Adobe Premiere

Animating a still image along a path

With Adobe® Premiere's® motion controls, you can move any still image or video clip along a motion path. Here you'll animate an Adobe Illustrator® file along a motion path over a clip playing in the background. This effect requires a video clip and a still image containing an alpha channel. You'll start with a project containing a video clip on the Video 1 track.

While this tip shows how to animate a still image, you can also use the same technique to animate video clips along motion paths.


1. Add the Illustrator still image.

Drag the shuttle slider in the Program view of the Monitor window to the time when you want the motion to start. Then drag the still image from the Project window to the Video 2 track, aligning its In point to the edit line in the Timeline.

### 2. Adjust the duration of the still image.

Move the shuttle slider in the Program view to the time where you want the motion to end. Then, in the Timeline, drag the right edge of the still image to the edit line.
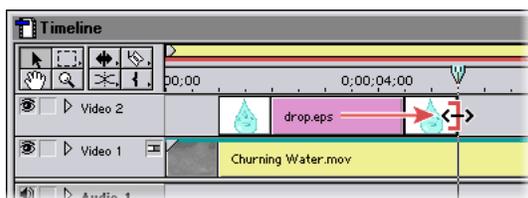
3. Apply transparency to the still image.

Select the still image in the Timeline and choose Clip > Video Options > Transparency. Choose Alpha Channel for Key Type. Select the page peel icon so that you can preview the effect, and click OK to close the dialog box.

In this example, the Illustrator image includes an alpha channel (for transparency), which makes it easy to key out the white background using either the Alpha Channel or White Alpha Matte key type.
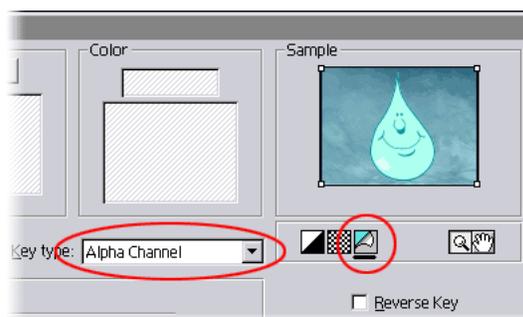
4. Apply motion to the still image.

With the still image selected in the Timeline, choose Clip > Video Options > Motion. Make sure that the Alpha option under the motion thumbnail is set to Use Clip's, and then select Show All to see a preview of the motion superimposed over the background clip.

Note that the default motion is straight, as represented by the horizontal line in the upper right panel. This line is called the motion path. If you were to click OK without making any changes, the selected clip would move in a horizontal line.
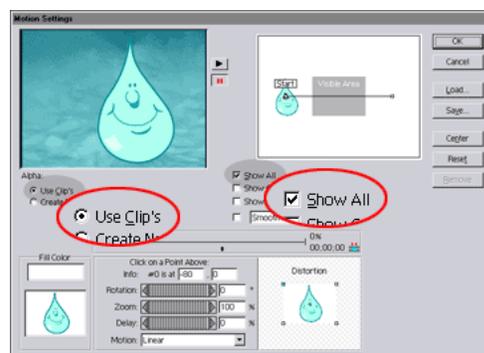
5. Adjust the motion path.

Notice that each end of the motion path has a small box, called a motion point, which you can use to adjust the path. Position the pointer on the start point of the motion path (the pointer icon becomes a pointing finger icon).

You can drag the motion points anywhere within the white or gray areas. The gray Visible Area represents the area visible in the Program window. We wanted the image to enter the screen from the top left corner of the screen and exit from the upper right corner, so we positioned the two motion points outside the visible area.

Click the Play button by the motion thumbnail to preview the motion.
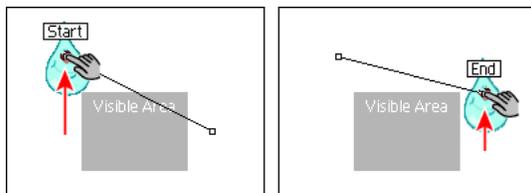
6. Add more motion points.

To add a motion point, click the motion path approximately one-third of the way from the start point, and drag the new motion point down. Then click and drag to create a series of motion points that zigzag across the visible area.

Tip: To move points in space, move them on the motion path. To move points in time, move them on the motion timeline.
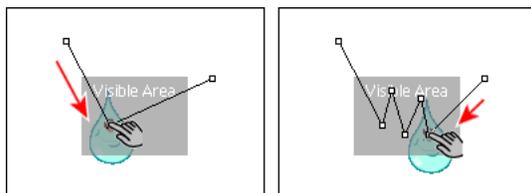

7. Rotate and scale the still image.

To create the illusion that the still image is moving through a three-dimensional space, change Rotation and Zoom settings in the lower section of the dialog box. Select the first motion point and specify a rotation value of -45 and a zoom value of 50. Next, select the other topmost motion points and assign each a rotation and zoom value similar to the first.

Click the Play button by the motion thumbnail to preview the motion. As the still image bounces from left to right, it will appear to move forward and then recede. When you're finished viewing, click OK to close the dialog box.

Note: A red-filled motion point indicates that its rotation, zoom, or delay settings have been changed from the default of 0.
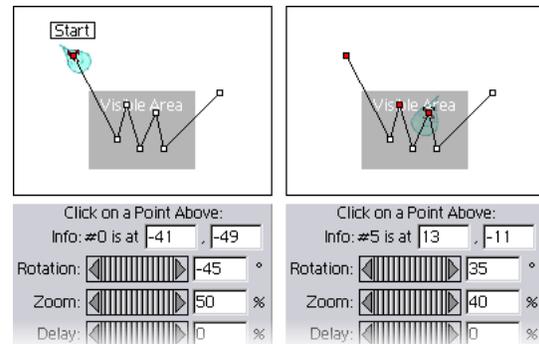
8. Preview the completed animation.

Set the time to the beginning of the animation, and then hold down Alt (Windows) or Option (Mac OS) as you drag the shuttle slider in the Timeline window. Pressing Alt or Option previews the transparency as well as the motion.
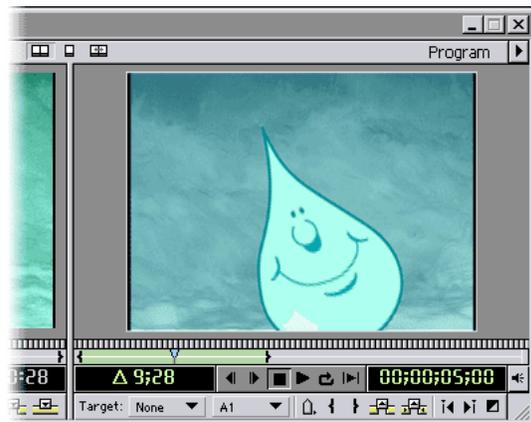
Congratulations... you're done! For more information about motion and transparency, see the Premiere Classroom in a Book®.