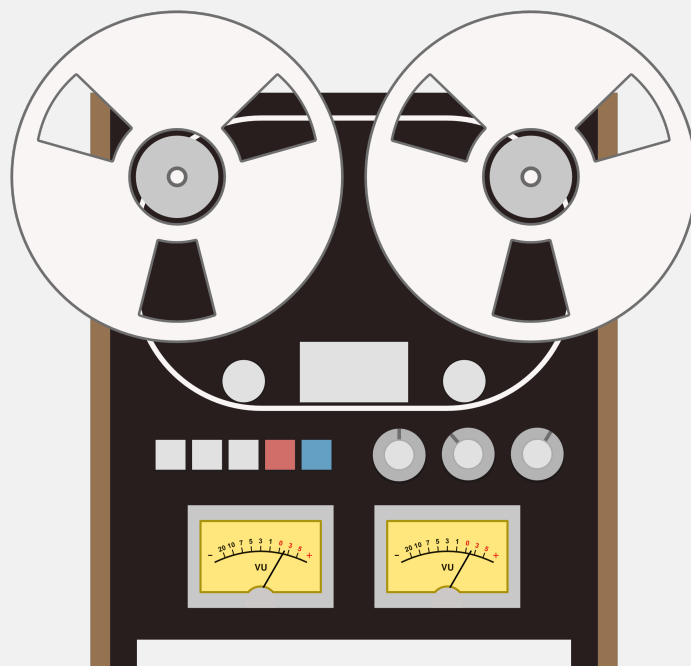


TAPE

An Analog Tape Machine for
Ableton Live



GETTING STARTED GUIDE

There really is nothing like the sound of tape, whether you're after that crunchy saturation, warm colour or the wonky, wobbly wow & flutter you can use TAPE to add some vintage flavour to your productions.

Now I'll be the first to admit, TAPE is by no means the best tape emulation out there - there are some amazing plugins that emulate the sounds of analog tape with amazing accuracy using all sorts of algorithms and component and frequency response modelling to copy the sound of tape in a very detailed way. However, there are much more general characteristics of tape that don't require detail circuit modelling to achieve; TAPE cleverly copies these characteristics to create a tape sound that is very generic but surprisingly authentic.

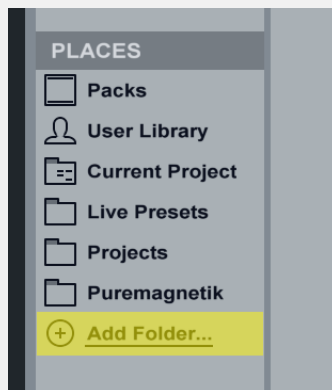
INSTALLATION

Installing TAPE is simple. Once you've finished the download you should have a file called TAPE.adg. You can drag and drop this file directly into Live from anywhere on your computer to use it.



TAPE.adg

You can also load TAPE from directly within Live by choosing 'Add Folder...' from within Live's browser and navigating to the location of the TAPE.adg file you downloaded.



HOW DOES TAPE WORK?

TAPE is built using native Ableton Live devices; there's no 3rd party plugins or MaxForLive involved and no complex algorithms, just plain and simple common sense modelling based on emulating the way tape works.

Let's take a look at exactly what each control is doing and how it is modelling a specific characteristic of real analog tape.



Input Gain: This control simply allows you to boost or cut the signal going in to TAPE in case your levels are too low or high.

Colour: Real analog tape has a far more limited frequency response than digital recordings - typically you lose a lot of the subs and extreme lows and quite a bit of high frequencies. You also get a bit of a bump in the lo-mid range that gives you that

‘warmth’. TAPE uses a simple EQ to approximate this frequency response and the Colour control adjusts several elements within this EQ to achieve the colouring effect of tape.

Drive: When overdriven (pushing the level going into the tape enough that it distorts) analog tape gives a nice warm, crunchy sound and engineers recording to tape often intentionally overdrive the signal to get this effect.

On TAPE the Drive control simply feeds into a soft-clipping Saturator to overdrive the sound in a pleasing way. You can go from very subtle amounts on the Drive control for a little bit of grit on top of your sound or turn the dial to the max to get raunchy, distorted sounds.

Compression: Analog tape has a limited dynamic range and often if sounds recorded to tape are driven quite hard this causes the sound to be compressed.

The Compression knob allows you to manually dial in the amount of this effect you’d like. You can leave it off to retain most of the dynamic range of your original sound or crank it up to get a punchy, compressed sound. Don’t overdo it though... Or maybe do 😊 Also, bear in mind that the Drive control, when driven to quite high values also has a slight compression effect.

Wow & Flutter: Analog tape is a physical medium and so is susceptible to physical interference, for example the speed that the tape passes through the tape head can often speed up or slow down slightly simply because of a little bit of extra friction.

The speed that tape plays back at has an effect on its pitch - faster speeds increase the pitch and slower speeds decrease the pitch, much like if you speed up or slow down the playback of a vinyl record.

On tape, these manifest as wow & flutter, fluctuations in the pitch. Wow is a much slower fluctuation whereas flutter is a bit quicker.

The most obvious way to hear the effect of these controls in TAPE is on something that has a defined pitch - try loading up a sound and play some chords or melodies then dial up the Wow and Flutter and notice how the pitch of your sound is affected. Using these in extreme amounts will give you a really detuned, wonky tape sound but smaller, more subtle amounts add a nice bit of analog detuning to your sound. Your call 🤔

Noise: Most analog mediums have some sort of inherent noise floor as they have a much smaller dynamic range than digital recordings. In the heyday of tape, engineers were constantly trying to lower this noise floor and get the cleanest possible

recordings onto tape but nowadays the previously undesirable sound of tape noise or 'hiss' sends your ears straight back to the golden era of analog recording.

In TAPE you can use this Noise control to dial in a little bit of characterful tape hiss, great for anyone who loves that lo-fi sound.

Note that in TAPE, the noise actually comes before the compression. This was a very specific choice as I find the effect of the compression on the noise has an almost glueing effect, especially on rhythmic parts.

Output Gain: This control simply allows you to boost or cut the signal going out of TAPE. I have tried as much as possible to make sure that the controls in TAPE don't add volume to your sound as a boost in volume can give you the wrong impression of what an effect is doing, however sometimes you might find that after you've applied a bit of TAPE your sound has increased in volume so you can use the Output Gain to turn it down a little.

If you have any questions or issues please get in touch at elphnt.io/contact

TAPE is made by Ableton Certified Trainer Tom Glendinning, also known as ELPHNT. For more devices, tutorials and free music production resources visit elphnt.io

Please read the up-to-date **licensing info** for TAPE at elphnt.io/licensing

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