

Color 1.5 Timeline Preparation

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Introduction: This list may at first appear overwhelming. Relax, it is meant to be inclusive and much of it is step-by-step instructions, which will hopefully make it easier for you to use. Feel free to contact me with any questions you have.

1. General Sequence Guidelines

- a. **Duplicate your project** prior to doing anything!
 - i. Then, duplicate the “picture-locked” sequence you are preparing for color grading. Do your sequence prep on the copy and give it a logical name like “*Sequence Name CC*” or use some kind of naming indicating that this is the sequence being prepped for color correction.
 - b. **Sequences should be from Final Cut Pro 7**- sequences from previous versions will be converted to version 7. This is irreversible; once saved in Final Cut 7, the sequence is not backwards compatible to a previous version.
 - c. **For longer projects**, the timeline should be broken up into approximately 15 to 23 minute reels, with each reel in its own sequence.
 - d. All the media within your sequence **must be the same format** (for example 720P), **codec** (for example ProRes) **and frame rate** (for example 29.97). I cannot accept mixed frame rate/format sequences.
 - i. Create a self-contained QT file or use Compressor to make all clips the same frame rate.
 - ii. Color may interpret different formats within the same sequence incorrectly
 - e. **Compress your video tracks:** All non-composited video should be on one or, at most, two video tracks. (option + down arrow moves clips down a track)
 1. Delete empty FCP video tracks: right click/delete (in gray area of control area).
 - f. Put each type of other file, for example Titles or Motion files, on the same video track to make it easier to find and work with them.
2. **Hard drive requirements**-the sequence, media files that the sequences link to, all supporting project files (including renders) and any plug-ins used should be provided on an external hard drive. Roughly, there should also be at least twice as much free space on your drive as the project and media currently use. Firewire 800 is preferred.
- a. **The project, media and supporting files should be the only things on the drive!**
Please, don't give me a drive with any of your other data on it. There is a good chance that you will lose any extraneous files included on the drive.
3. **Media Management**-the media must be media managed in FCP prior to delivery. This will cut down on drive space needed (only media referenced by the timeline is included) and it will organize all the source media into one folder.
- a. **Do not “drag and drop”** your media onto the external drive. It may work, but then again, it may not.
 - b. **Recapturing media:** media manage prior to recapturing media, if this is your workflow.
 - c. **To start Media Manager:** right click on sequence that you are sending for color correction. Choose “Media Manager”
 - d. **Settings**
 - i. **“Media:”**
 1. Select “copy media referenced by duplicated items” if your media is already at its finishing quality
 2. Select “create offline media referenced by duplicated items” if the media needs to be recaptured. Media manager will create an offline sequence that you will use to reconform to your offline media.
 3. I prefer if you check “include render files.” That way if I need to look at your original sequence to see Titles or Effects, they are already rendered.
 4. Uncheck “Include master clips outside selection”
 5. Check “Delete unused media from duplicated items”

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6. Check "Use Handles". Leave the settings at "00:00:01;00". This will leave you with 1 second handles, in case you need to do last-minute editing tweaks after grading.
 7. Uncheck "Include affiliate clips outside selection"
 8. Base media file names on "existing file names"
- ii. **"Project:"**
 1. Check "Duplicate selected items and place into a new project." This will save your changes to a new project file and leave your original project file in its original state.
 2. "Include non-active multiclip angles"
 - a. Check: if you have a multi-camera edit and you have **not** locked your final camera angles. This will use up a lot more hard drive space.
 - b. Uncheck:
 - i. If it is not a multi-camera edit
 - ii. If it is a multi-camera edit and you have locked all of your camera angles (best). Verify after the process is completed that you have selected the correct camera angles prior to sending for finishing.
 - iii. **"Media Destination:"** select the file location on the external drive where you would like your media if you selected "copy" in the first step.
- #### 4. Freeze frames
- a. Must be on V1
 - b. A speed adjustment applied to a freeze frame is problematic
 - i. You may not see the correct frame in Color
 - ii. **Best practice:** create a self-contained QT file from the clip and replace original clip in FCP (see instructions later).
 - c. Cannot have a transition applied to a freeze frame
 - i. Best practice: remove the transition and re-apply it after round-tripping back to FCP
 - d. Motion tab adjustments on freeze frames- will not appear in Color Geometry Room
 - i. What you probably will see in Color timeline: last key framed image.
 - ii. However, key frames are preserved and reapplied when sequence is round-tripped back to FCP
 1. These key frames will still need to be rendered in FCP timeline
 2. Color will only render the one frame that you see.
 - iii. Best Practice: create a self-contained QT file from the clip and replace the original clip in the sequence.
- #### 5. Stills
- a. Incorrectly sized stills seems to be the most common cause of FCP/Color roundtrip errors. If you need further help, after reading these guidelines, contact me and I can send you more resources.
 - b. Can be on any track (still better to consolidate tracks as much as possible)
 - c. You cannot use .PSD docs with layers-Tiffs are generally what is used for best quality
 - d. Image size cannot be larger than frame size Color supports (4096x2304)
 - i. If image is larger, need to export as self-contained QT file and re-edit back into FCP timeline prior to sending to Color.
 - e. Motion tab key frames on stills- will not appear in pan and scan in Color
 - i. What you probably will see in Color timeline: last key framed image. Color will also render only this one frame.
 - ii. However, key frames are preserved and reapplied when sequence is round-tripped back to FCP
 1. These key frames will still need to be rendered in FCP timeline
 2. Color will only render the one frame that you see.

- i. Titles/text
 - ii. shapes
 - iii. solids
 - c. Two options:
 - i. If you need video underneath the titles color corrected:
 - 1. Put all titles on the same video track (this will make it easier to remove and replace them as needed).
 - 2. Delete them on sequence that is being prepped for color correction (or they will be color corrected too).
 - 3. Replace them after color correction.
 - 4. Remember to include a copy of the sequence prior to preparation for color grading. This will help me understand what the title sequences will look like with the images and adjust my corrections accordingly.
 - ii. If you do not need to color correct the generated item, you can leave it in the timeline as is.
 - d. If you use a 3rd party font, it is useful to provide me with a copy of it, so I am able to see what the project looks like in FCP. I will also need them if you need for me to render out a final version of your project including titles.
- 12. **Motion files** (.MOT file)
 - a. Comes into Color as a placeholder only
 - b. Must be in V1 track if it is going to be left in the timeline sent to Color
 - i. Otherwise-if the .MOT files in your timeline are not in V1, put them all on the same Video Track by themselves, delete them and paste them back into the sequence after the roundtrip.
 - c. Color neither previews nor renders Motion files
 - d. If it needs to be color graded, export it as a self-contained QT file and replace original clip in sequence.
- 13. **Multi-Clips**- now supported
 - a. Only see the selected FCP angle in Color
 - b. After rendering in Color and round-tripping back to FCP: it will no longer be a multi-clip in FCP (also see Media Management settings for Multi-clips).
- 14. **Audio tracks**- are not brought into Color
 - a. Do nothing with them. They will be there after round-trip
- 15. **Preparing self-contained QT file for FCP**
 - a. Mark in/out of clip (I/O)
 - b. File/export/QT movie
 - i. Give it a new name
 - ii. Settings
 - 1. *Current settings*
 - 2. *Video only*
 - 3. *Markers: none*
 - 4. *Self-contained*
 - iii. Save it.
 - c. Import QT movie into FCP project
 - i. File/import
 - d. Overwrite original file in sequence
 - i. In/out should still be marked in sequence.
- 16. If the sequence is too complicated, too many clips need to be rendered out as self-contained QT movies, **sometimes it is easier to render out the entire sequence as a QT sequence. However, if you do this the film must absolutely be mixed and in final picture lock.**
 - a. RE-import movie into a FCP sequence
 - b. Cut up with the blade tool
 - c. Copy transitions from orig sequence and import this into Color.