

Vive tracking

Vive Trackers are small motion-tracking devices designed to bring real-world objects into virtual environments. While they are commonly used in VR setups to track body movements or props, they can also function as standalone tracking devices in software like TouchDesigner. Each tracker sends precise position and rotation data, making them useful for interactive installations, motion capture, and experimental media projects. By integrating them into creative software, we can map real-world movement onto digital visuals, audio, or other interactive elements.

- [Vive Trackers](#)
- [Vive Ultimate Trackers](#)

Vive Trackers



What Are Vive Trackers?

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Setting Up Vive Trackers with a Vive Pro & SteamVR

To use Vive Trackers standalone (without VR controllers), follow these steps:

1. Hardware Setup

A. Prepare Your Equipment

- **Vive Pro Headset** (even if unused, SteamVR requires it to be connected)
- **Vive Trackers** (paired via dongles or directly with the headset)
- **Base Stations** (for tracking)
- **USB Dongles** (when using multiple trackers)

B. Position the Base Stations

- Mount **at least two** base stations (2.0 recommended) **above head height** at opposite corners of your space, at a maximum of 5 meters apart.
 - Ensure they are powered and have a **clear view** of the area.
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2. Install & Launch SteamVR

- Install **Steam** and **SteamVR** if not already installed.
 - Connect the **Vive Pro headset** to ensure SteamVR initializes correctly.
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3. Pair the Vive Trackers

1. **Turn on each tracker** by pressing the power button until the light turns **blue**.
 2. Open **SteamVR** and go to **Devices > Pair Controller** (works for Trackers too).
 3. Select "**Vive Tracker**" and follow the instructions.
 4. If using a **USB dongle**, plug it into your PC and ensure the tracker is paired to it. Place the extension cradles at 45 cm from the computer for stable tracking.
 5. Once paired, the tracker's LED will turn **green**.
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4. Configure the Trackers in SteamVR

- Open **SteamVR > Devices > Manage Vive Trackers**
 - Set each tracker's **role** (e.g., "Held in Hand" or "Disabled" if using it just for positional data).
 - If needed, attach them to an object or a strap (e.g., for body tracking). This can be done with a camera-mount, ¼-inch screw size.
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5. Use in TouchDesigner

- Open **TouchDesigner** and use the **OpenVR CHOP** and set it to 'trackers' to read positional and rotational data.
- Trackers send **position (XYZ)** and **rotation (quaternion or Euler angles)**.
- You can map this data to visuals, interactive elements, or other media.

6. Use in other software

- Use **GazeboOsc** to pick up the Tracker signals & send them to other software (e.g. Isadora) that can handle OSC.
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Troubleshooting

- Check if the tracker has a **uninterrupted line of vision** with the base stations & headset.
- If a tracker is **not detected**, reset it by **holding the power button for 10 seconds**.
- Ensure **no reflective surfaces** interfere with the base stations.
- Restart **SteamVR** if tracking is unstable.

Vive Ultimate Trackers



What Are Vive Ultimate Trackers?

The **Vive Ultimate Tracker** is HTC's next-generation tracking device designed to improve motion tracking in VR and standalone applications. Unlike the **regular Vive Tracker**, which relies on external **base stations**, the **Ultimate Tracker** features **inside-out tracking**, meaning it uses **built-in cameras** to track its position without needing external sensors.

This makes the **Ultimate Tracker** more portable and flexible, as it doesn't require a dedicated tracking area or base stations.

Comparison: Ultimate Tracker vs. Regular Vive Tracker

Feature	Vive Ultimate Tracker	Vive Tracker
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Tracking Method	Inside-out (built-in cameras)	Outside-in (Base Stations), infrared.
Base Stations Needed	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Lighthouse)
Connection Type	Wi-Fi 6E / USB-C Dongle	USB dongle (2.4 GHz)
Battery Life	~7 hours	~7 hours
Size & Weight	Slightly smaller & standalone	Various sizes depending on the. model (1,2,3) & requires base station setup
Latency	Slightly higher due to processing	Lower latency with base stations
Connection	Built-In camera's, do not cover. Sometimes loses connection. Calibrates through mapping setup at startup. When connection is lost, move back to the centre point of callibration	Base stations, do not cover the tracker for line of sight connection, then stable. Zero point connected to headset initial calibration placement. This can be updated it TD
Best Use Case	Portable, flexible tracking without a defined play area	High-precision tracking in controlled spaces

When to Use Each?

- **Use the Vive Ultimate Tracker if:**
 - You need **standalone, flexible tracking** without base stations & headset.
 - You're working in **large or dynamic spaces** where base stations aren't practical.
 - In a well-lit enviroment (but not too much direct sunlight)
- **Use the Vive Tracker 3.0 if:**
 - You need **high-precision tracking** with minimal latency.
 - You're working in a **controlled space with base stations.**
 - You need compatibility with **existing VR setups** (e.g., Vive Pro).
 - When working in low-lit spaces.

1. Hardware Setup

A. What You Need

- **Vive Ultimate Tracker(s)**

- **Usb -c Hub & extension cradle**
- **PC with Vive software installed**
- **USB-C Cable** (for wired mode, firmware updates & charging)

B. Charging & Powering On

- Charge the **Ultimate Tracker** via **USB-C** before first use.
 - Press the **power button** until the LED lights up Blue.
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2. Connect to Vive Wireless Hub

1. **Install & Open the Vive Wireless Hub Software**
 - Download & install **Vive Hub** from HTC's official site.
 - Launch **Vive Hub** on your PC.
 2. **Pair the Ultimate Tracker** (link for steps on the Vive website)
 - Connect the USB Dongle to your computer at least 45 cm away for decent tracking.
 - Open **Vive Hub** and go to the **settings**, choose Vive Ultimate Trackers
 - Check for **firmware update** & do them if necessary (app explains the steps) .
 - **Pair New**: Follow the on screen instructions to pair each Ultimate Tracker.
 3. **Tracker Mapping**
 - click on Tracker setup & follow the **steps** on screen>
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/D53DEBVqvUY>
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3. Open SteamVR

- Once trackers are **mapped in Vive Hub**, launch **SteamVR**.
 - SteamVR should now detect the **Ultimate Trackers** automatically.
 - You can check and adjust tracking roles under **Devices > Manage Vive Trackers** in SteamVR.
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4. Use in TouchDesigner

- Open **TouchDesigner** and use the **OpenVrChop** & set it to **Trackers** to receive position & rotation data.
- Map the data to visuals, interactions, or animations as needed.

5. Use in other software

- Use **GazeboOsc** to pick up the Tracker signals & send them to other software (e.g. Isadora) that can handle OSC.
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Troubleshooting

- If SteamVR doesn't detect trackers, temporarily **turn on the headset** or **restart SteamVR** and **Vive Hub**.
- Ensure the tracker is **properly mapped in Vive Hub** before launching SteamVR.
- Reset a tracker by holding the **power button for 10 seconds**.
- When tracking is lost, return it to the **zero point** of the calibration
- Since the **Ultimate Tracker uses inside-out tracking**, ensure there are **enough visual markers** and **light** in the environment for stable tracking. Dark furniture may cause tracking issues.
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