

Compounding Interest in Clips

In the legacy version of Final Cut Pro it's a simple thing to manipulate multiple clips in a single bound by nesting them together into a sequence. One of the great strengths of Final Cut Pro was its ability to use a nested sequence of clips as just another video clip. This allows a number of techniques for animating multiple clips simultaneously, applying the same filter (or filters) to several clips, or overriding rendering order of motion effects and filters.

Final Cut Pro X continues this tradition, by adding a few new wrinkles to managing multiple clips in a project, but FCPX doesn't do it in quite the same way or with the same facility as legacy Final Cut Pro. The two primary ways of grouping multiple clips together in FCPX are creating a Secondary Storyline, or a Compound Clip.

Secondary Storylines are a good way to manage clips in a project as an editorial unit, basically grouping clips that work together as a cutaway or B-roll. Secondary Storylines can even be used to emulate the track-based workflow of legacy Final Cut Pro.

Compound clips are good for grouping clips together as an effects unit, when you need to apply motion or filter effects to several clips, as if they are a single clip. In this tutorial we'll replicate a classic 4-up, rotating video effect using Compound Clips and highlight a few other new features of the current version of Final Cut Pro X.

Note

The basic workflow described in this tutorial should work for almost all versions of Final Cut Pro X, but this tutorial was created using FCPX 10.0.6. Just sayin'.

All 4 One

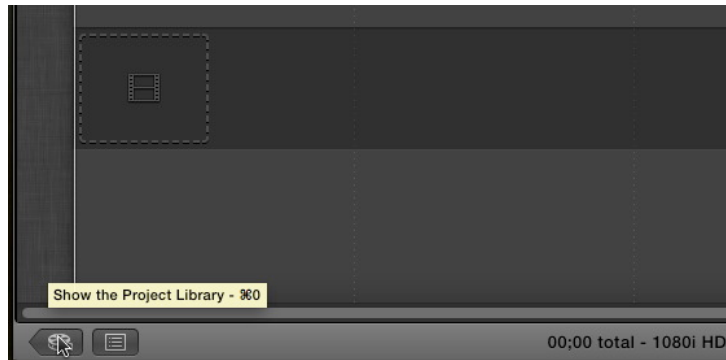
For all intents and purposes, Compound Clips are the Nested clips of Final Cut Pro X, however, they currently can't do a couple of things that nests can do in legacy Final Cut Pro.

- 1 Compound Clips can't change the render order of motion and filter effects like Nested Clips can.
- 2 Compound Clips can't create custom video frame sizes like Nested Clips can.

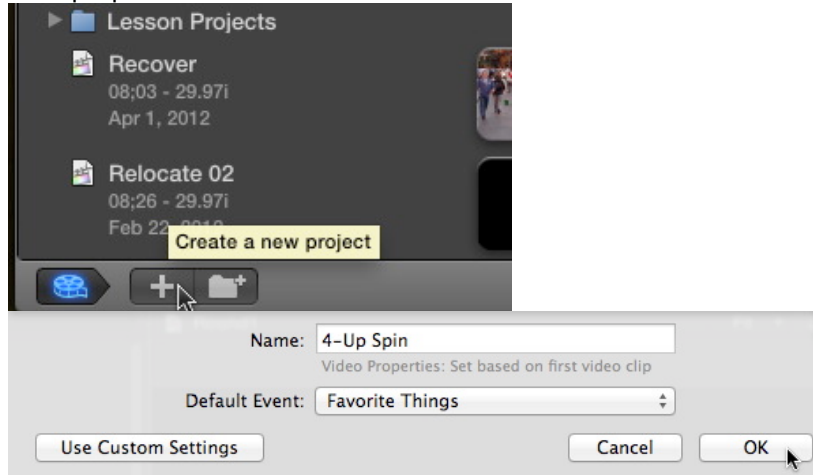
This second item can be worked around by using Motion 5 to create templates for custom frame sizes, and we'll walk you through that process in the next tutorial.

Let's set up a new project and create a spinning 4-up video wall.

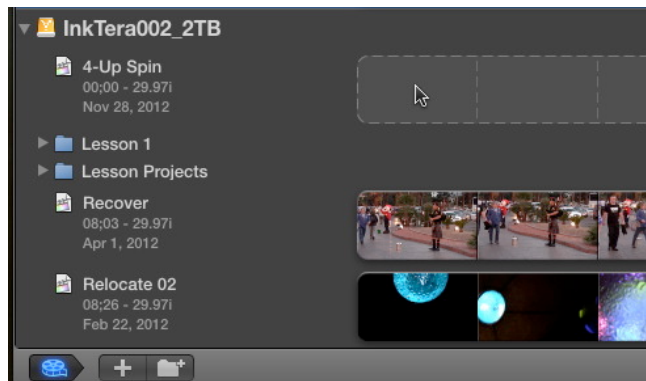
- 1 Launch Final Cut Pro by clicking on its icon on the Mac OS X Dock, the Lion Launchpad, or by double-clicking in the Application Folder.
- 2 In the Timeline click the Show Project Library button, to access the Project Library.



- 3 In the Project Library, click the Plus button to create a new Project and name it 4-Up Spin.

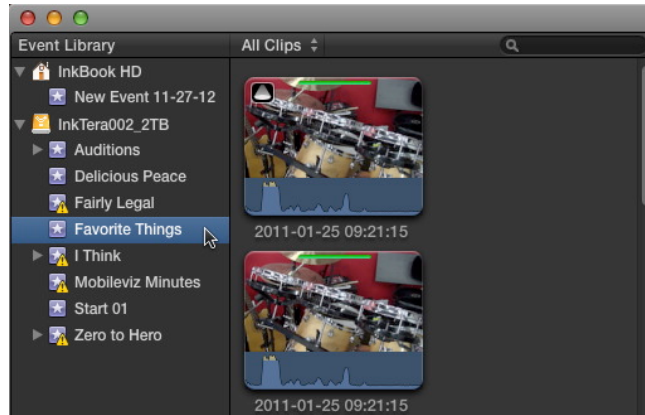


- 4 In the Project Library, double-click on the 4-Up Spin Project to make it the active Project in the Timeline.



Now let's add some clips to the Project.

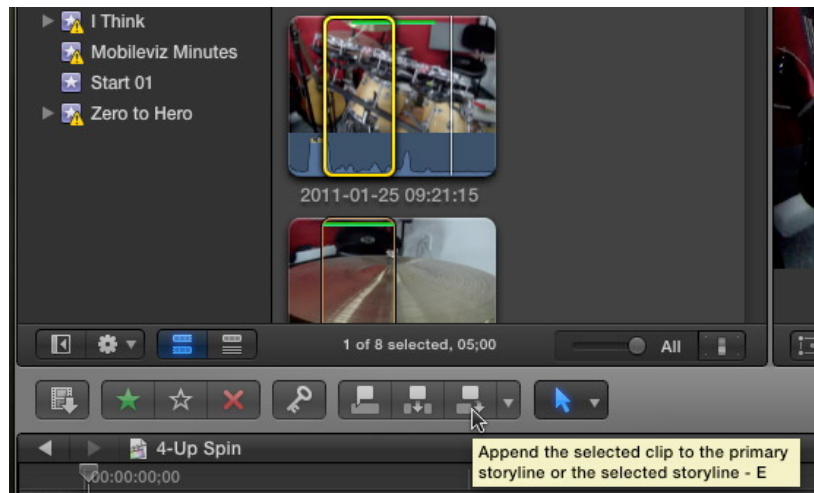
- 1 In the Event Library, click to select an appropriate event. In this example I'm using an Event called Favorite Things, but you can use any Event available on your system.



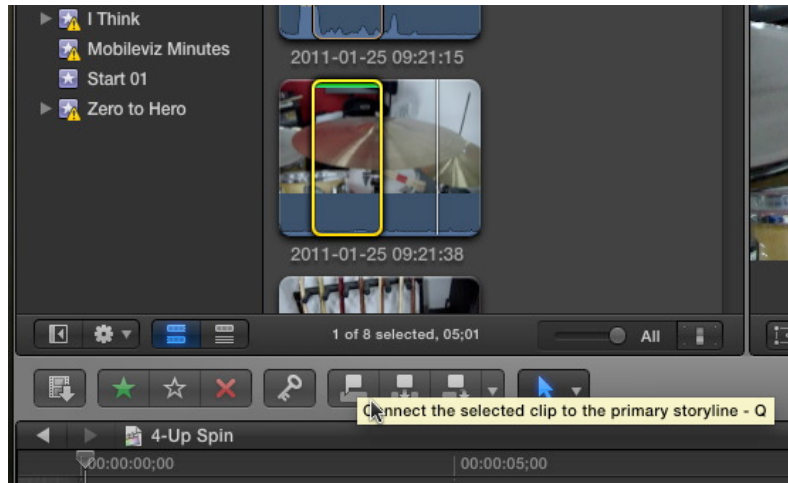
- 2 In the Event Browser select four five second segments from four different clips.

In Final Cut Pro X 10.0.6 you can now make persistent selections in your clips. Any selection you make by clicking and dragging or setting In and Out points will remain selected, even if you click on a different clip. If you are using an over version of FCPX then use Favorites to create your clip selections.

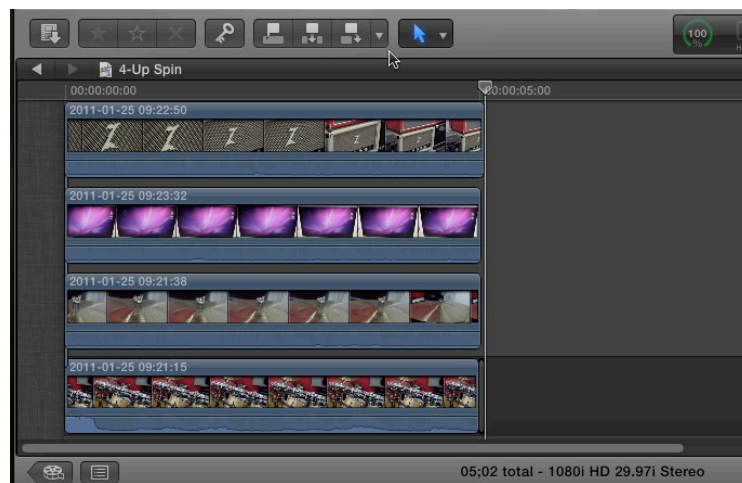
- 3 In the Event Browser, click to select the first clip segment and press the E key on the keyboard, or click on the Append button in the Toolbar to add the clip to the Timeline Project.



- 4 Repeat step 3 for the remaining three clips, but press the Q key, or click the Connect Clip button in the Toolbar to add the remaining clips as connected clips.

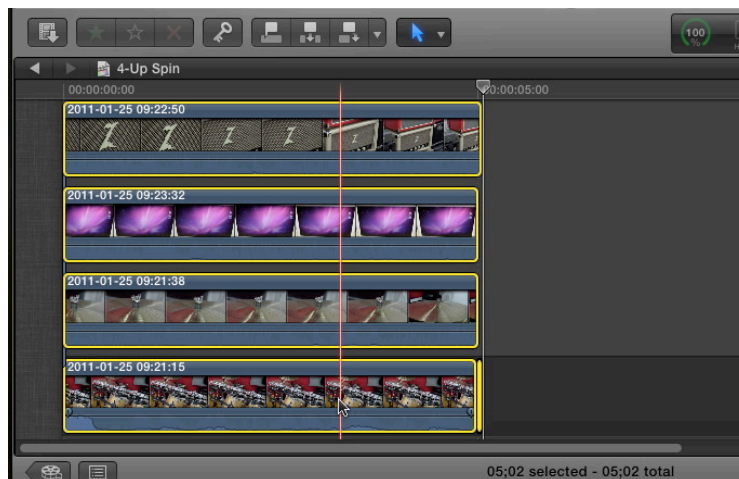


You'll likely have to reset the playhead back to the beginning of the Timeline Project between edits.

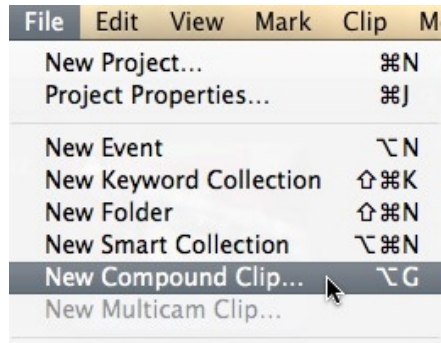


You now have four clips in the Timeline stacked on top of each other. Time to convert them to a Compound Clip.

- 1 In the Timeline, click to select the topmost clip, then hold the Shift key down on the keyboard and click the bottommost clip to select all four clips. You can also click and drag over the four clips to make a marquee selection.



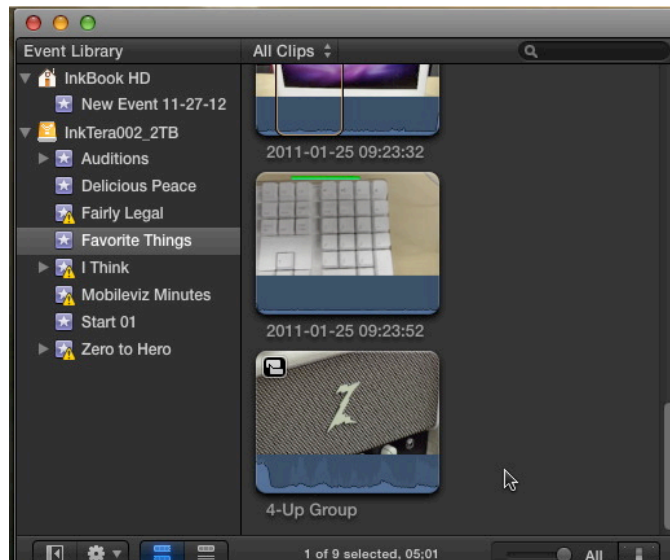
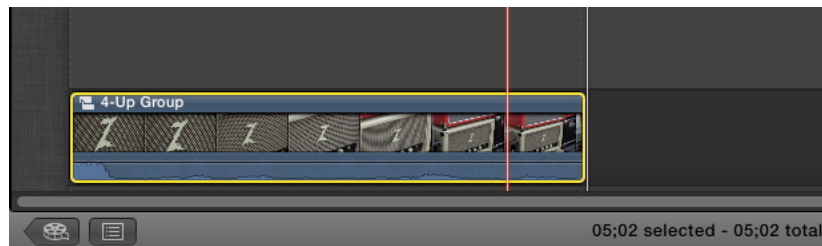
- 2 In the Menu Bar select File > New Compound Clip or press the Option – G keys on the keyboard.



- 3 In the Sheet that drops down, name the new Compound Clip 4-Up Group, make sure the appropriate Event is listed in the Event drop down menu, and click Okay.



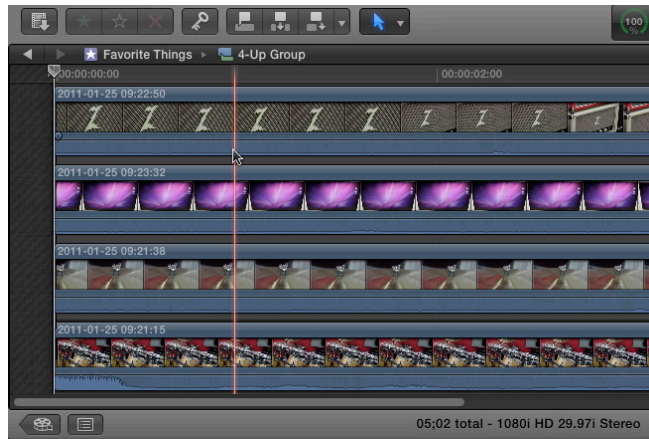
- 4 The four clips in the Timeline will be replaced with the new Compound Clip. Also notice that the newly named Compound Clip also appears in the Event Browser. This is another new feature of FCPX 10.0.6 that makes Compound Clips work more like the legacy Nests.



A Little Internal Medicine

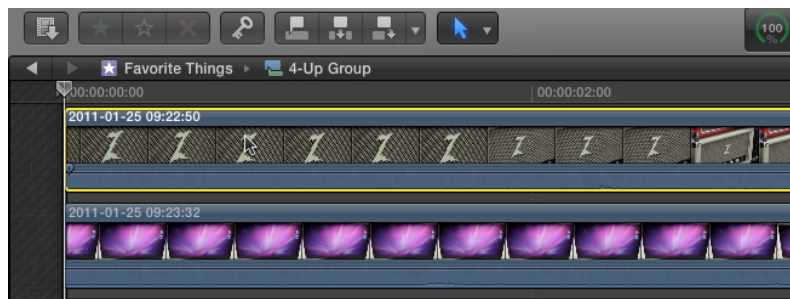
Now we'll create the 4-up video wall. To do so we'll modify the clips inside the Compound Clip.

- 1 In the Timeline, double-click on the 4-up Group Compound Clip to edit the individual clips.

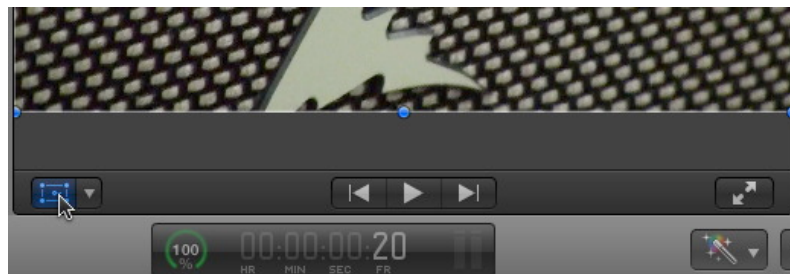


Just as with legacy nests you can make changes to the Compound Clip or to the individual clips inside the Compound Clip.

- 2 In the Timeline click to select the topmost clip.



- 3 In the Viewer click the Transform Button to adjust the size and position of the selected clip. The Transform Button will turn blue to indicate that it's active.

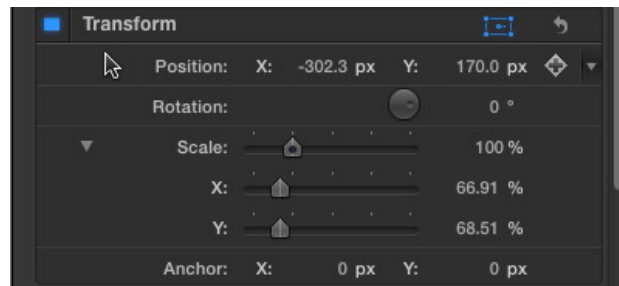


- 4 In the Viewer click and drag the clip's lower right blue corner handle up and to the left, while holding down the Option key on the keyboard, until the clip's scale size is approximately 50%.

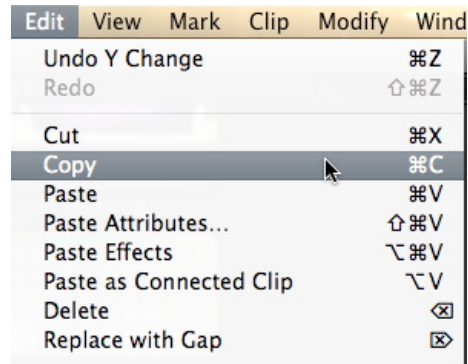


This will scale the clip so that it occupies the upper left quadrant of the viewer.

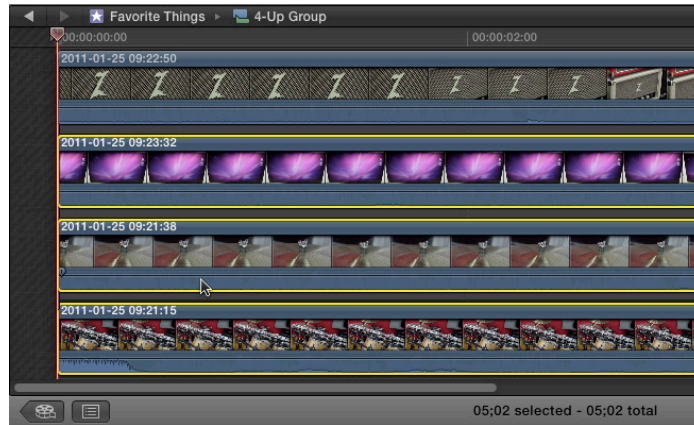
If you want to be more precise than just eyeballing the size change, then open the Inspector, show the Transform parameters and click the disclosure triangle next to the Scale parameter and watch the scale values decrease to around 50%.



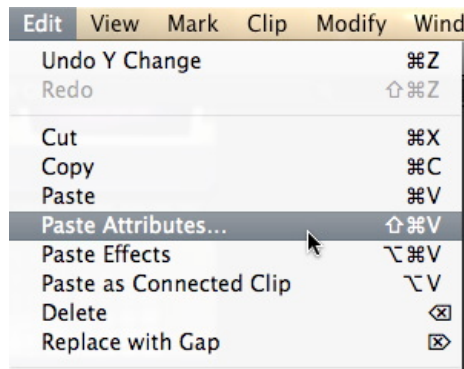
- 5 With the clip still selected, in the Menu Bar select Edit > Copy, or press the Command – C keys on the keyboard.



- 6 In the Timeline, select the remaining three clips and in the Menu Bar select Edit > Paste Attributes or press Command – Shift – V on the keyboard.

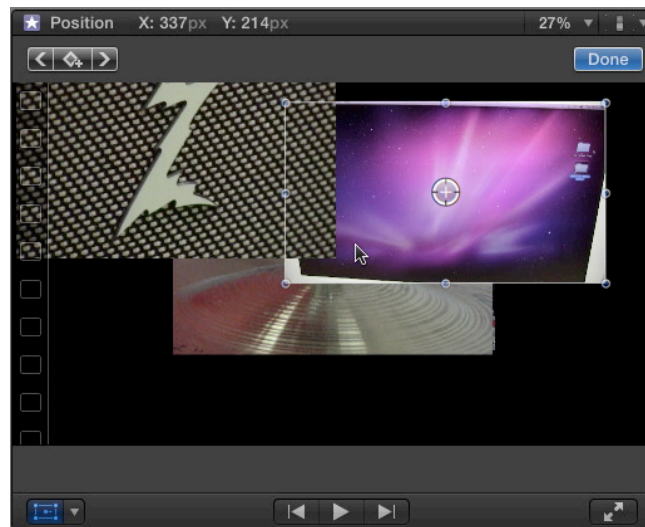
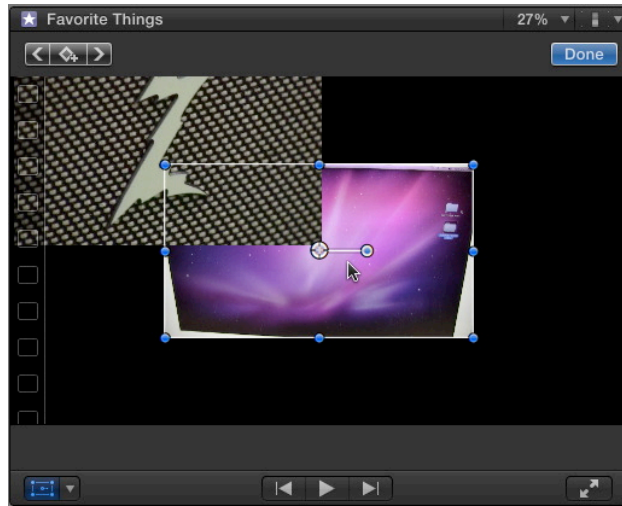


- In the Past Attributes dialog click to select the Scale Parameter and click Paste.

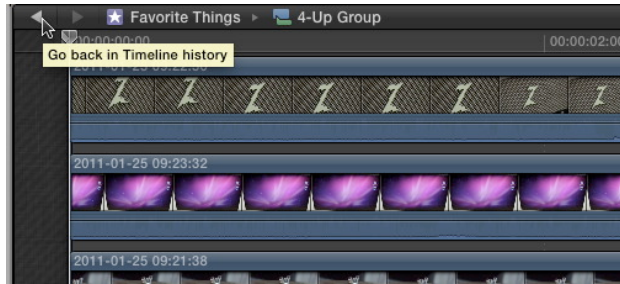


This is another new feature enhancement in Final Cut Pro X 10.0.6. You can now select the specific attributes you want to paste to other clips. Clip attributes are no longer applied en masse when you use the Paste Attributes function.

- In the Timeline, press Command – Shift – A to deselect the currently selected clips.
- In the Viewer click on the visible clip in the center of the Viewer and drag it to the upper right quadrant. Repeat to drag the remaining clips to the lower left and right quadrants.



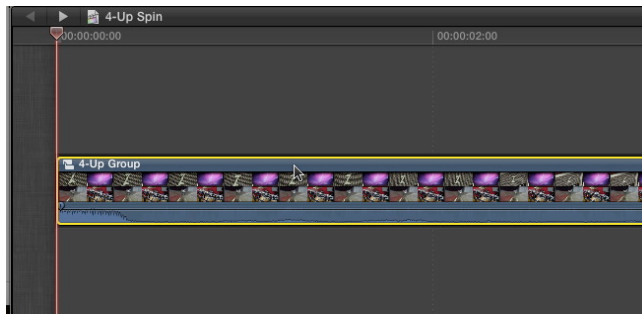
- 10 In the Timeline, click the Back in Timeline History Button to jump back to the display of your Project with the Compound Clip.



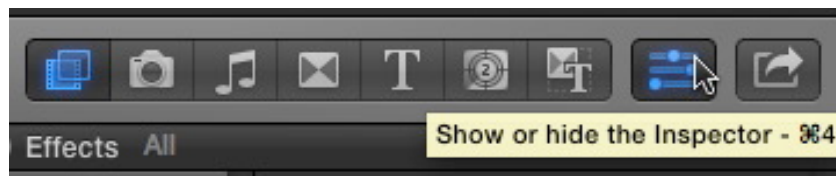
Season to Taste

Now you can apply any motion effect or filter to the Compound Clip and it will adjust all the clips.

- 1 In the Timeline, Move the playhead to the head of the Project and click to select the Compound Clip, if it is not already selected.



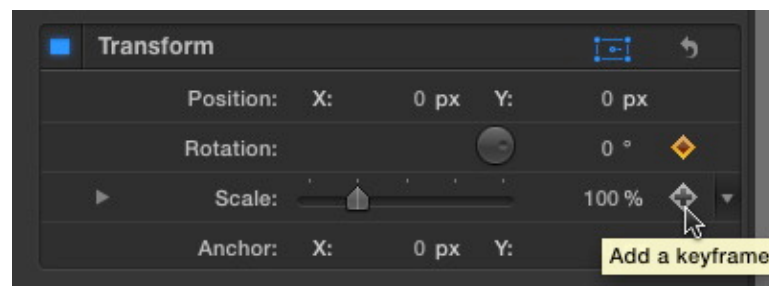
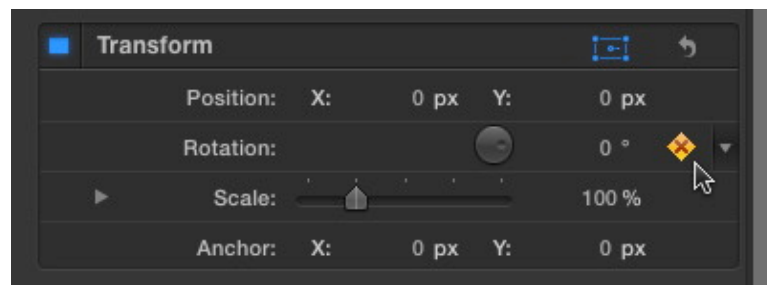
- 2 If the Inspector is not currently visible, in the Toolbar click the Inspector Window Button to display the Inspector.



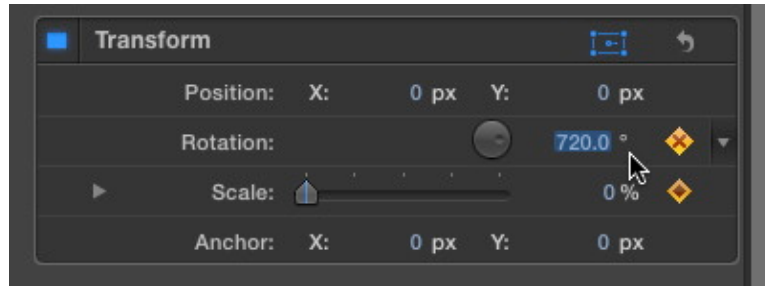
- 3 In the Inspector, show the Transform parameters, if they are not already visible.



- 11 In the Inspector, click on the Keyframe Button for the Rotation and Scale parameters to set initial keyframes at the head of the Timeline.



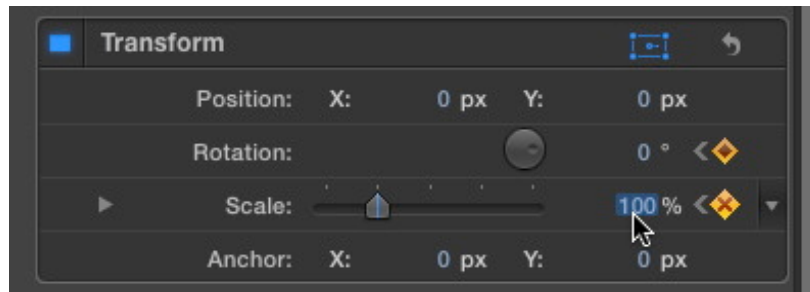
- 12 In the Inspector, set the Scale parameter to 0% and the Rotation Parameter to 720°.



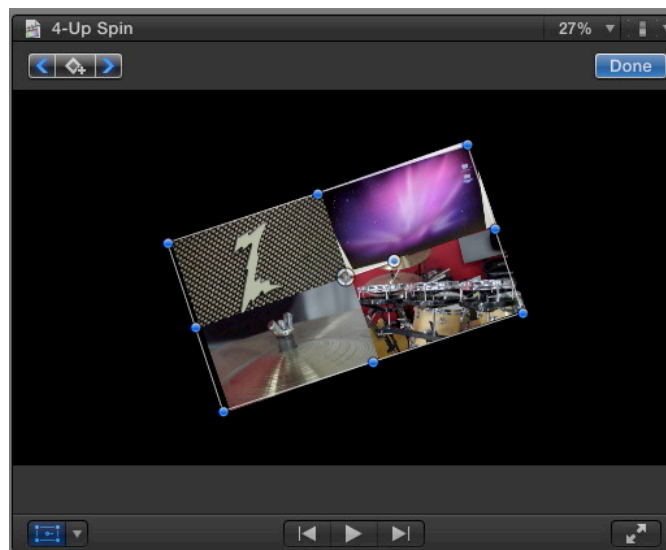
- In the Timeline, move the playhead approximately half way through the 4-up Group clip.



- This is where we will set the end parameters.
- In the Inspector, set the Scale parameter to 100% and the Rotation parameter to 0. Note that changing the parameter settings automatically creates new keyframes. This happens when because we set the initial keyframe in step 11.



- In the Timeline move the playhead back to the head of the Project and play it back.



Laboratory Experiments

Now that you have mastered the basic technique, try a few additional experiments of your own. Try additional transform effects or add filters

to the clips and you'll see how much more fun and easy it is to work with Compounds in your Final Cut Pro X workflow, than it was in High School Science class.