

Introduction

Thank you for purchasing the Flex Beat plugin effect. Flex Beat is a new plugin from Akai Professional that allows you to warp pitch, time, and volume of any audio source in your DAW. Rearrange and create beat chops, add DJ-style scratches and trance gates, or reverse and half-time audio with ease.

This user guide explains the features and functions of the plugin instrument. For more information on using this plugin with other software, please refer to your software's documentation for adding and using plugin instruments.

System Requirements & Product Support

Flex Beat supports VST, VST3, and AU formats.

For complete system requirements and compatibility information, visit akaipro.com.

For technical support, visit akaipro.com/support.

Installation and Setup

1. Double-click the **.exe** (Windows) or **.pkg** (macOS) file you downloaded. Follow the on-screen instructions to install the software.
2. Open a supported DAW host software.
3. Open your software's Preferences, Options, or other menu to scan for Flex Beat as a new plugin. Consult your software's documentation for more information.
4. In your project, add Flex Beat as an insert effect to any audio or MIDI track, and then open the plugin window.
5. Click **Sign In** to sign into your inMusic Brands Profile using your Internet browser. If you do not have an inMusic Brands Profile yet, you will be prompted to create one.
6. Once you have signed in, click **Activate** in the plugin window to enter your serial key to unlock the plugin. You can unlock each plugin on up to three devices at a time.
7. If you do not have a serial key, you can click **Try Unlicensed** to explore the plugin with intermittent audio alerts. You can also click **10-Day Trial** to initiate a free, fully featured trial of the plugin for 10 days.

If you would like to purchase a serial key, click the link to purchase a license at profile.inmusicbrands.com.

To deauthorize Flex Beat from a device, open the plugin application, click the Flex Beat logo in the upper-left corner of the window, and then click **Deauthorize**. The plugin will return to demo mode with intermittent audio alerts. The next time you open the plugin, you will be prompted again to sign into your account and authorize the plugin.

Operation

Overview



1. **Performance Pads:** Use these 16 pads to apply a preset to the current audio. See [Operation > Performance Pads](#) for more information.
2. **Library:** Click this icon to open the Library, where you can browse effect presets to add to the performance pads. See [Operation > Library](#) for more information.
3. **Grid Editor:** Use the grid editor to create new patterns of time and volume effects. The length of the grid is equal to one bar at the tempo of your project. See [Operation > Grid Editor](#) for more information.
4. **Editing Tools:** Use these tools to edit the current preset. See [Operation > Grid Editor](#) for more information.
5. **Quantize:** Click this icon to activate quantization, so that each pattern is launched on the first beat of the next bar. When deactivated, presets will launch immediately when selected.
6. **Dry/Wet:** Turn this knob to control the overall mix between the original audio signal (**Dry**) and the audio signal with the preset applied (**Wet**).
7. **Tooltips:** Click this icon to enable or disable tooltips, which will be shown here when you mouse over certain parts of the user interface.

Performance Pads

The 16 performance pads are loaded with presets that contain time stretch and/or volume envelope patterns.

Left-click a performance pad to trigger the preset. When enabled, the selected performance pad will change color, and a bar along the bottom of the performance pad will show the pattern progress. The preset's envelope pattern will be shown in the **Grid Editor**, and its effects will apply immediately to the current audio input.

Right-click any performance pad to open a menu with the following options:

Play Modes: Select how the pattern on the selected performance pad is triggered:

- **One Shot:** The preset plays once, then reverts to Pad 1 (which will play in Loop mode).
- **Loop:** The preset loops indefinitely. This is the default play mode.
- **Hold:** When Quantize is turned off, the preset will play and loop for as long as the performance pad is held, then revert to the previously selected pad upon release.

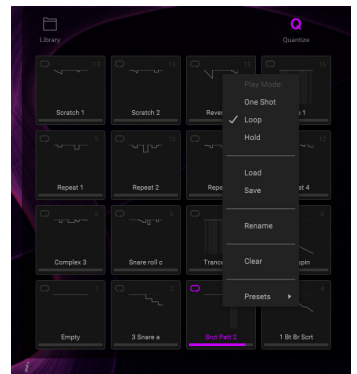
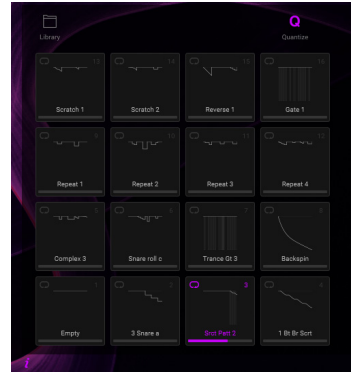
Load: Click to load a new preset.

Save: Click to save the selected preset.

Rename: Click to rename the selected pattern.

Clear: Click to clear the current preset from the selected performance pad.

Presets: Use this menu to select another preset to add to the performance pad. This is the same as browsing using the **Library**.



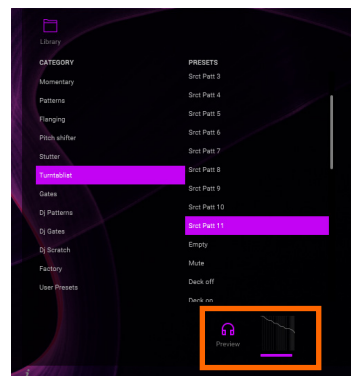
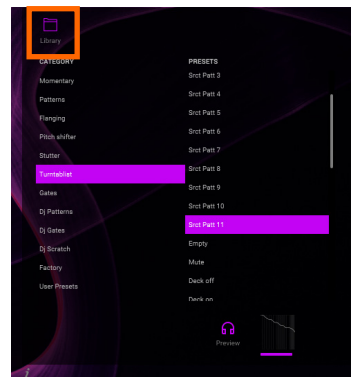
Library

Click the **Library** folder icon to browse the included presets. The presets are divided into categories according to their style and effects. The categories include:

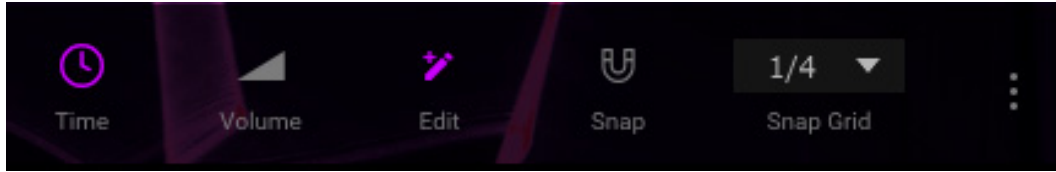
Momentary	Stutter	DJ Gates
Patterns	Turntablist	DJ Scratch
Flanging	Gates	Factory
Pitch shifter	DJ Patterns	User Presets

Drag and drop a preset from the browser onto a performance pad to load it.

Click the **Preview** headphones icon to automatically audition presets as they are selected within the browser. You can also view the preset's envelopes next to the Preview icon. When audio is playing, a bar below the envelope preview will show the pattern progress.



Grid Editor



You can edit any preset or start from scratch with the **Empty** preset to create your own. Use the editing tools at the top of the grid to edit the preset:

Time: Click to select and edit the time envelope. In this mode, Y-axis of the grid represents two bars of time in the audio buffer.

Volume: Click to select and edit the volume envelope. In this mode, the Y-axis of the grid represents the volume level.

Edit: Click to enable adding points on the grid with a left-click.

Snap: Click to activate or deactivate snapping points to the grid subdivision value.

Snap Grid: Click to select the subdivision value for the grid: **1/16**, **1/12**, **1/8**, **1/6**, **1/4**, or **1/3** beats.

Click the **three dots** icon to open a menu with additional options:

Envelope Tools: Use these tools to quickly edit the entire envelope.

- **Flip vertically:** Reflects the selected envelope so that, for example, 100.00% values are now 0.00% values.
- **Normalize levels:** Expands the range between the largest and smallest values to between 0.00–100.00% and distributes all points in between across the entire Y-axis.
- **Sliding Point Move:** When this feature is enabled, moving a curve point along the X-axis will shift the remaining pattern to the right of the selected point by the same amount.

Import envelope: Click to load an envelope file.

Export envelope: Click to save an envelope file. This will save only the currently selected **Time** or **Volume** envelope. You can then load this envelope shape into the Time or Volume envelope of another preset.

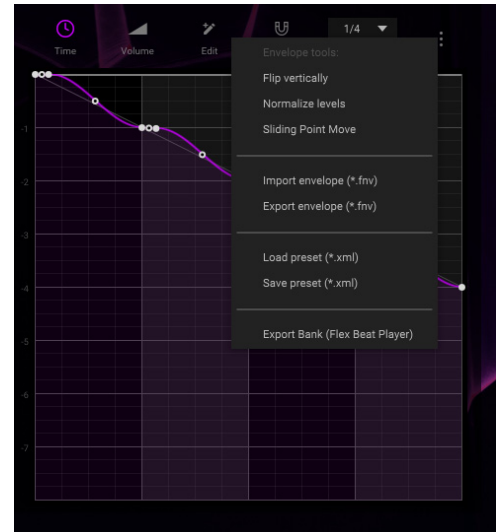
Load preset: Click to load a saved preset.

Save preset: Click to save the current preset. User saved presets are stored in the **User Presets** category of the **Library**. The Preset folder can be found in the following locations:

Windows: C:\Program Files\Flex Beat\Presets

macOS: Macintosh HD/Library/Application Support/Flex Beat/Presets

Export Bank: Click to export your bank of 16 presets for use with the **Flex Beat Player** plugin for MPC software and standalone hardware. The preset bank file will be exported as an **.xpl** file, which you can save to your local drive for use with MPC desktop software, or to a compatible external drive for use with standalone MPC hardware. Then, use the **Load preset** function in Flex Beat Player to load the preset bank.



The envelopes in the grid contain two types of nodes used for creating patterns: **curve points** (filled circles) and **tension points** (empty circles).

Left-click and drag a **curve point** to move it.

Right-click a **curve point** to access additional options:

Delete Point: Removes the selected point from the pattern.

Mode: Adjusts the type of curve controlled by the tension point to the left of the selected curve point. Choose **Single Curve**, **Double Curve**, **Alt Single Curve**, **Alt Double Curve**, **Hold**, **Stairs**, **Smooth Stairs**, **Pulse**, **Wave**, **Half Sine**, or **Smooth**.

Copy Value: Copies the current Y-axis value of the selected curve point.

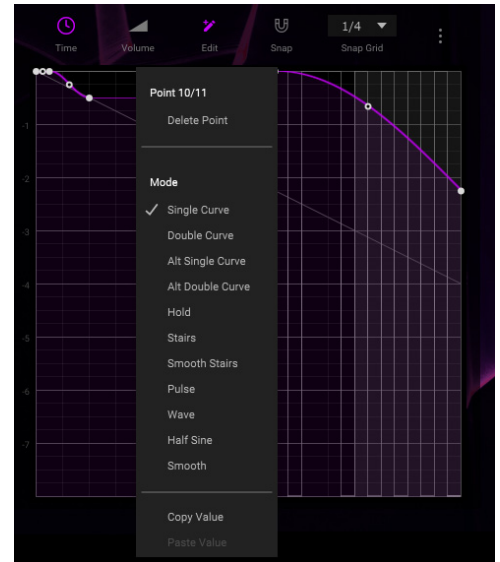
Paste Value: Pastes the copied Y-axis value to the selected curve point.

Right-click along the envelope to add a new curve point (when **Edit** is deactivated).

Double-click to remove a curve point.

Left-click and drag a **tension point** to modify the curve segment between two curve points.

Right-click a tension point to reset the curve to a straight line.



MIDI Side Chain Setup

Flex Beat can be controlled using MIDI side chaining in your DAW of choice. This allows you to trigger Performance Pads 1–16 using MIDI notes **C1–D#2**. See the instructions below for how to set up a MIDI side chain.

Ableton Live

1. Insert **Flex Beat** as an effect on an audio track.
2. Create a new MIDI track.
3. In the new MIDI track, use the **MIDI To** drop-down menu to select the audio track with Flex Beat as an insert.
4. Ensure that the MIDI track has **Record Arm** enabled.

Cubase

1. Insert **Flex Beat** as an effect on an audio track.
2. Create a new MIDI track.
3. Set the **Output Routing** on the new MIDI track to **Flex Beat**.

Logic Pro

1. Create a plugin instrument track.
2. In the instrument selection drop-down menu, navigate to **AU MIDI-controlled Effects** and select **Flex Beat**.
3. Open the Flex Beat plugin window, and use the **Side Chain** drop-down menu to select the audio track where you would like to apply the effect.

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