

# Akai MPD and MPK Series – Setup With Ableton Live

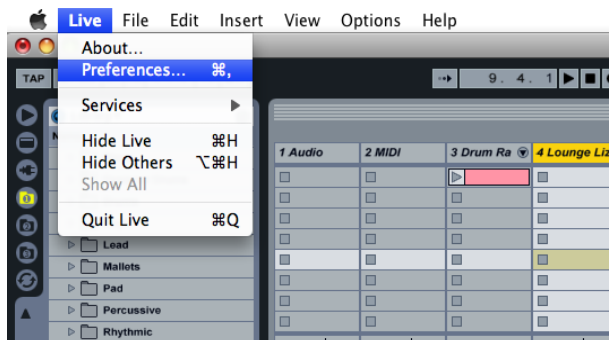
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**Note:** These screenshots were taken on Ableton Live 7.0.15, while there are new features in 8 the selections that pertain to this setup should remain the same. Also note they were taken using the MPK on a Mac. All of the options are the same for the MPD short of the Arp option. So if you own an MPD follow these same steps. The only difference is you will see MPD instead of MPK. PC users will see USB Device rather than MPD or MPK.

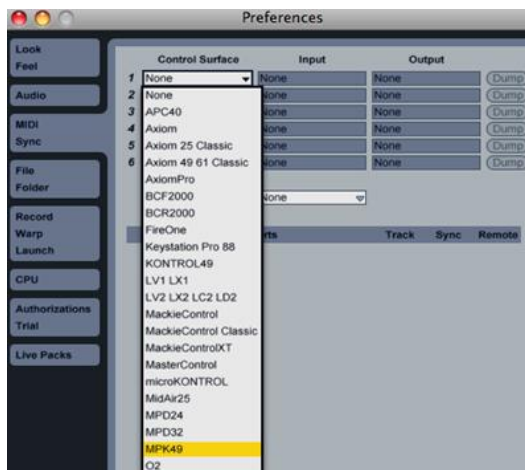
## Configuring as a Control Surface

1. First open the software and go to the **Live** Menu (**File** Menu on a PC) and choose **Preferences**.



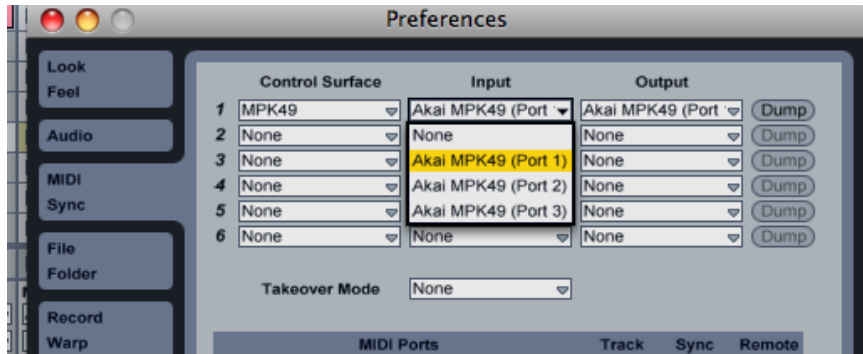
2. In the **Preferences** screen choose the **MIDI Sync** tab, and then drop down the **Control Surface** menu. In here you should see **MPD or MPK**.

If you do not see these options in the **Control Surface** menu please upgrade to the latest version of Ableton 6. Ableton 7 and 8 should have these options already.



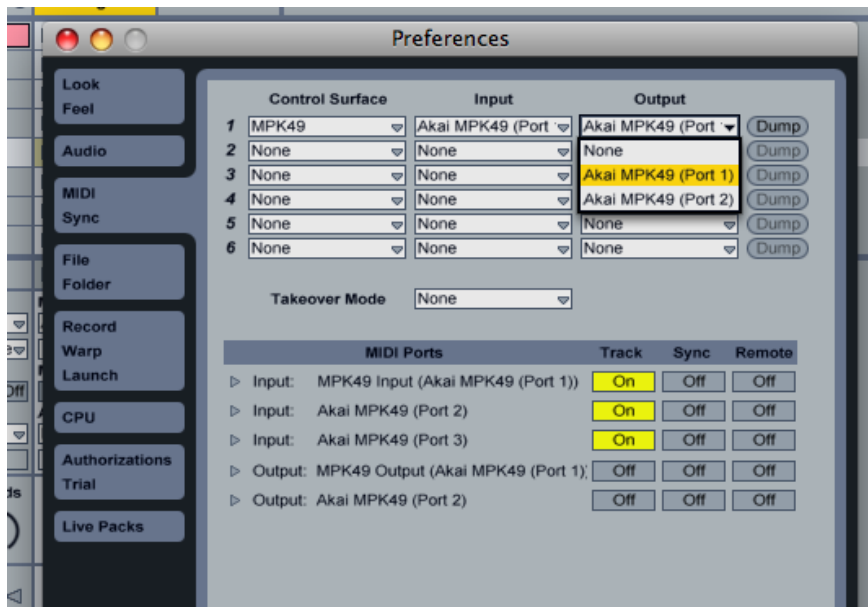
- After choosing the appropriate **Control Surface**, turn your attention to the **Input** and **Output** drop-down menus.

On the **Input** drop-down choose the 1<sup>st</sup> midi input. (Note: on PC's you may see *USB Audio Device not MPD or MPK*)



- After choosing the first input drop down the **Output** menu.

On the **Output** drop-down menu choose the 1<sup>st</sup> midi output.

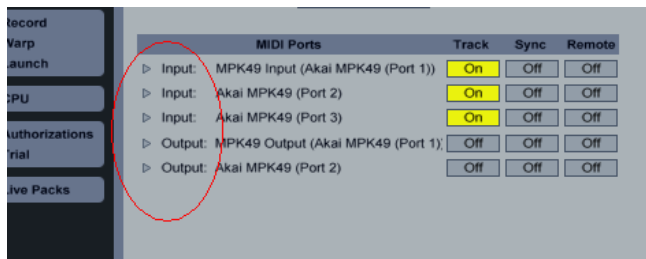


## Input Output Options

The MPD or MPK should now be selected as the control surface.

Now turn your attention to the **MIDI Ports** section below. You will see 3 inputs and 2 outputs. You will also notice the **Track**, **Sync**, and **Remote** options.

*\* Please ask download our MIDI IO Details Guide from any MPD or MPK controller's product page for an explanation on the differences between the 3 inputs and 2 outputs.*

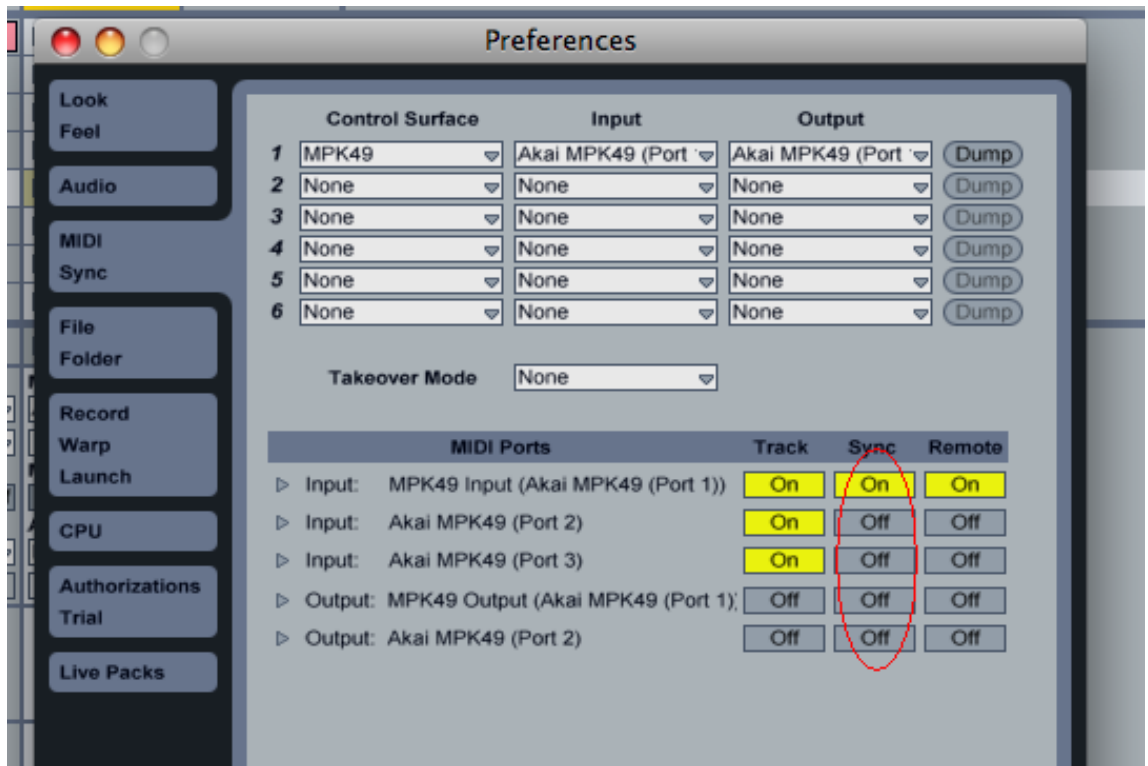


1. The **Track** option will control any midi notes being sent by the MPD or MPK or being sent back out to the MPD or MPK. (*i.e., the keys and the pads for playing instruments*).
  - When using the MPD or MPK to trigger virtual instruments in Ableton, you will want to turn **Track On** for the 1<sup>st</sup> input.
  - If you need to route midi notes from output **B** on the MPD or MPK then choose **Track On** for input 2.
  - If you would like to use the physical midi in to route midi from another controller then choose **Track On** for input 3.
  - You will see you can do the same on both outputs. Generally you will not need to turn **Track On** here. However if you need to route midi notes back out to an external device, you can do so by turning **Track On** for output 2.

MIDI Ports	Track	Sync	Remote
▷ Input: MPK49 Input (Akai MPK49 (Port 1))	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
▷ Input: Akai MPK49 (Port 2)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Input: Akai MPK49 (Port 3)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Output: MPK49 Output (Akai MPK49 (Port 1))	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
▷ Output: Akai MPK49 (Port 2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. The **Sync** option is specifically for routing Midi Clock between devices. This will come into play with **Note Repeat** and the **Arp** option.

- When using the **MPK** you may want to use the **Note Repeat** function on the pads or the **Arp** with the keys. The **MPD** will also allow **Note Repeat** with the pads. Both of these options repeat notes at a specific time division following a specific tempo.
- The **MPD** or **MPK** has an internal MIDI Clock and the ability to use an external clock source. This means the tempo of your project, and inevitably the tempo of **Note Repeat** and the **Arp**, can be chosen by tapping the **Tap Tempo** button on the **MPD** or **MPK** or by having the **MPD** or **MPK** listen to Ableton's tempo. This is purely based off personal preference.



3. The **Remote** option is used to send/receive **Control Surface** commands. i.e, the **transport** controls, the **knobs**, and the **faders**. (see *Custom Assigning Controls for more on this*)
- To use the knobs, faders, and transport to control Ableton turn **Remote On** for the 1st input. This will route these messages into the software enabling you to use the knobs, faders, and transport to control different functions in the software.
  - By default they are assigned to their best controls already. If you have the knobs or faders assigned to midi port B on your MPD or MPK then you would turn **Remote On** for input 2.
  - If you would like to use another controller via the MPD or MPK's MIDI in port then turn **Remote On** for input 3. To route Control Change messages through the MIDI out port on the MPD or MPK, turn **Remote On** for output 2.

## Custom Assigning Controls

1. It is also very easy to customize Ableton to respond in any way you'd like.
  - On a Mac hit **CMD + M** to bring up the midi assignment options. On a PC press **CTRL+M**. You'll see it puts a blue sheen over all assignable options. Any option you see highlighted can learn any knob, fader, or s-button on the MPD or MPK.
2. First click an assignable option on screen. In the example below I chose **Send A** on **Track 3**. You'll see it puts brackets around the option chosen.





3. After selecting the assignable option (**Send A** in this example), simply move the knob or fader you would like to assign to it on the MPD or MPK.
  - As you can see in the screen shot below it will show a number for the assignment it learned. This is the **CC (Control Change)** number assigned to the particular knob or fader you moved.

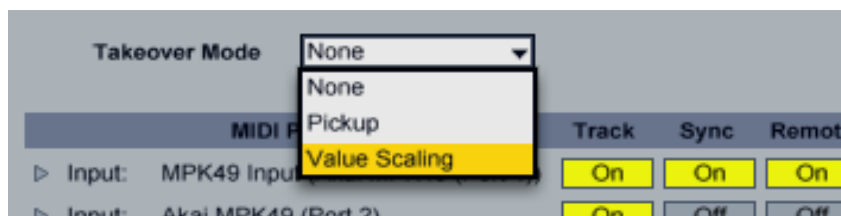


4. Once you see this on screen press **CMD+M** on the Mac (**Ctrl+M** on the PC) again to take the midi learn assignments off screen. Move the knob or fader you assigned and you will see it now moves the assignment you chose on screen. You can do this for virtually anything in Ableton. Feel free to set up your controller any way you'd like.

## Value Scaling vs. Pick Up Mode

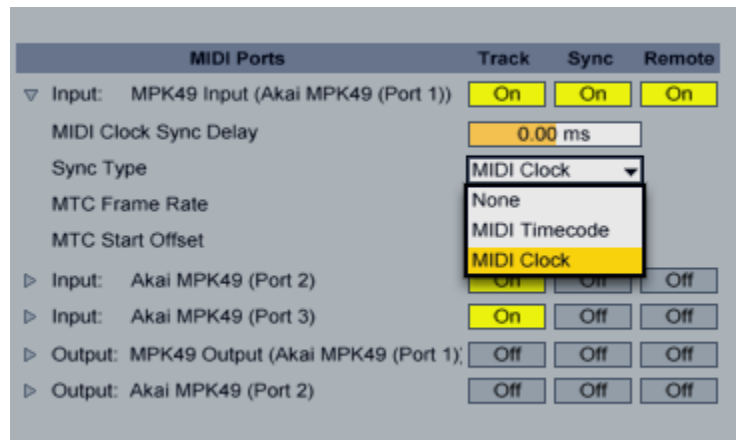
There is one more thing to be aware of on the **MIDI Sync** tab in your **Preferences** menu. You will see a **Takeover Mode** drop-down menu. Your two options are **Pick Up** and **Value Scaling**.

1. When set to **Pick Up** the knobs and faders will only start moving their counterpart on screen when that particular knob or fader moves past the location of the on screen knob or fader.
  - i.e., **Fader 1** on the MPD or MPK is all the way down. You open Ableton and **Fader 1** in the software is halfway up. When set to **Pick Up** the fader on screen will not move until the fader on the MPD or MPK goes past the halfway up point. It will “Pick Up” from this point and move along with the fader on screen.
2. When set to **Value Scaling** it will do the opposite.
  - i.e., **Fader 1** on the **MPK49** is all the way down. You open Ableton and **Fader 1** in the software is halfway up. When set to **Value Scaling** the fader on screen will move as soon as you move the fader on the **MPK49** without waiting for the fader to be halfway up. So rather than waiting for the fader on the **MPK49** to pass the point where the on screen fader is set, it will move immediately from its original location by the amount the fader on the **MPK49** was moved.

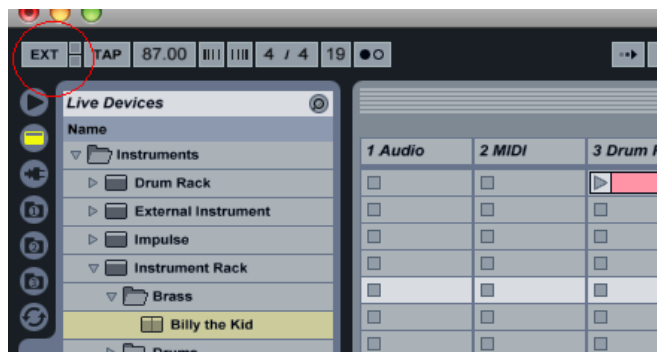


## Using Note Repeat /Arp with the MPD or MPK's Internal MIDI Clock

1. First turn **Sync On** for the first input. You will see **Sync Type**. Drop down this menu and choose **MIDI Clock**.
  - This is telling Ableton to listen to the tempo from your MPD or MPK. You choose this tempo by either tapping the **Tap Tempo** button or by pressing **Edit** and then **Tap Tempo** to manually scroll to the desired BPM. The **Tap Tempo** light will blink at the chosen tempo.
  - If you have an external device that sends MIDI clock that you would rather use as your source for midi clock, connect it to the MPD or MPK's MIDI in port and choose **Sync On** for the 3<sup>rd</sup> input.



When you do this you will notice Ableton will switch to **Ext** where you normally would see **Tap**. This confirms it is listening to the external MIDI clock.

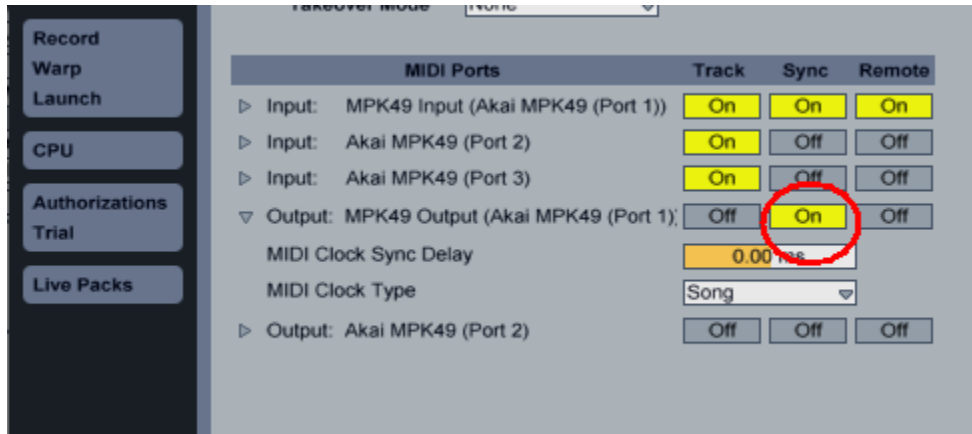


## Using Note Repeat /Arp with Ableton as Master

1. To set the MPD or MPK to listen to **External** clock press the **Global** button and then page right until you see **MIDI/CLK**. Set this option to **External**. Make sure you are on the latest firmware to be able to save this change.

The Tap Tempo light will stop blinking which confirms it is no longer using Internal Clock.

2. Back on the **MIDI Sync** tab under the **MIDI Ports** section turn your attention to output 1. Turn **Sync On** for the 1<sup>st</sup> output in order to route Ableton's MIDI clock to the MPD or MPK.



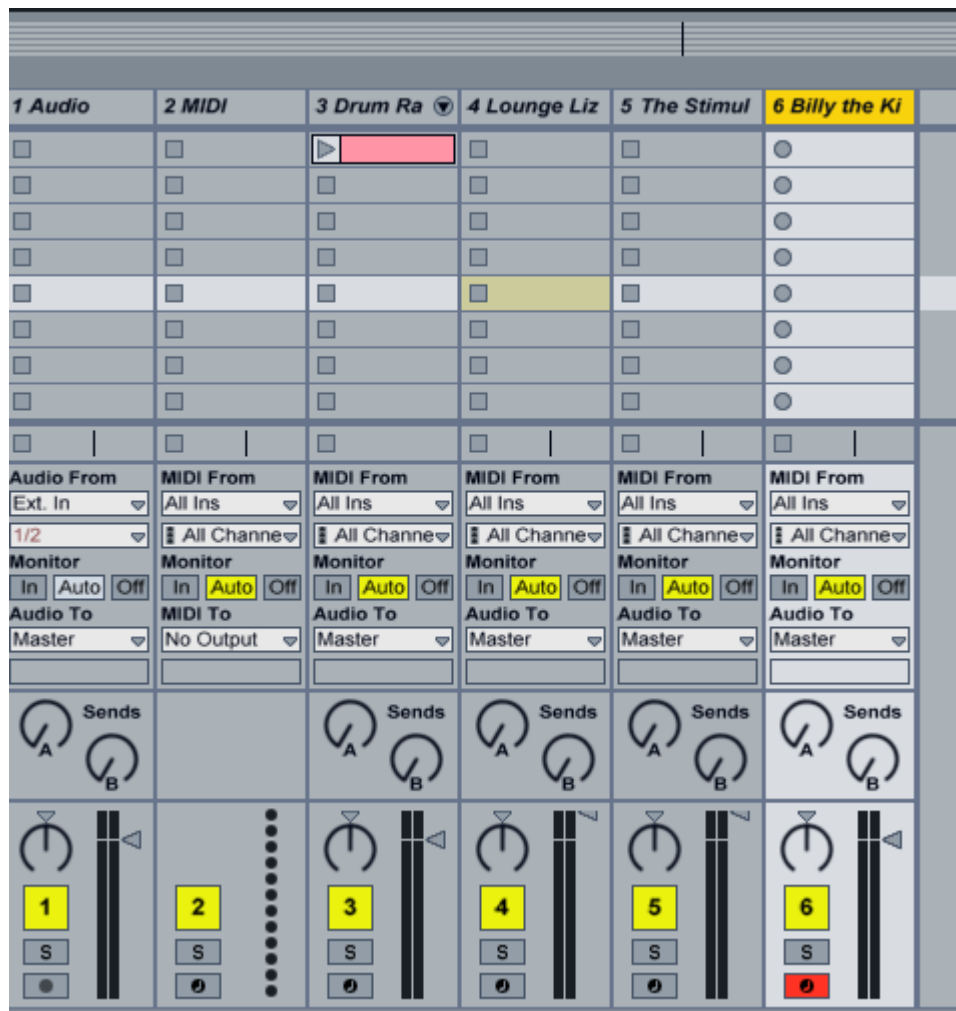
If you would like to send the midi clock to an external device via the MPD or MPK MIDI out port then choose **Sync On** for port 2.

## Using a Virtual Instrument in Ableton

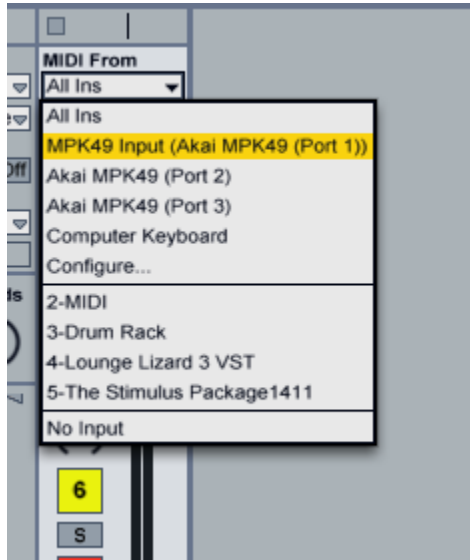
1. To set up a **Virtual Instrument** in Ableton the first thing we need to do is choose one from the Ableton Device List. (You can also use 3<sup>rd</sup> party VST's, consult Ableton's documentation)
2. Choose the option highlighted in the screenshot below to bring up a list of your **Live Devices**. In this example I chose **Billy the Kid** under the **Instrument Rack**. To add this to the project simply drag it from here and drop it to the right where it says "**Drop Files and Audio Devices Here**".



- You will see the track appear on the right. Notice at the bottom there is a red button. This is **Record Enable**, this must be activated to hear what you are playing.



4. Below you will see the drop down menu for the midi input. It will be labeled **MIDI From**. Generally you can leave this set to **All Ins**, however if need be choose the specific input for the **MPK49/MPD32** from the drop down menu.



5. If you have something set to a specific midi channel that you would like only this instrument to respond to you can choose the channel by dropping down the menu below. Generally this will stay on **All Channels**.



Now if you play the MPD or MPK you should hear the audio from this **Virtual Instrument** track. There is plenty to learn with Ableton as it is an advanced DAW(Digital Audio Workstation), so we still suggest reading the manual and going through the tutorial videos. You're MPD or MPK should be configured and ready to use!

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