

## Chapter 9

# Cool Track Matte Tricks

## Cutting holes through your videos

The Track Matte is one of Premiere Elements' most powerful tools.

Using the Track Matte, you can create a transparent spot in a video – and then animate that spot so that this transparency moves around your video frame.

Matting is a way of cutting a window, or making a transparent shape, through your video. When you make an area of your video transparent, whatever is on the video track below it shows through this window.

Mattes come in many forms in Premiere Elements. The **Crop** effect, for instance, is essentially a matte tool for making the sides of your video transparent. Using the various **Garbage Mattes**, you can draw almost any shape, rendering everything outside of that shape transparent, effectively creating a custom crop in any shape you need.

The **Track Matte** is a uniquely powerful way to make areas of your video transparent. The **Track Matte** bases the location, size and shape of this transparency on a shape on a separate track. Using keyframing, you can animate the size and position of this shape – and the **Track Matte** will follow it. In other words, using the **Track Matte**, you can follow a person or object around your video frame with almost any special effect!

By the way, don't be intimidated by the number of steps it takes to create a **Track Matte** effect. As you'll see, virtually all **Track Matte** effects use the same basic steps – creating a shape for the matte to follow, keyframing its motion around the frame and then setting the **Track Matte** to follow it. So, once you've mastered the basics, you'll be able to create virtually any **Track Matte** effect you can imagine!

## COOL TRICK 29 Highlight a Person in a Crowd

Okay, so you've got some great video of the entire varsity football team on the field. But there's one player in particular you'd like to highlight.

You can spotlight him, as we do in *Cool Trick 2, Spotlight an Area of Your Video*. Or, using the **Track Matte**, you can create an effect that dims everything but the person you want to highlight in the shot.

### HOT TIP How the Track Matte works

The **Track Matte** is applied to a video on an upper track (Video 2, for instance).

It will then display *only the area of the video represented by the shape* placed on a video track above it (Video 3, for instance).

Everything outside that shape will become transparent – revealing whatever is on the video track below it (Video 1, for instance).

If the video on Video 1 and Video 2 is the same clip and an effect is applied to the clip on only one of the video tracks, the **Track Matte** will make it appear that the effect is applied only outside or only inside the matte area.



### Highlight a Person in a Crowd (Part 1)

1. Add your clip to Video 1
2. Add identical clip to Video 2
3. Open the Titles workspace by clicking the "T" in the lower right of the Monitor panel
4. Delete the placeholder text.
5. Select the Oval shape tool from the Titles Toolbar.
6. Draw an oval over the person you want to highlight.

When you return to Edit mode (click the Timeline), your shape will be added as a clip on Video 3, directly above the other clips.

As with many **Track Matte** effects, this one uses the same clip on both Video 1 and Video 2. By applying an effect to one of the clips and then using the **Track Matte** to cut a window through it, we'll isolate the area of our video frame that has the effect applied to it.

#### 1. Place your clip on Video 1

Drag your clip from the **Project** media panel to the Video 1 track on your timeline.

#### 2. Place the same clip on Video 2

Drag the same clip from the **Project** media panel to the Video 2 track, directly above the first clip.

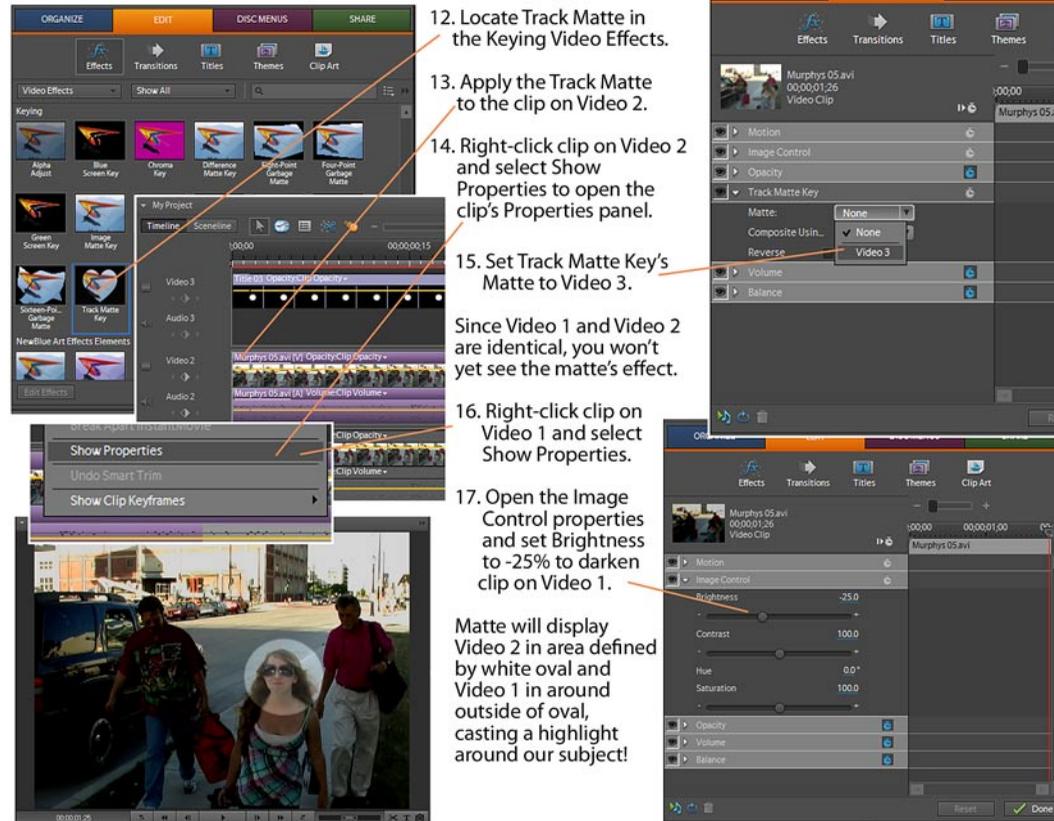
These two clips should be identical and aligned, one above the other.

#### 3. Open the Titles workspace

We will create our tracking object by drawing the shape in Premiere Elements Titles workspace. You could, as an alternative, create your shape, using a program like Photoshop Elements, save it as a PSD with no background layer and import into your Premiere Elements project.

To create a shape in the **Titles** workspace, Position the CTI to the very beginning of your clips and then click the **Add Default Text** button (the "T" icon) on the lower right of the **Monitor** panel.

Highlight a Person in a Crowd (Part 3)



11. Add other keyframes as needed

“Scrub” through your clip (by dragging the CTI back and forth) to ensure that the white oval covers the person you want to highlight throughout the clip.

As necessary, click on the white oval on the **Monitor** and drag it around to adjust its **Position**.

New keyframes will automatically be added at the CTI’s position whenever you make an adjustment.

Using these keyframes, Premiere Elements will create the necessary animation to follow the person you want to highlight around the video frame throughout your video clip.

12. Locate the Track Matte effect

Click the **Edit** tab and select **Effects**.

The **Track Matte** is located in the **Keying** category of **Video Effects**.

13. Apply the Track Matte to the Video 2 clip

Drag the **Track Matte** effect onto the clip on the Video 2 track, or select both the clip and the effect and click on the **Apply** button on the **Effects** panel.

14. Open the Properties panel for the Video 2 clip

Right-click on the Video 2 clip and select **Show Properties**, or click to select the Video 2 clip and click on the **Edit Effects** button on the **Effects** panel.

The clip’s **Properties** panel will open.

15. Set the Track Matte to Video 3

Locate the **Track Matte** listing on the Properties panel. If its settings are not visible, click on the little white triangle to the left of the effect’s listing.

From the effect’s **Matte** drop-down menu, select Video 3.

You’ve just created a tracking object and used it to define a matte! The area defined by the white oval in your video frame is displaying the video on Video 2. Everything outside that that oval is displaying the video on Video 1.

However, since both clips are identical at this point, you won’t yet be able to see the results of this effect. But that will in a moment – when we apply an effect to one of the clips.

16. Open the Properties panel for Video 1

Right-click on the clip on Video 1 and select **Show Properties**.

The clip’s **Properties** panel will open.

17. Adjust the Brightness for Video 1

Click on the little triangle to the left of the **Image Control** listing in the **Properties** panel.

The settings for this property will be displayed.

Using the slider or numerically, set **Brightness** to -25 (or whatever your particular situation requires).

The area in your video frame defined by the oval should remain bright (displaying the clip on Video 2) while everything outside of the oval’s position will be dimmed (displaying the darkened clip on Video 1). Also, because we keyframed motion so that the white oval will follow the person around the video frame, our subject will remain highlighted throughout the clip no matter where in the video frame he or she moves!

## COOL TRICK

**30** Blur a Face as on "COPS"

You've got a problem. You've shot some terrific footage – but one of the people in your video doesn't *want* to be in your video! Or maybe you don't have a signed release to legally show his or her face. Or maybe there's just something objectionable in your shot (e.g., nudity) that you don't want to impose on your audience.

As anyone who's familiar with reality TV shows like "COPS" knows, the *spot blur* – rendering specific spots in your video blurry or indistinguishable – is often the easiest solution.

Creating a spot blur using the **Track Matte** is very similar to *Cool Trick 29, Highlighting a Person in a Crowd*. In fact, we'll reuse many of the same steps.

The difference is that, instead of darkening the clip on Video 1 so that everything *outside* the matte is blurred, we'll apply a **Mosaic** effect to the clip on Video 2 so that everything *inside* the matte is fuzzy.

**1. Place your clip on Video 1**

Drag your clip from the **Project** media panel to the Video 1 track on your timeline.

**2. Place the same clip on Video 2**

Drag the same clip from the **Project** media panel to the Video 2 track, directly above the first clip.

These two clips should be identical and aligned, one above the other.

**3. Open the Titles workspace**

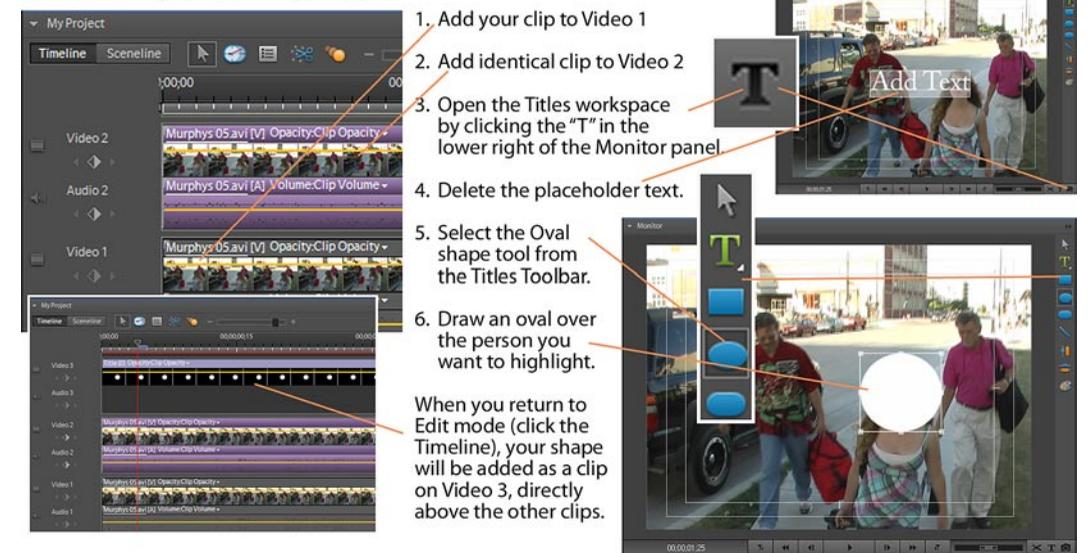
We will create our tracking object by drawing the shape in Premiere Elements Titles workspace.

You could, as an alternative, create your shape, using a program like Photoshop Elements, save it as a PSD with no background layer and import into your Premiere Elements project.

To create a shape in the **Titles** workspace, Position the **CTI** to the very beginning of your clips and then click the **Add Default Text** button (the "T" icon) on the lower right of the **Monitor** panel.

The **Titles** workspace will open and the placeholder words "Add Text" will appear on the **Monitor** panel.

## Blur a Face as on "COPS" (Part 1)

**4. Delete the placeholder text**

When the **Titles** workspace opens, the placeholder text should be selected by default. If not, drag to select it.

Press the **Delete** key on your keyboard to remove it.

**5. Select the Oval shape tool**

Click to select the **Oval** shape tool on the **Titles Toolbar** that appears is in the upper right of the **Monitor** panel, as illustrated above.

**6. Draw an oval over the area you want to highlight**

Drag the **Oval** shape tool to create a white oval over the person you want to highlight in your video.

Once you've drawn the oval, you can switch to the **Selection Tool** (the arrow on the **Titles Toolbar**) and tweak its size and position.

Click on the **Timeline** panel to exit the **Titles** workspace and return to the **Edit** workspace. When you exit the **Titles** workspace, your timeline should show your two video clips and your white oval shape, appearing as a clip on Video 3, directly above one another.

You can drag to extend the length of the title/shape clip's length if you'd like so that it has the same duration as your video clips.

### 18. Open the Properties panel for Video 2

Right-click on the clip on Video 2 and select **Show Properties**.  
The clip's **Properties** panel will open.

### 19. Adjust the Mosaic effect for Video 2

Click on the little triangle to the left of the **Mosaic** listing in the **Properties** panel.

The settings for this property will be displayed.

Using the sliders or by typing in the numbers set the **Horizontal Blocks** and **Vertical Blocks** both to about 60 (or whatever your particular situation requires).

As you adjust the Mosaic settings, the person you've tracked with your white oval should become unrecognizably pixelated.

Track Matte effects can be a bit temperamental, by the way. So, if you need to change the keyframed motion track for the white oval or swap in a different blur or distortion effect, you may need to completely remove the Track Matte from the clip and re-apply it.

**COOL TRICK**

# 31 Add Soft Edges to a Dream Sequence

Most often, you'll use the **Track Matte** to create a moving matte, a transparent area that follows an object or person around your video frame (hence the name **Track Matte**).

But, because the **Track Matte** also create semi-opaque masks (based on the shape and colors you're using to define your matte), you can also use it to create a stationary video effect.

One such effect is the soft, feathered edge – a blurring of the edges of your video frame commonly used to give the impression of a dream sequence.

To create this effect, you'll need a white graphic with a black gradient edge, like the one in the illustration. You can download my free **DreamSequence.jpg** from the Products page of Muvipix.com.

Import it into your Premiere Elements project by browsing to it using **Get Media** and then selecting **From PC Files and Folders**.

### 1. Place a video clip on Video 1

Drag the video clip you'd like to use as for your dream sequence from the Project media panel to the Video 1 track on your timeline.

### Add Soft Edges to a Dream Sequence

1. Add your clip to Video 1.
2. Add identical clip to Video 2.
3. Add **DreamSequence.jpg** to Video 3.
4. Locate the **Track Matte** in the **Keying** Video Effects.
5. Apply **Track Matte** to clip on Video 2.
6. Right-click on clip on Video 2 and select **Show Properties** to open the **Properties** panel.
7. Set **Track Matte's Matte** to Video 3.
8. Set **Track Matte's Composite** to **Matte Luma**.
9. Locate **Gaussian Blur** in **Blur & Sharpen** Video Effects.
10. Apply **Gaussian Blur** to clip on Video 1.
11. Right-click clip on Video 1 and select **Show Properties**.
12. Set **Gaussian Blur's Blurriness** level to 125.

The **Track Matte** will show your video with a soft, dream-like feathering around its edges.

### 2. Place the same clip on Video 2

Drag the same clip from the **Project** media panel to the Video 2 track, directly above the first clip.

These two clips should be identical and aligned, one above the other.

### 3. Place **DreamSequence.jpg** on Video 3

Drag the graphic **DreamSequence.jpg** from the **Project** media panel to Video 3, directly above your other video clips.

It should fill your video frame, covering the clips on Video 1 and Video 2 completely. If not, click on it in the **Monitor** panel and, by dragging the corner handles that appear, scale and position it as needed.

#### 4. Locate the Track Matte effect

Click the **Edit** tab and select **Effects**.

The **Track Matte** is located in the **Keying** category of **Video Effects**.

#### 5. Apply the Track Matte to the Video 2 clip

Drag the **Track Matte** effect onto the clip on the Video 2 track, or select both the clip and the effect and click on the **Apply** button on the **Effects** panel.

#### 6. Open the Properties panel for the Video 2 clip

Right-click on the Video 2 clip and select **Show Properties**, or click to select the Video 2 clip and click on the **Edit Effects** button on the **Effects** panel.

The clip's **Properties** panel will open.

#### 7. Set the Track Matte to Video 3

Locate the **Track Matte** listing on the **Properties** panel. If its settings are not visible, click on the little white triangle to the left of the effect's listing.

From the effect's **Matte** drop-down menu, select **Video 3**.

#### 8. Set the Track Matte Composite to Matte Luma

From the **Composite** drop-down menu, select the **Matte Luma** option.

At this point, although the **Track Matte** is creating a mask based on **DreamSequence.jpg**, you won't see any real effect, since the clip on Video 1 and the clip on Video 2 are identical. However, once we apply a blur to the clip on Video 1, the effect of the mask will become much more obvious.

#### 9. Locate the Gaussian Blur effect

Click the **Edit** tab and select **Effects**.

The **Gaussian Blur** effect is located in the **Blur & Sharpen** category of **Video Effects**.

#### 10. Apply the Gaussian Blur effect to Video 1

Drag the effect onto the clip on the Video 1 track, or select both the clip and the effect and click on the **Apply** button on the **Effects** panel.

#### 11. Open the Properties panel for Video 1

Right-click on the clip on Video 1 and select **Show Properties**.

The clip's **Properties** panel will open.

#### 12. Adjust the Gaussian Blur effect for Video 2

Click on the little triangle to the left of the **Gaussian Blur** listing in the **Properties** panel.

The settings for this property will be displayed.

Using the sliders or by typing in the numbers set the **Blurriness** level to about 125.

Your video should appear in the **Monitor** with a soft, blurry edge – a classic dream sequence!