# Getting Started With Handy Drums – ABLETON LIVE



First, make sure that you have installed the Handy Drums plugins you intend to use so you can get started quickly.

Before using the software, you must authorize it by entering the serial number (license key) you received with your purchase. Here is how to authorize Handy Drums. Alternatively, you can run our plugins in a FREE TRIAL mode.

## Handy Drums Plugins: What they are and what they are not

Handy Drums are virtual drum instruments. They can be used as plugins inside DAWs or as standalone apps. Think of Handy Drums primarily as sound modules that can be played live using a MIDI controller or by routing MIDI loops into them. They are the software equivalent of acoustic drums and percussion instruments and, as such, require a “performer” to play them (either a human being or MIDI loops).

We designed Handy Drums to be straightforward to use and to give you a beautiful, produced, finished drum sound right from the get-go.

They can also be used as standalone apps on Windows and MacOS computers. In that case, you can

either play them live using MIDI controllers (eg, electronic drums) or by playing loops directly inside them using the built-in MIDI Loop Browser (Handy Drums v2.0+ only).

Handy Drums are not drum machines.

## How To Load Handy Drums Plugins Inside Ableton Live

### Rescan Plugins

We must tell Ableton Live where to look for our Handy Drums plugin. If you have never added third-party VST plugins to Ableton before, you only have to do this once.

- Go to **Options > Preferences** (WIN) and select the **"Plugins"** vertical tab.
- Click on the **"Use VST3 Plug-Ins System Folders"**.

If you **didn't change** the default location during installation of Handy Drums in Windows, the plugins will be in:

- VST3
  *C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3\GoranGrooves\Handy Drums*
- VST2
  *C:\Program Files\VSTPlugIns\GoranGrooves\Handy Drums*

**MACOS** installers do not allow for installation directory selection, and the plugins will be installed in:

- VST3 Plugin:
  *Mac HD > Library > Audio > Plug-Ins > VST3 > GoranGrooves > Handy Drums*
- VST2 Plugin:
  *Mac HD > Library > Audio > Plug-Ins > VST > GoranGrooves > Handy Drums*

If you installed plugins to a custom directory (Windows):

- Click the **"Browse"** button to choose the folder where your Handy Drums VST3 is installed, and turn on the **"Use VST3 Plug-ins custom folder"** button if it doesn't automatically select.

Ableton Live will scan the folder and make plugins available.

Embedded media: https://cdn.library.gorangrooves.com/wp-content/uploads/20241003110305/Enable-plugins-add-vst3-folder-scan-ableton-live.mp4

## Load Handy Drums plugins

Once the plugins are scanned, you can proceed to the next step: load Handy Drums.

We'll show you how to do it in the arrangement view.

In Ableton Live, MIDI and Instrument Tracks are combined, so Handy Drums are loaded onto a MIDI track. (In other DAWs, this is commonly referred to as an "Instrument track.")

- If you don't have any available MIDI tracks, you should create one by going to **Create > Insert Midi track**
- Open the browser window on the left panel and navigate to **"Plug-Ins**."
- Go to the GoranGrooves folder and select the Handy Drums plugin of choice.
- Drag the plugin of choice onto the track of choice.

The plugin will load, and the user interface should open.

Embedded media: https://cdn.library.gorangrooves.com/wp-content/uploads/20241003110308/Load-virtual-instrument-to-midi-track-in-arrangement-view-ableton-live.mp4

You can also always open it by clicking on the little spanner icon of the plugin in the lower zone.

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## Playing a Drum Loop Through Handy Drums

To play a drum groove through the Handy Drums plugins, drop an existing MIDI drum performance

onto a MIDI track with a Handy Drums instrument loaded, or create/program a performance from scratch right on your MIDI track.

## Audition and import

The most practical way to preview and import MIDI drum loops into Ableton Live is to use Handy Drums' built-in MIDI LOOP BROWSER.

Open the MIDI LOOP BROWSER by clicking on its button in the lower left portion of the GUI. Browse any MIDI loops on your computer, and drag the desired file directly onto your MIDI track from the orange drag area.

Embedded media: https://cdn.library.gorangrooves.com/wp-content/uploads/20240104173903/handy-drums-v2-midi-loop-browser-previewer.mp4

See the dedicated MIDI LOOP BROWSER documentation for details on what you can do and how to use this functionality.

## Locate and Import

Alternatively, you can locate the MIDI file you want to import using your folder browser (or Finder on Mac), then drag the file directly onto your MIDI track at the desired position on the timeline.

However, this method does not allow you to audition MIDI loops before importing them into your project.

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## Enabling Plugin Multiple Outputs inside Ableton Live

To set up multiple outputs in Ableton Live, do the following:

- Inside Handy Drums, decide which stereo output you want each component to reach. For example, Kick 1+2, Snare 3+4.

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- Using Ableton's browser in the left zone, select **Instruments > External Instrument** and drag as many of those as you need channels into an empty space in the arrangement window.

This will create several tracks you'll need to connect to the Handy Drums stereo outputs that were previously routed.

Embedded media: https://cdn.library.gorangrooves.com/wp-content/uploads/20241003110254/Create-external-virtual-vst-software-instrument-channels-ableton-live.mp4

To stay better organized, rename those "ext instrument" tracks to meaningful component names we will connect them to, such as Snare, Hat, etc.

Embedded media: https://cdn.library.gorangrooves.com/wp-content/uploads/20241003110324/Rename-tracks-ableton-live.mp4