ATOMIC LABS

EFFECT

APEX

True-peak limiter with loudness meter

EFFECT · VST3 · WINDOWS 64-BIT · 300 PRESETS · V1.0



USER MANUAL

VERSION 1.0 · 2026

01 About Apex

Apex is a mastering limiter. It looks ahead in time, so the gain is already down when a peak arrives, and it measures true peaks between the samples at four times the sample rate, so the output never overshoots the ceiling after conversion.

Four styles (Clean, Punch, Warm, Loud) change the character. A loudness meter shows momentary, short-term and integrated loudness (LUFS) and the true-peak maximum, so you can hit streaming targets.

TYPE	FORMAT	SIGNAL	LATENCY
Effect	**VST3 · Win x64**	**Stereo in → stereo out**	**set by Lookahead (reported to the DAW)**

FACTORY PRESETS	CONTROLS	WINDOW	VERSION
300 + Init	**15 automatable**	**Resizable**	**1.0**

02 Quick start

1. Put Apex last on the master bus.
2. Set Ceiling to -1.0 dB with True Peak on (a safe value for streaming).
3. Raise Input Gain until the loudness meter reads your target (for example -14 LUFS integrated).
4. Use Gain Match to compare with the unprocessed sound at the same loudness, and Delta to hear only what the limiter removes.

INSTALLATION

Install

Copy the folder `Apex.vst3` into `C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3\`, then restart your DAW or rescan plug-ins. It appears under the manufacturer **Atomic Labs**.

This manual

A copy of this PDF lives inside the plug-in folder, next to `Contents`. Your DAW ignores it; it is there so the manual always travels with the plug-in.

03 The interface



Gain and ceiling

Input Gain drives the limiter. Ceiling is the highest level the output can reach. Output Gain trims the result.

Timing

Release sets how fast the gain recovers; Auto Release adapts it to the music. Lookahead (0.5 to 10 ms) lets the limiter see peaks early; the plugin reports the delay to your DAW, which compensates for it.

Character

Style: Clean, Punch, Warm or Loud. Character sets how strongly the style colours the sound. Stereo Link (0-100 %) keeps the stereo image steady.

Safety

True Peak detection, Limiter On, Dither (Off, 24 bit, 16 bit) for the final export.

Listening

Gain Match plays the result at the input loudness so you judge tone, not volume. Delta lets you hear only what is being removed.

Meters

Momentary, short-term and integrated loudness, true-peak maximum and gain reduction.

04 Presets

Apex comes with **300** factory presets in 10 categories, plus an **Init** program to start from scratch. Every preset was designed for this plug-in and level-matched, so you can browse without jumps in volume.

- **30** Transparent Master
- **30** Loud Master
- **30** Mix Bus Glue
- **30** Drums & Transients
- **30** Bass & 808
- **30** Vocals
- **30** Streaming
- **30** Broadcast & Podcast
- **30** Creative Crush
- **30** Safety & Utility

A FEW TO TRY

- Clear Master
- Subtle Finish
- Natural Limit
- Honest Master
- Wall Loudness
- Loud Master
- Radio Level
- Maximum Loudness
- Warm Mix
- Tight Limit
- Bus Glue
- Glue Mix
- Room Limit
- Snare Hits
- Crack Transients
- Sub Bass
- Rumble Low End
- 808 Limit
- Heavy Bass
- Present Limit
- Vocal Vocal
- Close Level
- Close Limit
- Upload Level
- Online Release
- Spotify Master
- Stream Level
- Studio Level
- Studio Master
- Speech Voice
- Crushed Crush
- Pancake Smash
- Grinder Limit
- Abused Crush
- Catch Guard
- Safety Limit

05 Tips

If you hear pumping, raise Release or use Auto Release.

For dance music try Punch with 1-2 ms lookahead; for acoustic music Clean with 5 ms.

Use 16-bit dither only on the final 16-bit export.

06 Atomic Labs essentials

These work the same way in every Atomic Labs plug-in.

Preset browser

Use the arrows next to the preset name to step through the presets, or click the name to open the menu sorted by category. The current category is shown above the name.

SAVE: your presets and banks

SAVE stores the complete state as your own preset (.atp) in Documents\Atomic Labs\Apex\Presets. From the same menu you can delete presets and export or import a whole bank (.atb) to share or back up. Your presets appear at the end of the preset menu.

DICE

DICE rolls a brand-new patch: it starts from a factory design and changes the main settings at random. Not happy? Roll again, or step back to a preset.

SIZE and resizing

Drag the bottom-right corner to resize the window, or pick a fixed zoom from SIZE. The size is remembered with the project.

Automation

Every control can be automated and is listed with its full name in your DAW. Changes are smoothed, so automation never clicks.

Project recall

The whole state (including drawn waves, patterns, steps and window size where available) is saved with your project.

STABILITY

Every Atomic Labs plug-in is tested at sample rates from 44.1 to 192 kHz and at block sizes from 1 to 8192 samples, before and after the host prepares it, and with every factory preset. The audio code never allocates memory while playing, and signals are protected against invalid values, so it stays quiet and stable in long sessions.

07 Control reference

Every automatable control as your DAW lists it, with its range and default value. Where a set of controls repeats (for example several identical layers, bands or slots), it is shown once.

General

CONTROL	RANGE / OPTIONS	DEFAULT
Input Gain	-12.0 dB to +24.0 dB	0.0 dB
Ceiling	-12.00 dB to 0.00 dB	-0.30 dB
Release	1.0 ms to 1000 ms	80.0 ms
Auto Release	Off · On	On
Lookahead	0.5 ms · 1 ms · 2 ms · 3 ms · 5 ms · 7.5 ms · 10 ms	3 ms
Style	Clean · Punch · Warm · Loud	Clean
Character	0 % to 100 %	50 %
Stereo Link	0 % to 100 %	100 %
True Peak	Off · On	On
Limiter On	Off · On	On
Output Gain	-24.0 dB to 0.0 dB	0.0 dB
Dither	Off · 24 bit · 16 bit	Off
Gain Match	Off · On	Off
Delta	Off · On	Off
Bypass	Off · On	Off



ATOMIC LABS

Apex · True-peak limiter with loudness meter

Atomic Labs makes original instruments and effects with futuristic, animated interfaces, deep sound design and hundreds of presets in every plug-in.

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