

iMovie: Using a green screen effect to superimpose video

You can record video in front of the green wall in the media labs and then superimpose your subject into another video clip. This is called a “green-screen” effect. For example, you could record a friend pretending to fly in front of a green backdrop, and then place that video into a video clip showing the starry sky so that your friend appears to be flying in the night sky. You can also drag the green-screen clip over a solid-color, animated background clip, or a photograph.

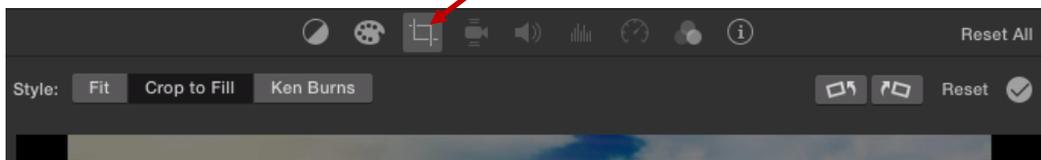
Recording video:

For best results, record your video in front of the green wall in the media lab, using the professional lighting to illuminate the subject being recorded. Please keep the following tips in mind:

- A blue backdrop will also work; the best blue is “chroma key blue.”¹
- Make sure the subject of the video isn’t wearing anything green if you’re shooting against green, and don’t include anything green in the shot other than the backdrop. The same applies if you’re shooting against blue: the subject of the video shouldn’t be wearing anything blue, and there should be nothing blue in the shot other than the backdrop.
- If possible, use multiple lighting sources to eliminate shadows on the subject being recorded.
- Record a moment at the end with the subject out of the frame. This indicates to iMovie what should be cut out when the video is superimposed.

Using the green screen effect:

1. In the timeline, select a clip or range that you shot against the green screen, and drag it above a video clip, solid background, or picture in your project. (Note: if you are using a photograph, you may want to turn off the Ken Burns effect so your background does not pan. To do this, click on the picture in your project and click the crop button. Then choose “Fit” or “Crop to Fill.”)

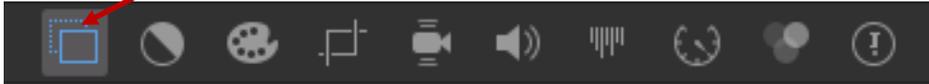


*When you see the green **Add Icon (+)**, let go of the mouse button.

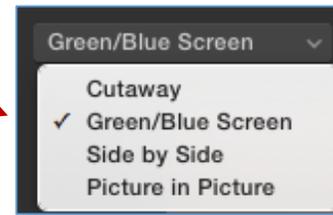


¹ These instructions assume you have filmed in front of a green screen; however, they also apply to footage filmed in front of a blue screen.

2. Click the **Video Overlay Settings** button, if cutaway controls aren't shown.



3. Select **Green/Blue Screen** from pop-up menu on the left. The **Green/Blue Screen** controls appear.



In the viewer, the clip shot against the green (or blue) backdrop has the green (or blue) removed. The clip below shows through the areas that were green (or blue), creating a composite image.

The color iMovie removes is based on the dominant color in the frame at the position of the playhead when you choose **Green/Blue Screen** from the pop-up menu. If the frame below the playhead is not representative of the rest of the clip, you may need to reposition the playhead and reapply the effect. For example, if a person in a blue shirt is in front of the green screen, and in the beginning of the shot the person is close to the camera and obscuring some of the green screen, iMovie removes blue, because the playhead is positioned on a predominantly blue frame. If the playhead is on a predominantly green frame later in the clip, the green is removed instead.

Depending on the length of the green-screen clip, it may extend beyond the clip to which it's connected (if there is another clip afterwards). To reposition the green screen clip, drag it to a different spot within the clip, or to a different clip. You can also drag the ends to lengthen or shorten the green-screen clip.

4. To apply the changes, click the **Apply**  button in the cutaway controls.

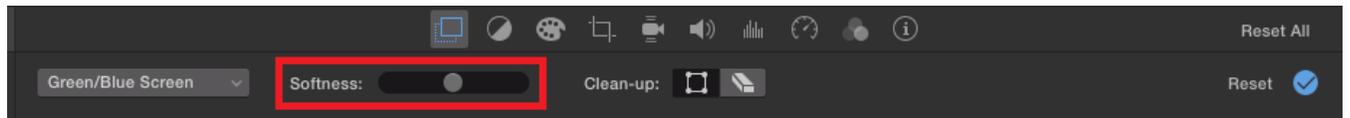
Adjusting the green screen effect:

1. Select the green-screen (or blue-screen) clip you want to adjust.
2. If the Green/Blue Screen controls are not shown, click the **Overlay Settings** button.



3. Do any of the following:

- To adjust the softness of the edges of the superimposed clip: Drag the **Softness slider**. (You should set the softness before using the clean-up tool. If you adjust Softness after you use the **Clean-up** button, the background clean-up selection is reset and must be reselected).



- To isolate areas of the green-screen (or blue-screen): Click the **Crop** button and then drag the corners of the frame to isolate the subject in the foreground clip.
 - To clean up areas of the green-screen clip: Click the **Clean-up** button and then drag across stray parts of the green-screen (or blue-screen) clip that should not be showing. Each time you drag, iMovie uses the new selection to determine what should be cleaned up.
4. To apply the change, click the **Apply**  button in the Green/Blue Screen controls.