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Welcome to Pro Tools® | First from Avid®. This guide documents how to install and authorize your Pro Tools | First software on Mac and Windows systems.

For detailed information on configuring your system, and for complete information about Pro Tools First software capabilities and functionality, see the Pro Tools | First Help (available from the Help menu in Pro Tools | First). For tutorials on using Pro Tools | First, see the Introduction to Pro Tools First.pdf.

Pro Tools | First Software Capabilities

Pro Tools | First software provides the following capabilities, depending on your hardware configuration:

• Support for up to four channels of audio input and output (depending on audio hardware)
• Up to a total of 16 audio tracks (mono or stereo) per session
• Up to 16 Auxiliary Input tracks (mono or stereo)
• Up to 4 Master Fader tracks (mono or stereo)
• Up to 16 MIDI tracks
• Up to 16 Instrument tracks (mono or stereo)
• 32-bit floating point audio resolution, at sample rates up to 96 kHz (depending on your hardware)
• Non-destructive, random-access editing and mix automation

• Audio processing with up to 10 real-time plug-ins per track, depending on your computer’s capabilities
• Up to 10 sends per track
• Up to 24 internal mix busses (mono or stereo) for routing and mixing

For information about the I/O capabilities of your audio interface, see the documentation that came with your audio interface.

System Requirements and Compatibility

Pro Tools | First can be used with any qualified audio interface running on a qualified Windows or Mac computer.

An internet connection is required to download the Pro Tools | First installer, and to log in and create projects.

Avid can only assure compatibility and provide support for hardware and software it has tested and approved.

For complete system requirements and a list of qualified computers, operating systems, hard drives, and third-party devices, visit: www.avid.com/compatibility

MIDI Requirements

USB, FireWire, and PCI MIDI interfaces work effectively with Pro Tools | First systems on Mac or Windows.

For a list of supported MIDI interfaces and controllers, visit www.avid.com/support.


## Hard Drive Requirements

Pro Tools | First can only record to the system drive. Ensure that you have enough free hard drive space for recording audio. For optimal audio recording and playback, make sure that this is an Avid-qualified hard drive.

> For information on qualified hard drives for use with Pro Tools | First, visit www.avid.com/support

## Installing Hardware Drivers

Before installing Pro Tools | First, ensure that you have installed your audio and MIDI hardware interfaces (if any) and that you have installed the latest drivers for your hardware (if any). Refer to the documentation that came with your hardware for more information. For Avid audio interfaces, visit www.avid.com/drivers to download and install the latest drivers for your device.

> Pro Tools | First will not recognize your audio interface if you do not install the drivers.

## Creating your Avid and iLok Accounts for Pro Tools | First

To get started with Pro Tools | First and create your Avid Master Account and iLok account, visit my.avid.com/protoolsfirstactivation and follow the on-screen instructions.

### Your Avid Master Account

Create a new Avid Master Account or log in to your existing Avid Master Account (my.avid.com). Your Avid Master Account gives you access to downloads, Marketplace purchases, support, and more. An Avid account is required to download and activate Pro Tools | First.

### Your iLok Account

Create an iLok account if you don’t have one already. Your iLok account manages your Pro Tools software and plug-in authorizations. It is free to create your iLok account. If you have an iLok USB key, you can store your authorizations on your iLok. However, if you don’t have an iLok, you can authorize Pro Tools | First on your computer instead.

## Installing Pro Tools | First Software

After you have created your Avid Master Account and iLok ID, you can download the installer for Pro Tools | First from your Avid Master Account and install Pro Tools | First software on your computer.

> Before installing Pro Tools | First, refer to the included Read Me for late-breaking information and any known issues.

### Installing Pro Tools | First on Mac

To install Pro Tools | First on Mac:

1. Download the installer for Mac from your Avid Master Account. After downloading, make sure the installer is uncompressed (.dmg).
2. Locate and double-click the Pro Tools First disk image.
3. On the disk image, locate and double-click Install Pro Tools | First.pkg.
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to install Pro Tools | First.
5. When installation is complete, click OK.
Installing Pro Tools | First on Windows

To install Pro Tools | First on Windows:

1. Download the installer for Windows from your Avid Master Account. After downloading, uncompress the Pro_Tools_First_Installer.zip file.

2. Once the .zip file is uncompressed, locate the Pro Tools First folder.

3. In the Pro Tools First folder, locate and double-click setup.exe.

4. Follow the on-screen instructions to complete the installation.

5. When installation is complete, click Finish.

First Avid Loopmasters 1.0

First Avid Loopmasters 1.0 sample pack provides 500 MB of royalty fee audio loops and sounds. This content is automatically accessible through the Soundbase window in Pro Tools | First and installed in the following locations depending on your operating system:

Mac OS X /Users/<username>/Documents/Pro Tools/Sound Libraries/

Windows \Users\<username>\My Documents\Pro Tools\Sound Libraries\

Avid Application Manager

The Avid Application Manager is installed with Pro Tools | First. The Avid Application Manager is used to manage your software entitlements related to your Avid Master Account.

The Avid Application Manager helps you maintain Pro Tools | First software and audio plug-in updates that you are entitled to when new versions become available. For more information about the Avid Application Manager, see the *Avid Application Manager Guide* (available online through the Avid Knowledgebase).

Starting Up or Shutting Down Your System

To ensure that the components of your system communicate properly with each other, start them in the following order.

Start up your Pro Tools | First system in this order:

1. Lower the volume of all output devices in your system.

2. Turn on any MIDI interfaces and devices.

3. For systems with audio interfaces that require external power, turn on the hardware. Wait at least fifteen seconds for the audio interface to initialize.

4. Turn on your computer.

5. Launch Pro Tools | First (see “Launching and Authorizing Pro Tools | First” on page 4).
Shut down your Pro Tools | First system in this order:

2. Turn off or lower the volume of all output devices in your system.
3. Turn off your computer.
4. For systems that use an audio interface that requires external power, turn off the hardware.
5. Turn off any MIDI interfaces and devices.
6. Turn off any control surfaces.
7. Turn off any external hard drives.

Launching and Authorizing Pro Tools | First

The first time you launch Pro Tools | First you are prompted to authorize your software using your iLok.com account credentials with the iLok License Manager application. Once your computer or your iLok USB key is authorized, you will be able to launch Pro Tools | First without having to go through the authorization procedure again.

For information about iLok license management, visit www.ilok.com.

To launch and authorize Pro Tools | First software:

1. Make sure your audio interface (if any) is connected to your computer and powered on.
2. Make sure that you are connected to the internet (this is only necessary the first time you launch Pro Tools).
3. Do one of the following:
   - On Mac, click the Pro Tools First shortcut in your Dock (or double-click the application icon in Macintosh HD/Applications/Avid/Pro Tools First).
   - On Windows, double-click the Pro Tools First shortcut on your desktop (or the application in Program Files\Avid\Pro Tools First).

4. When the Pro Tools activation screen appears, click Activate.
5. Log into your iLok.com account.
6. When the list of available licenses appears, select the license for Pro Tools | First and click Next.
7. When prompted, enter your iLok.com account credentials and click Next.
8. Select either your computer or your iLok (if you have one) as the location for the license and click Next.
9. After activation is complete, click Continue to launch Pro Tools | First.
10. On launch, you are prompted to sign in to your Avid Master Account with your registered email address and password. Enable the Keep me signed in option if desired.
11. Click the Sign In button and sign in to your Avid Master Account.
12. In the Dashboard window, do one of the following:
   - Create a new project from template.
   - Create a new blank project.
   - Open an existing project (if any).
   - Click the Cancel button to configure Pro Tools | First without a project open.

For more information about the Dashboard and projects, refer to Pro Tools | First Help (Help > Pro Tools | First Help) or the Introduction to Pro Tools First.pdf.
Configuring Pro Tools | First

Before you get started using Pro Tools | First software you should configure Pro Tools | First to meet the specific needs of your studio. Launch Pro Tools | First, cancel out of the Dashboard window, and configure the Setup options.

For detailed information on configuring your software, see Pro Tools | First Help (which is available from the Help menu in Pro Tools | First).

Playback Engine

The Playback Engine lets you select your audio interface and set the default stereo channel outputs for Pro Tools tracks. You can also optimize the audio engine for recording or playing back audio.

Playback Engine dialog

Default Output

From the Default Output selector, select stereo output channels on your audio interface or the built-in sound of your computer that you want to be the default output channels for newly created tracks. This also controls your audition path and what is displayed for the main output meters in both the Edit and Transport windows.

Sample Rate

If no project is open, the Sample Rate selector lets you specify the sample rate for new projects and your audio interface (not all audio interfaces support all Pro Tools | First sample rates). If a project is open, the sample rate of the project is displayed.

Optimize Engine For

Select one of the following options for optimizing the audio engine. Note that you will want to switch between these two options depending on whether you are recording audio and MIDI or if you are playing back and mixing audio.

Record

Select the Record option for recording in Pro Tools | First. This option provides the lowest latency between the audio input and output of your audio interface. The option is also useful for reducing performance latency if you are playing Virtual Instrument plug-ins from a MIDI controller.

Playback

Select the Playback option for playback and mixing with plug-ins. This option introduces noticeable latency between the audio input and output of your audio interface, so it is not intended for monitoring while recording or for real-time performance of Virtual Instrument plug-ins. However, this option is optimized for plug-in processing, as

When Windows Audio Device is selected as the Playback Engine, you can choose both an Input and Output device. Avid recommends that the same device be selected for both Input and Output.
well as audio and MIDI playback. If you encounter problems in sessions with lots of plug-ins when the Record option is enabled, try using the Playback option instead.

**Hardware Setup**

Configure your audio interface using its own Control Panel (consult the manufacturer’s instructions for information specific to your audio interface).

**To configure your audio interface:**

1. In Pro Tools | First, choose Setup > Hardware.
2. Pro Tools | First launches the Control Panel for your audio hardware.
3. Configure your audio hardware to suit your needs according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

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**Uninstalling Pro Tools | First on Windows**

To uninstall Pro Tools | First on Windows:

1. Choose Start > Control Panel.
2. Click Programs and Features.
3. Click Uninstall a program.
4. Select Avid Pro Tools First from the list of installed applications.
5. Click Uninstall.
6. Follow the on-screen instructions to remove Pro Tools.

⚠️ Note that you will have to uninstall plug-ins (such as Avid Effects), as well as any audio and MIDI device drivers separately.

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**Optimizing a Mac System for Pro Tools | First**

To ensure optimum performance with Pro Tools | First, configure your computer before installing the full version of Pro Tools.

**Uninstalling Pro Tools | First on Mac**

To uninstall Pro Tools | First on Mac:

1. Make sure you are logged in as an Administrator for the account where Pro Tools | First is installed.
2. Go to Applications folder and locate Pro Tools | First.
3. Drag the Pro Tools | First application to the trash and empty the trash.

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For a complete list of recommended optimizations for your operating system, visit www.avid.com/optimize.

Before configuring your computer, make sure you are logged in as an Administrator for the account where you installed Pro Tools | First. For details on Administrator privileges in Mac OS X, see your Apple OS X documentation.

⚠️ Do not use the Mac OS X automatic Software Update feature, as it may upgrade your system to a version of Mac OS that has not yet been qualified for Pro Tools. For details on qualified versions of Mac OS, visit www.avid.com/compatibility.
Turning Off Energy Saver

To turn off the Energy Saver feature:
1. Choose System Preferences from the Apple menu.
2. Click Energy Saver.
3. Set the Computer Sleep setting to Never.
4. Set the Display Sleep setting to Never.
5. Deselect “Put the hard disk(s) to sleep when possible” option.

Disable or Reassign Mac Keyboard Shortcuts Used by Pro Tools

To have the full complement of Pro Tools | First keyboard shortcuts, you need to disable or reassign conflicting Mac OS X Keyboard Shortcuts in the Apple System Preferences.

To disable or reassign Mac keyboard shortcuts used by Pro Tools | First:
1. From the Apple menu, choose System Preferences.
2. Click Keyboard.
3. Click the Keyboard Shortcuts tab.
4. You can disable or reassign Mac OS keyboard shortcuts that conflict with Pro Tools keyboard shortcuts. The following list includes several common Mac keyboard shortcuts that, depending on the make and model of your Mac, may also be used by Pro Tools:
   - Under “Launchpad & Dock”
     - “Turn Dock Hiding On/Off”
   - Under “Mission Control”
     - “Mission Control”
     - “Application windows”
     - “Show Desktop”
   - “Show Dashboard”
   - “Mission Control > Move left a space”
   - “Mission Control > Move right a space”
   - “Mission Control > Switch to Desktop n”
5. Under “Keyboard & Text Input”
   - “Turn keyboard access on or off”
   - “Move focus to the window drawer”
   - “Move focus to the Dock”
   - “Move Focus to active or next window”
6. Under “Services”
   - “Send File To Bluetooth Device”
   - “Search With Google”
   - “Spotlight”
7. Under “Spotlight”
   - “Show Spotlight search field”
   - “Show Spotlight window”
8. Under “Accessibility”
   - “Zoom”
   - “Contrast”
9. Under “Application Shortcuts”
   - “Show Help menu”

Enabling Journaling for Audio Drives

To yield higher performance from audio drives, enable journaling.

To enable journaling:
1. Launch the Disk Utility application, located in Applications/Utilities.
2. Select the volume in the left column of the Disk Utility window.
3. Select Enable Journaling in the toolbar.
To ensure optimum performance with Pro Tools | First, configure your computer before launching Pro Tools | First.

For a complete list of recommended optimizations for your operating system, visit www.avid.com/optimize.

Before configuring your computer, make sure you are logged in as an Administrator for the account where you want to install Pro Tools | First. For details on Administrator privileges, see your Windows documentation.

Required Optimizations

To ensure optimum performance with Pro Tools | First, configure the following settings.

When you are finished changing Windows system settings, restart your computer.

Disabling User Account Control

To disable User Account Control (UAC):

1 Choose Start > Control Panel.
2 Click User Accounts and Family Safety.
3 Click User Accounts.
4 Click on Change User Account Control settings.
5 Set the slider to Never Notify.
6 Click OK.

Configuring System Standby and Power Management

When using Pro Tools | First, the Windows System Standby power scheme must be set to Always On. This prevents long record or playback passes from stopping due to system resources powering down.

To configure Windows Power Management:

1 Choose Start > Control Panel.
2 Click on System and Security.
3 Click Power Options.
4 Click on the arrow to Show Additional Plans.
5 Select High Performance.
6 Click Change plan settings.
7 Click Change advanced power settings.
8 In the Power Options dialog, reveal Hard disk > Turn off hard disk after.
9 Select the value in the Setting (Minutes) field and press Backspace on your computer keyboard or scroll the value to Never.
10 Select the value in the Setting (Minutes) field and press Backspace on your computer keyboard or scroll the value to Never.
11 Click OK. The hard disk setting changes to Never and the Power Options dialog closes.
12 In the Edit Plan Settings window, click Save changes and close the window.

Pro Tools | First automatically switches to the “High Performance” Power Management settings on launch. Windows reverts to the previously selected Power Management settings (if different) when exiting Pro Tools | First. Consequently, when optimizing the Power Management settings for Pro Tools | First, you should always only optimize the High Performance configuration.
**Recommended Optimizations**

Pro Tools | First can also be affected by other software and hardware drivers installed on your computer. For best possible performance, it is recommended (but not required) that you do the following:

- Avoid running any unneeded programs at the same time as Pro Tools | First.
- Turn off any software utilities that run in the background, such as Windows Messenger, calendars, and disk maintenance programs.
- Turn off any non-essential USB devices while running Pro Tools.

**Optional Optimizations**

The following system optimizations may help Pro Tools | First perform better on some systems. It is recommended that you only try these optimizations if necessary, as they may disable or adversely affect the functionality of other programs on your system.

**Adjusting Processor Scheduling**

To adjust Processor Scheduling performance:

1. Right-click Computer and choose Properties.
2. Click Advanced system settings.
3. Under the Performance section, click the Settings button.
4. In the Performance Options window, click the Advanced tab.
5. Under the Processor Scheduling section, select the Background Services option.
6. Click OK to close the Performance Options window.
7. Click OK to close the System Properties window.

**Disabling System Startup Items**

The fewer items in use by your computer, the more resources are available for Pro Tools | First. Some startup applications may be consuming unnecessary CPU resources, and can be turned off.

If you disable any of the following startup items, do so carefully:

- Portable media serial number (required for some applications that utilize a copy protection key)
- The Plug and Play service
- Event log
- Cryptographic services

To disable System Startup items:

1. From the Start menu, type “msconfig” in Start Search and press Enter to open the System Configuration Utility.
2. Under the General tab, choose Selective Startup.
3. Deselect Load Startup Items and click OK.
4. Click Restart to restart the computer.
5. After restarting, the computer displays a System Configuration message. Check to see if Pro Tools performance has increased before you deselect the “Don't show this message again” option. If performance has not changed, run “msconfig” and return your computer Startup Selection back to Normal Startup - load all device drives and services. Alternatively, try disabling Startup items and non-essential processes individually.
Backing Up Your System

After setting up your system and installing Pro Tools | First, you should save an image of your system drive using a backup utility. By doing this, you can quickly restore your system configuration and settings if you encounter any problems.

What’s Next?

Now that you have Pro Tools | First installed, authorized, optimized, and running, start your first project!

Check out the Intro Pro Tools | First.pdf (available through your Avid Master Account), view some of the Getting Started with Pro Tools | First videos online at www.avid.com, refer to the online help (Help > Pro Tools | First Help), and join the online Avid Pro Tools community to discover what’s possible with Pro Tools as the instrument of your talent and creativity.