Getting Started With Handy Drums Plugins – PRO TOOLS

To use Handy Drums software in Pro Tools, you must install an AAX plugin format for Handy Drums on your computer (Pro Tools does not support VST or AU plugins). Here is how.

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 use Handy Drums in 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 Inside Pro Tools

In Pro Tools, virtual instruments are loaded into "**Instrument Tracks**."

Step 1

To load a virtual instrument into an Instrument Track, under the main menu, select **Track > New** and then make the following selections:

Under the channel configuration menu, select "**Stereo**" (for this example).

Under the track type menu, select "**Instrument Track**," leave the other two fields as default, or give the track a name such as "drums."

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Step 2

Load a Handy Drums virtual instrument into the newly-created Instrument Track's "**insert**" slot.

! The insert slots may be hidden by default, and to make them visible, go to the main menu:

View > Edit Window Views> inserts A-E.

A column of available inserts will appear in the Instrument Track, and the Handy Drums GUI should open automatically.

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You can also always open it by clicking on the insert where it is plugged in.

Audition the plugin sounds to ensure everything is installed and connected correctly.

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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 loop onto an Instrument track with the Handy Drums instrument loaded as described previously or create a loop from scratch right on your Instrument track. With Handy Drums' MIDI Loop Browser, you can preview any MIDI drum loops before importing them directly into Pro Tools via drag-n-drop.

Audition MIDI Loops Before Importing Into DAW Project

Beginning with Handy Drums v2.0, all plugins and standalone apps come with a built-in MIDI Loop Browser. This allows you to browse and audition any drum loops on your system and then import them via simple drag-n-drop.

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It is shown here in Cubase but with identical functionalities in all DAWs.

In addition to previewing and importing MIDI loops, the functionality can also bookmark any folders or loops for quick access. It can also sync tempo and playback controls with your DAW and allows you to play MIDI files inside Handy Drums without the need for a DAW.

The dedicated document covers the MIDI Loop Browser in detail. Make sure to read it to fully take advantage of its capabilities.

We will also mention two ways to import existing MIDI loops into Pro Tools without the ability to audition them first.

Native Pro Tools MIDI File Import- Option 1

Find the loop you want to import using your folder browser (or finder if on Mac). Drag the desired loop directly onto your instrument track and into a desired position on the timeline.

Embedded media: https://cdn.library.gorangrooves.com/wp-content/uploads/20231113125657/Drag-and-drop-midi-loop-inside-pro-tools.mp4

Native Pro Tools MIDI File Import- Option 2

Select **File > Import > MIDI** from the main menu**,** browse to your desired loop, and click **import**.

A pop-up window will appear, asking you to choose a few options.

For destination, you can either select Instrument Track or Midi Track.

The difference is that the Instrument Track must have a virtual instrument directly loaded into it (as demonstrated earlier).

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In contrast, the MIDI track must be **connected** to an existing instrument track. This second choice can be helpful if you want several different midi beats playing the same drum kit.

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We will leave the other options unchecked, but they can be helpful depending on the use case.

Whatever option you choose, you can also drag your newly imported MIDI information onto your previously created Handy Drums Instrument Track.

Set The MIDI Track Channel

To set the MIDI track channel in Pro Tools, do the following:

1 - We need to pull the "Instrument options" into view as they are hidden by default. Since we are working in the Edit window for now, click **View > Edit Window Views > Instrument**.

2 - A new section called "Instrument" should now become visible on our track, where you can select the desired MIDI output channel by clicking on the lower button (midi output selector) and navigating to channel 10.

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Enabling Plugin Multiple Outputs Inside Pro Tools

To set up Handy Drums with multiple outputs, we must create additional Instrument Tracks and manually route their inputs to accept Handy Drums outputs.

Step 1

We must make the I/O section of our tracks visible by going to

View > Edit Window Views > I/O and confirm it has a checkmark next to it.

Embedded media: https://cdn.library.gorangrooves.com/wp-content/uploads/20231113125718/Make-I-O-slot-visible-Pro-Tools.mp4

Step 2

Create as many new instrument tracks as you need stereo outputs from Handy Drums.

- Load the Handy Drums plugin into the insert of the **first** instrument track only.
- Then, for the next instrument track in the "**Input**" slot of the I/O section, navigate to:
  Plug In > Handy Drums > Channel 3+4

This will ensure the Handy Drums plugin **output 3+4** corresponds to this new channel's **input 3+4**.

- Repeat the process for all of the output tracks you created for routing Handy Drums (ie, 5+6, 7+8, and so on).

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Step 3

Inside the Handy Drums GUI, click on the Routing button and route the individual instruments to the desired outputs.

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It is a good practice to name the individual instrument tracks to match the components inside Handy Drums that are routed to them (eg. snare, kick, etc,).

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Now that everything works well, let us dive deeper into Handy Drums features and functionalities.