

Post-Production Sound Pro Tools Basics: Navigation

The Edit Window

The screenshot shows the Pro Tools Edit Window interface. At the top, the menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Track, Clip, Event, AudioSuite, Options, Setup, Window, Marketplace, and Help. Below the menu bar, the Transport controls are visible, including buttons for Shuffle, Spot, and Grid, a Counter showing 00:59:57:27, and Grid and Nudge values. The main workspace is divided into several sections: Video track (top), Audio tracks (middle), and Auxiliary tracks (bottom). The Video track shows a sequence of clips from a video file named 'Red Dragon.mov'. The Audio tracks show various audio clips, including 'Metals', 'MetBD', 'Horse EFX', 'Swords', 'Whoosh', 'Rain', 'KitchenAtms', 'Atmosmixd', 'MnksAmbnc', 'Music Mix', 'Reverb', and 'Master'. The Auxiliary tracks show 'Music Mix-01' and 'Music Mix-02'. The Clips list on the right side of the window lists various audio and video clips, such as 'AMBIENT_KITCHEN-01 (Stereo)', 'Erie Metal Impact Mix R7C-02', 'DAT.02.new.10.a1ine', 'Death Screams', 'Male Groans-Psh_01-02', 'MetBD_PLUGs_01-01', 'MetBD_PLUGs_01-06', 'MetBD_PLUGs_01-08', 'MetBD_PLUGs_01-10', 'MetBD_PLUGs_01-11', 'MIC_02', 'MIC_02-02', 'MIC_02-04', 'MIC_02-08', 'MIC_02-10', 'MIC_02-12', 'MIC_02-14', 'MIC_02-16', 'MIC_02-18', 'Monks Ambience_01 (Stereo)', 'Monks VO_13-13', 'Monks VO_13-14', 'Monks VO_06-01++++-05', 'Monks VO_06-01++++-08', 'Monks VO_06-01++++-09', 'Monks VO_06-01++++-10', 'Monks VO_12 shorter++-07', 'Monks VO_14 nowit begins-05', 'Music Mix_01 (Stereo)', and 'Music Mix_02 (Stereo)'. The word 'clips' is written in the center of the workspace with arrows pointing to various clips.

Labels and arrows pointing to the interface elements:

- Zoom buttons
- Edit tools
- Counter
- Grid and Nudge values
- Transport controls
- Edit modes
- Video track
- Audio tracks
- Auxiliary track
- Master fader track
- Track headers
- Inserts column
- Input/Output column
- Clips list

To start playback, click the **play button** in the **Transport controls**.



To stop playback, click the **stop button** in the **Transport controls**.

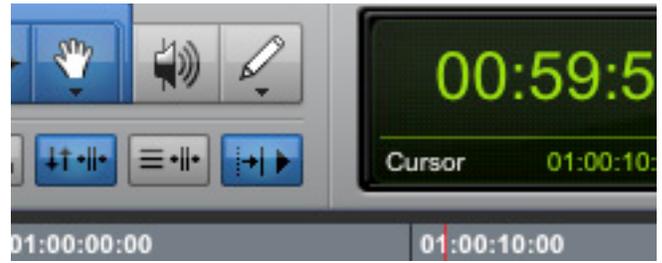


OR

Use the **spacebar** to start and stop playback.

Note that when you stop playback and start again, the playback starts from the same place as before, not where you stopped. Sometimes this is useful, sometimes it's not. You can change this in two ways.

click on **Insertion Follows Playback** button



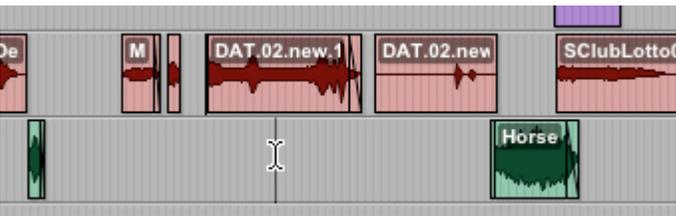
Insertion Follows Playback active

Now playback will resume from where it was stopped.

KEYBOARD
SHORTCUT:

control n toggles between the two modes of playback.

In ProTools, you can click anywhere in a **track**



or select a **clip**



and that's where playback will start.

To go to the beginning of a session, hit **return** (in Avid **home**).

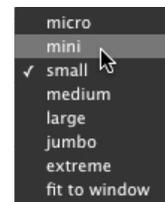
To go to the end of a session, hit **option - return** (in Avid **end**).

There are several ways to change the size of tracks.

Click the **track height bar**.

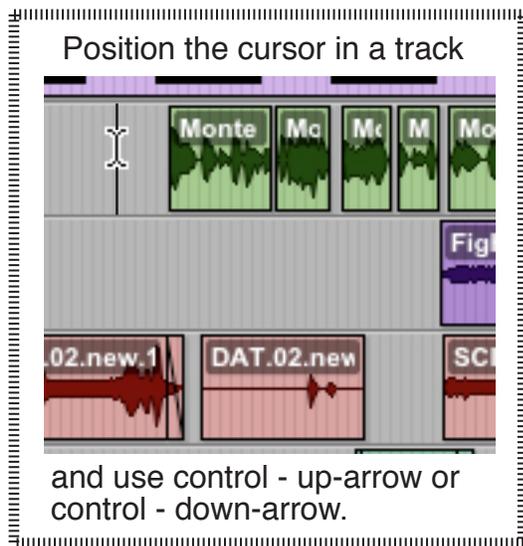


You get a pop-up **track height menu**.



Click anywhere along the bottom edge of a track header and drag. You can get in-between track heights this way. (This is the same as in Avid.)





Hold **option** while doing any of these and it will change the size of ALL tracks.

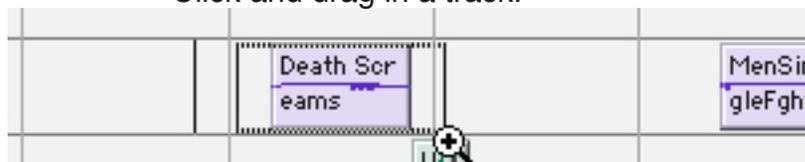
There are also several ways to zoom in and out horizontally.



Select the **zoomer tool**.



Click and drag in a track.



zoomed in



Position the **zoomer tool** and **click**.



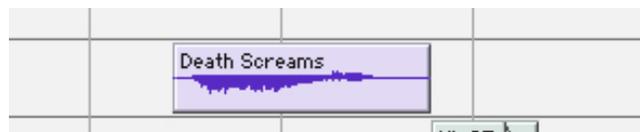
zoomed in



Position the **zoomer tool** and **option - click**.



zoomed out



keyboard shortcut: ⌘ [**zoom out** ⌘] **zoom in**



There are five user-definable **zoom presets**. To store a preset, -click on one of the preset buttons. To recall a preset, click on a preset button.

keyboard shortcut: **control - preset number**



Double-click the **zoomer tool** to fit the whole session into the window.

keyboard shortcut: **option - a**

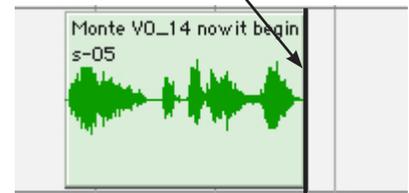
What if you want to start playback exactly at the beginning of the clip “Monte VO_14 now it begins-05”?

Position the cursor (aka **insertion point**) somewhere earlier in the track and hit **tab**.



Tab again and the cursor moves to the next clip boundary.

The cursor moves to the next clip boundary.



Tab in ProTools works the same as the down-arrow in Media Composer.

Option-tab moves the cursor to the **previous clip boundary**, the same as the up-arrow in MC.

There are one **Video Track**, one **stereo Audio Track**, one **mono Audio Track**, and one **stereo Master Fader**.

The **Main Counter** shows the position of the **playhead** (aka **cursor** aka **insertion point**).



If there is a **selection**, the **Secondary Counter** shows the **Start** and **End** times and the **Length** of the **selection**.



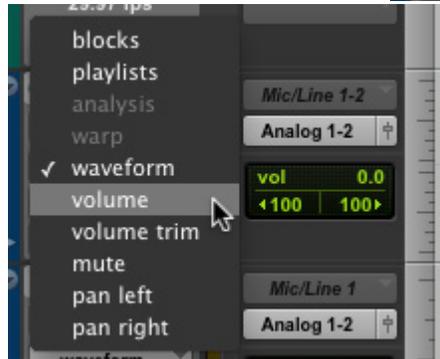
The default **track view** is **waveform**.



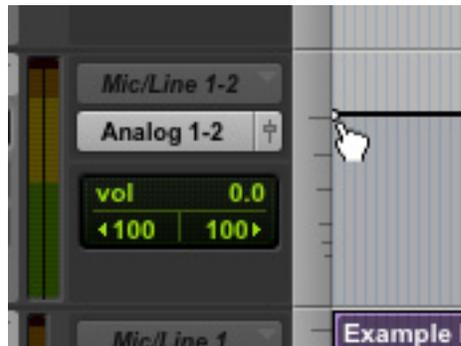
The little triangle indicates a pull-down menu, in this case for selecting the **Track View**.



Clicking on the triangle opens the menu. You have a lot of different **Track Views** to choose from. For now we want **volume**.



At the beginning of the track there's an **automation breakpoint**, Pro Tool's equivalent of a **keyframe**. It's the only one so far, and it's automatically there.

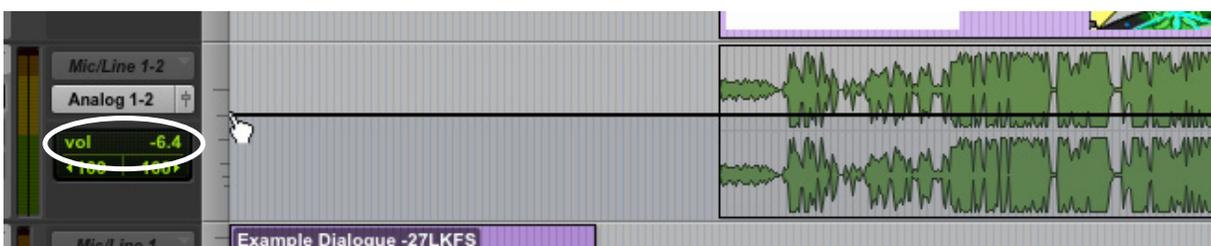


As you move the **cursor** to an **automation breakpoint** the **cursor** turns into the **grabber** that points (aka the nose-pick-er tool) which you can use to move an **automation breakpoint**.

click and drag



release



The new **volume** is displayed in the **vol bar**.