CUEKEEPING

COMPLETE USER MANUAL / 1.3.0

PULSE MAKER

Turn sustained sound into movement.

Shape the rhythm. Build the intensity.



AU + VST3 for Mac / VST3 for Windows

All controls, installation, creative workflows and activation.

cuekeeping.com

Find what you need.

The complete guide, including the changes in 1.3.0.

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> WHAT CHANGED
>
> Activation now enables processing during playback without waiting for Stop. A visible status explains when activation or host transport is needed. Hz, Pan, sound and saved settings retain their behavior.

Install. Press play.

Pulse Maker is an audio effect. Give it sustained audio and activate your trial or purchase.

Mac

Save your work and fully quit your DAW. Open the included .pkg installer. It installs AU and VST3 for Intel and Apple Silicon Macs running macOS 12 or later. The public Mac installer is signed and notarized. Reopen your DAW and allow its plugin scan to finish.

In Logic, choose the AU version from Audio FX. In Ableton Live, look under Plug-Ins for Cuekeeping / Pulse Maker. AU and VST3 are alternative formats of the same effect; insert 1 of them.

Windows

Extract the ZIP, quit your DAW and run the included Setup.exe. The installer requires administrator approval and installs the VST3 for Intel/AMD 64-bit Windows 10/11. In Ableton, enable Use VST3 Plug-In System Folders in Settings / Plug-Ins, then rescan if needed.

Windows installers are unsigned. Keep security protection enabled; send any block message to support@cuekeeping.com. Windows x64 also works on Windows 11 ARM with an x64-compatible host. For native ARM hosts, choose the Windows ARM download, which includes ARM64 and ARM64EC VST3 variants. Pro Tools/AAX isn't supported.

Your first pulse

Open Activate / trial at the lower-left and verify your email. The fully functional trial lasts 14 days. If you own Pulse Maker, use your purchase email. Activation and offline access are explained at the end of this manual.

Put Pulse Maker after a synth or on an audio track with a held chord, drone or sustained bass. Start playback. Choose 1/8, leave Depth at 100%, and adjust Length until the gaps feel right. Raise Attack for a softer entrance or shorten Release for a tighter ending.

> PLAYBACK MATTERS
>
> In Sync, Run while stopped lets you play a keyboard and hear the pulse at the project tempo without starting playback. Open the Straight, Dotted or Triplet menu below Rate to switch it on or off. New instances have it on. Projects and presets saved before 1.3.0 load with it off, preserving dry audio at unity gain while stopped. Hz runs independently. Pulse Maker does not generate sound by itself.

Install. Press play. (continued)

Pulse Maker is an audio effect. Give it sustained audio and activate your trial or purchase.

Updating? Save your session, fully quit the DAW, install, then reopen. Closing only the plugin window can leave the old version loaded.

Everything in reach.

The rhythm lives on the left. The tone and distortion live in the Build panel on the right.

Rate and timing

The Rate knob selects Sync or Hz. Sync offers 4 bars to 1/32 and starts at 1/8. Hz gives continuous 0.01-40 Hz. Click the Rate dial or the Sync / Hz buttons to change mode. Timing and Snap sit in the footer and apply only to Sync.

Envelope and level

The blue display previews the gain envelope, not an audio waveform. Attack, Release, Length and Depth determine its shape. Output sets the processed level. Choose Pulse or Pan and set its phase or width directly in the footer.

Build panel

The Build ON toggle enables the entire tone and Drive stage. Build sweeps the selected filter. Drive adds saturation, and the chain links its amount to Build. Filter opens Low Pass, High Pass, Peak and Harmonic. Character opens Warm, Grit and Heavy.

> CONTROL SHORTCUTS
>
> Drag a knob vertically. Hold Shift for finer adjustment. Double-click to reset it, or edit its value field. Click Rate to change mode and Depth to toggle its remembered amount. Space passes through to your DAW. Resize from the lower-right corner.

Choose when it hits.

Sync takes tempo and time signature from your DAW. Choose Sync below Rate to follow the musical grid.

Choose a repeat interval

Turn Rate to select 4 bars, 2 bars, 1 bar, 1/2, 1/4, 1/8, 1/16 or 1/32. It moves in musical steps and defaults to 1/8. Double-click to return to 1/8. Bar lengths follow the time signature reported by the host.

Straight, Dotted or Triplet

Straight uses the displayed note value. Dotted makes each interval 1.5 times as long. Triplet makes it 2/3 as long. At 120 BPM, straight 1/8 repeats every 250 ms; dotted 1/8 repeats every 375 ms; triplet 1/8 repeats about every 167 ms.

Immediate changes, by default

With Snap rate changes off, selecting a new rate starts a new pulse as soon as the change reaches the plugin. You can deliberately place that restart between grid lines. The new pattern continues from that point. Your DAW automation timing and audio buffer affect when the change arrives.

Snap to the destination grid

Enable Snap in the footer to wait for the next grid line of the rate you are going to. A switch to 1/8 waits for the next eighth-note division; a switch to 1 bar can wait until the next bar grid line. The current rate keeps running while it waits. Grid positions follow the host musical timeline.

> 2-BAR AND 4-BAR PULSES
>
> The repeats stay 2 or 4 bars apart, but each envelope closes within 1 host bar. Length can make the audible window shorter. At 100% Depth the remaining gap is silent; lower Depth leaves some signal between pulses.

For an immediate long pulse, leave Snap off. Long-rate playback starts a pulse when transport starts rather than waiting through an empty bar.

Move beyond the grid.

Continuous frequency gives you downers, drops and movement that changes speed.



Hz selected. Timing and Snap are unavailable.

0.01-40 Hz

Click the Rate dial or choose Hz below it. Frequency means cycles per second: 0.01 Hz takes 100 seconds for 1 cycle, 1 Hz takes 1 second, and 40 Hz takes 25 ms. Hz defaults to 2 Hz. This version starts at 0.01 Hz; it does not include a 0 Hz hold. Double-click Rate in Hz to restore 2 Hz.

Automate a continuous sweep

Use Rate Hz automation for a continuous frequency ramp. The cycle keeps its phase as frequency changes, with 5 ms frequency smoothing. A falling rate spreads pulses apart; a rising rate brings them together. Shape Attack, Release and Length while listening to the transition.

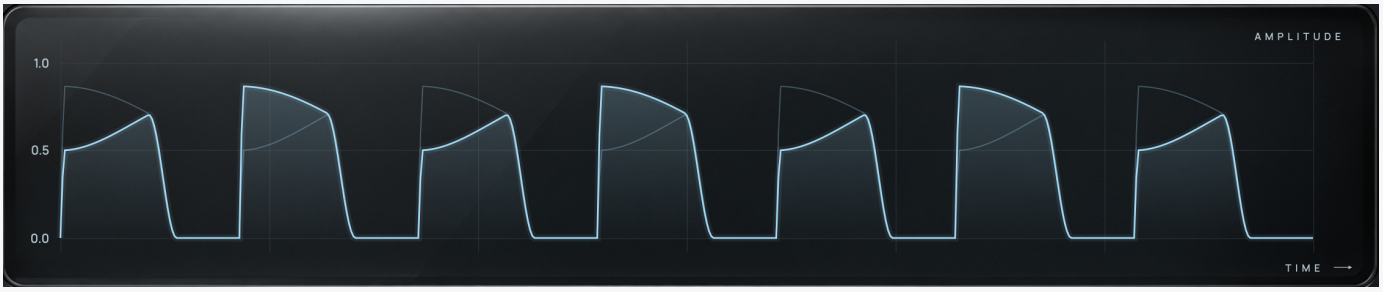
Free-running transport

Hz can process while transport is stopped. It is independent of tempo, the song grid and playhead jumps. Timing and Snap apply only to Sync and are disabled in Hz. Use whole-plugin Bypass when you want dry audio.

> SWITCHING AND RECALL
>
> Sync and Hz remember their own rate. Returning to Sync follows the host grid. Automate Rate mode to switch, Rate for the original musical lane and Rate Hz for frequency. Your project saves mode and both values.

Shape the space between hits.

Start with Length and Depth. Then use Attack and Release to refine the edges.



The display follows your current pulse envelope.

Attack / 0.5-250 ms

Controls the fade into each pulse. Low values give a defined front edge. Longer values soften a pad or let a texture swell into the beat.

Release / 0.5-500 ms

Controls the fade out inside the audible window. It does not add a tail after Length. If Attack and Release together need more space than Length allows, they shrink proportionally to fit.

Length / 5-100%

Sets the audible window as a percentage of the repeat interval, including both fades. At 120 BPM, a straight 1/4 lasts 500 ms; Length at 50% gives a 250 ms window. In Sync, long intervals are capped at 1 host bar. Hz uses its free-running cycle.

Depth / 0-100%

Sets how far the envelope closes. At 100%, gaps close fully. Click Depth to go to 0%; click again to restore the previous positive amount. Its dial turns red, with no OFF label. Dragging changes Depth without toggling it. Double-click resets to 100%. Build and Output remain active at 0%. New Pan states keep stereo movement active independently of Depth.

Motion with a clear pulse.

Choose Pulse or Pan in the footer, then set phase or width in degrees.

Pulse: offset the two envelopes

Pulse mode shifts the right-channel envelope relative to the left. At 0 degrees, both channels open together. At 180 degrees, the right envelope is half a pulse cycle ahead. Intermediate settings add width without a full left/right alternation.

Because the channels open at different times, the combined stereo signal can feel more continuous. Choose Pan if you want side-to-side movement while keeping the pulse gaps together.

Pan: move the sound through the pulse

Pan uses a shared pulse envelope and changes the left/right balance. At 0 degrees the balance stays centered. Raising the amount widens the motion; 180 degrees gives the full sweep. A complete left-right cycle spans 2 pulse intervals.

> START SMALL
>
> Try Pan around 45-90 degrees on a stereo texture. Keep a bass centered, or check the mix in mono before committing to wide motion. Pan balances the existing channels; it does not swap or sum their content.

Stereo movement requires a stereo instance. A mono instance processes the pulse without creating a second output channel.

Pan with Depth off

Choose Pan around 45-90 degrees, then click Depth to remove volume pulsing. Stereo balance keeps moving while the sound stays continuous.

> OLDER PROJECTS KEEP THEIR SOUND
>
> Old sessions and presets retain the original Pan/Depth relationship when loaded. Click Pan to explicitly choose independent movement for that state. The choice is saved. Loading an old preset alone keeps its original behavior.

Build toward the moment.

Turn the Build section ON. Move Build manually or automate it in your DAW.



Build power, the chain, Filter and Character.

Choose the filter

Low-pass opens from 180 Hz to 18 kHz (17.64 kHz at a 44.1 kHz sample rate). High-pass moves from 12 kHz down to 60 Hz, bringing the low end back as Build rises. The final 25% adds brightness with Low-pass, or body and a smaller high lift with High-pass.

Choose Peak from Filter for 1 broad bell boost sweeping from 100 Hz to 9 kHz. Choose Harmonic from the same menu for 6 narrow peaks following a harmonic series. Build raises the fundamental from 60 Hz to 9 kHz; higher peaks fade near the sample-rate limit. Choose Peak again to return to the broad bell.

Try harmonic mode on noise or a bright texture. Dark audio may lack the upper harmonics needed to excite the high bands. This processes incoming audio; silence stays silent.

> ON/OFF IS FOR THIS SECTION
>
> Build OFF bypasses both tone processing and Drive. The rhythmic pulse keeps running. The Build knob starts at 75%, but that is not bypass. Peak and harmonic modes still color the sound there. Use Build OFF to bypass tone and Drive.

Drive that follows the build.

Choose the character by ear, then compare at a similar listening level.

Warm, Grit and Heavy

Warm rounds the sound with asymmetric saturation. Grit adds a firmer edge and extra upper-frequency bite. Heavy is the most aggressive character. Each responds to the incoming level and tone, so the same Drive value can feel different on a bass, pad or full mix.

Link: one gesture, a controlled ceiling

With the chain connected, Build controls the applied Drive. The knob and number move with it. The default ceiling is 35%: full Build reaches 35% Drive. The response rises gradually, then gets stronger near the top, leaving room for the final push.

BUILD 0%	BUILD 50%	BUILD 100%
DRIVE 0%	DRIVE 8.8%	DRIVE 35%

To set the ceiling clearly, turn Build to 100%, then adjust Drive. Lower Build afterward and the dial follows the applied amount. Dragging Drive while linked changes the ceiling, even when the displayed amount is lower.

Unlink for a fixed amount

Click the chain so it appears broken. Drive now sets its amount independently of Build. The Build section must still be ON. Use this when you want steady distortion while automating a filter sweep.

Output / -24 to +6 dB

Drive includes level compensation to reduce large loudness jumps. The filter boosts are intentional and are not canceled by that compensation. Strong settings can still exceed 0 dBFS. Lower Output and watch your DAW meter; there is no output limiter.

Save the sound. Move the controls.

Factory presets are starting points. Your source and the tempo will change how they feel.

Preset menu

Factory contains Default and 10 sounds created by Dallas Dwight. Choose a name to load it. Default sets Build to 75% with the Build section OFF. The selected name stays visible. The adjacent arrows step through Factory and User sounds and wrap at either end.

Choose Save preset, enter a name and press Save. It appears under User immediately. No folder picker is needed. Saving a duplicate name creates a numbered copy instead of replacing your original. Import preset adds an existing .pulsemaker file to User. Open user folder takes you directly to your files for backup or sharing. Your DAW also saves the current settings.

Automate a build

Enable the Build section, choose a filter and set the linked Drive ceiling at full Build. Draw a Build ramp in your DAW. Leave enough Output headroom for the ending, especially when the final-quarter shelf lift arrives. Play the full transition before exporting.

Automate the rhythm

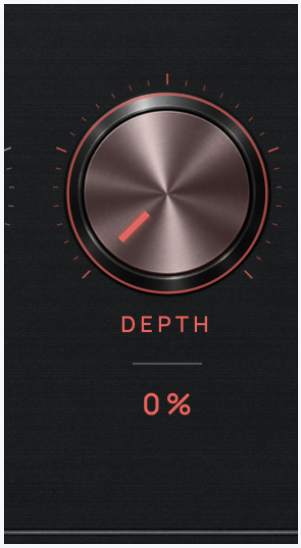
Rate controls the original 8 Sync values. Timing selects Straight, Dotted or Triplet. Choose Snap before recording or drawing changes. Rate Hz supplies the continuous frequency lane, and Rate mode switches Sync / Hz. Each mode remembers its own rate. Your DAW saves mode, both values, Depth memory and window size.

> WHEN REOPENING AN OLDER SESSION
>
> Released 1.0.0 automation IDs and mappings are retained; new rate controls append to them. Old projects and presets preserve their sound and Pan behavior. Very early beta versions before 0.3.8 used a different automation layout; rebuild those older lanes if needed.

A selected user preset offers Delete selected user preset with a confirmation. Factory sounds remain intact. Back up your User folder when moving computers.

Try a different direction.

Bypass the full effect, leave Build running on its own, or roll a new set of settings.



The red dial is enough to show Depth at 0%.

Bypass or turn off just the pulse

Bypass in the upper-right returns the whole plugin to dry audio, including Pulse, Pan, Build and Output trim. Click Depth to set it to 0% without disabling Build. Click again to restore its previous positive amount, even after reopening the project. Double-click resets it to 100%. Space never toggles Depth.

Roll the die

The original die randomizes sound and timing settings, including the Build switch. Output stays where you set it (0 dB by default), and whole-plugin Bypass stays unchanged. Its icon stays visually steady on click. Random settings can be loud. Save a sound you like before rolling again.

Open the manual

Click the Cuekeeping logo, then Open manual. The bundled PDF opens in your default PDF reader without an internet connection. No support website is required.

Starting points for your next cue.

Treat these as recipes to adapt, not targets you have to hit.

A tight rhythmic bass

Choose Default, set Rate to 1/16 and leave Stereo at 0 degrees. Use a held bass note, then shorten Length if the groove needs more space. Enable Build only if you want tone shaping; start with Warm and a modest Drive ceiling. Compare with the kick playing.

A pad that breathes

Choose Default at 1/8 and raise Attack for a softer entrance. Start with Pulse stereo at 0 degrees, then try Pan around 60 degrees. Lower Depth if complete silence makes the pad feel too chopped. Raise Attack until the entrance blends into the rest of the track.

An opening riser

Enable Build and choose Low-pass. Set the linked Drive ceiling to 35%, then automate Build from low to high over the phrase. The last quarter adds brightness. Try moving from 1/8 to 1/16 near the end; enable Snap if that change should wait for the destination grid.

A harmonic texture sweep

Feed in noise or a dense sustained texture. Choose Harmonic from Filter and sweep Build slowly. Start with a low Drive ceiling so you can hear the resonant bands, then add distortion if the source needs more density.

> MAKE ROOM FOR THE ENDING
>
> Set levels while listening to the strongest part of the sweep. A comfortable starting level does not guarantee headroom when Build reaches 100%. Keep the full mix playing while you decide.

A slowing downer or drop

Choose Hz and automate Rate Hz downward, for example from 12 Hz toward 0.5 Hz. Keep a sustained source underneath. Adjust Length and the fades so the slowing hits have the space you want. Hz is independent of transport; use Bypass for a dry comparison.

If something feels wrong.

Send sound feedback as well as errors. Both help shape the next version.

No pulse, or the sound keeps playing

Check the status beside Activate / trial first. If activation is required, verify your email. Then check that audio is entering the plugin and raise Depth above 0%. In Sync, enable Run while stopped in the timing menu or start playback. Hz can run while stopped. Lower Depth leaves signal between pulses. Build OFF only bypasses the tone stage; use whole-plugin Bypass to compare the full effect, including Output trim.

A rate change waits, or the rhythm moves off-grid

A wait is expected with Snap enabled, especially when changing to a long value. Disable Snap for an immediate restart. With Snap off, a change between grid lines intentionally starts a new pattern from that point.

Pan stops with Depth off

An old project or preset can retain its original Pan/Depth behavior. Click Pan to choose independent movement for that state, set width above 0 degrees and save it. A stereo instance is needed.

Plugin missing after installation

Fully quit and reopen the DAW, then run its plugin rescan. On Windows, check that VST3 system folders are enabled. On Mac, avoid duplicate Pulse Maker or Pulse Maker Native copies in your personal and system plugin folders. Keep the current system-installed copy.

Installation and support.

Find the installed files, remove the plugin or send a useful support report.

Installation locations and removal

Mac AU: /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components
Mac VST3: /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3
Windows VST3: C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3\Cuekeeping

To remove it on Mac, quit your DAW and remove only Pulse Maker.component and Pulse Maker.vst3 from those folders. On Windows, uninstall Cuekeeping Pulse Maker in Settings / Apps. Saved projects and separately saved presets remain.

Manual and support

Click the Cuekeeping logo, then Open manual, for the complete offline PDF. Email support@cuekeeping.com with the version in the lower-left, OS, DAW, processor and steps to reproduce the issue. For audio issues, include your interface, sample rate and buffer size. Screenshots, short videos and before/after audio help. Full-mix examples show how you use it.

Back up important sessions and test in a spare project first. Keep your usual interface settings; avoid changing hardware sample rate or buffer size during playback.

Third-party notices are included in the installer. Installed documents: /Library/Application Support/Cuekeeping/Pulse Maker on Mac; C:\Program Files\Cuekeeping\Pulse Maker on Windows. This complete manual covers Pulse Maker 1.3.0.

Your trial and purchase.

Use the same installation for your trial, purchase and approved tester access.

Start the 14-day trial

Open Activate / trial at the lower-left. Enter your email, then the verification code from your inbox. The fully functional 14-day trial starts at the first verified activation. No card or newsletter subscription is required.

Activate a purchase or approved beta access

Verify the email associated with your purchase or approved invitation. A purchase unlocks the same installation without changing presets or project settings. Approved Pulse Maker beta testers retain permanent Pulse Maker access, including future Pulse Maker versions.

Work offline

Activation needs an internet connection. After activation, permanent access works offline on that computer. A trial keeps its original expiry offline. Updating the plugin or activating another computer does not restart the trial.

Change computers

You can activate up to 2 computers for Pulse Maker. If both slots are in use, deactivate an old computer from your customer account before adding another. A permanent offline activation remains available until it checks in again.

If activation needs help

Check the purchase or invitation email address. If the code does not arrive, check Spam. Contact support@cuekeeping.com if you still cannot activate.

> KEEP YOUR SESSION SAFE
>
> Activation enables processing during playback. If audio passes through unchanged, check the status message beside Activate / trial. Sync can process while stopped when Run while stopped is on. It uses the last valid project BPM, or 120 BPM until the host provides a tempo. Playback locks it back to the song grid. With Run while stopped off, stopped Sync passes dry audio at unity gain. Offline renders keep the access state they started with.