


Alt + click on
 to add
an expression
to a property.
WIGGLE is
very popular.

WIGGLE() WITH EFFECTS

The wiggle() command is one of those gifts that keeps on giving. It's useful any time you want to inject a little randomness into your Comp. I've found that randomness is much easier for my computer than it is for me. For instance, if I wanted to simulate a trail or smoke blowing this way and that, I'd leave the heavy work up to wiggle(). Here's how:

1. Open Chapter03.aep, Comp 2, or create a 10-second Comp with a Comp-sized solid in it. The solid's color doesn't matter.
 2. Apply Effect > Simulation > Particle Playground to the solid.
 3. In the Effect Controls panel, twirl open the Cannon properties.
 4. Move the Cannon position to just below the bottom center of the Comp.
Move Cannon position to just above chimney of house.
- If you have the Particle Playground effect's name selected in the Effect Controls panel, you can drag a little crosshair in the Comp window to move Cannon.
5. Twirl open Gravity, and set Force to 0. NO GRAVITY

If you play the Comp, you'll see a little stream of particles shoot upward from the Cannon. Because you turned off gravity, the particles never fall. 4

6. In the Cannon property group, change the color to white.
7. Also in the Cannon group, set Direction Random Spread to 4. This will tighten up the stream, preventing it from fanning out as much. Smoke streams tend to be pretty thin.
8. Add an Expression to Cannon > Direction (not Direction Random Spread).

Remember, you can Option click (PC: Alt click) right in the Effect Controls panel. But you'll write the Expression in the Timeline.

9. Type wiggle(.3, 90).

wiggle(.3, 90)

After Effects will randomly veer the stream's direction up to 90 degrees clockwise or counterclockwise from its starting position. Play with the .3 to make the stream veer faster or slower. Play with the 90 to loosen or tighten the veering.

10. Apply Effects > Blur & Sharpen > Fast Blur to the layer.
11. Set Effect Controls panel > Fast Blur > Blurriness to 16.

Sweet sixteen