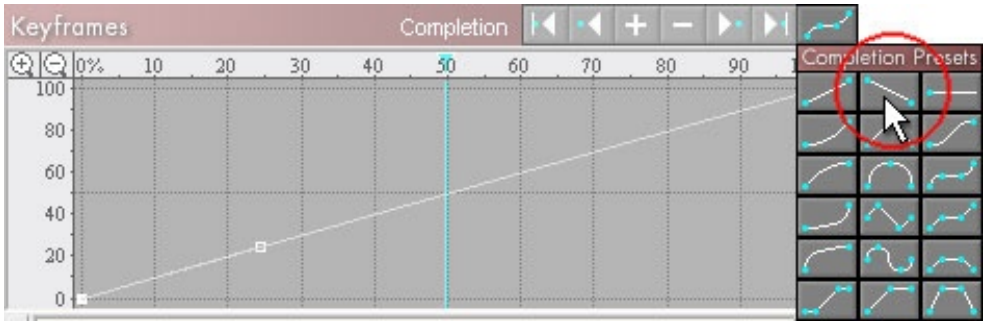
To decelerate Completion, drag the keyframe's bezier handle to create an downward curved line.



More Tips

To instantly reverse the effect's action/direction, click the Invert button located next to the spice image (circled below). This is usually quicker than manually reversing keyframe values, especially if many keyframes have been set.

To reverse the clip order of a SpiceMASTER transition (this is different than reversing the effect's action/direction), use the transition controls in your timeline. For the SpiceMASTER **effect**, click the Invert button (see above), then click the Completion Presets button and choose the 100% to 0% preset, as shown below.



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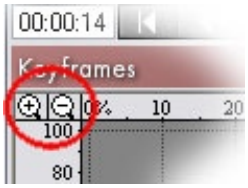
How to Move a Keyframe Precisely

Although dragging a keyframe in the Keyframes graph is the easiest way to position it, sometimes you may want more precision. **To move a keyframe only horizontally or vertically** in the Keyframes graph, Shift−drag. To fine−tune the position, click the Zoom (+) button (shown below) to zoom into the graph and then drag as needed. (For more zoom techniques, click here.)



To precisely position an existing keyframe, right−click the keyframe and choose Enter coordinates. Then enter the desired values as percentages (from 0% to 100%), as shown below. Note that the keyframe's Time position may not end up exactly as entered if there are not enough frames in the effect to precisely match the percentage.

To give a keyframe the exact value (vertical in the graph) of another keyframe, right−click the keyframe that has the desired value, then choose Copy value. Then right−click the other keyframe and choose Paste value.

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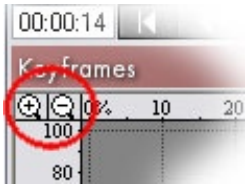
Navigating in the Keyframes Graph

To jump to a specific keyframe, you can just click on it. But among tightly clustered keyframes, sometimes that can be difficult. Also, sometimes you may want to activate a keyframe without perhaps accidentally changing its position by clicking on it. Here is an alternative: **To select the next or previous keyframe, or first or last keyframe,** click the corresponding button located above the Keyframes graph.

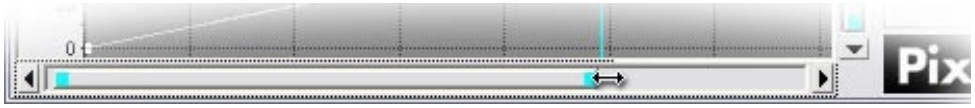
How to Zoom In/Out of the Keyframes Graph

Zooming the keyframes graph is handy to more precisely position a keyframe, or to have several keyframes very close together. **To zoom IN…**

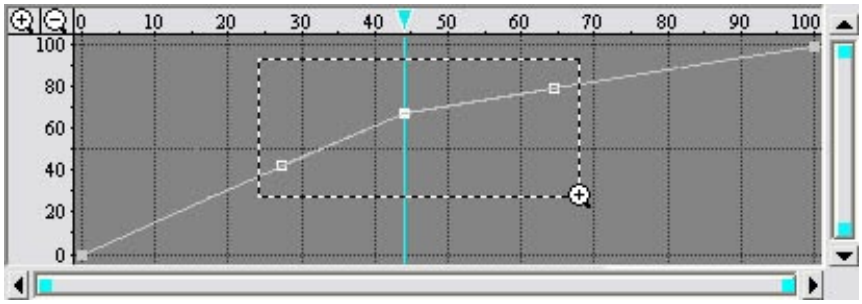
…horizontally toward the graph's center, click the Zoom In (+) button at the top left of the graph. Repeat to zoom in further, if desired.



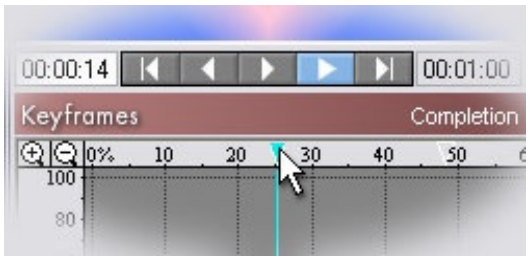
…horizontally toward either end of the graph, drag inward either end of the graph's horizontal scroll bar. **Likewise, to zoom in vertically to magnify the graph's top or bottom,** drag inward either end of the vertical scroll bar.



…vertically only, Shift−click the Zoom In (+) button. Shift−click the Zoom Out (−) button to vertically zoom out.
…vertically to the range where keyframes exist, right−click the graph's gray background, then choose Fit graph to keyframes. This can help you to fine−tune values in relatively flat keyframe profiles.
…wherever you define, Alt−drag in the graph to define where you want to zoom. Or Alt−click the Zoom In (+) button (or right−click the graph's gray background and choose Drag to zoom in), then drag to define where you want to zoom.



To scroll horizontally or vertically from where you zoomed, drag the gray background of the graph, or drag the center of either keyframe scroll bar (or click their arrows).
To bring the blue vertical playback marker into the zoomed region of a graph, click in the numerical bar above the graph.



To zoom back OUT by 2X, click the Zoom Out (−) button. **To instantly return the keyframes graph to show the entire duration** (0% to 100%), double−click the Zoom Out button.

Tips

• **To jump to a different area of a zoomed graph,** first double−click the Zoom Out (−) button to return to the graph's default (full) view. Then Alt−drag in the graph to define where you want to jump to.

• You can drag a keyframe horizontally beyond a zoomed graph area. Although the graph will not scroll horizontally as you drag, you can use the coordinates reported in the top left corner of the graph to see your position. Or, use the graph's horizontal scroll bar to reveal the target area before dragging.

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Below are additional handy tips that will enhance your keyframing in SpiceMASTER.

• How to delay the start of an effect (or advance the end of an effect)
A SpiceMASTER transition's duration is set in your video editing software's timeline, usually by adjusting the length of the transition's icon. Likewise, a SpiceMASTER effect (if available for your video editing software) automatically takes on the entire duration of the clip it is applied to. However, sometimes you may want a SpiceMASTER effect to appear only during part of the clip, by delaying the start of the effect or advancing the effect's end. To do that, choose the preset below from the Completion Presets palette, then manually adjust the inner keyframes as desired.

• How to move a bezier handle that is on top of a keyframe
If you happen to drag a bezier handle directly on top of a keyframe, later dragging may move both points. To move only the bezier handle, first click the keyframe that "owns" that handle −− to activate it. Then Ctrl−drag the bezier handle where desired.

• How to stay at a frame while adjusting keyframes elsewhere
SpiceMASTER's default behavior is to show the image that corresponds to wherever you drag or adjust a keyframe in the graph. The blue vertical playback marker therefore follows your movement in the graph. Sometimes, however, you may want to keep viewing a particular frame while adjusting a keyframe elsewhere. Perhaps you want to adjust a bezier curve while seeing how it alters an earlier or later frame's look. To do that, right−click in the graph's gray background and deselect Sync preview.

• How to snap a keyframe to the vertical playback marker position
When Sync preview is off (see above), sometimes you may need to move a keyframe to the blue vertical playback marker position, such as when aligning a keyframe in one graph to a keyframe in another graph. To do that, position the playback marker where desired, then right−click the keyframe you want to move and choose Snap to Time. The keyframe will then move to the frame the playback marker is on. If that position is not possible because it is beyond an adjacent keyframe, the command will not be available.

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Cool Tips

Working in the Library

Choosing a "spice" file is a key step to applying SpiceMASTER. That's because your effect's design will be based on the spice file's design. With hundreds of available spices, choosing could be a tedious process. Fortunately, SpiceMASTER includes a visual, interactive Library −− a great tool to compare and select the best spice for your desired effect. The Library shows spices as small side−by−side thumbnail animations −− much better than trying to choose from a long list of file names or icons!

The essentials of how to choose a spice file are covered in the earlier Basic Steps: 2. Choose a Spice File page. This page supplements that by showing how you can customize the Library and use its powerful management features. For example, you can create virtual folders of favorite (or project specific) spices. Spice file names can be color−coded for later reference or to help you mark and narrow choices. Also, you can adjust viewing options to tailor the Library to your working style.

Customizing the Library Display
Organizing Existing Effects in the Library
Adding/Deleting Effects in the Library
Other Library Features

Customizing the Library Display

With just a few clicks, you can change the Library's thumbnail style, softness, play direction, and size. **To customize the Library display** to your working style, click its Toolbar buttons. Equivalent commands are also in the Library menu.

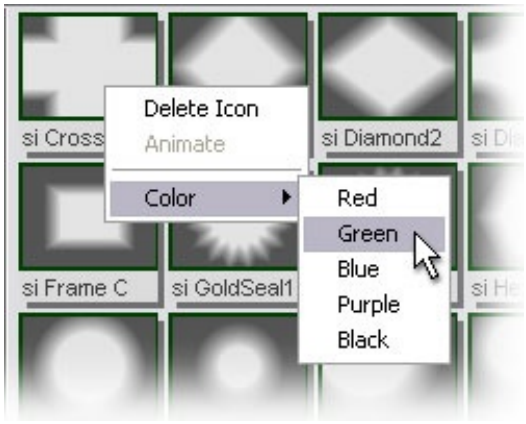
a. Play/Stop Preview −− Play or stop the thumbnail animations. Stopping will reveal the grayscale design that is the basis for each effect's geometry.
b. Preview Speed −− Speed or slow the animation.
c. Reverse Preview −− Play forward only or reverse loop.
d. Preview Softness −− Play with or without edge softness.
e. Change Preview Size −− Increase or decrease the thumbnail size.

Keep in mind you also can adjust the size and location of the Library window (and drag between its two panes to adjust their width). You also can minimize the Library window.

Tips

• **To play only one spice animation in the Library while others do NOT play,** click the Play/Stop toolbar button (button **a** above) to stop the animation of all effects. Then right−click a thumbnail and choose Animate. Repeat as often as desired, such as when you have narrowed your choice to two or three spice candidates.

• **To color a thumbnail name as a way to mark possible effects** (such as favorites, or potential choices for an effect), right−click the thumbnail and choose a color. The color will be stay on the thumbnail until you right−click and choose Black.



• **To hide part of the Library to have more space for thumbnails,** you can uncheck the status bar, toolbar, or left pane in the Options menu of the Library. Also, you can toggle the window's tiling under the main SpiceMASTER dialog with the Tile Library Window command.

Organizing Existing Effects in the Library

You can create "virtual folders" to further organize Library effects into any group, such as spices for a particular project or type of production. Virtual folders only exist within SpiceMASTER. Create as many as you want, with no penalty in disk space or speed. **A Favorites virtual folder is already created for you,** ready made to accept spices from anywhere else in the Library. **To create another virtual folder,** click the blue Add Virtual Folder button (shown below) in the Library toolbar (or choose Edit > Add Virtual Folder).

Then enter the desired name of the folder in the small dialog box that will appear. The new virtual folder will appear at the top of the Library's left pane. To later change the name of the virtual folder, right−click the virtual folder and choose Rename Folder.

To add an existing Library effect to the Favorites folder (or your virtual folder), display the effect in the Library's right pane, then drag and drop its thumbnail into the Favorites folder (or your virtual folder) in the Library's left pane. A duplicate will then reside there (no additional disk space required).

Tips

• **To create a subfolder within a virtual folder,** right−click the blue virtual folder in the left pane and choose Add SubFolder.

• **To delete an unwanted spice or folder,** right−click any thumbnail (or folder) in the Library, then choose Delete Icon (or Delete Folder). Or select a folder in the left pane and choose Edit > Delete Selected Folder. Either way, a warning dialog box that will appear to confirm your choice.

• **To refresh/update a Library folder's contents after adding more effect files to that folder on your drive,** right−click the folder in the Library's left pane, then choose Refresh Folder. **Note:** If you accidentally delete a spice or spice subfolder from the Library, this technique on the main folder will quickly restore it.

Adding/Deleting Effects in the Library

The Library holds several hundred spices that ship with SpiceMASTER, a range wide enough to cover most effect designs you will ever need. However, the Library is open−ended so you can add gradient/alpha wipes or custom mattes that you have created (or have acquired elsewhere). You can add an entire folder of those files or individually add such effects to the Library. For more info about custom files, click here.

An existing Your Custom Files folder is already visible in the Library, which is handy for adding to the Library. That folder is located on your drive within the SpiceMASTER 2.5\Spices folder in your editing software folder. Simply place a new gradient/alpha wipe file or custom matte file in that folder and it will automatically appear the next time you open the Library.

To add an individual effect to a different Library folder than the Your Custom Files folder, first create a virtual folder in the Library (unless you want to add it to the existing Favorites virtual folder). Then right−click the virtual folder and choose Add Spice. (Or with that folder selected, click the Add Spice button in the toolbar, or choose File > Add Spice.) In the Open dialog that will appear, navigate to and select the desired file.

To add an entire folder of additional effects to the Library, click the yellow Add Source Folder button (shown below) in the Library's toolbar (or choose Edit > Add Source Folder). This can be handy if you have a entire set of alpha wipes from another product that you wish to have available in the Library.

In the dialog that will appear, double−click the drive that holds the additional folder of effects. Navigate until you can select that additional folder of effects, then click OK. The selected folder will then appear in the Library's left pane, like any spice folder.

To delete an effect or folder, right−click any thumbnail (or folder) in the Library, then choose Delete Icon (or Delete Folder). Or select a folder in the left pane and choose Edit > Delete Selected Folder.

Other Library Features

Tiling the Library
By default, with sufficient screen space the Library will open directly below the main SpiceMASTER dialog (thus "tiled"). It's a great convenience to have both windows open, SINGLE−clicking on spice thumbnails to compare the effects real−time in SpiceMASTER's preview with particular settings. On smaller screens, however, the tiled position may not show all spices in a folder (without you having to scroll the window). To see more Library thumbnails at once, uncheck Options > Tile Library Window. The Library window will toggle between normal and tiled positions.

File Paths
Need to know the file path of a particular choice in the Library? Select the item in the right pane, then look in the Status Bar along the bottom of the Library window.

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next page

Cool Tips

Saved Settings, Presets, & Favorite Effects

SpiceMASTER includes a HUGE number of saved settings to instantly create a wide range of transitions and effects. You can also save your own custom effects. Favorite effects, or even just certain settings or keyframes, can be instantly reapplied, saving you time. Also, SpiceMASTER's 100+ undo/redo capability can temporarily retain settings so you can experiment easily before applying an effect.

SpiceMASTER has two ways to apply previously created effects −− section presets and saved settings. Each offers different advantages to you: **Section presets** are accessed by a "light bulb" button atop certain control sections −− they only affect controls in that section. **Saved settings**, unlike section presets, typically affect ALL controls in SpiceMASTER.

How to Apply a Section Preset

Click a light bulb at the upper right corner of a section, then choose a preset from the submenu. Trying presets is a quick and easy way to overview a section's effects capabilities. Keep in mind you can do this while the SpiceMASTER preview plays.

How to Apply a Saved Setting

1. Click the blue Load Saved Settings button in the black bar, as shown below. An Open dialog will appear to choose the desired saved settings file. (If the SpiceMASTER 2.5\Saved Settings folder is not open, navigate to it.)

2. Several subfolders of saved settings, organized by style, will appear in the Open dialog. Go into any subfolder and click a save settings file. The settings will preview in the Animate box within the dialog, making it easy to choose a desired file.

How to Create a New Saved Setting

1. Click the blue "+" Save Current Settings button in the bottom black bar of SpiceMASTER. A Save As dialog will appear.

2. Name the file (be descriptive) then click the Save button.

Tips

• **To save settings that (when loaded) will NOT change the current spice file,** turn OFF the Include Spice check box in the Save As dialog box when you create the saved setting.

• **To have a saved setting NOT change other effect settings when loaded into SpiceMASTER,** before double−clicking the desired file, turn ON the Choose Settings check box in the Open dialog. In the Import/Export Settings dialog that will appear, use the OFF buttons to protect one or more sections of existing settings you want to keep.

• **To undo any saved setting or section preset choice,** click the Undo button at the top right of the effect's window. The effect's 100+ undo/redo capability can temporarily retain settings so you can easily experiment!

• **To select from most recently used saved settings,** Ctrl−click the blue Load Saved Settings button.

• Saved settings can be transferred to other editing stations with SpiceMASTER 2.5. Just put the saved settings file you created in the other station's SpiceMASTER 2.5/Saved Settings folder.

• If you have a cool saved setting that you'd like to share with all other users, please email attach it to support2@pixelan.com, include your full contact info, and we will evaluate it for our web site, with you credited if it is posted.

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Cool Tips

Changing the Default Settings

The new default will determine the spice file and settings that will appear initially the NEXT time you apply SpiceMASTER. Changing the default is quick and easy:

1. Apply SpiceMASTER in your timeline so that its main dialog appears.

2. Choose a desired spice file and adjust effect controls as desired.

3. Click the Prefs tab to view the Preference pane, then click the Set button at the bottom of the pane.

To revert to SpiceMASTER's "Factory" default, do either of the following steps:

• **Click the Prefs tab** to view SpiceMASTER's Preference pane, then click the Clear button at the bottom of the pane. Clear will NOT change the current effect −− the new default will appear the NEXT time you apply SpiceMASTER. **Note:** Clear will not change SpiceMASTER's preferences, which are retained automatically when changed.

• **To do the above AND clear the current effect's spice and settings to the "factory" default,** Alt−click the yellow Clear Settings (−) button in SpiceMASTER's black bar area.

Go to the next Help section

Cool Tips

Preferences

SpiceMASTER's preferences are centralized in the Prefs pane. All options there are global −− SpiceMASTER will remember them from effect to effect.

Built−in Preview

SpiceMASTER's built−in preview usually can maintain a real−time pace even on older/slower computers. If the preview appears choppy, however, SpiceMASTER includes a few ways to speed processing up. Choose an option below in the Prefs pane, or trigger the option temporarily by using the keyboard shortcuts shown:

• No image update (Shift−click the Play button) not in Vegas version
Preview will play only with a single frame shown from the source clip(s).

• No UI update (Alt−click the Play button)
Preview will play, but SpiceMASTER's interface (controls, keyframes graph, etc.) will not update during playback.

• Drop frames if necessary (Ctrl−click the Play button)
SpiceMASTER will drop frames if necessary to keep the pacing correct. Turn it OFF to ensure you will preview every frame of the effect (even if the pacing is longer).

Output

Fields (not in Vegas version)
Almost all SpiceMASTER users should stick with the Use NLE settings default. SpiceMASTER will then use the same field order as your video editing software. However, if in your final output you see "raggedness" along a SpiceMASTER effect edge or where other motion occurs, then choose Reverse order **AND** turn on the Full vertical resolution option below (if available).

Full vertical resolution
Available in only certain versions of SpiceMASTER, such as the Premiere version. Increases vertical resolution of effects, instead of the field doubling that Premiere does by default.

Safe color selection
While on, selected Border and Shadow/Glow colors will more likely be "safe" for broadcast −− not too saturated or pure white/black. (Awareness of the safe issue while choosing colors is the best precaution, though.) It constrains RGB values to 16−235. For multimedia output, turn this option off to have the full color range available.

Widescreen (16:9) (DPS, Pinnacle, and Ulead versions only)
Turn on to manually set SpiceMASTER's built−in preview to a 16:9 aspect ratio −− in editing systems that cannot set this automatically. SpiceMASTER itself is resolution independent −− this option only affects the preview.

General

Time Units (not in Vegas version)
This option affects the display of the Current Frame and Duration indicators below SpiceMASTER's preview. Choose relative Timecode values or relative Frames.

Auto−open SpiceMASTER window (Vegas version only)
Turn this on to skip the initial video fx window for SpiceMASTER that appears in Vegas. Turn this off if incompatibility problems appear.

Auto−close Video Event FX window (Vegas version only)
Removes the video event FX window after SpiceMASTER is applied −− a convenience.

Hide Video Event FX window (Vegas version only)
Hides the video event FX window while SpiceMASTER is open −− a convenience.

Show tips in Event FX dialog (Vegas version only)
Toggles the two reminders on/off in SpiceMASTER's video event FX window, useful if you tire of seeing those reminders.

Show pop−up text (not in Vegas version)
Shows a brief text description when the cursor is over certain SpiceMASTER interface areas. Turn it off if it seems like a nuisance.

Confirm clearing of keyframes
With this option on, when clearing keyframes SpiceMASTER will ask for confirmation −− a good safety net for most users.

Confirm before exiting w/o changes
Another safety net so you won't accidentally lose a cool effect you've set up in SpiceMASTER.

Make current FX settings the default
To set a new default effect, choose a desired spice file and adjust settings, then click the Set button. To clear SpiceMASTER default settings back to the "factory" default, click the Clear button. That Clear button will NOT change the current effect's settings (see below). It will change what effect appears the NEXT time you apply SpiceMASTER. Clear will not change other preference settings.

To clear the current effect's settings back to your default SpiceMASTER effect, but retain the chosen spice file and NOT leave SpiceMASTER, click the yellow Clear '−' button in the black bar area of SpiceMASTER.)

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Cool Tips

More Cool Tips

Click below for additional creative capabilities you can achieve with SpiceMASTER.

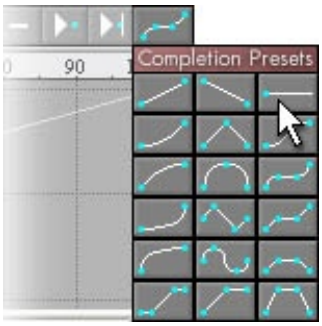
- Combined Spice Designs
- Easily Build Adjustable, Soft Mattes
- Easy Animation/Distortion/Texture Effects
- Brewing Your Own Effects for SpiceMASTER

Combined Spice Designs

SpiceMASTER's Library is loaded with hundreds of spice designs, covering most production situations. However, you have one more nifty way to create additional SpiceMASTER effect geometries: **apply the SpiceMASTER effect (if available) more than once to the same clip to combine spice designs**.

Easily Build Adjustable, Soft Mattes

Most video editing programs can form simple garbage mattes, which can be useful to mask out unwanted areas of a clip, such as static along a frame edge, an unwanted region of a scene, an area trailing a title, etc. Usually you cannot soften the garbage matte's edges and you are limited to straight−edged basic shapes (no curves or unusual/organic shapes). Not anymore! By applying SpiceMASTER and 'freezing' the progress of a spice effect, you can easily apply softenable custom mattes for any purpose. SpiceMASTER's Library includes lots of fundamental shapes to create mattes in virtually any geometry. All are adjustable for position, size, softness, etc. directly in SpiceMASTER. The technique is easy: **After applying a SpiceMASTER effect (if available) and selecting a spice file from the Library,** choose the 'flat' Completion Preset (shown below) in the Keyframes area and drag that keyframe line up or down in the Keyframes graph to set an iris−size or wipe−position as desired. To further fine−tune the matte's position, drag the orange handle in the grayscale spice image. That's all!



If the spice effect does not exactly match the matte shape you need, try the Combined Spice Designs tip above to create a custom shape. **To fine−tune the matte's softness,** apply Softness > All Edges. In addition to softness, most other SpiceMASTER enhancements in the Edge and Depth pane are available for the matte's edge −− border, glow, shadow, etc. For example, if you apply Texture > Motion then you can animate the matte's edge during the effect −− cool!

Easy Animation/Distortion/Texture Effects

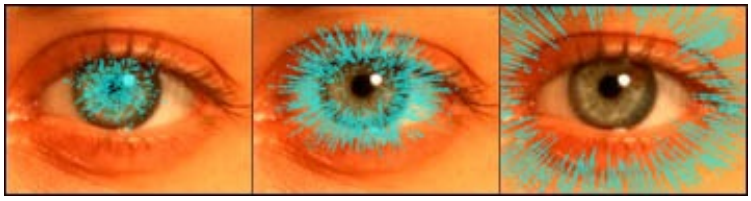
SpiceMASTER's numerous controls in the Edge and Depth panes are not only useful to enhance spice effects. They can be applied **directly to a single clip** to produce a huge range of quick and easy animation, distortion, and texture effects for you! The technique is easy:

1. Synch two copies of the SAME clip in your timeline. One clip copy will therefore sit directly above the other copy.

2. Apply the SpiceMASTER transition between the clip copies (if they are in the same track). **Or apply the SpiceMASTER effect** (if available for your video editing software) to the TOP clip copy. If you applied the SpiceMASTER **effect**, be sure to also activate the alpha channel key in the TOP clip. How to do this depends on your editing software.

3. Set up the effect. In the main area of SpiceMASTER, click the Choose Spice File button to select a spice with the effect design you desire.

4. Apply any enhancement from Border or Shadow/Glow sections of the Edge and Depth panes of SpiceMASTER. Modify further if desired with the Softness and Texture sections. Instant flowing energy wave!



Brewing Your Own Effects for SpiceMASTER

Despite the hundreds of spice files included with SpiceMASTER and the near−infinite ways to modify and customize them, occasionally you may still want to create your own "spice". Perhaps you need an effect that has the exact shape as a client's logo or graphic, or some other custom need. Since SpiceMASTER is open−ended, it will readily accept any still−image as a spice. The file should have a wide range of grayscales −− from pure black to pure white −− to create an effect that changes over time (such as a transition). Or the file can be a simple black & white matte to load and enhance in SpiceMASTER.

To create such a custom file, use a graphics program such as Photoshop to (a) create a grayscale still−image at the same size as your final output (such as 720x480 pixels), and (b) save the file in any format below. Then load the file directly into SpiceMASTER, or add it the Library for repeated future use. SpiceMASTER can load files in the following formats: BITMAP (.bmp or .dib), TIFF (.tif), PNG (.png), PICT (.pct), JPEG (.jpg), and TARGA (.tga).

Go to the next section of this Guide

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Undo −− Ctrl−Z
Redo −− Ctrl−X

Control Values
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100 −− End
Decrease by 20 −− Page Up
Increase by 20 −− Page Down
Increase by .1 −− Right or Down Arrow
Decrease by .1 −− Left or Up Arrow

Cycle through controls −− Tab

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Center −− Alt−5

Keyframes
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Play/Stop −− X
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Last frame −− R

Apply current settings −− Enter
Load Saved Settings −− Alt−L
Save Current Settings −− Alt−S
Clear Settings −− Alt−C
Exit without changes −− Esc

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Index

A GREAT index is crucial to a good help system. Much time and effort has gone into this Index. Click the letter below that corresponds to the first letter of your search term.

A B C D E F G H I JK L M N O PQ R S T U V W XYZ

Entries will then appear like this: accelerate/decelerate an effect **31** 29

Click an underlined page number to go to that help page. The most helpful page usually is first. Pages with an image about the topic appear bold (such as **31** above).

As an alternative, click here to view an index of just SpiceMASTER controls and commands organized by **where** they appear in the SpiceMASTER interface. Sometimes that can be an even quicker way to find help! This is similar to the context−sensitive help feature of SpiceMASTER, but can be accessed anytime, even when SpiceMASTER is not visible.

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