

## Music Production Kit: Beginners Guide!

The Akai MPC live 2 is a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) that includes a variety of amazing features. It's a fantastic tool for experts and beginners interested in music production and has a wide range of functionality. This tutorial is designed to introduce the basic functions of the MPC and utilize all the equipment in the music production kit.

New to MPC or music production? We highly recommend that beginners start with this video:

[Akai Professional MPC Live II | Overview](#) by AkaiProVideo on YouTube

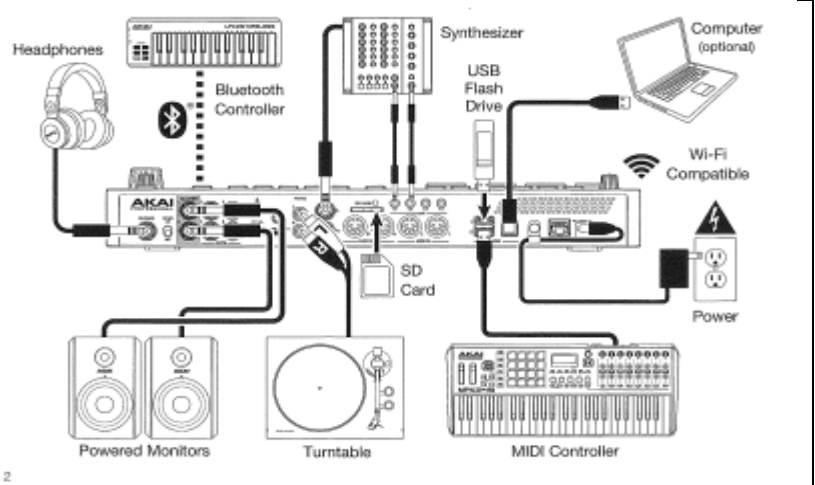
For a step-by-step guide through making a song, check out this video playlist:

[MPC Beats Academy | MPC Live II](#) by AkaiProVideo on YouTube

### Part 1: Equipment Set Up

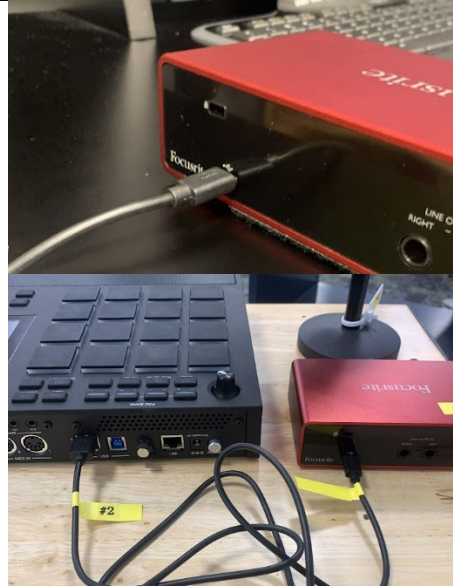
#### Power On!

- Plug in and power on the MPC with the button on the back.
- Insert your SD card or flash drive. Save any projects to your SD card or flash drive.
- **Any project saved to the internal MPC memory will be deleted.**
- The MPC will ask you to save projects before shutting off.



## Interface Set Up:

- Plug the cable labeled Focusrite into input 1 on the back of the MPC.
- Plug the other end into the back of the Focusrite interface.
- Connect the mic to the interface with the XLR cable.



- Make sure that the interface has the following settings:
  - 48V on and lit up (This gets power to the interface.).
  - Direct monitor on and lit up (This allows you to monitor sound coming through the mics.).
  - Monitor and headphone knob turned up (if you don't hear sound coming through the headphones, check that this is turned up).
  - Gain knob turned up (This controls the input level of the mic.).



**Note that when the interface is connected to the MPC. The sound will run through the interface and connected headphone not through the MPC speakers or MPC headphones.**

## MPK Mini Set Up:

- Plug the MPK mini into USB input 2 on the back of the MPC.
- No sound will come from the MPK until we are in the right settings for the MPC.



If you are using all the equipment from the music production kit, your set up may look like this picture:

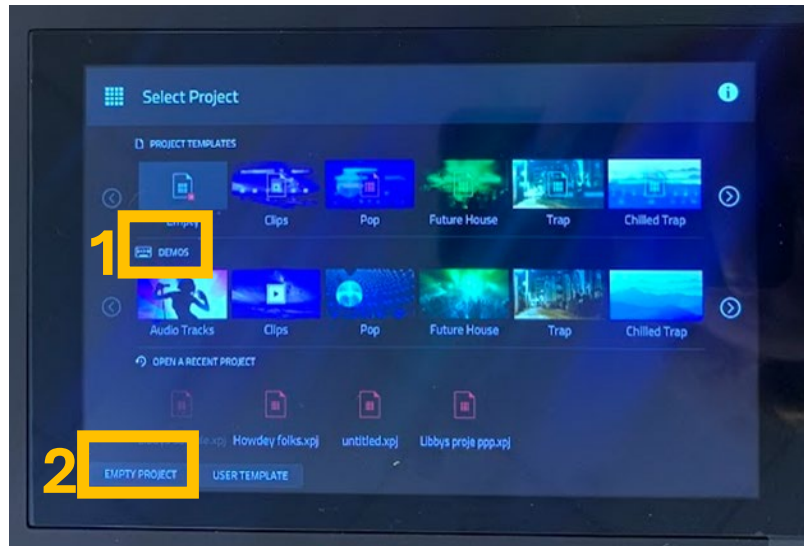
You could also bring your own equipment. For example, you could plug an electric guitar into the interface instead of the mic or bring your own midi keyboard.



## Part 2: Navigating the MPC

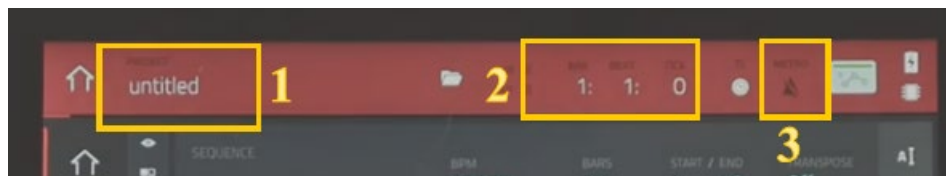
Navigate the MPC live by using the touch screen or scrolling through selections with the large dial on the bottom right and clicking to select options on the screen.

### Project Selection Page:



1. The project page has the option to play around with premade demos or create your own project. Demos will already have drum kits, sounds, and samples loaded and are a great place to start.
2. Click on empty project to start from scratch.

### Project Home Page, Top Bar:



1. Project title: to change the title, locate the row of buttons below the screen. Select **menu > save > project as**. **Only save projects on your SD card. Any projects saved internally will be deleted.**
2. Playback timing: This shows what measure and beat is being played during playback or editing.
3. Metronome: click on this to pull up the metronome menu. From there you can turn the metronome on or off, change the sound, rate, and recording settings.

## Project Home Page, Sequences, and Tracks:



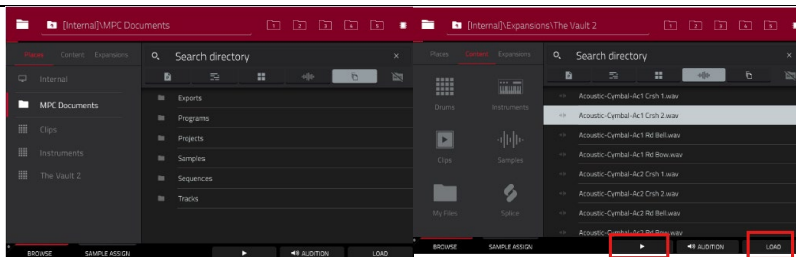
1. Sequence: Sequences make up the building blocks of a song. You could think of sequences as traditional parts of a song (i.e., verse, chorus, and outro). You can change the name of the sequence to the right and switch between sequences in the drop-down menu.
2. Tempo and Bars:
  - a. Change the tempo by lowering or raising beats per minute. BPM is sequence specific, meaning that 2 sequences can have different tempos. You can also use the **tap button** on the MPC to “tap” out the tempo of a sequence. **Press the button 3 times** at your desired tempo, and it will set the BPM to match.
  - b. Bars are the number of measures in a sequence. These are also sequence specific.
3. Tracks: Use this menu to move between tracks. Tracks with nothing recorded on them will be marked as unused. You can rename a track just like a sequence. Use the button at the bottom of the page to **add new tracks**. For more details on your recorded tracks select the **track menu** to the left.
4. Programs: Each track you create within a sequence is routed through a program. There are six types of programs, each of which determines how the track sounds or what it is used for. A single project can hold up to 128 programs. Check out the section on programs in the manual for more information.

# Part 3: Recording a Sequence with the MPC

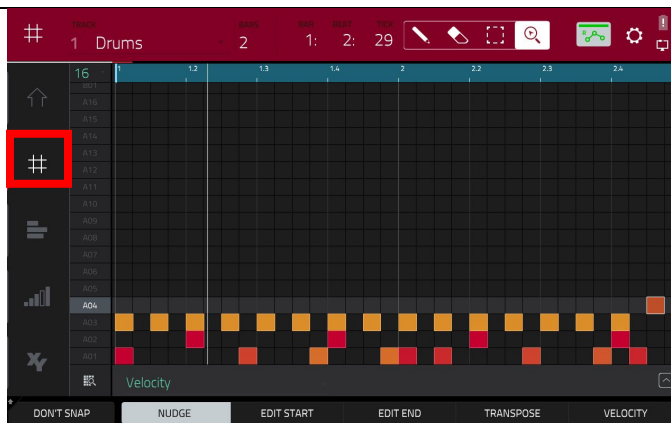
## Recording a Drum Track:

On the buttons below the screen hit **Shift+Menu/browse**

- Scroll through or search for different drum kits.
- Use the **play** button at the bottom to hear a kit sample.
- Press **load** to load that drum kit to your pads.



- Click on the 4 intersecting lines on the side bar to enter **grid mode**.
- Press the **tap** button 3 times at your preferred tempo to set the bpm.
- Press the **Rec button** to record-arm the sequence.
- Press the **Play button** to start the actual recording. You will hear the count-in for one measure before the recording starts.
- You can add more drum parts to this track, so don't feel the need to get everything in one take. Use the **Overdub** button instead of record to add to the track instead of overwriting what was previously recorded. Overdub lets you record additional note events over the existing sequence.



While in **grid mode**, the colorful dashes represent notes. Use these tools in grid view to edit your drum track:

- The **pencil** icon adds notes.
- The **eraser** deletes notes.
- The **select box** allows you to select a single note or a group of notes and move them up or down to change the sound or left or right to change the rhythm.
- The **magnifying glass** allows you to zoom in and out.



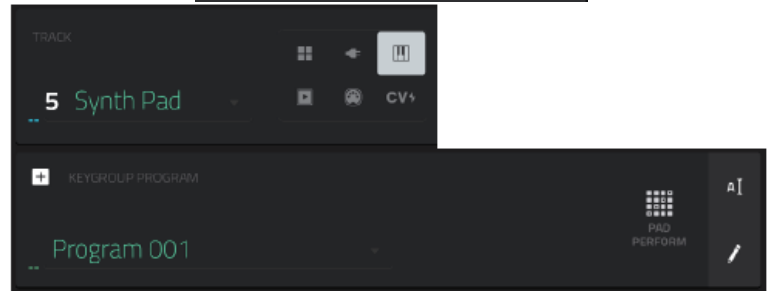
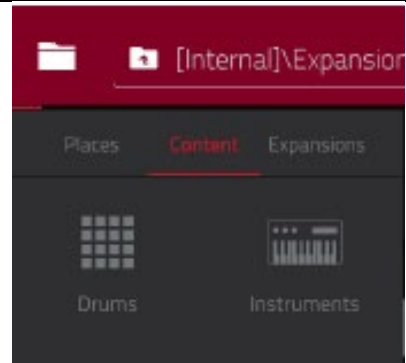


## Recording with the MPK Mini:

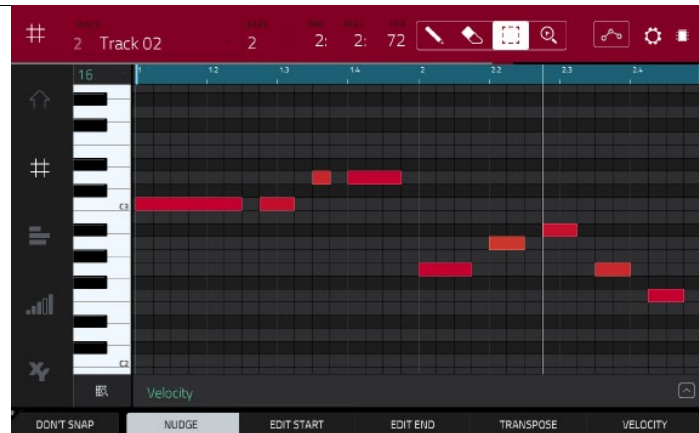
- Make sure the MPK is connected to input 1 or 2 on the back of the MPC.
- Check out the MPK mini manual for a guide to all the dials and buttons.
- From the main page, start a new track and select the **keyboard program**.



- Use **Shift+Menu/browse** and switch the **content** filter from drums to instruments to browse or search for different bass or synth sounds.
- Return to the main page and select your new sound program from the **keyboard program menu** at the bottom of the page.
- You can use the pads on the MPC to play a bass line or melody, but the MPK makes playing chromatically easier.
- Use the **octave buttons** on the MPK to raise or lower the octave range.



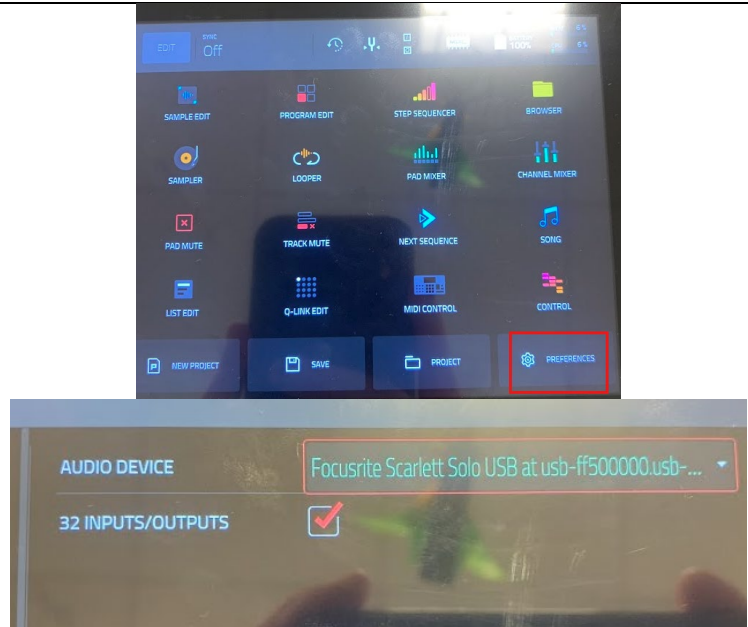
- Repeat the same recording process used for the drums.
- Use the grid mode to edit and change notes.



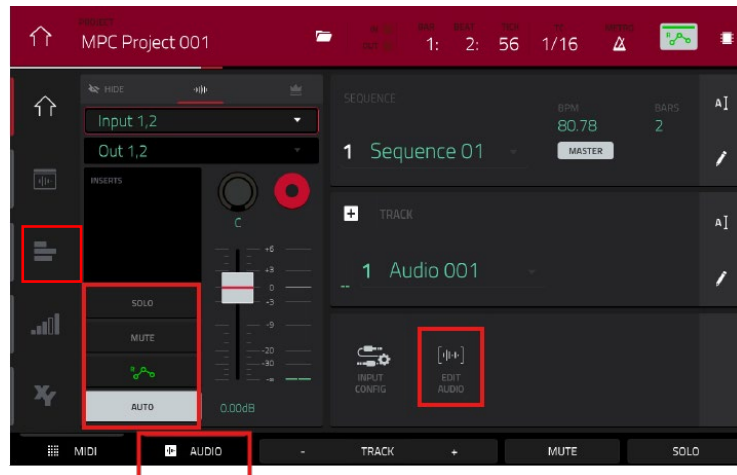
## Recording Vocals with the Mic:

### Checking the MPC audio settings:

- Make sure the Focusrite interface is plugged into input 1 or 2 on the back of the MPC and that the settings specified in section 1 are applied.
- Go to **Menu > preferences > audio device**.
- Change the audio device from internal to the Focusrite Scarlett Solo.
- **At this point, sound will run through the interface so make sure that your headphones are plugged into the Focusrite interface not the MPC.**

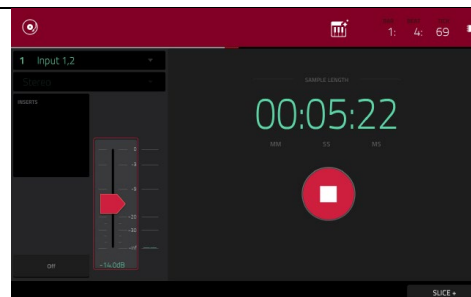


- Hit **menu** to return to the main view.
- Create a **new track** and select the **Audio** button at the bottom of the page.
- Make sure the settings below the inserts box match the picture.
- Record the audio track with **record + play** just like the previous tracks.
- Use the **edit audio** page to trim by changing when the recording starts and ends.
- Press the **hide button** at the top left to hide this menu.
- Press **Midi** in the bottom left to switch back to the drum and keyboard tracks.
- Use the **track view** on the left side to see all your tracks listed side by side.



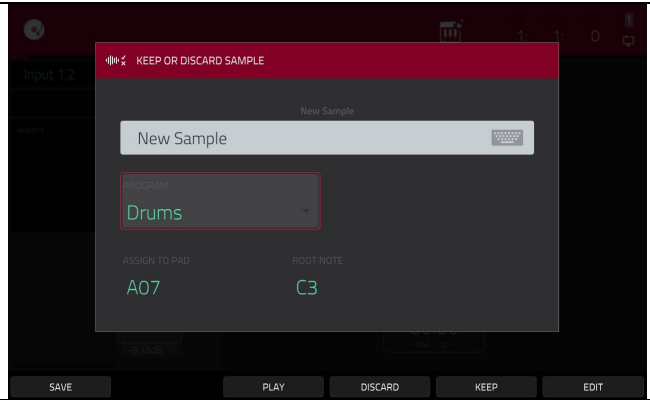
### Recording with the sampler (optional):

- Go to **Menu > sampler**.
- Click the **arm button** and then **record** to start recording.
- When you stop the recording, you will have the option to assign the sample to the drum pad by picking a **program** and a **pad number** to assign that sample to.



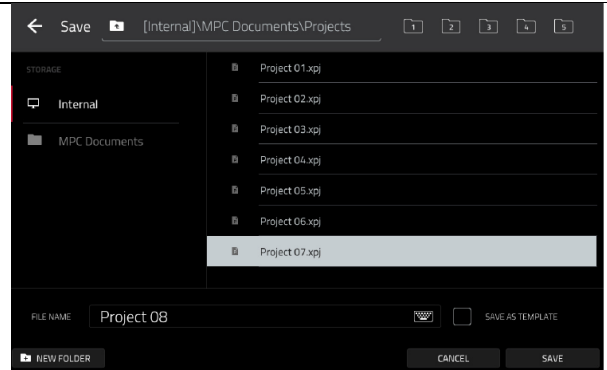


- Each pad has a number below the bottom-left corner.
- To use the sample in your sequence, return to **the main page** add a new drum track and make sure the **drum program** matches the **program** you saved the sample to.

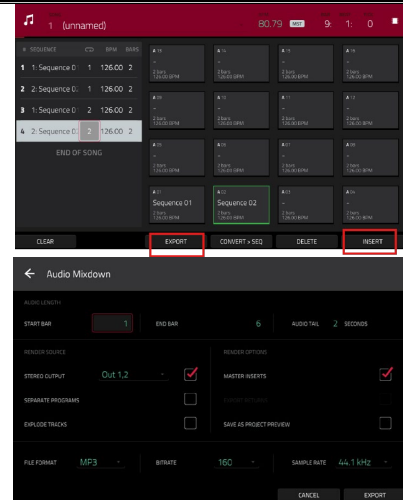


## Save and Export

- To **save** your project to your SD card or flash drive go to **menu > save**.
- You can save the entire project, the program, or the sequence, but make sure that you only save things to your SD card or flash drive.
- **Any projects or samples saved to the internal drive will be deleted.**



- To **export** your project, go to **menu > song**
- Click on **insert** to add you sequences and arrange them in any order.
- Click **export** to open the **Audio Mixdown** page.
- From here you can pick the file format.
- **MP3** files are great for sharing online.
- **WAV** files are good if you're going to continue editing on another software.
- Click **export** on the bottom right and save your file to your SD card or flash drive.
- To **eject** your SD card or flash drive go to **Shift+menu/browse > places** then hit the **eject button** next to the name of your device.
- Removing your SD card or flash drive without doing this can result in damaged files.



## Troubleshooting:

1. Check out the MPC manual in the Music Production Kit Binder. This is just a portion of the full MPC manual. Find the full version here:  
[Inmusic MPC live II guide](#)
2. For more tutorials and FAQs, check out the Akai support website:  
<https://support.akaipro.com/en/support/home>
3. For community help and support check out the MPC forums  
<https://www.mpc-forums.com/>

## Resources:

1. Want to learn more about DAWs and produce music at home? Check out our Synthesizer Maker Kits:  
<https://friscolibrary.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S159C379777>
2. Video Tutorials :
  - a. [MPC Beats Academy | MPC Live II](#) by AkaiProVideo on YouTube



- b. [MPC live for Beginners Playlist](#) by Matthew Stratton on YouTube



- c. [Akai MPC live 2 full workflow Instructional Video](#) by Sample kings on YouTube

