

Loopstack Pro for Mac

Everything Loopstack Pro does, and where to find it.

Read it top to bottom to learn the app, or jump to a section.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Getting started | 13. The Timeline |
| 2. The main window | 14. Piano roll and editors |
| 3. The instruments | 15. Mixer, effects and plugins |
| 4. Keys | 16. Perform and Macros |
| 5. Synth | 17. MIDI and the Mac keyboard |
| 6. Touch pads and XY FX | 18. Guitar Rig, Tuner and Pedals |
| 7. How It Plays: chords, strum, phrase, arp | 19. Projects, iCloud and your iPhone |
| 8. Drum Machine | 20. Export |
| 9. Sampler | 21. Settings and look |
| 10. Recording | 22. Trial and licence |
| 11. The Stack | 23. Keyboard shortcuts |
| 12. Scenes | |

1. Getting started

Loopstack Pro needs macOS 14 Sonoma or later. Open it, and if you use Loopstack on iPhone or iPad with iCloud, your projects are already there.

The quickest way in:

1. Open the **Instruments** tab at the bottom and click **KEYS** or **SYNTH**.
2. Play on the Mac keyboard (the row from **A**), on screen, or with a MIDI keyboard.
3. Press **R** to record a loop, then keep adding loops on top.
4. Turn on the drums, and when you like it, send the stack to the Timeline to build a song.

Most sliders and knobs reset when you double-click them. Hover over anything to see what it does.

Help > Key Commands (  ) lists every shortcut.

2. The main window

Toolbar

- **Project button:** the project's name and where it's kept (iCloud or This Mac). Click it to switch projects or make, rename, duplicate or delete one.
- **Pages:** **Stack**, **Scenes** and **Timeline**.
- **Transport:** Play, Stop, Undo and Redo (it changes a little with the page), and **Record** with its destination menu.
- **Display:** bar and time.
- **Tempo:** click the number to type it (40 to 220 BPM), or use the arrows. The time signature (4/4, 3/4, 5/4, 6/8) is set before the first loop.
- Buttons to show the bottom panel (  **B**) and the right panel (  **I**), and **Export...** ( **B**).

Panels

- **Left: the record column** (  **R**). Looper, loop length, parts and the loops folder. On the Scenes page it becomes the pad editor.
- **Middle:** the page you're on.
- **Right: the inspector.** Shows the settings of whatever you've selected: a loop, the keys, the drums, a clip or a track. With nothing selected, it shows the master.
- **Bottom panel** with tabs: **Perform**, **Mixer**, **Instruments**, **Editor** and **Macros** (and **FX** on the Scenes page).

Drag any panel's edge to resize it. The pop-out button on the bottom panel puts that tab in its own window, for a second screen. **View > Just the Middle (or Everything)** (  **M**) hides all the panels at once.

You can drop files straight onto the window: audio goes to the page you're on, MIDI files to the piano roll, and movies to a video track on the Timeline.

3. The instruments

Loopstack Pro has four instruments: **Keys** (22 recorded instruments), **Synth**, **Drum Machine** and **Sampler**. Each one lives in two places:

- **Small, in the bottom panel:** open the **Instruments** tab. The rail on the left has KEYS, SYNTH, DRUMS and SAMPLER (a green dot means it's sounding). Click one to make the keyboard play it and to show its bar: sound tiles and its main knobs.

- **Big, in its own window:** click the instrument's icon on its bar, or use the **Instruments** menu: Keys   K, Synth   Y, Drum Machine   B, Sampler   E. Choose it again to close it.

Every instrument window has the same header: the sound's name with < > to step through sounds (click the name for the full list), Save, and page buttons. The window fits any size you drag it to, and floats over the studio unless you turn off **Instruments > Float Over the Studio**.

Knobs: drag up or down; hold  for fine moves; double-click to reset. Right-click a knob and choose **Link to MIDI knob**, then turn a knob on your controller.

Blend

The **Blend** button plays Keys and Synth together. While blended, the bar shows both names with a crossfader between them (for example 60 · 40), and the synth's octave beside it.

Chords + notes, Sustain and octaves

- **Chords + notes** splits what you play: on the Mac keys,  –  play the key's chords and the letter rows play the melody. On a MIDI keyboard the split is at middle C: the white keys below it play chords, above it you play notes.
- **Sustain** holds notes for 1, 2, 3, 5 or 8 seconds. A MIDI sustain pedal works too.
- The octave block sets the **KEYS** and **CHORDS** octaves; link them to move together.  and  move the keys octave.

4. Keys

22 recorded instruments on five shelves: Pianos & keys, Bass & guitar, Strings, Winds and Mallets.

- **SOUND:** the instrument's own character card, with knobs that suit it. A piano has Hammer, Felt, Lid, Body and Mic; an organ has Leslie, Growl and Drawbars; a guitar has Amp, Cab and Pick; strings have Bow, Vibrato and Ensemble, and so on. Below are Attack and Release, and Output: Level, Pan, Tune (A4 from 428 to 452 Hz) and a clean Boost.
- **TOUCH:** the Shape, Colour and Space pads and XY FX (see Touch pads).
- **EFFECTS:** Colour (drive, tape and wear), Space (reverb, echo, chorus), Tape and Phaser.

5. Synth

Synth sounds on shelves: Keys, Bass, Lead, Pluck, Pad, Strings & Brass, Bells, Cinematic, Clean & Club and FX, with the iPhone's sounds under Classic and your own under Your sounds.

- **SOUND:** the wave screen, and

- **Macros:** Bright, Grit, Width, Motion and Space, five big moves for the whole sound.
- **Osc 1** and **Osc 2:** waves (Warm, Sine, Tri, Saw, Sqr, Pulse, Noise, FM), FM and Ring, the second one's octave, level and detune.
- **Filter:** 12 or 24 dB, Cutoff, Reso, Env and Decay.
- **Amp:** Attack, Decay, Sustain, Release.
- **MOTION:** two LFOs (free or synced to the tempo, moving pitch, filter, volume or pan), the pitch envelope, and Voice: Unison, Glide, Drift and Glitch.
- **TOUCH** and **EFFECTS**, as for Keys.

On the bar, **Knobs / Touch** switches between the main knobs and the touch pads, and **Warm / Clean** turns the tape, wear, wobble and drift on or off.

6. Touch pads and XY FX

Touch pads change several settings with one move. Each pad has nine named zones; drag across it and the sound changes smoothly.

- **Tone** (synth): dark to bright, soft to hard.
- **Shape:** struck or plucky to swelling, short to long.
- **Colour:** fresh or still to worn or moving, clean to dirty.
- **Space:** dry to huge, close to wide, from a booth to a cathedral.

XY FX is a performance effect pad with ten modes: DJ, Dub, Sweep, Wash, Crush, Scream, Chaos, Ondes, Bend and Harmony. Hover a mode to see what it does; the labels on the pad show what each direction does.

- Click to pin the effect, drag to move it, click the dot or press **Esc** to let go.
- Double-click to play it from the trackpad; double-click again to stop.
- **Hold** keeps the effect when you let go.

7. How It Plays: chords, strum, phrase, arp

How It Plays changes *how* your playing comes out, whatever instrument is on the keys. On the Keys and Synth bar, the **Chord** and **Arp** switches turn those on with one click, and the big **Strum / Phrase** button shows their lights. Double-click any of them (or click ↵) to open the How It Plays window.

Chord

One key plays a chord in the song's key. Choose the tones (Triad, 7th, 9th), a colour (Sus2, Sus4, Add9, 6), how many notes, the voicing (Close, Open, Wide, Smooth), the inversion, an added bass note, and **Keep** to hold one chord shape as you move.

Strum + Phrase

- **Strum** rolls each chord like a hand on strings. Turn the preset wheel: Piano ballad, Guitar strum, Harp, House stab, Neo-soul, Folk strum, Ukulele, Twelve-string, Gospel roll, Ambient bloom and more. Set the number of notes, direction (Up, Down, Turn, Random), free or synced, and save your own. Turning Strum on turns Chord on too.
- **Phrase** turns held chords into a playing pattern: rolled chords, Alberti, stride, bossa, montuno, reggae skank, house offbeats, waltz, film ostinato, disco octaves and many more. Set the length (1 to 8 bars) and speed, and save your own.

Arp

Plays held notes one at a time in time: rate (1/4 to 1/32 with triplets), octaves 1 to 4, pattern (Up, Down, Ping, Order, Random, Chord), Gate, Swing and Accent. **Latch** keeps it going after you let go.

8. Drum Machine

The Drum Machine plays the drums for the Stack (and, on the Scenes page, for the scenes). Turn the drums on from the drums lane on the Stack or the Drum Machine window.

STEPS page

- Pick a groove and a kit: Dusty, Crunch, Neon, FM, Acoustic, Studio, Hand, Rock, Jazz, Brushes, Club, Pop and Boom.
- One row per drum, 16 steps per page, 1 or 2 bars. Click a step to add or remove it; -click for an accent, -click for a soft hit. Click a drum's name to hear it; M and S mute and solo it.
- **Jam** card: Jam plays like a drummer, varying the groove (4/4). Set how busy it is, how often it fills, and whether it wanders to other grooves or stays.
- **Play** card: **FILL**, and hold pads for rolls (1/8, 1/16, 1/32), Drop and Half-time.
- **Sound** card: Swing, Pitch, Room, Level, Drive, Dirt, Vinyl, Tape and Wear.

SOUND page: designing drums

Build each drum from scratch: **Body** (a tuned tone with a pitch drop), **Noise** (snap and sizzle), **Metal** (cymbal tones) and **Out** (click, drive, level, pan). Save your kit, then **Send to drums**.

To use a sample instead, select the drums lane and, in the inspector's **Drum sounds**, choose **Replace** › a file or the sampler's sound.

9. Sampler

- **Sample** records up to 6 seconds from your input; **Import** loads the first minute of an audio file; **Kit** spreads a drum kit across the pads.
- **Chop**: Off (one sample across the keys), Hits (cut where each sound starts) or Even (equal slices).
- 16 pads; click one to edit it. Drag the start and end handles on the screen.
- For each pad: Level, Pan, Tune, Fine; Filter and Reso; Attack and Release; how it plays (One-shot, Hold, Loop) and a choke group.
- **Repeat** retriggers a held pad in time (1/8 to 1/32). **Full Level** plays every hit at full velocity.

10. Recording

Press **R** or click **Record**. The menu beside Record chooses where it goes:

- **New loop in the Stack**: records one loop the length of the stack, then stops by itself.
- **Stack → timeline**: records the stack as you play it, live, onto the Timeline.
- **Scenes → timeline**: records your Scenes performance, either each part on its own track or as one mixed track.
- **Timeline**: records onto a new or the selected instrument track.

Each page remembers its own choice. In the same menu: count-in (and a longer count-in for the first loop), the click, **Loops start on the first note**, and **Punch in the cycle** for the Timeline.

Missed it? Keep what I just played (**⇧ R**) captures the notes you just played, even though you weren't recording.

The looper (record column)

- **Looper**: click to record, click to close the loop, click to add another layer; click twice quickly to undo.
- **Free length**: the first loop is as long as you play it and sets the tempo, like a loop pedal.
- **Length** (1 to 16 bars) and time signature, set before the first loop.
- **Parts**: up to 8, each with its own loops, tempo and length.
- **Loops folder...** saves the current loops to use in any project.
- **Clear stack** (Undo brings it back).

11. The Stack

The Stack is your loops playing together, up to 64 of them. Switch between **List** and **Pads** at the top.

List

- Each loop has M (mute), S (solo) and a clone button. Click a loop to shape it in the inspector.
- Loops you played on the keys have a piano icon (edit the notes in the piano roll) and can **follow the keys**: the loop plays its notes with whatever sound is on the keys.
- Right-click a loop to quantize it, use its sound on the keys, save it to the loops folder, send it to the Timeline or Scenes, or delete it.
- **Import audio**: the first file sets an empty stack's tempo; later ones are fitted to it.

Shaping a loop (inspector)

- **Sound**: Level, Pan, Tone, Punch (or open the full compressor), Drive, Delay, Reverb, Reverse and Half speed.
- **Morph · live**: Filter, Crush, Echo, Width, beat Repeat and Gate patterns. Never changes the recording.
- **Morph · shape**: Speed, Pitch (to the cent: click the number to type), and Fit to 1, 2 or 4 bars.

Pads

A 4×4 grid of your loops in banks A to D, to play live. Click a pad (or press its key: **1**–**4**, **Q** **W** **E**, **A**–**F**, **Z**–**V**) to start or stop it on the next beat or bar; scroll over a pad for its level. **Capture** → **Scene** records a number of bars of what's playing onto the next empty Scenes pad.

Sending on

Send stack to Scenes puts one pass onto the next empty pad. **Send stack to timeline** adds one pass as a block at the end of the selected track.

12. Scenes

Scenes is for performing: 4 banks of 16 pads, each holding a section of music you can launch.

- **Fill pads** by sending the stack, dropping audio files or song blocks on them, **Fill from song**, or clicking an empty pad.
- **Launch** by clicking or with the keyboard. Set the timing (Now, 1, 2 or 4 bars), whether one pad plays at a time or they layer, and whether a new pad picks up where the last one was.
- **Pad editor** (left column): name and colour, speed, pitch and reverse, loops and drums on or off, a beat of its own, whether it loops, plays once or only while held, its level, and what happens next (keep going, next, previous, random, first or stop) after a number of passes.
- Right-click a pad to copy, paste, duplicate, colour, capture into it or clear it.

- **Match levels** evens out the loudness of a bank. The **Rider** keeps the overall level steady while you play.
- **Build** 4, 8 or 16 bars starts a build-up; click again to drop.

FX tab

Live effects for **This pad** or **Everything**: a filter XY pad, Hold effects (beat repeats, tape stop, backspin, reverse, dive, mute, gates), a three-band Isolator with kills, Character (vinyl, lo-fi, echo, resonator, width, squash), and two Snapshots you can fade between.

The Keys chip shows the keyboard map for launching and effects. A MIDI pad controller plays the pads from C1 up.

Turn on **Let iPhone and iPad play this Mac** to perform the Scenes from your phone (see your iPhone).

13. The Timeline

The Timeline is where you arrange and finish a song, with tracks and clips.

Tracks

Add track offers: Instrument, Drum, Audio, Stack (records the Stack), Scenes (records the Scenes), Video (a movie to score) and Bus (a group).

- Instrument tracks choose their sound from the track header: any Keys or Synth sound, the Sampler, or an Audio Unit instrument.
- Audio tracks choose their input: plain, through the Guitar or Bass rig, or the Stack or Scenes.
- Right-click a track to rename or move it, route it to a bus, duck it under another track, freeze it, bounce it in place or delete it.
- The **A** menu shows automation lanes for volume, pan, filter and the sends. Plugin settings can be automated too.

Clips

- Drag to move; drag the edges to resize or repeat; drag the corner squares to fade. Double-click to edit.
- **Duplicate linked** (  **D**): edit one and its copies follow.
- Split at the playhead ( **E**), or into bars to comp takes; recording round the cycle makes a take each pass.
- Right-click an audio clip to strip silence, edit the notes' pitch, turn it into MIDI (melody, drums or chords), or split it into stems.

Audio and tempo

- **Follow the song's tempo (warp)** fits audio to the song. Tell it the tempo it was played at and its length in bars, and drag the warp markers if needed.
- **Split into stems** makes Drums, Bass, Voice and Other tracks. Voice uses Apple's voice isolation where your Mac has it.

Song tools

The ruler sets the cycle (drag) and the playhead (click). Add markers and tempo changes in their own rows. **Bars, markers and tempo** inserts or deletes bars, transposes the whole song and changes the tempo at the playhead. The **BLOCKS** strip holds the song sections sent from your iPhone: drag them onto a track.

14. Piano roll and editors

Double-click a clip, or click a loop's piano icon, to edit it in the **Editor** tab.

- **Piano roll:** click to add a note, drag to move, drag its end to resize, double-click to delete, -drag to select.  quantizes; the arrow keys move notes. **Tools** adds swing, humanize, strum, chords of the key, seventh chords, legato and octave doubling. There's a velocity lane below.
- **Drum steps:** click a step to add or remove it, drag up or down for velocity,  for an accent,  for a roll,  for chance. Each drum has level, tune, decay, tone, pan and drive.
- **Note pitch** (audio clips): **Find the notes**, then drag a note to change its pitch, or **Correct to key**.

15. Mixer, effects and plugins

The **Mixer** tab has a strip for every loop (or every track on the Timeline), plus the keyboard, drums, click and master. The chevron makes it bigger, with sends.

- **EQ:** seven bands from low cut to high cut. Drag a dot, scroll to change its width, double-click to flatten. Presets include Warm, Bright, Less mud, Kick weight and Vocal presence.
- **Compressor:** threshold, ratio, attack, release, makeup, with presets such as Gentle glue and Punchy drums.
- **Sends:** to the shared reverb and delay.
- **Master:** level, a limiter that keeps the output under -1 dB true peak, the master EQ and compressor, plugins on the master, and the Stack master (Glue, Loudness, Width, Filter, Pump).

Audio Unit plugins

Add your Mac's Audio Unit effects to any track or the master with **Add a plugin effect**. Click a plugin's name to open its window, or show its settings as sliders. Save and load presets, switch it off, reorder or

remove it. Instrument plugins are chosen from an instrument track's sound menu.

16. Perform and Macros

The **Perform** tab gathers what you need to play live into one screen of cards. On the Stack page: the keyboard's sound, Phrase, Strum, Record, Drums, loop length and tempo, Stack morph, the XY pad and your loops. On the Scenes page: launching, build-ups, drums, recording and the pads. On the Timeline: a card for each instrument track.

Macros are eight knobs that each move any settings you choose, from any track or the master, each with its own range. Double-click a name to rename it. MIDI CC 20 to 27 turn them.

17. MIDI and the Mac keyboard

Mac keyboard

The middle letter row plays notes: **A** is C, **W** C#, up to **'**. **Z** / **X** change the octave, **C** / **V** the velocity. The keys play notes when the Instruments, Perform or Editor tab is showing, when an armed instrument track is selected, or in an instrument window.

MIDI keyboards and controllers

Plug in and play. In **Instruments > Tuner & Input** you can choose which channel the keys listen to (any, or 1 to 16) and the drums channel (10 by default). With the Drum Machine window in front, every note plays drums. The pitch wheel bends up to 4 semitones; the mod wheel adds vibrato and a reverb swell.

Right-click any knob to link it to a controller knob. Macros answer to CC 20 to 27. On the Scenes page, a pad controller plays the pads from C1 up.

18. Guitar Rig, Tuner and Pedals

- **Guitar Rig** (**⌘** **G**), for guitar or bass through an audio interface: gate and compressor, a pedal (drive, distortion, fuzz, octave, boost), an amp (Clean, Crunch, Lead), a cabinet with mic, modulation, delay and reverb, with presets.
- **Tuner & Input** (**⌘** **T**): choose the input device and channel, check the level, hear yourself, adjust the take timing, tune (reference A from 415 to 466 Hz), and set up MIDI.
- **Pedals** (**⌘** **P**): learn a foot pedal (MIDI or a key-typing pedal) for Looper, Record, Play/Stop, Stop, Undo, next and previous scene, drum fill, drums on/off and tap tempo. By default Page Down is the Looper, Page Up Undo, End Stop.

19. Projects, iCloud and your iPhone

- Use the **File** menu or the project button to make, open, rename, duplicate or delete projects. **Save Version** (⌘ S) keeps a dated copy. Everything saves as you go.
- **File > Keep Projects in iCloud** keeps your projects on your Mac, iPhone and iPad together. Work on a project on one device at a time; if one changes in two places, both versions are kept.
- Sections you **Send to song** on your iPhone arrive on the Mac as song blocks: in the Stack's song strip, the Timeline's BLOCKS strip and on Scenes.
- Your iPhone or iPad can play the Mac: turn on **Let iPhone and iPad play this Mac** on the Scenes page, then on the phone open Projects > **Play Loopstack Pro on your Mac**.

Import MIDI files to the Stack (⌘ I) or the Timeline (⌘ I), and audio to the Stack, Scenes or Timeline, from the File menu.

20. Export

File > Export... (⌘ B) exports the Timeline:

- Format: WAV 24-bit, WAV 16-bit or AAC (M4A).
- **The mix**, or **Stems**, a file per track, into a folder you choose.
- Only the cycle region, and normalize to -0.3 dB, if you want.
- **Export MIDI...**, and **Export Movie...** when the project has video.

If the Timeline is empty, Export saves the iPhone song instead.

21. Settings and look

- **Settings** (⌘ ,): output and input devices and buffer size. Smaller buffers make playing feel tighter; raise it if you hear clicks.
- **View > Theme**: Loopstack, Fjord, Paper, Neko, Dusk, Phosphor, Teletext, Graph, Legal, Engineer and Gothic.
- **View** also shows or hides the scope, the on-screen keyboard and the panels.

22. Trial and licence

The free trial gives you every feature for 5 hours of actual use: only time the app is open and you're working counts. Exports in the trial stop at one minute, and MIDI export needs a licence. Starting the trial needs an internet connection.

When you buy, your licence key arrives by email. Enter it in **Loopstack Pro > Licence...** and click **Activate**. Nothing to reinstall. The Licence window shows how long new versions are included:

- The \$75 licence includes new versions for a year. After that it keeps working, with bug fixes for your version, and you can add a year of updates whenever you like.
- The \$200 licence includes new versions for life.

To move to a new Mac, use **Deactivate on this Mac...** first. Your projects are always safe in iCloud and on your iPhone, licence or not.

23. Keyboard shortcuts

Key	Does
Space	Play / pause
Return	Stop
R	Record
⇧ R	Keep what I just played
⌘ K	Metronome on / off
⌘ Z / ⇧ ⌘ Z	Undo / redo
⌘ D / ⌥ ⌘ D	Duplicate / duplicate linked
⌘ E	Split at the playhead
⌘ B	Export
⌘ N / ⌥ ⌘ S	New project / save a version
⌥ ⌘ K Y B E	Keys, Synth, Drum Machine, Sampler windows
⌥ ⌘ G T P	Guitar Rig, Tuner & Input, Pedals
^ ⌘ B / R / M	Bottom panel / record column / just the middle
A to ' , W to P	Play notes
Z / X , C / V	Octave, velocity
⇧ ⌘ /	All key commands

Still stuck? Get support, or read the guides.