

The Quick and Dirty WUTV Editing Guide

Final Cut really is a complex program, as its three volume manual attests. This guide is only meant to serve as a quick reference for some of Final Cut's most basic functions. If this is your first experience with video editing, it'll help get you started. Don't be intimidated by the size of the manual though. It's laid out fairly well, and is the only completely comprehensive guide to Final Cut that you will be able to find.

Capturing Video into Final Cut

Before you do anything else, save your project. To edit the video that you've shot, you must first capture it onto the computer:

- Connect your camera to the computer with a FireWire cable.
- Select video playback mode on the camera, and cue the tape to the position you want to capture from.
- In Final Cut, choose `File > Log and Capture`. This will open the `Log and Capture` window.
- Enter a name for your video clip in the `Description` text box.
- Click on the `Capture Now` button in the bottom right of the window.
- When you have reached the end of your video, press the `Escape` key.

Final Cut will save your captured video clip in the directory, `(user)\Capture Scratch\`(your project name). When you close the `Log and Capture` window, your captured clip should appear in the `Browser`. If it doesn't, you can add it to your project manually:

- Choose `File > Import`.
- Select the file you want to use in your project, and click the `Choose` button.

If the video that you have captured is a long clip from a DV camera, Final Cut can automatically split it up into subclips based on the shots you took when filming:

- Double click on the clip in the `Browser` to open it in the `Viewer`.
- With the `Viewer` active, choose `Mark > DV Start/Stop Detection`.
- This will create markers in the clip. In the `Browser`, select all of them.
- Choose `Modify > Make Subclip`.

Note that this process has two important limitations. First, there must not be any gaps in your video. To avoid this, don't rewind or fast-forward your tape while you are filming. Second, for this to work for many cameras, the date and time must be set when you are filming.

Arranging Clips in the Timeline

The `Timeline` is the core of Final Cut. In it, you combine your clips, along with audio and video effects, to form a completed project.

To add a clip to the timeline:

- Select the clip in the `Browser`.
- If you want to preview the clip, double click on it to open it in the `Viewer`.
- Drag it to the `Timeline`.

If you want to reposition a clip, simply select it, and drag it along the `Timeline`. To delete a clip, select it and press the `Delete` key.

You may find it useful to turn on snapping. This causes clips on the timeline to stick to clip boundaries, markers, and the playhead when you are positioning them. To turn snapping on or off:

- Choose `View > Snapping`. A check indicates when snapping is on.

You may also find it useful to link certain clips so that they move together. To link or unlink a group of clips:

- Select the desired clips in the `Timeline`.
- Choose `Modify > Link` to link unlinked items, or unlink linked items.

Making Cuts

It is incredibly unlikely that you will want to use your captured clips as they are. `Final Cut` offers many ways to trim and break up your clips. If you want to adjust the ends of a clip, also called the clip's in and out points:

- Select the clip you want to modify in the `Timeline`.
- Drag the beginning of the clip to adjust the in point.
- Drag the end of the clip to adjust the out point.

You also may want to cut a clip into different parts:

- In the `Timeline`, position the playhead where you want to divide your clip.
- Choose `Sequence > Add Edit`.

Transitions

In some cases, you may want to transition between clips more elaborately than with a simple cut. `Final Cut` has dozens of transitions to choose from. To add a transition:

- Click on an edit point between two clips in the `Timeline` to select it.
- Choose `Effects > Video Transitions`, and pick the transition that you want to use.

Note that adding a transition requires that you have frames available on either side of the edit point. To change the duration of a transition simply drag one of its ends in the timeline, just as you would do to resize a clip. If you want to remove a transition, simply select it, and press the `Delete` key.

Text

`Final Cut` has several built in text generators that allow you to create titles, credit sequences, or other overlays. The simplest of these is the static text generator:

- In the `Browser`, click on the `Effects` tab.
- Select `Text Generator` from the `Text` folder, and drag it to the `Timeline`.
- To overlay text on your video, drag the generated clip to a video track above the clip you wish to superimpose text on.
- To adjust properties such as font, color, and text, double click on the generated clip, then click on the `Controls` tab in the `Viewer`.

Music

You can use Final Cut to add a soundtrack to your video. Final Cut recognizes a wide variety of audio files, but it does not work well with mp3. You should convert mp3 audio files into another format (such as aiff) before you can use it in your project. Once you have added your music file of choice to your project:

- Select the audio file in the `Browser`.
- Drag it to a free audio track in the `Timeline`. Audio tracks appear in the bottom half of the `Timeline`.
- Position and trim the audio clip just as you would a video clip.

Adjusting Audio Levels

Nothing gives away an amateur video like bad sound. While sound quality depends largely on how you record it, you can significantly improve the quality of your audio in Final Cut. The easiest way to do so is to adjust the volume of your clips so voices are both consistent and audible. To adjust the volume of an audio clip in the `Timeline`:

- In the bottom left corner of the `Timeline`, make sure that the `Clip Overlays` control is on. Its image looks like a crooked line with diamonds on it.
- Volume level overlays should now appear on audio clips. If you have not modified them, they will look like thin horizontal lines.
- To adjust the volume of a particular audio clip, drag the volume level overlay up or down on it.

Finishing Your Project

Once you have finished editing your project, you have two options for finishing it. You can print your video to a DV tape, or you can form a single video file that can be played back on any computer. To print to tape:

- Connect your camera to the computer with a FireWire cable.
- Set the camera to video playback mode.
- Cue the tape to the position that you want to begin recording from. Note that this will erase any video already present on the tape.
- Choose `File > Print to Video`. This will open the `Print to Video` window.
- In the `Leader` section, select the check box labeled `Black` and enter a value of about five in the field next to it. This will add a few seconds of black to the tape before your video.
- Do the same in the `Trailer` section.
- Click on the `OK` button.

You can also create a video file that can be played back on other computers. Unless you use some form of compression, which is beyond the scope of this guide, the file will likely be quite large:

- Choose `File > Export > QuickTime Move`.
- In the `Save` window, choose a name and location for your file.
- Make sure that the `Make Movie Self Contained` check box is selected.
- Click the `Save` button.