

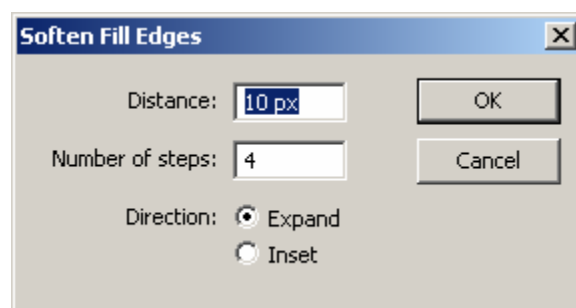
Lightening Flashes in Flash CS3 – by R. Berdan

To create realistic looking lightening can be a challenge it helps to look at some photos before you begin. If you examine photographs of lightening you will see the main strike is white with a fuzzy purple glow around the strike. The side branches are also considerably thinner than the main strike. Lightening also appears to “Flash” several times when it strikes.

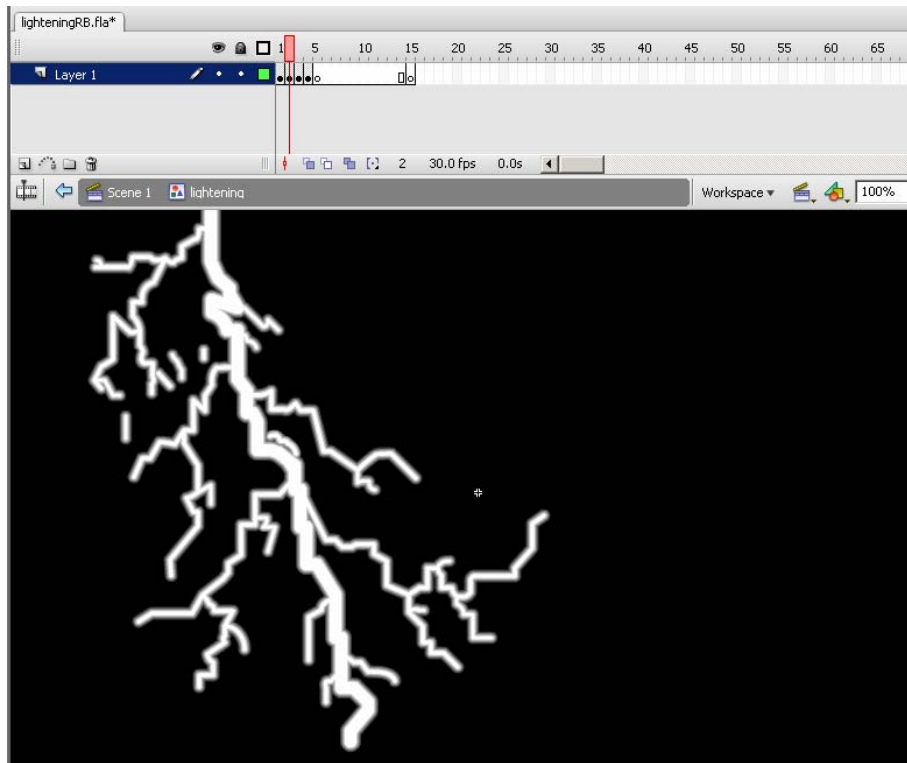


Lightening bolt photo - note the soft glow and purple color around the main strike

1. File> New> Modify Movie> set background to black save your movie as lightening.fla
2. Insert > New Symbol>Graphic name it lightening
3. In the first keyframe, select the pencil tool fill color white, set line width 8.0, curve modifier (smooth). Draw a single erratic line from the top to the bottom. Now select a line width of 1.0 and draw some branches. Not all branches have to be attached to the main strike. Then select 0.5 line width and add the smallest branches.
4. Create 3 more keyframes all containing the same lightening strike in frame one. Select the 2nd keyframe, select the lightening strike, choose Modify>Shape>Convert Lines to Fill. Then choose Modify>Shapes>Soften Edges to fill and set Distance to 10 pixels, Number of steps 4, Direction expand. This will make a thicker fuzzy looking lightening bolt.



5. Select Frame 3, choose Modify>Shape>Convert Lines to Fill. Then select Modify>Shape>Soften Edges – Distance 10, steps 4, expand. Then select a purple color from the paint can e.g. #9900CC and it should fill the bolt with deep purple. Then select the entire lightening bolt with the selection tool and select> Modify>convert it to a symbol>leave name as symbol 1. Converting to a symbol permits you to alter the alpha property. (note when this tutorial was created Flash did not have filters, you may wish to use the glow filter to create a better looking lightening bolt - rb to do this you need to convert it to a movie clip).
6. Click on the graphic and from the properties box, select the color tab choose alpha, change the alpha property to about 50%.
7. Create a nother keyframe at 4, and copy and paste the lightening bolt in place in this frame. Add a 5th keyframe, delete the lightening bolt so the frame is empty. Now add another keyframe at frame 15. Nothing happens between frame 5-15 – this provides blank dark sky after the lightening bolt. Click on Scene1 to return to the main timeline.



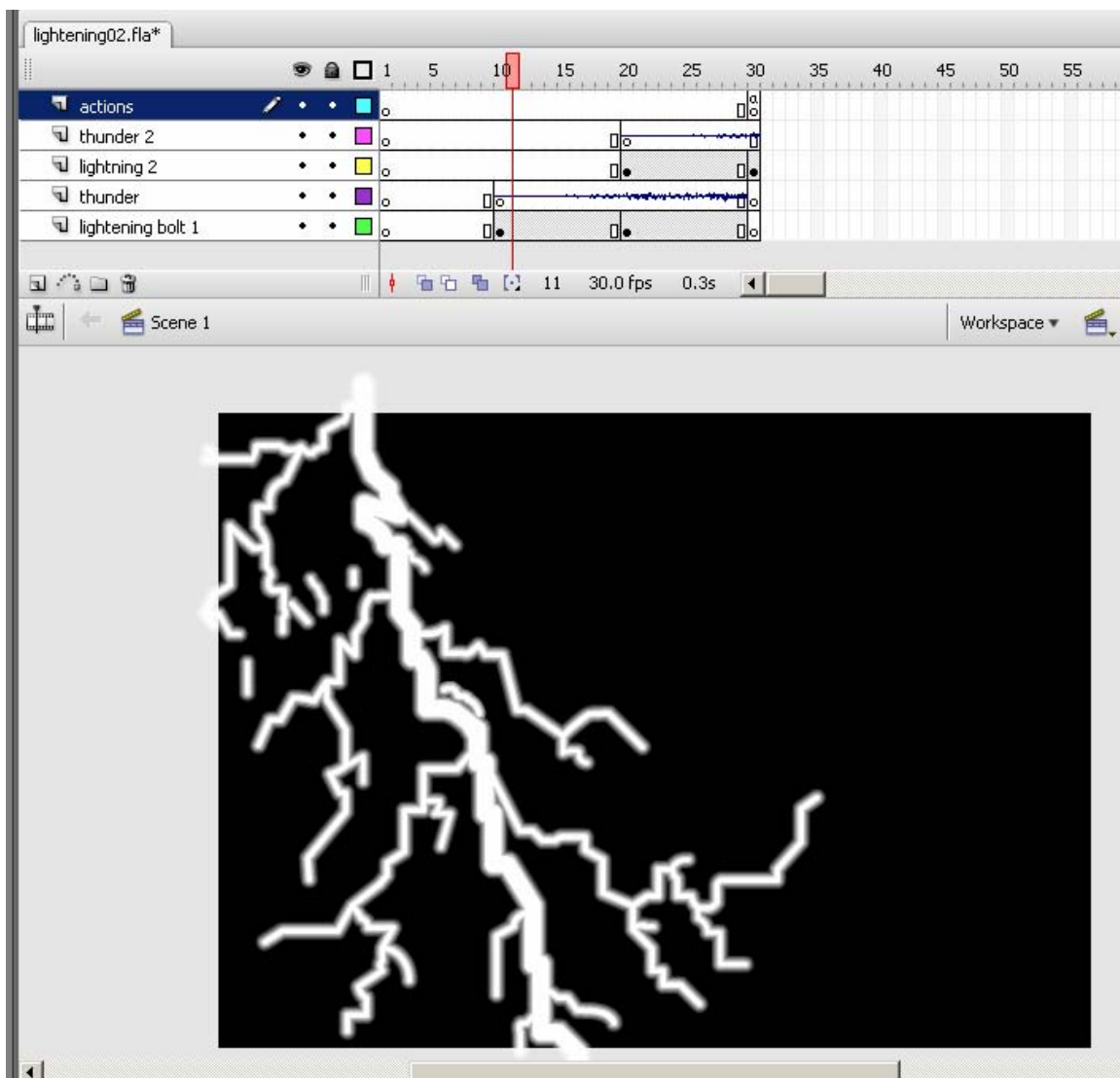
8. Label the first layer lightening bolt 1. Create a new keyframe at 10 in the time line. Open the personal library Window>library and drag the lightening graphic onto the stage. Add a second keyframe in the layer at frame position you need to add some effects. Create a new layer 2 and name it thunder and create a keyframe in the time line at 10.
9. Select File>Import >import to library located the thunder.wav sound. From your libraay drag the Thunder sound file into keyframe 10 of the second layer. In the properties box make sure the sound file is set to Event (plays independent of timeline) and play your movie. At the moment the movie loops we will add a stop action later.

10. Add another layer call it lightning 2 and create a keyframe at 20. Drag the lightning graphic on the stage with keyframe 20 selected. Select the lightning graphic and then select Modify>Transform>flip horizontal to flip the direction of the lightning bolt. Then add another keyframe at 30. Also add blank keyframes at 30 for layers 1 and 2. (you may wish to spread the start of the lightning bolts out more).

11. Create a new layer above lightning 2 and call it thunder 2. Create a keyframe at 20 and drag an instance of the thunder.wav file onto the stage with this frame selected.

12. Create one more layer above call it actions and create a keyframe at 30. Right click on the keyframe and from the pop up box select actions. Add the action stop(); to the script window. Save your file then test it by Control > test movie and you will have two lightning bolts.

You can place a photo below the lightning bolts if you like it should be a picture taken at night.



Finished movie – showing all the layers, keyframes with the playhead at position 11 on the timeline.