

Converting 4:3 Movies To 16:9 Widescreen

This procedure is for MEP 11 PLUS and later, but it may work for earlier versions.

Magix has posted a NSTC tutorial on the US website; which uses a different technique. I believe my method is simpler.

Converting 4:3 footage to 16:9 requires trimming/chopping off some of the top and or bottom of the picture (144 pixels [PAL] or 120 [NTSC] total to be precise) so that the sides can be expanded in proportion to fill the screen.

Steps

File>Movie Settings, set the "Video Settings" to PAL or NTSC 16:9.

The Preview window will change to 16:9 format, displaying black side borders:

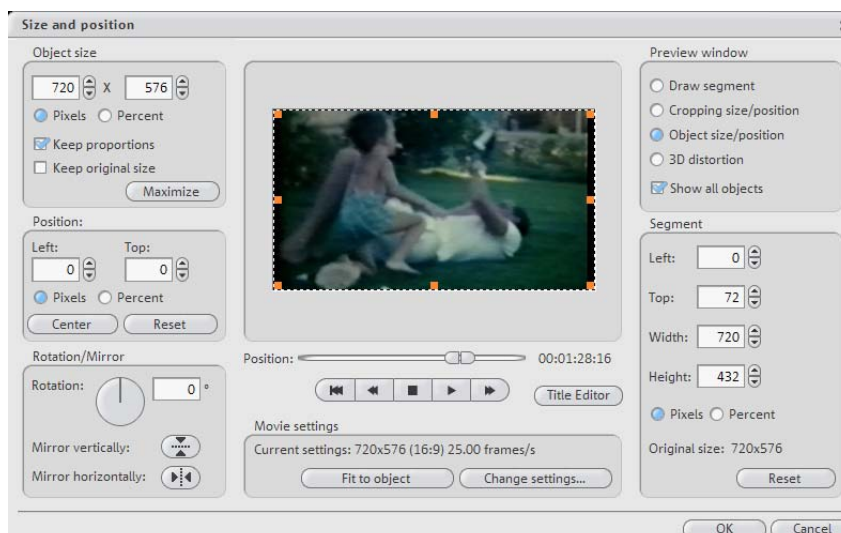


Equal Top/Bottom Trimming: Standard Frame Size

This procedure/numbers works for standard DVD-size 4:3 videos ie PAL 720x576 and NTSC 720x480. If you have a non-standard framesize, such as 320x240, then use the Freehand Trimming method below.

If you want to chop off the top and bottom evenly, then simply open the Image Size and Position screen and set it up as follows:

The only changes that need to be made are in the Segment section: set the TOP to 72 PAL or 60 NTSC and the HEIGHT to 432 PAL and 360 NTSC, then in the Object Size section click Maximise, then click OK.



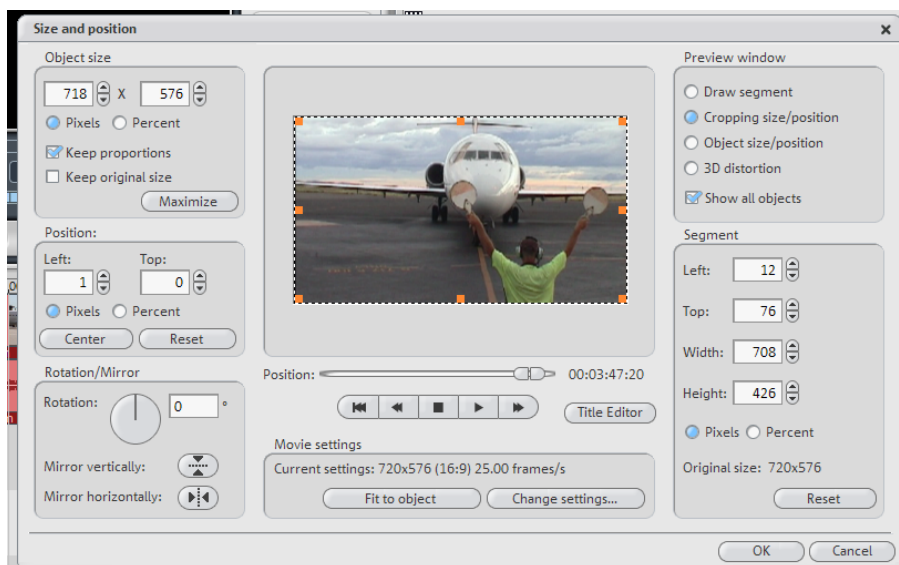
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Note that initially, the Object Size is 540 x 576 PAL (or 540x480 NTSC) but after you've made the segment changes, it becomes 720 x 576 (720x480). "Hang on" you say! That's the same as 4:3! Yes it is. The difference is that 4:3 pixels are almost square, whereas 16:9 pixels are wider for the same height.

Do this for each of your video objects. If you wish, you can save this video effect ie the crop, by right-clicking on the object you've just cropped and selecting "Save Video Effects". Give it a name and then you can "load video effects" onto your other objects by using the same effect, without having to redo the Image Size and Position procedure.

Freehand Trimming

1. On the timeline, for each video object, right click and select Image Size and Position:



2. In the "Preview window" section, click on the Cropping size/position radio button.
3. Drag either or both the top and bottom centre handles towards the centre of the screen to trim off what you don't need, then in the "Object Size" section, click Maximise. This will centre your video object. Keep dragging the top handle up or down until you have no black side or top bars.

You are, in effect, cropping off the top and/or bottom portions of your picture to allow the video to expand and fit the 16:9 screen.

If you wish to adjust what part of the picture is visible in the frame, put your mouse in the middle of the picture and left-drag it around as required. Then click Maximise again to centre the image.

You can also drag the left and right handles to crop off unwanted video on the sides of your footage. Just keep cropping all four sides so that when you click maximise, you have no (or acceptable) black sections around the border. Remember though that the more you trim off the sides, the more you have to take off the top/bottom and also that the remaining video will have to be progressively blown up to fit into the screen.

4. When you've finished, click OK.

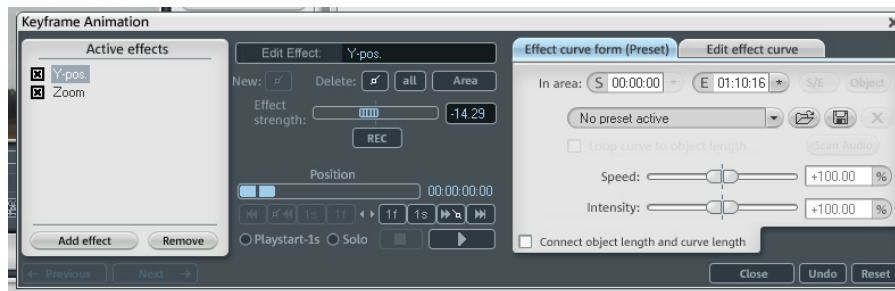
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If you need to start again, click all the RESET and Maximise buttons you can find on this screen!

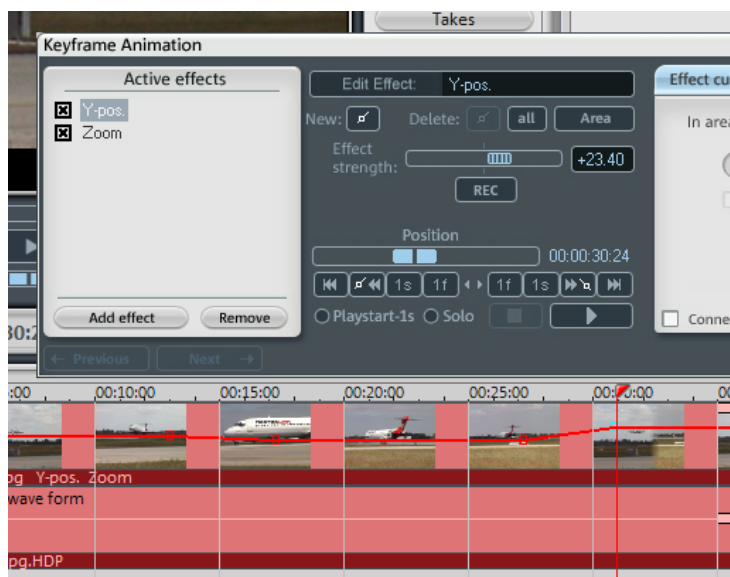
Uneven Top/Bottom Trimming

Often, the top and bottom portions of your 4:3 video to be cropped will vary as the clip progresses. In this case, using the image Size and Position dialog can become cumbersome. In this case, I recommend use of the Keyframe Animator (available in the Plus versions of MEP).

1. Set the Movie Properties to 16:9 (File>Movie Properties).
2. Open the KFA and add the Zoom and Y Pos effects.



3. Position the Start marker at the start of your video object.
4. Click on the Zoom effect and use the Effect Strength slider to zoom in your video until the edges are just touching the sides of the preview window (note that you “lose” the top and bottom of your video).
5. To vertically adjust what video you see, use the Y Pos effect. Click along the timeline where you want the vertical position to change and again use the slider to position the video as desired. You will have to use two nodes: one at the start of the section you want to start moving up or down, and then another at the point when the movement up or down is to stop as shown here:



I needed to move the picture down for a section where the camera was pointing too high, so I set two nodes to change the Y Pos down, then let the movie run for a few seconds until I wanted to move the picture back up, so I set two more nodes to achieve that.