LEARNING MADE EASY

3rd Edition

Logic Pro®

for dummies®
A Wiley Brand

Set up your first Logic Pro project

Capture sound from live audio or virtual instruments

Sweeten your sounds in mixing and mastering

Graham English
Composer, songwriter, and music tech trainer

Logic Pro®

3rd Edition

by Graham English

for dummies®
A Wiley Brand

Logic Pro® For Dummies®, 3rd Edition

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.,** 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

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Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2023935197

ISBN 978-1-394-16210-9 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-394-16211-6 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-394-16212-3 (ebk)

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Introduction

At its near-permanent spot in the top-ten grossing apps in the entire Mac App Store, Logic Pro has proven itself to be in high demand. You shouldn't expect anything less than stellar software from Apple. And there's a good reason why Logic Pro is professionally competitive. Apple designs intuitive software that music producers love at the best possible value. And unlike other digital audio workstations that have moved to a subscription pricing model, Logic Pro remains a relatively inexpensive one-time purchase with free updates included.

In line with Apple's mission, I wrote *Logic Pro For Dummies* to add value to your Mac and Logic Pro. You learn how to record, arrange, edit, mix, and share your music, becoming a self-sufficient musician with your computer and Logic Pro. This book will guide you to make more music.

About This Book

If I could give people one superpower, I would give them instant musical talent. My world would be a curious musical, filled with willing musical partners. *Logic Pro For Dummies* is my honest attempt to make musical partners out of every reader, including you.

This book is designed to get you making music fast. You don't even need to know how to play an instrument to make music with Logic Pro because it includes additional content you can use in your projects. Regardless of your current capabilities, the step-by-step instruction in this book guides you through everything you need to know to make music quickly.

I'm happy you came to me to learn Logic Pro because I have been coaching Logic Pro users since 2007 and know people's common frustrations and mistakes. I want you to feel confident using the software so you can complete more projects and share your music — with others and with me. This book gives you the most important information you need to quickly meet your musical goals and turn your ideas into completed projects.

Logic Pro For Dummies is organized for easy access. It's your productivity advisor and your reference for quickly finding the information you need. And because many people learn more quickly by watching someone else, I provide free videos and project templates to accompany the book at `https://logicstudiotraining.com/bookextras`.

Throughout the book, I use certain conventions to show you what to do. For example, when you choose items from menus, I use the command arrow, such as Choose File ➪ Edit. Links to websites are presented like this: `https://logicstudiotraining.com`. If you purchased the e-book, links are live and will take you directly to the web page. Finally, Logic Pro uses the term *key command* for any combination of keys that can act as a shortcut to a function; when I refer to the Command key, I use the ⌘ symbol.

Foolish Assumptions

As I said, I want to give you instant talent, but I have to make some assumptions about you, my friendly reader. I'm pretty sure you have the music bug. But you may want to only record audio with Logic Pro, such as voice-overs, podcasts, or live seminars. This book covers those topics, but I'm also writing for the musician in you.

I believe you bought this book not only to learn how to use software but also to create music. Logic Pro is the tool, and your music is the reason it exists.

I also assume that you're not making as much music as you could be making. I know I'm not. I'm sure we could all be bringing more music into the world, and I often aggressively push for it. I love to train musicians because they are great listeners. Great listeners make great leaders, and if I didn't push for more great leaders, I would feel that I wasted a golden opportunity to inspire you to greatness. The more music you make, the better listener you become.

Even if you're a beginner, I assume you'll be able to make music that sounds great with Logic Pro. It might be a foolish assumption, but given everything Logic Pro can do for you, I don't think so. Finally, I make the safe assumption that you'll enjoy your time with Logic Pro.

Icons Used in This Book

You'll see helpful icons throughout this book. Scan for them, and you'll find useful information that will help pull everything together and even broaden your perspective. Readers love to scan, and I love to write for scanners.

The Tip icon is usually designed to give you an "aha" moment. Tips go beyond step-by-step instruction into strategies and techniques to make better sounding music. Pay close attention to the tips!

The Remember icon points out information that you need to keep in mind as you use Logic Pro. In some cases, you'll be given key commands that are important to remember. Other times, you'll see a short refresher on information relevant to the topic and covered elsewhere in the book. Whenever you see this icon, it's important to at least store the information in your short-term memory. After all, the book remembers everything for you in the long term.

The Technical Stuff icon points out information that can be skipped or treated as extra credit. The information in these sections shouldn't be beyond your understanding, but you don't need to know how the engine works to drive a car.

The Warning icon is reserved for potential mistakes that could cause you to sound bad. That's the last thing I want, and fortunately, sounding bad is hard to achieve with Logic Pro. So when you see the Warning icon, please read it!

Beyond the Book

As mentioned, I deliver content outside this book through videos and project files. Where appropriate, I've added a link to a web page with further instructions. These videos should help you visualize the book's content, and the project files are excellent resources for getting started.

In addition, *For Dummies* books include one of my favorite tools of all time, the cheat sheet. I make cheat sheets for a hobby, and I'm excited to give you what I've got. To get to the cheat sheet, go to `www.dummies.com` and type *Logic Pro For Dummies cheat sheet* in the Search box.

Where to Go from Here

Although I wrote the book to be somewhat linear and to follow a logical progression, you can start anywhere you want. Because I reference chapters throughout the book, you should be able to open any chapter and follow along.

If you're new to Logic Pro, you'll at least want to skim the first four chapters. These chapters make up Part 1 and will get you started using Logic Pro and understanding how it works. Part 2 shows you how to record audio, load and play software instruments, and add prerecorded media to your project. If you're upgrading from previous versions of Logic Pro, you might skip to Part 3 and learn about the new software instruments or head over to Part 4, where you learn how to use the exciting new editing features such as flex pitch.

Part 5 is dedicated to mixing audio so that the final result sounds good and is ready to share with the world. From the beginning of the book to the end, you have a powerful music production blueprint. I hope you get what you need. If you should have a question, you can find me online at `https://logicstudiotraining.com` or `https://grahamenglish.com`.

1 Leaping into Logic Pro

IN THIS PART . . .

Develop a productive workflow and mindset.

Discover timesaving tips to help you finish Logic Pro projects and share your projects for collaboration and backup.

Navigate the software interface, play and control your project, and explore the tools.

Understand how tracks and regions work in Logic Pro, adjust your tempo and time signature, save track settings for instant recall, and edit and loop regions.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Understanding the benefits of creating with Logic Pro
- Getting into the Logic Pro mindset
- Developing a productive workflow
- Setting up your Logic Pro studio

Chapter 1

Getting Logic Pro Up and Sprinting

The joke used to be that Logic Pro wasn't logical. I would argue that it was logical but not intuitive. Nowadays, you can't make that joke without dating yourself. Apple, known for making the complicated simple, bought Logic Pro from Emagic in 2002 and continues to make the product better and better.

You'll find that creating music with Logic Pro can be a straightforward and rewarding experience. One caveat: As you explore Logic Pro, remember your desired outcome. With so many bright and shiny objects in this deep and powerful app, getting distracted is easy. But if you keep your musical and learning goals in mind, you'll discover why Logic Pro is behind so many Billboard hits.

Take command. Logic Pro listens.

In this chapter, you discover why Logic Pro users are proud, productive, and ready to play. You'll understand how to plan your creations, get the most value from your time with Logic Pro, set up your studio, and much more.

REMEMBERING THE LOGIC PRO JOURNEY

Logic Pro has come a long way since its inception. In the mid-80s, the German company C-LAB created Supertrack for the Commodore 64 computer. This product evolved into the Creator software program and eventually became Notator Logic, which ran on the Atari system in the early 90s. Here are some significant milestones on the path to Logic Pro:

- 1994: Audio recording capabilities were added to Notator Logic.
- 2000: Virtual instruments were added to Logic 4.
- 2002: Apple purchased Logic.
- 2004: Logic 6 became Mac-only.
- 2007: Several audio applications, including Logic Pro 8 and MainStage, were bundled as Logic Studio. New features such as Quick Swipe Comping and the Delay Designer plug-in were introduced, and the copy protection USB dongle was eliminated.
- 2009: Logic Pro 9 introduces features such as flex time editing, Amp Designer, and Pedalboard plug-ins.
- 2010: Logic Pro 9 goes 64-bit.
- 2013: Logic Pro X is released, with a redesigned look, flex pitch editing, new editors, the Drummer software instrument, the Bass Amp Designer plug-in, virtual vintage instruments, MIDI plug-ins, track stacks, smart controls, tighter integration with GarageBand, the Logic Remote iPad app, and much more.
- 2020: Apple drops *X* from the Logic Pro name while continuing to develop several incremental updates worthy of significant releases and without any additional cost to users. Notable features include live loops, step sequencer, remix FX, drum synth, and a new refined design with drag-and-drop workflows. The EXS24 sampler software instrument was phased out in favor of the new sampler and quick sampler. And spatial audio mixing with Dolby Atmos enables you to mix and monitor 3D immersive audio with dynamic head tracking using select headphones.

Embracing Logic Pro

Why would you want to choose Logic Pro when so many different digital audio workstations (DAWs) are on the market? Here's a list of reasons why you don't need to look any further than Logic Pro:

- Logic Pro is designed by Apple, so hardware and software compatibility are simple and usually hassle-free. Logic Pro doesn't lag behind Mac operating system updates and takes advantage of the hardware. However, if you rely on third-party plug-ins, upgrade cautiously. If you're wondering whether it's safe to upgrade, stop by `https://logicstudiotraining.com` and ask me.
- Logic Pro has thousands of sampled instruments and effects presets, saving you thousands of dollars in additional expenses. You get a complete studio — including a virtual drummer who won't show up late or scuff your floors.
- Logic Pro excels at both recording and editing audio and MIDI. Some DAWs do one or the other well, but Logic Pro does both with superb sound quality and ease of use.
- Logic Pro is compatible with most audio and MIDI hardware. I rarely get asked hardware questions from my clients because the product just works.
- Logic Pro enables you to provide professional notation for lead sheets and full scores. When you need to hand out chord charts to the band or provide fully engraved charts with advanced markup to the orchestra, Logic Pro has you covered. Logic Pro can also create guitar tablature and add lyrics to your score.
- Logic Pro supports many hardware control surfaces, so you can control knobs, faders, buttons, and other parameters in Logic Pro right from your hardware. An inexpensive MIDI controller can be turned into a remote control for advanced control (or when the hand you use for your mouse or trackpad begins to ache from overuse).
- Logic Pro is a powerful mixing console. If your computer can handle it, you can have 255 audio tracks, 255 software instrument tracks, and 255 auxiliary tracks. You weren't worried about running out of tracks, were you? And because you don't have 255 hands, you can automate parameter changes on all those tracks.
- Logic Pro is a 64-bit application that gives you increased power. Older 32-bit apps allow the use of only 4MB of RAM, but Logic Pro can access all the memory your computer has installed. You can run more plug-ins and more software instruments without a hiccup.

I've only touched the surface of what Logic Pro can do. Surround sound, virtual vintage instruments, drum machines, guitar amps and pedals, pitch and time editing, and MIDI effects are a fraction of what you have available as a Logic Pro user. Congratulations on making such a smart choice to embrace Logic Pro. Welcome to the club!

Adjusting Accessibility Settings

Apple products include accessibility features to assist users. To find out how to use these features, visit the following:

- Apple accessibility: `www.apple.com/accessibility`
- Accessibility support: `support.apple.com/accessibility`

If you want to use Logic Pro with VoiceOver, you can make plug-in windows open in Controls view, which will list the plug-in parameters instead of displaying a graphical user interface. Choose Logic Pro ➪ Settings ➪ General. Select the Accessibility tab and then select the Open in Controls View by Default check box.

Transitioning from Other Software

I won't bad-mouth or slam other DAWs — it's a good rule, especially when collaborating with musicians who use different software. I'm a fan of GarageBand and use it sometimes because it integrates so well with Logic Pro. If you've used GarageBand, you'll find the Logic Pro interface familiar and welcoming.

Logic Pro has many of the same features as GarageBand, including a professional mixer and finer control over audio and MIDI regions. GarageBand 10 users are familiar with smart controls, but with Logic Pro, you can do a lot more with them, such as control and edit more parameters. Best of all, Logic Pro can open GarageBand projects, including GarageBand projects created in iOS, the operating system that powers the iPhone, the iPad, and the iPod touch. Starting projects on one of those devices and continuing working on them in GarageBand or Logic Pro creates a powerful workflow.

If you're coming from another software environment, maintain a beginner's mind as you explore Logic Pro. The workflow is probably similar to what you're accustomed to. It won't take long to understand that a Logic Pro project has tracks containing MIDI or audio regions and that you can arrange those regions in the main window or edit them in the various editors. Did I just give the whole book away right there? Not quite, but understanding Logic Pro is almost that simple.

Just remember, if your objective is clear, Logic Pro can help you reach it.

Creating with Logic Pro

With Logic Pro, you have a full band at your fingertips. From country to dance music, songwriting to film scoring, capturing MIDI performances to professional audio recording, Logic Pro will excite your passions and showcase your strengths. Lead the way, and Logic Pro will follow.

Thinking like a pro

Whether or not you're in it for the money, having a professional mindset can make your experience with Logic Pro more productive and enjoyable.

My advice to new and seasoned Logic Pro users alike is to set a goal and work steadily towards that goal. Here's what I've found, and I hope you agree. Creativity loves speed. Slow and tedious labor kills creativity faster than anything. So set a clear objective and move quickly towards completion.

Planning your creative process

You can always wait for inspiration to strike you — but you could end up waiting a long time. And when inspiration does strike, it often doesn't stick around long. For all the moments when you're not feeling inspired, having a plan for your creative process can help.

What's your purpose for the project? Are you learning something or creating something? If you're learning, what's your learning goal and how much time will you give it? You could easily get lost trying to learn everything Logic Pro can do and never create anything. That will suck the joy out of using Logic Pro, and you'll find yourself opening it less and less. So give yourself learning limits and give yourself creative projects. Connecting to the purpose of your project will keep you motivated and moving in a clear and forward direction.

Here are some example projects to get you learning and creating:

- **Learn a tool.** Logic Pro has lots of tools and editors to help you achieve your creative goals. Spend 5 to 15 minutes learning a single tool, function, or editor. You will have many opportunities to do this throughout the book.
- **Write a song.** Lots of my students find it easier to separate writing a song from recording a song. Writing a song means starting from scratch and trying out ideas. You'll end up doing some recording, but your purpose is not to create "keeper" tracks but to experiment and organize your ideas.

- **Record a song.** If you've already written a song, record it. Logic Pro has an intuitive interface, and you'll be able to polish your tracks until they're as shiny as a platinum record.
- **Sequence an 8-bar loop.** Not all projects have to be big and grand. A simple 8-bar piece of music can become a loop that you can use in another project or license to another artist.
- **Compose a score.** Use the orchestral instruments or synthesizers to create a score for a video or just for fun. If you have any home videos on your computer, you can import them to Logic Pro and give them a soundtrack. Play the video at the next holiday reunion, and your film composition is sure to impress friends and family.
- **Design a sound.** Spend 30 minutes with any of the Logic Pro virtual instruments and come up with your own sounds. Several synths even come with a randomize button to keep the sound fresh. Ever wondered what a six-foot guitar made of cardboard would sound like? Me neither, but you can make it happen with the Sculpture software instrument in Logic Pro.
- **Mix a song.** You can use a project you've recorded or Apple loops to practice your mixing chops and share your project with the world. Be sure to consult my mixing guide at `https://logicstudiotraining.com` to make your time in audio engineering land productive and free of earaches.

These examples are just a sampling of the types of projects you can start. The main point is to set a clear objective so you can achieve your goal. Set yourself up to win, and you'll stay motivated.

Getting to the finish line

Most Logic Pro users come to me for help not with getting started but with getting things done. When inspiration fades, so does motivation, unless you have a strategy for getting to the finish line.

Here are some tips for completing projects:

- **Set time limits.** Give yourself the shortest time frame for completing a task. Parkinson's law states that work expands to fill the time available to complete it. Set aside 10 hours to complete a job, and it will take 10 hours. Set aside 30 minutes, and the job will take 30 minutes. For larger projects, put a deadline on the calendar and stick to it. This suggestion might sound rigid, but the only thing you have to lose is your uncompleted projects.
- **Make projects attainable.** Dream big but be realistic. If you've never done a particular task, give yourself time to learn and improve. You might want to

write a chart-buster, but begin by writing a simple song with a clear structure. Then you can build upon your new skills and improve with each project.

- **Break the project down.** Typically, an album is made up of many songs, each song is made up of many instruments recorded on separate tracks, and each track is made up of many takes that are edited and turned into a final take. When you list all the tasks required to complete your project, you'll have an easier time completing each task.
- **Keep it simple.** The fewer parts you commit to your project, the easier it will be to complete. Many pop songs have 32 tracks on the low end and more than 100 tracks on the not-so-high end, but that doesn't mean you have to do the same. Lots of great songs have only four instruments, including the lead vocal. Try to simplify your project; you'll find that completing your project is much easier when it isn't complicated.

The more you create, the better you'll get. The more projects you complete, the more confidence you'll have. With confidence and chops, you'll tackle more ambitious projects and find yourself working with higher-level musicians.

Now that you've read about the Logic Pro producer's mindset, it's time to get your gear ready to handle your mad genius.

Connecting Your Logic Pro Studio

You can do a lot just with the Logic Pro software. You can play the software instruments with your computer keyboard by using musical typing (described in Chapter 7). You can import media from a variety of sources, such as Apple's Music app or iMovie (as detailed in Chapter 8). You can use headphones or your computer speakers to listen to your project. However, you'll want to connect some peripheral devices to take advantage of all that Logic Pro offers.

Consider adding some or all of the following devices to your studio:

- **Audio interface:** You'll need to get audio into and out of your computer. Your computer probably has a built-in mic, but you might also want to capture audio from a variety of sources, such as a keyboard, guitar, and microphone. You may want to be able to record more than one instrument at a time. Audio interfaces allow you to get professional sounding audio into your Logic Pro project. You can get inexpensive, good-quality input devices through major retailers and the Apple store or by searching for used options. USB and Thunderbolt connectivity are standard on the latest Apple computers.

- **Speakers:** In the pro audio community, your speakers are known as *monitors.* In a pinch, your computer speakers will do just fine. I use them to do a chunk of my mixing because many people listen to music on their laptop's speakers. (The same advice goes for mixing with common headphones, like Apple's AirPods. Even studios with expensive monitors listen to mixes in cars — or trucks if they're mixing country music.) For a more accurate audio picture, listen to your project on a set of monitors that produces the entire frequency range. There's a good chance that your audio interface will have a stereo monitor output for connecting a pair of speakers.
- **Headphones:** When you record vocals or instruments using microphones, you need a quiet environment. Headphones allow you to hear what you're recording without speakers, so you capture just the instrument — not any other audio coming from your speakers. Also, live instruments can be loud, and headphones allow the performer to hear all the tracks well while recording. Headphones are also useful during mixing when you need to hear the details of your audio.
- **MIDI controller:** MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) allows devices to talk to each other and lets you control all the wonderful software instruments that come with Logic Pro. A MIDI controller can be a keyboard, drum pads, or any other device that transmits MIDI. MIDI controllers connect to your computer by USB, Bluetooth, or a separate MIDI interface for devices with 5-pin DIN connectors.
- **iPad and iPhone:** The Logic Remote iOS app can control software instruments and the mixer, execute key commands, and more. Best of all, the app is free! It connects to Logic Pro through your Wi-Fi network. Have an instrument you want to record, but it's sitting 20 feet away from the computer? No problem: Use your iOS device to control Logic Pro remotely. I cover Logic Remote in Chapter 20.

Setting up your computer

If you haven't already installed Logic Pro on your computer, get it from the Apple App Store. Open the App Store in your Applications folder and search for Logic Pro. Purchase and install it (an installation wizard will guide you) — but be patient while downloading because the program size is about 1.1GB.

To download the additional Logic Pro content, launch Logic Pro. Choose Logic Pro ➪ Sound Library ➪ Download All Available Sounds or Download Essential Sounds. If you're updating the sound library, you may need to select the libraries available for download individually. Click the Continue button to download and install the content.