

# A quick guide to using Audacity

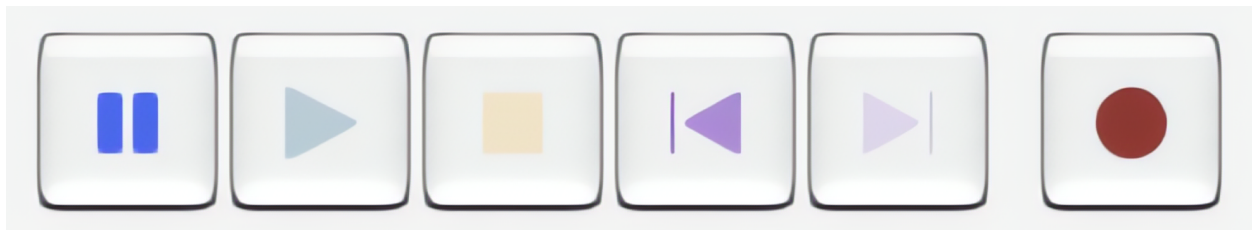
Audacity is a free, open-source, cross-platform audio editing tool available for Mac, Windows, and Linux, available from:

**<https://www.audacityteam.org/>**

Audacity is what's called a "destructive editor": if you delete something, save your progress, and close your project, you will never be able to restore what was deleted. (This is different from a video editor such as Final Cut Pro, which is a non-destructive editor.) For that reason, I recommend keeping regular of your work. backups.

## The tools

Audacity's playback commands are similar to any audio player's:



The spacebar is a shortcut for play/stop; use it liberally. Try to avoid using the "Pause" button, as audio cannot be edited when it is paused — only when it is stopped.

There are also several buttons for zooming in on your audio. The first button zooms in; the second button zooms out. The third button zooms in on your highlighted text; the fourth button makes the entire recording fit on the screen. You can also find these options (and their keyboard shortcuts!) listed under **View > Zoom**.



Audacity has four main editing tools. For this exercise, you'll need only one: the selection tool.



The selection tool is used for highlighting and selecting clips of audio. When selected, you can drag your mouse across the waveforms to select segments of audio to edit. You can also double-click a track to select the entire segment.

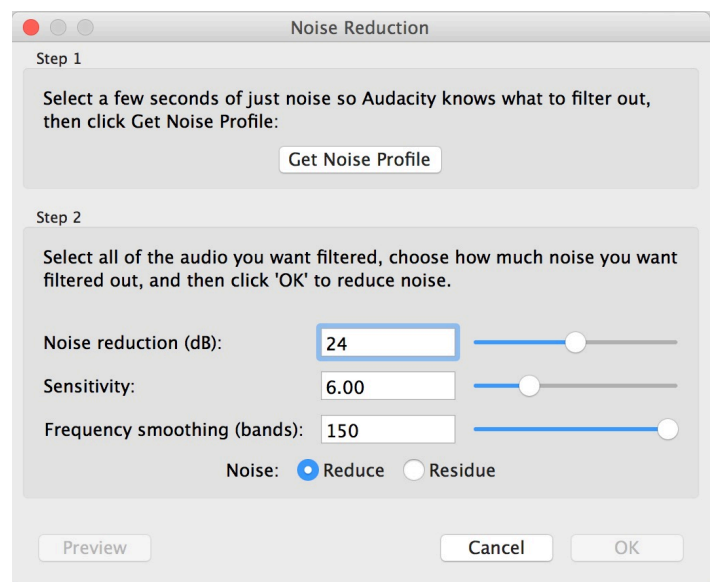
To shift and sync tracks, use the Selection Tool to grab the track's "handle" (the rounded top with the track name) and move it left and right. Once your tracks are in sync, use the "sync lock" tool to keep them in sync. This function is available at **Tracks > Sync-Lock Tracks**. With this option selected, anything done to change the **duration** (but not the **content**) of one track will affect all other tracks as well.

## Editing

The first step is to reduce background, or "ambient", noise—defined as noise that occurs consistently throughout your project. Examples include a refrigerator, fan, air conditioning, or general static hiss.

1. Find at least five seconds of audio where there is no one talking, and only the ambient noise is present. Highlight it.
2. Go to **Effect > Noise Reduction...** and click "Get Noise Profile". Nothing will appear to happen.
3. Now select the entire track by double-clicking it.
4. Again go to **Effect > Noise Reduction...** but this time click "OK".

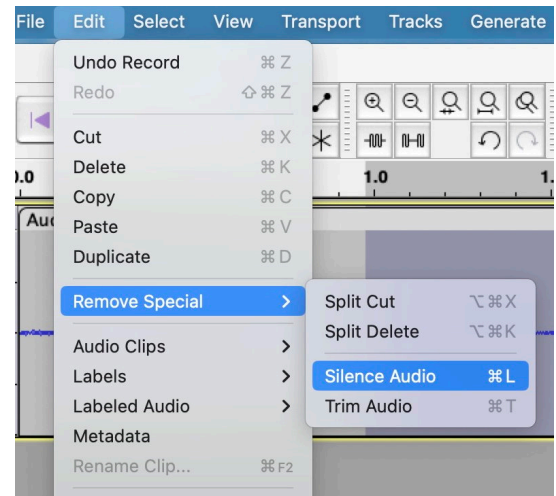
This process will remove the ambient noise from everywhere in the track—even when people are talking. Note that these steps must be done separately on each track.



Now you need to remove intermittent noise—such as a dog barking, a keyboard typing, or someone sneezing. Since each person has their own audio track, you can silence one person without affecting what the other speaker is saying.

Just highlight the audio you want to silence, then select **Edit > Remove Special > Silence Audio**. (On the Mac, you can also press Command-L.)

If you find long, awkward pauses where nobody is talking, or off-the-record conversation and remarks are made, you can delete them by simply highlighting them and pressing “Delete” on the keyboard. Any audio to the right will shift left to fill the gap.



## Complete

You’ve now completed the basic editing for a podcast:

1. Synced the tracks to ensure they’re aligned.
2. Removed any ambient and intermittent noise.
3. Silenced or deleted any lengthy gaps or errors.

Nice job! Further steps include:

1. Using Audacity to add intro/outro music (optional)
2. Using Audacity to export the audio in WAV format
3. Using [Levelator](#) to make the volume levels consistent
4. Using your audio program of choice (such as Audacity or Apple Music) to convert to MP3 and add album artwork and other metadata (such as title, description, and episode #).
5. Publishing to your website!

For more information about using Audacity, please visit its online manual:

**<https://manual.audacityteam.org/>**