

## Making a silhouette video (iPod commercial look)

1. First you need a piece of video that has an alpha channel to it. So, if you want to follow along, shoot a piece of video with a green screen and create a video with an alpha channel. Check out the Channel options inside of the Output Module to generate an alpha channel.  
*- Please note that for this tutorial I am having a single shot and not a sequence of shots put together. Having multiple cuts in a single clip will introduce a number of complexities into auto-trace that I'm not covering in this tutorial. And now, back to our program already in progress...*
2. Import your clip into After Effects and create a composition with it by dragging it to the 'new comp' button on the bottom of the project panel.
3. You can toggle the transparency on and off by choosing the toggle switch in the comp window. Check out the picture below. This will make sure you have video with an actual alpha channel.

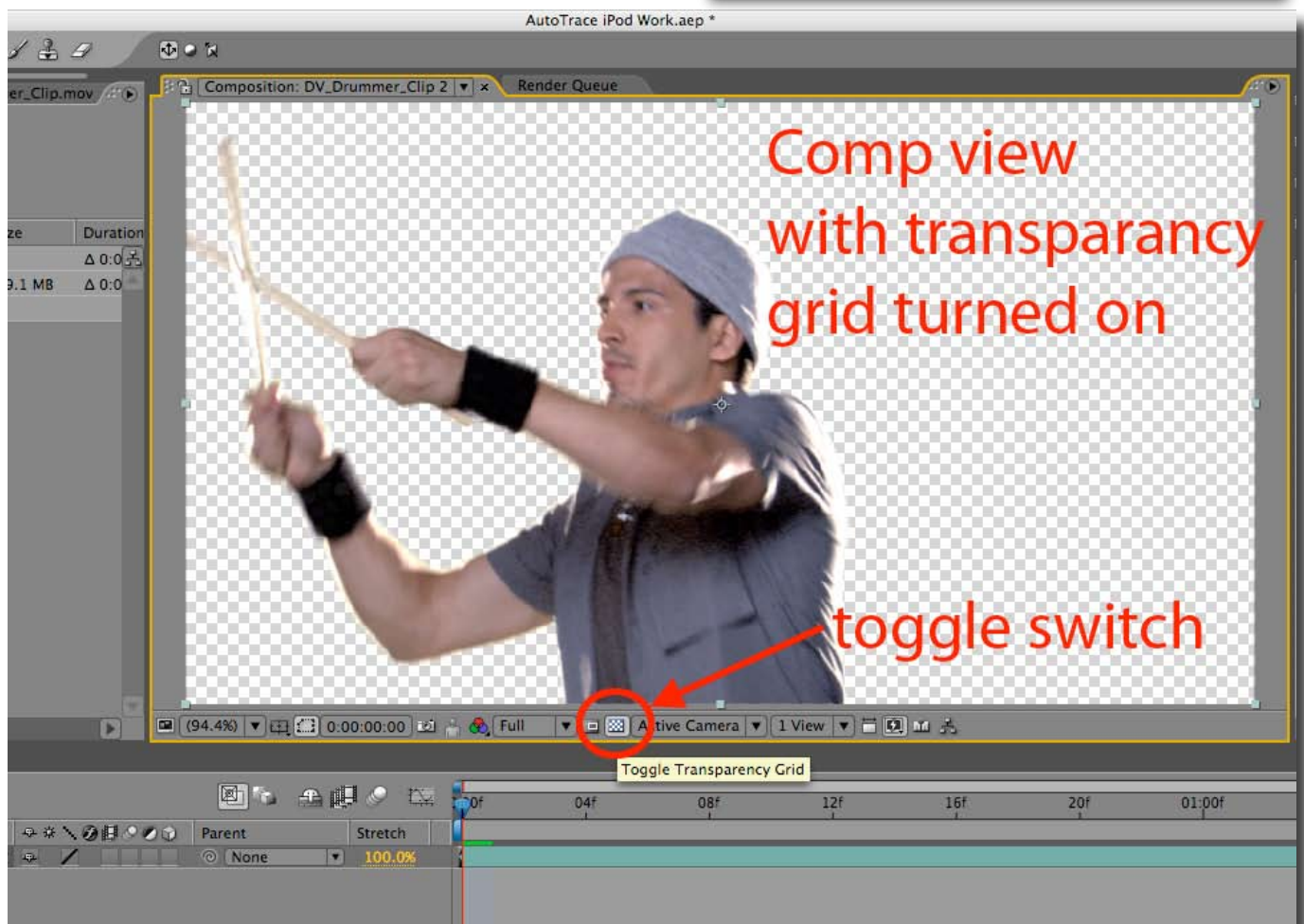
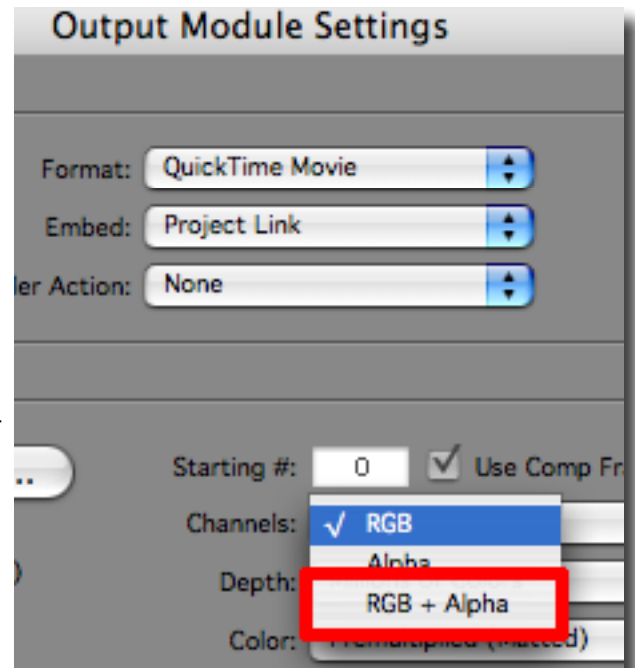
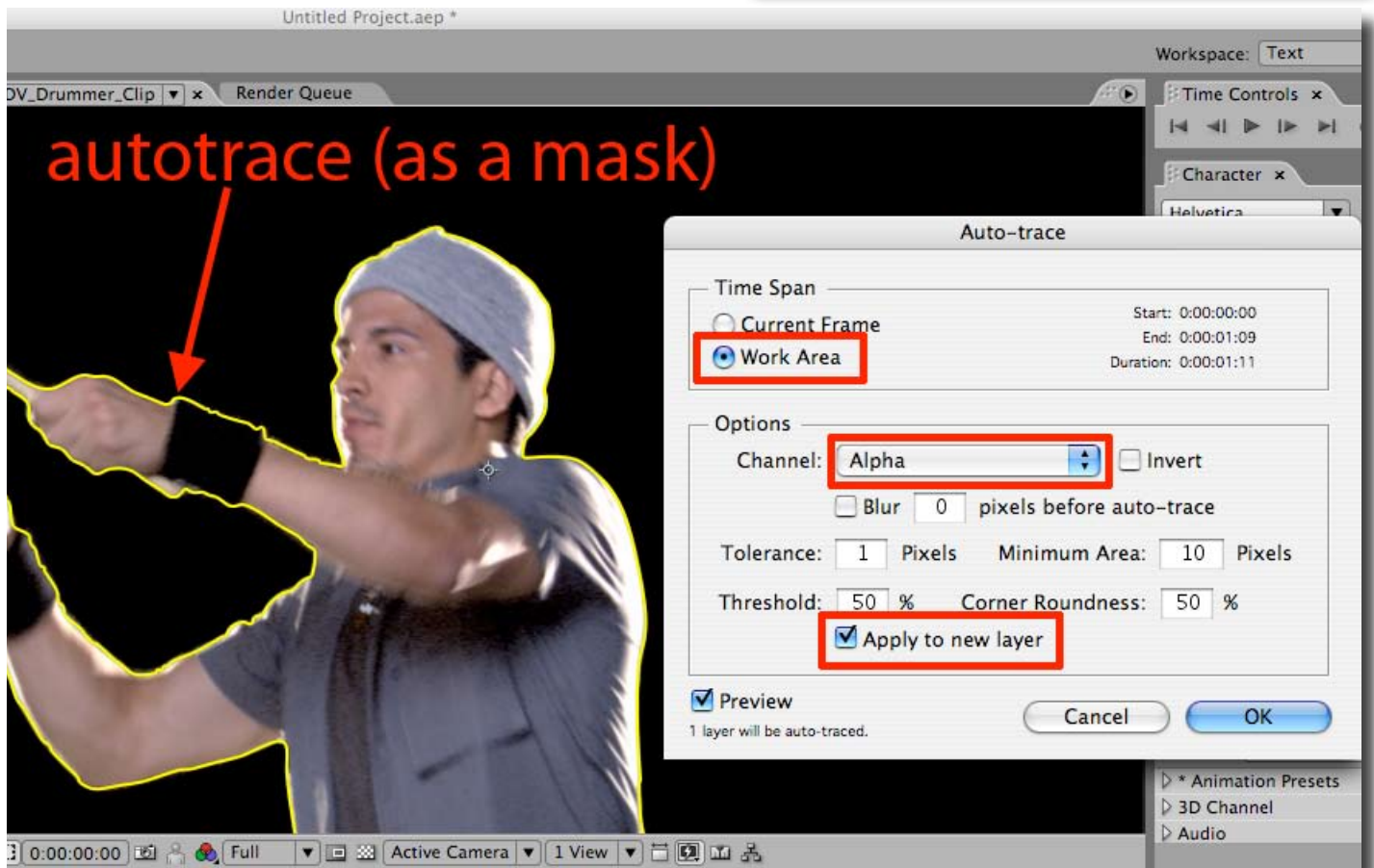
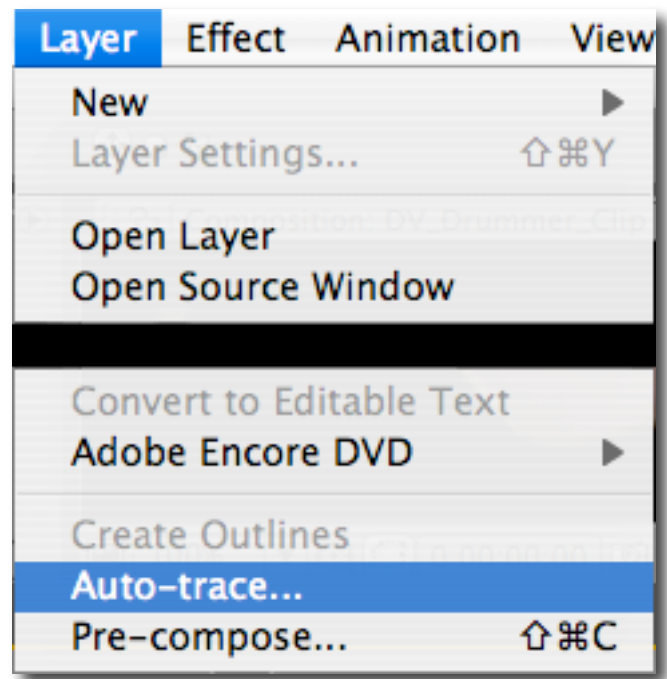
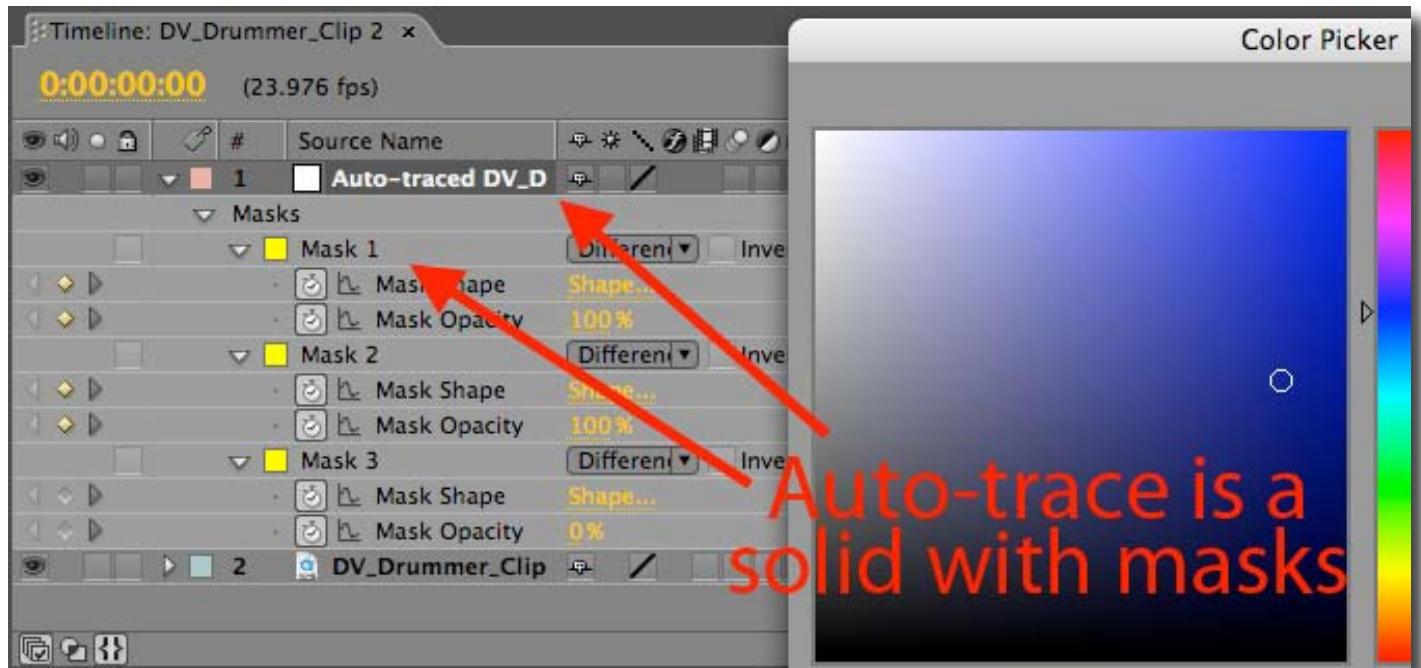


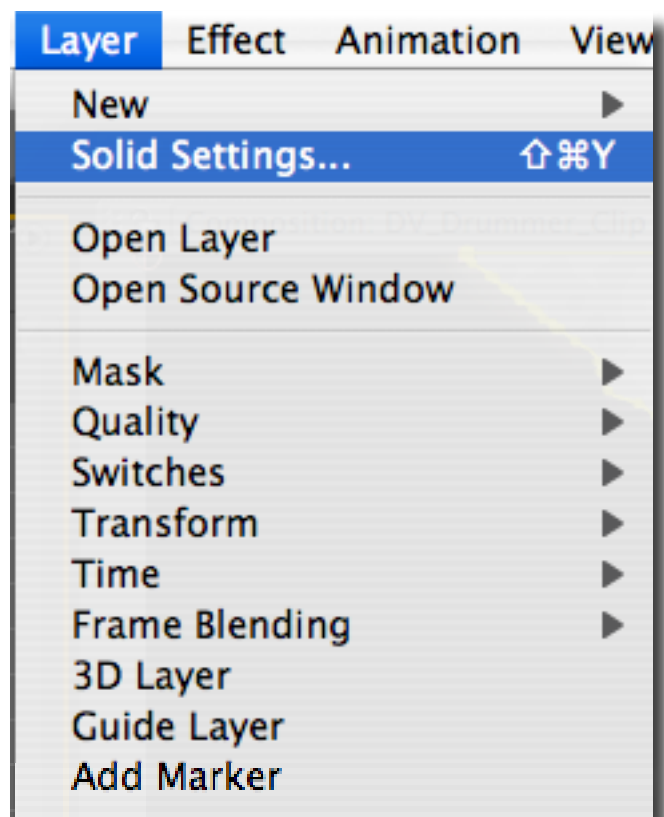
Figure 1 above displays the video with alpha channel we want to autotrace

4. With your layer selected in your composition, go to Layer>Auto-trace. You'll want to make sure that you have the work area selected or you'll only auto-trace a single frame.
5. Check out the channels as there are some different options including Luminance and RGB. Before you choose Alpha, pull up some of the other options and see what it does to your footage. Happy accidents are an AE artists best friend!
6. Okay, choose Alpha for your channel and make sure you have checked the Apply to new layer option.
7. After Effects will do some thinking depending on how long your source clip is and then magically, your auto-trace footage will appear!





8. Now you should have a second layer that is a solid that also contains your masks. As a reminder, a solid is nothing but a container that holds information (like masks) and a color which is what you can change.
9. Your footage probably has the silhouette look now, but it's white. To change the color, you can hit shift-command-Y (Mac) or with the Solid/Auto-trace layer selected go Layer>Solid Settings. Once there, you can use the color picker to make it to your liking.
10. We're done - but if you'd like some ideas on where to go from there, consider adding some effects to the solid, like a gradient (Generate>Ramp) or instead introduce Fractal Noise into your auto-trace. Experimenting is half the fun!



**Auto-trace is a powerful and fun feature that you can use quickly.**  
**Enjoy!**