

# The Essential Shortcuts

Master these first. They cover 90% of everything you do in CapCut Desktop.

TIMELINE & PLAYBACK		EDITING ESSENTIALS	
<b>Space</b>	Play / Pause	<b>Ctrl + Z / Y</b>	Undo / Redo
← / →	Step 1 frame back / forward	<b>Ctrl + C / V / X</b>	Copy / Paste / Cut clip
<b>Shift + ← / →</b>	Jump 5 frames back / forward	<b>Ctrl + D</b>	Duplicate selected clip
<b>Home / End</b>	Jump to start / end of timeline	<b>Delete / Backspace</b>	Delete clip, keep gap
<b>I / O</b>	Set In / Out point for clip	<b>Ctrl + A</b>	Select all clips on timeline
<b>, / .</b>	Previous / next keyframe	<b>B</b>	Blade: split at playhead
<b>J / K / L</b>	Rewind / Pause / Fast forward	<b>Ctrl + Shift + Z</b>	Redo (alternate)

CLIPS & TRACKS		VIEW & ZOOM	
<b>Ctrl + T</b>	Insert text / title layer	<b>Ctrl + = / -</b>	Zoom timeline in / out
<b>Ctrl + Shift + S</b>	Detach audio from video	<b>Ctrl + Shift + F</b>	Fit all clips to window
<b>Alt + drag clip</b>	Slip edit — move content	<b>Ctrl + Shift + H</b>	Toggle audio waveforms
<b>Ctrl + G</b>	Group selected clips	<b>Ctrl + R</b>	Rotate clip 90°
<b>Ctrl + Shift + G</b>	Ungroup clips	<b>Ctrl + F</b>	Flip clip horizontally
<b>M</b>	Drop a marker at playhead	<b>Ctrl + Shift + P</b>	Toggle full-screen preview
<b>Ctrl + L</b>	Lock / unlock track	<b>Ctrl + 0</b>	Reset preview zoom to 100%

EFFECTS & COLOR		EXPORT & PROJECT	
<b>Ctrl + E</b>	Open Effects panel	<b>Ctrl + E (export)</b>	Open Export Settings dialog
<b>Ctrl + Shift + C</b>	Copy color grade to clipboard	<b>Ctrl + S</b>	Save project
<b>Ctrl + Shift + V</b>	Paste grade to selected clip	<b>Ctrl + Shift + N</b>	New project
<b>Alt + click LUT</b>	Preview LUT without applying	<b>Ctrl + O</b>	Open existing project
<b>Double-click clip</b>	Open clip settings panel	<b>Ctrl + W</b>	Close current project
<b>Ctrl + K</b>	Split and keep both halves	<b>Ctrl + Shift + S</b>	Save project as new name
<b>Ctrl + Shift + E</b>	Export color-graded still	<b>Ctrl + P</b>	Project settings

## MUST-KNOW WORKFLOW HABITS

<b>Always match frame rate</b> Before importing, check your footage FPS (right-click → properties). Mismatched FPS causes audio drift.	<b>Scrub faster</b> Hold Shift while dragging the playhead to scrub at 8x speed.	<b>Multi-select trick</b> Hold Ctrl to click individual clips, or Shift to select a range on the timeline.	<b>Undo limit</b> CapCut supports up to 100 undo steps. Don't rely on it — save project versions often (Ctrl+Shift+S).
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# Export, Color & Audio Mastery

The settings that separate amateur uploads from professional ones.

## EXPORT SETTINGS — THE RIGHT WAY

Setting	Recommended Value	Why it matters
Codec	<b>H.264 (MP4)</b>	Universal compatibility. HEVC causes color shifts on social media.
Bitrate	<b>Custom VBR — High</b>	30-45 Mbps for 1080p. 80-100 Mbps for 4K. Never use 'Recommended'.
Color space	<b>Rec.709</b>	Prevents the 'washed out' look on YouTube and Instagram.
Frame rate	<b>Match source</b>	Never upconvert. Mismatched FPS = audio sync drift over time.
Resolution	<b>Original (no upscale)</b>	Upscaling in CapCut adds compression artifacts. Use source resolution.
Hardware encode	<b>ON (GPU)</b>	2-4x faster renders. Reduces CPU bottleneck and freeze at 99%.
Container format	<b>MP4 (not MOV)</b>	MOV triggers QuickTime gamma shift on Mac. Always export MP4.

COLOR GRADING ESSENTIALS		AUDIO MASTERY	
<b>Color space</b>	Set to Rec.709 before grading	<b>Audio sync fix</b>	Convert VFR to CFR via Handbrake first
<b>Exposure first</b>	Fix exposure before adding LUTs	<b>Noise reduction</b>	Audio panel → Denoise → subtle (20-30%)
<b>LUT strength</b>	Reduce opacity to 60-80% for realism	<b>Fade in/out</b>	Right-click audio clip → Fade In/Out
<b>Curves tool</b>	S-curve for contrast — subtle beats harsh	<b>Beat sync</b>	Auto Beat Sync: Audio → Beat → Auto
<b>HSL panel</b>	Target specific colors without affecting all	<b>Volume leveling</b>	Normalize to -14 LUFS for YouTube
<b>Skin tones</b>	Adjust Orange channel in HSL last	<b>Music + voice</b>	Duck music to -18dB under voiceover
<b>Preview device</b>	Check on phone before final export	<b>Audio detach</b>	Ctrl+Shift+S to separate for fine control

## COMMON EXPORT MISTAKES TO AVOID

<b>✗ Exporting MOV on Mac</b> Triggers gamma shift. Always use MP4.	<b>✗ Using 'Recommended' bitrate</b> Destroys color depth. Set custom VBR instead.	<b>✗ Ignoring HDR mismatch</b> Turn off Smart HDR if uploading to SDR platforms.	<b>✗ Wrong color space</b> Rec.709 for web. Rec.2020 only for HDR TV delivery.
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# Performance & Pro Secrets

What most CapCut users never discover — the features that save hours and fix the hardest problems.

PERFORMANCE SETTINGS		PERFORMANCE SETTINGS (CONT.)	
<b>Proxy editing</b>	Settings → Performance → Proxy → Enable	<b>Clear render cache</b>	Settings → Cache → Clear All (do weekly)
<b>Proxy resolution</b>	Set to 1/4 for 4K footage, 1/2 for 1080p	<b>Background render</b>	Let CapCut pre-render in background while editing
<b>GPU decoding</b>	Settings → Performance → Hardware → ON	<b>RAM for CapCut</b>	Close Chrome + Spotify before 4K exports
<b>Cache location</b>	Move to SSD (not C: drive) for speed	<b>Project drive</b>	Store project files on SSD — prevents freeze at 99%

HIDDEN FEATURES MOST USERS MISS		ADVANCED TECHNIQUES	
<b>AI Voice Cloning</b>	Text panel → AI Voice → Clone your voice (free)	<b>VBR vs CBR</b>	VBR = smaller file, same quality. Always choose VBR.
<b>Auto Captions</b>	Text → Auto Captions — fastest subtitle workflow	<b>Keyframe easing</b>	Right-click keyframe → Bezier curve for smooth motion
<b>Background Remover</b>	Clip → Remove Background (AI, no green screen)	<b>Stacked color grades</b>	Add Adjustment Layer → apply LUT → add curves on top
<b>Speed Ramp</b>	Right-click → Speed → Curve for cinematic ramps	<b>Chroma key tips</b>	Green screen: light evenly, increase spill suppression
<b>Mask shapes</b>	Overlay → Mask → linear / mirror / heart / star	<b>Multi-cam sync</b>	Use audio waveform view to align multiple camera angles
<b>Freeze frame</b>	Right-click clip → Add Freeze Frame (2s inserted)	<b>Template creation</b>	File → Save as Template for reusable project structure
<b>Compound clip</b>	Select clips → Right-click → Create Compound Clip	<b>Batch export</b>	Add to queue via Export → Add to Queue (export later)

## THE 5 GOLDEN RULES OF CAPCUT DESKTOP

<b>Rule 1</b>	<p><b>Rule 1: Match before you edit</b></p> <p>Always set your project FPS to match your footage before you import anything. Changing it later causes timeline desync.</p>
<b>Rule 2</b>	<p><b>Rule 2: Proxy first, grade last</b></p> <p>Enable proxy editing at the start of every project. Disable it only when you are ready to do your final color grade.</p>
<b>Rule 3</b>	<p><b>Rule 3: Export MP4, never MOV</b></p> <p>MOV triggers the QuickTime gamma shift on Mac. Every single time. Export H.264 MP4. Your colors will thank you.</p>
<b>Rule 4</b>	<p><b>Rule 4: Custom VBR, always</b></p> <p>The 'Recommended' bitrate setting compresses your color grade into mud. Set Custom VBR at 30-45 Mbps minimum for 1080p.</p>
<b>Rule 5</b>	<p><b>Rule 5: Check on mobile before uploading</b></p> <p>Your editing monitor lies. Play the exported file on your phone to see exactly what your audience will see after platform compression.</p>