

The #1 rule: Don't polish before your rough cut is complete. Finish structure first — then make it pretty.

STAGE 1

Setup & project creation

Start clean so nothing breaks later.

- Create project folder + subfolders (Footage / Audio / Graphics / Exports)
- Name your project file consistently
- Confirm autosave is on
- Open your Editing workspace

✓ DONE WHEN

You know where everything will live before you import a single file.

STAGE 2

Ingest & organize

Make footage findable in under 10 seconds.

- Import all media
- Organize into bins: A-roll / B-roll / Music / SFX / Graphics
- Star or label your "must-use" clips
- Create your main sequence

✓ DONE WHEN

You can find any clip without digging.

STAGE 3

Rough cut

Build the story. Don't worry about polish yet.

- Assemble beginning → middle → end
- Remove obvious dead space at clip start/end
- Get timing roughly right
- Drop markers on problems to fix later

✓ DONE WHEN

The video plays through and makes sense.

STAGE 4

Clean cut

Make it feel intentional and watchable.

- Tighten pacing — remove verbal padding
- Fix awkward moments + jump cuts
- Add B-roll where A-roll is weak
- Tasteful transitions only

✓ DONE WHEN

The edit flows and nothing feels sloppy.

STAGE 5

Final touches

Make it look and sound finished.

- Audio first: dialogue consistent, music balanced
- Captions / text / graphics — legible, consistent
- Color correction: exposure + white balance across clips
- SFX, overlays last

✓ DONE WHEN

It sounds and looks "finished," not "almost."

STAGE 6

Export & review

Deliver the right file with no drama.

- Choose correct export settings for destination (YouTube / Reels / client)
- Export a review version first
- Watch the export: audio, captions, framing
- Create extra ratios if needed (9:16, 1:1)

✓ DONE WHEN

You've watched the export and it's ready to share.

STAGE 7

Archive

Make it easy to revisit — without panic.

- Save final exports inside your project folder
- Consolidate media if sharing with a collaborator
- Keep version naming consistent
- *Have Gal Toolkit MAX? Use "Reduce Project" to remove unused assets and "Handy Collect" to archive into any folder.*

✓ DONE WHEN

You could reopen this project in 6 months and know exactly where to start.

SHORT ON TIME?

Minimum path: **Rough Cut** → **Audio baseline** → **Export**. Refine everything else later.

SEARCH-FIRST MINDSET

When stuck, **don't rabbit-hole** — check your notes or course before spending 30 min on Google.

MAKE IT A TEMPLATE

After your first project, **save it as a Premiere template** — setup is already done next time.