

Illustrator to After Effects

pixflow.net/blog

Pre-flight checklist: run it before every import

IN ILLUSTRATOR

- ☐ **Color mode is RGB**
File > Document Color Mode > RGB Color
- ☐ **Artboard matches the comp size**
e.g. 1920 x 1080 px, art placed at its hero size
- ☐ **One artboard per scene file**
Split big multi-artboard documents before import
- ☐ **Artboard background is transparent**
Properties > Artboards, or you get a white box per layer
- ☐ **Every moving part is a top-level layer**
Layers menu > Release to Layers (Sequence), then drag out
- ☐ **Layers have clear, unique names**
arm_L, wheel_front, logo_icon, not Layer 12
- ☐ **Static parts are merged**
Merge Selected for pieces that never move apart
- ☐ **Text is outlined, live copy kept hidden**
Type > Create Outlines (Ctrl/Cmd + Shift + O)
- ☐ **Appearances expanded, raster effects removed**
Object > Expand Appearance; rebuild glows in AE
- ☐ **Strokes left live where you need Trim Paths**
Outline only strokes that should behave as fills
- ☐ **Freeform gradients, meshes, heavy blends simplified**
Keep them as Illustrator layers or rebuild in AE
- ☐ **Saved as .ai with PDF compatibility**
Save As > Illustrator > Create PDF Compatible File on

IN AFTER EFFECTS

- ☐ **Import Kind: Composition - Retain Layer Sizes**
File > Import > File (Ctrl/Cmd + I)
- ☐ **Continuously Rasterize on for scaled layers**
The sun switch, needed above 100% scale
- ☐ **Only path-animated layers converted to shapes**
Layer > Create > Create Shapes from Vector Layer
- ☐ **Leftover clipping or artboard paths deleted**
Check the Contents group after conversion
- ☐ **The .ai file is kept as your master**
Edit > Edit Original (Ctrl/Cmd + E) for changes