Ridgewalk

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User Manual


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Overview

Ridgewalk is a granular looper, designed to reinterpret and reimagine any audio. Audio is recorded or loaded into a shared buffer, and then resynthesized by a cluster of microloopers in synchronized motion. It can stretch or compress audio in real time, turn audio into an infinite atmospheric pad, or anything in between.

Ridgewalk is a flexible, modular tool, and its depth goes as far as you care to explore. Each control is designed with simplicity and musicality in mind. Ridgewalk can be used as an ambience generator, a non-traditional looper, a delay, an inspiration machine - however you find it best for your workflow.

Ridgewalk is intended to be equally pleasing to the ears and the eyes. I hope you and your compositions enjoy it.

- Aqeel

Contents

Primary usage

Ridgewalk is both a looper and a granular engine. All audio is recorded into a single buffer, and output is generated by a group of independent microloopers that can traverse the buffer.

The audio buffer can be freely recorded to, overdubbed over, and reverted to a previous version, and the microloopers will transition smoothly and instantly. Loopers share settings and move in concert, though they can desynchronize and become independent as well.

Ridgewalk is designed to be used either as an effect directly on your track, or used as a send effect (similar to a reverb or delay). Detailed usage ideas are described in the Suggested Usages section.

Features and Controls

Buffer section: These controls have to do with the size of the singular buffer that captures audio. This section controls the size of the buffer and the technique for recording or loading audio.

Looper section: This section controls the cluster of loopers which provide playback from the buffer. This is where you'll find controls for loop size, crossfading, pitch, and more.

Traversal section: These controls will affect where the loopers are positioned in buffer over time. Loopers can move sequentially and predictably through the buffer, meander the length of the buffer, or position themselves exactly where you dictate.

Features and Controls - Buffer section

Audio can be recorded or imported in multiple ways. Any recorded or imported audio will be saved and retained when reloading a project.

Auto Recording: Input signal is automatically recorded when it reaches the settable volume threshold. Set the Threshold control right below the volume of the input you want to record.

Classic Recording: A latching style recording that can be enabled via a button press or transport synchronization. When the initial recording completes, overdubbing will begin automatically, and will continue until recording is stopped.

File Import: A sample can be imported into Ridgewalk directly via file picker or by dragging and dropping into the interface.

Features and Controls - Buffer section *(cont.)*

Once an initial recording is made, subsequent recordings will create an overdubbed layer. There are two overdubbing options:

Feedback: A traditional feedback-based overdub in which existing audio will be fed back into a new recording at a percentage from 0% (no feedback) to 100% (complete feedback), and new audio will be recorded on top. This is the default overdubbing mode for Auto Recording.

Sidechain: A sidechain-based overdub in which recorded audio will overlay and compress any existing audio. The compressor ratio ranges from 1:1 to 1:10. If no audio is recorded, the layer will not be committed. This is the default mode for Classic Recording and makes it safe to keep Classic Recording running endlessly.

Features and Controls - Buffer section *(cont.)*

The buffer also has the following controls.

Layer: Determines which recording is used for playback. Changing this can essentially revert recorded audio to a previous version. Changes will be handled seamlessly.

Size: This sets the size of the buffer in seconds (up to 60 seconds) or musical increments (up to 16 bars, based on your BPM).

Features and Controls - Playback

The following controls affect global settings of the device.

Play/pause: Starts or stops playback from the loopers. Output will smoothly fade in or out based on the **Fade Time** in the **Traversal** section.

Hold time: How long playback will hold before automatically pausing. This can make Ridgewalk behave more like a strange delay or reverb. By default, playback is held indefinitely until manually paused.

Reverse: Reverses the buffer. Audio can be recorded and played in reverse.

Clear: Clears all of the recorded buffers. Press and hold this button for one second to take effect.

Features and Controls - Looper section

A group of microloopers provide Ridgewalk's output, and navigate the buffer together in tandem. This section controls things like looper size and behavior; the position of the loopers in the buffer is determined by the Traversal section.

Size: The size of the loopers, in seconds or tempo-synced musical increments. Looper size cannot exceed the size of the buffer.

Blur: This controls the amount of crossfading between loopers from 0% to 50%, and above 50%, a reverb of increasing size and depth is introduced.

Amount: The number of loopers playing, from 1 to 7.

Features and Controls - Looper section *(cont.)*

Drift: A random variation added to each looper's size and position. This can allow loopers to desynchronize from one another.

Pitch: Controls the pitch of the output, from -24 to +24 semitones (±2 octaves).

Random skip: Adds a chance that a looper will be muted for its duration (at 0%, no skipping at occurs, and at 100%, loopers will always be skipped).

Random volume: Adds a random variation to each looper's volume. Note that looper volume will only be *decreased*, so overall output will be quieter.

Features and Controls - Traversal section

The **Traversal** section controls how the microloopers are positioned in the buffer, and how they navigate the buffer over time.

Movement: Determines how the loopers' positions will change over time. All loopers will move together and will pick up the current **Movement** position when their current loop is completed. The **Movement** position is visualized by a small indicator along the "ridgeline" visual.

Wander: Loopers will randomly move forward and backward via Brownian motion. The speed of this motion can be changed; at maximum, the position is effectively random.

Forward: Loopers will move forward linearly in the given amount of time, either in sections or a tempo-synced musical increment.

Features and Controls - Traversal section *(cont.)*

Backward: Loopers will move backward linearly in the given amount of time.

Ping-pong: Loopers will move forward and then backward in the given amount of time.

Manual: Looper position can be controlled directly by clicking or tapping on the visualizer.

External: Looper position can be controlled with custom modulation or automation via the EXTERNAL MOTION parameter.

Features and Controls - Traversal section *(cont.)*

Start position: This is the minimum position that loopers can traverse due to Movement. Increasing this limits loopers' possible positioning.

End position: This is the maximum position that loopers can traverse. Decreasing this limits loopers' possible positioning.

Spread: Controls the relatively distance between the active loopers. The distance between loopers is defined as a percentage of their current size.

Fade time: How long playback will fade in or out for.

Settings Menu

There are some additional controls available via Ridgewalk's Settings menu (top-right corner).

Filters: A simple low- and high-pass filter are available to dial in looper output.

Playback syncing: Ridgewalk's playback can be automatically synced to your DAW's transport. Enabled by default.

Recording syncing: In Classic Mode, Ridgewalk's recording can be automatically synced to your DAW's transport. Enabled by default.

Instant playback: Playback from loopers can start as soon as possible when recording. This makes Ridgewalk more of a live effect. Enabled by default.

Settings Menu *(cont.)*

Layers stored: The maximum number of layers stored can be modified from 1 to 10. The more layers stored, the more memory Ridgewalk will require.

Pitch quantization: The pitch of Ridgewalk's loopers can be limited to just octaves or just octaves and fifths. This can help keep output "pleasant" when using modulation or automation on the pitch control.

Tooltips: Helper tooltips are shown throughout the UI for details on a particular control. Enabled by default.

External Controls

All controls for Ridgewalk are available as automation/modulation parameters for your DAW. In addition, there are some controls provided for helpful controller or MIDI mapping:

Playback: Playback can be controlled directly via the PLAY parameter.

Recording: Recording can be controlled directly via the RECORD parameter.

Clear: Clear can be controlled directly via the CLEAR parameter.

External Motion: In “External” Movement mode, looper positions can be controlled directly via the EXTERNAL MOTION parameter.

Basic Usage

Ridgewalk can be used as an effect directly on a track, or as a send effect.

- As a track effect: Use the “dry” volume to control how much of the original signal to pass through (likely 100%). Use the “wet” volume to control how much of the Ridgewalk looper output to hear.
- As a send effect: Place Ridgewalk on a return track in your DAW. Set the “dry” volume to 0% and use the “wet” volume to control the volume of Ridgewalk’s output. Send a single sound source to Ridgewalk with highly configurable volume balance, or send multiple sounds to Ridgewalk for loops that combine multiple sources.

Suggested Usages *(cont.)*

The following are some creative ideas for using Ridgewalk.

- Use forward movement and a relatively small looper size to create a granular time stretcher.
- Use wandering movement with a high blur and drift setting to turn a recording or sample into an infinite soundscape.
- Use a relatively short buffer and hold time to create a false reverb that will momentarily response after each recording.

Gotchas

The following are noted as potentially confusing behaviors for new users.

- The **Layer** control cannot be changed while recording. After recording, the newest recording will always become the currently selected layer. Furthermore, if you start a recording while reverted to a previous layer, you will overdub the selected layer and lose the layers that came after it before.
- The AU version of Ridgewalk may not immediately play sound when loading a file. This is a limitation of AUs and certain DAWs handling “audio effects” such as Ridgewalk, and not expecting them to generate sound on their own. The most reliable fixes are to briefly send Ridgewalk some audio to wake it up, or to load Ridgewalk on a channel with a dummy software instrument.

Compatibility

macOS 10.13 or later, Intel and Apple M1/M2 chips supported. VST3/AU/CLAP format.

Windows 10 or later, 64-bit. VST3/CLAP format.

Ridgewalk requires an internet connection for initial authorization. Internet connection will not be necessary afterwards.

Support

For any support inquiries, please feel free to reach out via email.

hello@aqeelaadamsound.com

Installation

macOS:

- Open the .pkg installer files and follow the provided instructions.

Windows:

- Use the provided Install_VST3.bat and Install_CLAP.bat scripts to install to the proper location.
- If the scripts are unsuccessful, simply copy the .vst3 file to C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3\ and the .clap file to C:\Program Files\Common Files\CLAP\

After the above instructions, you will need to restart your DAW and/or re-scan for new plug-ins.

Uninstall locations

macOS:

- AU: Macintosh HD/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/Components/
- VST3: Macintosh HD/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3/
- CLAP: Macintosh HD/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/CLAP/

Windows:

- VST3: C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3\
- CLAP: C:\Program Files\Common Files\CLAP\