

iMovie '11: Import video

 Languages English ▾

To create movies in iMovie, you must first import (transfer) your video footage from your camera to your computer. You can import from most types of camcorders, including:

- Digital camcorders that record to DVD, hard disk drive, or flash memory. These cameras connect to your computer using a USB cable.
- Digital still cameras that record video. These cameras use flash memory, often stored on Secure Digital (SD) or CompactFlash (CF) cards. They connect to your computer using a USB cable.
- Camcorders that record to tape. These cameras connect to your computer using a FireWire cable.

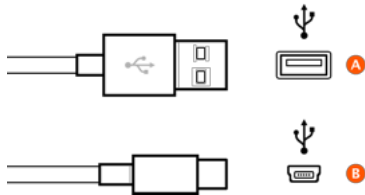
This task describes how to import from digital camcorders and camcorders that record to tape.

When you import video, iMovie stores it as an Event in the Event Library. This is the footage you use to create movie projects in iMovie.

Import video from a camcorder that records to DVD, hard disk drive, or flash memory

1. Locate the cable that came with your camera, or any other similar USB cable.

The cable should have at least one connector that plugs into your Mac and looks like the connector on the left (A, below). The other end of the USB cable, which plugs into your recording device, might look different (as shown in B, below). For more information about cable connectors, go to this topic: [About video cable connectors](#).



2. Connect the camera to your computer with the cable.
3. Turn on your camera and set it to PC Connect mode (this mode may have a different name on your camera).
4. The first time you import from a device that records high-definition (HD) video, an HD Import Setting dialog appears. Even if you aren't importing high-definition video now, select Large or Full, and then click OK.
5. If the Import window doesn't open, choose File > "Import from Camera."

The Import window displays all the video clips on the device. You can use the playback controls below the viewer to play the clips.



6. Select which video clips to import:
 - To import all clips, set the Automatic/Manual switch to Automatic, and then click Import All.



- To import specific clips, set the Automatic/Manual switch to Manual. Deselect the clips you don't want to import, and then click Import Checked.
7. Choose the disk where you want to store the video from the Save To pop-up menu.

Typically, you'll store the video on your computer hard disk, but if you have another hard disk connected to your computer, you can store the video there.
 8. Choose how you want to organize the imported video in your Event Library:
 - To add the imported video to an existing Event (video you've already imported), select "Add to Existing Event," and then choose the Event's name from the pop-up menu. The first time you import video, there won't be any existing Events in your Event Library.

- To create a new Event, type a name for it (for example, "Birthday Party") in the "Create new Event" field. If the video you're importing was recorded on several different days and you want iMovie to create a new Event for each of those days, select "Split days into new Events."
9. To have iMovie smooth the shaky portions of your video (a process called stabilization), or to have iMovie analyze your video for the presence of people, select "After import analyze for," and then choose an option from the pop-up menu.

Stabilization reduces the camera motion in your video so that shaky parts can be played back more smoothly. Analyzing video for the presence of people marks the footage that contains people. You can easily search for this video later when you're creating a project for which you need footage of people.

The processes of stabilization and analyzing video for the presence of people can take a long time.

10. If you're importing HD video, choose a size from the "Optimize video" pop-up menu.

If you're not sure whether the video you're importing is HD video, check the camera's user manual for information about how to set the camera to record HD or standard-definition (SD) video.

The option you choose overrides what you selected in step 4 in the HD Import Setting dialog (which you see only the first time you import video).

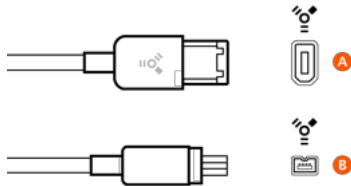
11. Click OK.

It can take several minutes to more than an hour for iMovie to import the video, depending on how much video you have.

Import video from a tape-based camcorder

1. Locate the cable that came with your camera, or any other similar FireWire cable.

The cable should have a 6-pin connector that plugs into your Mac (A, below) on one end and a 4-pin connector that plugs into your camcorder (B, below) on the other end. You might have a FireWire 800 cable, with a different end that plugs into your camcorder. For more information about cable connectors, go to this topic: [About video cable connectors](#).



2. Turn on the camcorder and set it to VTR or VCR mode (this mode may have a different name on your camera).
3. Connect the camera to your computer with the cable.
4. The first time you import from a camcorder that can record high-definition (HD) video, an HD Import Setting dialog appears; even if you aren't importing HD video now, select Large or Full, and then click OK.
5. If the Import window doesn't open, choose File > "Import from Camera."
6. Set the Automatic/Manual switch:



- **Automatic:**
Automatically rewinds the tape, imports all of the video on the tape, and rewinds the tape again. If you use this option, click OK.
- **Manual:**
Lets you rewind and fast-forward the tape so that you can import only the footage you want. Use the controls to set your tape to the point where you want to begin importing.



7. Click Import.
8. Choose the disk where you want to store the video from the Save To pop-up menu.

Typically, you'll store the video on your computer hard disk, but if you have another hard disk connected to your computer, you can store the video there.

9. Choose how you want to organize the imported video in your Event Library.
 - To add the imported video to an existing Event (video you've already imported), select "Add to Existing Event," and then choose the Event's name from the pop-up menu. The first time you import video, there won't be any existing Events in your Event Library.
 - To create a new Event, type a name for it (for example, "Birthday Party") in the "Create new Event" field. If the video you're importing was recorded on several different days and you want iMovie to create a new Event for each of those days, select "Split days into new Events."
10. To have iMovie smooth the shaky portions of your video (a process called stabilization), or to have iMovie analyze your video for the presence of people, select "After import analyze for," and then choose an option from the pop-up menu.

Stabilization reduces the camera motion in your video so that shaky parts can be played back more smoothly. Analyzing video for the presence of people marks the footage that contains people. You can easily search for this video later when you're creating a project for which you need footage of people.

The processes of stabilization and analyzing video for the presence of people can take a long time.

11. If you're importing HD video, choose a size from the "Optimize video" pop-up menu.

If you're not sure whether the video you're importing is HD video, check the camera's user manual for information about how to set the camera to record HD or standard-definition (SD) video.

The option you choose overrides what you selected in step 4 in the HD Import Setting dialog (which you see only the first time you import video).

12. Click Import.

If you're importing automatically, you can leave your computer and come back when the import is complete.

If you're importing manually, click Stop (in the lower-right corner of the Import window) when the section of video you want has been imported. Then use the import controls to set your video to a point where you want to begin importing again, and repeat steps 7 through 11. Continue in this manner until you have imported all the video you want.

For more information about importing video into iMovie, click the Browse Help button above and see the topics in "Import video into iMovie."

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