

PathOffset Pro

USER MANUAL

This manual covers how to use PathOffset Pro (referred to as the tool below). It includes outer/inner path offsetting, outline shape generation, Boolean Union, and the Element 3D integration workflow. For installation instructions, please refer to the separate Install Guide.

→ About the Beta

PathOffset Pro is currently in **Beta**. **Complex intersections and CJK characters (Japanese / Chinese / Korean)** may produce unexpected results. Boolean operations are currently **Union only**. Buyers receive **all future updates including the full release for free**.

01 / OVERVIEW

What is PathOffset Pro?

PathOffset Pro is a CEP extension that brings Illustrator-like path offset operations into After Effects. Expand, shrink, or outline text and mask paths — a real path-processing engine that runs entirely inside AE.

Common use cases:

Title design	Decorative bold-outlined title creation
Element 3D workflow	Building beveled 3D typography
Motion graphics	Shape scale animations
Logo work	Logo weight adjustment and outline variations

Panel Layout

From the After Effects menu, select **Window > Extensions > PathOffset Pro** to open the panel. The panel is divided into the following areas:

Header	Title display, Help / License management button (?)
Amount	Offset amount input (in px)
Operations	Six main operations: Text to Mask / Outer Offset / Inner Offset / Outer Outline / Inner Outline / Union
Options	Auto Union After Offset checkbox
Advanced	Expand to access Precision, Hole Filter %, Hole Min (px ²), and other detailed parameters
Footer	Log area and trial usage counter

Core Features

PathOffset Pro has 6 main features:

01 Text Layer to Mask

Select a text layer and run this to export the character outlines as mask paths on a new solid layer. Supports multiple characters.

■ *Available unlimited in trial.*

02 Outer Offset

Expand mask paths outward by the specified px. Self-intersections are automatically detected and resolved. Collapsed masks are automatically removed.

■ *Trial: max 3px, up to 15 runs.*

03 Inner Offset

Shrink mask paths inward. Uses the same self-intersection resolution logic as Outer Offset, providing stable results on complex shapes.

■ *Trial: max 3px, up to 15 runs.*

04 Outer Outline

Generate a frame (outline only) on the outside of the mask. Creates an outline shape from the difference between the original mask and its outer offset. Ideal as bevel source material for Element 3D.

■ *Locked in trial.*

05 Inner Outline

Generate a frame on the inside of the mask. Perfect for decorative typography and step-outline creation.

■ *Locked in trial.*

06 Union

When multiple masks overlap on a layer, merge them into a single path. For a single mask, only self-intersection resolution is performed.

■ *Locked in trial.*

Options & Advanced Parameters

Auto Union After Offset

When checked, Union runs automatically after Offset execution. Useful when you want to complete "offset + merge" with a single button. (Locked in trial)

Advanced Parameters

Expanding "Advanced" at the bottom of the panel enables finer adjustments.

Amount	Offset distance in px. Trial version: max 3px
Precision	Bezier subdivision precision. Smaller = more precise but slower. Default usually works fine
Hole Filter %	Remove holes smaller than the specified percentage of the original path area. Useful for auto-removing small holes
Hole Min (px²)	Remove holes smaller than this absolute area. Use for removing noise-like small holes

Basic Workflow

STEP 01 Prepare a text or mask layer

Select a text layer or a layer with masks in AE. For text layers, first run "Text Layer to Mask" to convert to masks.

STEP 02 Enter Amount

Input the offset amount in px. For complex shapes, lowering Precision under Advanced increases accuracy.

STEP 03 Select and execute an operation

Click one of Outer Offset / Inner Offset / Outer Outline / Inner Outline. Self-intersections are resolved automatically.

STEP 04 Union if needed

To merge overlapping masks, click the Union button. If Auto Union After Offset is ON, this step is automated.

→ For best results

You can run offset on an already-offset mask, but precision degrades with each iteration and complex shapes may break.

For the best results, we recommend reverting to the original mask path before applying offset again. (Use Undo (Ctrl+Z) or re-run Text Layer to Mask to reset)

06 / ELEMENT 3D

Element 3D Integration

PathOffset Pro shines when combined with Video Copilot's Element 3D. Build beveled 3D typography entirely inside AE, without round-tripping to Illustrator.

STEP 01 Convert text to mask

Select a text layer and run PathOffset Pro's "Text Layer to Mask". Character outlines are exported as mask paths.

STEP 02 Generate outline with Outer Outline

Specify an Amount and run "Outer Outline" on the generated mask. An outer outline shape for bevel use is generated.

STEP 03 Load into Element 3D

In Element 3D's Custom Layers, specify the layer containing the masks. Use Edit Custom Path to extrude the mask paths into 3D.

STEP 04 Add depth with bevel settings

Adjust bevel depth and shape in Element 3D's Bevel settings. Using shapes generated by Outer Outline enables more complex bevel expressions.

→ TIP: Reusing path data

Generated masks are standard AE masks, so they can be copy-pasted to other layers or shape layers for reuse.

Keeping the same path on separate layers for animation and Element 3D gives you more editing flexibility.

Useful Tips

→ Handling shapes prone to self-intersection

Shapes with sharp concave corners (e.g., stars, complex characters) are prone to self-intersection. PathOffset Pro attempts to resolve automatically, but if results look corrupted, revert to the original shape and try again with a smaller Amount.

→ When to use Auto Union

When running Offset on a layer with closely placed (or to-be-overlapping) masks, turning ON Auto Union After Offset cleanly merges the results. Leave it OFF for simple standalone shapes.

→ Using Hole Filter effectively

For shapes with many holes (e.g., letters like "O" or "8"), increase Hole Filter % to remove small inner holes. To preserve intentional holes, set it to 0%.

→ Combining with Element 3D textures

Register shapes generated by Outer Outline as a sub-group in Element 3D to apply different materials to the body and outline. Perfect for effects like metal-framed text.

Troubleshooting

→ Second offset starts looking rough

You can run offset on an already-offset mask, but precision degrades with each iteration and complex shapes may break. **For the best results, we recommend reverting to the original mask path (Ctrl+Z or re-run Text Layer to Mask) before applying offset again.**

→ Masks disappear

Running Inner Offset with a large value can collapse the shape and trigger auto-removal. Try again with a smaller value.

→ Results don't match expectations

Complex intersections and CJK characters (kanji, etc.) may produce unexpected results. This is a current limitation of the Beta. Improvements are planned for future updates.

→ **Outer Outline shape looks unnatural**

Lowering Precision (finer subdivision) may improve results. Also, if the original mask has self-intersections, clean it with Union first.

→ **Path passed to Element 3D looks messy**

Resolving mask self-intersections with Union before using Outline functions produces cleaner extrusions in Element 3D.

For questions or feedback about PathOffset Pro, please contact us at takecinema.support@gmail.com.