Beginner's Guide to Audacity

This document is a guide to the basic functions of Audacity. You can get further information on these functions or more advanced options from [Audacity's website](#) including Manuals, FAQs and Wikis.

Created by the Digital Resources Team of CIE, University of Liverpool.
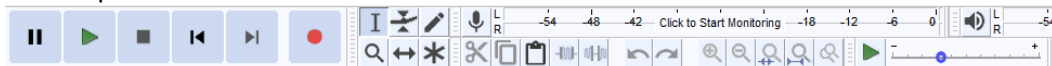
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Import audio into audacity:

- Click File, Import, Audio. Then navigate to your audio file.
- Or, drag and drop your audio file onto the background.

Playing the audio:

- Select the I button in the toolbox at the top of the window. The toolbox is in the main control panel.

- You can then click anywhere on the audio track and a line will appear; this is the Playhead.
- Pressing spacebar on your keyboard will Play/Stop the audio.
- At default, the playhead will revert back to position you clicked every time you stop so that you can listen to a part over and over.
    - If you wish to stop it so that when you play it continues from that point rather than reverting back, then you can use the X Key instead of Spacebar.
- All the can also be done by pressing the buttons in the toolbar at the top.

Playing only a section of the audio:

- Select the I button in the toolbox at the top of the window.
- Click and drag over the section of the audio you wish to hear, highlighting it.
- Press Spacebar/Play. This will start from the start of the section, and end at the end of the highlighted section.

Looping footage:

- Select the I button in the toolbox at the top of the window.
- Click and drag over the section of the audio you wish to hear, highlighting it.
- Press Shift and Spacebar together. This will loop the highlighted section.
- To stop the loop, press only Spacebar.

Scrolling along the footage:

- Hold Shift and scroll with the mouse wheel.
- Scrolling down moves right.
- Scrolling up moves left.

Zooming in on the footage:

- Hold Ctrl and scrolling with the mouse wheel.
- Scrolling up zooms in.
- Scrolling down zooms out.
- You can also use these two buttons or Ctrl 1 (zoom in) Ctrl 3 (zoom out). These methods will zoom you into wherever the play head is.

Special Zoom options:

- To zoom to be able to see a particular section, select the I button in the toolbox at the top of the window.
- Click and drag over a section of the audio, highlighting it.
- Click the button or press Ctrl E.

- This will then fill the highlighted section to the width of the screen.

- If you want to set the whole project to fit within the screen simply press the 🔍 button or press Ctrl F.

Changing the height of the tracks to 'zoom' in/out vertically:
- Hover your mouse over the bottom of the track and it should change to a double-sided arrow, point up and down.
- Click and drag to change the height of the track.
- Dragging down will 'zoom' in.
- Dragging up will 'zoom' out.

Delete footage:
- Select the I button in the toolbox at the top of the window.
- Click and drag over a section of the audio, highlighting it.
- Press delete on your keyboard or Edit – Delete.
- When you delete audio, the audio ahead of it will move to fill the gap.

Split footage:
- Select the I button in the toolbox at the top of the window.
- Click where you want to make the cut.
- Press 'Ctrl I' or click Edit – Clip Boundaries – Split.
- When you move the cursor, a dark line will now be where the cut was made.

Move footage:

- Select the ↔ button.
- Hover over the audio and your cursor will change to the above icon.
- Click and drag the audio and you can drag it left and right.

Cutting Footage:
- Select the I button in the toolbox at the top of the window.
- Click and drag over a section of the audio, highlighting it.
- Press Ctrl I on your keyboard, the ✂ button in the toolbox or Edit – Cut.
- When you delete audio, the audio ahead of it will move to fill the gap.

- You can paste this cut footage anywhere you like (please see below).

Copying Footage:
- Select the I button in the toolbox at the top of the window.
- Click and drag over a section of the audio, highlighting it.
- Press Ctrl C on your keyboard, the 🗐 button in the toolbox, or Edit – Copy.

Pasting Footage:
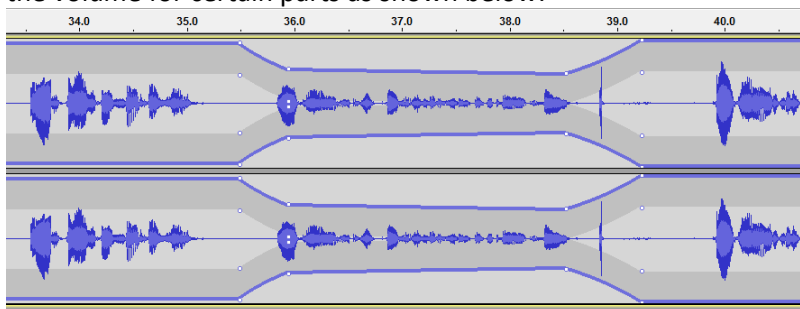- Move your I cursor where you want to insert the audio and click.

- Press Ctrl V on your keyboard, the [clipboard icon] button in the toolbox, or Edit – Paste.
- If you want to paste over an existing section of the audio, instead of clicking where you want to insert the copied part, click and drag over all the audio you want to overwrite and then paste.
- When you do this, the track will shrink or enlarge to accommodate the change in length compared to the overwritten section.

Trim all audio outside of selection:

- With the [I icon] tool, click and drag over the section of audio you want to keep, highlighting it.
- Press the [icon] button in the toolbar or Ctrl T.
- This will then delete everything but the footage you highlighted.
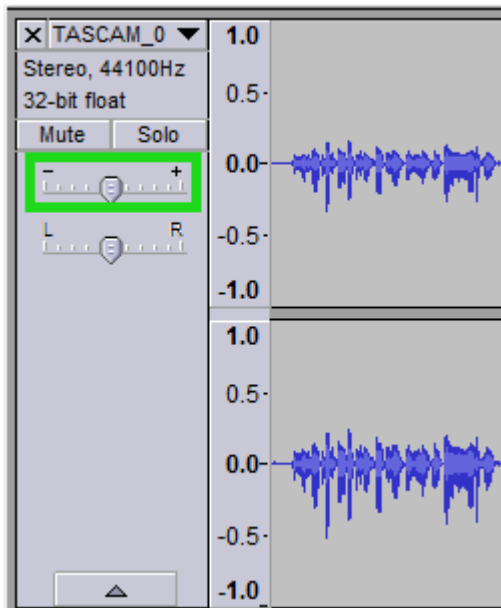
Adjusting the volume throughout a track:

- Select the 'Envelope Tool' [icon] from the toolbox.
- Blue Lines will then appear at the top and bottom of each channel. These blue lines represent the volume at its current max.
- You can now click and drag anywhere to change the volume of the track.
- To create an envelope, click once to create a point. Click to create as many pints as you want there to be, each of these is a point the audio volume will start to increase, decrease, or stay the same.
- You can now click and drag any of these points to create envelopes and lower or increase the volume for certain parts as shown below:

- Moving a point downwards makes the volume quieter whilst upwards makes it louder.
- Moving a point closer to the point on its left or right makes the ramp steeper so the volume change will be faster and more noticeable. You can move it all the way to the previous point where the volume will change suddenly.
- It's a good idea to do small fade ins and outs when possible as these are less noticeable.
- When you return to the [I icon] button, the blue lines will disappear but a greyed out ghost of the changes you made will remain behind the waveform.

Making an entire Audio track Louder or quieter:

o At the side of the audio track is a small info bar with two sliders. One adjusts the gain, whilst the other adjusts panning.
o Simply move the audio slider (highlighted in green in the image below) to the left (-) to make quieter, or right (+) to make louder.
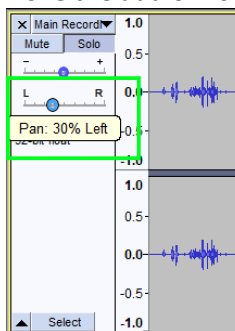
- o A small box will pop up telling the db (decibels) that you are reducing or increasing it by.
- o This method is good for balancing whole tracks but is not a permanent change so does not affect the waveform displayed on the track and has a limit of 36 db in either direction.
- o For other occasions it may be best to use the envelope Tool or Amplify discussed in separate points.

Using the amplify effect to make whole tracks or sections louder:

- To increase the volume of the entire track you can use the amplify effect.
- Press Ctrl A to select the entire track.
- You can also click and drag with the selection tool to select an area.
- Click 'Effect', then Amplify…
- The effect will then show the dB increase needed to raise the volume the max it can before any part is too loud it will distort.
- If you don't want to make it this loud, you can move the slider to the left and then press ok.
- If you want it louder, make sure 'Allow Clipping' is ticked, and then press ok.
- Once the effect is applied you will see the blue audio wave change size.
- If you are not happy, press undo and then go through the process again, choosing a new level of dB on the slider. You can also press preview to hear what the change in amplification will sound like.

Panning a track left or right:

- On the info bar to the left of the track, you can use the L R Slider to change the panning and move the audio more to the left ear or right ear.
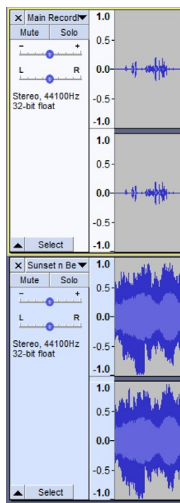
- Simply drag the slider as much as you want to L to pan the track left, or R to pan the track right. A text box will pop up telling you the percentage.
- The more you move the slider, the more noticeable the effect until at the extreme it will only be in that ear.
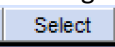
Adding another audio recording or music:
- Import this the same as importing your original audio.
- This time, the track should appear as a separate track at the bottom.
- Pressing play will now play both simultaneously.
- Please make sure your track is copyright free or you have the rights to use it.
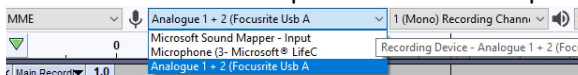
Working with multiple tracks:
- On the left of the tracks there is an info bar. You can control the tracks from here.

- To mute one of the tracks, you can press the Mute button on the track you wish to Mute. Click Mute again and it will unmute the track. You can mute as many tracks as you wish. When you mute a track, it will grey out the waveform.
- If you want to listen to just one track, you can press Solo on that track and it will mute every other track. Click Solo again and it will un-solo it. You can only solo one track at a time.
- To hide a track from view, click the button in the bottom left of the bar. This will minimize it and the button will change to which you can press to maximize it again.
- To select a track, simply click . This will highlight the whole track for you.

Recording new audio:
- Make sure you have a microphone plugged in.
- Select the correct microphone from this drop down menu

- Click the record button .
- The playhead will start moving and will now be red. A Waveform of any recorded audio will start to appear behind it.

- Stop the recording by pressing the spacebar or pressing the Stop button .

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- To record to a new track, click on Tracks - Add new – Mono. This will then be used for recording.

Exporting Finished audio:

- Click File – Export Audio, then choose where you want to save your file and then name it how you want.
- Chose the filetype you want from the drop-down menu and then click save. WAV will be high quality but very large file size. MP3 is good quality but quite small file size.
- Choose the quality you want in the Quality Drop Down menu. The higher the quality the larger the file size.
- Press Save.
- You can then choose to enter Metadata like the name of creator, year, genre etc or skip this by pressing OK.
- It will then render through the audio and export it.

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