PRANA

SOUND STUDIOS

TRACKER

A generative tracker sequencer for Ableton Live

Max for Live device · User Manual · v1.1

Welcome

Prana Tracker is a generative step sequencer built around one idea: program a pattern the classic tracker way — time running down the screen, one column per voice — then let every cell roll its own dice. Chance, ratchets, rolls, velocity wander, in-key chords, arpeggios, Euclidean rhythms, and effect automation all live per-cell, so the same grid can play a pattern that never quite repeats itself.

Requirements

- Ableton Live 11 or 12 (Suite, or Standard with the Max for Live add-on)
- Max for Live — **required.** The device will not load without it.

Install

- Drag `Prana Tracker.amxd` onto a MIDI track, before your instrument.
- Click **Edit** on the device face to open the floating grid window.
- Press Play in Live. Click the grid window to give it keyboard focus, then program.

> **Keyboard focus.** The grid must be the focused window for key commands to work. Click the grid first. When running two instances, whichever grid you last clicked owns the keyboard.

Your first pattern

- Arrow keys move the cursor. Type a number + `Enter` to place a note — `36` is C1, the first Drum Rack pad (tracks map C1–D♯2).
- Press `n` to toggle between note names and MIDI numbers.
- Press `Backspace` to clear. Double-click an empty cell to drop a default note.
- Press Play. The green row is the playhead; the yellow outline is your cursor.
- Hit **RESYNC** on the device face to snap the grid to Live's bar position at any time.

The grid

16 tracks (columns) × up to 64 steps (rows) × 16 patterns. Track N sends MIDI note 36+N, mapping across a Drum Rack's pads. Time runs top to bottom; downbeats shade every four steps.

Notes

KEY	ACTION
`←↑↓→`	Move cursor
`0–9` `Enter`	Enter note number (36–127, or note name with `n` toggled)
`n`	Toggle note names / MIDI numbers
`Backspace`	Clear cell (or selected block)
`Esc`	Cancel entry / close panel
`[ ]`	Page up / down (for patterns longer than the window)
`double-click`	Place default note / erase note
`drag note`	Change pitch by dragging up or down

Copy, paste & select

KEY	ACTION
`c`	Copy cell (or selected block)
`x`	Paste at cursor, advance down
`S`	Toggle selection mode; arrows extend the selection
`Shift+click`	Extend selection to that cell

With a block selected, `c` copies the region, `x` pastes (top-left anchored), `Backspace` clears.

Long patterns

Set pattern length from the **Step Length** menu on the device face (16, 32, 48, or 64 steps). Use `[` `]` to page. Shortening is non-destructive — steps return when you lengthen again.

Per-cell dice

Every cell can carry its own randomization. All values are re-rolled on each pass so patterns never exactly repeat. Staged keys cycle through sub-settings: type a value and press `Enter` to advance; `Esc` backs out.

Velocity — `v` / `V`

STAGE	RANGE	WHAT IT DOES
`Vn — base level`	1–127	Fixed velocity for this note. Cell brightness tracks velocity.
`V% — chance`	1–100%	Probability the velocity change applies. 100 = always.
`V~ — wander`	0–64	Random ± range around the base. Shown as `~`

Probability — `p`

RANGE	WHAT IT DOES
`1–100%`	Chance this step plays at all. 100 = always; 50 = plays half the time. Below 100%, an amber `%` marker appears.

Ratchet — `r` / `R`

Subdivides this one cell into multiple rapid hits (a flutter/roll within the step). Does not extend into empty cells below — see **Roll** for that.

STAGE	RANGE	WHAT IT DOES
`Rn — count`	1–8	Number of hits crammed into this step. 1 = off; 8 = eight rapid hits. Shown as `x3`
`R% — chance`	1–100%	Probability the ratchet fires at all. Marker turns amber when below 100%.
`R? — randomize`	0 or 1	0 = fixed count; 1 = count randomizes from 1 up to Rn each pass.

Roll — `y` / `Y`

Note-repeat that plays out across the **empty cells below** at a musical rate until it hits the next cell that has its own note. Unlike ratchet (one cell), roll spans multiple steps.

STAGE	VALUE	RATE
`Yr — rate (0–6)`	0	1/4 note
	1	1/8 note
	2	1/8 triplet
	3	1/16 note
	4	1/16 triplet
	5	1/32 note
	6	1/32 triplet

STAGE	RANGE	WHAT IT DOES
`Y% — chance`	1–100%	Probability the roll fires on each empty step. Marker turns amber below 100%. Blank = 100%.

Leave rate blank (just press `Enter`) to clear a roll. Shown as `o16` (green; amber when chance-gated).

Gate & random note

Gate length — G

Overrides the global gate for this cell. The global gate is set on the device face; a cell gate overrides it.

STAGE	RANGE	WHAT IT DOES
`Gn — length`	1–200%	Gate as a percentage of the step duration. 25% = tight staccato; 100% = hold to next step (legato); 200% = overlaps into the following step.
`G% — chance`	1–100%	Probability the gate override applies. 100 = always.
`G~ — wander`	0–100%	Random ± range added to the gate each pass. Shown as `g50`

> **Tempo-independent.** Gate lengths are calculated from the actual step duration in ms, so they track correctly at any tempo or division.

Random note — N

Replaces the written pitch with a random pitch near it each pass. If the track is scale-locked, all results snap to the session scale.

STAGE	RANGE	WHAT IT DOES
`N% — chance`	1–100%	Probability the random note fires. Below 100% it sometimes plays the written note instead.
`No — range`	1–10	Octave range: the pitch wanders ±(range × 6) semitones. 1 = ±6 semitones (one octave span); 2 = ±12 (two octave span). Shown as `?`

Track strips (click the header row)

STRIP	WHAT IT DOES
`swing (teal)`	Toggle whether this track follows the global Swing amount or stays straight. Lets you groove the hats while the kick stays tight.
`scale (purple)`	Lock this track to Live's session scale. Notes snap to the nearest scale tone at play time; random notes and chords stay in key. Leave off for Drum Racks.

Chords & arpeggiator

Chords — C

One cell holds a whole chord. It carries the cell's velocity, gate, probability, and ratchet.

- **Scale-locked track:** chords are diatonic, chosen by degree (I–VII) and built from Live's session scale. Press ` (backtick) to switch to explicit chord types.
- **Unlocked track:** choose explicit types directly.
- Common: maj, min, maj7, min7, dom7. Extended: sus2, sus4, dim, aug, min7b5, add9 (under "more").

> **Needs a polyphonic instrument.** Chord cells send multiple MIDI notes simultaneously. Point that track at a synth or sampler, not a drum pad.

Arpeggiator — K

Turns a cell into an arpeggiator locked to Live's transport. A chord cell arpeggiates its voices; a single note arps across octaves. Staged over four settings:

STAGE	VALUE	MEANING
Am — mode	0	Up
	1	Down
	2	Up/down
	3	Down/up
	4	Random (no immediate repeat)
	5	As-played (chord voice order)

STAGE	VALUE	RATE
Ar — rate	0	1/4
	1	1/8
	2	1/8 triplet
	3	1/16
	4	1/16 triplet
	5	1/32
	6	1/32 triplet

STAGE	RANGE	MEANING
Ao — octaves	1–4	Octave span to arpeggiate across
Al — length	0–64	0 = fill this step only; N = run for N steps then stop (16 = one bar). Shown as A^

Generative tools & effects

Euclidean generator — E

Spreads N hits across M steps as evenly as possible — the mathematical foundation of countless world rhythms. Results are stamped as normal editable notes.

STAGE	RANGE	WHAT IT DOES
Eh — hits	1–64	Number of notes to place
Es — steps	1–64	Total steps to distribute them across
Er — rotation	0–63	Rotate the pattern start offset for rhythmic variation

FX picker — F

Point any step at any parameter on any device on the track, including a single drum pad's effects. Each step can hold up to 4 FX slots; each slot can hold multiple weighted targets and roll between them every pass.

- Press F to open. Navigate with arrows; Enter selects; 1–4 jump to a slot. Backspace on a slot clears it.
- Enter on an **existing target row** lets you edit its value and weight in place — no need to delete and redo.
- Hold ↓ or ↑ in any list to auto-scroll.

FX target value & weight

FIELD	RANGE	WHAT IT DOES
Value	0–100	The parameter value sent, scaled to the parameter's full range. 0 = minimum; 100 = maximum. For example, 50 sends the parameter to its midpoint.
Weight	1–100	Relative probability of this target being chosen when the step fires. If slot has targets with weights 1, 1, 3 — the third is chosen 60% of the time. Equal weights = equal odds.

Grid markers: • working FX slot • • broken (target device moved or deleted).

Playback & patterns

The device face controls

CONTROL	WHAT IT DOES
`Play Division`	Step rate: 1/4, 1/8, 1/8T, 1/16 (default), 1/16T, 1/32, 1/32T. Speeds up or slows the whole pattern.
`Step Length`	Pattern length: 16, 32, 48, or 64 steps. Non-destructive.
`Swing`	0–100. Delays off-beat steps. On-beats never move. Per-track swing strip can opt each track in or out.
`Play Direction`	Forward, reverse, random (no immediate repeat), or ping-pong.
`Patterns 1–16`	Switch patterns, quantized to the bar.
`Group Save A–D`	Store the current set of active patterns and recall them. Automatable from Live so your arrangement plays itself.
`Loop Play`	Toggle loop mode.
`RESYNC`	Snap the grid playhead to Live's current bar position instantly.

Multi-instance

Run as many Prana Trackers as you like — drums on one track, bass and lead on others. Each keeps its own patterns and state. Keys only affect the grid you last clicked.

Saving & restoring

Patterns save automatically with your Live set (in a JSON file next to the project). Nothing is stored in Live parameters — the JSON file is the source of truth. If a state file is missing on load, the device starts fresh.

Grid legend & key reference

Cell markers

MARK	MEANING
C1	Note (brighter = louder)
%	Chance below 100%
x3	Ratchet (blue = always; amber = chance-gated)
~	Velocity wander
?	Random note

MARK	MEANING
g50	Gate length %
A^	Arpeggiator
maj7	Chord
o16	Roll (green = always; amber = chance-gated)
•	FX slot ok / • broken

All key commands

←↑↓→	Move cursor
0-9 Enter	Enter note
n	Names / numbers
Backspace	Clear
[ ]	Page up / down
c x	Copy / paste
S	Selection mode

v V	Velocity (staged)
p	Probability 1–100%
r R	Ratchet (staged, 1–8)
y Y	Roll (staged, rate 0–6)
N	Random note (staged)
G	Gate 1–200%
C	Chord menu

K	Arpeggiator (staged)
E	Euclidean (staged)
F	FX picker
`	Flip mode in panel
Esc	Cancel / back

Program less. Discover more.

Set the rules, then let Prana Tracker surprise you.