

FSEQ User Manual

Welcome to FSEQ. This sequencer is designed to streamline your drum programming workflow in Ableton Live. I have always preferred the classic step-sequencer workflow for drum programming. It bypasses the unnecessary complexities of a traditional piano roll and provides a much cleaner, more focused overview. The vision behind FSEQ was to pair this fast, intuitive workflow with the massive capabilities of the Ableton Drum Rack. While the Drum Rack is arguably one of the best drum programming tools in the world, it can quickly become cluttered and overwhelming to manage. FSEQ bridges this gap, giving you fast pattern creation backed by the deep power of Ableton Live.

Plus, with full total recall, FSEQ saves seamlessly with your Ableton project. So the next time you open your session, your sequencer opens exactly as you left it.

1. Installation

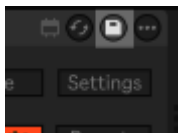
You can place the device in any folder you prefer on your hard drive. It is highly recommended to store it in a folder located within your Ableton Live Browser (Places) so you can easily drag and drop it into your projects.

- **Important:** FSEQ is a MIDI device and must be placed on a **MIDI Track**.
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2. First Steps

2.1 Settings & Initialization

Before you start producing, it is recommended to adjust the settings to fit your workflow and set your preferred **Preset Path** (where your saved patterns will be stored)(see section 5). Once you have configured everything to your liking, save the device itself as an Ableton preset (.adv file). You can save multiple .adv variations with different default settings if needed.



2.2 Main Modes: Drum Rack vs. Manual

FSEQ operates in two primary modes:

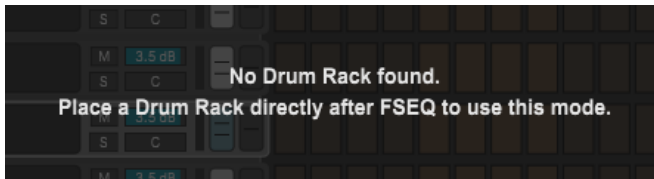
- **Drum Rack Mode:** Designed to work seamlessly with an Ableton Drum Rack. *Note: The Drum Rack must be placed directly after the FSEQ in the device chain.*
- **Manual Mode:** A standalone mode where you can assign custom MIDI notes and row names yourself. It does not require a specific device to follow it.



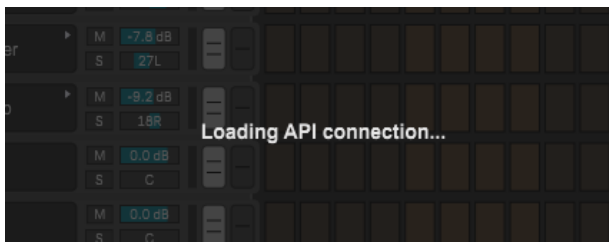
2.3 Drum Rack Mode Integration

When FSEQ is placed on a track, it scans the chain:

- If no Drum Rack is found behind the sequencer, you will receive this message: “No Drum Rack found.”



- If a Drum Rack is added, the API connections will initialize, and you will see: “Loading Api connection...”



Once connected, FSEQ offers **bi-directional control** over the Drum Rack:

- Volume, Pan, Mute, and Solo are fully synced.
- Selecting a row in FSEQ highlights the corresponding pad/chain in the Drum Rack.
- Row names in FSEQ are automatically synced from the Drum Rack pads.
- You can select specific samples via the Instrument Rack Chain Selector (see section 5.2).

3. Creating a Sequence

3.1 Setting Steps

FSEQ is primarily designed for creating drum loops, where each row represents a specific drum sound.

- **Add/Remove:** Left-click on a step in the grid to add a note. Click it again to remove it.
- **Draw:** Click and hold the left mouse button while dragging across the grid to quickly draw or erase multiple steps.
- **Grid Selection:** Right-click and drag to create a selection box in the grid. This can span across multiple rows and is perfect for quickly copying, cutting, pasting, filling, or modifying larger parts of your pattern. This also applies to entire rows (see section 3.3).



3.2 Velocity Control



- **Open Velocity Window:** Left-click the **Velocity** button (or use the scroll wheel while hovering over an active step) to open the velocity window for that row. Each slider represents the velocity of the step directly above it.



- **Adjust:** Click or draw across the sliders to adjust values. Double-clicking a slider resets it to the default value (100).
- **Reset All:** Right-click the **Velocity** button to instantly reset all velocities in that specific row back to default (100).



3.3 Managing Rows



- **Selection:** Left-click a row to highlight it. In Drum Rack Mode, this automatically selects the corresponding pad in Ableton. You can also navigate through rows using the **Up** and **Down** arrow keys.
- **Row Options:** Located next to the velocity button. Click (left or right) to open a menu with options for automatic standard fills, random fills, copy, cut, and paste. (These functions can also be triggered via Hotkeys).



- **Sample Preview:** Left-click on the row number to trigger a quick audio preview of the sample.

3.4 The Top Bar

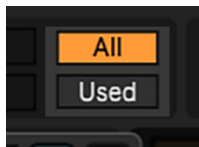
- **Sequence Length:** Set your pattern length to 16, 32, or 64 steps.



- **4x4 Navigator:** Designed to mirror the standard 16-pad view of an Ableton Drum Rack. FSEQ hosts a total of 96 rows (6 pages of 16 rows). Each button in the navigator selects a block of 16 rows. You can also use the **Left** and **Right arrow keys** to switch pages.



- **All / Used:** Toggle your view. "All" shows the standard 4x4 navigator pages. "Used" displays only the rows that contain at least one active step (up to the first 16 used rows), giving you a clean overview of your active groove.



- **Pattern Selection:** Switch between 8 independent patterns. Each pattern saves its own sequence, velocities, and sequence length. Use the **Copy** button to duplicate the currently selected pattern to the next slot for quick variations.



- **Mode Switch:** Toggle between Drum Rack Mode and Manual Mode.



- **Create Clip:** Exports your current sequence (steps and velocities) into an Ableton MIDI clip.
 - *Place Mode:* The clip is exported to a Session View slot AND instantly placed onto the Arrangement View timeline at your current cursor position.
 - *Clip Mode:* The sequence is only exported to a Session View clip slot.
 - *Tip:* In the settings, you can choose the destination for exported patterns (e.g., the first 8 slots or the last 8 slots of the track).



- **Duplicate Length (16x2 / 32x2):** Instantly duplicate a 16-step sequence into a 32-step sequence, or a 32-step into a 64-step sequence with a single click.



- **Dropzone:** Drag and drop one or multiple audio samples here to instantly build your racks (see section 5.1).



4. Advanced Sample Selection

FSEQ utilizes the Chain Selector of an Ableton Instrument Rack nested inside a Drum Rack pad to switch samples.

Prerequisites: The Instrument Rack must be the first device in the Drum Pad's chain. Samples must be mapped sequentially from top to bottom in the Chain Selector (e.g., Sample 1 to zone 0-0, Sample 2 to zone 1-1, etc.). *A pre-mapped Instrument Rack containing 128 empty Simplers is included with FSEQ to help you get started.*

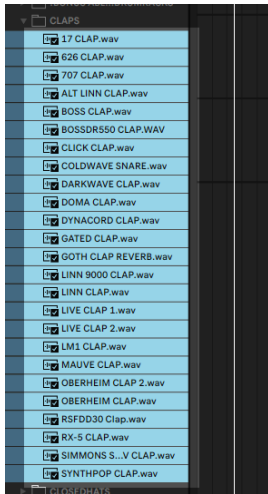
4.1 Building a Multi-Sample Drum Rack

Due to Ableton API limitations, fully automating the creation of Chain Selector zones is not possible. However, FSEQ provides a powerful workflow workaround using the included Simpler rack:

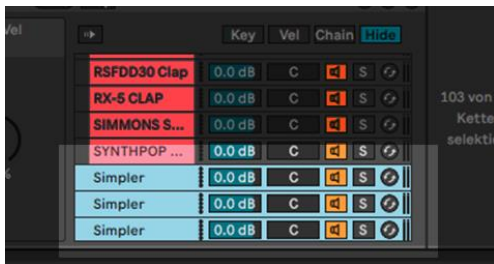
1. Drag the included pre-mapped Instrument Rack onto an empty Drum Pad.



2. Select all the audio samples you want on this pad (e.g., 50 different snares) from your browser, and drag them into the FSEQ **Dropzone**. The samples will automatically load sequentially into the empty Simplers. You can repeat this process to add more samples to the next available slots (up to 128 samples per pad).



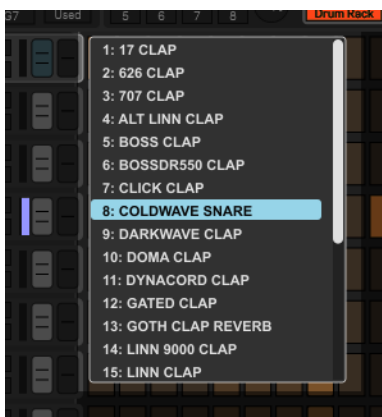
3. **Clean up:** Navigate to the Instrument Rack in Ableton. The used chains will be renamed to your sample names. Scroll down to where the chains are still named "Simpler" (the empty ones), highlight them, and delete them to save RAM.



Tip: Save this completed Drum Rack to your Ableton User Library! You only have to build your ultimate drum kit once.

4.2 Selecting Samples in FSEQ

If a Drum Pad contains a multi-sample setup, a small white arrow will appear in the top-right corner of the FSEQ row name.



- Left-click the arrow, or right-click anywhere on the name field, to open the **Sample Selection Window**. Click any sample to load it.

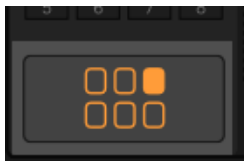
- **Fast Scrolling:** Hover over the name field and use your mouse scroll wheel to quickly flip through samples. The selection window will open temporarily to show your position.

5. Main Device Controls (Track View)

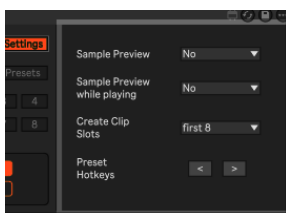
These controls are located on the main FSEQ device interface sitting at the bottom of your Ableton window.



- **Open Sequencer:** Toggles the main floating UI. The button turns yellow/orange when open and white when closed. You can MIDI/Key map this button to toggle the sequencer interface instantly.



- **Create Clip:** Functions exactly like the Create Clip button in the Top Bar. Can be MIDI/Key mapped to export clips while the main UI is closed.
- **Auto Mute:** When enabled, FSEQ monitors incoming MIDI. If a MIDI clip is playing from the Ableton timeline, the sequencer will automatically mute its internal playback to prevent double-triggering.
- **Settings:** Customize your workflow:



- *Sample Preview (Stop):* Toggles automatic audio preview when scrolling through samples while Ableton playback is stopped.
 - *Sample Preview (Play):* Toggles audio preview while Ableton is playing.
 - *Create Clip Slots:* Defines the destination for exported clips.
 - *Preset Hotkeys:* Map MIDI/Keys to cycle forward or backward through presets in your selected folder.
- **Presets:** Opens the preset management window.

- **Pattern Buttons:** Mirrors the Top Bar, allowing you to switch patterns while browsing presets.

5.1 The Preset Browser

The left side displays presets; the right side shows your folder structure. Double-click a preset to load it.

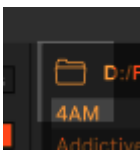


What gets saved in an FSEQ Preset? A preset saves a single pattern (sequence). You can load multiple different presets into the 8 pattern slots of a single FSEQ instance. It saves:

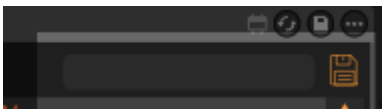
1. The operating Mode (Drum Rack or Manual).
2. Sequence Length (16, 32, or 64 steps).
3. The active grid steps and their velocity values.
4. *Manual Mode only:* Row names and assigned MIDI notes.

Preset Controls:

- **Path Button:** Opens your OS file browser to define your master preset folder.



- **Save Field:** Type your preset name and click **Save** to write the pattern to your hard drive.



6. Keyboard Hotkeys

When a single Row is highlighted (No Grid Selection):

- 1 : Fill every step
- 2 : Fill every 2nd step
- 4 : Fill every 4th step

- 6 : Fill every 4th step (Offbeat)
- 8 : Fill Snare pattern
- 9 : Fill Snare pattern (Halftime)
- 5 : Fill Random
- 7 : Fill Random (Dense)
- Arrow Down : Move highlight one row down
- Arrow Up : Move highlight one row up
- Arrow Left : Navigate 4x4 page left
- Arrow Right : Navigate 4x4 page right
- Ctrl + C : Copy entire row
- Ctrl + X : Cut entire row
- Ctrl + V : Paste copied/cut row data
- Ctrl + Arrow Key down : Trigger sample preview

When a Grid Area is selected (Right-click drag):

- Ctrl + C : Copy selected steps
- Ctrl + X : Cut selected steps
- Ctrl + V : Paste data into selection
- Ctrl + D : Duplicate selected steps to the next grid position
- 5 : Random fill within selection
- 7 : Random fill (Dense) within selection

7. Special Mouse Shortcuts

- **Scroll Wheel over Row Name:** Instantly scrolls through available samples in a multi-sample rack. Opens the sample window for 3 seconds. (If you click a sample or move the scrollbar within this time, the window stays open).
- **Scroll Wheel over Velocity Button:** Opens the velocity window for 1.5 seconds and simultaneously raises/lowers all velocity values for that row at once.
- **Ctrl + Scroll Wheel over Velocity Button:** Opens the velocity window for 1.5 seconds and scales the dynamic range (increases or decreases the ratio between loud and quiet steps).
- **Scroll Wheel over an Active Step:** Opens the velocity window for 1.5 seconds and adjusts the velocity of that specific step. (Clicking inside the window resets the 1.5-second timer).
- **Middle Mouse Button over a Row:** Toggles the Solo state for that specific row/drum pad.