

47 must-know Avid Pro Tools shortcuts: 2023 cheat sheet

Being a successful professional audio editor or producer requires both precision and speed. The longer it takes to complete a project, the less projects you complete.

Making mistakes costs time as well, so learning how to make precise, error-free edits and modifications is a skill that many sound editors will spend their entire career honing. Speed, however, is a much easier skill to master, and largely comes down to how well you know your tools.

If you're an editor who works on Avid Pro Tools, shortcuts should become a key part of your workflow, allowing you to work faster and more efficiently. Shortcuts save time because they allow you to access tools and features right from your keyboard without having to click through lengthy menus or leave your workspace.

When used correctly, they become almost a sort of dance that your fingers do as you edit, allowing you to sink into that ever-elusive "flow state" during your editing and recording sessions. From creating new tracks to fine-tuning the tiniest waveform blip in a dialog track, there's a shortcut for nearly everything. Soon you'll see your entire session fly by and be hitting "export" in no time.

We've compiled this handy Pro Tools keyboard shortcuts guide so that you can speed up your editing and recording sessions so you can work smarter, not harder. Make sure to save this for future reference!

47 Handy Avid Pro Tools Shortcuts

There are lots of different shortcut combinations that work with Pro Tools, but first, let's start with the basics:

**Note: These are all based on the standard qwerty keyboard*

Basics:

- Play Edit Selection: ([) Key
- Play Timeline Selection: (]) Key
- Trim Selected Clip Start to Cursor: [A] Key
- Separate: [B] Key
- Copy: [C] Key
- Fade from Start: [D] Key
- Zoom Toggle: [E] Key
- Undo: [Z] Key
- Redo: Shift + Z

These single key commands are often called "hotkeys" and are typically assigned due to their frequency of use.

Now we'll dive into more complex keyboard shortcuts that will allow you to access a wide range of features and tools.

Edit Window and Mix Window Shortcuts:

- Start/Stop Playback: [Spacebar]
- Half-Speed Playback: [Shift + Spacebar]
- Pause: [Ctrl/Cmd + Spacebar]
- Import Audio: [Shift + Ctrl/Cmd + I]

Recording Shortcuts:

- Start Recording: [Ctrl/Cmd + Spacebar]
- Stop Recording: [Spacebar]
- Half-Speed Record: [Ctrl/Cmd + Shift + Spacebar]
- Loop Record Toggle: [Alt/Option + L]
- Enable or Disable Pre/Post-Roll Time: [Ctrl/Cmd + K]
- Set and Enable Pre/Post-Roll Time: [Alt/Option + mouse click before or after selected track]

Edit Modes and Edit Tools Shortcuts:

- Shuffle Mode: [F1] or [Option + 1]
- Slip Mode: [F2] or [Option + 2]
- Spot Mode: [F3] or [Option + 3]
- Enable Snap to Grid (while in another edit mode): [Shift + F4]
- Enable Snap to Grid AND Shuffle Mode: [F1 + F4]
- Enable Snap to Grid AND Slip Mode: [F2 + F4]
- Enable Snap to Grid AND Spot Mode: [F3 + F4]
- Zoomer Tool: [F5] or [Ctrl/Cmd + 1]
- Trimmer Tool: [F6] or [Ctrl/Cmd + 2]
- Selector Tool: [F7] or [Ctrl/Cmd + 3]
- Grabber Tool: [F8] or [Ctrl/Cmd + 4]

- Scrubber Tool: [F9] or [Ctrl/Cmd + 5]
- Pencil Tool: [F10] or [Ctrl/Cmd + 6]
- Smart Tool: [F6 + F7] or [Ctrl/Cmd + 7]
- Cycle Through Edit Modes: [`] Key (known as the "Single Open Quote" key, located directly above the Tab key)
- Cycle Through Edit Tools: [Esc]
- Lock or Unlock Shuffle Mode: Command-click "Shuffle" button (Mac) or Control-click "Shuffle" button (Windows)

Transport Mode (Numeric Keypad):

- Start/Stop: [0]
- Rewind: [1]
- Fast Forward: [2]
- Record Enable: [3]
- Loop Playback Mode (On/Off): [4]
- Loop Record Mode (On/Off): [5]
- QuickPunch Mode (On/Off): [6]
- Click (On/Off): [7]
- Countoff (On/Off): [8]

MIDI Merge/Replace Mode (On/Off): [9]

How to Add or Change Shortcuts in Avid Pro Tools

Unlike other editing and recording programs, Avid Pro Tools does not have an integrated way to reassign hotkeys

and shortcuts within the program, so you're pretty much stuck with the default layout.

This can be a big downside for editors who are used to a certain workflow or just want to change things around because of personal preference (for example, you prefer to use the [fn] key instead of the control key before commands).

Thankfully, we've found some workarounds you can try that will allow you to further customize your Avid Pro Tools shortcut workflow:

Solution #1: AutoHotKey (Windows)

[AutoHotKey](#) is an open-source program that allows for quick and easy keyboard automation. It has easy-to-learn commands built in so that even absolute beginners can dive in and start remapping buttons and creating new commands.

This will still take some self-educating and setup time to get comfortable using, but once you do you can fine tune your Pro Tools commands to your hearts content, along with pretty much any other program.

Solution #2: Streamdeck (Windows and Mac)

While AutoHotKey is a software solution, [Streamdeck](#) provides a hardware solution for the less coding-savvy who don't want to deal with plug-ins or automation

commands. Originally designed for livestream hosts, the Streamdeck essentially performs as a separate shortcut keyboard where you can assign virtually any program or command to its buttons.

You can also create a custom icon for each button to eliminate confusion (and maybe even add a little fun). If you're looking for the easiest hotkey solution on the market, this is it.

Now you can fully customize your keyboard to edit quickly and efficiently in whatever workflow works best for you. Once you've gotten the hang of using shortcuts, you can start trimming down your editing time, which means your movie score may be hitting the big screen or your pop album will rank #1 on a Spotify playlist faster than you'd think.

If you're looking for a better way to bring your remote recording team closer together and collaborate more efficiently from a distance, check out Evercast. [Evercast](#) allows you to stream your edit sessions in HD while video chatting and exchanging notes with your team, all under one platform. Because we believe collaboration is the magic behind turning a good project into a great one.

Additional Resources for Avid Users:

- [How to Stream Avid Without Lag](#)
- [Avid vs Premiere Pro: Head-to-Head Showdown](#)
- [30+ Avid Media Composer Shortcuts](#)

