

# **ANIMTools for MAYA v1.0**

designed by Dimos Vrysellas  
scripted by Charles Wardlaw

Property of Circus Ink Entertainment, Ltd.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

### ***Notices/Preface***

ANIMTools is a tool designed for assisting in the animation process in Autodesk's MAYA (formerly known as Alias' Maya). It is scripted in MEL and should work seamlessly with all versions of MAYA from 7.0 and up (Win, Mac or Linux). No guarantees to its stability or usability are made or suggested. USE AT YOUR OWN RISK!

The tool is FREE for personal/education use ONLY. For commercial use the tool is free for up to 30 days for testing purposes. There are no physical limitations but we kindly request payment when used in a commercial project or in any of your workflow/pipeline on productions. Please contact Circus Ink Entertainment, Ltd. for pricing and/or payment information, using the following contact information.

By mail:

ATTN: ANIMTools for MAYA  
P.O. Box 346  
Streetsville, ON L5M 2B9  
CANADA

By web or email:

[www.circusink.com](http://www.circusink.com)  
[animtools@circusink.com](mailto:animtools@circusink.com)

Prices for usage vary on number of seats purchased and/or production(s). Please do not redistribute this tool in whole or in part without prior written consent from the copyright holders (Circus Ink Entertainment, Ltd.). All copies must be download directly from Circus Ink Entertainment, Ltd.'s web site or via a representative's direct e-mail and/or web site addressed to the authorized user(s).

### ***Credits and Info***

The *ANIMTool* was designed by Dimos Vrysellas and scripted by Charles Wardlaw. The tool is based on similar tools such as the *ReTime Tool* (created by Lionel Gallat) and the *AnimationAgent* (created by Roja Huchez & Dimos Vrysellas). The ANIMTool is designed to aid in the setting of key/breakdown poses and in the timing process. The tool is especially helpful for CG animators that follow a more traditional approach to animation (mimicking hand drawn techniques) but can be useful for every method and style of animation production using MAYA. It's up to the user to fit it in their workflow as they see fit.

If you have any further questions please contact us at [animtools@circusink.com](mailto:animtools@circusink.com).

## INTRODUCTION TO ANIMTools v1.0

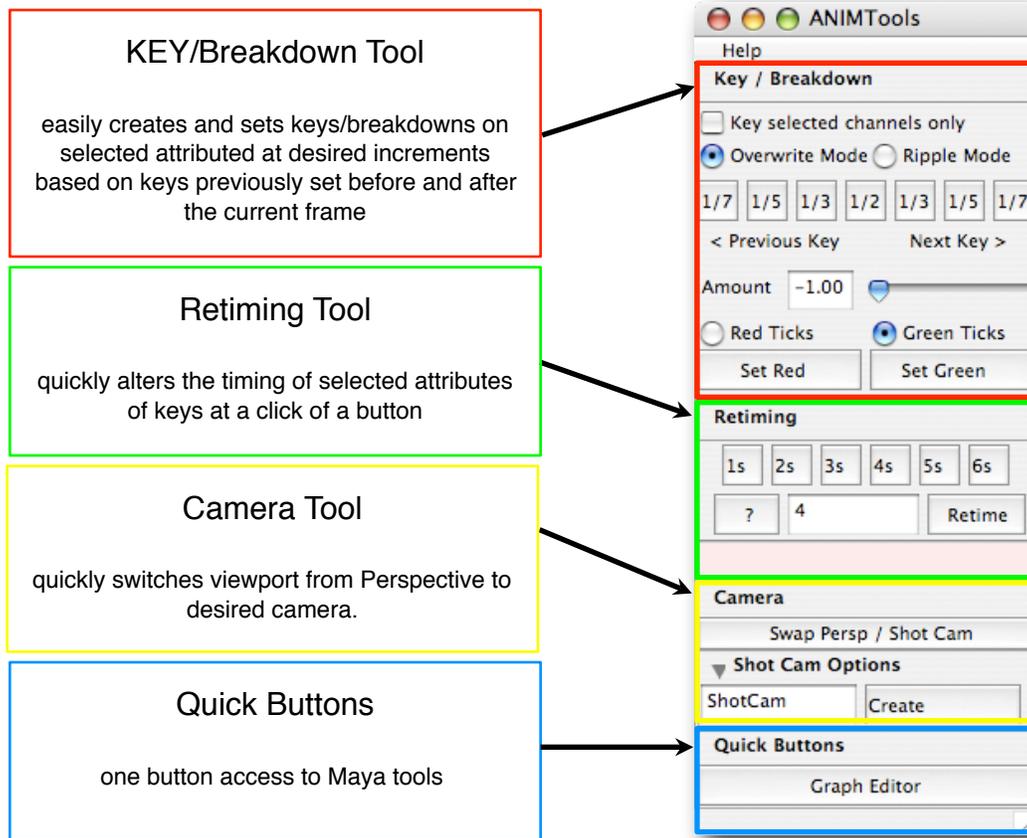


image above shown in the MacOS X version of Maya. Windows and Linux versions will vary in appearance but not in layout or functionality.

### KEY/Breakdown Tools

#### **Key Selected Channels Only**

When this box is checked then only the selected channels in the channel box get keyed when using *The Fraction Buttons* or *The Slider*.

#### **Overwrite Mode/Ripple Mode**

In *Overwrite Mode*, using *The Fraction Buttons* or *The Slider* on frames that already have a key, will overwrite that key with a breakdown. When in *Ripple Mode*, if a key is present at the current frame keys after it will be bumped a step forward and a new breakdown key will be set at the frame after the current one. Please note that *Ripple Mode* does not work in conjunction with the *Key Selected Channels Only* checkbox and the tool automatically disables the *Key Selected Channels Only* box if *Ripple Mode* is on.

## **The Fraction Buttons**

The meat of this section, these automatically create a key on the selected controls at desired intervals based on the key prior to and the key after the current frame. Pressing the 1/2 button will set a key with values exactly one half of the way between the two keys. The Previous buttons (buttons on the left of the 1/2 button) set keys that favor the previous key, and the Next buttons (buttons on the right of the 1/2 button) favor the next key. For example, setting a 1/7 Previous breakdown key in the middle of two keyframes will give an object a very slow in, with a faster out. Setting a 1/7 Next breakdown key in the middle of two keyframes will give an object a very fast out, but a slow in.

## **The Slider**

Similar in function to the *Fraction Buttons*, the *Slider* allows the user to set breakdowns outside of the preset values of the *Fraction Buttons*. At default the slider is set a 0 (zero) and when pulled to the right the values of the selected controls will favor the next key according to the amount in the number box (0 to 1). When the slider is pulled to the left then the values of the selected controls favor the previous key according to the amount in the number box (0 to -1). The number box can also be manually changed to allow for precise manipulation of the tool ranging from -1 to 1.

In case you were wondering, a value of 0 on the slider equals the 1/2 Fraction/Breakdown Button.

## **Red Ticks/Green Ticks**

Allows the user to select whether the Key Ticks in the Timeslider in Maya show up as red or green when using the tools in this section. This is meant only to help the animator to decipher if the key is meant to be a key pose or a breakdown pose.

## **Set Red/Set Green**

Pressing either the *Set Red* or *Set Green* button on any previously set key will change the color of the tick in the Timeslider to the corresponding color. It will not alter the keys in anyway. This is useful to help distinguish between key poses and breakdown poses, with red representing a key pose and green a breakdown pose.

## **Retiming Tools**

### **Quick Timing Presets**

When these buttons are pressed the timing between keys is altered according to the number of the button. For example, when the 3s button is pushed the frame count between the two keys will change from the current number of frames to 3 frames and then the current frame is set to the next Key. Be aware that this only works on all channels of any selected control.

**"?"**

When pressed, information on how many frames between the two current keys will be posted in the *Retime Info Box* below. For example, there is a key on frame 13 and a key on

frame 21, when the current frame is anywhere in between frames 13 and 20 and the "?" is pressed the dialogue will read *13 on 8*.

### ***Retime dialogue box and button***

You can manually type in the number of frames you require and then press the *Retime Button* to set the frame length on the current key. This comes in handy for retiming to amounts longer than six frames.

### ***Retime Info Box***

Displays the information from the "?" button. See above description.

## **Camera Tools**

### ***Swap Perspective/ShotCam Button***

Allows the user to switch quickly from a perspective viewport to a preset shot cam or view.

### ***Shot Cam Options***

Click on the disclosure triangle beside the text to open up the options. In the text box you can type in the name of the desired camera or view to use with the *Swap Button* above. The Create Button creates a new camera in the scene with the specified name, and should only be pressed when a new shot camera is desired.

## **Quick Buttons**

### ***Graph Editor***

Open and closes a floating Graph Editor window.

---

### ***KNOWN ISSUES***

- The tool does not currently work in conjunction with Maya's character sets.
- There are a few known situations in which *The Slider* will not properly set keys. If you come across this in one of your scenes, and can repeat the problem, please send us the file for examination. However, in testing this seems a rare problem.

Please report any bugs or unsatisfactory behavior to ***animtools@circusink.com***.