

Using Effects

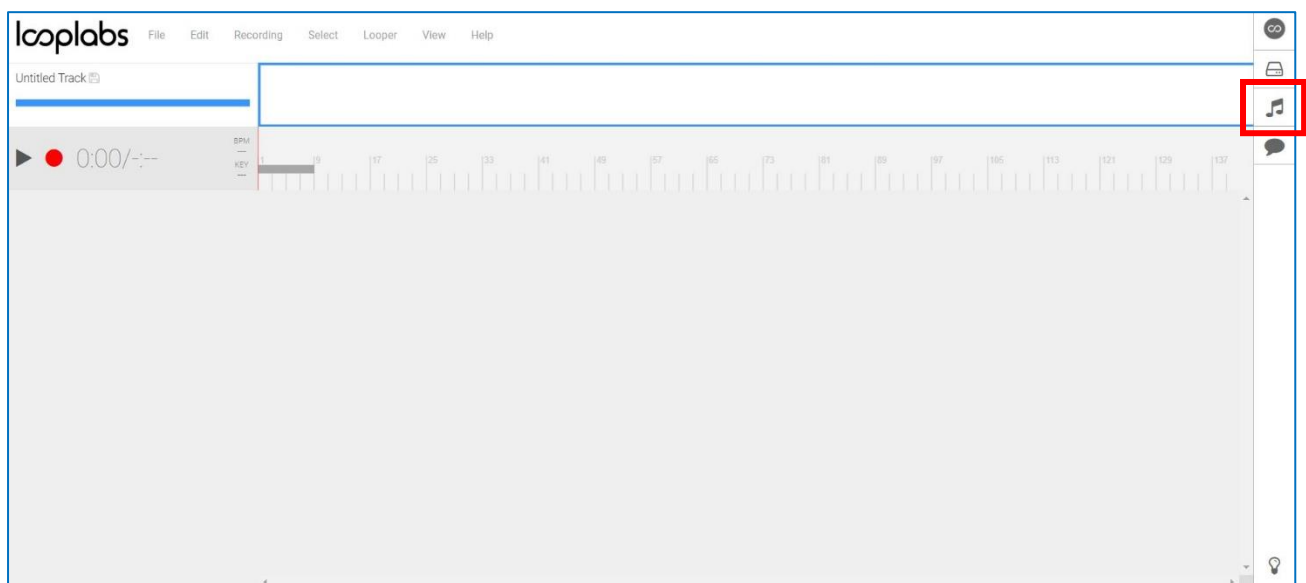
By Eddy Mentzel

For this session you will need a laptop, tablet or phone which is connected to the internet. Headphone's are advisable but not essential.

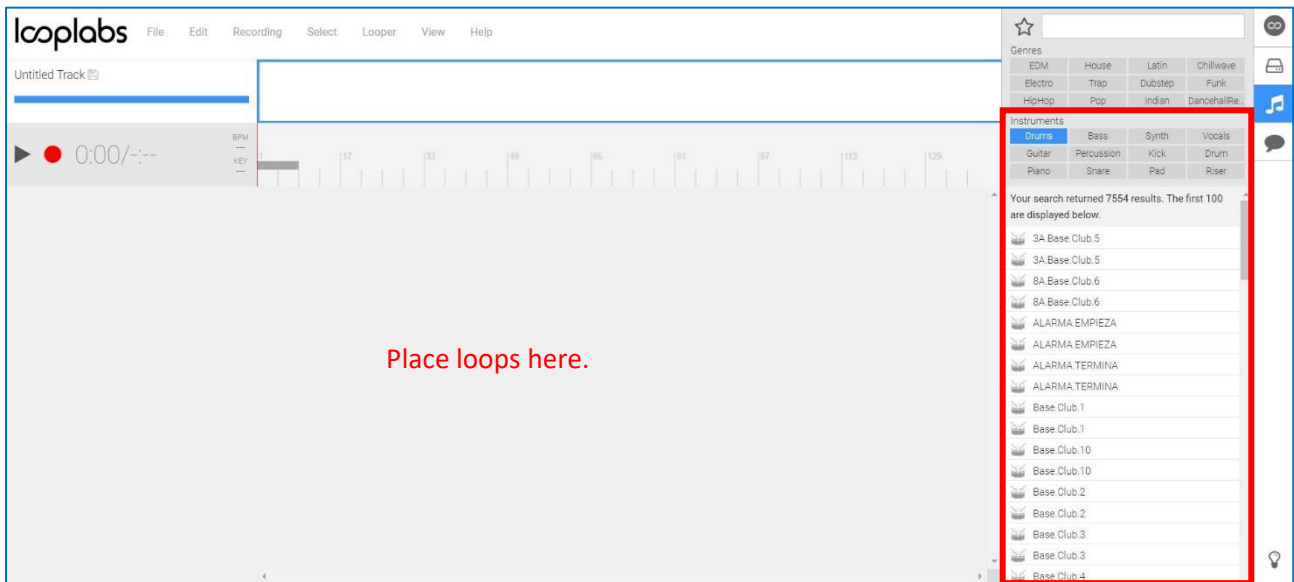
Please note: this session uses the same website that was explored in 'Song Structures'. If you did not complete that session please look through that first to learn how to set up and use 'Looplabs'.

This week we are going to be experimenting with **effects**; the ways we can control a sound to make it have more impact or manipulate it into something entirely different. We can use effects in really creative ways; to create something totally unique, to liven up a dull sound, to gradually introduce a musical part, to help an instrument feature more prominently or to make it feel more 'background'. Effects can be subtle or extreme. They can be 'automated' to change over time adding further complexity and musical interest to your productions. Oh, and one other thing...effects can be seriously fun to play around with!

To do: Open <https://www.looplabs.com/beta> in your browser on your phone, tablet or laptop. If you have problems using the link search for '**Looplabs**' on Google. **Login** to your account, click on '**Studio**' and select '**Create from Scratch**'. Please note: *Details of how to do this can be found in the 'Song Structures' session.*



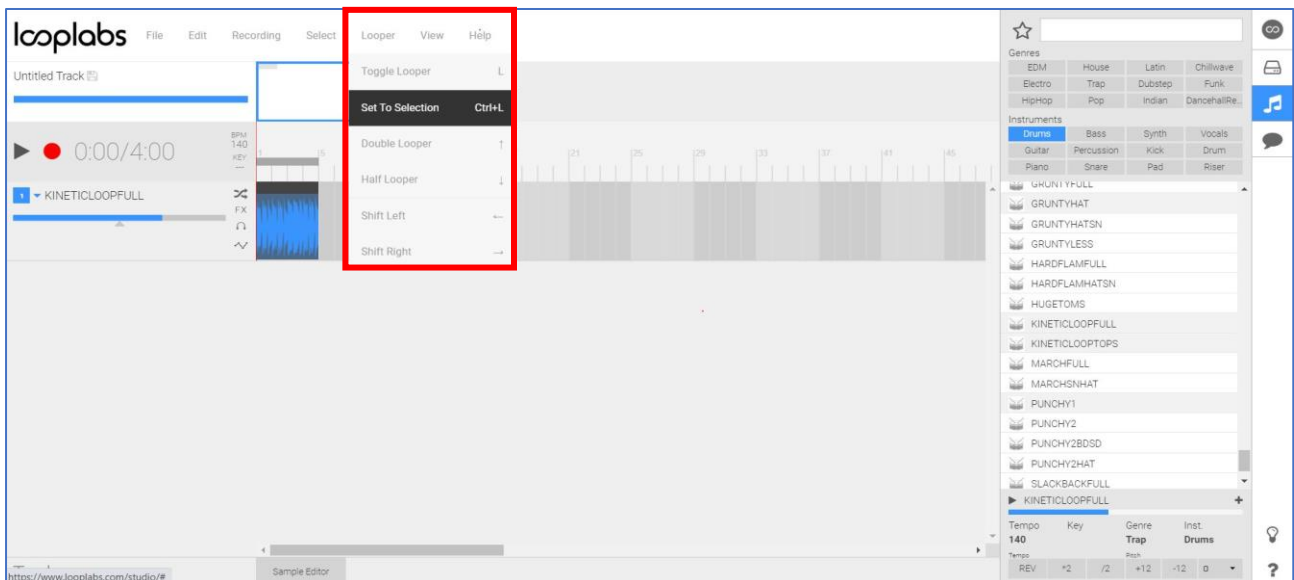
To do: Click on the **musical note icon**, as highlighted in red on the image above, and open up the bank of loops.



To do: Select the ‘**Drums**’ category in the ‘**Instruments**’ section, as highlighted in red on the image above. Choose a drum loop you would like to use and drag it into your project.

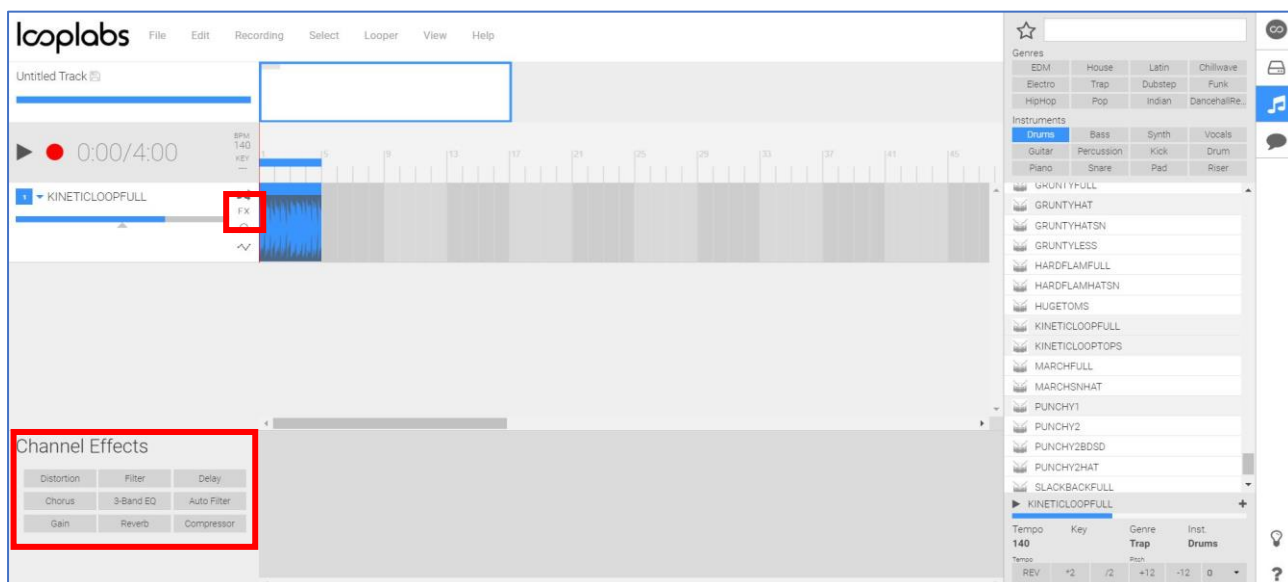
Please note: in this example, try selecting a drum loop that has lots going on so that you can hear the changes the effects are making more clearly. In my example I chose the loop ‘Kinetic Loop Full’.

Once you have inserted your drum loop you will need to create a continuous loop; this will save you having to keep pressing play whilst you are playing around with the effects.



To do: From the top menu, select ‘**Looper**’ then choose ‘**Set to Selection**’, as shown in the image above. Press the space bar to play the loop. It should now jump back to the start again when it reaches the end of your sample. You can pause at any time by pressing the space bar again.

We can now begin to explore adding a sound effect to the drum loop.



To do: Click the **'FX' button**, as highlighted in the image above. This will open a strip at the bottom of the page called **'Channel Effects'**. You have nine effects to choose from;

Distortion – distorts the sound, giving it a more aggressive feel.

Filter – boosts or cuts frequencies that make up the sound.

Delay – repeats the sound a number of times.

Chorus – mixes in a second or third version of the sound that is being modulated.

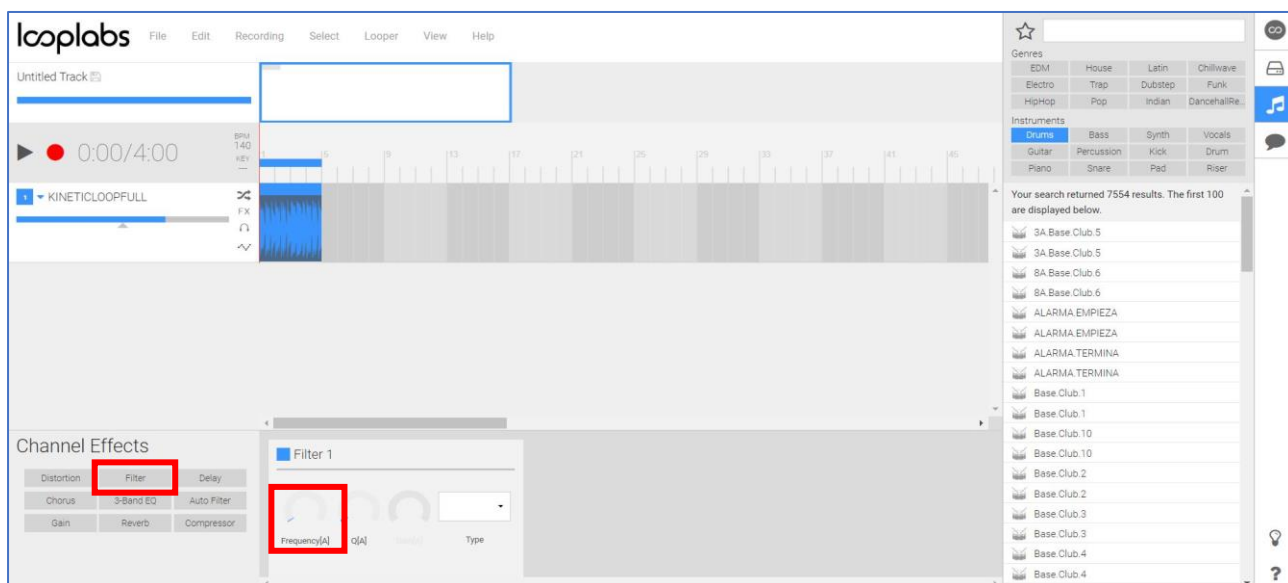
3-Band EQ – used to adjust the frequencies that make up the sound.

Auto Filter – automatically filters through the frequency spectrum, creating a 'waa' effect.

Gain – how loud the sound is, pushing the gain more results in distortion.

Reverb – puts the sound in a space, such as a cathedral or hall.

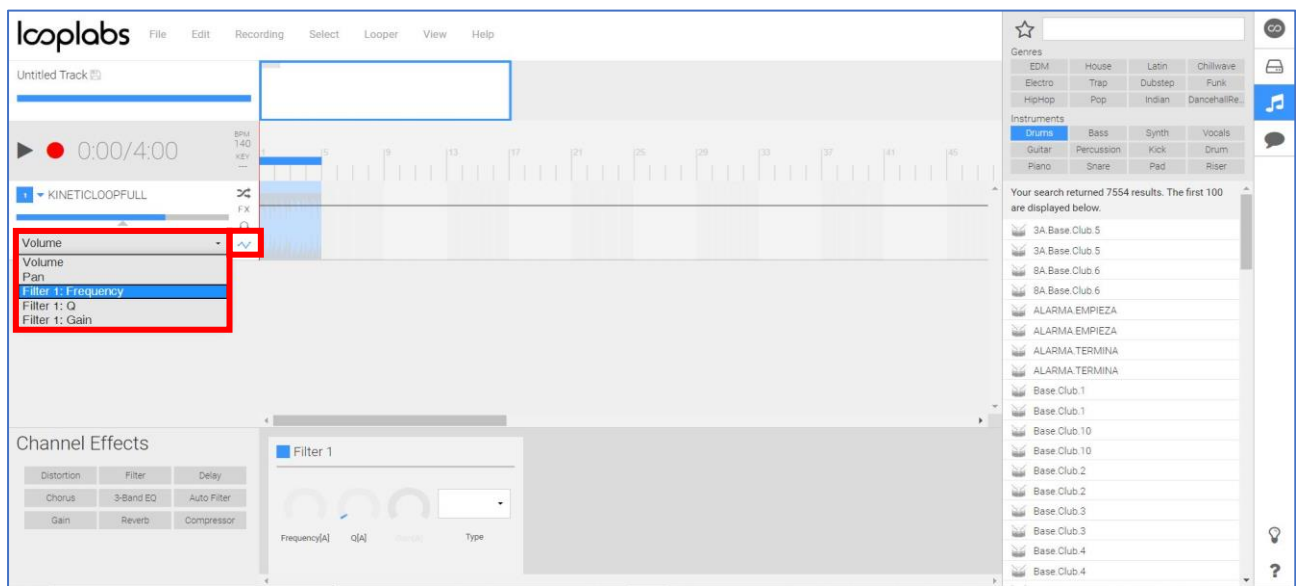
Compressor – squeezes the sound, making the louder and quieter parts more matched.



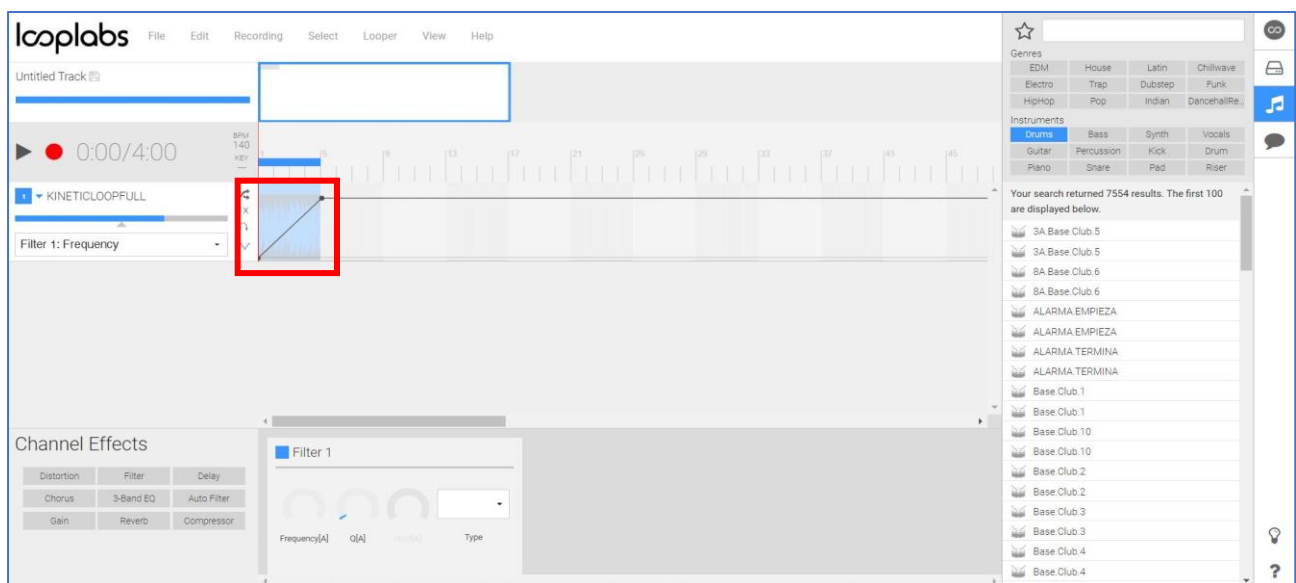
To do: Select the **'filter'** effect, as highlighted in the image above. Whilst the sound is playing, move the **'Frequency'** dial up and down. Hear how it changes the sound?

The filter is taking out all of the frequencies above whatever range you select. So, the lower the dial the less high frequencies in the sound are heard.

Filters are particularly effective when 'automated'. **Automation** is where we make a dial, such as the 'Frequency' dial, move automatically.

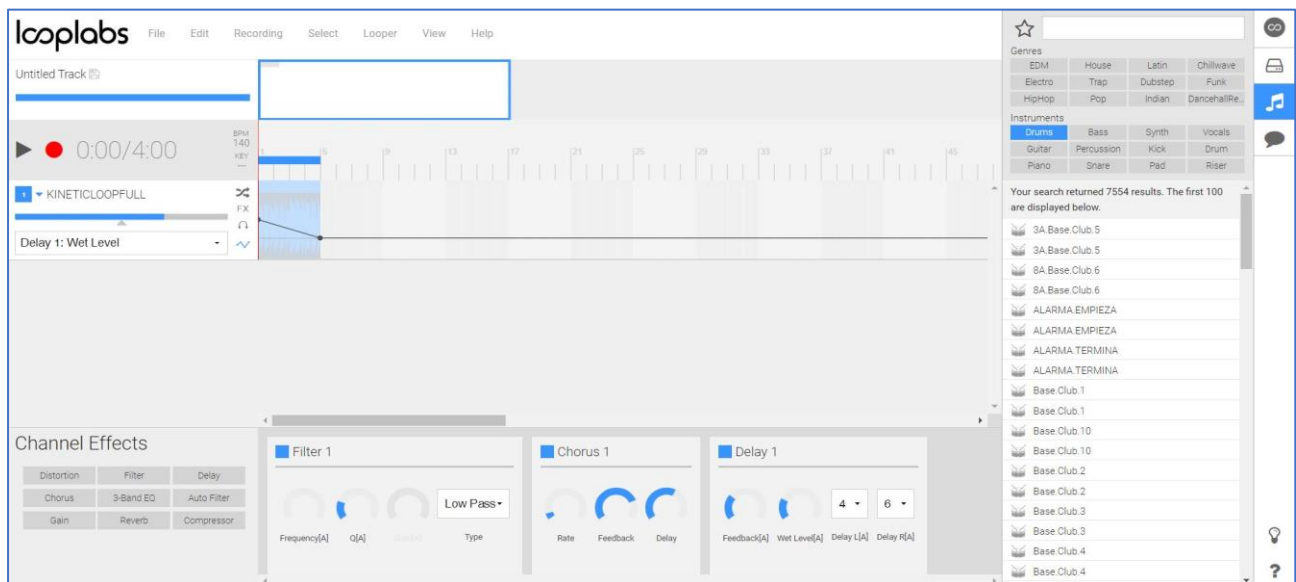


To do: Click on the 'automation' button then, from the drop-down menu, select 'Filter 1: Frequency'. These have both been highlighted in the image above. You can now start adding in points on the black line, which will now represent movements on the frequency dial.



To do: Add a dot to the beginning and the end of the black line, then create a slope by pulling the first dot lower than the second. Your line should look similar to mine in the image above. Press your space bar to play the loop. You will now hear the 'Frequency' dial moving from low to high on its own. You can add further dots if you wish to create more complex dial movements.

This kind of automation can be used for any of the dials within the nine effects. And when you add further channel effects, these too could be automated, creating multiple layers of automation on your original loop.



To do: Try adding further channel effects to change your sound further, as I have done in the image above. You may choose to automate dials on these effects too. Stacking effects is a great way of creating something really colourful and unique. *Quick tip: the order that your effects play can drastically change the sound, try moving the effects you are using into a different order.*

Effects can be added to any sound, so don't just stop at your drum loop! Why not try adding some other loops and warping their sound too?

Effects are great for adding interest to your tracks and for getting really creative with your sound palette. Add some life and character to your loops, to your voices and to your instruments. Spice up your productions and, most of all, create your own sound!