

## AfterEffects: Animation presets

### Save an animation preset

With *animation presets*, you can save and reuse specific configurations of layer properties and animations, including keyframes, effects, and expressions. For example, if you created an explosion using several effects with complex property settings, keyframes, and expressions, you can save all of those settings as a single animation preset. You can then apply that animation preset to any other layer.

Many animation presets don't contain animation; rather, they contain combinations of effects, transform properties, and so on. A *behavior* animation preset uses expressions instead of keyframes to animate layer properties.

Animation presets can be saved and transferred from one computer to another. The filename extension for an animation preset is `.ffx`.

After Effects includes hundreds of animation presets that you can apply to your layers and modify to suit your needs.

You can browse and apply animation presets in After Effects using the Effects & Presets panel or Adobe Bridge. To open the Presets folder in Adobe Bridge, choose Browse Presets from the Effects & Presets panel menu or from the Animation menu.

💡 A great way to see how advanced users use After Effects is to apply an animation preset, and press U or UU to reveal only the animated or modified layer properties. Viewing the animated and modified properties shows you what changes the designer of the animation preset made to create the animation preset.

A gallery of animation presets included with After Effects 7 is available on the Adobe website. This set of animation presets is similar to the set included with After Effects CS4. For a list of animation presets included with After Effects CS4.

Chris Zwar provides an animation preset on his website that creates a target cross-hair using a single shape layer, with a wide variety of custom properties that make controlling and modifying the cross-hair animation easy and obvious. This is an excellent example of how to use animation presets to create elements that can be used and reused by others.

## Downloading, installing, and moving animation presets

The animation presets that are installed with After Effects are in the Presets folder located in the Program Files\Adobe\Adobe After Effects CS4\Support Files (Windows) or Applications/Adobe After Effects CS4 (Mac OS) folder. Animation presets that you create are saved by default in the Presets folder located in My Documents\Adobe\After Effects CS4 (Windows) or Documents/Adobe/After Effects CS4 (Mac OS).

You can add a single new animation preset or an entire folder of new animation presets to either of the Presets folders.

When After Effects starts, it searches both of the Presets folders and their subfolders for installed presets and adds them to the Effects & Presets panel. After Effects ignores the contents of folders with names that begin and end in parentheses; for example, the contents of the folder (archived\_animation\_presets) are not loaded.

Note: Animation presets appear in the Effects & Presets panel only if they are located in one of the Presets folders or a subfolder of one of the Presets folders. If you move a preset to a new folder, place a shortcut (Windows) or an alias (Mac OS) of that folder in the Presets folder.

You can download additional animation presets—including a set of animation presets that make use of shape layers and per-character 3D text animation—from the Adobe After Effects Exchange.

If you apply an animation preset from the Animation Presets > Shapes > Backgrounds category, you can see a custom Animated Shape Control effect in the Effect Controls panel. This custom effect is a specialized expression control effect that was created specifically for these animation presets. You can copy and paste this effect to other layers, or you can save it as an animation preset itself so that you can apply it elsewhere.

You can also download animation presets from many After Effects community websites, such as the [AE Enhancers forum](#).

### **Save an animation preset**

1. Select any combination of properties (for example, Position and Scale) and property groups (for example, Paint and Transform). If you are selecting only effects, you can select them in the Effect Controls panel.
2. Choose Save Animation Preset from the Animation menu or from the Effects & Presets panel menu.
3. Specify a name and location for the file, and then click Save.

For the animation preset to appear in the Effects & Presets panel, it must be saved in the Presets folder.

Note: If the animation preset does not appear in the Effects & Presets panel, choose Refresh List from the Effects & Presets panel menu.