How to apply and adjust video transitions

Applying transitions between clips—such as dissolves, page wipes, spinning screens—can be an effective way to grab viewers' attention or ease them from one scene to the next.

Premiere Pro provides more than 75 video transitions that are easy to use and customize. The customization involves their placement relative to the cut line between clips, their duration, and such settings as colored borders, motion parameter values, and start and end locations (**Figure 1**).
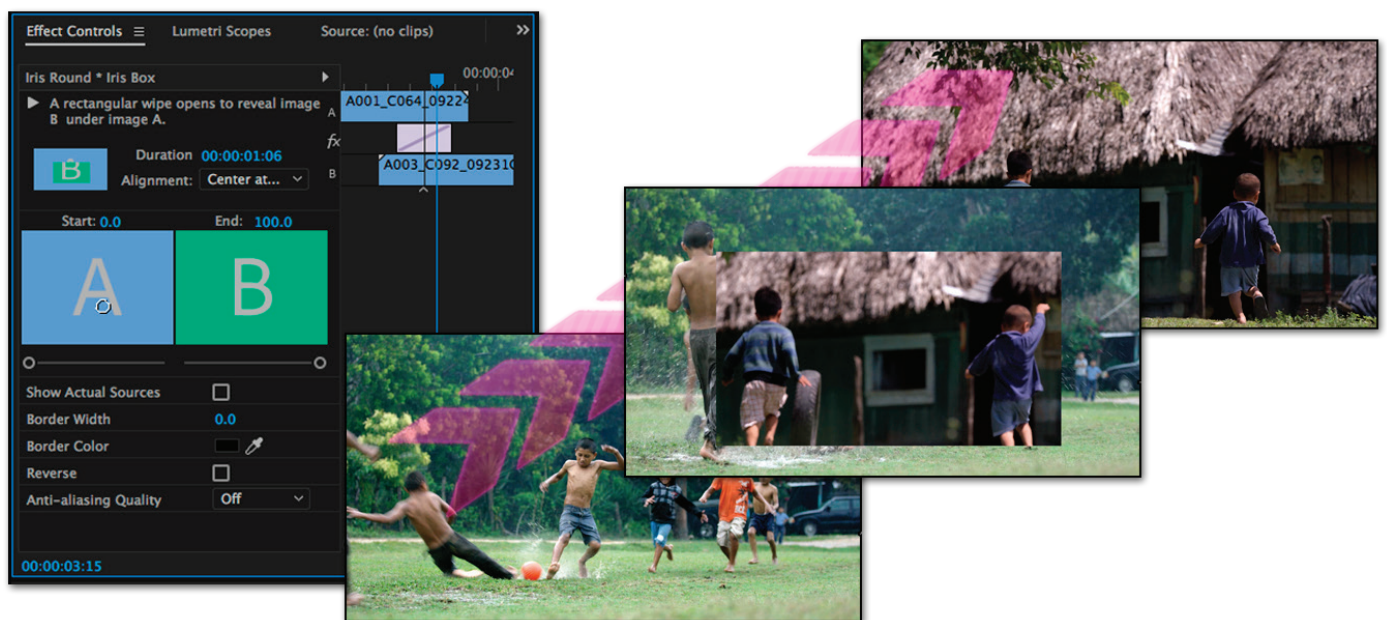

Figure 1 *Effects Controls panel and video clips with Iris Box transition applied*

Most transition customizing takes place in the Effect Controls panel. In addition to the various options unique to each transition, the Effect Controls panel has a time ruler feature that makes it easy to move transitions relative to the cut line, move the cut line and transition together, and change the transition In and Out points. The *Morph Cut* is a video transition that you can use in talking head interviews. It uses advanced technology to automatically smooth out distracting jump cuts to create seamless transitions. Use your own files or download the assets used in this tutorial here.

Applying and replacing video transitions

You will need two video clips for the following tasks.

To apply and replace video transitions:

1. Start Premiere Pro, start a new project, and import two video clips.

2. Drag the two video clips from the Project panel to the Video 1 track in the Timeline panel.

3. In the Tools panel, select the Ripple Edit tool (**Figure 2**).

4. Drag the end (Out point) of the first clip to the left to shorten it by about 1 second, and drag the beginning (In point) of the second clip to the right about 2 seconds (**Figure 3**).

   This gives the clips some tail and head frames so that you can create a smooth transition.

5. Use the Zoom Slider in the lower-left corner of the Timeline panel to adjust the relative size of the clips until they fill the width of the Timeline panel.

6. In the Tools panel, click the Selection tool.

7. Open the **Effects** panel and open the **Video Transitions** > **Dissolve** bin.

   Note: The **Effects** panel contains audio and video effects and transitions. There is also an **Effect Controls** panel, where you can adjust effect value parameters and transition settings such as duration, the start and end of an effect or transition, and the audio volume level.

   Note: **Cross Dissolve** has a blue box around it indicating it is the default transition (**Figure 4**). To apply the default transition, move the CTI to (or near) the cut line between the two clips, and press **Ctrl+D** (Windows) or **Command+D** (Mac OS).
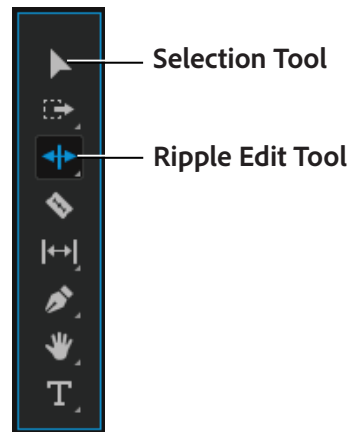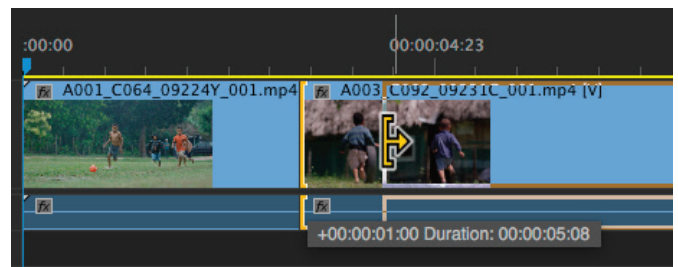
Figure 2 *Tools panel*

Selection Tool

Ripple Edit Tool

Figure 3 *Ripple Edit tool*

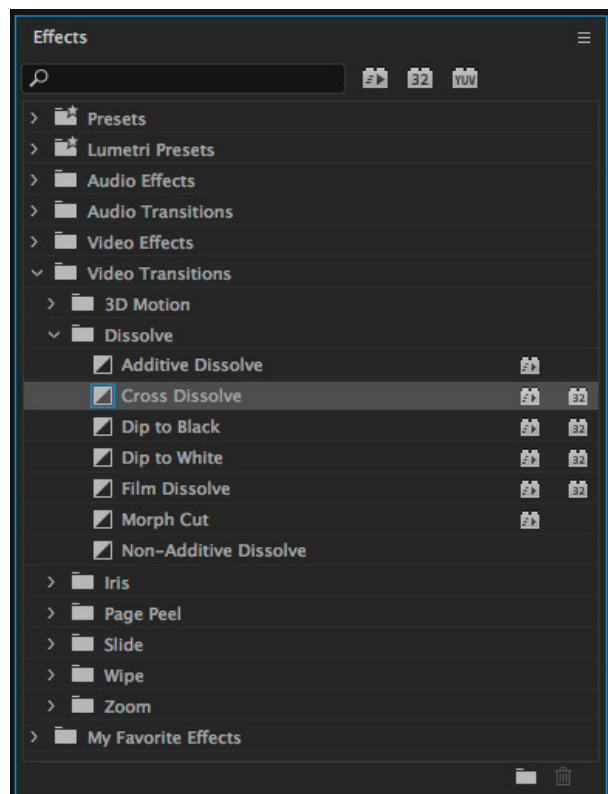**Figure 4** *Effects panel and default transition*

8. Drag **Cross Dissolve** to the cut line between the two clips on the sequence (**Figure 5**).

   Note: If you drag the transition left or right over the cut line, the rectangle on top of the clips changes to show the placement of the transition (**Figure 6**):

   - Ending at the cut line (at the Out point of the first clip)
   - Centered on the cut line
   - Starting at the cut line (at the In point of the second clip)

   Transitions placed at the beginning or end of a clip are called *single-sided*. All others are *double-sided*.

9. In the Timeline panel, drag the current-time indicator (CTI) ahead of (to the left of) the transition and press **Enter** (Windows) or **Return** (Mac OS).

   The transition renders automatically and then plays. The transition has a 1-second (30 frames) duration by default. You can change the default length in the **General Preferences** dialog box: Select **Edit** > **Preferences** > **General** (Windows) > **Timeline** or **Premiere Pro** > **Preferences** > **General** (Mac OS) > **Timeline**.

   Note: You can replace one transition with another by simply dragging a new transition to the existing transition in the sequence.

10. To change the default transition, select a new transition in the **Effects** panel and select **Set Selected As Default Transition** in the **Effects** panel menu (**Figure 7**).
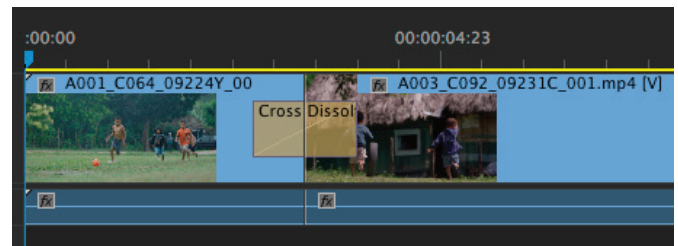

Figure 5 Transition at a cut line

Figure 6 Three transition locations and cursor icons: left (top), center (middle), and right (bottom)
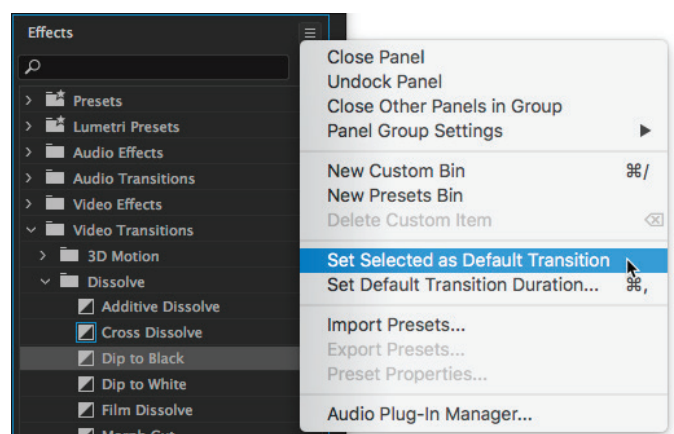

Figure 7 Effects panel menu

Overview of video transition settings

After you place a transition at a cut line between two clips, you will usually want to change the transition settings to customize its actions to suit your project, for example by making longer, shorter, or more intense. You make those changes in the Effect Controls panel. Each transition has its own set of options, although many transitions have settings in common with other transitions. To see all the transition options and the transition time ruler, you will probably need to drag the edges of the Effect Controls panel to expand its height and width. Here's an overview of what's available:

- *Edge selectors*: Change the orientation or direction of the transition. Some transitions can move from all eight primary cardinal compass points (N, NE, E, SE, and so on).
- *Duration*: Set the length of the transition.
- *Alignment*: Place the transition starting at the cut, ending at the cut, centered at the cut, or in a custom location. Custom Start appears as an option in the Alignment field only if you drag the transition to a custom location over the cut.
- *Start And End Sliders*: Start a transition with part of the transition already completed or end it before its logical completion. For example, the Clock wipe can start with half the face showing the next clip or end with half the face showing the first clip.
- *Show Actual Sources*: Display the starting and ending video frames of the transition. This can help you decide the transition duration or the placement of certain elements. For example, the Iris Box transition has the second clip appear in a tiny box within the first clip. You use the starting frame to help set where that box should appear in the clip.
- *Border Width*: Adjust the width of the optional border on the transition. The default border is None. Some transitions do not have borders.
- *Border Color*: Specify the color of the transition's border. You can select a color from the color swatch or use the eyedropper to select the color from a video clip.
- *Reverse*: Play the transition backward. For example, the Curtain transition closes and the Clock Wipe transition plays counterclockwise.
- *Anti-aliasing Quality*: Aliasing is the jagged, stair-step edge common along sharply defined lines on computer monitors and TV sets. This is most noticeable when the transition is not a horizontal or vertical move. To get rid of aliasing (to soften that edge), you select Anti-Aliasing. This option is available for transitions that have borders.
- *Custom*: Only a handful of transitions have custom settings. Here are some examples: Zoom Boxes—number of boxes, Band Wipe—number of bands, and Card Flip—Rows, Columns, Flip Order, and Axis.
- *Positioning Circles*: Locate the starting and ending points of a transition within a clip's frame. For example, Iris Star has the second clip appear in the first clip as a tiny star that grows to a full-screen clip. You use the starting positioning circle to place where in the first clip that tiny star appears. Most transitions don't have positioning circles.

Adjusting reverse and positional circle settings

Changing most of the transition settings is straightforward. However, reverse and positional circles need some explanation. Here is an overview of those settings.

To adjust reverse and positional circle settings:

1. Continue working with the clips you added earlier in this guide, or start a new sequence, add two clips to it, and trim their respective Out and In points.

2. In the **Effects** panel, open the **Video Transitions** and **Iris** bins, and then drag **Iris Round** effect to the end of the last clip.

   Note: The only placement option when applying a transition to the end of the last clip in a sequence is to have the transition end at the Out point. This is a single-sided transition (**Figure 8**).

3. Click the **Iris Round** transition rectangle at the end of the clip to select it and to display its parameters in the **Effect Controls** panel.

4. Play the transition and note that the iris opens outward, giving the appearance of a growing black circle.

   That is the default action for the **Iris Round** transition. Instead, the iris should appear to close down on the video, creating the effect of closure.

5. In the **Effect Controls** panel, select the Reverse option and view the transition in the **Program Monitor** (**Figure 9**).

   Note: Reverse changes the action of a transition.

6. Drag the **Iris Box** transition from the **Effects** panel to the cut line between the two clips in the sequence.

7. Click the **Iris Box** transition rectangle at the cut line between the two clips to display its parameters in the **Effect Controls** panel.

   Iris Box has an option you have not seen up to this point: a positioning circle in the **Start** clip preview pane (**Figure 10**).

8. Move the positioning circle in the **Start** screen to change the location where the zoom boxes will start and finish.

   Note: Because there is only one positioning circle for **Iris Box** (some transitions have both start and end positioning circles), the transition starts and ends in the same relative position within the frames of the two clips.

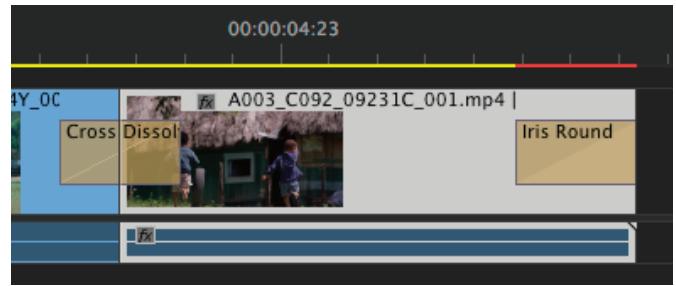9. Play the sequence and preview the transitions.

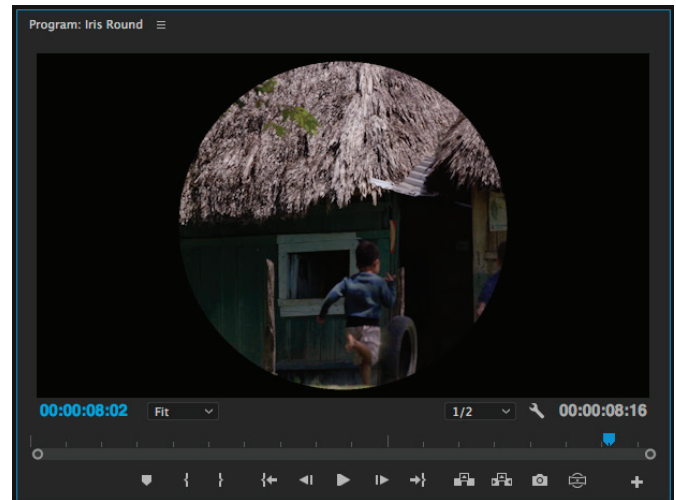*Figure 8* Iris Round transition placed at end of clip

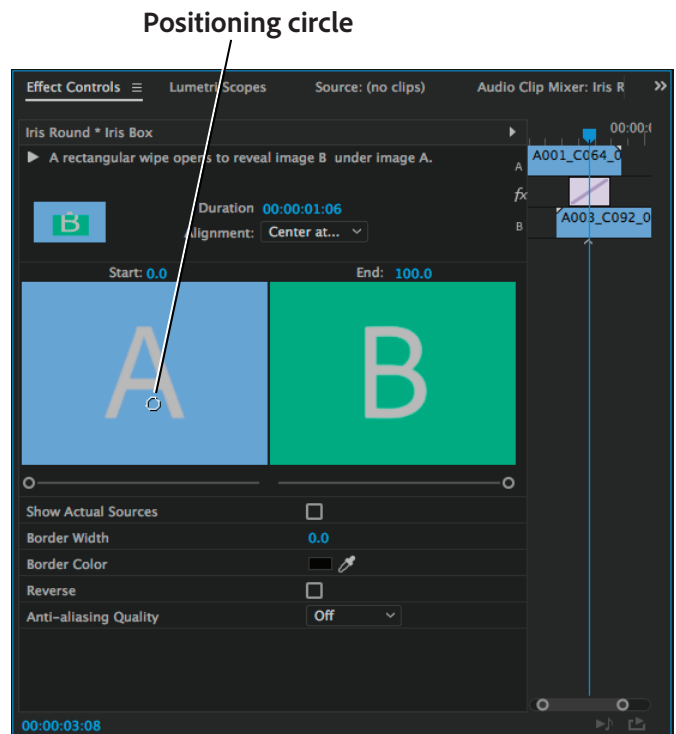*Figure 9* Iris Round transition

Positioning circle

Figure 10 Transition Clip preview panes

Adjusting transitions in the Effect Controls time ruler

You can make several types of adjustments to transitions in the Effect Controls time ruler:

- *Adjust transition alignment*: You can drag the transition to reposition it over the cut.

- *Move the cut line and transition together*: This is the same as performing a rolling edit in the Timeline panel. As you move the cut, the transition moves with it. Move the cut line and transition together by positioning the cursor on the thin vertical cut line (the pointer changes from the Slide Transition tool to the Rolling Edit tool) and dragging left or right (**Figure 11**).

- *Change the transition In and Out points*: Use the time ruler to drag either end of the transition and precisely position it relative to the clips. Change the In or Out points of the transition by positioning the pointer over the transition until the Trim-in or Trim- out tool appears and then drag left or right (**Figure 12**).
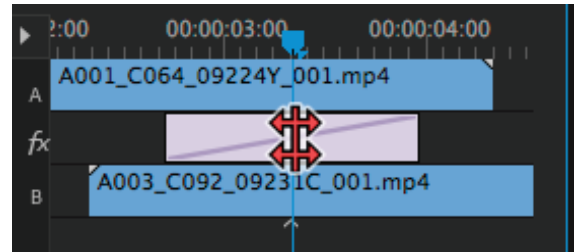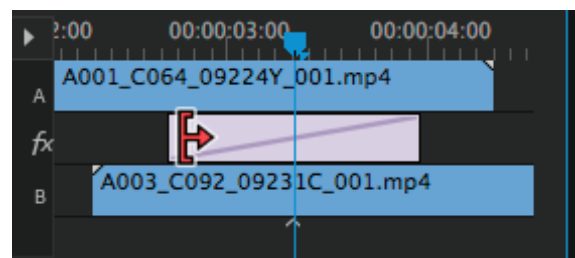

Figure 11 *Rolling Edit tool*

Figure 12 *Trim-out tool*

Morph Cut transition

A common challenge that comes with editing footage with a "talking head" is that the subject can stutter, make frequent use of "umms", "uhs", or unwanted pauses. All of which keep you from having a clean, continuous sequence without the use of jump cuts or cross dissolves.

You can effectively clean interview dialog by removing unwanted portions of a clip and then apply the Morph Cut video transition to smooth out distracting jump cuts. You can also use Morph Cut to effectively rearrange clips in your interview footage to ensure a smooth flow without any jumps in visual continuity.

Morph Cut uses an advanced combination of face tracking and optical flow interpolation to create a seamless transition between clips. When used effectively, a Morph Cut transition can be so seamless that it looks as natural as shooting the video without unwanted pauses or words that can break the narrative flow. For best results, apply Morph Cut to fixed shots that have a single talking head and a static background.

To apply Morph Cut:

1. Set In and Out points on the Timeline to select the part of the clip that you want to remove.

    You can remove clips from your sequence in different ways, like lift and extract, delete, and ripple-delete.

    Repeat this step for all portions of the clip that need removing.

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2. In the **Effects** panel, choose **Video Transitions** > **Dissolve** > **Morph Cut** and drag the effect to the edit point between clips in the Timeline (**Figure 13**).

   Note: To avoid lip sync problems, apply Morph Cut between places where the last or first words of the speech peak. You can also use audio waveforms to help identify areas with a natural pause and make your cuts there.

3. After you apply the **Morph Cut** effect, analysis of the clip begins immediately in the background. As analysis begins, an "**Analyzing in background**" banner displays within the **Program Monitor** indicating that analysis is occurring.

   You are free to work with the footage or elsewhere in the project while the analysis occurs (**Figure 14**).

4. After analysis is complete, a symmetrical transition is created, centered at the edit point. The transition duration matches the default of 30 frames specified for **Video Transition Default Duration**. You can change the default duration using the **Preferences** dialog.

   Note: A typical transition duration that works well is about 10-20 frames.

   If the lip movements and voice are not exactly in sync or the results are not satisfactory, change the In and Out points or adjust the duration of the transition.

   Note: Every time you make changes to a selected **Morph Cut**, or even undo a change, Premiere Pro retriggers a new analysis. However, you don't need to delete any previously analyzed data.

When you apply **Morph Cut**, a transition is created using default settings. You can fine-tune the transition using the **Effect Controls** panel or Timeline. For more information about how to do this, see Adobe Help Fine-tune transition.

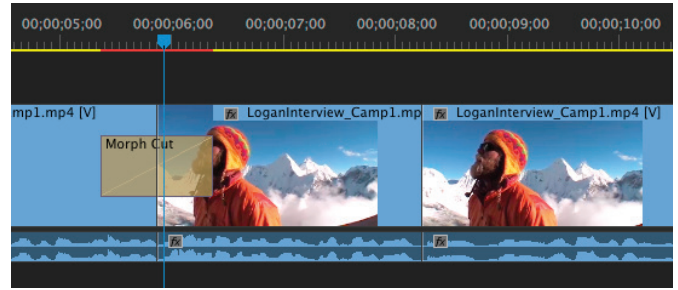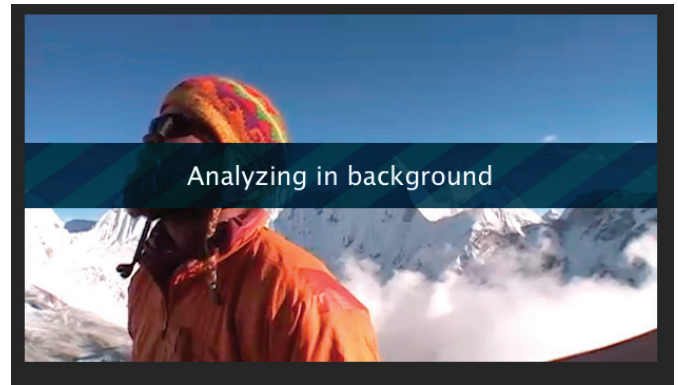*Figure 13* Morph Cut transition in Timeline

Figure 14 Clip analysis after applying Morph Cut

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