



# Audacity Basics

Audacity is an open-source desktop audio recording and editing program.

## Preparation

### Download Audacity

Audacity is installed on many Langara computers, but you can find the current version of Audacity at <http://www.audacityteam.org/download/>.

**Note:** If you are using MacOS version Catalina or later, you may encounter compatibility issues using the most recent version of Audacity. If so, uninstall Audacity and try a version older than 2.3.2 (if using plugins like the FFMPEG Library, make sure to also install the version of the plugin that goes with your version of Audacity), or try the workarounds described here: <https://www.audacityteam.org/macOS-10-15-catalina-is-not-yet-supported-by-audacity/>

### The FFMPEG Library

Normally, in order to import/export larger files of certain formats, you will need to install a plugin before running Audacity.

If needed, you can find the most recent version of the plugin file here:

<https://lame.buanzo.org/#lamewindl>

Once the download is complete, click the downloaded file icon in your browser and follow prompts to install. Then open Audacity. No further configuration should be required.

**Note:** you may need administrative access – or assistance from IT Helpdesk – to install these files on a Langara computer.

You can find more information on this and other plug-ins at the link below.

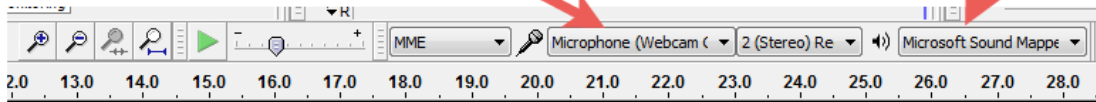
FFMPEG Library: [http://manual.audacityteam.org/man/faq\\_installation\\_and\\_plugin.html#ffdown](http://manual.audacityteam.org/man/faq_installation_and_plugin.html#ffdown)

# Recording

## Select Input and Output

Select Recording Device

Select Output



Make sure you've selected the correct external microphone (input) and speakers (output). If you're using a headset mic, these will be the same device.

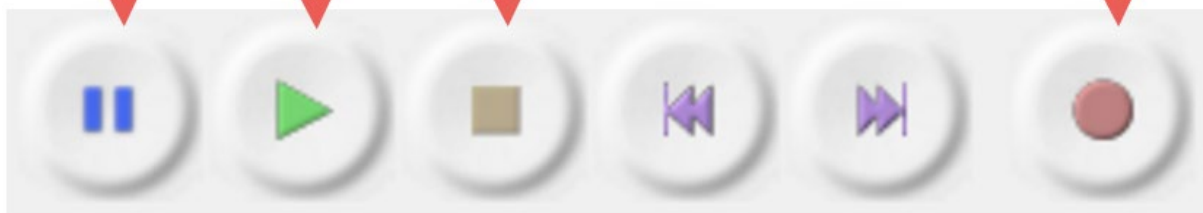
## Controls

Pause

Play

Stop

Record



## Tools

**Selection Tool** – for choosing start/endpoints, selecting tracks, or parts of tracks, for editing or deletion

**Time Shift Tool** – for moving tracks around using drag-and-drop



Select

Time Shift

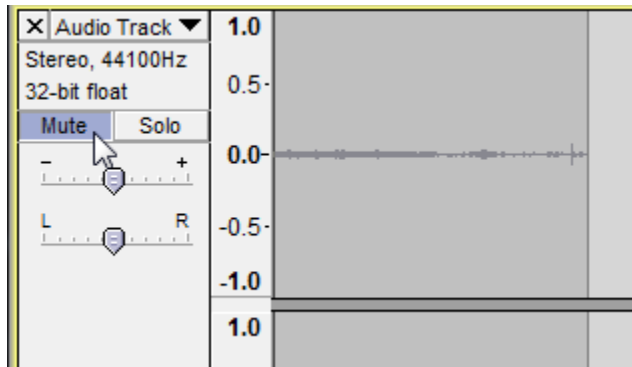
## How to record

**To start recording:** click the **Record** button (depending on your version, Audacity may create a new track each time you click Record, or require you to click **Tracks > Add New > [type of track]**)

**To stop recording:** click the **Stop** button

**Change start point:** use the **Selection Tool** (see Tools) to choose a new start point for recording or playback

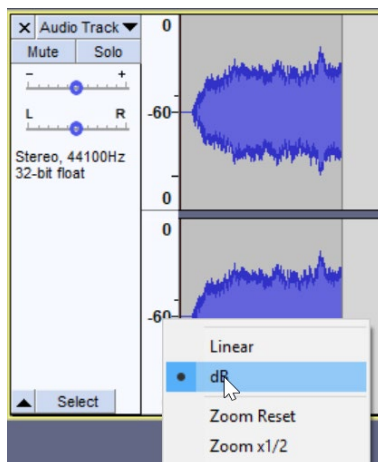
**Mute tracks:** remember to mute the previous track(s) if you stop recording and then start again



**Delete tracks:** click on the “x” in the top left corner of the track



**Linear vs. dB track view:** to switch between the Linear (basic) and dB track views, right-click and select “dB” – this can often be useful when editing out very short sections or working with very quiet audio

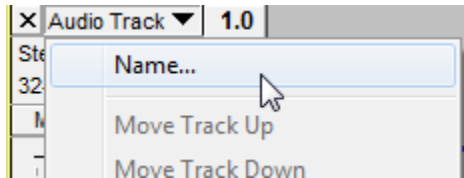


## Recording a “Silence” track

This is useful for filtering out background noise later. Just make sure you’re in a quiet space, and then record 10 or more seconds of ambient background noise with no one speaking. When you’re finished, mute this track. You will return to it later.

## Naming tracks

This can be very useful if you end up with multiple tracks. Rename the track by clicking on the track menu and selecting “Name.”



## Save early, save often

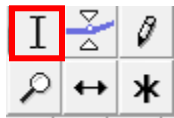
Remember to save your Audacity project (**File > Save** or **Ctrl + S**) every time you stop recording or make a change to a track.

# Processing

Remember to un-mute tracks as you edit them.

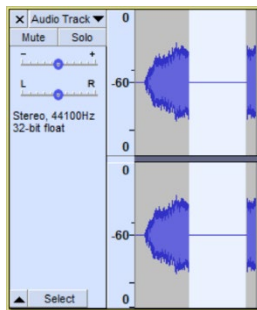
## Editing Tracks

### *Cut out a section*



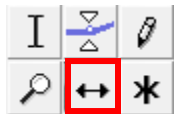
Using the Selection tool, click and drag along the section you want to cut. Then press the **Delete** key on your keyboard.

### *Silence a section*



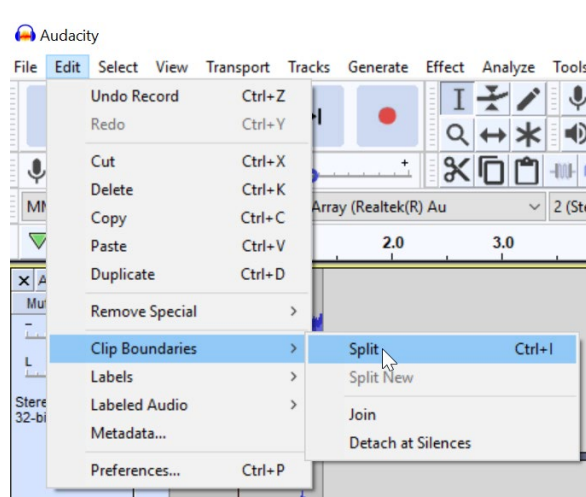
Using the Selection tool, click and drag along the section you want to silence. Then press **Ctrl + L**.

### *Move a track*



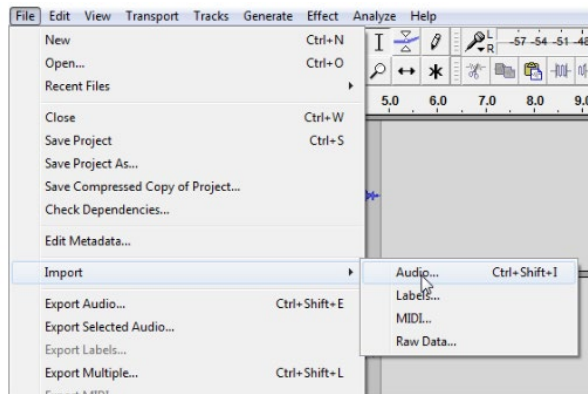
Using the Time Shift tool, click on the track you want to move and drag it forwards, backwards, or up and down into separate tracks.

### *Split a track*



To create a split in a track (you might do this if you want to separate two sections, to put something in between, like music), use the Selection tool and click on the spot on the timeline where you'd like to create the split. Then click **Edit > Clip Boundaries > Split**, or press **Ctrl + I**.

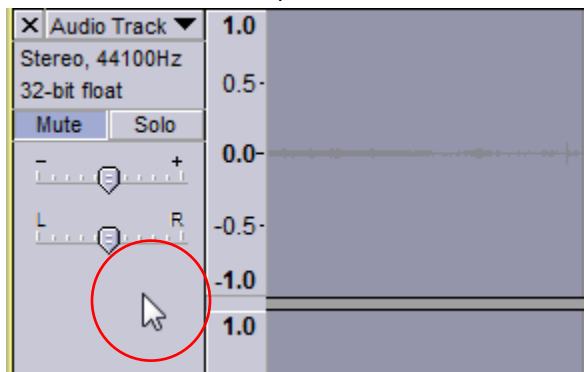
## *Import music or other files*



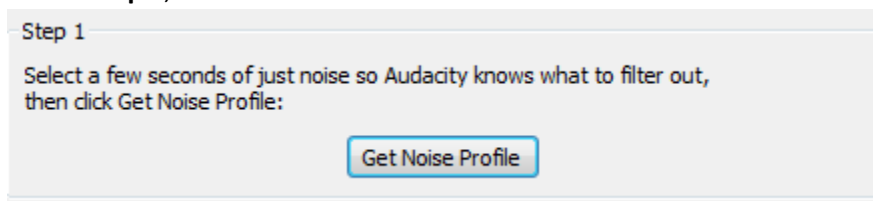
1. Go to **File > Import > Audio**
2. Navigate to the file and click **Open**
3. The imported audio will appear as a new track at the bottom of your project
4. Using the Time Shift tool, drag it to where you want it
5. Optionally: fade the music in and out by selecting the beginning and end of the file with the Selection Tool and going to **Effect > Fade Out**

## *Filter out background noise*

1. Unmute the “silence” track you recorded earlier and select it with the Selection Tool. You can also select the entire track by clicking in the track’s Track Control Panel (rather than on any of the controls or buttons):

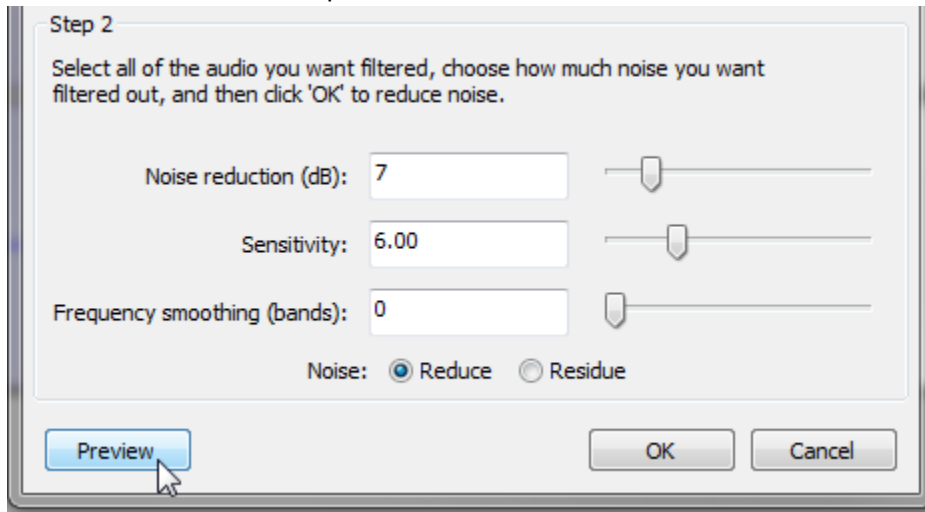


2. Go to **Effect > Noise Reduction**
3. Under **Step 1**, click “Get Noise Profile”



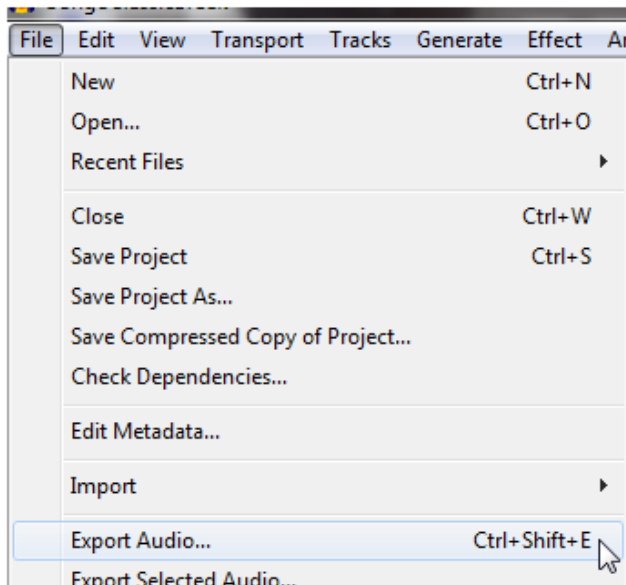
4. The Noise Reduction window will close; now select the track(s) you want to fix and go to **Effect > Noise Reduction** again

- Under **Step 2**, change levels if you want (start with the default; you can always Undo and adjust for a second try), and preview with the Preview button; when you're finished, click OK and wait while the Noise Reduction processes

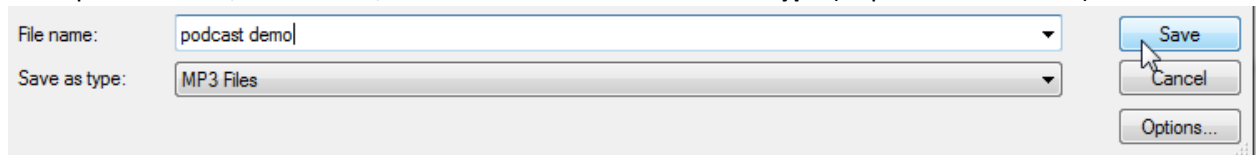


## Exporting your podcast

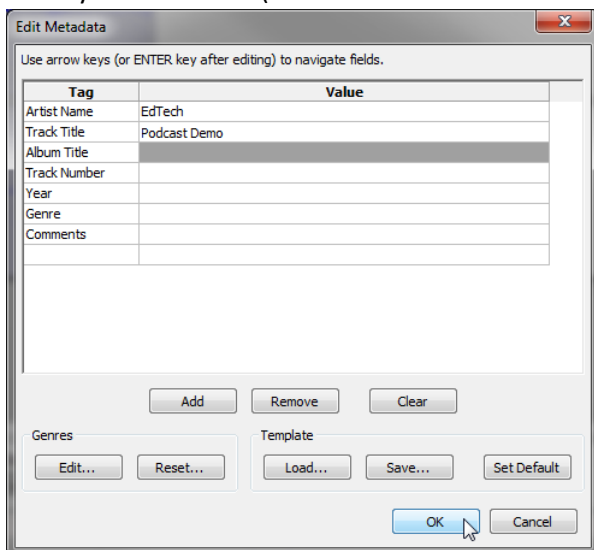
1. Go to **File > Export Audio** to export the entire project. To export only a portion of the project, select it with the Select tool and choose **Export Selected Audio** instead.



2. Choose a place to save, a file name, and a file format under **Save as type** (.mp3 recommended)

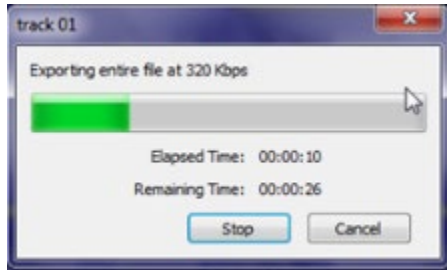


3. Click **Save**
4. Enter your metadata (Artist Name and Track Title minimum)





5. Click **OK** and wait for the file to render; depending on the size of the file, this could take anywhere from a few seconds to several minutes, depending on the size of the file and the speed of your computer



6. Navigate to where you saved the file, and listen to your new podcast