How to Look at CyTOF Data in FlowJo.
by Michael Leipold, Human Immune Monitoring Center, Stanford University.

Because of the inherent lack of compensation and a large number of zeroes in the CyTOF data, a lot of CyTOF data points will wind up on one of the axes. This makes accurate gating difficult.

The main thing you want to do is change some of your Preference settings. I've only tested this up through Mac v9.4.9, rather than v9.4.11, but I'm pretty sure it'll remain the same.

I have attached a screenshot of what you want your settings to look like.

1. Open FlowJo.
2. Close the new workspace that automatically appears.
3. Under "FlowJo", select "Preferences"
4. Make your Preferences window look like the left side of the attached picture. Especially note the lower right corner: select "CyTOF", and set log parameter range to "20000".
5. In the lower right corner, click the "Define" button. This opens the other window (right side of the attached picture).
6. Make this new window look like the right side of the attached picture. Especially note the upper right corner, where Time and Cell Length are *linear*, rather than log.
7. Hit "OK" in the second window.
8. In the first window, there's a drop-down menu in the bottom center. Select "Save this Set of Preferences", name it ("CyTOF preferences", or something), and hit "OK".
11. Under "File", select "New Workspace". This new workspace should now have the new preferences set, and can drag in your FCS files.

* I do the biexponential transformation too, but I'm not sure whether you can do that with the workspace open already, or whether you can just do that once you have your FCS files in.

Note: if you're switching back and forth between flow preferences and CyTOF preferences, you *have* to close all workspaces, switch preferences, then open a new workspace.

I've been back and forth with FlowJo/Treestar back in August 2011 or so. Supposedly, you shouldn’t have to close the new workspace and switch preferences before dragging in FCS files. In fact, supposedly you can have an open file and just switch preference sets.

However, I've *never* been able to get that to work. Just do it my way.

One thing you *could* do: after you create a workspace with the CyTOF preferences, just
save it as a template (*.jot) file you can just reopen as necessary. Any files added to this template automatically have the CyTOF preferences, b/c the template does. Same idea with the flow preferences... just have a CyTOF template and a Flow template, and let that work for you.