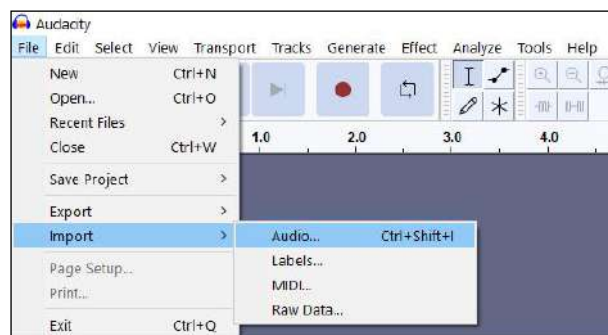


Changing the Pitch and Tempo of Backing Tracks

Many singers use backing tracks for practice, but what to do if a backing track is at the wrong pitch (too high or too low) or tempo (too fast or too slow) for you?

Never fear! There's a simple way to change both of these, and all you need is a PC or laptop and Audacity, a free audio editor. 'But I don't know the first thing about audio editing!' you might be saying at this point. You don't need to. The process of changing pitch and/or tempo is simple, and we'll take you through it step by step.

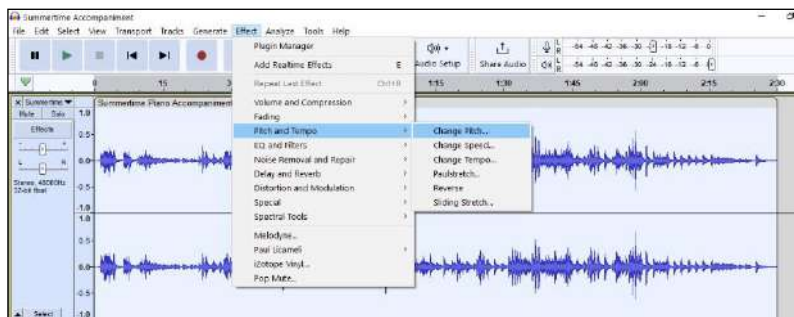
1. If you don't have Audacity, go to the [Audacity website](#) and download the version of Audacity for your PC or laptop's operating system.
2. Go to your downloads folder, where you will find the Audacity file. Click or double-click on to install Audacity and follow the instructions.
3. Save the sound file (mp3 or another format) to place on your PC or laptop where you can find it easily.
4. Launch Audacity.
5. Click on File on the upper right corner, then select Import from the dropdown list that appears, then select Audio from the second dropdown list that appears.
6. Find your audio file and import it. For the purpose of showing how this works, we have chosen the piano accompaniment to 'Summertime' by George Gershwin as our backing track.



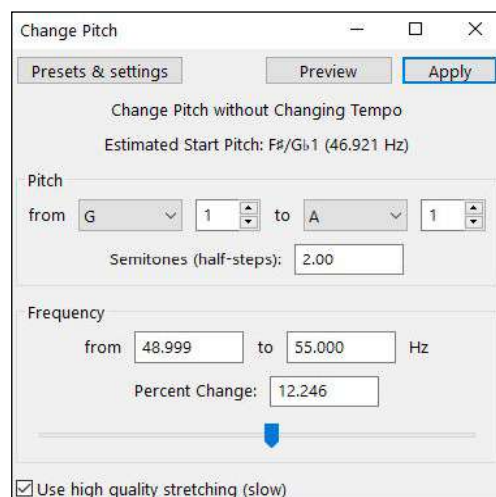
Changing Pitch

The first thing we'll do is to change the pitch of the backing track:

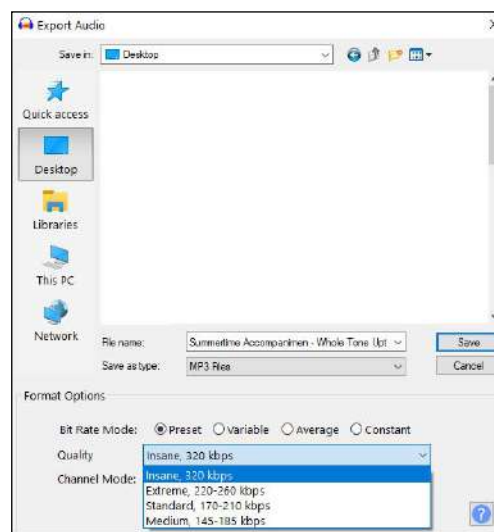
1. Click on Effect in the top menu, then select Pitch and Tempo from the dropdown list, then select Change Pitch from the second dropdown list.



2. A Change Pitch box will appear.
3. If you happen to know what key the backing track is in, then select the key in the 'from' dropdown list. But knowing the key isn't necessary. You can also choose to change the pitch by moving up or down in semitones or half-steps. (1 is up a semitone, and -1 is down a semitone.) In this case, we're changing the pitch of 'Summertime' up a whole tone (2).
4. You can hear a brief preview of how the backing track will sound by clicking on Preview. Otherwise, just click Apply. It will take a minute for the change to take effect.
5. Before you create an mp3 of the new backing track by exporting it, play the Audacity file and singing along to it to see if you're comfortable with the new pitch. You can do this simply by clicking on the Play button below the top menu.



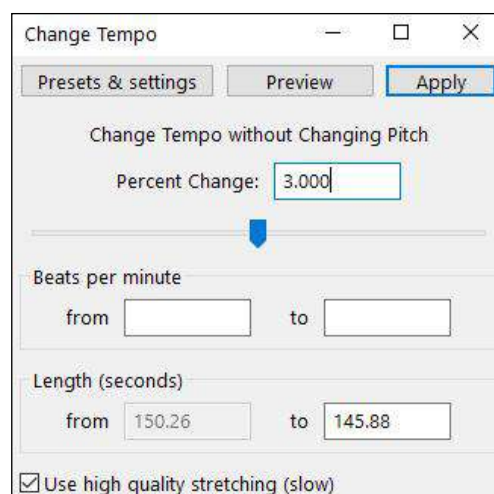
- If you need to adjust the track up or down again, click on the stop button below the main menu, then Effect, and go through the process again.
- When you're satisfied with the result, first save the Audacity file in case you need to adjust it again by clicking on File, then selecting Save Project from the dropdown list, then Save Project As from the second dropdown list.
- Save the Audacity file where you want to with a new name. In this case we'll save it as 'Summertime Accompaniment – Whole Tone Up'.
- Now export the project (most people will do this as an mp3 file) by clicking on File again, then selecting Export from the first dropdown list, then Export as MP3 from the second dropdown list. An Export Audio box will appear.
- You can then choose the quality of your mp3 file. In this case, we have chosen 'Insane' (the highest quality).
- Click Save and another box will appear. Here you can add additional information about your mp3 file.
- Save the file where you want to.



Changing Tempo

The second thing we'll do is to change the tempo of the backing track by either speeding it up or slowing it down.

- Either import the sound file again or open the previous Audacity file.
- Again, click on Effect in the top menu, then select Pitch and Tempo from the dropdown list, then select Change Tempo from the second dropdown list. Don't select Change Speed, as this will change the pitch along with the tempo. (That is, the faster the speed, the higher the pitch, and the slower the speed, the lower the pitch.)
- A Change Tempo box will appear.
- You can either speed up or slow down the tempo by percentages. In this case, we are making the tempo 3% faster. (If you wanted to slow it down by 3% instead, you would type -3.)
- As with the Change Pitch box, you can hear a brief preview of how the backing track will sound by clicking on Preview. Otherwise, just click Apply.
- Try playing the Audacity file and singing along to it to see if you're comfortable with the new tempo.
- It is recommended that if you aren't satisfied with the tempo change, don't adjust it further. Instead, undo the tempo change by clicking on Edit in the top menu and Undo at the top of the dropdown list. Then try a different percentage. This way, when you save the Audacity file with a new name and then export it (following the same procedure as the pitch changed file), you can rename the file and exported mp3 with the correct percentage of tempo change (for example, 'Summertime Accompaniment – 3 Percent Faster').



You now have a backing track at the right pitch and tempo for you!

If you would like to create a backing track from an existing recording, please see our **Creating Backing Tracks from Existing Recordings** information sheet.