



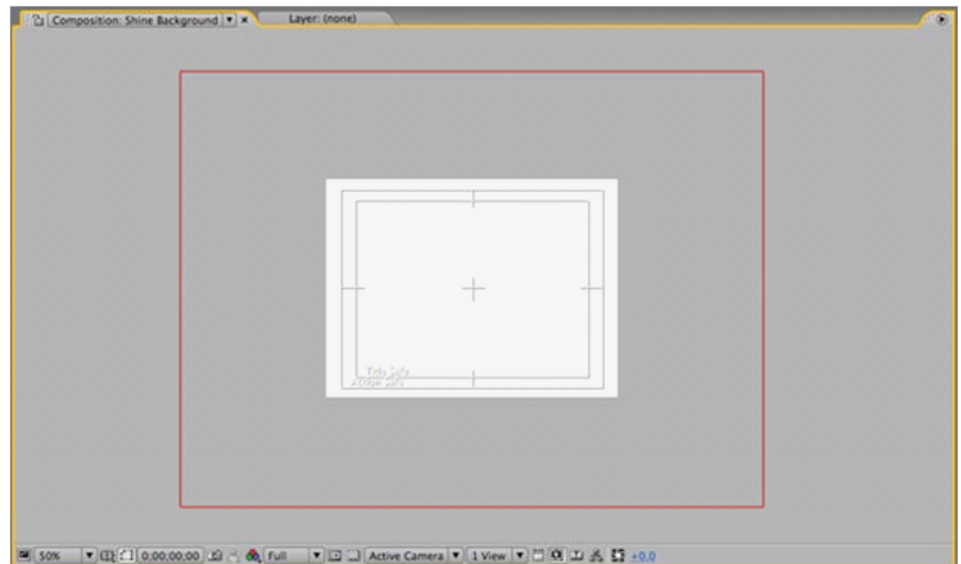
INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHICS

Animated Backgrounds in After Effects

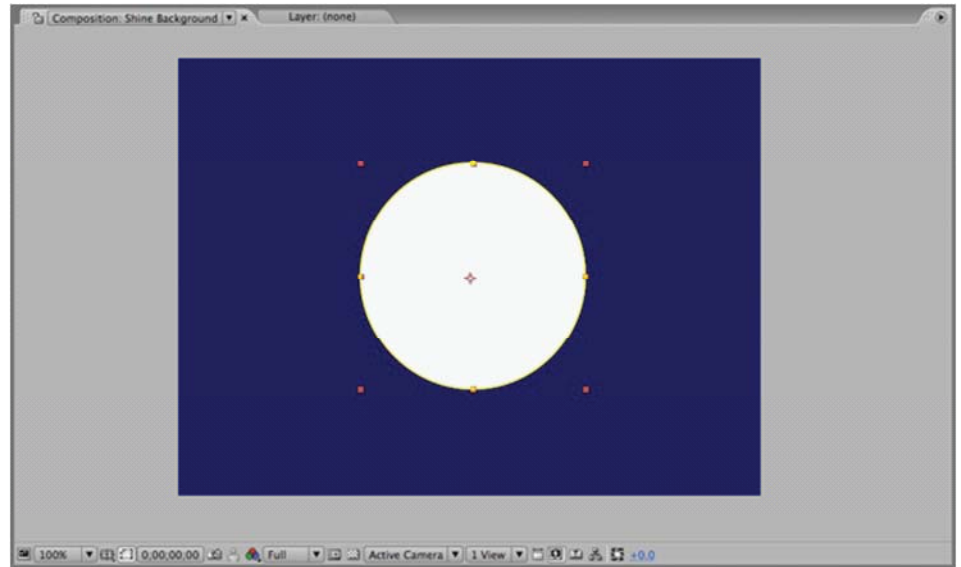
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People say that these days, we live in an instant gratification society, and what they mean by this is that we want everything and we want it now. Beginners and advanced After Effects users alike are quick to buy animated backgrounds to use in their compositions, because it is quick and easy to do. The big problem with it is that it costs money that a lot of us don't have. This Info Sheet will show you how to create a simple, effective background using a very popular plug-in which is Trapcode's Shine, that many of people already own. Shine, in a lot of cases, is used to create "God Rays" in a very bold manner. Let's see how we can use it subtly to create a nice looking background element.

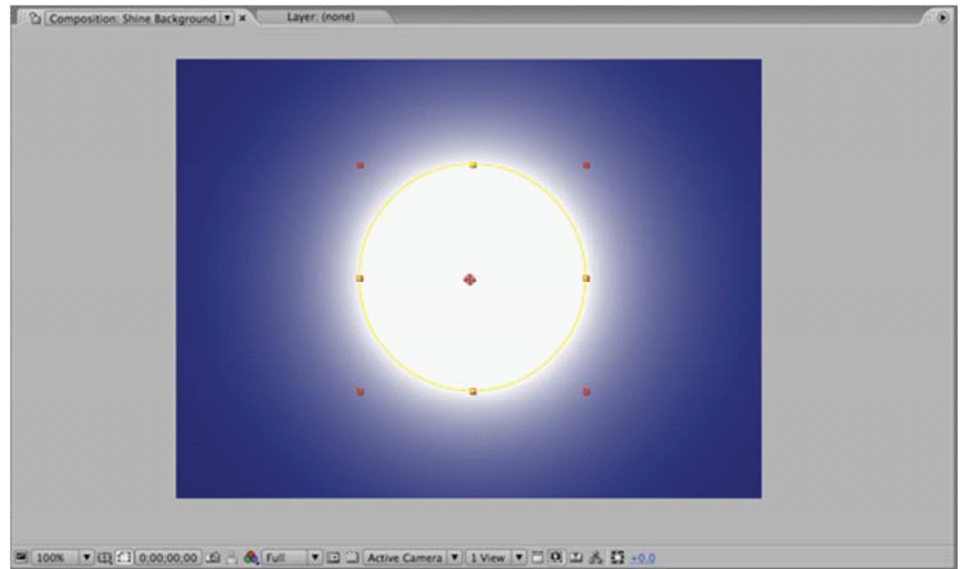
First, let's launch After Effects, and when it is open, we're going to create a dark blue solid layer for our background. It doesn't really matter the size you choose, as this will work the same for any size composition. Next, create a new solid layer, make it white, but this time make it double the size of the base layer. Your AE composition should look something like this.



Next, you are going to create a circular mask on our white solid, right in the middle of the composition.

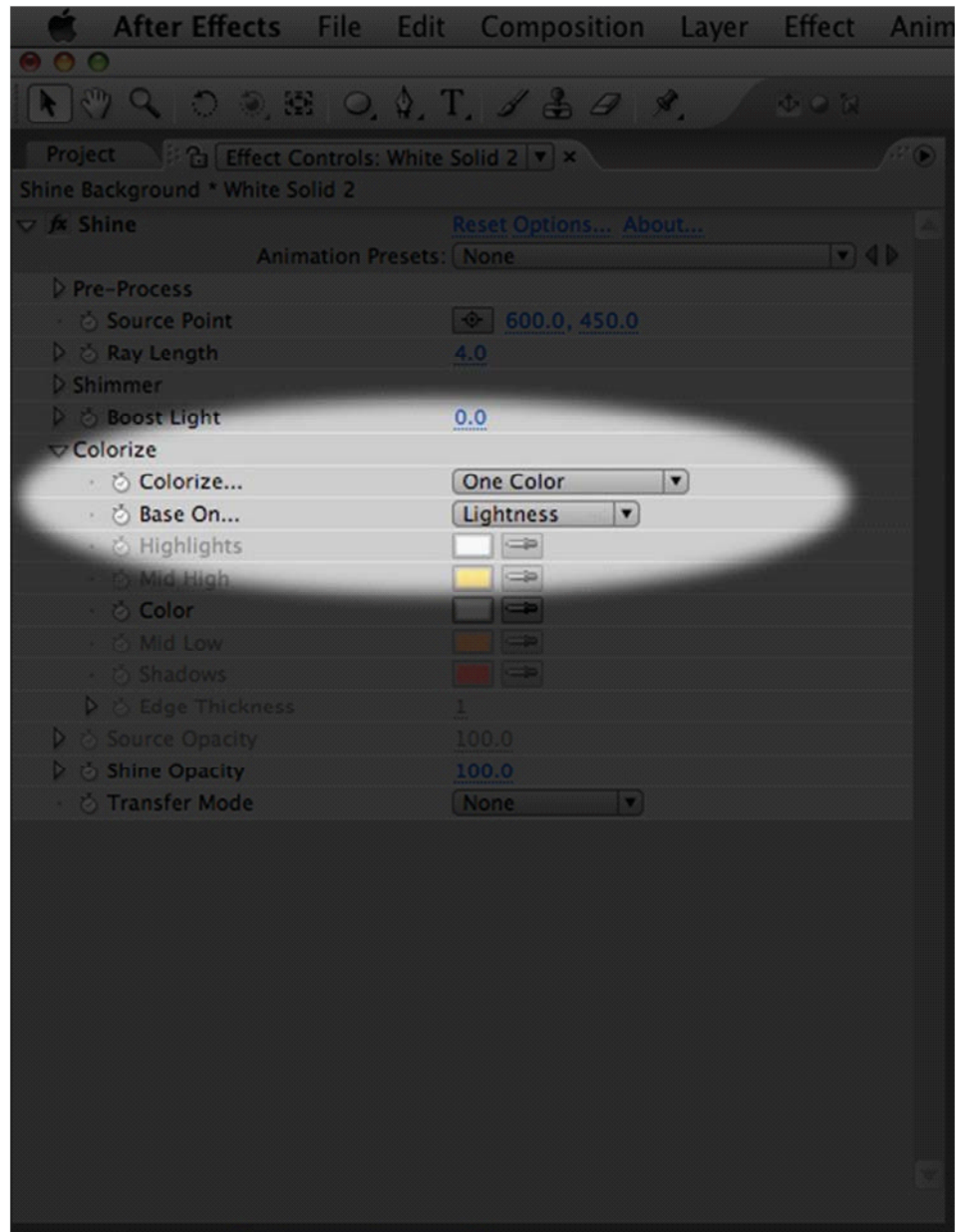


Now, you're going to add Shine to it, and it will look something like this.

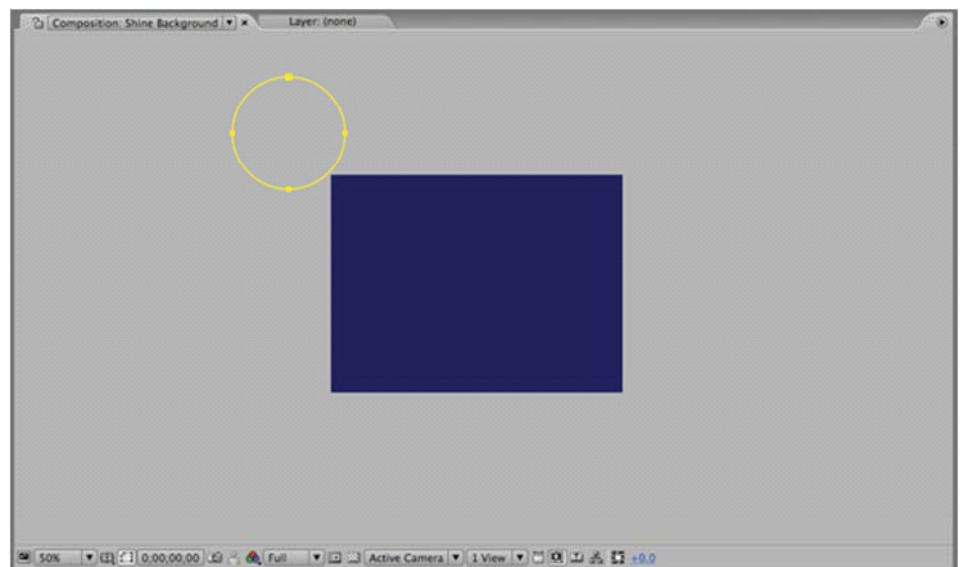


Now, that's a pretty nice looking Sun effect, but not quite what you should be going for. Select your "White Solid" layer, press "F3" to open your effects palette, and navigate down to the "Colorize" section of Shine. You're only going to use one color, which is white, so change from a "Three Color Gradient" to "One Color", and make that color white.

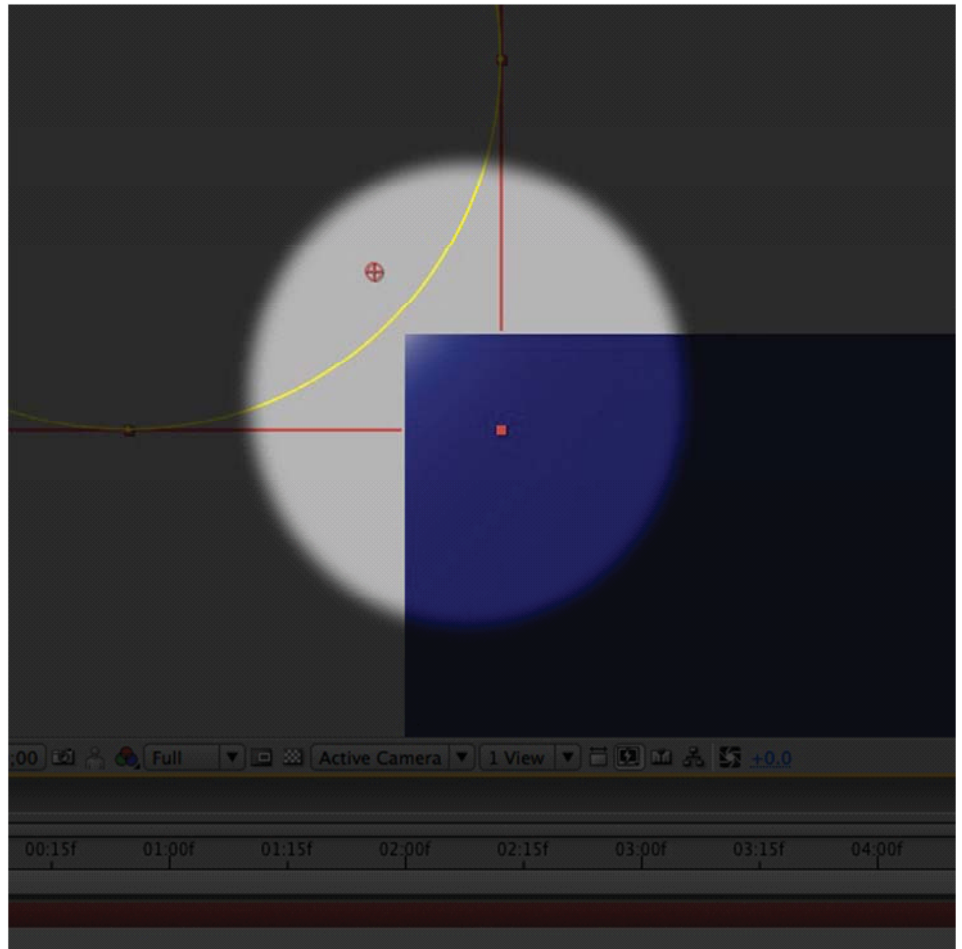
Now, take your mask, and drag it outside the upper left corner of the screen, so when you zoom out, it's visible outside the frame.



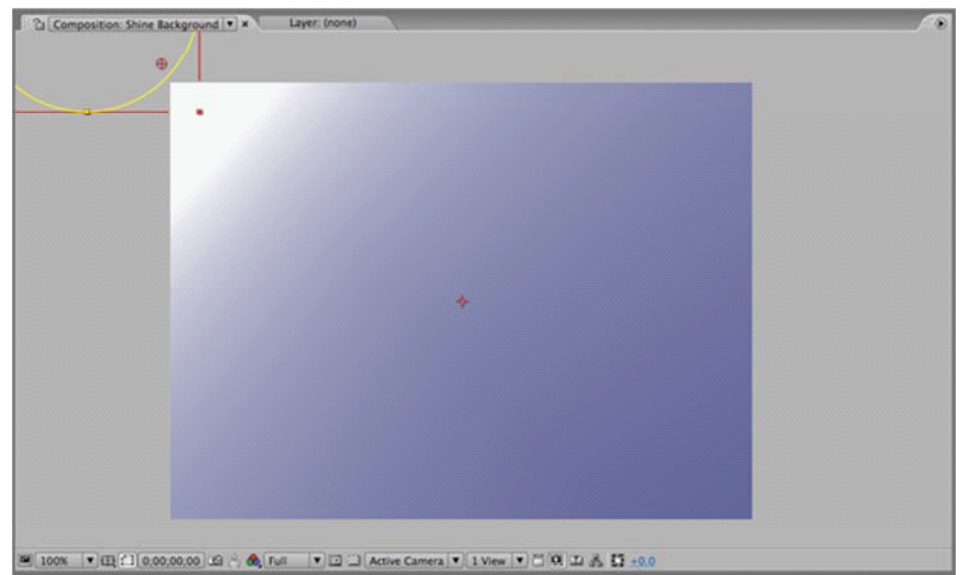
As you can see, your "Shine" effect has completely disappeared. That's because it is still centered in the middle of our screen where our mask used to be. What we want to do is have it sit on the lower right side of our circle mask. Select your "Source Point" in Shine, and click somewhere near the lower right edge of your circle mask. You can now, very faintly, see the Shine effect in the upper left corner of your composition window.



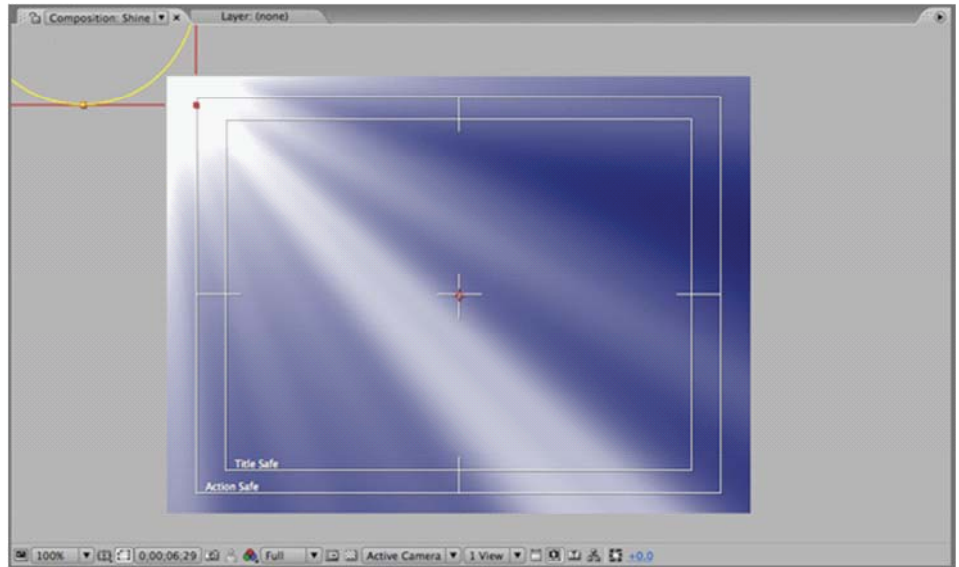
What you now want to do is increase your "Ray Length" and "Boost Light" parameters, so you can better see your Shine effect. Set your "Ray Length" to "20" and your "Boost Light" to "10". This is what you should have.



You're getting there, but it still doesn't look quite right, since everything seems to be a wash of white. What we need to do is have beams of light coming out of our circle mask, and that is achieved by using the "Shimmer" parameter in Shine. Let's set our "Shimmer Amount" to be "200", and the "Detail" to "5".



This is much better! Now, you want this shimmer to animate, so create a keyframe for the shimmer's "Phase" at the start of our composition with a value of "0", and you are going to have three full revolutions happen in your seven second composition, so press the "End" key on your keyboard to jump to the end of the composition, but instead of putting the keyframe here, click to the "Next Frame" in your time controls to put this keyframe one frame past the end.



You may be wondering why this is necessary? Because you want it to loop seamlessly, and putting the keyframe at 6:29 would give us a one frame (noticeable) pause before it starts again. To see what you have so far, open Video One located in the project folder.

You're almost done, but there is one thing that is very noticeable, and that is that the white is WAY too bright. So, fix that by changing the transfer mode of the "White Solid" layer. You're going to use "Overlay", so you're going to change it and take a look at the result.

You can see that it's almost unnoticeable, so duplicate the layer. Now it looks much better! The best part of the effect is that it is completely loopable, and if you find the Shine effect to be moving too quickly, all you have to do is adjust the "Phase" parameter from "3" to "2" or even "1", and it will give you a slower, calmer effect. View the Phase Three, Two and One videos in the folder to see the effect in action by making this adjustment.

