

# Loopstack for iPhone and iPad

Everything Loopstack does, and where to find it. Read it top to bottom to learn the app, or jump to a section.

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## 1. Getting started

Open Loopstack and tap **Tap to open** (or anywhere on the screen) to start the audio. Your last project opens where you left it.

A new project starts at 96 BPM, 4 bars long in 4/4, in C major, with the metronome and count-in on and the drums off.

The screen is one page that scrolls, made of cards:

- **The transport bar** stays pinned at the top: status, tempo and bar, Undo, Stop, Record and Play, with a ruler that shows where you are in the loop.
- **The tempo card**: tempo, loop length, time signature, Send to song.
- **INSTRUMENT**: what the pads play, and the pads themselves.
- **Layers**: your loops.

- **DRUMS, Mix** and **SESSION**.

Under the project name are the page tabs **Stack**, **Scenes** and **Song**, and three buttons: **Pads full screen**, **Play and shape the sound** and **Live**.

**Undo** is always one tap away: the curved arrow in the transport bar. Hold it to redo. A note at the bottom of the screen tells you what changed, with its own Undo button. Loopstack keeps your last 30 steps.

## 2. Tempo, length and transport

### Transport

- **Play** starts the loop, and pauses it. Play again carries on from where it paused.
- **Stop** stops and goes back to the top.
- **Record** records a new loop (see Recording a loop).

### Length and time signature

**LENGTH** sets the loop length in bars: 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 or 128. Pick the time signature beside it: 4/4, 3/4, 5/4 or 6/8. Both lock once you have a loop. To change them, tap **Clear** to empty the stack (you can undo it).

### Tempo

Drag the tempo slider (40 to 220 BPM) or tap **Tap** in time a few times. If you already have loops, they stretch to the new tempo and keep their pitch.

**Metronome** and **Count-in** switch the click and the one-bar count before recording on and off.

## 3. Recording a loop

Press **Record** and play. Loopstack records exactly one full pass of the loop from wherever you pressed it, wraps round, and closes the loop where it began, so every take fits perfectly in time. The ring around the Record button fills as the take goes.

- Pressed while stopped: with Count-in on you get one bar of clicks first; with it off, recording starts at once.
- Pressed while playing: recording starts straight away.
- Stop during a take throws the unfinished take away.

Each new loop appears in **Layers** as Loop 1, Loop 2 and so on. You can stack up to **16 loops**.

What gets recorded is whatever you play: the pads, a MIDI keyboard, the sampler or the microphone.

**Record dry** (under the pads): when it's on, new loops are recorded without the delay and reverb you hear, and get their own Dly and Rev sliders so you can change them later. When it's off, loops keep the effects you hear.

## 4. Choosing a sound

The **INSTRUMENT** card has four big buttons. The lit one is what the pads play:

- **Keys:** 22 recorded instruments.
- **Synth:** Loopstack's synth sounds.
- **Sampler:** a sound you capture or import (see The sampler).
- **Mic:** live input from the microphone (see The microphone).

Step through sounds with the ◀ ▶ arrows by the sound's name, or pick one from the tiles. Tabs sort them into shelves:

- **Keys:** Pianos & keys, Bass & guitar, Strings, Winds and Mallets. Two grand pianos, upright, harpsichord, organ, electric and upright bass, electric guitar, strings, cello, pizzicato, harp, flute, clarinet, saxophones, French horn, vibraphone, marimba, glockenspiel and kalimba.
- **Synth:** Keys & EP, Bass, Lead, Pluck, Pad and Noise (Noise also holds risers, impacts and sweeps for transitions). **Yours** appears once you've saved sounds of your own.

Picking a bass instrument drops the octave by two automatically.

### Blend Keys + Synth

Turn on **Blend Keys + Synth** to play a recorded instrument and a synth sound together. A **Keys** ↔ **Synth** slider sets the mix, and **SYNTH OCT** moves the synth an octave down or up. While blended, tap Keys or Synth to choose which sounds the tiles show.

### Saving and resetting sounds

Loopstack remembers your changes to every sound. **Reset** takes a sound back to how it came. **Save sound** stores the current sound under a name of your own, in Your sounds.

The line **THE PADS PLAY** always tells you what's playing, for example "Studio Grand + Warm Keys".

## 5. Playing the pads

The pads are always in key: you can't hit a wrong note. Play with several fingers at once, or slide across pads to play each one you touch. The root notes are highlighted.

## Layouts

- **Notes:** 16 notes of the key.
- **Chords + notes:** 8 chord pads, one for each step of the scale, next to 8 melody notes. The  $\rightleftharpoons$  button swaps which side the chords are on.
- **Big 8:** one octave on eight big pads.

## Key, scale and octave

Under **KEY**, pick the root note (C to B) and the scale: **Major**, **Minor** or **Chrom** (every note). The – and + buttons move the octave, three each way.

## Sustain and Release

**Sustain** is an on-screen sustain pedal: tap it on and notes ring until you tap it off. **Release** sets how long notes ring after you let go.

# 6. Chords and arpeggiator

## Chord

Turn on **Chord** and every pad plays a full chord in key. Choose **Triad**, **7th** or **9th**.

## Arp

**Arp** plays the notes you hold one after another, in time with the tempo.

- **Rate:** 1/4, 1/8, 1/8T, 1/16, 1/16T or 1/32 (T is triplets).
- **Order:** **Up**, **Down**, **Ping** (up and down), **Order** (as you played them), **Rand** (random) or **Strum** (the whole chord, rolled, on every step).
- **OCT:** how many octaves the pattern climbs, 1 to 4.
- **Gate** (note length), **Swing** and **Accent**.
- **Hold** keeps the pattern going after you let go. Tap pads to add them to the pattern; tap a lit pad to take it out.

# 7. Shaping the sound

Open the **SYNTH** row in the INSTRUMENT card to shape the sound, or tap **Play and shape the sound** to have the controls above full-height pads.

## Synth controls (synth sounds and Blend)

- **OSC 1** and **OSC 2**: the two oscillators' waves (Warm, Sine, Tri, Saw, Sqr, Pulse, Noise, FM), the second one's octave, and **Mix**, **Det** (detune), **Cut** (filter cutoff), **Q** (resonance) and **FM**.
- **ENVELOPE**: Attack, Decay, Sustain.
- **FILTER ENV** and **PITCH ENV**: how much the filter and the pitch move at the start of each note, and how fast.
- **LFO**: rate (or **Sync** to the tempo), depth, shape (Sine, Tri, Square, Random) and what it moves: Pitch, Filter or Volume.
- **VOICE**: Unison (thicker) and Glide (notes slide into each other).
- **Drift** and **Glitch** add movement and character.

## For every sound

- **Vol**, **Pan**, **Dly** (delay), **Rev** (reverb) and **Chorus**.
- **REVERB** type: Room, Plate, Hall, Space or Massive.
- **Tune**: the tuning reference, 428 to 452 Hz.
- **Tape** (warm saturation) and **Wear** (wow, flutter, drifting pitch and dropouts, like an old tape).
- **Sustain** for recorded instruments, from natural to pedal down.
- **PLUGIN FX**: add one Audio Unit effect from another app (see plugins).

## 8. Working with loops

Every loop has a row in **Layers** with its name, a waveform and these buttons:

- **Rev** plays it backwards;  $\frac{1}{2}$  plays it at half speed.
- **Mute**, **Solo** and **Delete**.
- Sliders: **Vol**, **Pan**, **Dly**, **Rev** (reverb), **Drive**, **Tone** (darker or brighter) and **Punch**.

### Takes

Hold a loop's name and choose **Record a new take**. The old take is kept. Once a loop has takes, tap their numbers to switch between them, or + to record another. Loopstack keeps up to 8 earlier takes.

### Morph

Open **MORPH** to bend a loop live. It never changes the recording:

- **Filter**: low-pass to the left, high-pass to the right, off in the middle.
- **Crush**: lo-fi bit crushing.

- **Echo:** a ping-pong echo on this loop alone.
- **Width:** from mono to wider than recorded.
- **Repeat:** beat repeat at 1/4, 1/8, 1/16 or 1/32.
- **Gate:** rhythmic chopping in six patterns.

## Shape

**SHAPE** remakes the loop from its original, always in time: **Speed** (½×, 1×, 2× or reversed), **Fit** (squeeze it into 1, 2 or 4 bars) and **Pitch** (up to 12 semitones up or down). Undo brings back the original.

## Change a loop's sound after recording

Loops you play on Keys or Synth remember their notes.

- **Play with ...** replays the notes with the sound you have selected now.
- **Edit its sound** puts the loop's own sound on the keys. Change anything and the loop plays the new sound a moment later. Tap **Done** when finished.
- Sampler loops have **Play its hits with this sample**.

## Quantize

**Quantize** moves a loop's notes onto the beat: snap to 1/8, 1/8T, 1/16, 1/16T or 1/32, or go half way to keep some of your feel.

## Bounce

With two or more loops playing, **Bounce** records them into one loop with their mix and effects, freeing up room. Muted loops and drums are left out. Undo brings the original loops back.

# 9. Saved loops

Tap the tray icon in the Layers header to open **Saved loops**. **Save these loops...** keeps all your loops, with their takes, notes, sounds and settings, in a library you can use in any project.

For a saved set, **Load** replaces the stack (and takes the set's tempo and length). **Add to stack** adds the loops to what you have, when the tempo, length and time signature match and there's room. Swipe to delete.

# 10. Parts

A project can hold up to 8 parts (Part A, Part B...), each with its own loops, tempo, length and time signature: a verse and a chorus, for example. Use the part menu in the Layers header to switch, add a **New part** or delete one. Switching parts starts playback from the top and clears the undo history.

## 11. Drums

Switch the **DRUMS** card on to add a beat. Pick a kit and a groove from the lists.

- **13 kits:** Dusty, Crunch, Neon, FM, Acoustic, Studio, Hand, Rock, Jazz, Brushes, Club, Pop and Boom.
- **Grooves** for each time signature: 30 in 4/4, from Four on the Floor and Boom Bap to Footwork and DnB Break, plus waltzes in 3/4, grooves in 6/8 and in 5/4.

### Jam and Fill (4/4)

**Fill** plays a one-bar break on the next bar. Hold it to choose the fill: Snare roll, Tom run, Break fill or Hat choke. **Jam** plays the drums like a drummer: it varies the groove every bar, adds a half-bar fill every 8 bars and moves to a related groove every 16.

### Editing a beat

Open **STEPS** to edit the groove as your own; your version is saved as **My Beat**.

- Pick a drum (Kick, Snare, Hat, Open Hat, Clap, Rim, Tom, Perc) and tap steps to turn them on or off.
- Hold a step to set its **Volume** (Loud, Normal, Soft), how often it **Plays** (always, 75%, 50% or 25% of the time) and a **Roll** (x2, x3 or x4).
- Choose 1 or 2 bars, and add **Swing**.
- The drum's sound menu swaps its sound for one from the kit, an audio file, or the sampler's sound.

### Drum sound

Sliders shape the whole kit: **Comp**, **Drive**, **Dirt**, **Vinyl**, **Room**, **Tape**, **Wear** and **Pitch**.

## 12. The sampler

Tap **Sampler** in the INSTRUMENT card. Get a sound in one of these ways:

- **Capture sample** records up to 6 seconds from the microphone.
- **Import** > **Import file...** brings in audio from Files (up to 60 seconds).
- **Import** > **Resample one cycle** records one pass of everything playing, or of one loop.
- The **DRUMS** chips load any drum kit as chops, one drum per pad, for finger drumming.

**Normalize** makes the sample as loud as it can go without clipping.

### Pitched or chopped

- **Pitched:** the pads play the sample up and down the key, like an instrument.

- **Chopped:** the sample is cut into up to 16 chops, one per pad. Cut **At hits** (where each sound starts), **Even** (equal slices), or turn on **Sync** to stretch the sample to the project tempo first. Hold Sync to choose 1, 2, 4 or 8 bars.

## Editing chops

On the waveform, tap a chop to hear it, drag a line to move it, and double-tap to add a new chop. Pinch to zoom in, drag with two fingers to move around, and double-tap with two fingers to see it all again.

Hold a pad (or use the ... menu) to open its chop editor:

- **Pad:** level, pan, how it plays (**One-shot**, **Hold** or **Loop**), a choke group, Reverse, and **Cut by next**.
- **Tune:** pitch, fine tune, and where the chop starts and ends.
- **Filter:** low-pass or high-pass, cutoff and resonance.
- **Amp:** attack and release.

From the editor you can **Save as sound**, or **Use on drum** to put the chop into the drum kit.

## Note repeat

**Repeat** under the pads retriggers a held pad in time (1/4 to 1/32, with triplets). Recording captures the repeats.

# 13. Your sounds

The grid button beside the synth tabs opens **Your sounds**: your saved **Kits**, **Samples** and **Keys sounds**. Tap one to load it; swipe to rename or delete it. Deleted sounds stay in **Recently deleted** for 30 days.

# 14. Mix

The **Mix** card sets the levels of **Master**, **Keys**, **Loops**, **Drums** and **Metronome**, and the master effects:

- **Glue:** gentle compression that pulls everything together.
- **Loudness:** up to 9 dB louder.
- **Filter:** a DJ filter, low-pass to the left, high-pass to the right.
- **Pump:** ducks the keys and loops on every beat, like sidechain compression.
- **Width:** narrower or wider stereo.

The **LIMIT** light shows when the limiter is holding the level down; it turns red when it's working hard.

## 15. Making a song

Songs are built from blocks: each block is one pass of your stack, exactly as it sounded.

- **Send to song** (on the tempo card) adds one pass as a block.
- **Record to song** turns every pass into its own block while you play, mute, unmute and change things, until you stop. It starts on the downbeat.

On the **Song** page, play the song from the big Play button. For each block you can set how many times it repeats (1 to 32), move it up or down, duplicate it or delete it. **Export song** saves it as **WAV** (full quality) or **M4A** (smaller, to share).

## 16. Scenes

Scenes are pads that each hold a version of your stack, to switch between live. Tap **Send to Scenes** under the transport to save the stack as it sounds now; the Scenes page opens.

- Two banks, **Bank A** and **Bank B**, with 16 pads each.
- Touch a pad to launch or stop it. **LAUNCH** sets whether it starts **Now** or on the next bar.
- **Pick up** keeps your place in the bar when you switch.
- Hold a pad to rename it, colour it, choose whether it plays loops and drums, loops only or drums only, or clear it.
- **Stop all** stops everything.

Scenes are shared with Loopstack Pro when your project syncs.

## 17. Live grid and full-screen pads

**Live** turns the screen into a grid of every loop plus the drums, for performing. Tap a tile to bring it in or out. With **On the bar** on, changes wait for the next bar (tap again to cancel). The drum strip has the grooves, kits, Jam and fills. **All in** brings everything in at once, and **Rec to song** and **To Scenes** work as on the main page.

**Pads full screen** shows only the transport and big pads.

## 18. Recording a session

The **SESSION** card records everything you hear, loops, drums and live playing, into one WAV file. Tap **Record session**, play, then **Stop**, and **Save or share**. The tape button on the tempo card does the same.

## 19. Projects and iCloud

Tap the project name at the top to open **Projects**. Projects save automatically.

- **New** starts a project.
- Swipe or hold a project to rename, duplicate or delete it.
- Turn on **iCloud** to keep your projects and sounds on every iPhone and iPad signed in to your Apple Account, and to open them in Loopstack Pro on your Mac. Work on a project on one device at a time.

## 20. Exporting and sharing

- **The song:** **Export song** on the Song page, as WAV or M4A.
- **Stems:** **Share stems** at the bottom of the Stack page makes a ZIP with a WAV file for each loop and the drums, plus a MIDI file of the notes for each loop you played on Keys or the Sampler. Bring them into any DAW.
- **A performance:** a session recording (see above).

## 21. MIDI keyboards and controllers

Plug in a USB MIDI keyboard and play: no setup needed. For a Bluetooth keyboard, tap **Bluetooth** in the MIDI row under the pads to pair it.

- Velocity, sustain pedal, pitch bend and the mod wheel all work. Your keyboard plays every note; the key and scale only shape the on-screen pads.
- Notes on MIDI channel 10 play the drum kit (General MIDI drum notes), so a pad controller plays the drums.

### MIDI Learn

Hold the *name* of any slider and choose **Link to MIDI knob**, then turn a knob on your controller. Linked sliders show a small MIDI tag. Hold the name again to unlink it. Links are remembered across projects.

## 22. Link, plugins and Loopstack Instrument

### Ableton Link

Tap **Ableton Link** on the tempo card to join other Link apps on the same Wi-Fi. Everyone keeps the same tempo and stays in time.

## Audio Unit plugins

Loopstack can play instruments and effects from other apps you've installed (Audio Unit extensions). Under **OTHER APPS**, tap **Plugins...** to load an instrument; under **PLUGIN FX**, load an effect. **Show** opens the plugin's own screen. The plugin is saved with the project.

## Loopstack Instrument

Loopstack comes with an Audio Unit of its own, **Loopstack Instrument**, with all of Loopstack's synth sounds. Load it in GarageBand, Logic Pro for iPad, AUM or any app that hosts instruments, pick a sound, and adjust **Space** and **Volume**.

## 23. Playing Loopstack Pro from your phone

If you have Loopstack Pro on a Mac, your iPhone or iPad can play it. On the Mac, turn on **Let iPhone and iPad play this Mac** on the Scenes page. On the phone, open Projects and tap **Play Loopstack Pro on your Mac**. Both must be on the same Wi-Fi.

- **Scenes:** launch the Mac's scenes from 16 pads, with banks, Stop all, recording and live effects.
- **Keys:** a two-octave keyboard that plays the Mac's instrument.

## 24. On iPad

On a wide iPad screen Loopstack becomes a two-column studio: tempo and instrument on the left, loops, drums and mix on the right, with the transport in the header. The pads are bigger. In portrait on smaller iPads, or in Split View, it uses the single-column layout.

## 25. The microphone

Tap **Mic** in the INSTRUMENT card and allow microphone access to record your voice or an instrument straight into a loop. **Monitor** lets you hear yourself: use headphones, or the speaker will feed back.

The microphone is only used when you turn it on. Loopstack keeps playing when you leave the app or lock your phone, except while the microphone is on.

## 26. Themes

Open Projects and pick a theme: Loopstack, Console, Fjord and Paper, and under **More themes** Neko, Dusk, Phosphor, Teletext, Graph, Legal, Engineer and Gothic.

# 27. Keyboard shortcuts

With a hardware keyboard connected to your iPhone or iPad:

| Key                       | Does                                         |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Space                     | Play / pause                                 |
| R                         | Record                                       |
| Return                    | Stop                                         |
| Z / X                     | Octave down / up                             |
| C / V                     | Softer / harder (velocity)                   |
| A S D F ... and W E T Y U | Play the pads (in Chromatic, a piano layout) |
| ⌘ Z / ⌘ ⇧ Z               | Undo / redo                                  |

Still stuck? [Get support](#), or [read the guides](#).