AKAI MPC KEY 61 Standalone Production Workstation and Synthesiser User Guide

MPE KEY 61
Quickstart Guide

Contents

Introduction

Features:

- 20+ cutting-edge instrument plugin engines
- A massive 6,000+ sound preset library
- 61 key semi-weighted keyboard with aftertouch
- Vibrant 7” capacitive multi-touch screen
- Standalone MPC workflow with 4 GB RAM

- 16 velocity-sensitive RGB-backlit drum pads
- MPC DAW with MIDI sequencing, audio recording, plugin instruments, and audio effects

Box Contents

MPC Key 61	Software Download Card
Power Cable	Quickstart Guide
USB Cable	Safety & Warranty Manual

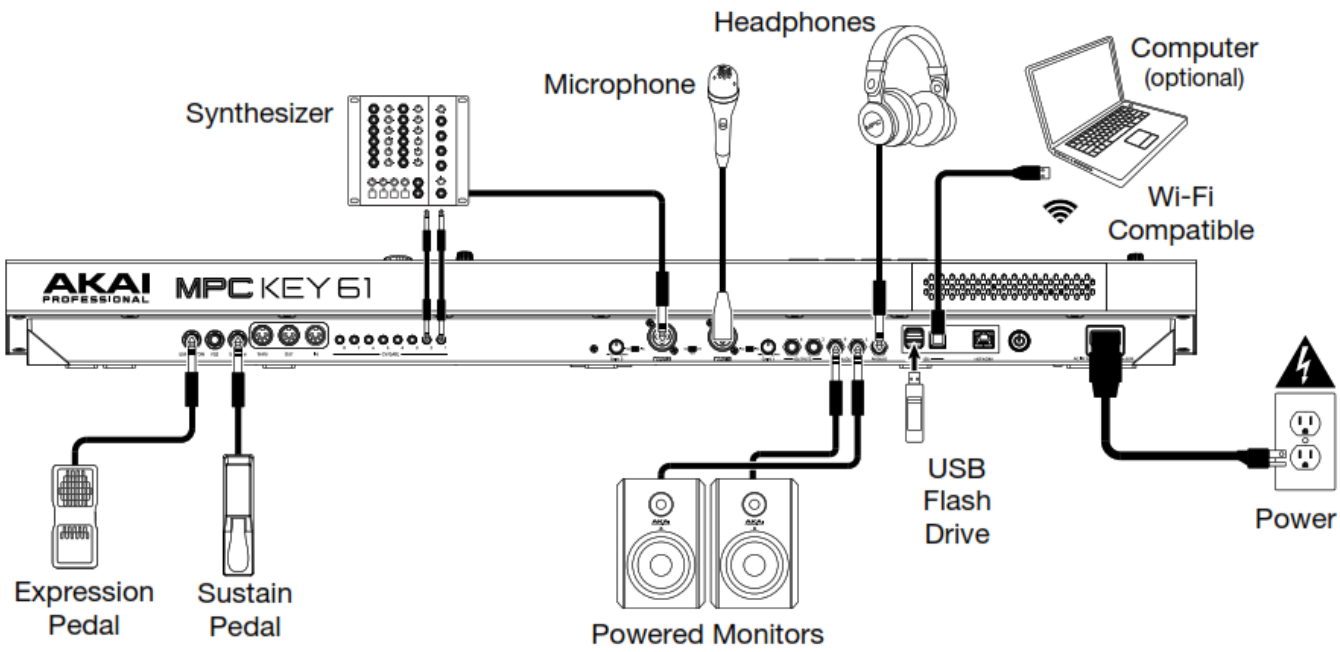
Important: Visit akaipro.com and find the webpage for **MPC Key 61** to download the complete User Guide.

Support

For the latest information about this product (documentation, technical specifications, system requirements, compatibility information, etc.) and product registration, visit akaipro.com.
For additional product support, visit akaipro.com/support.

Connection Diagram

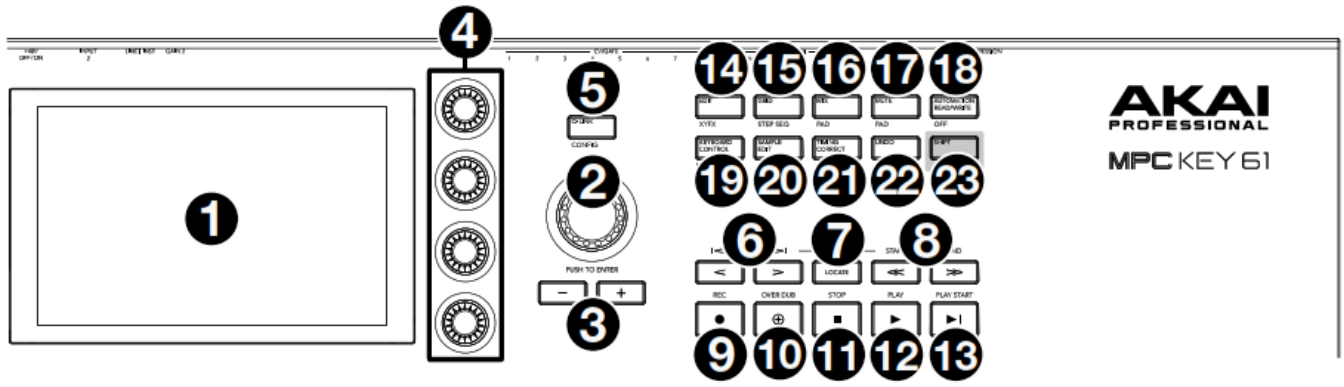
Items not listed under **Introduction > Box Contents** are sold separately.



See **Appendix > Signal Flow** for a full diagram of how audio and MIDI are routed through MPC Key 61's different features.

Features

Top Panel

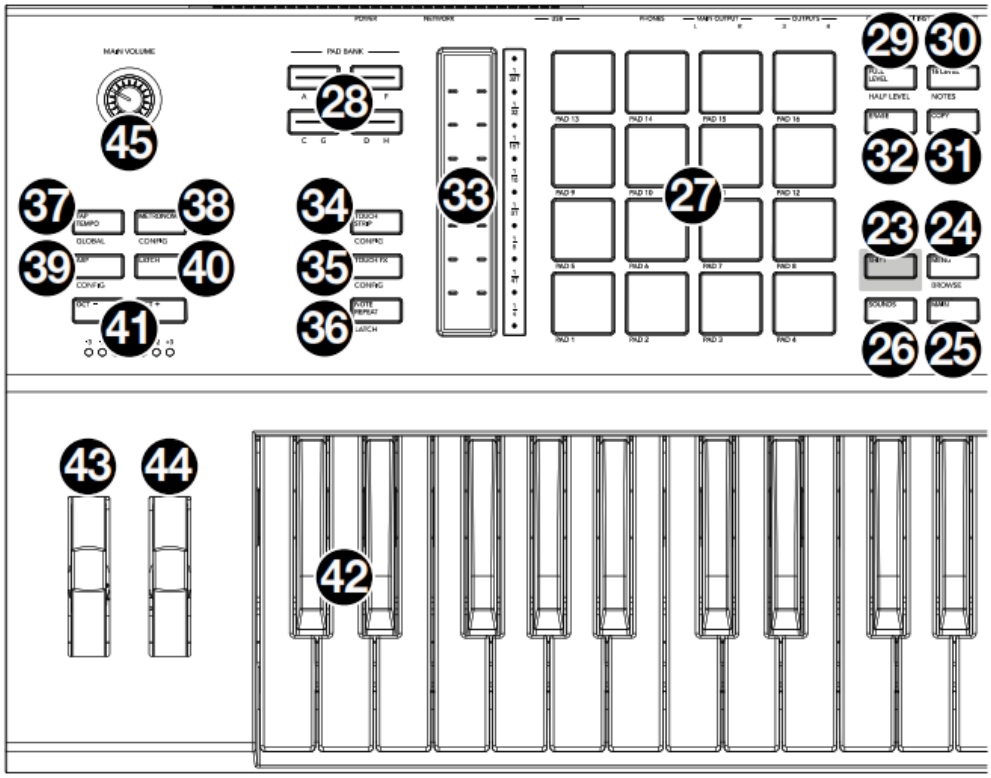


1. **Display:** This full-color multi-touch display shows information relevant to MPC Key 61's current operation. Touch the display (and use the hardware controls) to control the MPC interface. See **Operation** to learn how to use some basic functions.
2. **Data Dial:** Use this dial to scroll through the available menu options or adjust the parameter values of the selected field on the display. Pressing the dial also functions as an **Enter button**.
3. **–/+:** Press these buttons to increase or decrease the value of the selected field on the display.
4. **Q-Link Knobs:** Use these touch-sensitive knobs to adjust various parameters and settings. The knobs can control one column of parameters at a time. The lights above the Q-Link button indicate the currently selected column. Press the **Q-Link** button to change which column of parameters they currently control.
5. **Q-Link Button:** Press this button to change which column of parameters the **Q-Link** Knobs currently control (indicated by the lights above the button). Each press will select the next column.
   Press and hold **Shift** and then press this button to view the **Q-Link** Configuration window.
   Press and hold **Shift** and then press this button again to return to the Main page.
6. **</> (Event |</>|):** Use these buttons to move the audio pointer left/right, one step at a time.
   Press and hold Locate and press one of these buttons to move the audio pointer to the previous/next event in the sequence grid.
7. **Locate:** Press this button to open the **Locate** window, which allows you to quickly jump to specific points in your project.
   Press and hold this button to activate the secondary functions of the </> and <</>> buttons (i.e., Event |</>| and Start/End, respectively).
8. **<</>> (Start/End):** Use these buttons to move the audio pointer left/right, one bar at a time. Press and hold Locate and press one of these buttons to move the audio pointer to the start or end of the sequence grid.
9. **Rec** / **Recall**: Press this button to record-arm the sequence. Press **Play or Play Start** to start recording. Recording in this way (rather than using **Overdub)** erases the events of the current sequence. After the sequence plays through once while recording, **Overdub** will be enabled. Press and hold Shift and press this button to recall recently played MIDI note events when the recording was disabled and insert them into the current sequence.
10. **Overdub:** Press this button to enable Overdub, which allows you to record note events in a sequence without overwriting any previously recorded note events. You can enable Overdub either before or during recording.
11. **Stop** / **Return:** Press this button to stop playback. Double-press this button to immediately stop all sounds. Press and hold Shift and press this button to stop playback and return the play head to the Loop Start value.
12. **Play:** Press this button to play the sequence from the audio pointer's current position.
13. **Play Start:** Press this button to play the sequence from its start point.
14. **Edit** / **XYFX:** Press this button to view Program Edit Mode, which contains all parameters for editing your

programs.

Press and hold **Shift** and press this button to view XYFX Mode, which turns the touchscreen into an XY pad where each axis represents the range of an effect parameter. As you touch or move your finger on the touchscreen, the current position will determine the current value of the two parameters. You can use this mode to create interesting effect automation on your tracks.

15. **Grid** / **Step Seq:** Press this button to enter Grid View Mode, where you can view and edit the note events of each track of a sequence in a project and their velocities. Press and hold Shift and press this button to view Step Sequencer Mode where you can create or edit sequences by using the pads as “step buttons,” simulating the experience of a traditional step-sequencer-style drum machine.
16. **Mix** / **Pad**: Press this button to view the Track Mixer where you can set levels, stereo panning, and other settings for your tracks, programs, returns, submixes, and masters. Press and hold Shift and then press this button to view the Pad Mixer where you can set a program’s levels, stereo panning, routing, and effects.
17. **Mute** / **Pad:** Press this button to view Track Mute Mode where you can easily mute tracks within a sequence or set mute groups for each track. Press and hold Shift and press this button to view Pad Mute Mode where you can easily mute pads within a program or set mute groups for each pad within a program.
18. **Automation Read/Write** / **Off:** Press this button to toggle the Global Automation state between Read and Write. Press and hold Shift and press this button to disable or enable Global Automation.
19. **Keyboard Control** / **MIDI Control:** Press this button to view the Keyboard Control menu, where you can customize the functions of the keyboard and wheels, including velocity response, routing, MIDI assignments, ranges and more. Press and hold **Shift** and press this button to view MIDI Control Mode, where you can use the device as a MIDI controller and customize what MIDI messages are sent from the hardware controls.
20. **Sample Edit** / **Sampler:** Press this button to view Sample Edit Mode where you can edit your samples using various functions and processes. Press and hold Shift and press this button to view the Sampler where you can record audio samples to use in your projects.
21. **Timing Correct** / **On/Off:** Press this button to open the Timing Correct window, which contains various settings to help quantize the events in your sequence. Press and hold Shift and press this button to turn Timing Correct on and off.
22. **Undo** / **Redo:** Press this button to undo your last action. Press and hold Shift and press this button to redo the last action you undid.
23. **Shift:** Press and hold this button to access some buttons’ secondary functions (indicated by white writing).



24. **Menu** / **Browse:** Press this button to open the Mode Menu. You can tap an option on the Menu screen to enter that mode, view, etc.
    Press and hold **Shift** and then press this button to view the Browser. You can use the Browser to locate and select programs, samples, sequences, etc.
25. **Main** / **Track:** Press this button to view Main Mode.
    Press and hold **Shift** and press this button to view Track View Mode, an overview of the tracks of each sequence. You can also set key ranges in this mode.
26. **Sounds** / **Favorites:** Press this button to view Sounds Mode, where you can browse MPC Key 61's built-in instruments and presets. Press and hold **Shift** and press this button to view Favorites, where you can quickly select instruments and presets that you have defined as your favorites.
27. **Pads:** Use these pads to trigger drum hits or other samples. The pads are velocity-sensitive and pressure-sensitive, which makes them very responsive and intuitive to play. The pads will light up different colors, depending on the current function. You can also customize their colors.
28. **Pad Bank Buttons:** Press any of these buttons to access Pad Banks A–D. Press and hold Shift while pressing any of these buttons to access Pad Banks E–H. Alternatively, doublepress one of these buttons.
29. **Full Level** / **Half Level:** Press this button to activate/deactivate Full Level. When activated,the pads will always trigger their samples at the maximum velocity (127), regardless of the amount of force you use.
    Press and hold **Shift** and press this button to activate/deactivate Half Level. When activated,the pads will always trigger their samples at half-velocity (64).
30. **16 Level** / **Notes:** Press this button to activate/deactivate 16 Level. When activated, the last pad that was hit will be temporarily copied to all 16 pads. The pads will play the same sample as the original pad, but a selectable parameter will increase in value with each pad number, regardless of the amount of force you use.
    Press and hold **Shift** and press this button to activate/deactivate Notes mode for the pads.
    When activated, you can play musical scales/modes, chords or progressions using the pads while in any mode. Use the Pad Perform window to configure the settings for the pads.
31. **Erase:** As a Sequence is playing, press and hold this button and then press a pad or key to delete the note event for that pad or key at the current playback position. This is a quick way to delete note events from your

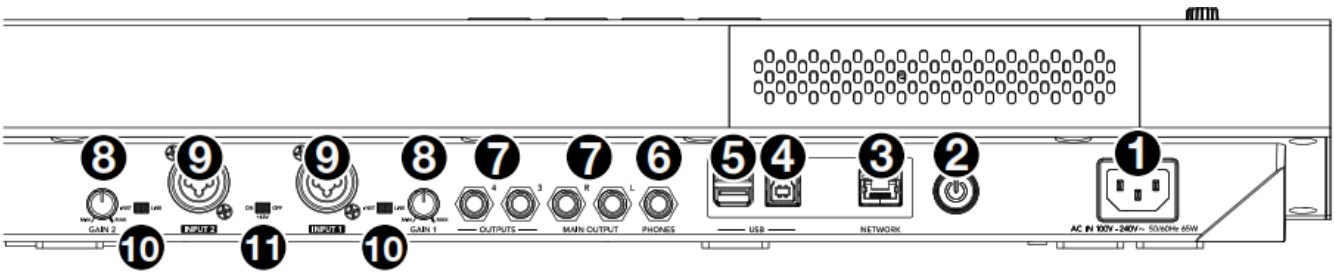
sequence without having to stop playback. When playback is stopped, press this button to open the Erase window where notes, automation and other sequence data can be erased from the sequence.

32. **Copy** / **Delete:** Press this button to copy one pad to another in Clip and Drum programs.
    When the **From Pad** field is selected, press the "source" pad (the pad you want to copy).
    When the **To Pad** graphic (of all pads) is selected, press the "destination" pad. You can select multiple destination pads, and you can select pads in different pad banks. Tap Do It to continue or **Cancel** to return to the previous screen.
    Press and hold Shift and press this button to delete.
33. **Touch Strip:** The touch strip can be used as an expressive control for playing and can be configured to control Note Repeat, Pitch Bend, Modulation and more.
34. **Touch Strip** / **Config:** Press this button to cycle between control modes for the Touch Strip.
    Press and hold the button to quickly select one of the control modes.
    Press and hold Shift and press this button to view the Touch Strip Configuration window.
35. **Touch FX** / **Config:** Press this button to enable Touch FX control for the Touch Strip. This allows you to control parameters from the Touch FX plugin using the Touch Strip. Press and hold this button to quickly select a Touch FX preset. Alternatively, double press this button.
    Press and hold Shift and press this button to view the Touch FX Configuration window.
36. **Note Repeat** / **Latch:** Press and hold this button, and then press a pad to trigger that pad's sample repeatedly. The rate is based on the current tempo and Timing Correct settings.
    Press and hold **Shift** and press this button to "latch" the Note Repeat feature. When latched, you do not have to hold the Note Repeat button for it to be activated. Press Note Repeat once more to unlatch it.
37. **Tap Tempo** / **Global:** Press this button in time with the desired tempo to enter a new tempo (in BPM). Press and hold this button to adjust the tempo manually using the data dial.
    Press and hold **Shift** and press this button to set whether the currently selected sequence follows its own tempo (the button will be lit white) or a global tempo (the button will be lit red).
38. **Metronome** / **Config:** Press this button to enable or disable the metronome.
    Press and hold **Shift** and press this button, or press and hold this button, to open the Metronome Configuration window.
39. **Arp** / **Config:** Press this button to enable or disable the internal Arpeggiator, whose rate is based on the current Tempo and Time Division settings.
    Press and hold Shift and press this button, or press and hold this button, to configure the Arpeggiator's settings.
40. **Latch:** Press this button to enable or disable latch for the Arpeggiator. When latched, you do not have to hold the keys for the arpeggiation to continue.
41. **Oct –** / **Oct +:** Press these buttons to transpose the keyboard down or up one octave at a time. The lights below this button will indicate the current octave setting.
    Press and hold **Shift** and press these buttons to transpose the keyboard down or up one semitone at a time.
    Press and hold both buttons and press a key on the keybed to set the transposition to that value.
    Press and hold both buttons and release to reset the transposition.
42. **Keybed:** Use this 61-key semi-weighted, velocity-sensitive keybed to input notes and aftertouch. See **Appendix > Signal** Flow for a full diagram of how MIDI is routed through MPC Key 61's different features.
43. **Pitch Wheel:** The pitch bend wheel is primarily used to bend the notes played on the keyboard up or down. This allows you to play phrases not normally associated with

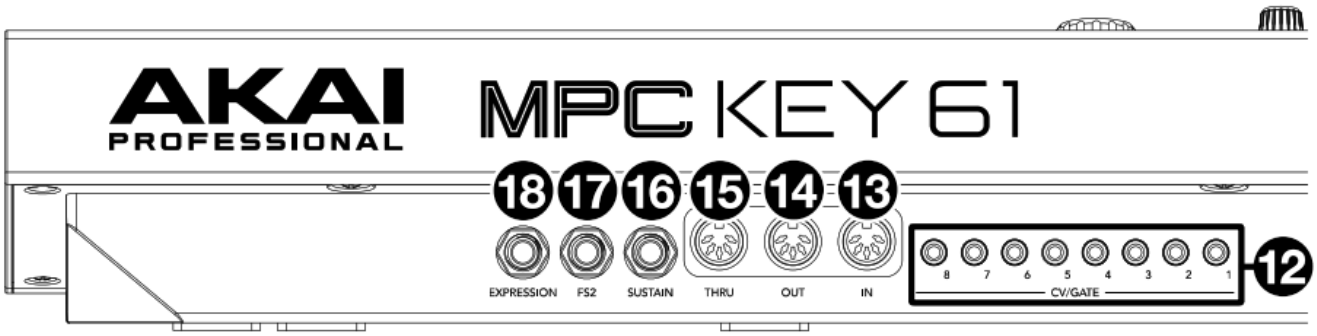
keyboard playing, such as guitar-style riffs.

44. **Modulation Wheel:** The modulation wheel is typically used to add variation for the sound you are playing. This type of real-time controller was originally introduced on electronic keyboard instruments to give the performer options such as adding vibrato, just like the players of acoustic instruments do.
45. **Main Volume:** Turn this knob to adjust the volume of the **outputs and phones output.**

Rear Panel



1. **Power Input:** Use the included power adapter to connect MPC Key 61 to a power outlet.
2. **Power Switch:** Turns MPC Key 61's power on/off.
3. **Network:** Connect a standard Ethernet cable to this port to use Ableton Link and other compatible devices with MPC Key 61. Download the full User Guide for more information.
   Note: You can also use Ableton Link wirelessly over a Wi-Fi connection. Download the full User Guide for more information.
4. **USB-B Port:** Use the included USB cable to connect this high-retention-force USB port to an available USB port on your computer. This connection allows MPC Key 61 to send/receive MIDI and audio data to/from the MPC software on your computer.
5. **USB-A Ports:** Connect a USB flash drive to these USB ports to access its files directly using MPC Key 61. You can also connect any class-compliant MIDI device to these ports.
6. **Phones (1/4" / 6.35 mm):** Connect standard stereo headphones to this output.
7. **Outputs (1/4" / 6.35 mm):** Use standard TRS cables to connect these outputs to your monitors, mixer, etc.). The **Main L/R** outputs are the same as **Outputs 1,2.**
8. **Gain:** Use these knobs to adjust the gain of the incoming signal from Input 1/2 on the rear panel. Be careful when setting this knob at higher levels, as this can cause the signal to distort.
9. **Inputs 1/2 (XLR or 1/4" / 6.35 mm):** Use standard XLR or TRS cables to connect these inputs to audio sources (microphone, mixer, synthesizer, etc.). When using a 1/4″ cable, the Mic preamp is removed from the circuit, and the Inst/Line switch can be used to set the impedance.
   Turn the Gain knobs to set the input level of each one.
10. **Inst/Line:** Use these switches to set **Inputs 1/2** to accept either a Line-level or Instrumentlevel sound source when using a 1/4″ connection.
11. **Phantom Power (+48V):** This switch activates and deactivates phantom power for **Inputs 1/2** when using an XLR connection. When activated, +48V of phantom power will be supplied to both inputs. Note that most dynamic microphones **do** not require phantom power, while most condenser microphones do. Refer to your microphone's documentation to check if it needs phantom power.



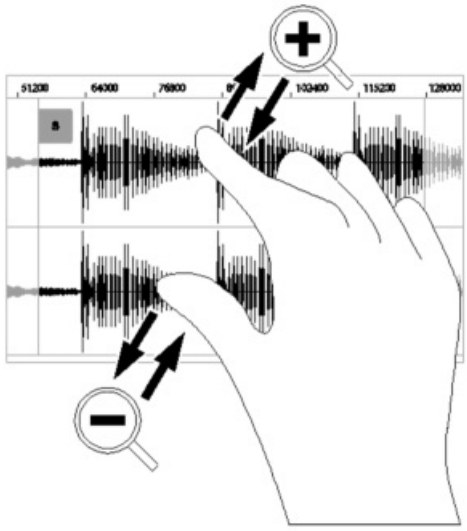
12. **CV/Gate Out (1/8″ / 3.5 mm, TS):** MPC Key 61 will send control voltage (CV) and/or Gate signals over these outputs to optional external synths or sequencers. Use standard 1/8” (3.5 mm) TS cables to send a single CV/Gate signal per output.
13. **MIDI In:** Use a standard 5-pin MIDI cable to connect these inputs to the MIDI output of an external MIDI device (additional MIDI keyboard, pad controller, etc.).
14. **MIDI Out:** Use a standard 5-pin MIDI cable to connect these outputs to the MIDI input of an external MIDI device (synthesizer, drum machine, etc.).
15. **MIDI Thru:** Use a standard 5-pin MIDI cable to connect this thru-port to the MIDI input of an external MIDI device (synthesizer, drum machine, etc.). MIDI from the MIDI In will be sent through this output.
16. **Sustain (1/4″ / 6.35 mm, TRS):** This input accepts an optional momentary-contact foot pedal. When pressed, the pedal will sustain the sound you are playing without having to keep your fingers pressed down on the keys.
17. **FS2 (1/4″ / 6.35 mm, TRS):** Connect an optional 1/4″ (6.35 mm) TRS footswitch or other foot pedal to this input.
18. **Expression (1/4″ / 6.35 mm, TRS):** Connect an optional expression pedal to this input for adding expressive changes during performances.

Operation

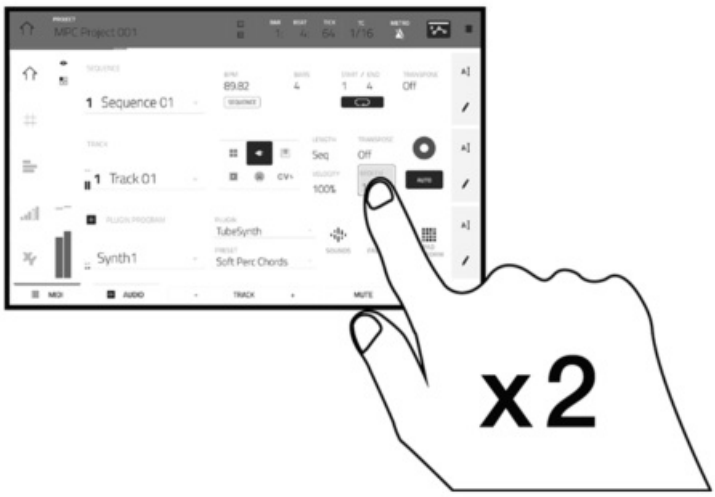
Using the Display

Here is some general information about how to use the MPC Key 61 display:

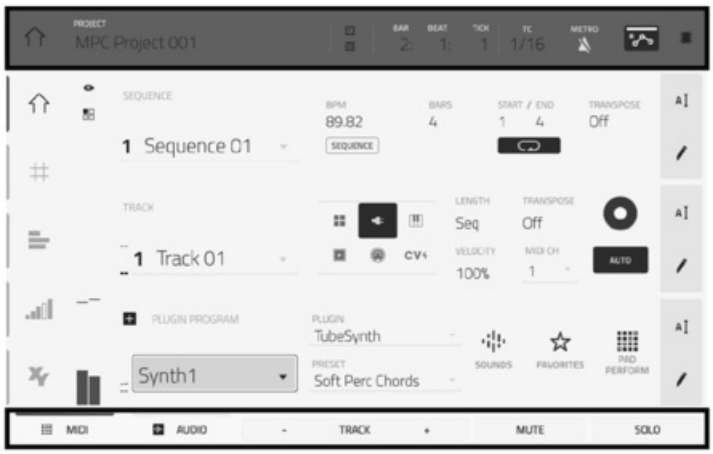
Tap a button or option to select it. Use the **data dial o**r –/+ buttons to change its setting or value



Spread two fingers to zoom in (into a section of a waveform, for example). Pinch two fingers to zoom out.



Double-tap a button to access advanced editing options. In some cases, this will show a numeric keypad that you can use to enter a value (an alternative to the **data dial or** –/+ buttons). Tap the upper-left part of the display to return to the previous view.



The upper edge of the display shows the toolbar, which contains information about the current view (often the name of the current track, sequence, audio pointer position, etc.).
Tap an item to select it.
The lower edge of the display shows various buttons that you can use in the current view. Tap a button to press it.
To return to a previous view, either tap outside of the window currently in the display or tap the left arrow (←) in the upper-left part of the display.

Selecting Sounds

To get started with MPC Key 61's array of built-in instruments:

1. When MPC Key 61 is first powered on, press the **Empty Project** button on the Demo Screen to create a new project. Tracks 1–8 will automatically be populated with Plugin Programs in this new project.
2. Press the **Sounds** button to open the Instruments menu. Alternatively, tap the **Sounds** icon when viewing the Main Mode on the display.
3. On the Instruments page, you will see a list of the available plugins for MPC Key 61. Tap the plugin name to open the preset categories for the selected plugin, and then tap the category name to view the presets in that category.
   To move back to the previous page, tap the ⇦ **icon** in the upper-left corner of the touchscreen.
4. Tap the preset name to load it to the track. You can also use the arrows at the bottom of the display to move to the previous or next preset.

To return to the Instruments home page, tap the **X** icon in the upper-left corner of the touchscreen.
To return to Main Mode, press the Main button.

Editing Sounds

To edit a selected plugin preset:

1. From the Instruments page, tap the Edit Instrument button at the bottom of the display to switch to **Program Edit Mode**, where you will see a graphical representation of the plugin interface. Alternatively, you can press the **Edit** button on the MPC Key 61 hardware at any time.
2. Use the tabs at the bottom of the screen to view different pages of parameters for each plugin.
3. Plugin parameters can be edited directly from the touchscreen, or you can use the **Q-Link** knobs to adjust the highlighted parameters. Tap the **Q-Link** button on the MPC Key 61 hardware to change which column of parameters the **Q-Link Knobs** currently control.

To enable automation for recording parameter adjustments, tap the **automation** icon in the upper-right corner of the touchscreen. Alternatively, press the **Automation Read/Write** button on the MPC Key 61 hardware to toggle between the modes. When automation **write** is enabled, you can adjust parameters while you are recording or playing back for an expressive performance that can be saved and replayed. Set the automation state to **read** to play back your adjustments.
To save your edited plugin preset, tap the **save disk** icon at the top of the display.
To load a saved plugin preset, tap the **folder icon** at the top of the display.

Documents / Resources

	AKAI MPC KEY 61 Standalone Production Workstation and Synthesiser [pdf] User Guide MPC KEY 61, Standalone Production Workstation and Synthesiser, MPC KEY 61 Standalone P roduction Workstation and Synthesiser, Production Workstation and Synthesiser, Workstation a nd Synthesiser, Synthesiser

References

- Music Production Hardware & Software | Akai Pro
- Legal
- Support : Akai Professional