

# Concentrate User Manual



MANY



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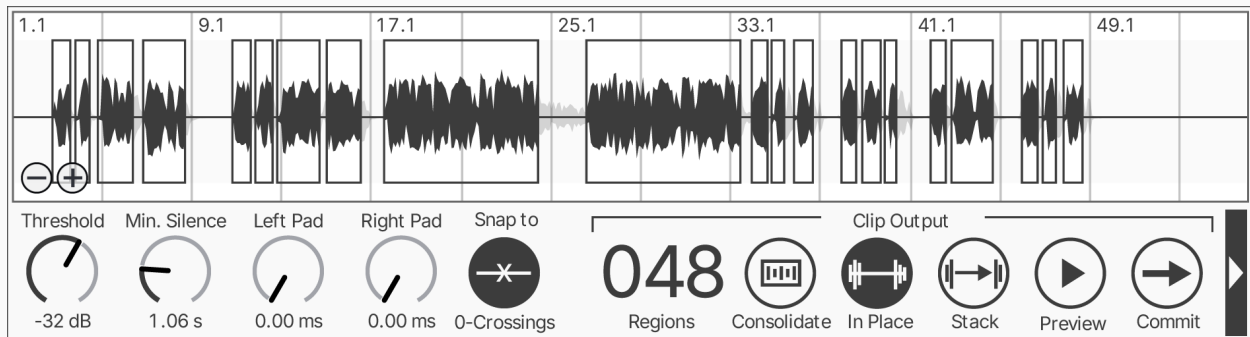
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Concentrate is a silence remover for Ableton Live. Set a threshold, tweak some settings to fit your audio, press a button and you're done.

Concentrate updates a clip on an audio track to only include the parts you want. You can even line up the kept audio in consecutive clips if you are prepping a sample for chopping, or want to create glitchy sounds.

## Requirements

- Ableton Live: Version 12.2 or higher (Suite, or Standard with M4L add-on).
- Max: Version 9.0 or higher.
- Operating System:
  - macOS: 11.0 (Big Sur) or later.
  - Windows: Windows 10 (version 22H2) or Windows 11.
- Important: Concentrate is a Max for Live device and only works with Ableton Live. It also uses special features that require Max 9 or higher.

## Install Concentrate

Installing the device is easy. Download the file, unzip it anywhere, then copy the **MANY HEADS** folder to your Ableton User Library.

## Load Concentrate

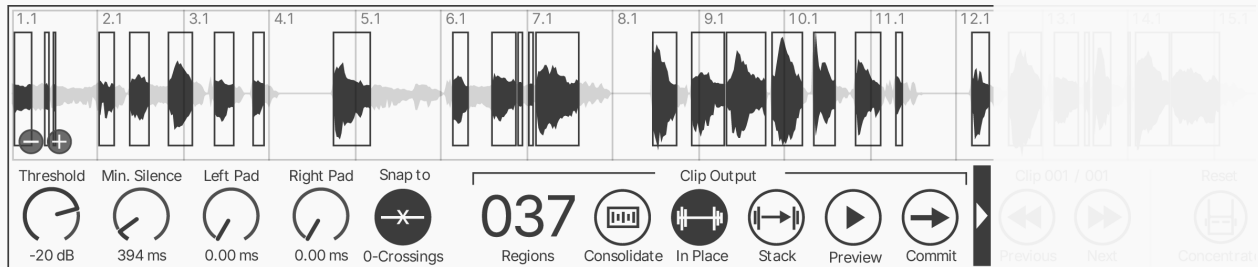
If you saved the device somewhere in your User Library, it should show up in the Max for Live folder in the Ableton Browser under **Concentrate.amxd**.

If you don't see it there, you can load it directly from the folder you saved it to in your User Library.

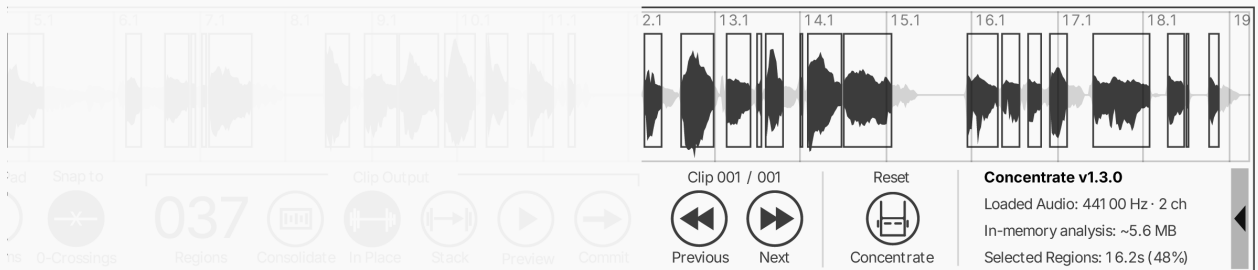
If all else fails, go to the All section of your Ableton browser, and search for "Concentrate.amxd".

## How to Concentrate Your Audio

### Concentrate's main parameters



### Concentrate's expanded parameters



#### Threshold



-24 dB

Start by adjusting the **Threshold**. Audio regions that exceed this value will be kept, and regions that fall below the value will be discarded. Audio regions that will be kept are outlined, and regions that will be discarded are faded back.

#### Min. Silence



394 ms

Increase the **Min. Silence** to smooth out your selection. This setting determines how long a region must last before it is considered below the threshold. Low values will split your audio at every tiny dip in volume, while higher values ignore short pauses to keep your phrases intact.

**Left Pad**

0.00 ms

**Left Pad** adds some cushioning ahead of the kept audio regions.

**Right Pad** adds a smooth tail to the end of your regions so they don't end with an abrupt silence.

**Right Pad**

0.00 ms

## Snap to



0-Crossings

Select **Snap to Zero Crossings** to make the edges of the kept audio regions snap to the center line of the sound wave. This can help prevent clicking and popping.

**128**

Regions Found

The **Clip Counter** displays the number of currently detected kept regions. This updates in real time as you adjust the controls.



Consolidate

If **Consolidate** is toggled on when you commit your changes, Concentrate will output a single clip that contains all selected regions, with silence inserted between each region if the device is in In Place mode. If you don't need a separate clip for each committed region, this can speed up the commit process.



In Place



Stack

Select **Keep Clips in Place** to keep the audio clips in their original positions when you commit your changes to the audio track. Select **Stack Clips** to arrange the clips of kept audio regions consecutively on the track. This can be useful for prepping samples for chopping or finding interesting sounds.



Preview

Select **Preview Kept Regions** to play through all currently selected kept regions in sequence, with a moving playhead on the waveform.



Commit

Pressing **Commit** applies your changes directly to the audio track. Once committed, you can use Undo (Cmd/Ctrl+Z) to restore the original clip and return the device to its pre-commit state.

**Clip 001 / 568**

Previous

Added in v1.3, you can now switch between audio clips on the current track by clicking the **Next Clip** or **Previous Clip** buttons.



Next

Reset



Concentrate

Use the **Reset Concentrate** button to reload the device to its initial load state.

## More on Using Concentrate

Concentrate only works in Arrangement View, and only on an audio track. You can drop **Concentrate.amxd** onto any audio track in Arrangement View. Concentrate will automatically load the first clip it finds on the track.

**Note:** Concentrate analyzes the audio file directly. The audio clip on the track must have **Warp disabled**.

Once Concentrate finishes loading the clip, the waveform appears. Region boundaries update in real time as you adjust the controls. Take a look at the waveform to get a sense of the audio's dynamics, then work through the controls from left to right:

After committing, Concentrate locks and commits the changes to the audio clip on the track. One clip is added to the track for each audio region you have selected to keep (unless **Consolidate** is on, which produces a single new clip). Each of those clips contains a reference to the full original audio clip, with loop bounds set to the start and end point of each region. The original clip is deleted from the track. Use Undo (Cmd/Ctrl+Z) to restore the original clip — the device returns to its pre-commit state with the waveform and settings intact.

**Tip:** If you output clips in Stack mode, try selecting all of the output clips, then pressing Cmd/Ctrl-Option/Alt-F to add a short crossfade between each clip. If you'd like to consolidate the clips into one, use Cmd/Ctrl-J.

## Suggested settings by source

These are starting points only — always use your ears and the waveform. The clip counter and outline regions show whether you are headed toward a manageable number of kept regions before you commit.

### Drum loop

**Typical goals:** remove dead air at the start or end, tighten a loop, or strip silence between hits without losing ghost notes or room tone you care about.

- **Threshold:** Start around **-45 to -35 dB**. Loops with loud kicks and snares tolerate a higher threshold; busier or softer loops may need **-50 dB** or lower so quiet hats and shakers stay “kept.”
- **Min. Silence:** For a tight one-bar loop, try **5–30 ms** so micro-gaps between hits do not explode the region count. If you only want to trim obvious gaps (long pause before the downbeat), try **50–150 ms**.
- **Padding:** Small **Left / Right Pad** (e.g. **2–15 ms**) preserves transients and decay tails; increase if cuts feel early or clipped.
- **Snap to Zero Crossings:** Usually **on** for clean edits unless you are deliberately chasing stutter, sliced textures.
- **Output: Consolidate** is a good default when you want one edited loop file. Use separate clips per region only when you need individual hits on the timeline.

**Long clips (over ~3 minutes) and/or many regions (about 500+):** Drum parts often create huge region counts if the threshold is too sensitive to bleed and room noise. Try raising **Min. Silence** first (see troubleshooting below). Prefer **Consolidate** when a single edited file is acceptable. If you must keep hundreds of separate clips, split the part onto a fresh track in **1–2 minute** sections so Live has fewer arrangement clips to juggle during commit — the point is to reduce clip count on the track during the operation, not to shorten analysis input in a meaningful way for drums.

## Vocal take

**Typical goals:** remove long pauses and breath noise between phrases while keeping words intact and natural.

- **Threshold:** Start near **-50 to -40 dB** for close-miked speech or singing (similar to the manual's speech suggestion). Noisy rooms or quiet passages may need **-60 dB** or lower.
- **Min. Silence:** **80–250 ms** often bridges breaths and short pauses without merging separate lines. For aggressive "dead air" removal only, you can go higher; for tight rap doubles, go lower and watch the region count.
- **Padding:** **Left Pad** helps word onsets; **Right Pad** helps sibilants and room tail. Try **20–80 ms** per side and adjust by ear.
- **Snap to Zero Crossings:** **On** for broadcast-style cleanup; try **off** if edits feel smeared and you prefer sample-accurate boundaries.
- **Output:** **Keep Clips in Place** when timing against the rest of the song matters. **Consolidate** plus **In Place** gives one file with timeline gaps as silence between phrases; **Consolidate** plus **Stack** gives one shorter file with phrases edited edge-to-edge.

**Long takes and/or 500+ regions:** Podcast- or interview-style material often spikes the region count when every tiny dip crosses the threshold. Zoom the waveform in and raise **Min. Silence** into the **20–100 ms** range (or higher) so short gaps merge; nudge **Threshold** until you get fewer, broader regions without losing words. **Consolidate** avoids one Live duplicate per region and is usually much faster. For dialogue you truly need as many separate clips, split the audio across **1–2 minute** clips on **separate tracks** before committing each section.

## Field recording

**Typical goals:** remove long stretches of wind, handling, traffic, or room hush while keeping birds, voices, or events you want.

- **Threshold:** Often **-55 to -40 dB** depending on how loud the “interesting” material is versus the bed. Very quiet ambiences may need **-65 dB** or lower so soft detail stays above the cutoff.
- **Min. Silence:** Start **higher** than for drums — e.g. **150–500 ms** — so only real pauses become removable silence; wind and rustle often fluctuate just under a vocal-style threshold.
- **Padding:** Generous **Right Pad** (e.g. **100–400 ms**) preserves fade-outs and distant reflections; use **Left Pad** sparingly so you do not pull noise backward into an onset you wanted clean.
- **Snap to Zero Crossings:** Often **on** for naturalistic cuts; for highly textured noise beds, audition both.
- **Output: Consolidate** is common when delivering one cleaned ambience file. Use per-region clips when you are building a collage and need each event on its own clip.

**Long recordings and/or 500+ regions:** Field material is prone to thousands of micro-regions if the detector chases small level changes in the bed. Prioritize a **much higher Min. Silence** so only real pauses create new regions, then adjust **Threshold** in small steps (higher or lower depending on whether you need to keep more detail or simplify the map) until the clip counter looks sane. Prefer **Consolidate** for one long master. If you still need many clips, work in **sections on separate tracks** as above.

## Troubleshooting

**"Switch to Arrangement View to use Concentrate."** — Concentrate is only able to load and commit clips from the Arrangement View. Switch to Arrangement View in Ableton Live (press Tab if you are in Session View).

**"Add a clip to the audio track to use Concentrate."** — There is no audio clip on the track. Add a clip to the track's arrangement section and Concentrate will detect it automatically.

**"The detected audio clip has Warping enabled. Disable Warping to use Concentrate."** — Select the clip in the arrangement, open its Clip View, and turn off **Warp**. Concentrate reads the raw audio file and is not compatible with Live's time-stretching engine.

**"The audio clip in this track could not be loaded. Try bouncing the audio clip in place, and then reload Concentrate."** — This can happen with clips that reference external files in certain formats, or clips that do not have a resolvable file path (e.g. clips created by certain plugins). Try bouncing or consolidating the clip to create a new audio file, then load that file onto the track.

**"Unable to load audio clip. Try loading a new clip, or bouncing the clip in place and reloading Concentrate."** — The clip on the track does not have a readable file path. Bouncing or consolidating the clip in place usually resolves this.

## Troubleshooting (continued)

**No regions are detected / all audio appears dropped.** — The Threshold may be set too high. Lower the Threshold value (toward -80 dB) until regions appear outlined in the waveform.

**Too many small regions are created.** — Increase **Min. Silence** to bridge short gaps between sounds, or raise **Left Pad / Right Pad** so that adjacent regions merge together.

**Clicks or pops at the start or end of committed clips.** — Enable **Snap to Zero Crossings** so that boundaries land on natural zero points in the waveform. Adding a small **Left Pad** or **Right Pad** can also help avoid abrupt cuts.

**Concentrate loads the wrong clip.** — Concentrate always loads the first clip on the track (the clip with the earliest start position). If you want to process a different clip, move it to the beginning of the track, or remove other clips from the track first. With the device **expanded**, use **Prev clip / Next clip** to switch among clips on the same track.

**"No regions selected" after pressing Commit.** — Your current Threshold and Min. Silence settings produced no kept regions to commit. Lower the Threshold or reduce Min. Silence until at least one outlined region appears in the waveform, then try again.

**After commit, Reset loads only part of the original audio.** — If you committed in the default (non-Consolidate) mode, the track now holds several region clips. **Reset Device** loads the first clip on the track, which may be a small region clip, not the original full file. To work on the original again, use Undo until the original clip is back, then reset or navigate as needed.

**Concentrate is on a non-audio track.** — If you accidentally drop Concentrate onto a MIDI track or a return track, it will automatically create a new audio track and move itself there.

**Commit takes a very long time or seems to hang.** — Large or complex commits are normal in some cases: many kept regions, long audio, and Live's own cost when the arrangement already has many clips. The progress line in the device may move slowly rather than freezing outright. Try the following in order.

- **Abort:** Use the **Abort** button to stop the commit. The device attempts to restore the prior arrangement state; if anything looks wrong, use Undo in Live and reload the clip if needed.
- **Consolidate mode:** If you do not need a separate clip for every kept region, turn **Consolidate** on. Concentrate writes **one new clip** instead of one per region, which is usually **much faster**. With **Keep Clips in Place**, the file length matches the original span and **dropped sections become silence** between the kept passages. With **Stack**, kept audio is **packed back-to-back** into a shorter file (no long silent gaps between regions in the file).
- **Increase Minimum Silence:** This mainly helps when you still need **one clip per region**, but it speeds analysis and commit either way. Zoom into the waveform and raise **Min. Silence** into roughly the **20–100 ms** range (or higher for vocals and field material). That merges tiny gaps and often drops region counts by orders of magnitude for stem-style cleanup, which speeds commit. You can also nudge **Threshold** to hit your sonic goal with fewer regions.
- **Many regions, no parameter relief:** If you truly need a separate clip per region and cannot reduce the count, split the **source audio** into **1–2 minute** sections on **different tracks** (duplicate regions of the same file is fine). The goal is not to shorten what Concentrate analyzes in one go, but to reduce how many clips Live must manage on one track during the duplicate-heavy commit.

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