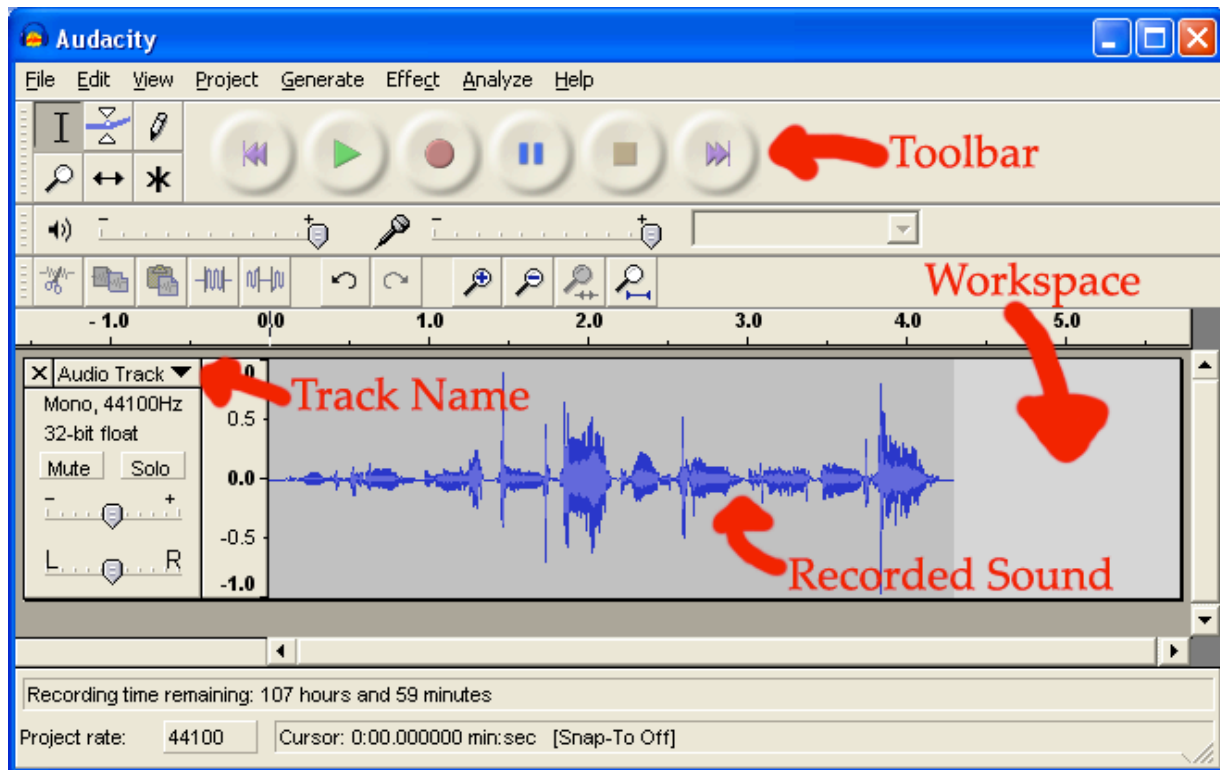


Sound Editing with Audacity – Basic instructions

This was written with users of Audacity 1.2.5 in mind; earlier versions, as well as the 1.3 beta versions, are not substantially different for the beginner, so don't worry too much at this point about what version you're using. Current software versions can be downloaded for free at <http://sourceforge.audacity.org>.

Step 1: Getting Started

When you first open Audacity, you'll be presented with the main window for the program. The Audacity interface is composed of two main areas: the toolbar and the workspace (see figure below). The toolbar is where you'll find buttons for recording, stopping, and playing back your recording. The workspace is where your audio tracks will appear—this is where you can see visual representations of the sound you're recording on a timeline.



It's a good idea to save your work as soon as you start a new project, so that you get into the habit of saving your work as you go. To save your file, go to the **File** menu and select **Save Project As...** Create a name under which to save your project file, and click OK. Audacity creates a file with an *.aup* extension that stores all the necessary information to reconstruct the project, as well as a new folder for all of the audio data; this folder will automatically have the same name as your project file. It is extremely important that, if you are transferring your project between different computers, you'll want to transfer not only the project file (with the *.aup* extension), but also the folder with the same name as your project. This folder can easily be quite larger (an hour's worth of audio can be around 1.5 GB of data).

Step 2: Recording sound

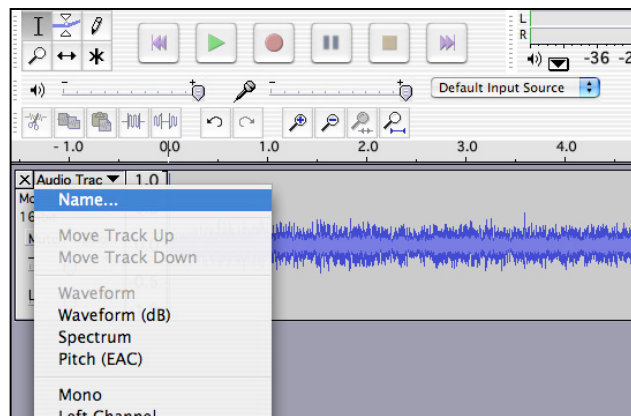
In order to record, you'll need to have a microphone plugged into your computer. Some microphones can be plugged into your USB port—others may plug into a microphone jack (it looks like a standard headphone jack on many computers: on a PC, it is often colored pink,

and is found on the side of a laptop or the back of a desktop computer). Some computers, such as Apple's iBook or PowerBook, for example, have built-in microphones. If you are not sure whether or not you need a microphone, refer to your computer's documentation for more information.

When you are ready to record, press the red circular **Record** button on the toolbar. Audacity creates a new track in the workspace and begins recording the session. As you talk into the microphone, you can see the sound waves appearing on the current track in the workspace.

If, at any time, you need to pause the recording, just press the **Pause** button (the two purple vertical bars on the toolbar) to temporarily halt the recording, then press the button again to resume. Once you are finished recording the track, you can press the **Stop** button (the yellow square) to end the recording.

After recording, you can give the track a name in order to help distinguish it in the current project. This is a good way to keep multiple tracks organized, since you may end up with many of them. To change the name of a particular track, click on the arrow next to the label **Audio Track** on the top left corner of the audio track in the workspace. If you click on the **Name...** option, a dialog box will appear and ask you to what you want to change the name of your track. After entering the new name and clicking the OK button, the new name of the track will appear in place of the old **Audio Track** label.



Whenever you press **Record**, Audacity automatically creates a new track immediately below the most recent track. If you would like to add new material to the end of a track, first record the material on a new track. Then highlight the entire new track by clicking and dragging your mouse, select **Copy** from the **Edit** menu. Click your mouse at the end of the track to which you want to append the copied material, and then select **Paste** from the **Edit** menu. Audacity will copy the new material over to the end of the target track.

Step 3: Playing and Editing your Project

To play back your recording, click the **Play** button (the green triangle on the toolbar). Audacity starts playback from the current position of the trackhead – that is, wherever the thin vertical line is on your workspace.

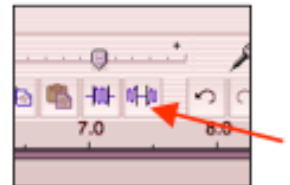
- To start at the beginning of your recording, click the **Back** button (the purple double arrows at the far left of the toolbar).
- To play only a selected part of the track, highlight the section by clicking and dragging your mouse over it, then press the **Play** button.

In general, Audacity plays all of the tracks in the project simultaneously; this is usually what you want to do, but while you're editing, it's often useful to listen only to a particular track or tracks.

- To prevent a particular track from being played, click the Mute button on the options bar to the left of the track.
- To play only one particular track, select the Solo button on the options bar to the right of the track.

Audacity has many functions that enable complex editing. The following is just the very basics to get you started; to learn more about using Audacity to mix your recording, using fades, filters, and other effects, check this out:

- To erase a select part of a track, highlight the segment of the track by clicking and dragging over it, then press the Delete key on the keyboard. Audacity removes that portion of the track, just as if you had stopped recording during that time, effectively making the entire track shorter.
- To mute the sound on part of a track, but without shortening or changing the timeline of the track, you will want to replace the sound with silence. Highlight the desired segment, then click the silence button on the toolbar (see right).
- To remove an entire track, click on the "X" on the upper-left corner of the desired track.
- To keep only a particular section of a track, highlight the portion, go to the **Edit** menu, and select **Trim**. This will remove all of the audio on the track except for the highlighted portion.
- If you want to shift a particular track on the timeline, select the **Time Line Tool** (see right) in the upper left hand corner of the window. Once selected, you can click and drag the track to adjust its position on the timeline.



Step 4: Encoding Your Recording

Once you are done editing your recording, you will want to encode the recording in a format that is easy to play back and small enough to move around easily. In Audacity, this is done by *exporting* your project file. Ordinarily, you will want to export your project into MP3 format, the most common format for digital audio playback.

1. Go to the **File** menu and select **Export as MP3...** A pop-up window appears, asking for the name and location you'd like for the new file.
2. Make sure you select a target folder that you can locate easily (i.e. the Desktop), then type a name and click **Save**.
3. A dialog box appears, titled **Edit the ID3 tags for the MP3 file**. These fields are used to store information about the file that other programs, like iTunes or Windows Media Player can read and use. Enter the title of your recording in the **Title** field, and place your name in the **Artist** field. Entering information in the other fields is up to you – the more information you provide, the easier it will be for others to find your materials.
4. Once done, click **OK**.

Note: Before you are able to export your project to MP3 format, you need to add a special file to your Audacity program folder. Directions on how to do this are available at <http://audacity.sourceforge.net>.