



Live Version 8.1 for Windows and Mac OS
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Chapter 1

Welcome to Live

1.1 The Ableton Team Says: Thank You

Live is the result of musicians wanting a better way to create, produce and perform music using a computer. A great deal of effort has been put into making Live easy and fun to use, yet at the same time capable of helping you create music with unlimited depth and sophistication. This effort continues even as you read these lines... in fact, a new, improved Live version might already be available for download! Please check [on our website now¹](#), or choose the Check for Updates command from the Help menu.

We hope you enjoy using Live and that it enhances your creative process. Should you have suggestions about how we can improve Live, please [let us know²](#).

Your Ableton Team.

¹<http://www.ableton.com/downloads>

²contact@ableton.com

1.2 What's New in Live 8?

1.2.1 New Warping Engine

- Live's **warping engine** has been dramatically overhauled, with more accurate transient detection and a redesigned interface that allows you to drag the waveform along a fixed timeline.
- New transient loop and envelope controls in **Beats Mode** allow for higher quality warping, especially at slower tempos.
- New **Complex Pro Mode** for even higher quality warping.
- You can now **quantize audio clips** using the Edit menu's Quantize command.

1.2.2 New Groove Functionality

Groove patterns can now modify the timing and volume of audio and MIDI clips in real-time. A large library of grooves is provided, and grooves can be extracted from clips and then reapplied to other clips.

1.2.3 Workflow Enhancements

- **Crossfades** are now available for adjacent clips in Arrangement View.
- The **MIDI Editor** has been reworked, and editing MIDI is now similar to editing in the Arrangement. An insert mark sets the precise location for clipboard operations, allowing notes or time to be copied, pasted, inserted and deleted anywhere in the clip. Enhanced keyboard commands also improve the editing workflow.
- As a result of the new navigation possibilities in the MIDI Editor, it is now possible to **step record** MIDI notes.
- Audio and MIDI tracks can be grouped into a summing **Group Track**. Group Tracks can be folded or unfolded to help organize your workflow in both Session and Arrangement View.

- Live's interface can be magnified to maximize visibility via the **Zoom Display** slider.
- A **Preview Tab** in the Browser provides a visual overview of the previewed file's contents, and allows you to scrub in the waveform or MIDI display.
- When multiple tracks are selected, adjusting one of their mixer or routing parameters will adjust the same parameter in the other selected tracks.

1.2.4 Ableton Effects and Instruments

- **Operator** has been dramatically overhauled with a variety of new filter types, an expanded set of modulation routings and additive wavetable synthesis with drawable partials.
- **Collision** optional add-on instrument
- **Corpus** optional add-on effect
- **Latin Percussion** optional add-on sample library
- **Looper** provides classic tape-loop style overdubbing, with drag-and-drop export to clips, MIDI-mappable controls optimized for use with foot pedals and more.
- **Vocoder** combines the best of classic analog vocoders with powerful new features.
- **Limitter** provides a true "brickwall" limiter, ideal for mastering applications.
- The **Multiband Dynamics** device allows for upward or downward compression or expansion of up to three separate frequency bands.
- **Overdrive** is a powerful addition to Live's arsenal of distortion tools.
- **Frequency Shifter** combines frequency shifting and ring modulation effects in a single device.

1.2.5 New Library

- Live's **Library** is now stocked with a large collection of new creative tools including numerous device presets, loops and samples, construction kits and template Sets.

1.2.6 Online Collaboration Tools

- [Share Live Sets with other users](#) via a shared web area at [ableton.com](https://www.ableton.com).

1.2.7 Controllers

- Support for the [APC40](#) and [Novation Launchpad](#), which are dedicated controllers for Ableton Live.

1.2.8 More Improvements

- [Macro Controls](#) now automatically show the name and units of their mapped parameter whenever possible.
- a High-Quality mode has been added to the [Flanger](#) effect.
- [Third-party plug-in support](#) has been improved to allow access to an arbitrary number of parameters.
- it is now possible to [slice](#) based on the transients of the audio file.
- the [Ping Pong Delay](#) and [Simple Delay](#) effects now have three user-selectable delay transition modes.
- [Sampler's](#) waveshaper now offers a fourth curve type: "4bit."
- Multiple Live Packs can be uninstalled simultaneously, and the Browser can now sort content by the Live Pack that installed it.

Chapter 2

First Steps

When you install Live and run it for the first time, you will be presented with an authorization dialog. Please see the chapter on [authorizing Live](#) should you have questions or concerns during the authorization process.

If you do not (yet) own Live, you can still try out all of Live's features, but you will not be able to save or export your work.

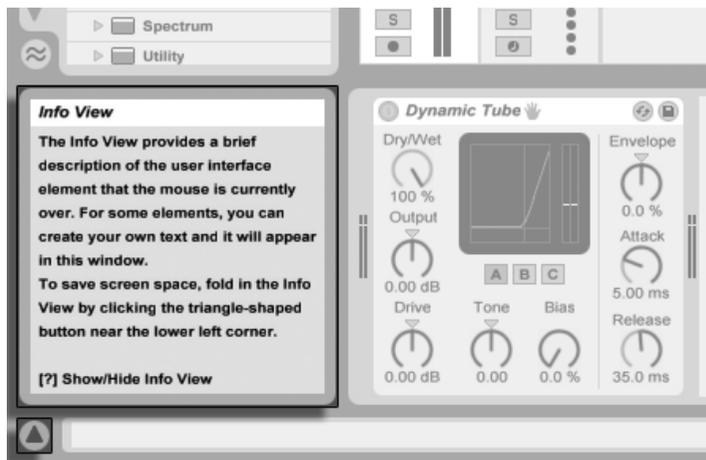
2.1 Learn About Live

Live comes with a set of interactive *lessons* to take you step by step through the key features of the program. The lessons are organized in a table of contents, which can be opened directly in the program via the Help menu. We highly recommend following the lessons. Many users have told us that the lessons helped them become familiar with the program very quickly.

We also recommend that you read the [Live Concepts chapter](#), which encapsulates everything that Live is and can do, and is therefore a worthwhile read for both beginners and experienced users. The remaining chapters of this manual serve as in-depth reference for the material introduced in Live Concepts.

2.1.1 Using the Info View and Index

Live's Info View tells you the name and function of whatever you place the mouse over. For certain items, you can create your own text and it will appear in this window.



The Info View and its Show/Hide Button.

If you require more information on a specific user interface element or topic, please consult this reference manual. The index, found at the end of the manual, contains the names of all user interface elements and will lead you to the relevant section.

2.2 Setting up Preferences

Live's Preferences window is where you can find various settings that determine how Live looks, behaves and interfaces with the outside world. This window is accessed from the Preferences command, which in Windows is available in the Options menu and in OS X is available in the Live menu. Preferences can also be accessed with the **Ctrl** + **P** (PC) / **⌘** + **P** (Mac) shortcut.

Live's Preferences are distributed over several tabs:

- In the Look/Feel tab, you can modify various settings, including the language used for

text display and the color scheme, or “skin,” for the Live user interface. This is also where you can adjust the size of objects displayed on the screen: the Zoom Display slider allows you to zoom Live’s screen to any percentage between 50% and 200% of the standard interface size.

- The Audio Preferences are used to set up Live’s audio connections with the outside world via an audio interface. Please take the time to follow the program’s built-in “Setting up Audio I/O” lesson, which will walk you through all the steps required to set up and optimize the settings for any given system. To access the lesson, use the Help View command from the Help menu.
- The MIDI/Sync Preferences are used to help Live recognize MIDI devices for three separate and distinct purposes:
 - *Playing MIDI notes.* To learn how to route an external device into Live for MIDI input, or how to send MIDI to an external device, please see the [Routing and I/O chapter](#).
 - *Controlling parts of the interface remotely.* This subject is covered in detail in the [MIDI and Key Remote Control chapter](#).
 - *Syncing the program* with an external sequencer or drum machine, either as a master or a slave. Please see the [Synchronizing via MIDI chapter](#) for details.
- The File/Folder Preferences pertain to Live’s [file management](#) and the location of [plug-in devices](#).
- The Record/Warp/Launch Preferences allow customizing the default state for [new Live Sets](#) and [their components](#), as well as selecting options for [new recordings](#).
- The CPU Preferences include options for managing the [processing load](#), including multicore/multiprocessor support.
- The User Account/Licenses Preferences are used to manage licensing and installation of [the Live platform](#), and add-on components like [the Operator instrument](#).
- The Library Preferences allow you to specify the location of Live’s [Library](#) and manage currently installed Live Packs.

2.3 The Main Live Screen

Most of your work in Live happens in the main Live screen. This screen consists of a number of views, and each view manages a specific aspect of your *Live Set*, which is the type of document that you create and work on in Live. Since screen space is usually limited, the Live views can't all be displayed at the same time.

Each one of the *selector buttons* at the screen borders calls up a specific view; clicking this one, for instance, opens Live's *Device Browser*:



The Device Browser Selector.

To hide one of Live's views and free up screen space, click on the triangle-shaped button next to it. To restore the view, click the button again.



A View Show/Hide Button.

You can run Live in Full Screen Mode by selecting the Full Screen command from the View menu. To leave Full Screen Mode, click the button that appears in the lower right corner of the screen. Full Screen Mode can also be toggled by pressing **F11**. (Note: On Mac OS X, this key is assigned by default to Exposé, and will not toggle Full Screen Mode unless Exposé has been deactivated or assigned to a different key in OS X's System Preferences.)

If one of the browser views is open, you can adjust the main window's horizontal split by dragging.