Lesson 1:
Getting Your Video Into iMovie

The images you shoot with your camcorder are on digital videotape. In order to edit them with iMovie, you need to get that video footage into your computer. The process of transferring video from the videotape in your camcorder to the hard disk in your computer is called importing. It’s quick and easy to import your video using the controls in the iMovie window. When you import your movie footage into iMovie, the raw video on your videotape is not changed or deleted. Instead, a copy of it is created on your hard disk. You will work with the copy in iMovie.

What You’ll Need

Before you start, make sure that you have each of the following items on hand:

■ Your camcorder and videotape
■ FireWire cable
■ Macintosh computer with a FireWire port
■ At least 2 gigabytes (GB) of free hard disk space
■ At least 256 megabytes (MB) of random access memory (RAM)

Before You Begin

To make it easier to do the tasks in this lesson, print the lesson before you start.

In many tasks shown in this lesson and in iMovie Help, you need to choose menu commands, which look like this:

Choose Edit > Crop.

The first term after Choose is the name of a menu in the iMovie menu bar. The next term (or terms) are the items you choose from that menu.
FireWire

The FireWire port on your Mac has this icon next to it:

FireWire, which is also called IEEE 1394, is a technology that lets you transfer information between electronic devices at very high speeds. Using a FireWire cable, you can quickly move the large amounts of visual and audio information from your camcorder to your computer. You can identify a FireWire cable by the connectors on each end. Each connector is shown below next to the port it plugs into.

The 4-pin connector shown on the left plugs into your camcorder. The 6-pin connector on the right plugs into the FireWire port on your computer.

Free Disk Space

If you don’t have enough hard disk space, try freeing up some space by deleting files that you no longer need from your computer. If you still cannot create enough space, you may want to install another hard disk or attach an external hard disk. For more information, see the manual that came with your computer.
Importing Your Video Into iMovie

Follow these instructions to connect your camcorder and import your video.

To import your video into iMovie:

1. Connect your camcorder to your computer using a FireWire cable, as shown above. Connect the 6-pin connector to your Mac and the 4-pin connector to your camcorder.
2. Insert the tape with your video footage and switch the camcorder to VTR mode.
3. Open iMovie and set the mode switch under the iMovie monitor to camera mode, as shown below.
4. Use the playback controls, shown above, to view the tape in the iMovie monitor.
5. Rewind the tape to a few seconds before the point at which you want to start importing.
6. Click the Play button.
7. Click Import when you see the scene at which you want to start importing.
8. Click Stop to stop importing when you have imported the scenes you want to work with.
Automatic Scene Detection

When you start and stop filming a scene with your camera, you switch the camera from Record to Standby or Off. As you import your video footage, iMovie detects each place where you made a break in recording, and automatically divides the video into separate scenes at each break. Each sequence of recorded video is then made into a video clip that is stored in the Clips pane, shown below.

If you prefer, you can turn off automatic scene detection and manually create the breaks between video clips as you import.

**To turn off automatic scene detection:**

1. Choose iMovie > Preferences.
2. Deselect the checkbox labeled “Automatically start new clip at scene break.”
Importing Clips From Your Hard Disk

If you already have digital video or still images on your computer’s hard disk or an external hard disk, you can import them to your iMovie project.

To import video from your hard disk:

1. Open iMovie and set the mode switch under the iMovie monitor to edit mode.
2. Choose File > Import.
3. Choose the images you want to import.
4. Click Open.

Building Your Movie From Video Clips

Once your footage has been imported to the Clips pane, you need to move it to the clip viewer to start creating your movie. In the clip viewer, you put the clips in the sequence you want them to appear in your movie.

To add a clip to your movie:

- Drag the clip to the clip viewer and position it where you want it to appear.

You can also have your clips placed directly in the clip viewer and timeline viewer when you import them.

To import clips directly into the clip viewer and timeline viewer:

1. Choose iMovie > Preferences.
2. Select “New clips go to Movie Timeline.”

To change the order of the clips in the clip viewer:

- Drag a clip to a new location.