Performance Controller App for Ableton Live

Reach
Quick Start Guide

Mac USB Mac Bluetooth Mac Wi-Fi Windows Wi-Fi

Learn how to connect Reach to Ableton Live and use your iPad as a performance controller.

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Reach 1.0

This guide gets Reach connected to Ableton Live and ready to play. Install the bridge first, choose one connection path, then verify note delivery and the bridge response before performing.

Access, Trial, and Setup

Fix Connection and Setup Guide open the same wizard at Welcome. Your saved connection choice is preserved. Reopening setup does not reset onboarding history, start or reset a trial, or change purchases or access. Use Back and Continue to move through the instructions.

Reach access and Ableton setup are independent. You can install ReachBridge, open the setup guide, and reconnect an existing installation without starting a trial.

- The free trial starts only when you choose Start Free 7-Day Trial in Purchase & Access. It provides full access for seven days.
- The trial does not become a subscription and does not charge automatically when it ends.
- You can buy the Full Version before, during, or after the trial with a one-time in-app purchase. The button shows the current App Store price for your region.
- If you already bought the Full Version with the same Apple Account, choose Restore Purchases. You may still need to complete the Ableton setup on a new or restored iPad.

Before You Connect

Reach sends MIDI notes and control messages to Ableton Live. Live sends track, clip, transport, mixer, device, scale, and pad state back through ReachBridge. Both directions must use the same MIDI port.

Item	Current requirement
iPad	A compatible iPad with Reach installed and local network access allowed for Wi-Fi MIDI
Ableton Live	Live 12.4.6 or later with the included ReachBridge control-surface folder installed
Mac connection	USB, Bluetooth MIDI, or Wi-Fi MIDI; one selected connection carries notes, controls, and feedback
Windows connection	Wi-Fi RTP MIDI through rtpMIDI; direct iPad USB MIDI is not supported on Windows
Push hardware	Optional. Leave its existing Live configuration unchanged

Install Reach Install Reach from the App Store. Reach is an iPad-only app; Ableton Live and ReachBridge run on the connected Mac or Windows computer.

Install the Ableton Live Bridge

The ReachBridge folder is the only Live bridge to install. Keep the folder intact and do not copy its individual files separately.

Computer	Default Remote Scripts folder
Mac	~/Music/Ableton/User Library/Remote Scripts/
Windows	%USERPROFILE%\Documents\Ableton\User Library\Remote Scripts\

1 First, in Live's browser, right-click User Library and choose Show in Finder (Mac) or Show in Explorer (Windows). Use that folder even on an external drive. Then save your Set and quit Live.

2 Inside the User Library opened from Live, create Remote Scripts if needed. Copy the complete ReachBridge folder there. When updating, replace the whole old folder and keep any backup outside Remote Scripts.

3 Restart Live.

4 In Ableton Live, open Settings ⟶ Tempo & MIDI (called Link, Tempo & MIDI in older Live versions).

5 Add a Control Surface row and select ReachBridge. Leave Input and Output unassigned until the iPad MIDI connection is active.

6 Keep any existing Push control-surface configuration unchanged.

Bridge updates and the installed bridge check

An existing installation shows a one-time notice when an update changes the bridge requirement. Open Setup goes directly to Install Bridge in the existing guide and keeps the saved connection route. Not Now dismisses the notice; Reopen it in Settings > Ableton Setup. First-time users keep the full five-step setup without an update popup.

Download ReachBridge for Reach 1.0 (Revision 1). Keep the folder named ReachBridge. After replacing it, quit and restart Live, then tap I Installed It to continue setup. Test Connection shows the revision reported by the running bridge and whether it is compatible. Settings > Ableton Setup also shows Running ReachBridge. App versions and bridge revisions are independent; an app update does not always require a new bridge.

Connect to check ReachBridge means no matching MIDI connection is available. Check Again tries for six seconds, including one retry. ReachBridge update needed appears only after a reply identifies an older incompatible bridge. Complete the connection and audible-note test before finishing setup.

ReachBridge revision not verified means no valid reply was received, not that the bridge is outdated. If you replaced the folder, quit and restart Live, not just Reach, then tap Check Again. Otherwise check Live's ReachBridge Control Surface Input and Output. Use the setup link to install or replace the bridge. Reach cannot identify the running revision until it replies.

Use Live's configured User Library, including an external drive: right-click User Library in Live and choose Show in Finder (Mac) or Show in Explorer (Windows). Install inside its Remote Scripts folder; do not use an abandoned default library. Keep the drive connected.

The check confirms a fresh bridge reply and compatibility, not sound routing or every installed file. Reach cannot inspect the computer's installation folder when no bridge responds, and does not display its library path.

Connect to a Mac with USB

Recommended — most reliable. Connect directly with a USB cable. Your selected connection carries all notes, controls, and feedback.

1. Connect the iPad directly to the Mac with a data-capable USB cable. Unlock the iPad and trust the Mac if prompted.
2. On the Mac, open Audio MIDI Setup.
3. Choose Window, then Show Audio Devices.
4. Find the iPad in the Audio Devices sidebar and click Enable. The iPad MIDI port does not exist for the app until this Mac step is complete.
5. Open Reach and choose Mac + USB in the setup wizard. Reach selects USB MIDI and automatic port selection for you.
6. In Live Settings under Tempo & MIDI (older versions: Link, Tempo & MIDI), set both Input and Output for ReachBridge to the enabled iPad or IDAM MIDI Host port.
7. In Live's MIDI Ports list, turn Track on for that same input. Leave Sync off unless another part of the studio specifically requires it.
8. Continue to Test Connection. Wait for Connected to Ableton Live, tap Play Test Note, then tap Yes only if the note sounds and stops. Otherwise, tap Something's Wrong.

Connection assistant Reach cannot press the Enable button in Audio MIDI Setup. If USB is selected and no usable endpoint appears, the app shows a warning bar. CHECK AGAIN refreshes the state, FIX CONNECTION opens the shared setup wizard at Welcome, and the close button dismisses the warning.

Connect to a Mac with Bluetooth

Connect wirelessly directly to your Mac. Your selected connection carries all notes, controls, and feedback.

1 Choose Mac + Bluetooth in Reach's setup wizard.

2 Turn on Bluetooth on your Mac and this iPad. Keep Reach open.

3 Give this iPad a distinct MIDI name below, then tap Advertise This iPad. Allow Bluetooth access if prompted.

4 On your Mac, open Audio MIDI Setup.

5 Choose Window → Show MIDI Studio, then click the Bluetooth button in the toolbar.

6 Find this iPad's MIDI name in the list and click Connect. Confirm any system pairing prompt.

7 Wait for the Mac's button to change to Disconnect.

8 For another iPad, repeat these steps with a different MIDI name. Connect each iPad from the Mac; the Mac does not need to advertise.

9 Continue to set up Live. Give each iPad its own ReachBridge row with its matching Bluetooth MIDI Input and Output.

10 In Ableton Live, open Settings → Tempo & MIDI (called Link, Tempo & MIDI in older Live versions).

11 Choose ReachBridge in a separate control-surface row for each iPad. For BOTH Input and Output in that row, choose the same iPad's Bluetooth MIDI port. Match the MIDI name advertised by that iPad; macOS may retain its existing device name. Reach shows the Mac's name. Enable Track for each iPad's input. Leave Sync off. Remote is only needed for separate manual MIDI mappings. Preserve unrelated control-surface rows.

12 On Test Connection, wait for Connected to Ableton Live. Reach checks a fresh bridge reply and current Live feedback automatically. Select and arm an instrument track in Live, then tap Play Test Note. If the note sounds and stops, tap Yes and finish setup. Otherwise, tap Something's Wrong. Detailed Connection Test is optional. If the automatic check fails, install the latest ReachBridge, check both Live ports, and tap Check Again.

If Bluetooth access is denied, tap Open Settings and enable Bluetooth for Reach. You can also go to iPad Settings → Privacy & Security → Bluetooth → Reach. Return to Reach, edit this iPad's MIDI name if needed, then tap Advertise This iPad. Allowing access does not choose or change the MIDI name. If Bluetooth disconnects, keep Reach open and Bluetooth on. If this iPad is not advertising, tap Advertise This iPad, then click Connect beside its name in the Mac's Audio MIDI Setup. If the first attempt fails, wait for Connect to return and try again. Reach waits for your selected Mac and does not replay notes played while disconnected. Stop Advertising stops discovery, not an existing connection; disconnect from the Mac to end that link.

Compatibility Bluetooth MIDI is supported on Mac for notes, controls, and ReachBridge feedback. Windows Bluetooth is not a supported setup route.

Connect to a Mac with Wi-Fi

Connect through the same Wi-Fi network. Keep the iPad and Mac on the same trusted local network and avoid guest networks that isolate devices from one another.

1 Connect the Mac and iPad to the same trusted Wi-Fi network. Keep Reach open on the iPad and allow Local Network access if prompted.

2 On the Mac, open Audio MIDI Setup.

3 Choose Window → Show MIDI Studio.

4 Click the globe button beside Bluetooth in the MIDI Studio toolbar: Configure Network Driver.

5 Under My Sessions, select an existing RTP session or choose Create New Session → RTP.

6 Turn Enabled on for that session.

7 Under Sessions and Directories, select the iPad and click Connect.

8 Confirm the iPad appears under Connected Peers. Older macOS versions call these sections Directory and Participants.

9 Reach automatically selects Wi-Fi MIDI and automatic port selection for this setup route. You do not need to open Settings.

10 In Ableton Live, open Settings → Tempo & MIDI (called Link, Tempo & MIDI in older Live versions). Choose ReachBridge in a control-surface row. For BOTH Input and Output, choose the Mac RTP network session you enabled. Its name may differ from the port name shown on the iPad — for example, RTP Session 1 on the Mac and Network Session 1 in Reach.

11 Enable Track for that session's input and leave Sync off. Preserve unrelated control-surface rows.

12 On Test Connection, wait for Connected to Ableton Live. Reach checks a fresh bridge reply and current Live feedback automatically. Select and arm an instrument track in Live, then tap Play Test Note. If the note sounds and stops, tap Yes and finish setup. Otherwise, tap Something's Wrong. Detailed Connection Test is optional. If the automatic check fails, install the latest ReachBridge, check both Live ports, and tap Check Again.

A Network MIDI port can appear before your computer connects. Confirm the iPad is listed under Connected Peers or Participants on your computer, then tap Continue to set up Live. ReachBridge is checked after Live is configured.

Notes, controls and feedback use one connection. Reach does not switch to another connection if this one disconnects.

Connect to a Windows Computer

Connect through the same Wi-Fi network using rtpMIDI. A USB cable may power the iPad, but it does not provide the Windows MIDI link.

1 Connect the Windows PC and iPad to the same trusted Wi-Fi network. Keep Reach open and allow Local Network access if prompted.

2 Install rtpMIDI from Tobias Erichsen's official site, linked on the Reach setup page. Install Bonjour if prompted and make sure its service is running.

3 Use a Private network in Windows and allow rtpMIDI and Bonjour through Windows Firewall for that network.

4 In rtpMIDI, use the plus button under My Sessions to create a session. Set its Local Name (for example, Reach Session) and enable it.

5 Select the iPad in Directory and click Connect. Confirm it appears under Participants for the enabled session.

6 Reach automatically selects Wi-Fi MIDI and automatic port selection for this setup route. You do not need to open Settings.

7 In Ableton Live, open Settings → Tempo & MIDI (called Link, Tempo & MIDI in older Live versions). Choose ReachBridge in a control-surface row. For BOTH Input and Output, choose the Windows rtpMIDI Local Name you enabled. Its name may differ from the port name shown on the iPad.

8 Enable Track for that session's input and leave Sync off. Preserve unrelated control-surface rows.

9 On Test Connection, wait for Connected to Ableton Live. Reach checks a fresh bridge reply and current Live feedback automatically. Select and arm an instrument track in Live, then tap Play Test Note. If the note sounds and stops, tap Yes and finish setup. Otherwise, tap Something's Wrong. Detailed Connection Test is optional. If the automatic check fails, install the latest ReachBridge, check both Live ports, and tap Check Again.

A Network MIDI port can appear before your computer connects. Confirm the iPad is listed under Connected Peers or Participants on your computer, then tap Continue to set up Live. ReachBridge is checked after Live is configured.

Notes, controls and feedback use one connection. Reach does not switch to another connection if this one disconnects.

Configure Ableton Live

Live must receive ordinary notes and the ReachBridge control protocol through the same connection that Reach selected.

Live setting	Required value
Control Surface	ReachBridge
Input	The active iPad USB or Bluetooth port, Mac RTP session, or Windows rtpMIDI Local Name
Output	The same active connection used for Input
MIDI Ports Track Input	On
MIDI Ports Sync	Off unless a separate clock workflow requires it
Existing Push row	Leave unchanged

Two different checks Setup checks for a fresh ReachBridge reply containing current Live feedback automatically. Play Test Note then asks you to confirm the note sounded and stopped. Detailed Connection Test is optional; the automatic check does not exercise every control or prove performance under load. BRIDGE RESPONSE in Settings is a round-trip measurement, not note-to-sound latency.

Play Your First Track

1. In Live, select a MIDI track and arm it, or set monitoring to In. Use an instrument in Live, or route MIDI To to an external instrument and its channel; empty MIDI tracks and MIDI-effect-only tracks also show the playing surfaces.
2. In Reach, open the Pads workspace. In the Main role, the surface follows the selected Live track automatically. Secondary can navigate independently.
3. For a Drum Rack, tap one of the lower-left drum pads, then tap steps above it to build a pattern.
4. To select a Drum Rack sound without hearing it, hold the center Select button with one finger and tap the drum pad with another. The pad becomes the sound edited by the step rows, but no note is played.
5. For another MIDI instrument, play the melodic grid. Use Scale to choose key, scale, layout, In Key or Chromatic, Fixed, and octave.
6. Press Play or Session Record. Watch Live and the iPad for matching transport and clip state.
7. If the wrong surface appears, confirm the bridge responds in Settings > MIDI, then reselect the track in Live.

Clips, Recording, and Commands

- On a melodic track in Pads, tap Layout to cycle through 4ths, 3rds, Sequential, and Keys, or choose directly in Scale > Layout. Keys offers an In Key scale keyboard or a Chromatic piano keyboard. In Scale > Keyboard, choose one or two rows with one or two octaves per row; narrower layouts allow one octave per row.
- Tap Chords to turn chords on or off. Hold Chords to open its temporary settings in the device display; keep holding while changing options with another finger, then release to return to the device controls. Quality +

Extensions shows eight controls across the top pad row or above Keys. Hold a type or extension while pressing the next pad/key; it responds immediately and does not change notes already sounding. Release the modifier to restore the previous choice.

- In the Chords menu, Split keeps the shaded bottom three pad rows, or the lower keyboard in two-row Keys, as single notes. Chord Levels repeats the same root register through triads, 7ths, 9ths and 11ths, with chord names on pads/keys; it turns Quality + Extensions and Split off. Starting Level chooses the first level, including on compact keyboards. Inv works with diatonic chords in normal, Split and Levels modes. Octave runs from −2 to +3, extending to −4 through +7 only while Chord Levels is active.
- On first launch, Quality + Extensions, Split and Chord Levels are off, with Starting Level at Triad. Reach remembers these menu choices across launches. Chords and Inv start off each launch; tap Chords to play with your saved options.
- Open Commands with the lightning-bolt workspace button. Search or filter All Commands, tap a star to add or remove a favorite, and use Favorites to run or arrange the pad grid.
- Tap an empty favorite to assign it; hold and drag an assigned favorite to move or swap it. To remove it directly from Favorites, drag it into the red strip at the bottom and release. Most of the bottom row remains available for normal moves. Dim commands state the Live context they require.
- To change a favorite pad color, press and hold that pad with two fingers. Choose a color from the palette, or choose Default to restore the command's original color. The custom color follows the command when you move it.
- Use Arm/Disarm Track for Live's explicit track Arm state. Reach's automatic performance-workspace arming policy is separate and is not a Commands shortcut.
- Clip follows the selected Session or Arrangement clip. MIDI clips show notes, loop information, and a moving playhead; audio clips show the selected clip's waveform, loop, and playhead when the source is readable.
- For a Drum Rack Arrangement clip, the sequencer follows its steps, loop, and playback. At 1/16, the loop selector lights one pad per bar even when more step rows are visible.
- Choose Settings > General > Clip / Scene Workflow for NEW and the center Select button. Tap NEW to prepare the next recording target. In Pads, Device, Mix, or Session, hold NEW and use another finger to insert tracks, scenes, or a one-bar MIDI clip, or duplicate a track. Keep holding for more actions; release to close the menu without running the tap action.
- Inserted and duplicated tracks become selected. Duplicating a clip selects its copy, so repeated presses continue into new slots. In Device, the right-rail Duplicate button acts on the device; use the NEW menu to duplicate the track.
- In Pads and Device, tap Velocity on a MIDI or instrument track to switch to track Volume, then tap again to return. Arrows adjust Volume in 3 dB steps from -inf to +6 dB. Audio, group, and return tracks use Volume only and hide Octave. Session always shows Volume; Mix uses its channel faders.
- Session Record and Arrangement Record do not force Live to change its visible view. Starting Session recording gives the Session clip playback priority, disables the Arrangement clip for that track, and lights Back to Arrangement as Live reports it.

V1.0 workflow essentials

Use ReachBridge for Reach 1.0 and keep the installed folder named ReachBridge. Save your Set and restart Live after replacing the bridge; restarting Reach alone is insufficient. Follow the separate USB, Bluetooth or Wi-Fi setup sequence, then check both bridge response and Play Test Note.

For two iPads, give each a distinct MIDI name and its own Live bridge row. Main follows Live and owns automatic arming; Secondary can navigate independently. Transport, mixer edits, explicit Arm and clip launches remain shared.

Layout cycles the existing playing layouts. On Drum Racks it cycles Loop Selector, 16 Velocities and 64 Pads. Hold Layout for temporary velocity access. Hold steps and use Velocity arrows for relative changes, or tap a velocity pad for an exact value. M + step mutes a note; M/S + drum mutes or solos that drum.

Scale closes and dims automatically on unsupported tracks. Melodic pad counts remain adaptive; there is no Auto/16/32/64 melodic pad-count setting. Chords retains its existing hold menu and saved options.

Unfold racks to select chains and nested devices; use Track to return. Insert compatible content into empty chains or add chains with the browser. Device replacement and sample replacement are separate actions. Duplicate Device on a supported instrument creates original/copy rack chains.

Simpler supports direct boundary handles, zoom to 64x, explicit Fit, Crop and Reverse, and mode-aware fade shading. Drum Sampler adds Sample, Playback FX, Filter and Global pages, sample loading, associated waveforms and FX/filter symbols. New sample loads can still wait for indexing.

Convert can offer limited Simpler ↔ Drum Sampler sample transfer. It replaces the instrument, preserves sample/trim and resets other settings. Reverse transfer requires a sample verified during the current Live session; use Undo to restore the prior instrument.

Wavetable has factory-table reference visuals, position/LFO/filter guides, voice choices and inline Sub controls. Drift and Meld use waveform/model symbols. Auto Filter uses shape-and-text choices and applicable slope buttons. These are display guides, not measured audio.

Hybrid Reverb has Convolution, Algorithm, EQ and Global pages, IR selectors/shaping and routing symbols. Operator has color-coded A–D oscillator pages, envelopes, Filter, LFO, Pitch and Global, with eleven algorithm diagrams. Its circuit and Morph controls follow the filter selection.

Continuous control drags are grouped for Undo. MIDI expression handles retain pending edits during Live feedback; the playhead stays above the expression lane.

Device switching prioritizes your latest selection and retries incomplete responses automatically. If loading still fails, use Retry and check the matching bridge and connection. Audio clips may show a quick waveform overview that refines as detail arrives; the audio is unchanged.

Explore Devices and Samples

- Open Device to edit the selected track. Tap + to add a device, or hold and drag + into a valid gap; the browser opens on release. Hold and drag an existing device to reorder it in Live.
- Use the circular-arrow button beside an instrument to replace the instrument and its settings. Choose Favorites, Live Collections or Show All. Favorites combines compatible Reach favorites without a dropdown. Live Collections provides a Collection picker; dimmed collections contain no compatible devices. Show All provides a Source picker, starting with All Sources. Swipe vertically for more results.
- Tap a browser row to open a folder or choose an item. Stars save separate Reach Favorites without changing Live Collections or switching your current view. The browser remembers its view, source, folder or collection and list position for each purpose. Reopen it to add another item from the same place to the newly selected destination. Home returns to the current source or collection root; use Show All to change source. MIDI effects, instruments, audio effects and samples keep separate favorites. Add and Replace Instrument share the instrument list.
- In Pads, select a Drum Rack pad or an audio-track clip slot. In Session, select a clip slot. Use + beside Convert to browse content; occupied destinations show Replace and open compatible replacement content. Drum pads accept instruments or samples. Audio slots accept samples or Live audio clips; MIDI slots accept Live MIDI clips. Convert stays visible but dimmed when unavailable; Chords and Inv are hidden for Drum Racks.
- The TRACK/name box follows Live's track color. Device drop-down menus select named options directly. Auto Filter shows controls relevant to the selected mode. Wavetable, Drift and Meld provide section tabs and engine or oscillator menus; bank arrows reveal more controls. Meld displays its model's macro labels and values.
- Drag parameter knobs vertically; move sideways until FINE appears for smaller changes. Compact and full-size knobs share the same sensitivity. Double-tap to reset to Live's default.
- Delay provides a draggable filter curve and Filter, Freeze, Ping Pong and Link buttons. Timing controls follow Sync; Link shares the left/right timing.
- In Device view, Simpler pairs Convert with Add Sample or Replace Sample in the right rail. Replacing audio keeps instrument controls, playback/Warp settings and proportional trim boundaries; slices and transients belong to the new audio.
- Choose Classic, One-Shot or Slicing. Classic grays out skipped audio and highlights enabled loops. Drag slice markers with one finger; use the top edge for trim. Pinch to zoom, drag with two fingers to pan, and tap Fit to reset. The Warp menu stays the same size.
- Simpler Slicing shows 15 pads numbered 1-15, then 16-30 using the SLICES arrows. Empty slots stay dimmed and bank changes wait for held pads to be released. Sampler has 15 chromatic pads with note names. The MIDI monitor shows actual notes or recognized chords; saved scale and chord choices are preserved.
- Some compressed samples cannot show a waveform. Successful loads still close the browser and leave sample controls available.
- Use Live 12.4.6 or later and the latest ReachBridge; restart Live after installation. Earlier Live versions may offer partial functionality. Available content depends on your Live edition and library.

Continue with the Owner's Manual

For complete instructions for every Reach workspace, control, gesture, and troubleshooting path, use the online Owner's Manual. The online version can be kept current without requiring an app update.

Open the Reach Owner's Manual

Fast Troubleshooting

What you see	What to check
NO MIDI PORT	Enable the iPad in Audio MIDI Setup on Mac, or connect the Network Session or rtpMIDI participant. Then tap Refresh Ports.
Test C3 works but no bridge response	Select ReachBridge in Live and assign the same port to both its Input and Output.
Bridge response works but no sound	Turn Track on for the connection input. Arm the selected MIDI track or set monitoring to In.
Wi-Fi connection disappears	Keep both devices on the same private network, reconnect the participant, and avoid guest Wi-Fi, VPN routing, or client isolation.
USB warning on Mac	Unlock and trust the iPad, use a data cable, open Audio MIDI Setup, and click Enable for the iPad.
Wrong Pads mode	Confirm Bridge Response in Settings > MIDI, then reselect the intended track in Live.

If a note hangs Stop and reconnect if notes hang. The app sends note cleanup when the destination, mode, mapping, or app state changes, but Live's All Notes Off command remains the safest recovery if a network interruption occurs mid-note.