

Making a “Slowmation”

on a Mac using iMovie

Slowmation is a simple and fun animation technique and all you need is a digital camera, a computer, your imagination and your ready to go.

There are many ways to go about shooting, editing and finalising your slowmation; following are some simple steps to get you started.

Once you have completed the planning and storyboarding phase of your project we can begin the construction of your slowmation.



Step 1: Taking the photographs

Let's say, for example, that you would like to make an object appear and move across the sky. Start at the beginning: place a project sheet or butcher's paper (which can be coloured to represent the sky) on the floor and then place your objects or models on the sheet. Make sure the models are movable and not stuck to your project sheet.

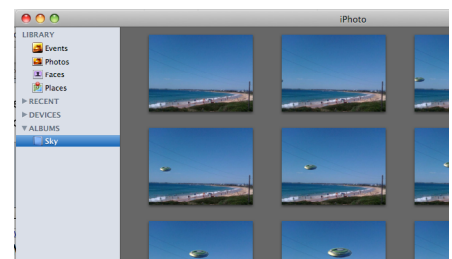
Setup your camera using a tripod looking down at your project sheet. Then place your model on the project sheet and take your first photo. Remember, you want to use camera (still frame) mode, not movie mode and set the image size on the *smallest size* (i.e. 640 x 480 pixels).

Once you've taken your first photo, move your model slightly in the direction you want it to travel and take another photo. Move it again and take one more. Continue this until your model reaches its final destination. You can manipulate your models in interesting and creative ways to add interest to your slowmation. Just remember that many small movements are best and that it will take about 30-40 photos for a 1-2 minute slowmation.

Finally, if your photo doesn't look right after you have taken it, delete it from the camera and take another one. If you do this as you go it save you time when you assemble your slowmation.

Step 2: Download your photos

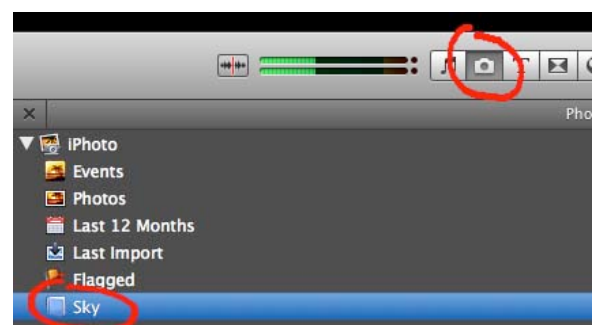
Now that you've taken your photos, you need to get them on your computer. We'll be using iPhoto, so first, connect your camera to your computer and open iPhoto. Create a new album in iPhoto for your project and drag the photos from your camera to the new album. Once your photos have been imported into the new album, close iPhoto and open iMovie.



Step 3: Locate your photos in iMovie

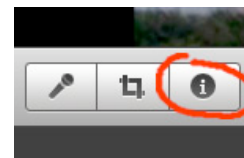
Create a new iMovie project and give it a name (set the aspect ratio to standard 4:3).

Now click on the "camera" button to the right above your timeline (this is the media browser). Select the iPhoto folder you created in step 2. All of your photos should now appear in order. Then highlight your photos and drag them to the project window (top left).

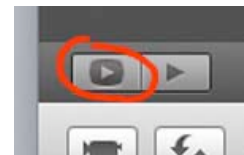


Step 4: Animate your photos

Next you need to tell iMovie how long you want each photo to be shown before moving to the next one. Select all the photos in your project window (this can be done by clicking the first photo and then while holding the shift key, scroll to the last photo and click it). Now click the inspector button and a floating window will appear. The timing we recommend is 0.5s.



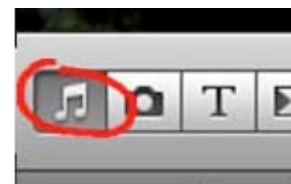
Then hit the play button located on the left-hand side of the iMovie project window. You have just created your first slowmotion movie!



Step 5: Adding narration and music

To enhance your slowmotion you can add a narration and music.

To add music it is as simple as dragging mp3's or AIFF files to your timeline, or browse your iTunes library in the media browser from within iMovie by selecting the 'Sound' button. Then select a piece of music and drag it to the timeline.



You can also create your own narration. This can be done two ways. You can record it on an mp3 player and import it as described above or you can use the voiceover tool in iMovies. Select the voice over tool and when the floating window opens check the settings and ensure your microphone is selected. Next, click the clip in which you want the narration to start then hit the 'space bar' to stop. It is as simple as that.



Important: Your slowmotion will most likely require a narration or text, but not usually both. In order to get the best possible result the script for your narration should be prepared before hand (usually during the storyboard phase).

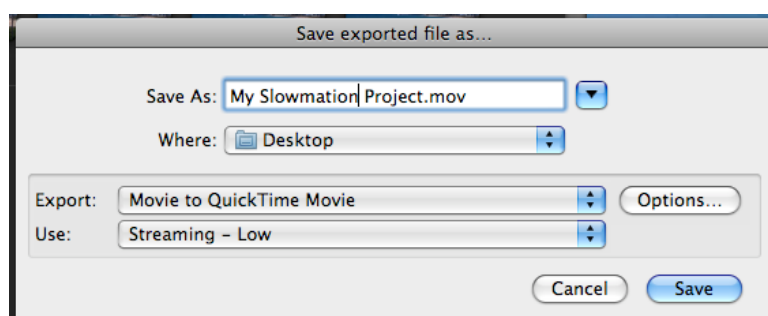
Step 6: Sharing your animation

Sharing your slowmotion is an easy process and just a few clicks away. In iMovie, click the 'Share' button in the top menu, you'll see a great selection of options there. If you plan to place your slowmotion on the slowmotion website or you just want to keep a copy on your harddrive, click the 'Export using QuickTime' option.



When the floating window opens type in a file name and location for the file. The use the 'Streaming - Low' format if you plan to upload your slowmotion to the slowmotion website.

Remember to have fun and be creative!



For more help with iMovie go to:
<http://www.apple.com/ilife/tutorials/?sr=app#imovie-intro>