After Effects for Photography.

Adobe Creative Cloud Learning Series

Learn to use the amazing effects in After Effects to enhance your photographs. Make images more dramatic, add special effects, and generate patterns and textures.

Create intricate transparency in your photographs with keying in After Effects.

When shooting subjects that will need to be silhouetted from their background, I recommend putting a solid, contrasting color, behind the subject. This can be achieved by using poster board, a sheet, or even using a solid colored table. I also recommend lighting the scene with two, or three, lights to help reduce shadows. While this technique is used quite a lot for video, this can also be a big help when your photographs are needed for design projects.

Once you've captured an image you are happy with, we'll use the keying tools in After Effects to quickly remove the background. While there are some great tools to do similar work in Photoshop, I'd argue that the Keylight effect in After Effects provides a much faster workflow, as well as tools to help with halos and color contamination due to background reflections.
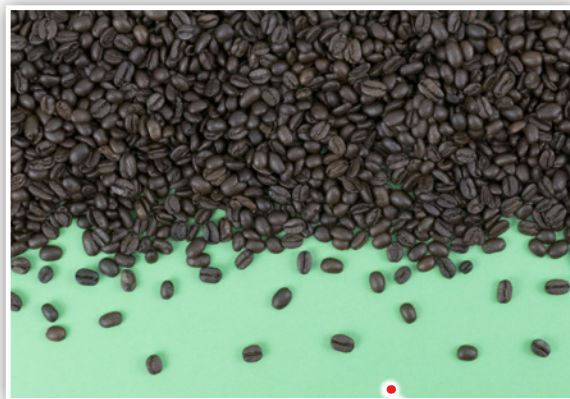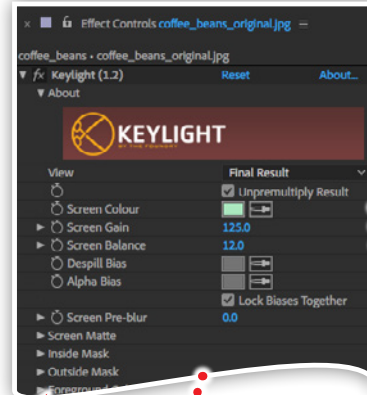

Photo imported into After Effects composition

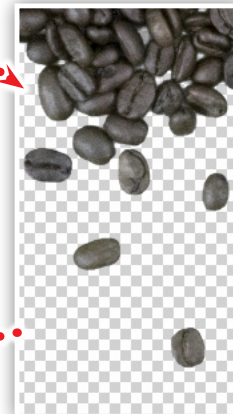**Keylight 1.2 effect applied to photo from the Effects & Presets panel**

Screen Color

Screen Gain

Screen Balance

Transparency revealed from keying effect


Web design mock-up in Photoshop

After importing the image into After Effects and creating a new composition, it's time to apply the Keylight effect. With the layer containing the image selected, apply the effect by double-clicking on the effect in the Effects & Presets panel, or dragging the effect to the image layer.

Once applied, the effect provides you with an eye dropper tool to select the background color that is to be removed. The Screen Gain option allows you to increase or decrease the keying tolerance for the selected color, allowing you to remove the halo effect from the pixels on the edge of the new silhouette. Additionally, the Screen Balance property allows you to remove the color cast, or reflection, created from the background color onto the silhouetted area. While there are many more advanced options you can explore, these properties will work for a wide range of images.

Exporting to Photoshop.

One of my favorite features in After Effects is the ability to save your composition to a native, layered Photoshop file—complete with transparency! With either the Composition panel or the Timeline panel selected, choose the Composition menu, then Save Frame As, then select Photoshop Layers.

Once you choose Save, you'll have a new Photoshop file that's ready to use in any project.
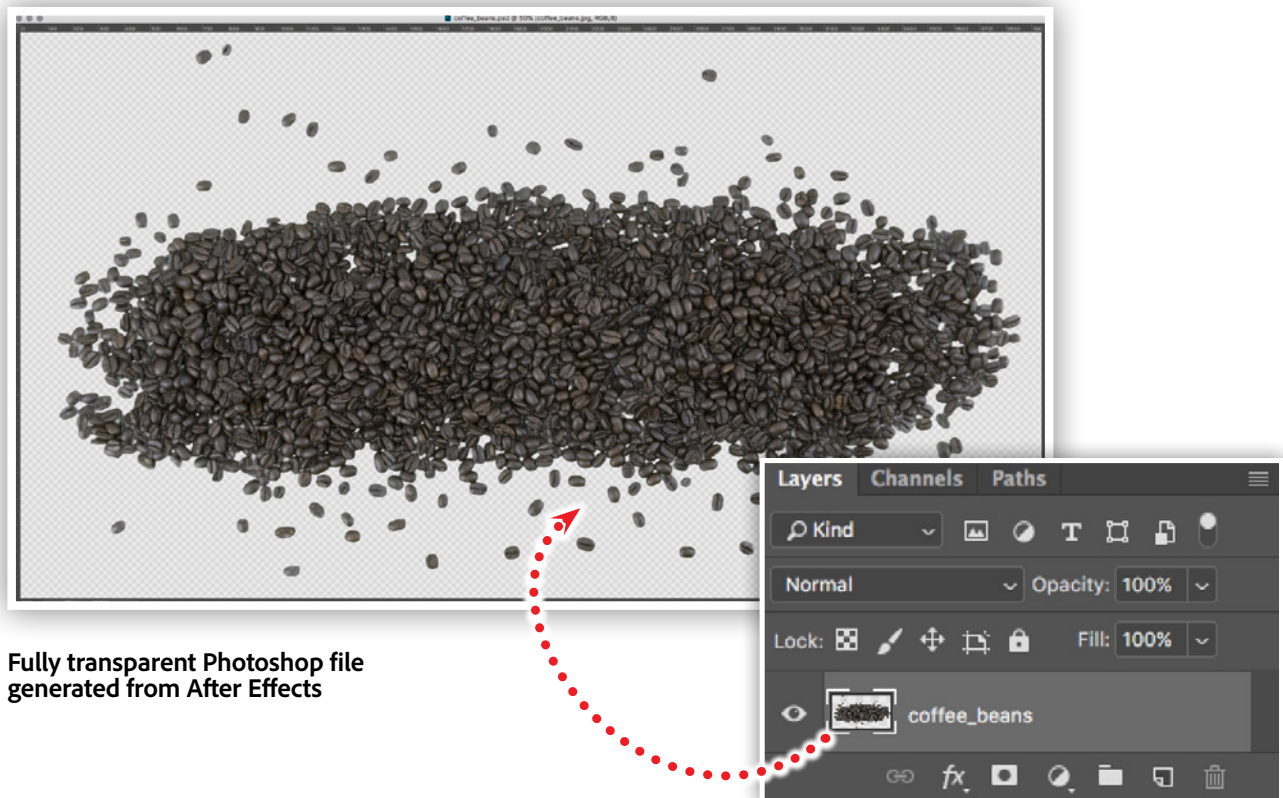
Fully transparent Photoshop file generated from After Effects

Dazzling light effects for photography with After Effects.

Lighting effects can dramatically change the look of your photo. Effects such as CC Light Rays, CC Light Burst and CC Spotlight give you the ability to add visual interest to areas of your image.
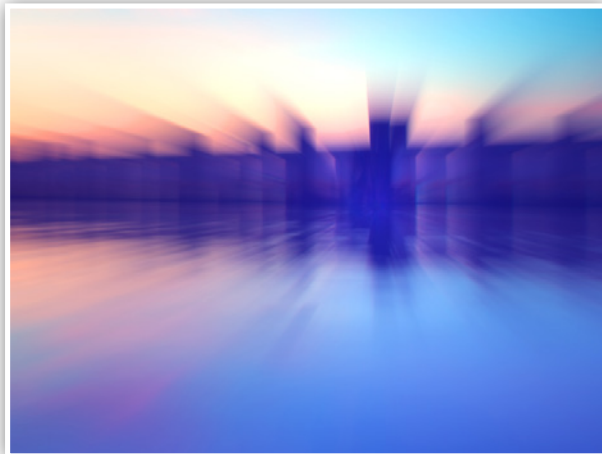

Original Adobe Stock photo

CC Light Rays effect

CC Light Burst effect

CC Spot Light effect

After Searching for the perfect Adobe Stock image, there were some enhancements I wanted to make. The image of the pier, just after sunset, made me wish the photo was taken a few minutes before—so the sun was visible.

Once you download the image, import the image into After Effects by choosing Import form the File menu. Once the image shows up in the project panel, simply drag the image into the composition panel. This will automatically create a composition at the exact size as your photograph. Then to apply an effect, open the Effects & Presets panel from the Window menu, and drag an effect onto your photo in the composition panel.

Using the CC Light Rays effect, I was able to add a sunset to the photo. I began by adding the effect to the image and setting the center point above the pier; where the sky was the brightest. I increased the radius to 67 and set the warp softness to zero.

CC Light Rays effect

503.0,815.8
Center

67.0
Radius

0.0
Warp
Softness

Square
Shape

0x+94.0°
Direction

Center point of the effect placed just above the pier.

The sunset effect was achieved by adding three light ray effects with slightly different settings

In order to create the sun rays, I changed the shape to a square, which, in turn, activates the directional rotation property. Adjusting the direction of the shape, in conjunction with the radius property, gives you control over the rays emanating from the center point.

Don't be afraid to play.

Most effects in After Effects contain a myriad of properties and settings. It's nearly impossible to memorize them all, nor is it possible to figure out what they do from simply reading the names. You have to play with the settings.

Drag sliders, type in numbers, change settings, colors and blend modes—see what happens. The possibilities are endless.

Editing VR photography (360º photos) with After Effects.

Though virtual reality still seems like a far-off technology designed for gamers, we're actually using the beginnings of this technology everyday — on social media sites. If you've seen a friend's Facebook post that contains a photo you can rotate, this is a virtual reality (VR) image.

While more immersive interactive games and experiences are not quite as commonplace, 360 photography is already here. And like most photographers with a new toy, the first thing I wanted to do with my 360 photos was manipulate them.
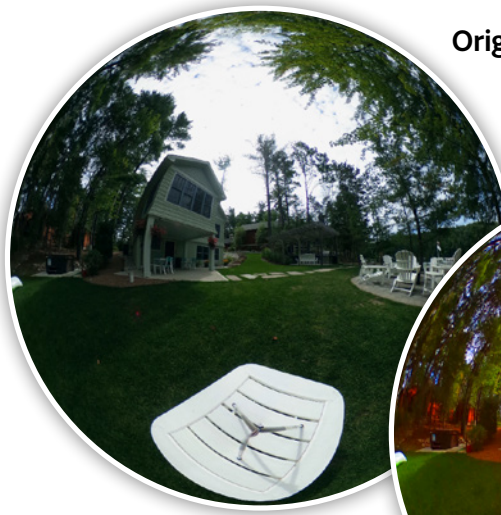
Original VR photo

Enhanced VR photo

Sometimes referred to as a spherical panorama, these images appear "flattened," or "unwrapped," when you load them in an image editing environment. What's more, removing the tripod, or yourself, in addition to adding logos and artwork is just about impossible when working in an unwrapped view.

The example above shows the enhanced version of the VR photo with a new sky, a sunset (see Dazzling lighting effects with After Effects), color adjustments, and a logo—all while maintaining the spherical nature of the original photo.

Introducing the VR Comp Editor.

Introduced in the 2018 version of After Effects CC, the VR Comp Editor allows you to "wrap" your VR photo back into a sphere while you make your edits. The more straight-forward use of this feature includes seamlessly removing elements from the image, including tripods and other unwanted objects.

The VR Comp Editor can be activated from the Window menu within After Effects. Once activated, the editor allows you to add "edits" to your unwrapped panorama. These edits, in turn, create additional compositions that allow for navigating within the spherical panorama—similar to that of standard spherical viewers.

More advanced uses of this feature allow you to introduce new 2D artwork into your VR photo. The VR Comp Editor will then manipulate the 2D artwork to match the contours of the spherical image. This makes the new artwork appear as though is was present in the environment when the photo was taken.

As you can imagine, transforming your artwork, or logo, to match the spherical contours of the original photo would be impossible without the help of a feature like the VR Comp Editor.
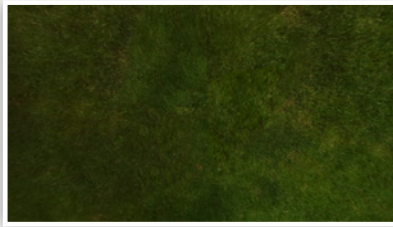
Unwrapped VR photo placed in Composition
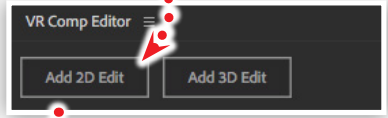
Apply a 2D Edit to the Composition via the VR Comp Editor

Use the Unified Camera Tool to rotate the spherical image

Click-and-drag to rotate the view of the VR photo

Rotate the image to look directly at the ground

Place a logo on the ground in front of the house

The logo is transformed to match the spherical contours of the original VR photo

Watch these features in action.

Join Chris Converse in the recorded webinar and learn to use the amazing effects in After Effects to enhance your photographs. Make images more dramatic, add special effects, and generate patterns and textures that are simply not possible in other Creative Cloud apps.

In this session you'll learn the following:

· How After Effects relates to InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop

· Import artwork to After Effects and working with effects

· Working with After Effects and Photoshop together

· Creating advanced transparency in your photos

· Add special effects to your photos

· Edit and retouch VR (360º) photography

Adobe Creative Cloud e-Learning Series

Watch the live recording here:

[After Effects for Photography](#)