
XDoG
STUDIO
Graphic Stylisation for After Effects
Quick Start Guide

Recommended Installation

Install with aescripts + aeplugins manager

The easiest way to install, license, and update **XDoG Studio** is by using the **aescripts + aeplugins manager**.

The manager is a desktop app for macOS and Windows that lets you manage aescripts tools in one place.

Steps

1. Download and install the **aescripts + aeplugins manager**.
2. Open the manager and sign in with your aescripts account.
3. Find **XDoG Studio** in your account/products list.
4. Click **Install**.
5. Restart **Adobe After Effects**.
6. Apply the effect from: Effect > PIXLSHFT > XDoG Studio

Installing a trial

To install a trial, open the **aescripts + aeplugins manager**, go to the **Account** menu, and select **Add Trial**.

Licensing

XDoG Studio uses aescripts licensing. Licenses need to be activated online, so make sure your machine is connected to the internet during activation.

Once installed, you can activate XDoG Studio by applying the effect in After Effects and clicking **Register** in the Effect Controls panel.

Recommended method: aescripts + aeplugins manager. Manual installation instructions are provided on the next page.

Manual Installation

The recommended installation method is the **aescripts + aeplugins manager**, but XDoG Studio can also be installed manually.

Windows Installation

1. Close **Adobe After Effects**.
2. Locate the plugin file: XDoG Studio.aex
3. Copy the .aex file into your After Effects Plug-ins folder.

Common Windows location:

C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe After Effects [version]\Support Files\Plug-ins\

Optional recommended folder structure:

C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe After Effects [version]\Support Files\Plug-ins\PIXLSHFT\XDoG Studio.aex

4. Restart **Adobe After Effects**.
5. Apply the effect from: Effect > PIXLSHFT > XDoG Studio

Notes

XDoG Studio v1.0.0 is currently available for:

- Windows x64
- Adobe After Effects

Make sure you install the correct version of the plugin for your operating system and After Effects version.

If the plugin does not appear

Try the following:

- Confirm the .aex file is inside the After Effects Plug-ins folder
- Restart After Effects
- Check that you are using a supported Windows x64 version
- Make sure the plugin has not been placed inside a zipped folder
- Reinstall using the aescripts + aeplugins manager if available

After installation, continue to Activation to register or trial XDoG Studio.

Activation

Activate XDoG Studio

XDoG Studio uses aescripts licensing. After installation, the plugin can be activated from inside Adobe After Effects.

Activation steps

1. Open Adobe After Effects.
2. Add footage, an image, or a solid to a composition.
3. Apply XDoG Studio from: Effect > PIXLSHFT > XDoG Studio
4. In the Effect Controls panel, click: Register
5. Enter your aescripts license details.
6. Once activation is complete, restart After Effects if required.
7. Reopen After Effects and apply XDoG Studio again to confirm the license is active.

Trial Mode

XDoG Studio can be installed as a trial through the aescripts + aeplugins manager. To install a trial, open the aescripts + aeplugins manager, go to the Account menu, and select Add Trial. In trial or unlicensed mode, XDoG Studio will render with a visible trial cross/watermark. Once a valid license is activated, the trial watermark will be removed from rendered output.

Moving to another machine

If you need to move your license to another computer, manage your activation through your aescripts account or the aescripts + aeplugins manager.

Activation troubleshooting

If activation does not work:

- Make sure your computer is connected to the internet
- Confirm you are signed into the correct aescripts account
- Check that the license has not already been used on another machine
- Restart After Effects after activation
- Try activating through the aescripts + aeplugins manager
- Contact aescripts support if the license still cannot be activated

Recommended: install and manage your license through the aescripts + aeplugins manager whenever possible.

Quick Start

XDoG Studio is designed to generate bold graphic, ink, toon, sketch, and edge-driven looks directly inside Adobe After Effects.

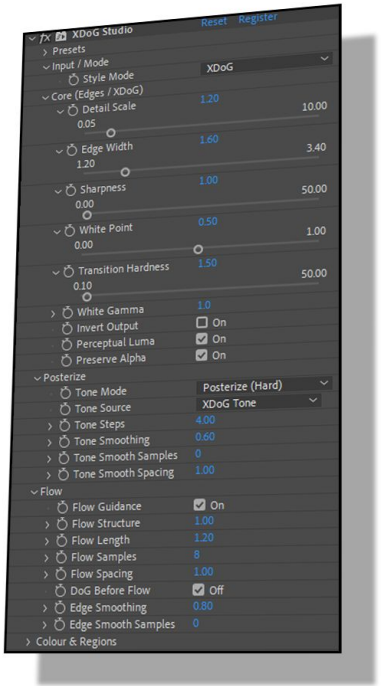
Basic workflow

1. Add footage, an image, or a precomp to your After Effects composition.
2. Select the layer you want to stylise.
3. Apply XDoG Studio from: Effect > PIXLSHFT > XDoG Studio
4. Start with the default settings or choose a preset.
5. Adjust the main controls to shape the look.
6. Preview at Half or Quarter resolution while working, then switch back to Full resolution for final output.

Start Here

Mode
Choose the main output style, such as XDoG, colour-channel looks, debug views.

Preset / Style
Use a preset as a starting point, then adjust the controls manually to create your own look



Recommended: Start with Detail Scale, then work down through the core controls.

Quick Start

Core / Edges — XDoG

The **Core / Edges** controls define the main character of the XDoG look. Start here when building a new style. These settings control the scale, width, sharpness, threshold, and hardness of the linework.

Detail Scale

Controls the scale of detail used to generate the XDoG result.

Lower values reveal finer image detail and smaller edges. Higher values create broader, cleaner, more graphic shapes.

Use this first to decide whether the look should feel detailed and sketch-like, or bold and simplified.

Edge Width

Controls the apparent width and weight of the detected lines.

Lower values create thinner, finer linework. Higher values create heavier, more

graphic outlines.

Use this to move between subtle ink detail and strong comic-style edges.

Sharpness

Controls the strength and definition of the edge response.

Lower values produce softer, more gradual linework. Higher values create stronger, crisper, higher-contrast edges.

Use this after Detail Scale and Edge Width to refine the punch of the linework.

White Point

Controls where the XDoG tones transition toward white.

This is one of the most important controls for shaping the final look. Adjusting White Point changes how much of the image becomes visible linework, tonal detail, or clean white space.

Use this to balance the amount of detail in the final image.

Transition Hardness

Controls how soft or hard the tonal transition is around the threshold.

Lower values create smoother, softer transitions. Higher values create harder, more graphic cut-offs.

Use this to move between soft sketch-like shading and bold posterised ink shapes.

Suggested first pass

For a fast starting workflow:

1. Set **Detail Scale** to define the overall level of image detail.
2. Adjust **Edge Width** to control line weight.
3. Increase or decrease **Sharpness** to refine edge strength.
4. Use **White Point** to control how much detail appears.
5. Adjust **Transition Hardness** to make the result softer or more graphic.

Quick tips

- Start with the Core / Edges controls before adjusting colour
- Small changes to White Point can have a large visual effect
- Use lower Detail Scale for fine sketch detail
- Use higher Detail Scale for cleaner graphic shapes
- Increase Edge Width and Sharpness for bold comic-style linework
- Use Transition Hardness to control whether the result feels soft or posterised

Recommended: Start with Detail Scale, then work down through the core controls.

Quick Start

Posterise

The **Posterise** controls simplify tonal or colour detail to create cleaner graphic shapes. Use these after the main XDoG edge controls are working.

Posterise Mode

Controls how the image is simplified.

Use posterisation when you want a cleaner toon, comic, manga, or print-style result rather than a fully photographic image.

Levels

Controls how many tonal or colour steps are used.

Lower values create a flatter, more graphic look with fewer tones. Higher values preserve more detail and smoother transitions.

Use lower levels for bold poster-style treatments and higher levels for subtler stylisation.

Softness

Controls how smoothly the posterised steps transition.

Lower values create harder, more cut-out graphic edges. Higher values create softer tonal blending between levels.

Use this to balance between clean cel-shaded shapes and smoother illustrated colour.

Posterise quick tips

- Use fewer levels for bold toon or comic looks
- Use more levels for softer stylised footage
- Increase softness if the image feels too harsh
- Try per-channel colour for stronger graphic colour separation
- Dial in Core / Edges first, then use Posterise to simplify the image

Recommended: Start with Detail Scale, then work down through the core controls.

Quick Start

Use Flow

Use Flow enables flow-guided processing. This helps the linework follow the natural direction of shapes in the image, creating smoother and more illustrative results.

Use Flow is especially useful for faces, clothing, vehicles, architecture, landscapes, and footage where you want the strokes to feel more directed and less noisy.

Use Flow

Turns flow-guided stylisation on or off.

When enabled, XDoG Studio uses image structure to guide the direction of the linework. This can create cleaner, more coherent strokes.

When disabled, the result is usually faster and can feel more direct or raw.

Flow Guidance

Controls how strongly the flow-guided result is smoothed.

Lower values preserve more fine detail. Higher values create cleaner, broader, more painterly or illustrative linework.

Flow Structure

Flow helps lines follow the underlying direction of forms in the image.

This can make edges feel more natural, especially around curved surfaces, hair, fabric, vehicles, and organic shapes.

Detail vs Cleanliness

Use Flow is often a balance between detail and cleanliness.

If the image feels too noisy, increase flow smoothing or use a light blur before XDoG Studio. If the image feels too soft, reduce smoothing or lower the detail scale.

Use Flow quick tips

- Enable Use Flow for smoother, more directed linework
- Disable Use Flow for faster previews or sharper raw edge detection
- Increase smoothing for cleaner graphic shapes
- Reduce smoothing to preserve fine detail
- Flow works best after Detail Scale, Edge Width, White Point, and Transition Hardness are already close
- For noisy footage, or high detail footage try “Smart blur” to reduce detail and preserve edges before applying XDoG

Recommended: Start with Detail Scale, then work down through the core controls.

GPU Notes + Troubleshooting

GPU Acceleration

XDoG Studio supports GPU-accelerated rendering on Windows using compatible CUDA or OpenCL devices.

GPU rendering is recommended for the best performance, especially when working with larger compositions, high-resolution footage, or flow-guided looks.

Supported GPU paths

XDoG Studio includes support for:

CUDA
OpenCL
CPU fallback rendering

If GPU rendering is unavailable, XDoG Studio can still render on the CPU, but performance may be much slower.

Performance tips

For smoother previews:

- Preview heavy compositions at Half or Quarter resolution
- Use shorter preview ranges when testing settings
- Reduce flow smoothing or heavy posterise settings while experimenting
- Pre-render complex layers if your comp has many effects stacked together
- Use 16-bit or 32-bit projects when you need smoother colour and tonal control
- For noisy footage, try adding a light blur or “Smart blur” before XDoG Studio

If GPU rendering is unavailable

Try the following:

- Make sure your GPU drivers are up to date
- Confirm After Effects GPU acceleration is enabled
- Restart After Effects after changing GPU settings
- Try switching to CPU rendering if GPU rendering fails
- Avoid running multiple GPU-heavy applications while rendering
- If using OpenCL, confirm your GPU and driver support OpenCL correctly

If the effect appears watermarked

XDoG Studio will display a trial cross/watermark when it is running in trial or unlicensed mode.

To remove the watermark:

1. Make sure XDoG Studio is activated with a valid aescripts license.
2. Click Register in the Effect Controls panel if activation is required.
3. Confirm you are signed into the correct aescripts account.
4. Restart After Effects after activation.
5. If needed, manage your license through the aescripts + aeplugins manager.

If XDoG Studio does not appear in After Effects

Check the following:

- Restart After Effects after installation
- Confirm the plugin is installed in the After Effects Plug-ins folder
- Make sure you are using the Windows x64 version
- Install through the aescripts + aeplugins manager where possible
- Reinstall the plugin if the file was moved, renamed, or left inside a zipped folder

General troubleshooting

If something is not working as expected:

- Restart After Effects
- Try a new simple composition with one footage layer
- Reset XDoG Studio to its default settings
- Test at Full, Half, and Quarter resolution
- Try CPU rendering if GPU rendering is unstable
- Update your GPU drivers
- Reinstall using the aescripts + aeplugins manager

Support

For installation, licensing, or account issues, use aescripts support or the aescripts + aeplugins manager.

For product-specific issues, include as much detail as possible:

- After Effects version
- Windows version
- GPU model
- CUDA or OpenCL path if known
- A short description of the issue
- A screenshot or example frame if helpful

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For updates, licensing, and support: Use your aescripts account or the aescripts + aeplugins manager.