Wind User Guide

Wind is a unique and versatile animation system for After Effects. It incorporates turbulence as a way of simulating natural motion. **Wind** is not a particle system nor is it based on the complex math and physics of an actual wind field. **Wind** uses built-in features of After Effects to generate many variations of wind-like movement.

Installation

Wind requires After Effects CS6 or later.

The **Wind** trial period is 3 days. The trial version is limited to maximum of 10 layers and doesn't support multiple builds in the same composition.

To install **Wind** as a dockable panel, place the wind.jsxbin file in After Effects/Scripts/ScriptUI Panels (MAC) or After Effects/Support Files/Scripts/ScriptUI Panels (Windows).

Getting Started

The easiest way to become familiar with **Wind**'s features is to just play with it. All our scripts are designed to have as small a learning curve as possible, but **Wind** is even easier than most of the others. Just set up your comp, click the **Apply** button, and preview the result. To tweak the result, just click the **Restore** button, adjust the settings in the UI and click **Apply** again. You can also manually move layers around after a build.

If you installed the wind.jsxbin file in AE's ScriptUI Panels folder, just launch AE and you should then be able to launch **Wind** from the bottom section of AE's Window menu. You can leave the **Wind** UI as a floating window, or drag its tab to dock it somewhere in the AE UI.

Note that if you haven't installed the script in the ScriptUI Panels folder, you'll have to launch **Wind** from AE's File>Scripts>Run Script File… menu, and it will be a floating window.

Create a new 10-second 1920x1080 comp and arrange some layers that you would like to animate with **Wind**. Note that **Wind** will ignore the following types of layers:

Locked layers
Audio layers
Disabled layers (eyeball turned off)
Camera layers
Light layers
Null layers
Guide layers
Adjustment layers
Layers with keyframes for Anchor Point, Position or Rotation
3D layers with keyframes for X, Y, or Z Rotation

Layers already processed by Wind
Parented layers

If no layers are selected, **Wind** will process all eligible layers in the comp. If you have layers selected, **Wind** will process only those.

Make sure your new comp is active and then click **Wind**'s **Apply** button to create a build. You should see a Wind Master control layer in the Timeline panel. If you preview, or scrub the timeline, you should see your layers being blown to the right, with increasing separation and turbulence.

When you un-shy the comp, you can examine what the script has done. You'll see your original layers safely stashed away at the bottom of the layer stack, locked, disabled, with shy enabled. **Wind** will use these layers to restore your initial setup if you subsequently click the **Restore** button.

Above your original layers (in the layer stack) you'll see pairs of control null layers and object layers (copies of your original layers). Each object layer will have its Anchor Point centered, have 3D turned on, and be parented to its corresponding null.

Each control layer has a single layer marker, which is used to trigger the animations for both the control layer and the attached object layer. You can reposition the markers to adjust the timing. That's all there is to creating a default build. Let's look at the **Wind** UI to see how each of the controls can influence the build.

Wind's User Interface

Buttons

Apply: This button initiates a **Wind** build. If layers are selected, **Wind** will use those. If no layers are selected it will use all eligible layers in the comp. Any layers used will be duplicated, have their video switches (eyeballs) turned off, be locked, have shy set, and be moved to the bottom of the layer stack. **Wind**'s animation of the layers will begin at the position of the comp's Current Time Indicator. Note that you can have multiple **Wind** builds in a comp, but each object layer can only be used in one build.

Restore: This button will initiate the removal of a **Wind** build. If there are multiple builds in a comp, you can restrict the Restore to a specific build by selecting the master control layer for that build. Your original layers will be restored (to the extent possible).

Bake: This button will cause the script to search the comp for all expressions applied by **Wind** and convert them to keyframes. You would do this when you are happy with the result and want to speed up rendering.

Main Dropdown Controls

Preset: This dropdown is where you can select the basic type of wind effect you want to start with. Each selection will change the values of most of the other UI controls (Direction, Drift, Interpolation, Ease Type, Distance, Speed, Spin, Chaos, Flutter, Variation, and Drift Distance), so you would generally use this control at the start of your design process.

Animate: This dropdown is where you select whether you want the animation to transition **Out** (layers blow away) or **In** (layers assemble).

Direction: This is where you set the general direction that the layers will travel.

Drift: This is where you can specify a secondary motion for the object layers.

Interpolation: This controls the nature of the ease applied to the animation. The **Mix:** selections allow you to randomize the type of interpolation applied to each layer. For example, if you select **Mix: Small**, each layer will randomly be assigned **Ease: Extra Small** or **Ease: Small**. Note that selecting **Linear** will deactivate the **Ease Type** control.

Ease Type: This is where you control whether the animation eases in, out, or both.

Slider Controls

Distance: This is where you specify how far you want the layers to travel. This slider gives you a range from zero up to 2x the width of the comp.

Speed: This slider specifies how fast you want the animation to occur. The lowest setting corresponds to a 20-second animation, the highest setting corresponds to .67 seconds.

Spin: This slider specifies the amount of rotation of the control null around the axis determined by the **Direction** control. For example, if you have selected **Left** or **Right** for **Direction**, **Spin** will cause rotation around the X axis. The highest setting corresponds to 720 degrees. The rotation will be randomly assigned a positive or negative value.

Chaos: This slider controls the rotation of the two control null axes not involved in **Spin**. This introduces an element of asymmetry and chaos to the motion. The highest setting corresponds to 20 degrees. The rotations will be randomly assigned positive or negative values.

Flutter: Flutter is rotation applied to the object layer. It is randomly applied to any combination of the rotation axes. The highest setting corresponds to 720 degrees.

Variation: This slider determines that amount of randomness applied to the settings of the other sliders. The maximum range of this slider corresponds to a 20% variation.

Drift Distance: This is where you specify the amplitude of the secondary motion (in the direction specified by the **Drift** control). The maximum range of this slider corresponds to 1x the comp width.

Transition Controls

These checkboxes are where you specify whether you want a transition to occur. It will occur at the beginning of the animation if you have chosen **In** as your **Animate** selection, or at the end if you have chosen **Out**. You can select **Fade** (animate Opacity to/from zero) and/or **Scale** (animate Scale to/from zero).

Hide Controls

These checkboxes determine which layers will be locked and/or visible in the AE timeline after the build. If **Null** is selected, the control nulls will be set to Shy and their video switch (eyeball) will be turned off. If **Object** is selected, the object layers will be locked and set to Shy.

Motion Blur

Use this checkbox to turn on each object layer's (but not the comp's) Motion Blur switch.

Auto Orient

This checkbox will cause each layer to face the comp's active camera (assuming there is one). Activating this control will deactivate the **Flutter** control.

Last Word

Wind was built for quick studies and lots of iterations. If you're working with dozens, or hundreds of layers, the best approach would be to just select a few of them to work with when starting your experimentations. This will speed up the workflow.

Currently there is no way to save the UI settings, so our advice is to save a screenshot of your UI in your project file for future reference.

Good luck and please send us your feedback and samples of your work with **Wind**. Let us know if our slider settings work for you, or if you have any ways of improving it for future editions.

Dan & Orrin