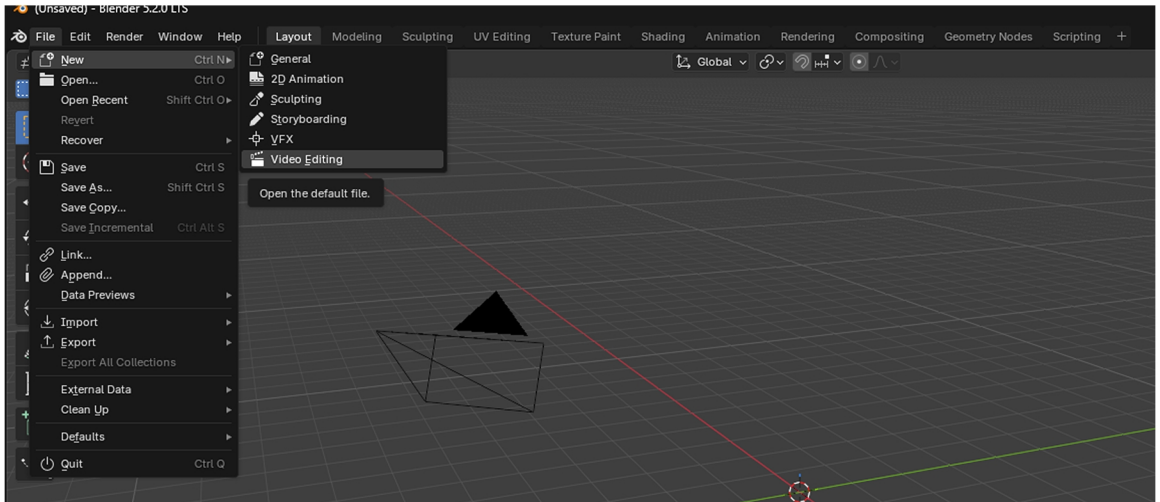


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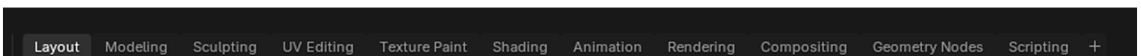
**An Introduction to
Using the Blender
Video Editor (VSE)
For Version 5.2**

How do you access Video Editing? Both from a new project and an existing project.

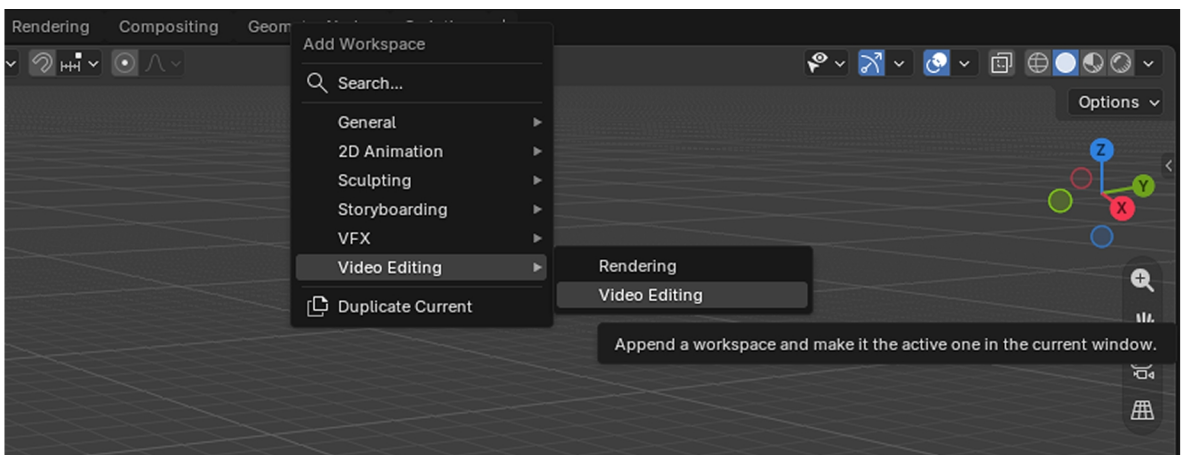
Go up to File in the top corner, choose New, then choose Video Editing.



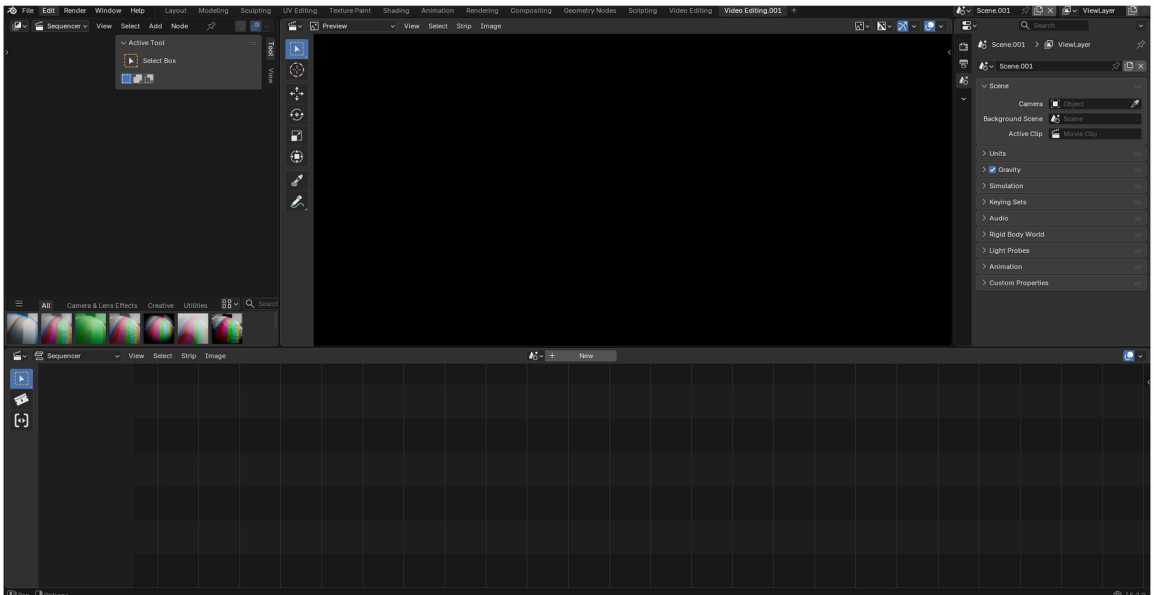
At the very end of the top bar (next to scripting) there's also a + symbol.



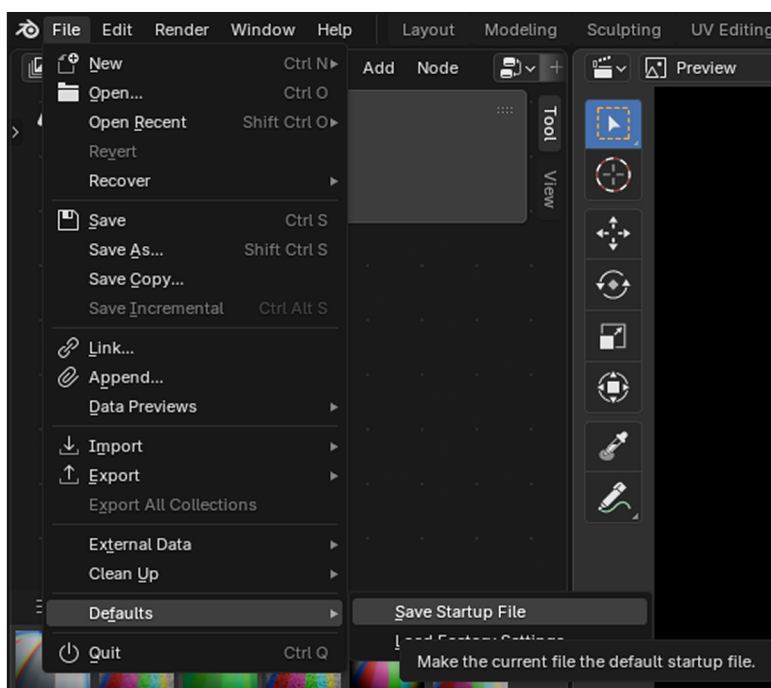
You can hit that and then choose Video Editing - > Video Editing.



I've found when doing it this way a lot of my buttons are missing from the sequencer. If that's the case for you, hit the New button under the preview window and on top of the sequencer (in the center of the frame).

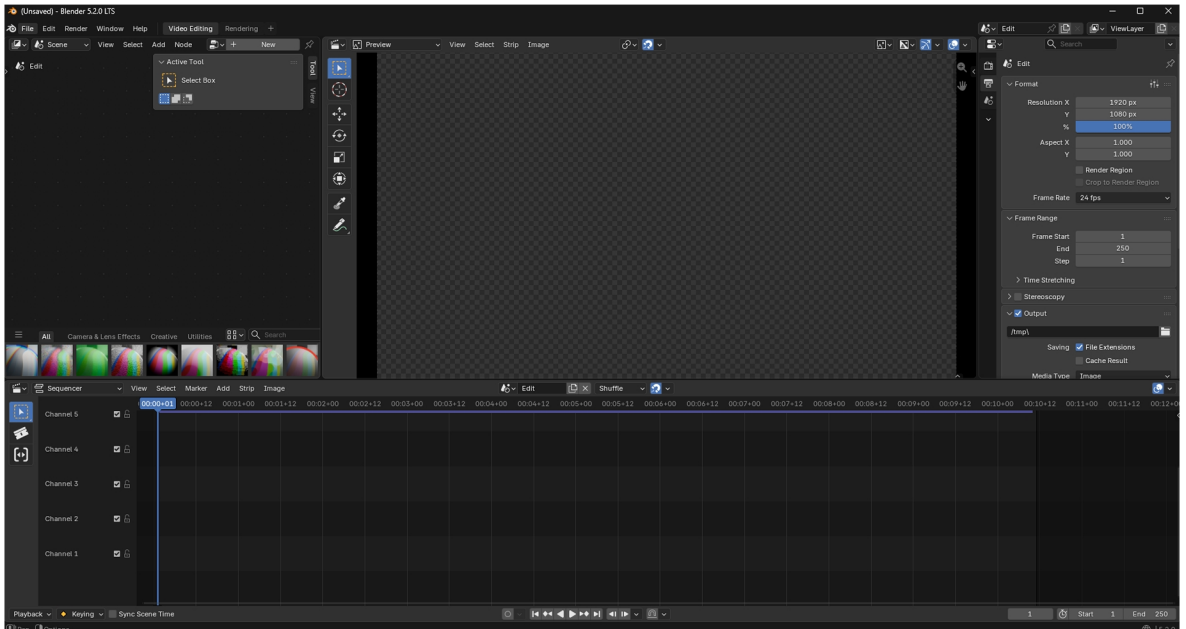


If you want to save the Video Editor as your default view when starting the program (or keep the video editing tab up top) go to File -> Defaults -> Save Startup File (do this with the video editor open if you want Blender to open to that view as your default).

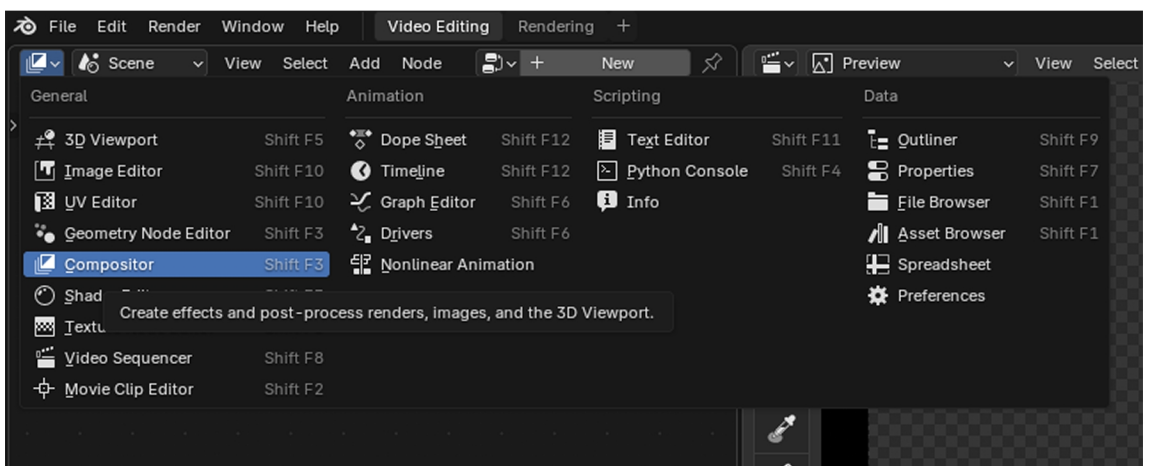


Explain the 4 main windows I'm seeing.

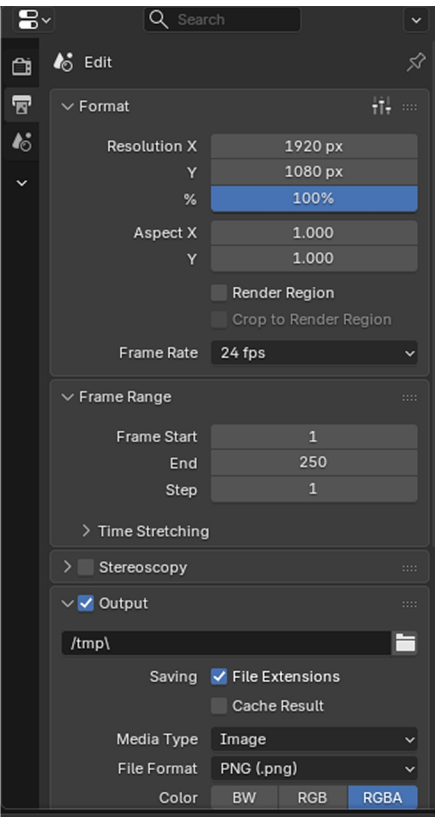
This is the main layout you should be seeing, minus that you're probably seeing a file manager as one of the windows instead of the compositor. I recommend switching it to the compositor since that will probably be more useful overall to you (either that or the timeline).



This is how you switch it to the compositor. Hit the square that's highlighted in blue, and choose it from the list.

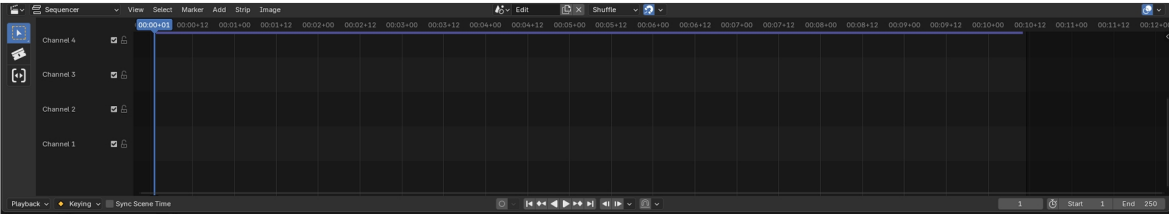


This is the Output tab where your render settings are. You can adjust the size of the canvas / render in the format drop down, set the frame rate (I like to keep it at 24 since that's standard for animation), the frame range lets you set how long you want the project to be, the output is where you'll export your finished file and choose what format you want to save it as.



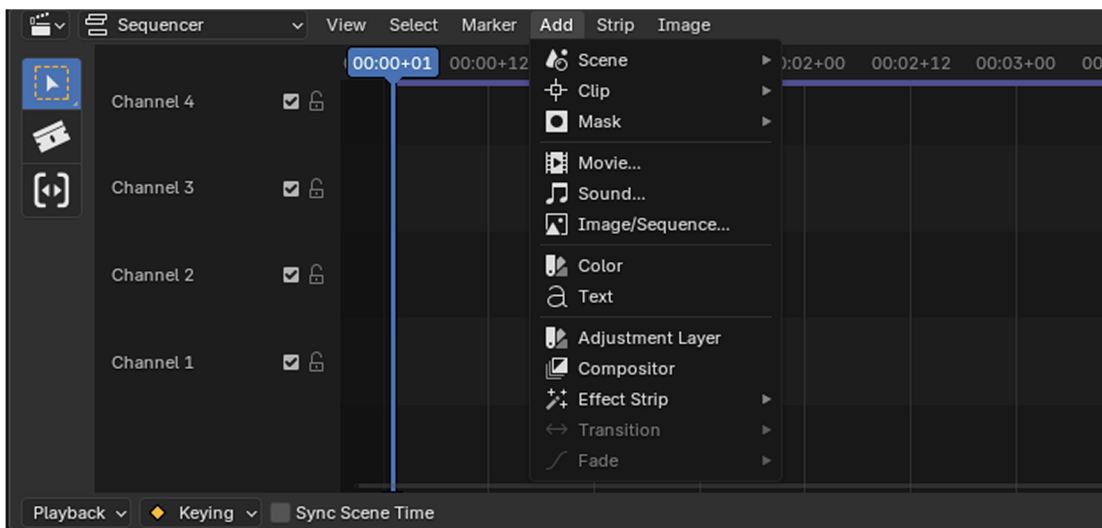
This side panel is also where your layer settings will be once you add some media to the sequencer.

This is the sequencer, where you'll add in your files and edit them. Your play buttons are down at the bottom, and in the corner is the length of the project. You can change the numbers for how long you want it to be there as well.

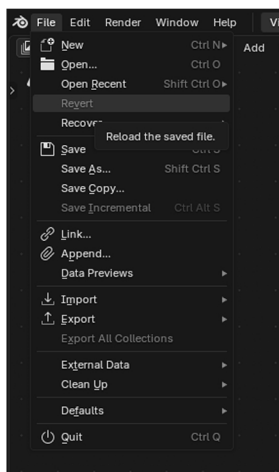


How do I add a video, image, or audio asset into the sequencer?

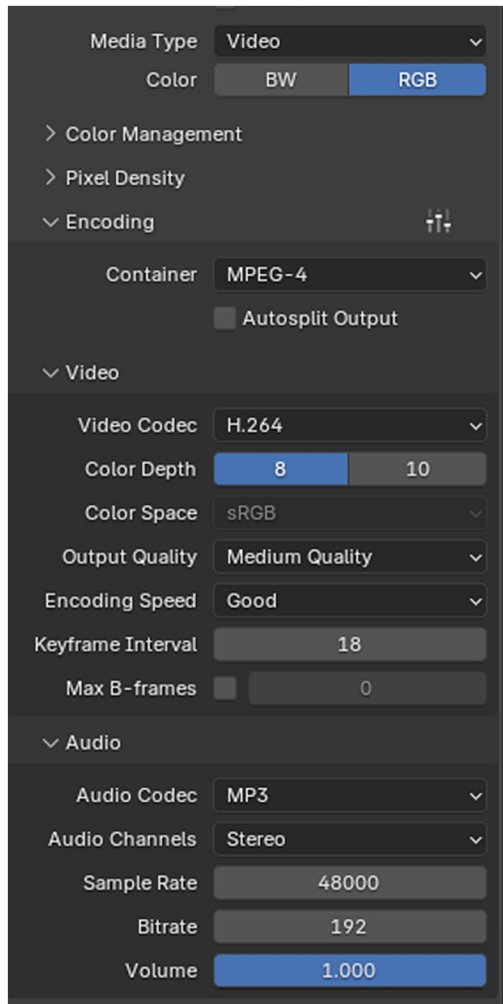
Here's how you'll add media to the sequencer, go to Add and choose which media type you want to add. An image sequence is if you exported an animation as a series of PNGs. In Blender it's ideal to export that way when you're working on something still since it keeps the quality the same. The PNGS will also auto update between files, so it's really good if you're fixing things in CSP (or elsewhere) and resaving.



If your images aren't updating after you've re-saved them elsewhere after editing, just reload the file. You can also go up to file and choose revert for a quick reload (it's grayed out because I haven't saved this file).



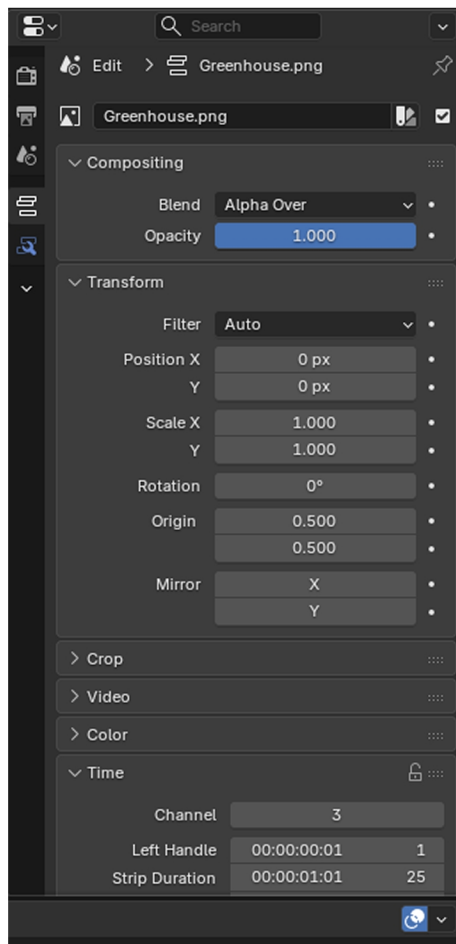
On your final render you'll probably want to save as a video file. You'll change the media type to Video, and then open the encoding drop down, and make sure audio is turned on if you have audio (since it's off by default).



Text and color will add new layers to the sequencer, and aren't for importing media. All text properties are in the strip properties panel. Same for if you want to change the color of the color layer.

To add files to the sequencer you can also drag them from your filemanager and into the sequencer window.

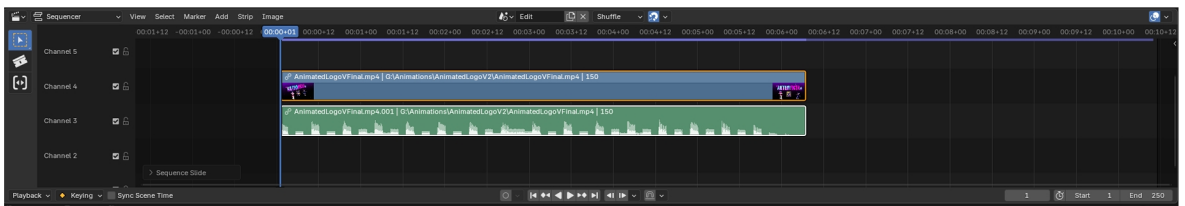
Once you've added something to the sequencer (and have it selected) two new tabs will appear in the same side panel as your render options. The three little white bars image represent the strip properties tab, and then a blue wrench over the bars is your strip modifiers tab. The strip properties is where your layer settings are, as well as, other editable features for the selected media strip. The blue wrench is where you'll apply your modifiers for color correction and effects. Blend and opacity under compositing are similar to the layer modes in CSP.



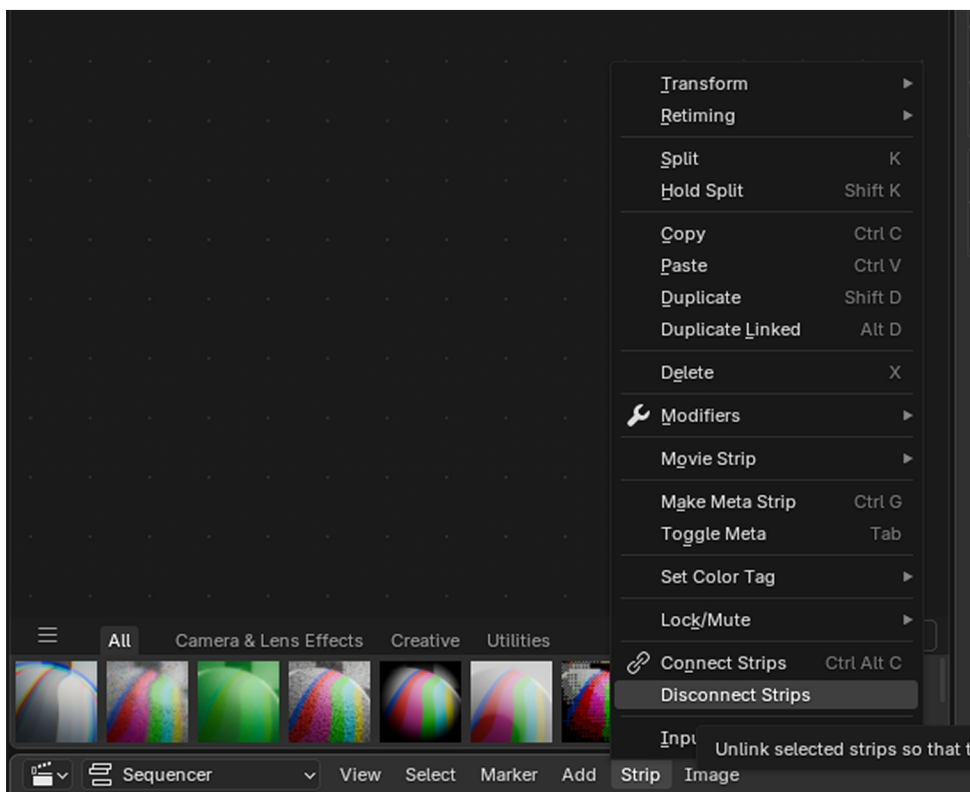
Transform is pretty self explanatory, it lets you move, scale, and mirror the media strip. If you want to animate any of these values hover over the number and hit I (for insert), or right click over it and choose insert keyframe.

I added a video asset, but for some reason it took up two channels? Is one video and one audio?

Yes, video and audio are imported as two connected strips. For audio you'll see the waveform in the strip, and it'll be a light green color. The video portion is colored blue.



If you want to disconnect them you can go to Strip - > then choose Disconnect Strips. Alternatively you can hit W and choose Disconnect Strips from there as well.



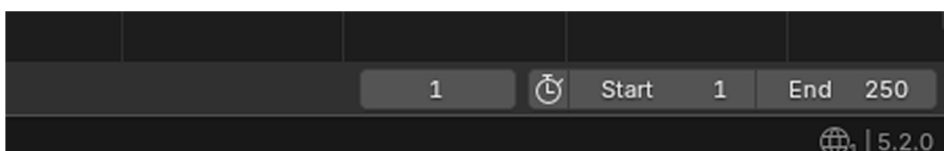
Disconnecting the strips lets you work with the strips independently of each other, or delete one. To delete you can either select the strip and hit X, hit W and choose delete, or go to strip and choose delete.

To reconnect the strips you can select them and choose Connect Strips right above Disconnect Strips.

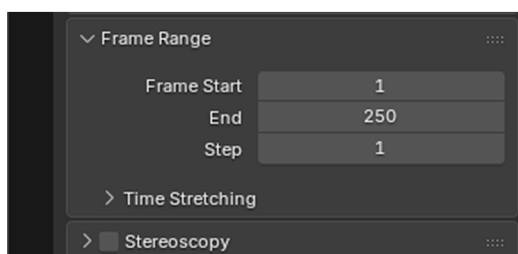
If you want to work with both strips as a single strip you can choose Make Meta Strip from the same menus as Disconnect Strips. You can undo the meta strip later, but you'll lose some of your strip options after that for whatever reason.

How do I extend the default animation duration?

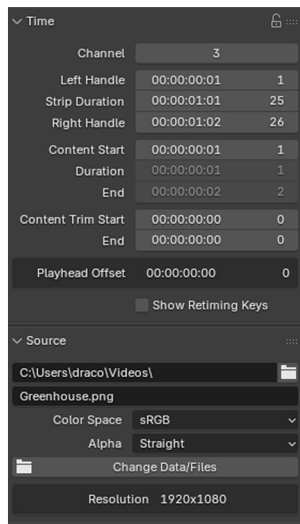
Change the start and end numbers at the very bottom of the screen (under the Sequencer) to adjust the length of the project. The box next to the stop watch lets you set an exact frame number to jump to with the cursor.



You can also adjust the time in the Output properties; in Frame Range, under the format settings (as shown earlier).



To adjust the length of the individual media go to its time tab and adjust strip duration. Changing the content start will also move where it begins on the timeline.



Are there hot keys to go to the beginning/ end of the sequence?

Shift + Right Arrow to go to the end, Shift + Left Arrow to go to the beginning. Hitting the R/ L arrows alone makes you go forward and back one frame.

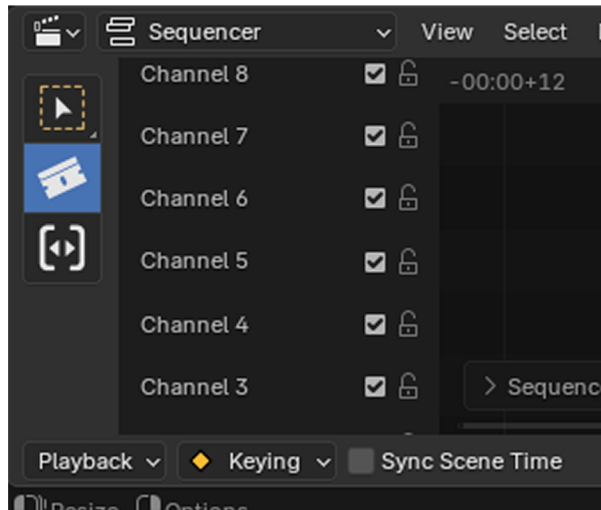
Hit spacebar to play.

How the heck do I make a cut? How do I remove a clip?

Move your cursor to where you want to make the cut, go to Strip - > Split. Alternatively you can hit W and choose split, or just hit K.

Apparently you can't rejoin them after they've been split.

You can also use the blade tool in the side bar to make cuts on your media strip wherever you click with it.

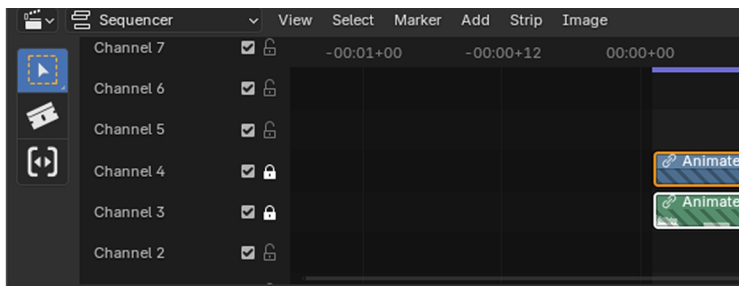


Side note, to move strips in the sequencer you can press G then move the mouse, or hold down the right* mouse button while dragging.

*It may be the left mouse button depending on how you set up Blender.

Can I lock channels?

Yes, just hit the little lock icon. Hit it again to turn it off. You can also rename the channels by double clicking on them.

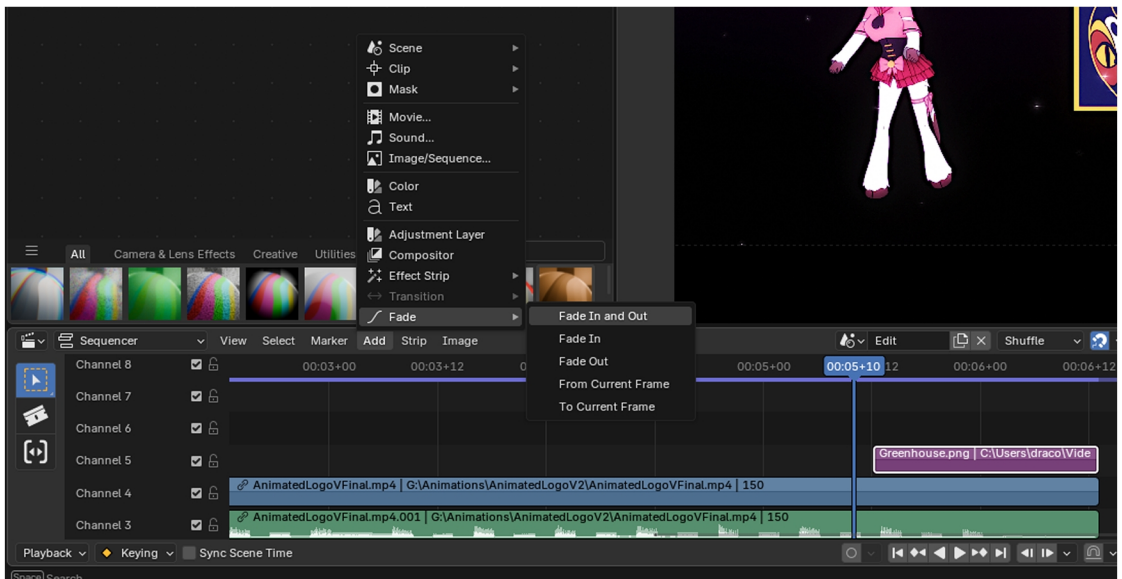


You can also lock a media strip by going to Strip -> Lock / Mute -> Lock Strips (or hitting Ctrl + H). Can unlock the strips in the same menu, or hit Ctrl + Alt + H.

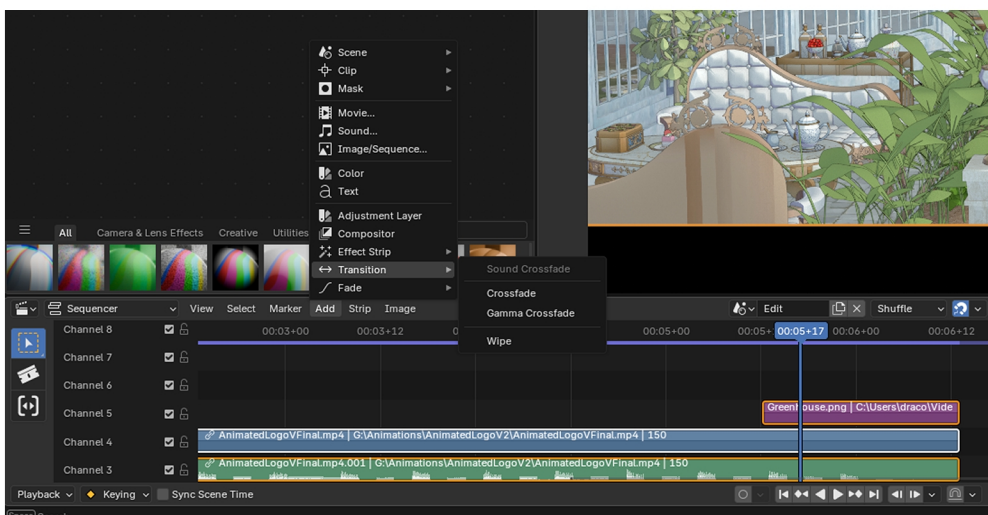
If you want to hide a strip temporarily you can hit H, and then Alt + H to unhide it.

I see there is an option to fade in and fade out the clip. Do I have other transition effects? Or is it just this one?

To add a fade select your media strip and then go to Add -> Fade, and then choose which fade type you want. I find this most helpful for audio in particular.



To add a transition you'll need to select two media strips, then go to Add -> Transition, and you can choose from one of the three available (Crossfade, Gamma Crossfade, and Wipe).

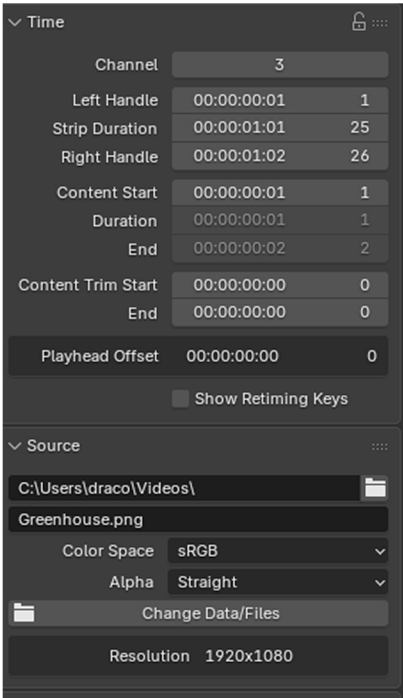


I'd also like to mention the effect strips for Gaussian Blur and Glow because it's not intuitive how to add them. First you will add an **adjustment layer**, and then selecting the adjustment layer you'll add one of the effect strips. You can edit the properties for the glow and gaussian blur strips in the strip properties tab.

How does the layering ordering work? Like is it just the top channels above the others or the reverse?

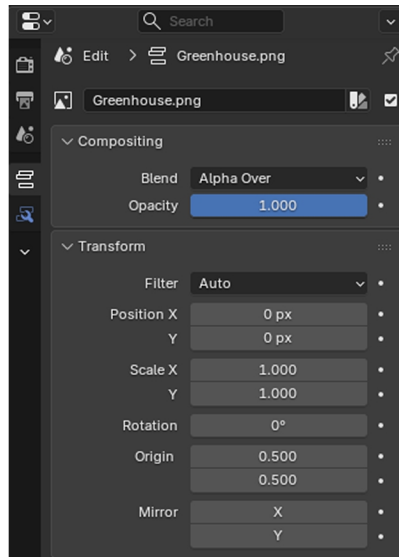
Top channels influence the lower channels, same as CSP. Backgrounds should go on the bottom.

To move which channel a strip is on you can either hit G and drag the strip up or down, or go to strip properties, find the time drop down and change the channel number at the top there.

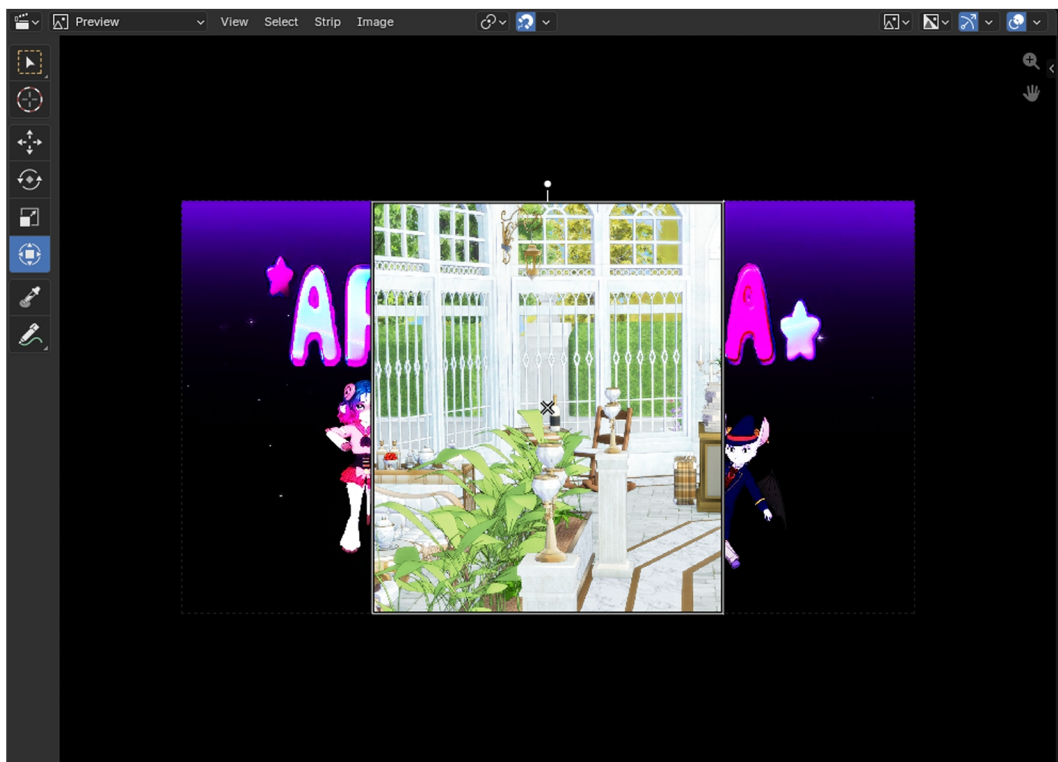


How do I move, scale, and rotate separate elements?

First way: Go to your media strip properties panel and use the transform drop down.



Second way: On the side of the preview window (in the tool bar) there's the move, rotate, scale, and transform tools.



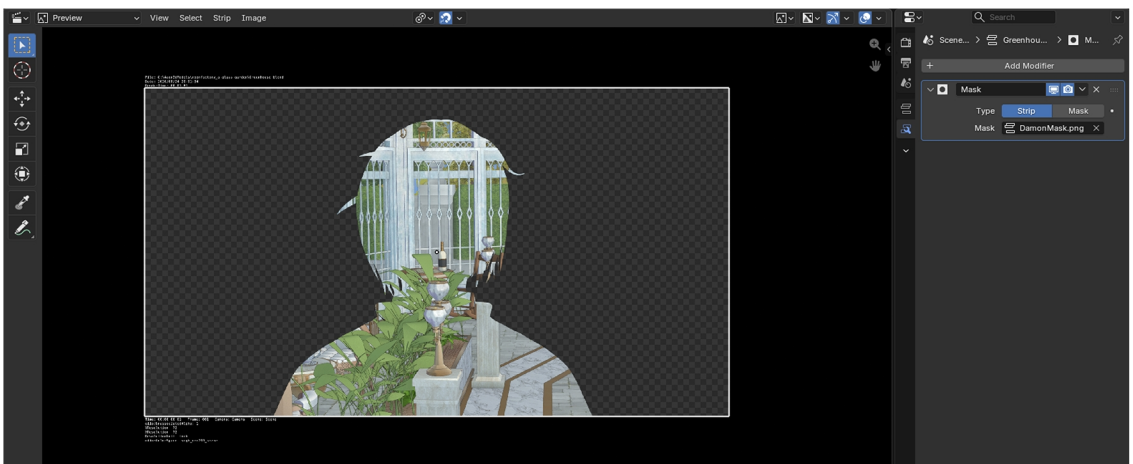
Third Way: With your mouse over your preview image hit G to move it, S to scale it, and R to rotate it.

How the heck do I mask?

This works best if the part you want visible is pure white, while the part to be hidden is black.



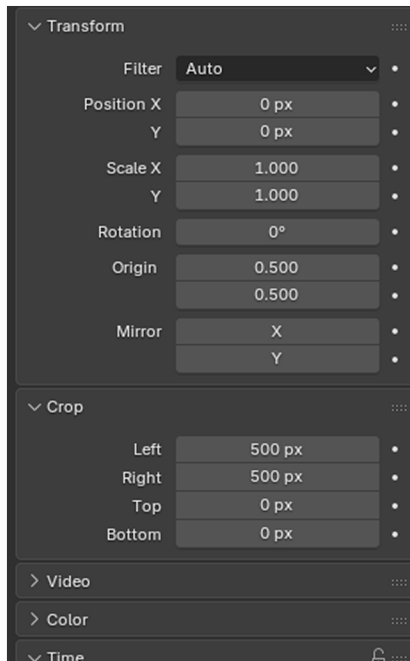
Add the mask media to your sequencer, over the strip you want to use it on, so that it matches up time wise. Hide the strip by hitting H. Then select the strip you want to use the mask on, and add the mask modifier to it.



In the modifier you'll choose the mask strip from the mask drop down, with strip selected.

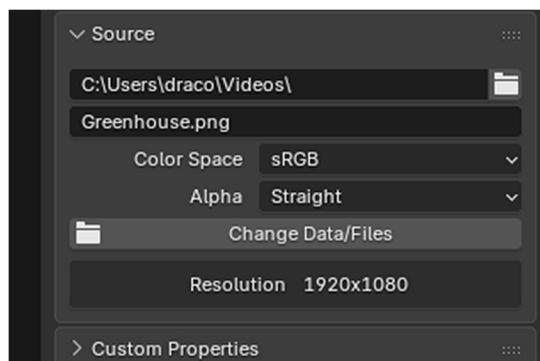
How do I crop an element?

In the strip properties (under transform) there's a crop drop down menu you can adjust the values in. I personally just do that kind of thing in CSP though.



I see a lot of options to use the menu Add -> etc., but how do I actually change things?

The strip properties panel will cover most things. If you have a media strip you want to keep the timing of but want to replace it with an updated version you can go down to the Source drop down at the very bottom of the strip properties panel.

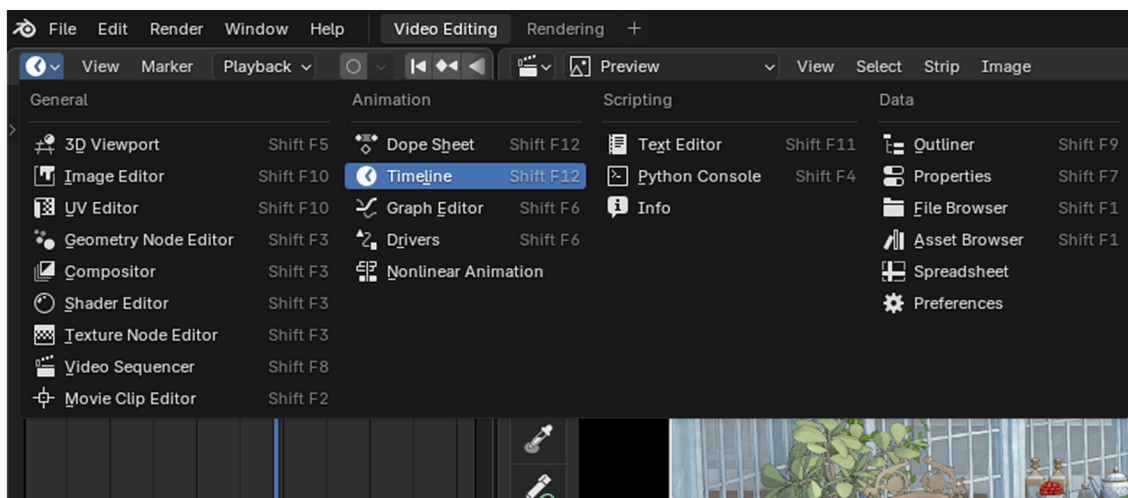


You'll hit the folder icon to find the location of the updated file, and then the Change Data/Files button to select the updated file. If it's a PNG sequence you'll want to select all of the PNGs in the correct order. Hitting A while in the image file folder will select all of the images at once to import.

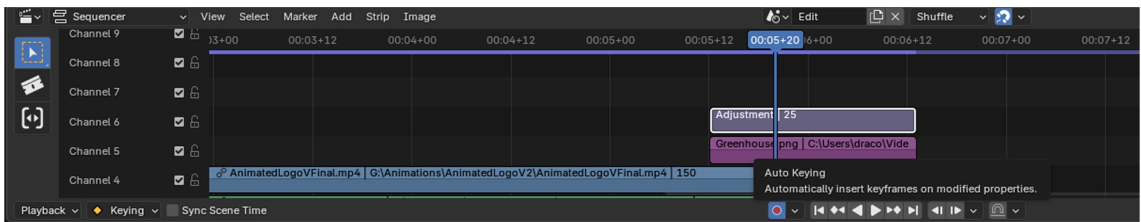
If you want to add modifiers to everything below a channel and not to one strip you would make an adjustment layer in the channel above all the channels you want affected by it. The same for if you want the blur and glow effect strips to affect all the channels below (you add those to the adjustment layer as mentioned earlier).

How would I animate text or something? Like say I want an element to slide into the video. How would I do that?

Add the timeline to one of your windows so you can see your keyframes. I like to add it to where I usually have the compositor, although making another panel for it by dragging on one of the corners of the other panels is also an option.

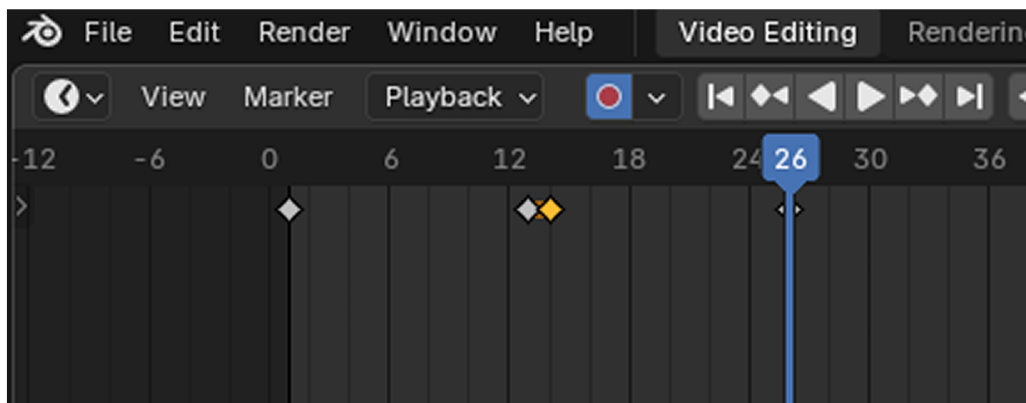


Then if you want to automatically keyframe things you would turn on Auto Keying, so that you don't have to keep manually inserting the keyframes by hitting I or right clicking.



Auto Keying is the circle button next to the play buttons, it becomes red when it's on.

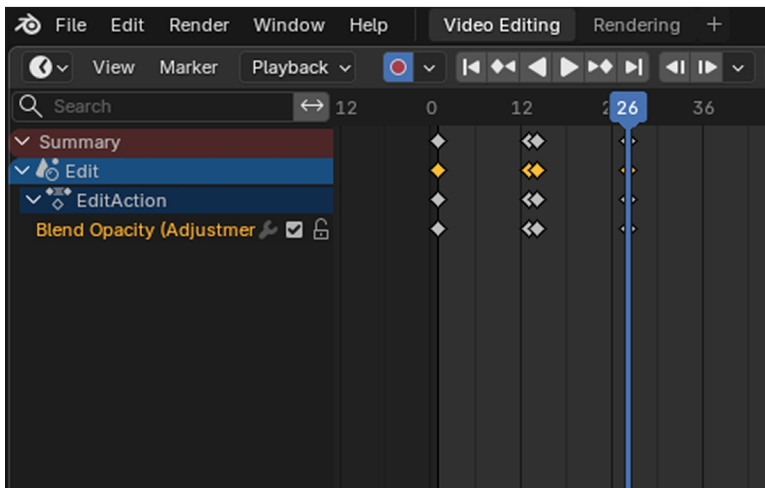
If you add a fade to a strip the keyframes will automatically show up in the timeline. To move a keyframe just right click it to select it (or left click if you have Blender setup to do it that way), and hit G, then drag it to where you want frame wise. The keyframes are white when unselected and yellow when selected.



To select all keyframes at once hit A, to unselect them hit Alt + A. You can also hit B and drag over an area to select multiple keyframes at once.

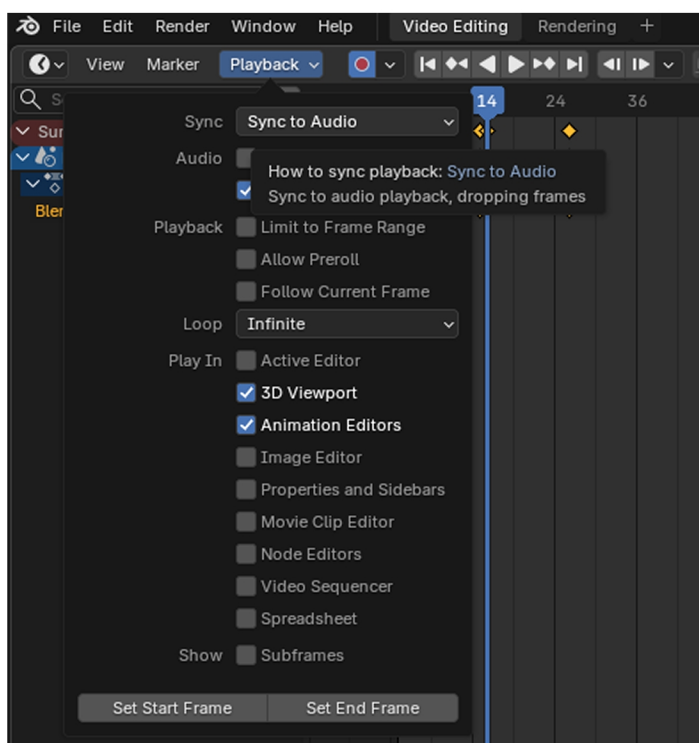
As mentioned earlier, to animate an element hit I while hovering over that value with the mouse, or right click and choose insert keyframe. Right clicking also gives you the option to delete a keyframe, or clear all keyframes for a value.

There is a little arrow on the very side of the timeline panel, hit that to see what element each keyframe goes to.



To delete keyframes hit X with it selected.

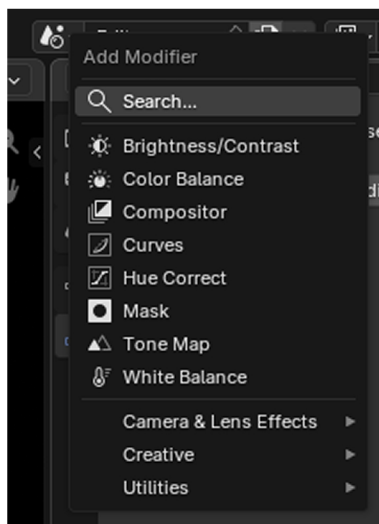
If you have audio it's usually good to select Playback -> Sync -> Sync to Audio so the video and audio stay in sync during playback. Even if frames are dropped it usually doesn't make a big difference unless it's a large amount.



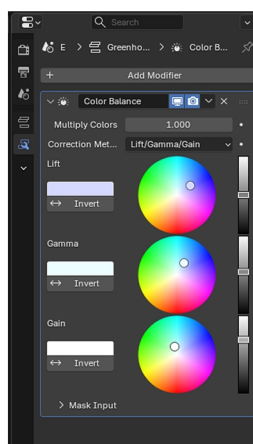
I see a lot of modifier options, but I'm not sure what all of them really do?

The modifiers can either be added to your media strip or to an adjustment layer depending on what you want to achieve with them. If I just use it on a media strip my preference is to make a duplicate of the media strip and then add the modifier to the duplicate so I can adjust the blending mode and opacity of it over the original media strip for more overall control.

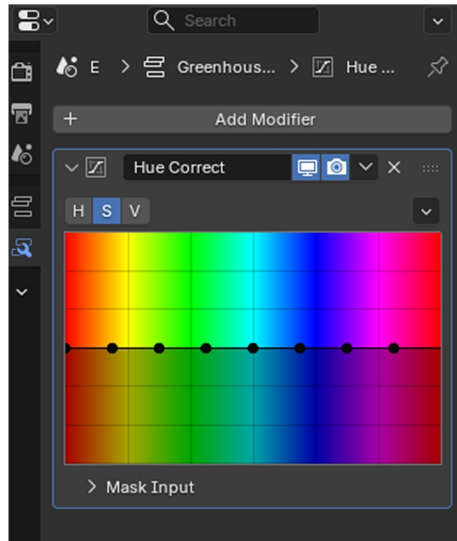
These are your basic modifiers up top. Brightness / Contrast and Curves work pretty much the same as CSP.



Color Balance is a pretty good one for changing colors, just drag the little circles around on the color wheels until you feel happy with the end result on the media strip.



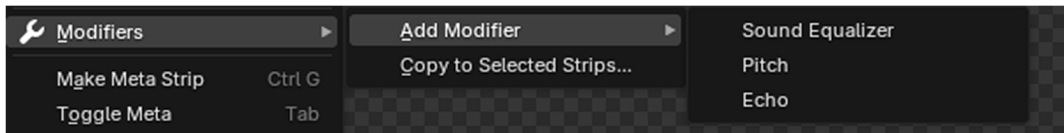
The Hue Correct is basically the Hue/Saturation/Luminosity tonal correction in CSP, but instead of sliders it uses points that you drag in the color range you want to adjust. H is for Hue, S is for Saturation, and V will be your luminosity.



The Tone Map modifier maps one set of colors to another to help fit a high dynamic range (HDR) image into a standard, lower dynamic range medium without losing too much visual detail.

The white balance modifier adjusts the color temperature of a strip by letting you pick a color that should be neutral white.

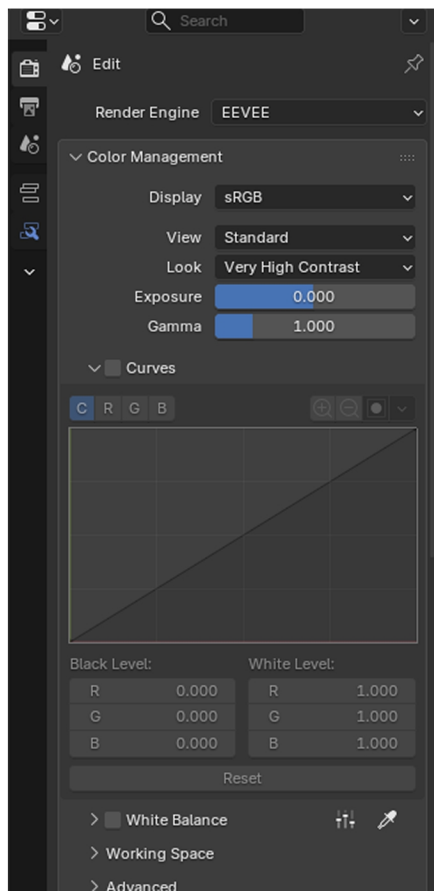
Camera & Lens Effects, and Creative modifiers will give you different cool effects that are pretty self explanatory from their titles. Unsharp Mask will actually sharpen the image though, kind of an ironic name for it. Going through all of them and their features would probably be better for a more in depth tutorial, the point of this one is to just get you started with the editor. These modifiers do tend to make my computer overheat and crash sometimes though, so be a bit wary if your computer is also prone to overheating.



These are the modifiers for an audio file. They only show up when an audio strip is selected.

For video editing, does the render engine matter? Or like any of the property fields (like motion blur, depth of field, etc.)

No. As far as I'm aware only the color management drop down in the Render Properties tab (the one that looks like a microwave) affects the Video Editor render.



Also you can move each drop down section higher or lower in the list for ease of use by dragging on it where those dots in the far corner are on each one.

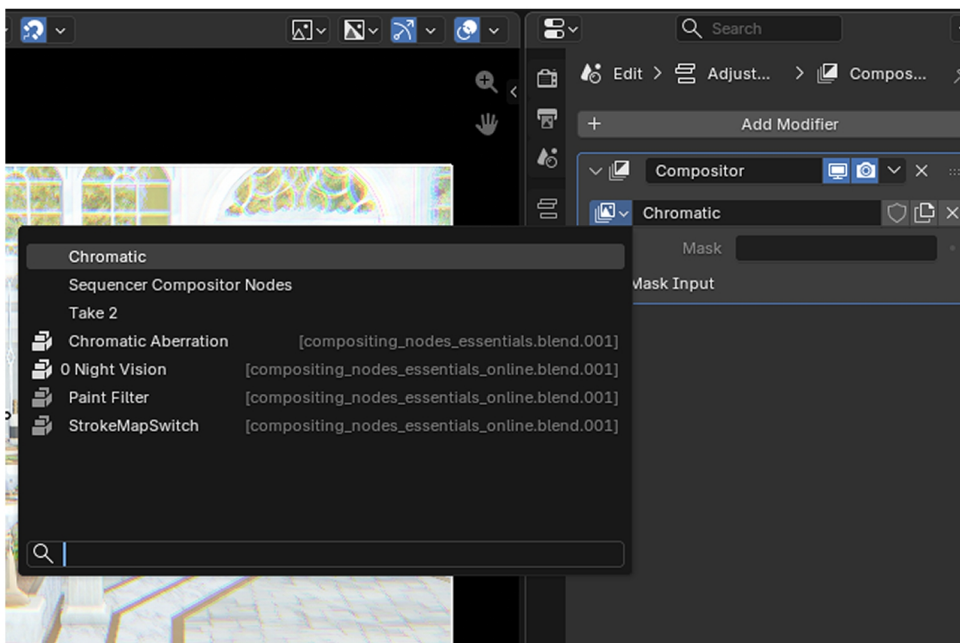
How do you use the compositor?

So this feature is pretty new to the Blender Video Editor, meaning they keep doing a lot of updates to it every version.

This version took me a moment since it's become more complicated than the previous version.

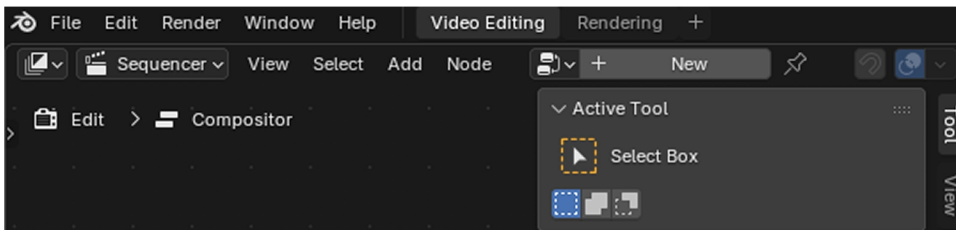
There's two ways now to add the compositor, the newest way is a compositor strip that's located under the Add drop down (under adjustment layer). You'll want to select all the media strips you want to be affected by the compositor strip **BEFORE** adding the compositor strip (otherwise it won't work).

The second way is to select the media strip (or adjustment layer) you want it on, and then go to the modifiers, add the compositor modifier, and choose the name of your node group from the drop down list (the little square with the images and arrow pointing down on it that's in blue).



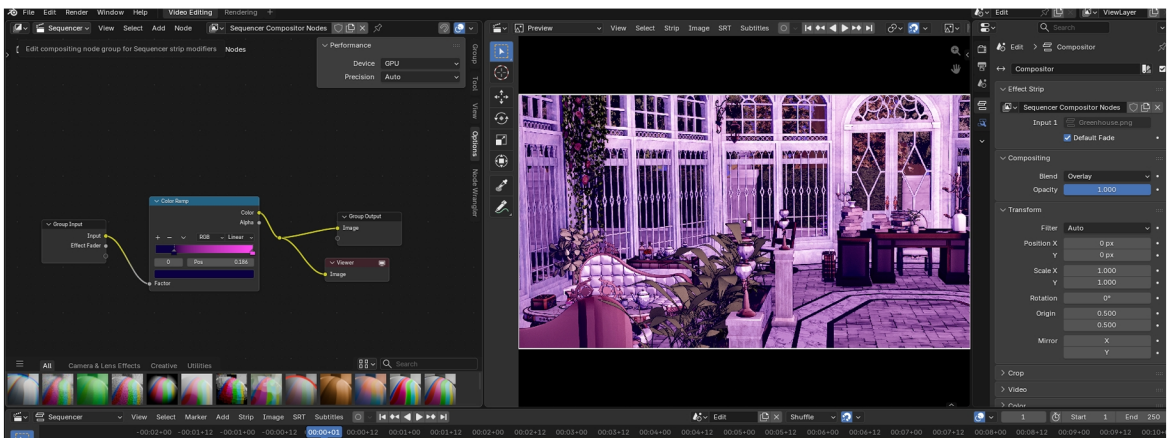
You can also add the compositor modifier by going to Strip - > Modifiers - > Add Modifiers - > Compositor.

In your compositor window make sure where it says scene by default is changed to sequencer (otherwise it won't work).



Then you'll want to hit the new button in the compositor window (next to Node). New will change to Sequencer Compositor Nodes, but you can rename it by clicking on it. This will create a node group for you to use in the modifier panel, and where you can start attaching effects to. To pull up effect nodes you can hit Shift + A and a long list will show up. Alternatively you can go up to Add in the top bar of the compositor window and choose it from there as well.

Say for instance you want a gradient map, you can add a color ramp node and change the colors in the pointers on the ramp.



In the strip properties panel you can change the blending mode and opacity of the media strip or adjustment layer.

If you want to bypass adding an adjustment layer to add a blur or glow to the media strip you can also add those effects using the compositor instead.

Nodes will usually auto attach if you drag it near the yellow lines. But you can also manually connect the points by clicking on the circles and dragging to the available circles. To delete a node select it and hit X. You can disconnect them the same way you connected them. There's also the Node drop down up top next to Add that has the same functions.

Since this is Blender, can I add things like particle effects on top of a video clip?

No, you have to render it out and then add it as a 2D PNG sequence or video. There is a way to add a separate scene strip to the VSE, but that's a bit more advanced and probably not worth the effort at this point.

I am surprised Blender's VSE can't do 3d layering like Grease Pencil and After Effects can. Maybe they'll add it in a future update though.



KhyatiX.com