⚡PowerSkin Manual

Natural skin smoothing and blemish reduction for Final Cut Pro.

Installation

1. Double-click `PowerSkin-1.0.pkg` and follow the installer (administrator password required).
2. The installer places the PowerSkin app in `Applications` and the effect template in your `Movies › Motion Templates` folder, then opens PowerSkin once. That starts your **free 7-day trial** with every feature unlocked.
3. **Restart Final Cut Pro** if it was running.

The effect appears in the Effects browser under ⚡ **PowerApps → Effects → PowerSkin**.

> **Effect not showing?** Quit Final Cut Pro fully (⌘Q) and reopen it. FCP only scans for new effects at launch.

Requirements

- macOS 13 or later, Apple silicon or Intel
- Final Cut Pro 10.6 or later. Auto Mask (FCP 12.3+) is optional

---

Quick start

1. **Apply** PowerSkin to your clip from Effects → ⚡ PowerApps → Effects.
2. **Let Auto Skin find the skin.** It is on by default: PowerSkin measures the skin color inside the detected face on every frame and limits itself to it, with no mask to add. Tick **Show Skin Mask** once to see the coverage (warm white where the effect applies), then untick it. If the face is lit an unusual color, press **Sample Skin Color** once. If hair or eyes get in, lower Saturation Range or Brightness Range. Prefer Final Cut's own masking? Untick Auto Skin and add an Auto Mask → Skin; PowerSkin then processes whatever the mask lets through.
   Want pixel-perfect edges? Add Final Cut's Auto Mask → Skin on top (FCP 12.3+). Both masks combine. Auto Mask costs playback performance, so use it only when you need it.
3. **Dial it in, or let PowerSkin do it.** Press **Auto Fix** and PowerSkin analyzes the shot's skin and sets Smoothing, Texture, Blemish Reduction, Redness and Skin Tone Correct to match what it measures (press again, **Reset All**, to return to defaults). Every value stays a normal slider you can tweak. Manually: raise **Blemish Reduction** for acne/spots, add **Shadow Lift** for dark circles, and use **Skin Tone Correct** for color casts (see below).

> **Tip. Check what you're removing:** tick **Show Removed Detail** while adjusting. Only blemish-scale detail should appear in the difference view; if facial structure shows up, lower Smoothing or Blemish Size.

Perfect skin tones with Skin Check

Every healthy skin tone, all complexions, sits on the same hue line on a vectorscope (the “flesh line”). PowerSkin makes this foolproof:

1. Tick **Skin Check**. The image turns gray; skin glows **green** when tones are correct and **red** when there's a color cast. A mini-vectorscope in the corner shows your skin's color cloud and the orange flesh line.
2. Press **Auto Skin Tone**, PowerSkin measures the cast and sets the slider for you (press again to reset), or drag **Skin Tone Correct** yourself until the face is green and the cloud hugs the line.
3. Untick Skin Check. Done: complexion is preserved; only the cast is removed.

Parameter reference

PARAMETER	WHAT IT DOES
Smoothing	Overall evening of skin: removes pore-scale texture (except what Texture keeps) and evens ordinary mid-scale unevenness, while facial structure is preserved. 0 removes nothing. Default 35 is subtle; 60+ is glam.
Texture	How much fine pore detail is kept. Higher = more real skin. Keep at 50–70 to avoid the plastic look.
Restore Details	Brings pores and natural skin features back at full strength everywhere the blemish and discoloration detectors found nothing, so you can smooth harder without the waxy look. Blemishes and discolored patches stay removed. Not a sharpener: nothing is amplified beyond the original.
Blemish Reduction	Targeted removal of acne, moles and spots. Detects outliers, so normal shading survives even at 100.
Blemish Size	The size of imperfections being targeted. Raise for larger blemishes, lower for fine spots only.
Auto Scale	On by default. Sizes the pore, blemish and structure bands from the detected face, so a subject who walks toward the camera keeps the same look with no keyframes, and a wide shot is not over-processed. With several people the largest face sets the scale. If no face is found, the bands fall back to a frame-size rule.
Detail Scale	A multiplier on the band sizes, 25 to 400 percent, keyframeable. Use it to trim Auto Scale, or as a manual distance control with Auto Scale off (hands, body shots, or a shot where detection blinks).
Redness Reduction	Pulls down localized redness (irritation, broken capillaries) without shifting overall skin tone.

Shadow Lift	Brightens dark circles, eye bags and shadow-side wrinkles, and neutralizes their bluish cast. A built-in limit protects real facial structure. Try 30–60.
Tone Evenness	Unifies patchy, uneven skin color toward the surrounding tone. Luminance is untouched.
Warmth	A gentle warm/cool trim along the skin tone axis.
Skin Tone Correct	Rotates skin hue onto the vectorscope flesh line: removes color casts while preserving complexion and saturation. 40–70 is the tasteful zone; 100 is a full snap.
Auto Skin Tone	One click measures the skin's color cast on the current frame and sets Skin Tone Correct to the right value (clean footage sets 0). Becomes **Reset Skin Tone** while a correction is active.
Auto Fix	Analyzes the shot's skin (texture roughness, blemish density, redness and color cast) and sets Smoothing, Texture, Blemish Reduction, Redness and Skin Tone Correct in one click. Becomes **Reset All**, which restores those five to their defaults. Suggestions are conservative and always editable.
Skin Tone Only	Color correction with no retouching. One press sets Smoothing, Restore Details, Blemish Reduction, Redness, Shadow Lift, Tone Evenness and Warmth to zero, so no smoothing or detail work happens, then runs Auto Skin Tone to bring the skin onto the vectorscope flesh line. The button then reads **Restore Retouch**: press it to put your previous settings back (after relaunching Final Cut, it restores the defaults).
Auto Skin	Built-in skin detection. On by default. PowerSkin classifies every pixel by how close its color sits to the vectorscope flesh line and confines the effect to skin, with no Final Cut mask. Untick to process the whole frame (for example under your own mask).

Hue Range	How far a hue may sit from the skin center and still count as skin. Raise it if parts of the face drop out (check with Show Skin Mask); lower it if wood or beige walls get in.
Saturation Range	How much more or less saturated than the center a pixel may be. Hair and irises are usually less saturated than face skin, so lowering this is the first move when they leak into the mask.
Brightness Range	The brightness window around the skin center. Lower it to drop hair, irises and eye whites that share the skin's hue; raise it if forehead highlights or shadowed cheeks fall out.
Mask Softness	Blends between a tight mask with clean edges and a soft one that follows the shape of the face. Default 50 suits most footage.
Skin Color / Sample Skin Color / Use Picked Color	The center of the skin model. By default PowerSkin measures it on every frame from the skin inside the detected face, which absorbs moderate color casts by itself. For a shot where nothing looks like skin to the model (a face lit blue, a heavy grade), press **Sample Skin Color**: it averages the real color of the cheeks, nose and forehead on the current frame, writes it into Skin Color and ticks **Use Picked Color**, so the mask centers on that color. You can also set Skin Color by hand; clicking the swatch opens the macOS Colors panel, which has a magnifier eyedropper that samples anything on screen, including the viewer.
Limit to Faces	Restricts the skin mask to detected faces (plus forehead, ears and neck). Uses Apple's on-device face detection at a few milliseconds per frame. If no face is found the whole frame stays eligible, so hands and body shots still work. Untick for shots where skin outside the face matters.

Protect Features	On by default. Keeps the nostrils, eyes, brows and lips untouched: PowerSkin finds them with Apple's on-device face analysis and leaves a soft oval around each one, following the face as it moves. The under-eye area stays outside, so Shadow Lift still works on dark circles. Tick Show Skin Mask to see the protected ovals as dark shapes inside the skin.
Mix	Wet/dry blend with the original. 0 shows the untouched image.
Skin Check	The green/red skin-tone verdict view with mini-vectorscope (see above). Preview only. Untick before export.
Show Removed Detail	Difference view of what's being taken out. Preview only. Untick before export.
Show Skin Mask	Shows the Auto Skin coverage: warm white where the effect applies, dim elsewhere. Preview only. Untick before export.
Show Skin Only	Shows the corrected skin and turns everything else black, so the vectorscope reads only the skin. Open the scope next to it to check the trace sits on the flesh line. Needs Auto Skin on; with Final Cut's Auto Mask, use Final Cut's own mask view. Preview only. Untick before export.

> **Surgical fixes:** apply PowerSkin twice: one instance with your general settings and Auto Skin on, and a second with only Shadow Lift raised, masked with small shape masks under the eyes.

Trial & License

- **Trial**: 7 days, every feature, starts automatically on install.
- **License**: everything, forever, free updates. One-time purchase.

When the trial ends, output is watermarked until you activate a license key. Your settings and timelines are untouched. Activating clears the watermark in place.

Activating

1. Your license key arrives by email from Payhip after purchase.
2. Open **PowerSkin** from Applications, paste the key, click **Activate**.
3. Final Cut Pro picks up the change within seconds, no restart needed.

Updates

PowerSkin checks for updates automatically. When one is available, the app shows a **Download Update** button and the effect's inspector header reads **UPDATE AVAILABLE**. Run the downloaded installer over the old version. Settings and license are kept.

Troubleshooting

- **Effect missing from FCP**: restart FCP. Still missing: launch the PowerSkin app once, then restart FCP again.
- **Watermark on output**: the trial has ended. Open the PowerSkin app and activate your key (or buy one); the watermark clears within seconds. The effect's inspector header shows the current license state.
- **Skin Check tints the background**. Cosmetic only: the verdict view guesses what's skin, but Auto Skin still limits the actual effect to skin.
- **Part of the face is missing from the skin mask**: raise Hue Range, Brightness Range or Mask Softness. If the shot has a strong color cast, press Sample Skin Color first.
- **The mask catches hair, eyes or eyebrows**: lower Saturation Range, then Brightness Range. They share the skin's hue but not its saturation or brightness.
- **The mask catches wood, walls or a beige background**: lower Hue Range and make sure Limit to Faces is on.
- **Nothing is selected on a stylized or heavily graded shot**: press Sample Skin Color, or untick Auto Skin and use Final Cut's Auto Mask → Skin.
- **The effect looks too strong on a wide shot, or does nothing on a close-up**: make sure Auto Scale is on. If the face is not detected (hard profile, covered face), untick it and keyframe Detail Scale instead.
- **Halos along fingers, hair or the jaw**: fixed in 1.1.2. Update via Check for Updates in the PowerSkin app.
- **Nostrils, eyes or lips look smoothed or lightened**: make sure Protect Features is on. On a hard profile or a partly covered face the features may not be found; add a Shape Mask set to Subtract over that area instead.
- **Playback stutters**: if you added a Final Cut Auto Mask, remove it. Auto Skin does the same job on the GPU at a fraction of the cost.
- **"A plug-in is not responding" or FCP disables PowerSkin**: update to the latest version first (open the PowerSkin app and click Check for Updates). If it still happens, send a diagnostic log: see below.

Sending a diagnostic log

If you write to support about a crash or hang, this log tells us exactly what Final Cut asked PowerSkin to do right before the problem. It contains frame sizes and timings only, no footage.

1. Quit Final Cut Pro.
2. Open Terminal (Applications > Utilities) and paste this line, then press Return:
   `mkdir -p ~/Library/Application\ Support/PowerSkin && touch ~/Library/Application\ Support/PowerSkin/debug-enable`
3. Open Final Cut Pro and reproduce the problem (for example add PowerSkin, then add the Auto Mask).
4. In Finder choose Go > Go to Folder, paste `~/Library/Application Support/PowerSkin` and attach the file `debug.log` to your email.
5. If Final Cut showed a crash or "not responding" dialog, also open Console (Applications > Utilities), pick **Crash Reports** in the sidebar, and attach any entry named PowerSkin, PowerSkinXPC or Final Cut Pro from that time.
6. When done, delete the `debug-enable` file so logging stops.

Uninstalling

The easy way

1. Download the PowerSkin Uninstaller and unzip it.
2. Right-click `PowerSkin Uninstaller.command` and choose **Open** (the right-click is needed the first time because the script isn't from the App Store), then confirm.
3. Restart Final Cut Pro.

Manually

Delete these items, then restart Final Cut Pro:

- `/Applications/PowerSkin.app`
- `~/Movies/Motion Templates/Effects/⚡ PowerApps/Effects/PowerSkin`
- `~/Library/Application Support/PowerSkin` (settings and license data)

Your license key itself stays valid either way. Reinstall and activate again whenever you like.