



Circle Drone of Doom

An Impact Soundworks Instrument
for Kontakt Player 7.10.7 or higher
Instrument Version 1.0.0

Product Manual

Introduction

We love analog drone synthesizers. They are enormous, imposing, and uncompromising, with absolutely no subtlety, just raw voltage pumped out as colossal, undulating tidal waves of sound.

How do you bring that sonic concept into the virtual realm without losing its essence? And just how far can you take it? That's what we set out to answer with this library.

Our **Circle Drone of Doom** began life as an instrument with the same name created by YouTuber **Look Mum No Computer**, who partnered with us to create something new based on that wild creation.

We wanted to keep the killer sound and directness of the real analog hardware, but you know how we are — we kept finding more features to add and new ways to improve the workflow. The result is something that functions a lot like a synth, with much more straightforward controls.

The fun and creative design is meant to inspire you to dive in and get your hands dirty, discovering new sounds as you play with it. Every knob and setting sounds good (even if "good" sometimes means "massively, brutally chaotic").

Far from a single-use instrument or a straightforward drone, **Circle Drone of Doom** morphs and shifts to a huge range of sounds within the flavor of its distinctive character.

We think it's an ideal companion to our Bundle of Doom if you're writing modern metal; use it to double your Shreddage 3 Argent leads and heavy riffs.

And if you're building dystopian soundscapes or scoring dungeon crawls, you'll find true cinematic-ready presets ready and waiting for you: big, washy drones; crunchy analog synths; heavy, distorted darkness; massive chaos; unsettling creepiness — to name just a few.

Installation

Please see our installation guide [here](#).

Welcome to Circle Drone of Doom!

When you load the instrument, you will be presented with a simple—yet deceptively deep—user interface:



Let us walk you through it all!

Accessibility Mode



Located in the lower left corner, **Accessibility Mode** dims the background of the main disc in the user interface and changes the labels for the controls into more accessible versions.



The Look Mum No Computer Logo



While labels for all knobs are enabled by default, clicking this logo will disable them—do this if you wish to explore the instrument in a more playful, creative way!

The Outer Ring

Oscillators 1-6



Surrounding the outside of the layout are the *oscillator knobs*. These are numbered clockwise, starting with Oscillator 1 at the 11'o clock position.

The six *oscillator knobs* control the tunings of the 6 available oscillators; at zero (all the way to the left) the tuning is at **-3600** cents, and at full (all the way to the right) the tuning is at **+3600** cents. All oscillators are *always on*.

💡 Some advanced tips:

Hold down the **Shift** key and **left-click drag** the mouse up and down for more granular control (useful for subtle de-tuning of an oscillator).

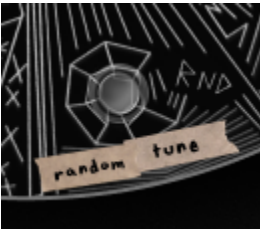
Hold down the **Alt** (Windows)/**Option** (Mac) key and **left-click drag** the mouse up and down to affect the tuning by *semitones*. Effectively, the knob will now move in “snapping” steps of **100** cents instead of **1** cent.

Lastly, holding down the **Ctrl** (Windows) or **Cmd** (Mac) key and **left-clicking** an oscillator knob will *reset it to its default value*.

⚠ Caution:

Clicking the **Random Tune** button (more on that below) will, as the name implies, *randomize all oscillators*. Use it with caution (or with wild abandon)!

Random Tune



Left-clicking this button will randomize the tuning of all six oscillators (depending on the value of the **UNITY** knob—read more about that on *page 11*).

Holding down the **Alt** (Windows) or **Option** (Mac) key and **left-clicking** this button randomizes the tuning of the oscillators *in steps of semitones* instead of cent values.

Holding down the **Shift** key and **left-clicking** this button *undoes the most recent randomization*. (Note that only one level of “undo” is available.)

Holding down the **Ctrl** (Windows) or **Cmd** (Mac) key and **left-clicking** this button *resets the tuning to 0* for all oscillators.

The Middle Ring

We will walk through these knobs starting with the one next to the first oscillator knob and move clockwise:

Shape

Takes the output of each oscillator and runs it through a waveshaper (essentially an audio effect that imposes a certain shape onto the waveform), changing the combined timbral quality. At zero (all the way left) the shape is a *square wave*, and at full (all the way right) the shape is a *sawtooth wave*.

Attack



Adjusts the *attack time* of the amplifier envelope (i.e., how long it takes to get to maximum volume) from **0 milliseconds** (all the way to the left) to **15k milliseconds** (all the way to the right).

Release



Adjusts the *release time* of the amplifier envelope from **0 milliseconds** (all the way to the left) to **15k milliseconds** (all the way to the right). At maximum, the oscillators will stick around for *fifteen seconds* after the note ends!

The **Attack** and **Release** knobs can be changed into **Envelope** knobs by using the **mode switcher**  found in-between.

Env Shape (Envelope Shape)



Adjusts the **attack**, **sustain**, and **release** of the filter envelope by blending between several pre-defined shapes of the standard **ADSR** envelope. At zero (all the way to the left) this means only the values for **Setting 1** and at full (all the way to the right) this means only the values for **Setting 5** (see below for more details).

⚙ Under the hood:

Here are the different shapes that we blend between with the **Env Shape** knob, shown in Kontakt's *edit mode* (note that the **Hold** value is never used, and the **Curve** value is always at -33%):



Setting 1 has the values **A** = 0 ms, **D** = 100 ms, **S** = -inf dB, **R** = 100 ms



Setting 2 has the values **A** = 0 ms, **D** = 5000 ms, **S** = -inf dB, **R** = 5000 ms



Setting 3 has the values **A** = 5000 ms, **D** = 5000 ms, **S** = -inf dB, **R** = 5000 ms



Setting 4 has the values **A** = 5000 ms, **D** = 5000 ms, **S** = 0 dB, **R** = 5000 ms



Setting 5 has the values **A** = 10,000 ms, **D** = 10,000 ms, **S** = 0 dB, **R** = 10,000 ms

Env Amt (Envelope Amount)



This knob controls how much the envelope will move the cutoff.

As the control is *bipolar*, at 12 o'clock, it does nothing. Going counter-clockwise moves the cutoff from its value downwards, while going clockwise moves the cutoff from its value upwards.

Reverb



Perhaps unsurprisingly, this knob affects the amount of reverb added to the oscillators. It works a little differently from what you might expect, though:

At zero, there is no reverb whatsoever (i.e., only a dry signal). At 12 o'clock, the dry and wet signals are equal. Continuing to move the knob clockwise will reduce the dry signal to silence, leaving only the wet signal.

⚙ Under the hood:

The **Reverb** knob actually adjusts multiple controls at once—Predelay, Size, Time, Damping, Diffusion, Mod, Stereo, Low Shelf, and High Cut, along with Dry and Wet—but we intentionally made it so that it will always just *sound good*. The reverb itself is Native Instruments' own excellent *Galois Reverb* (which is the precursor to their **Raum** reverb effects plug-in).

THICK



Adjusts the overall detuning and stereo image of the oscillator stack.

💡 Some advanced tips:

Just like all other controls in **Circle Drone of Doom**, this control can be *automated* by right-clicking the knob, selecting **Learn MIDI CC automation**, and moving a knob or fader on your MIDI keyboard (or by drag-and-dropping a MIDI CC from Kontakt's *Automation > MIDI Automation* tab—note that this requires Kontakt 8 to be in Classic View). Try it out—it can generate some seriously gnarly sounds!

This knob is affected by the **MORE!** control (see below), meaning the higher the value of that knob, the more detuned oscillators you will get.

MORE!



Adjusts the number of unison voices between 1 and 8. This means that a single key can play up to 48 voices of polyphony! (Note that this knob does not affect notes that are currently playing, so re-triggering the note is necessary in order to hear the effect.)

The **MORE!** and **THICK** knobs can be changed into **LFO** knobs by using the **mode switcher**  found in-between. [:]

LFO MOD (LFO Modulation Selection)



Selects between various LFO (Low Frequency Oscillator) rates. This knob is *bipolar*—at 12 o'clock, there is no modulation. Moving the knob counter-clockwise targets the LFO to modulate volume (tempo-synced); moving it clockwise targets it to modulate filter cutoff.

LFO Amt (LFO Amount)



Adjusts the amount of LFO modulation; moving the knob counter-clockwise adjusts it with a sine waveform, and moving it clockwise adjusts it with a Sample and Hold waveform. Note that this knob, like the **LFO MOD** knob (see above), is *bipolar*.

Experiment with different values for this and **LFO MOD** to get some truly crazy results!

Some advanced tips:

For a walkthrough of what Sample and Hold means, we direct you to this excellent YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ReCEy7vyz0>

The Inner Ring

Since the innermost ring of the **Circle Drone of Doom** works a little differently, we will go through them in a slightly different way, starting with:

Filter Button (Lowpass | Bandpass | Highpass)



Sets the type of filter applied to the output. Left-click this button to choose between **Lowpass**, **Bandpass**, or **Highpass** filtering. The color of the button—and the two related knobs (see below)—changes depending on the selected filter.



Cutoff (Lowpass | Bandpass | Highpass)

Adjusts the cutoff frequency of the selected filter.

⚙ Under the hood:

At the selected frequency, the input signal is 3 dB quieter, and continues to roll off at 12 dB per octave.

Resonance (Lowpass | Bandpass | Highpass)

Adjusts the amount of emphasis for frequencies around the **Cutoff** frequency.

⚙ Under the hood:

The filters available are **AR (adaptive resonance)** filters. These have a built-in compressor which limits the resonance peak. In essence, this prevents the filter resonance from getting too piercing (which can often happen with a high resonance value), resulting in a more pleasant, more musical sound.

Drive Button (Dark | Balanced | Bright)



Left-click this button to choose between **Dark**, **Balanced**, or **Bright** filtering. The color of the button—and the two related knobs (see below)—changes depending on the selected distortion type.

Amount (**Dark** | **Balanced** | **Bright**)

Adjusts the amount of distortion. At far left, no distortion is applied; at far right, both stages of distortion are applied (see below).

⚙️ Under the hood:

There are actually two different stages of distortion: Distortion **A** and Distortion **B**. From zero up to 12 o'clock Distortion A is adjusted, and going past "noon" will bring the additional Distortion B. Crank this knob all the way right for truly gritty results!

Tone (**Dark** | **Balanced** | **Bright**)

Adjusts the tilt filter (basically a filter that boosts one end of the frequency spectrum if the other end is cut, and vice versa) which shapes the tone of the distortion. At 12 o'clock, the filter is not affecting the distortion at all. Going counter-clockwise from "noon", low frequencies are tamed and high frequencies are boosted; going clockwise "noon," high frequencies are tamed and low frequencies are boosted.

UNITY



Adjusts the tuning of *all six oscillators* by blending between the unaffected pitch of the played note to the individual tuning offsets of each oscillator.

In essence, when this knob is at the far left, the different oscillator tunings are fully affecting the sound; when it is at the far right, no tuning from any oscillator knobs is taken into account.

Setup & Tweaking

Tips for Getting the Most out of the User Interface

- Almost all controls can be MIDI-learned by (1) right-clicking the UI and (2) selecting 'MIDI Learn'. You will then need to move the control of your choice (*i.e.*, fader, knob, *et al.*) on your MIDI control surface or in your DAW to establish the link.

Pro Tip: Once you MIDI-learn something, you should save your modified version of that NKI so you won't have to do it again! To do this in Kontakt 8, open the **Kontakt** menu on the top left and select "Save as."

- You can view Help Text by hovering over controls in the **Circle Drone of Doom** UI. The Help Text will appear at the bottom-left of the Kontakt UI plug-in window. Enable this help text by clicking the Info Pane button  on the lower left corner of the Kontakt window (**Kontakt 8**).
- The colorful Kontakt virtual keyboard, seen in our videos, is a Kontakt feature and not specific to **Circle Drone of Doom**. To enable the virtual keyboard, simply press **F3** on your computer (*not* MIDI!) keyboard. Alternatively, you can click the Keyboard button  on the lower right corner of the Kontakt window (**Kontakt 8**).
- **Circle Drone of Doom** is fully NKS Compatible and features quite a few existing host-automatable controls. If you have a Komplete Kontrol keyboard or use the Komplete Kontrol application, you will be able to benefit from this functionality!

Tips for CPU & Memory Optimization

If you experience high CPU and memory usage with **Circle Drone of Doom**, there are a number of things you can do to mitigate the issue.

Save CPU and memory by quitting unnecessary applications

For experienced users, this may seem obvious, but it's easy to lose track of how much computing power is being used by seemingly-innocuous applications. For example, it's not uncommon to have a Chrome browser, Discord, Slack, Skype, Zoom, and Dropbox all running at the same time. All of these not only take up RAM, but can also interfere with real-time audio playback by causing pops & crackles.

So, anytime you work on a very intensive DAW project, it's a good idea to close all applications and services you don't need—even if they just run in the background.

Avoid pops and crackles with a higher buffer size

This applies to your DAW settings in general. Typically, every DAW's audio settings allow you to change the 'buffer size' of the playback drivers. Sometimes, this may only be changeable in a separate application, such as with some RME products.

The buffer size (measured in milliseconds or samples, like `8ms / 512 samples`) determines the amount of latency in DAW output and input, inversely correlated to CPU usage. In other words, lower buffer sizes are much more demanding on your CPU than higher ones.

Though it feels great to perform and record MIDI at very low buffer sizes, this is also most taxing on your CPU. Consider increasing your buffer size once you're out of the MIDI recording phase, and on to editing, mixing, and mastering.

Credits & Acknowledgements

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...And a big thanks to our beta team!

Troubleshooting

Having trouble with **Circle Drone of Doom**? Use it in a project you want to tell us about? Drop us a line via our [Support Center](#) contact form (but be sure to read the FAQ first!)

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