
Chapter 2: Basics II

Pro Tools

App 2

Nov 17, 2015

Overview

By the end of this chapter you should understand the concepts of importing audio. This chapter will be discussing grid and metronome options in Pro Tools. This chapter also covers your transport window in more detail as well as your editing modes and editing tools.

Importing Audio

Sometimes you will need to import audio files into Pro Tools from any number of sources. The more information we can get about the file before we import the better!

Things you'll want to look for are Sample Rate, Bit Depth and File format.

Example of a .WAV file in finder:

Name	ACCOUSTIC.dup...
Kind	Waveform audio
Size	1.6 MB
Created	2015-06-21
Modified	2015-06-21
Last opened	2015-06-21
Duration	00:11
Sample rate	48,000
Bits per sample	24

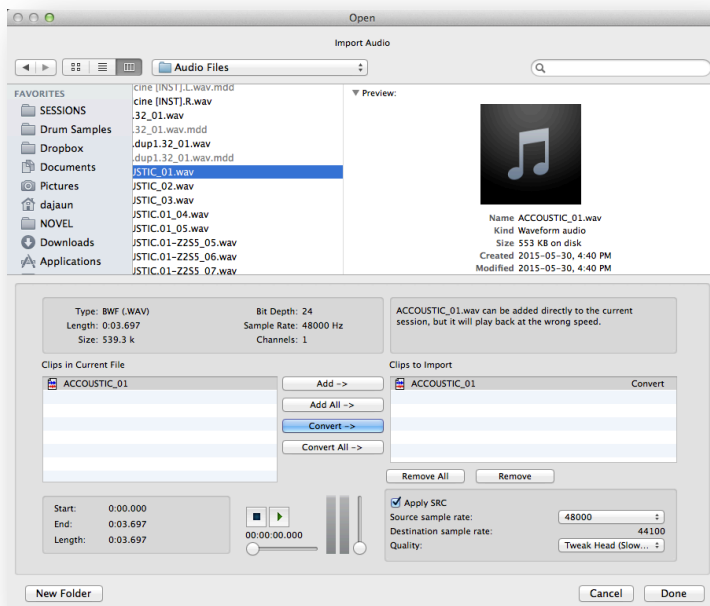
Just by looking at the file in finder we can see all the information we need before we import the file into pro tools.

Now that we know some basic information about the file we can go ahead and open our import audio file dialog box.

From the top menu bar you can Select File > Import > Audio File.

Or use the Quick Key*

You should now be looking at your import audio dialog box.



Within this window you can select multiple audio files to import. You'll notice that the

Chapter 1 Review:

Create a new session by pressing Command + N

information we found earlier is also displayed here. This may NOT always be the case. In some unique situations pro tools will not be able to identify the file type or information. If you have established audition paths in your I/O you can even listen to the audio files now. We will be discussing that later in this chapter. The left side of the dialog box shows audio files you have currently selected. The right side of the dialog box shows audio files you have marked for import. You have a choice to add, add all, convert, or convert all of your files. Add, when available, will give you the option to add a file to your session without copying it to the active audio files folder. This option links the audio file to the session but DOES NOT copy it to the session. Add All does the same thing but for all selected files.

Convert/Copy

If the file selected shows the button as copy then Pro Tools has automatically detected that the audio file's sample rate and bit depth are identical to that of the session. If the Convert option is show in place of copy then you will have to pay attention to the SRC (Sample Rate Conversion) settings. Pro Tools will automatically detect the sample rate of the file however you can force different sample rates which is helpful if the original recording session was clocked improperly or can be used creatively for pitch and time effects. For the most part these settings can be ignored because Pro Tools will automatically handle them for you. It is important to be aware of their existence in the event you are importing sessions from multiple sources. If you are importing audio from multiple sources you may want to import them separately, if you apply one blanket SRC to a whole set of files you may end up importing some files incorrectly resulting in the wrong playback speed.

Basic Navigation

Zoom in the time scale on a track: Command +]

Zoom out the time scale on a track: Command + [

Increase Waveform size: Command + Option +]

Decrease Waveform size: Command + Option + [

Using the scroll wheel on a mouse you can zoom in and out by holding option on the keyboard. You can also increase or decrease the size of the waveform by holding option + shift + scroll wheel.

The Expanded Transport Window

The expanded transport window floats around allowing you to place it anywhere on the computer screen. Here you will also find pre and post roll controls, you can manually input a bar beat position or a time code position. You can also define the global tempo of a session, or instruct pro tools to follow a dynamic tempo that follows the conductor track.

To access the transport window you can find it under the Window dropdown menu or use the Quick Key.

Quick Keys:

Zoom In:

Command +]

Zoom Out:

Command + [

Scroll zoom In & Out:

Option + Scroll Wheel

Increase Waveform size:

Command + Option +]

Decrease Waveform size:

Command + Option + [

Scroll Adjust Waveform size:

Option + Shift + Scroll Wheel

Import Audio:

Command + Shift + I



Quick Keys:

Open Transport Window:
Command + Number Pad 1

Enable Loop Playback:
Command + Shift + L

Looking at your playback and record controls you may recognize some from the top menu transport. If you right click on the play button you will see that there are multiple play options. Half Speed, Prime for playback, Loop and Dynamic Transport.

Half-Speed: This function simply plays back the audio at half the speed.

Prime for Playback: Prime for playback is not a persistent function, meaning it will have to be selected every time you want to use it. The main purpose for prime for playback is when you have sessions with large track counts that are bogging down the system. When prime for playback is selected the computer will preload everything that is needed for the system to play instantaneously. Pro Tools indicates that it has been primed for playback when the stop button is illuminated.

Loop: Loop playback will continuously replay the same selection on repeat until the user interrupts the system by pressing stop.

Record Modes:

There are 4 different record modes in pro tools all accessible by right clicking on the record button.

Normal: Records normally without any special functions.

Loop: Loop record will continually loop over a timeline selection and automatically record each take to a unique playlist.

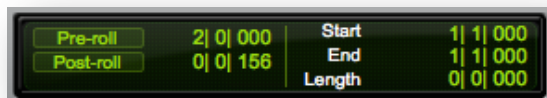
Quick Punch: Quick punch puts Pro Tools in a state where it is always recording as long as the system is playing back. When in loop record the engineer can play back the audio previously recorded then punch in allowing whatever is currently being performed. The engineer may then punch out returning to whatever previously recorded material was on the track. Quick Punch is a non-destructive recording system. Non-destructive means that nothing is lost, no audio file are erased or rewritten. Everything will be stored and is available in the clips bin.

Destructive: Destructive recording is not recommended! This option allows you to rewrite audio files permanently. When recording destructively previous recordings and information are lost forever!

Definitions:

Punch In/Out:

A recording technique used on multi-track recordings where a portion of the performance is overdubbed onto a previously recorded tape or hard drive, usually overwriting any sound that had previously been on the track used.



Pre and Post Roll options.

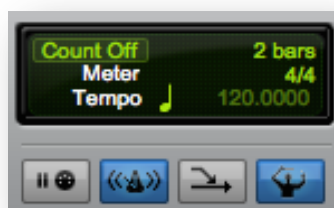
When recording alone an engineer can program pre and post roll options so that the computer can punch the recording in and out automatically. Pre and Post roll options will follow your main counter settings which can be changed from Bars/Beats to Minutes/Seconds, Feet/Frames, Time code or Samples.

To use pre and post roll simply enter the amount of pre-roll desired and the amount of post roll desired. You can automatically select how much pre or post roll you want to set by option + clicking before or after your selection.

You can toggle pre and post roll on and off with the Quick Key!

Midi Controls:

Within the midi controls on the transport you'll find a count off option that will count off 2 bars or whatever you manually input before starting playback/recording. You will also see global meter and tempo options if you choose not to use the conductor track.



There are four buttons across the bottom from left to right. Wait for note, Metronome, Midi Merge, and Conductor Track.

1. Wait for note – When selected Pro Tools will wait for midi input before putting the system into record
2. Metronome – This toggles the midi for the metronome on or off. Click to enable or use the Quick Key!
3. Midi Merge – When midi merge is enabled pro tools will add midi to an already existing track. When disabled pro tools will erase previous midi and write new midi commands in.
4. Conductor Track – When enabled pro tools will follow the tempo and meter options in the conductor track and ignore the global tempo and meter.

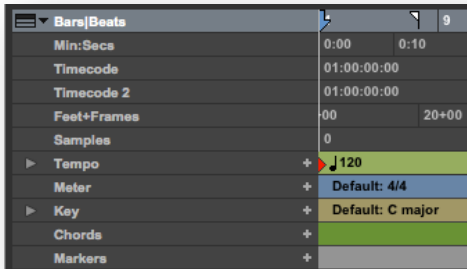
Quick Keys:

Toggle Quick Punch:
Command + K

Metronome Toggle:
Number Pad 7

Grids and Metronomes

At the top left corner of the edit window you will find all of your grid options. From the drop down menu you can select



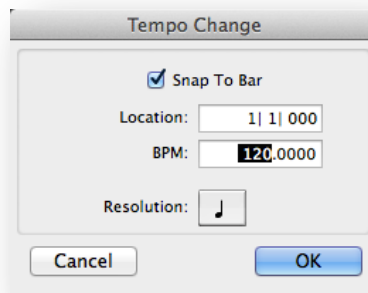
Bars/Beats, Minutes Seconds, Timecode, Timecode 2, Feet+Frames or Samples. Whichever of these options is highlighted light grey is what the edit window will follow.

Here you will also find your tempo and meter conductor tracks. You can input tempo and meter

changes by selecting the point in the timeline where you want to make the change. Then clicking the plus sign beside either the tempo or meter track. The tempo track can be expanded into a draw view where you can pencil in tempo changes. Pro tools also offers Key, chord and Marker rulers where you can input information for use later.

Tempo Changes:

After clicking the plus sign on the tempo changes ruler the Tempo Change dialogue box will appear.



Snap To bar tells pro tools to force the tempo change to happen on the down beat, or on the 1 in the bar.

Location tells Pro Tools which bar/beat to put the tempo change at.

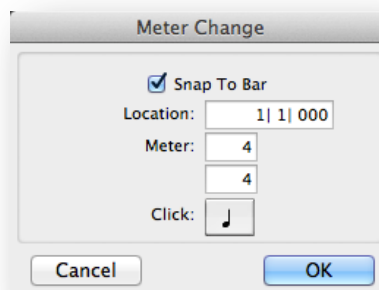
BPM (Beats Per Minute) is where you enter what you would like the new tempo to be.

Resolution identifies which note gets the beat. The default is Quarter notes. So for example if you have the BPM at 120 you will get 120 beats per minute and each of those beats will be identified as a quarter note on the grid.

Meter Changes:

Just as with tempo changes meter changes also have a snap to bar and location option which functions just the same.

In the meter boxes you will see two places to enter integers. The top number identifies how many beats in the bar. The bottom number identifies what kind of note gets the beat. So the default 4/4 shows us that we will have 4 beats in the



bar and each of those beats will be a quarter note.

The click option tells the midi beat clock which notes to click on. If you have it set to quarter note then there will be a click on every quarter note. If you have it set to an eighth note then there will be a click on every eighth note etc.

Editing Modes

There are 4 main editing modes in pro tools.

Shuffle Mode: This mode will dynamically move audio in the session. When deleting or cutting a section the audio in the selected playlist will shuffle back filling the selected space.



Spot: Spot mode brings up a dialogue box that allows you to input exact locations for audio clips. It also has an option to restore the audio clips to the location where they were originally recorded.

Slip: Slip mode allows you to move audio freely within the session.

Grid: Grid mode will snap audio to the grid.

Sub Editing Modes

Absolute Grid vs Relative Grid: By default the grid mode is in Absolute mode. Absolute mode locks audio to exact grid lines. Relative Grid will move clips that do not begin or end on a grid relatively to another grid point without having to be exactly on the grid. Relative grid can be handy for moving vocals around from one section to the next where you want to maintain your position within the bar by copy it to another bar.

Shuffle Grid: Using Shuffle by itself can be dangerous because by default shuffle works off of a slip principal. With either Shuffle or Grid selected you can hold shift and then click the other to combine the two options. This will operate with all the rules of shuffle mode but will snap to the grid in pro tools.

Slip Grid: Slip grid may seem silly but it is extremely useful if you find yourself switching between the two. Enable slip grid by selecting one, holding shift and then selecting the other. Once you've enabled slip grid pro tools will operate as though it is in grid mode until you hold the Command key then it will instantly switch into slip operation.

Quick Keys:

Shuffle Mode: F1

Slip Mode: F2

Spot Mode: F3

Grid Mode: F4

Toggle Editing Mode: ~

Editing Tools



- Zoomer Tool: The Zoomer Tool simply zooms the edit window to whatever selection you make.
- Single Zoom: Works just like the regular zoom tool but after you use it once it returns to whichever tool you were using previously.
- Trim Tool: The Trim Tool can be used to trim the beginnings and ends of audio and midi clips.
- TCE Tool: The TCE Tool appears in the dropdown menu of the trim tool. This tool will stretch or shrink audio freely.
- Loop Tool: The loop tool will loop an audio or midi clip out as far as you pull it.
- Selector Tool: The selector tool allows you to make selections within the edit window. Once selections are made you can cut, copy, paste or delete them.
- Grabber Tool: The default grabber tool is the time grabber tool. With the time grabber tool you can drag whole clips around in the edit window.
- Separation Grabber Tool: Found in the grabber tool sub-menu the separation grabber tool will automatically cut the clips at the beginning and end of your selection so that you can then move it freely within the edit window.
- Object Grabber Tool: The object grabber tool moves clips around while maintain separations and gaps. The object grabber allows you to place multiple clips simultaneously.
- Scrubber Tool: The scrubber tool will playback audio dynamically as you drag the cursor across.
- Pencil Tool: The pencil tool has a multitude of subsettings: Freehand, Line, Triangle, Square, Random, Parabolic and S-Curve. The Pencil tool can be used for repairing waveforms, drawing in automation, drawing in midi and plenty of other places too!

Quick Keys:

Zoomer Tool: F5

Trim Tool: F6

Selector Tool: F7

Grabber Tool: F8

Scrubber Tool: F9

Pencil Tool: F10

Multi-Tool: Combination of any two F6, F7 or F8

Cycle Editing Tools: ESC

Quick Keys:

Zoom In:

Command +]

Zoom Out:

Command + [

Scroll zoom In & Out:

Option + Scroll Wheel

Increase Waveform size:

Command + Option +]

Decrease Waveform size:

Command + Option + [

Scroll Adjust Waveform size:

Option + Shift + Scroll Wheel

Import Audio:

Command + Shift + I

Open Transport Window:

Command + Number Pad 1

Enable Loop Playback:

Command + Shift + L

Shuffle Mode: F1

Spot Mode: F2

Slip Mode: F3

Grid Mode: F4

Toggle Editing Mode: ~

Zoomer Tool: F5

Trim Tool: F6

Selector Tool: F7

Grabber Tool: F8

Scrubber Tool: F9

Pencil Tool: F10

Multi-Tool: Combination of any two F6, F7 or F8

Cycle Editing Tools: ESC