Loop Kong

Quick Start Guide

Build your first working session: audio, MIDI, plugins, recording, PFL and Scene Chain

For new users Learn the fastest safe path into LoopKong without reading the full manual first.	**For beta testers** Check the main workflows quickly and report issues with clearer context.
For musicians Start with one loop, one MIDI instrument, one recording and one small arrangement.	**For live use** Understand what goes to Master, what goes to PFL, and how Scenes become a performance.

Guide Revision: 1.6 Publication Date: October 23, 2026. Current application baseline: APP_3640 / 0.3.640. This guide is intentionally practical. Use the full User Manual when you need deeper reference details.

Recommended first goal: make sound, record one idea, build four Scenes, save the Project.

Contents and reading path

This guide is shorter and more practical than the full manual. It groups related topics together so the pages feel useful instead of empty.

1. Possibilities What LoopKong lets you do. How Scenes, Tracks, Cells and Layers fit together.	**2. First setup** Audio device, MIDI input, Master output, PFL and buffer size.
3. First project Create a small session, import audio, launch a Scene and save early.	**4. MIDI and recording** Load a VSTi, record MIDI, record audio and choose inputs.
5. Plugins and routing Use plugin slots safely and record from hardware or internal track outputs.	**6. Live workflow** Scene Pads, Scene Chain, PFL, metronome and troubleshooting.

The shortest useful workflow

1. Set the audio output and confirm the Master meter can reach your speakers or interface.
2. Import one audio loop into an Audio Cell and fire the Scene.
3. Create one MIDI Track, load a VST instrument and record or draw a short phrase.
4. Record one audio take into a Scene using a hardware input or internal track input.
5. Build four Scenes, place them in Scene Chain and save the Project.

Do not start with everything. A small session that works is better than a large session where you cannot tell why something is silent.

1. What LoopKong can do

LoopKong is a live-oriented music workstation. It is built for scene-based composition, looping, recording, MIDI instruments, plugins and cue monitoring.

Live looping Record takes into Cells and build a performance from repeated musical sections.	**Scene launching** Use Scenes as Intro, Groove, Break, Chorus or Ending sections.
Audio recording Capture hardware inputs or record from another track inside LoopKong.	**MIDI sequencing** Record, draw and edit notes in the MIDI Editor with quantize and humanize tools.
Plugin hosting Use VST instruments on MIDI Tracks and effects on Audio, Return and Master Tracks.	**Cue monitoring** Use PFL to hear a track or click privately before sending it to the main output.

2. The basic idea

Object	Meaning
Project	The whole saved session.
Scene	A horizontal song section or performance step.
Track	A vertical lane: audio, MIDI, record/monitor, return or master.
Cell	Where one Track and one Scene meet.
Layer	The actual audio or MIDI take inside a Cell.

Mental picture: Tracks go vertically. Scenes go horizontally. A Cell is the slot where one Track plays or records material for one Scene.

3. First launch checklist

Most first-use problems come from output routing, MIDI input selection or monitoring. Check these before judging the Project.

Check	Recommended first choice
Audio host	Use ASIO if your interface has a stable ASIO driver.
Output device	Select the interface connected to your speakers or headphones.
Master output	Route it to the physical outputs you actually listen to.
PFL output	Route it to headphones or leave it unused until you understand it.
Buffer size	Start at 64 or 128 frames. Increase it if you hear dropouts.
MIDI input	Select the keyboard/controller you will actually play.

4. Create your first Project

Keep the first Project small. You only need enough structure to prove the complete flow.

- Create a New empty project or New default project.
- Create four Scenes: Intro, Groove, Break and Ending.
- Create one Audio Track, one MIDI Track and one Record/Monitor Track.
- Name everything immediately. Clear names prevent mistakes in live use.
- Save the empty configured Project before experimenting.

> **Good first Project name:** LoopKong_First_Test_01. Use simple names while learning; complexity comes later.

5. Import and launch your first audio loop

Audio import is the fastest way to confirm that the Project, Scene launch and Master output are working.

1. Open the Browser or use a file from Windows Explorer.
2. Drag a WAV, AIFF, FLAC, MP3, OGG or M4A file into an Audio Cell.
3. Confirm that the Cell now contains a Layer.
4. Fire the Scene that contains the Cell.
5. Watch the Track meter and Master meter.
6. Adjust Track volume and Layer gain if needed.

Best format for first loops Use WAV or AIFF when possible. They are safer for precise loop work.	**Compressed files** MP3, OGG and M4A are useful, but can have small timing or quality differences.
If you see meters but hear nothing Check Master output and your audio interface mixer.	**If nothing moves** Check that the Cell contains a valid Layer and is not muted.

Multiple Cells

You can select several Cells for grouped operations. Ctrl+click toggles individual Cells. Shift+click selects a rectangular range. Dragging one selected Cell can move the selected group. Context menus can offer batch actions such as clearing several Cells or adding MIDI Layers to several compatible Cells.

6. Create your first MIDI Track

MIDI clips do not make sound by themselves. A MIDI Track needs a VST instrument or an external MIDI output.

1. Create or select a MIDI Track.
2. Load a simple VST instrument in the first suitable plugin slot.
3. Arm the MIDI Track if you want to record from a keyboard or controller. Newly created normal MIDI Tracks use Preferences > Monitoring > Default monitor mode; AUTO remains the factory default.
4. Play a few notes and confirm that the instrument responds.
5. Create an empty MIDI Layer or record a short phrase into a Cell.
6. Open the MIDI Editor and move one note to confirm editing works.

MIDI action	Use it for
Zoom X	See more or less musical time.
Zoom Y	See pitches with more vertical space.
Quantize	Tighten timing toward a grid.
Humanize	Add small timing or velocity variation.
Preview	Hear edits while working.
Global Swing	Choose 1/8, 1/16 or 1/32 and 50-75% swing without rewriting the MIDI notes.

Several armed MIDI Tracks: If several MIDI Tracks share the same input, they can respond at the same time. During recording, LoopKong keeps recording ownership clear so you do not accidentally duplicate the same take into multiple armed Tracks.

Global MIDI Swing

The Top Bar has a project-level MIDI swing control. Choose 1/8, 1/16 or 1/32 and a ratio from 50% to 75%. 50% is straight, about 66.7% is a triplet feel, and 75% is strong swing. New projects default to 50% at 1/16, and the preference can be changed for future projects.

7. Record audio into a Scene

Audio recording can come from hardware inputs or from another Track inside LoopKong. Start simple with hardware, then try internal routing when you understand the signal path.

1. Select the Track that will receive the recording. A Record/Monitor Track is usually clearest for live input.
2. Choose the input source: hardware input or internal Track source.
3. Set monitoring: Off, In or Auto. Newly created normal Audio and MIDI Tracks start in Auto; projects you reopen keep their saved monitoring mode.
4. Arm the Track.
5. Launch the Scene or use REC Scene. If “Start recording on scene launch” is enabled, an armed normal Track with an empty destination Cell starts recording on the first launch, exactly at the Scene-launch boundary.
6. Stop recording, listen back and save if the take is good. Finalized audio recordings refresh their final waveform automatically when recording stops.

Internal Track input routing

Input source	Meaning
Hardware input	Records from your audio interface.
Track: Post FX	Records another Track after its plugins, before its fader/pan.
Track: Post Mixer	Records another Track after mixer processing, closer to what you hear from that channel.

Safe routing rule: Avoid circular routing. If a source Track is deleted or a route becomes invalid, LoopKong should fall back safely rather than leaving an unsafe loop.

8. Use plugins safely

Plugins are powerful, but they are external software. Load them deliberately and save after useful setups.

Track type	Plugin rule
MIDI Track	Load a VST instrument before audio effects.
Audio Track	Use audio effects such as EQ, compression, delay or reverb.
Return Track	Use shared effects, usually reverb or delay.
Master Track	Use final processing carefully: limiter, EQ, metering or gentle bus processing.

Move, swap or copy Plugin Slots

You can drag loaded plugin slots to reorganize a chain or move a plugin to another compatible Track. Normal drag moves to an empty slot and swaps with an occupied slot. Hold Ctrl/Cmd while dropping to copy the source plugin into the destination, restoring a new instance from the source state.

- On MIDI Tracks, keep the instrument before audio effects.
- After moving plugins, confirm that the Track still makes sound.
- Ctrl/Cmd+drag copies a plugin slot. Because plugins are external software, save before copying fragile or old plugins and verify the copied instance after it finishes loading.
- Before experimenting with old or unstable plugins, save the Project.

First plugin test: Load a simple instrument, play MIDI, save, close, reopen, remove it and close again. A plugin that survives this small test is safer for larger Projects.

9. Build a simple live arrangement

A good first arrangement has only a few clear Scenes. The goal is to perform the structure without hunting around the screen.

Intro	Groove	Break	Ending
Drums only, or a quiet starting texture.	Add bass, rhythm instruments and main loop.	Remove or reduce parts for contrast.	Return to main material or stop cleanly.

1. Put at least one useful Cell in each Scene.
2. Launch each Scene manually from the Scene Pads.
3. Check that the correct Tracks start, stop or remain silent.
4. Create a Scene Chain: Intro, Groove, Break, Groove, Ending.
5. Press Scene Chain Play to start from the prepared step. The same button becomes Pause while advancing; Pause stops only future Chain progression, so the current Scene and main transport keep running.

Scene Chain timing and recording

Timing choices are ordered CYCLE BAR, CYCLE BEAT, BAR, BAR x2, BAR x4, BAR x8, BAR x16, BAR x32, BAR x64 and BAR x128. CYCLE BAR is the default for genuinely new projects. CYCLE modes use each Scene's stable musical cycle; BAR xN gives every step one explicit fixed length, independent of Layer length.

LOOP repeats the Chain. RWD prepares step 1 when stopped; while running, the current step finishes and step 1 becomes the next occurrence. STEP ×2 doubles each step duration by repeating each reference, CHAIN ×2 duplicates the complete pattern, the mouse wheel over a step changes only its referenced Scene, and dragging a step to the trash removes only that Chain reference.

Repeated steps that reference the same Scene are still separate Chain steps, but automatic progression does not retrigger the Scene or restart a long Layer. An 8-bar Layer can therefore play continuously across four 2-bar steps while the step marker advances every 2 bars.

Transport note: Stop pauses first

If the Stop pauses first preference is enabled, the first Stop pauses playback and preserves the position. The second Stop fully stops and resets. If the preference is disabled, Stop behaves as a direct stop/reset command.

> **Live rule:** Prepare before performance. During a show, launch, cue, record and stop. Avoid heavy editing or unknown plugin changes.

10. Monitoring, PFL and metronome

Monitoring decides what you hear while recording or performing. PFL decides what you can hear privately before sending it to the main output. Preferences > Monitoring > Default monitor mode chooses IN, AUTO or OFF for newly created normal Audio/MIDI Tracks; reopened Tracks keep their saved mode and duplicated Tracks copy the source mode.

Control	Practical meaning
Master	The main output, usually speakers or the audience mix.
PFL	Private cue/listen output, usually headphones.
Monitor Off	Input is not heard through the Track.
Monitor In	Input is always heard through the Track.
Monitor Auto	Input monitoring follows playback/recording state. New normal Audio/MIDI Tracks start here.
Metronome to PFL	Click goes to headphones instead of the audience output.

Recording vocals

Use headphones. Do not monitor the microphone through speakers in the same room.

Preparing sounds live

Use PFL to check a Track privately before sending it to Master.

Click track

Route metronome to PFL unless the audience must hear it.

No sound after PFL

Check whether “Mute track output when PFL is enabled” is active.

11. Common first problems

Problem	First checks
No sound	Check meters, Master output, mute/solo, valid Layer and audio interface output.
MIDI notes but no audio	Load a VST instrument on the MIDI Track before audio effects.
Plugin moved but silent	Check slot order, Track type compatibility and whether a MIDI Track still has an instrument first.
Several MIDI Tracks behave unexpectedly	Check shared MIDI input, armed state and recording ownership.
PFL changes the main mix	Review PFL routing and the preference that mutes Track output when PFL is enabled.
Clicks or dropouts	Increase buffer size, close heavy plugin editors and avoid major operations during playback.
Scene launch feels late	Check quantization. Pending launch usually means LoopKong is waiting for the next musical point.
Scene Chain step is too long	Check timing mode: CYCLE follows each Scene cycle; BAR xN uses a fixed number of bars per step.

Quick diagnostic order

1. Does the Track meter move?
2. Does the Master meter move?
3. Is the correct physical output selected?
4. Is any Track soloed or muted?
5. Is PFL changing the route?
6. Is the plugin chain valid?
7. Can a simple WAV in a clean Audio Track play?

Best troubleshooting method: Strip the session down to one known-good audio file, one Track and no plugins. When that works, add complexity one step at a time.

12. Your first 10-minute workflow

Use this as your first practical exercise. It is short, but it touches the main concepts you need for real work.

1. Open LoopKong and create a New default project.
2. Set the audio output and confirm the Master output is correct.
3. Create four Scenes: Intro, Groove, Break and Ending.
4. Import a drum loop into an Audio Cell in Intro.
5. Create a MIDI Track, load a simple VST instrument and record a bass or pad phrase in Groove.
6. Create or use a Record/Monitor Track and record one short audio take.
7. Add one delay or reverb on a Return Track or after the instrument.
8. Route the metronome to PFL if you use headphones.
9. Build Scene Chain: Intro, Groove, Break, Groove, Ending.
10. Save the Project as LoopKong_First_Test_01.

Before you close the session

- Play every Scene once.
- Confirm no unwanted Solo, Mute or PFL state is active.
- Confirm the Project is saved.
- Write down what worked and what you want to improve next time.

> **Remember:** The best first LoopKong session is not the most complex one. It is the one you understand well enough to repeat without fear.

Historical APP_3507 Notes

The original quick-start workflow was documented in APP_3507 / 0.3.507. The fastest safe workflow is still the same: configure audio, make one loop play, add one MIDI instrument, record one take, build a few Scenes, then save.

Important current behavior: Scene Chain has stable CYCLE timing, BAR xN timing, STEP ×2/CHAIN ×2, per-step wheel editing and a trash target; empty Cells can switch between STOP and CONTINUE and restore STOP later; Audio Layers can Spread across Scenes; Warp editing is live in Q0 and the controlled Q1 gate; the default Monitor mode is configurable; and the UI can switch persistently between English and Spanish.

Five Current Habits

Use CYCLE BAR when each Scene should define its own cycle; use BAR xN when every Scene Chain step must have one fixed global length. Use STEP ×2 to lengthen every occurrence and CHAIN ×2 to repeat the complete arrangement pattern.

Use empty-Cell Stop buttons deliberately: keep STOP when that Scene should silence the Track, choose Delete Stop button for CONTINUE/NO ACTION, and Add Stop Button(s) when you want to restore the stop action later.

Use normal drag for plugin Move/Swap and Ctrl/Cmd+drag for Copy. For Audio Layers, use Warp markers only when you want timing deformation; creating a marker is neutral until you move it. Set Default monitor mode and UI Language in Preferences before building your normal template.

Earlier Warp, Spread and UI preferences (APP_3507)

Warp: turn WARP ON, double-click the upper waveform ruler to create a marker, drag the orange target diamond/line, and Delete/Backspace to remove the selected marker. The waveform deforms immediately. Prepared Warp/TS/Tune playback has since been extended to Q2/Multi and Q3/Random subject to their timing conditions; see the Revision 1.6 update. There is no user Tune control yet.

Spread: on Audio Q0/Q2 Layers, use the context menu to distribute consecutive source slices across Scenes without rendering duplicate audio files. Existing destination material blocks the operation, and one Undo restores the pre-Spread state.

Preferences: Monitoring > Default monitor mode selects IN/AUTO/OFF for new normal Audio/MIDI Tracks. UI > Language selects English or Español; Apply/OK persists it and Cancel restores the last host-confirmed language. The grey loop-range bar means Loop is OFF.

What changed — Revision 1.6 / APP_3640

Keep the original quick-start workflow: configure Audio, play an Audio Cell, load one MIDI instrument, record, build a Scene Chain and save. The following controls are important in APP_3640 / 0.3.640.

MIDI Mapping: select Gesture before Learn

Open MIDI Mapping, choose GLOBAL or a normal Track, then set Control, CtrlType and Gesture BEFORE pressing Learn. To use one pedal for two actions, learn FIRE + Single; then add OVERDUB + Long and learn the same pedal again. The MIDI Note/CC type, channel and number should match. Legacy cannot share a pedal with explicit gestures, and duplicate message/gesture combinations are rejected. For CC buttons, use Learn CC if press/release values need calibration. Press & Hold is reserved for compatible BPM increment/decrement actions.

Navigate Tracks without Return FX

Previous Track and Next Track skip Return FX, stopping at the first or last normal Track. Return FX can still be clicked directly. MIDI Mapping offers PREVIOUS_TRACK and NEXT_TRACK in GLOBAL scope. In a new project with no normal Tracks, the Bottom Panel shows MASTER instead of Return FX1.

Audio Apply, project switching and recovery

When you change enabled Audio input/output pairs in Preferences and press Apply, each Track Input/Output menu updates with the effective choices. Verify the resulting sound and Master/PFL routing. Saving during playback, or opening/closing/changing projects while playing, asks for consent before interruption. After an unexpected close, valid unsaved checkpoints may offer Project Recovery: Recover or Discard. Save an explicitly recovered session yourself.

More useful tools

Undo History lets you navigate recent actions, including many MIDI mappings, recordings, and plugin operations. Browser Favorites keeps common files and projects close; Clips Pool stores imported audio for later reuse. Recent Record/Monitor takes appear first. Warp/TS/Tune prepared playback now covers additional Q-Modes, Reverse preserves Tune, and Q1 AutoOverdub Off no longer leaves an empty take.

Before performing live, test two pedal gestures, verify physical I/O and reopen the saved project once.