

Step-By-Step Guide

Tascam DP-24SD and DP-32SD Multi-track Recorder/Portastudio

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2. About this guide

This step-by-step guide complements the [DP-24/32 Tutorial](#) video series on YouTube and DVD. The videos will give you a better understanding and overview of the machine, but the guide is useful as a reference or as a quick-start where detailed explanations can be skipped as necessary.

As with the videos, it is specifically for the Tascam DP-32SD Digital Multitrack Recorder (portastudio). It can also be used with the DP-24SD, which just has less tracks in a fixed mono/stereo layout, and the older DP-24 or DP-32 models, although their CD and MIDI functions are not covered.

Corrections and feedback are welcomed. My email is on the [PhiLiZound Recordings](#) website along with details of the DVD tutorial (follow the links for Freebies and Tascam DP-24SD/DP-32SD).

The guide may be re-issued over time with corrections and/or new sections; the version number is shown as a 3-digit suffix to the filename in the footer.

2.1 Acknowledgements

Many thanks to [Kristi Kelty](#) for her kind support and encouragement in starting this guide. Thanks also to supporters and donators on the [Tascam forum](#) and my [YouTube channel](#), and to Boyko Daskalov for his comprehensive proof-reading.

2.2 Contents

Use the Contents list to find topics within the guide; it has been structured for easy navigation both online and when printed as opposed to being read linearly from cover-to-cover. Cross-references are clickable for online use, and topics are arranged (mostly) in alphabetical order for easier navigation when printed.

2.3 Disclaimer

All information presented here is based on my personal experience and understanding of the machine, and is correct to the best of my knowledge. There is no affiliation with Tascam, and no endorsement from them. No responsibility can be taken for any damage or loss of data.

2.4 How to ...

These sections form the bulk of the guide and are arranged in alphabetical order. Cross-referencing is used to reduce repetition, although this may entail some ‘jumping around’ until you are familiar with the more common operations. You may find the Scenarios sections easier to follow at first.

2.5 Notes

Background info within steps is denoted by a different colour and prefixed with ‘Note:’; they can be ignored if you just want to follow basic steps with no explanations. More background info is in the Terminology section, so cross-reference links to these can be followed or ignored as required.

2.6 Scenarios

These sections are copies of the relevant How to ... sections, collated into a linear set of steps for specific scenarios. This makes them fairly lengthy, but they may be easier to follow if the scenario is close enough to what you want to achieve. They all start with a set of assumptions describing the scenario so you can adapt them as required.

2.7 Terminology

This section contains terms and detailed descriptions in alphabetical order. They are mainly in the context of the machine although some cover more generic recording principles. They are cross-referenced from other sections so you can choose to read or ignore them when following the steps.

3. Terminology

3.1 AudioDepot

This is a Folder on the sd-card used as a temporary holding location for audio wave files to be transferred between the machine and a computer.

The folder is only used for transferring *individual tracks* for a song; if you want to transfer a *whole song* for backup purposes, see How to copy/backup songs to a computer and How to copy/restore songs from a computer.

You can display the folder contents by pressing Menu, scrolling to AudioDepot, then pressing F4.

To transfer individual tracks from the current song to a computer, the tracks first have to be converted by a process called 'Export'. This collates various internal files within the Song folder and creates a single wave file for each track in the AudioDepot folder. These files can then be copied to a computer for further processing; see How to copy/export tracks to a computer.

To transfer individual tracks from a computer to the current song, the files from the computer should be copied to the AudioDepot folder. Then they need converting into song tracks within the Song folder by a process called 'Import'; see How to copy/import tracks from a computer.

None of the files in the AudioDepot folder are actively used when recording or playing back, so can be deleted to make room on the sd-card.

3.2 Bounce bus

This Bus is very similar to the Stereo bus but is only active in Bounce mode. It is also a stereo bus (lower-case 'stereo') in that it comprises a left and right bus; see Stereo and panning.

In Bounce mode, source track and input signals for the bounce are routed to the Bounce bus instead of the Stereo bus, and the Bounce bus output goes to the bounce destination track(s) instead of the stereo output sockets. The internal Send effect is also routed to the Bounce bus instead of the Stereo bus. This is how bouncing is able to mix tracks and inputs (with send effects if required), and record the result back to another track.

meter bars is fixed; no controls will affect it. In contrast, the monitor level shown on the L/R meters is affected by other controls depending on the monitor select setting.

3.30.1 Speakers and Headphones

The monitor signal goes to both the monitor output sockets *and* the headphones; both are controlled by the same monitor level knob. This means you cannot separate the two paths, for example you cannot mute one without muting the other.

If you need this functionality, you could connect an external switching device. Some devices also have level controls and their own switchable headphone output so you could drive monitor speakers and headphones from the same unit.

Another advantage of using an external headphone amplifier (connected to the monitor output sockets) is that it bypasses the built-in one. The latter is not the best quality as it generates a small amount of background hiss independent of the monitor level. This does *not* affect recordings or any other signals flowing through the machine and is not normally a problem, but it seems to vary depending on the headphone sensitivity and impedance.

3.31 Monitor select

This button allows you to monitor (see Monitoring) one of 4 different signals within the machine:

- The stereo signal from the Stereo bus, i.e. the signal going to the stereo output sockets.
- The stereo signal from the Bounce bus, i.e. the signal going to the destination track(s) in Bounce mode.
- The mono signal from Send bus-1, i.e. the signal going to the Effect Send-1 output socket *and* the internal Send effect.
- The mono signal from Send bus-2, i.e. the signal going to the Effect Send-2 output socket.

Whatever is being monitored appears on the L(ef)t/R(ight) meter bars at the right-hand side of the Home screen, so you can measure the levels and check for overloads.



The signals also go via the Monitor Level knob to the monitor output sockets and the headphone socket, so you can hear the signals if required. This is optional as they will always appear on the L/R meter bars regardless of the monitor knob setting.

Monitoring uses left and right signals so you will see and hear a stereo 'spread' (if there is one) from the Stereo or Bounce buses. The Send signals are mono so these will always appear in the centre of the stereo field and the L/R meters bars will be in step with each other.

- Use Cursor buttons to highlight other settings and use Jog/Data wheel to change values as required.

Note: if using a compressor, see the tips in Compression.

46. How to record FX - Send effects

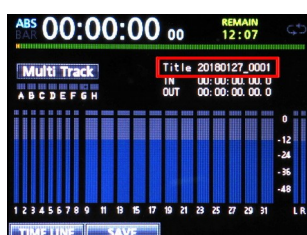
Note: The return signal from the internal send effect goes to the Stereo bus in Multitrack mode and Mixdown mode, and to the Bounce bus in Bounce mode.

This means the simplest way of recording the send effect is in Bounce mode or Mixdown mode.

1. To record the internal Send effect in Bounce mode or Mixdown mode, see How to send signals to the Internal Send Effect, or Scenario: Recording internal send effect in bounce mode.
2. To record the internal Send effect in Multitrack mode, a cable is required from the machine's stereo outputs to its inputs. These signals are normally used for monitoring so extra care must be taken to avoid feedback. For this reason, the process is not included in this guide, so use either bounce or mixdown for this.

47. How to record mono sources to mono tracks

1. If the machine is on, turn it off; see How to turn the machine off.
2. Plug your source mono instruments and/or mics into any of the 8 inputs A-H, and plug in headphones or monitor speakers as required; see How to connect inputs and outputs.
3. If an instrument needs a High-impedance input, such as an electric guitar with passive pickup, use input H and set the slide-switch at the back to the Guitar position.
4. Turn machine on; see How to turn the machine on.
5. If any mic needs phantom power, press the phantom power button for the corresponding input; see Phantom power.
6. If you want to create a **new** song for the recordings, see either How to create a song with current settings or How to create a song with settings from a template.
If you want to add recordings to an **existing** song, load it first if it isn't already loaded; see How to load a song.
7. Once your current song is correct as shown on the home screen, press Assign button to show the Assign screen, then press F2(Clear) if required to clear all previous assignments.



Note: The left/right buttons also control the horizontal zoom for the audio graph, and the up/down buttons define its vertical zoom.

5. To set marker points at the current position, see either How to set and delete marker points or How to set and delete IN and OUT marker points.
6. To switch to the default resolution, either press the F1(TimeLine) button to see the TimeLine display, then F1(Waveform) to return, or press the Jog/Play button to exit the mode.

Note: The max resolution in Jog/Play mode is still not accurate enough to ‘wind’ the transport to a marker point in order to delete the marker; to do this, use one of the ‘jump’ methods in How to position the transport.

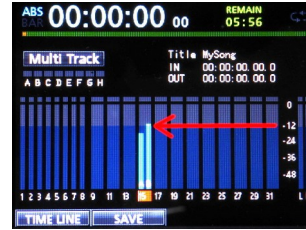
55. How to send mono signals to an External Send Effect

1. If the machine already on, turn it off; see How to turn the machine off.
2. Turn off the external effect unit.
3. If you are already using the machine’s internal Send effect, connect a cable from the Effect Send-2 socket to the input of your external effect. If not, connect the cable to **either** Effect Send-1 or Effect Send-2 sockets.
4. If the output of your external effect is mono, connect a cable from there to one of the machine’s inputs.
5. If the output of your external effect is stereo, use 2 cables to connect its left and right output signals to any of the 4 pairs of inputs, A and B, C and D, E and F or G and H (the pairs must be adjacent, but do not use other pairings such as B and C).

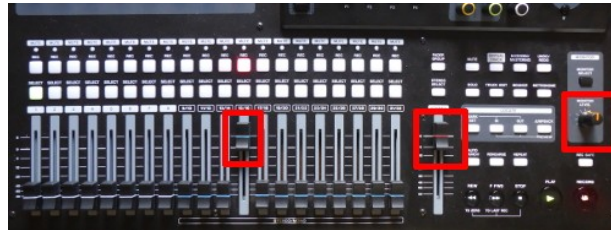
Note: a **reverb** effect unit usually outputs stereo signals for added realism; this applies even if the effect input is mono. In real-life, echoes from the surroundings appear from all directions, so retaining this ‘stereo field’ makes the reverb more realistic; see Stereo and panning.

6. Turn on the machine; see How to turn the machine on.
7. Turn on the external effect unit, and configure it as required.
8. You can now treat the external effect output just like any other source/instrument connected to your inputs, so how you record it depends on whether you want to record it in Mixdown mode or Bounce mode and whether the effect output is stereo or mono, so see the relevant section, e.g.
 - How to mixdown
 - How to bounce
 - How to record mono sources to mono tracks
 - How to record stereo sources to stereo tracks

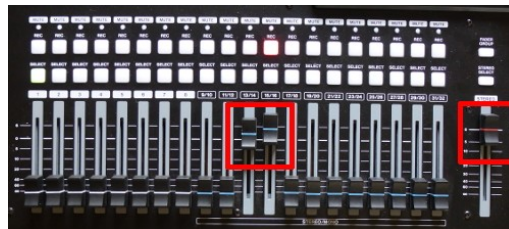
10. Set the recording levels with source Trim knobs A and B while singing/playing.



11. To hear yourself in the monitors, turn up the fader for track 15/16, the master stereo fader and monitor level knob gradually to a reasonable level on your headphones or monitor speakers while singing/playing.



12. Use Rewind or Fast Forward to position at start of song and press Play.
13. Turn up the track fader for track 13/14 so you can hear the original recording, and adjust both faders 13/14 and 15/16 as required for a reasonable balance in your monitors while singing/playing.



14. When happy with the levels, press Stop, wait for machine to stop, then press Rewind and position to start of song.
15. Press Record and start singing/playing in time with the original recording.



16. When finished, press Stop and wait for the machine to finish writing to the sd-card; this may take a few seconds.
17. Press the Rec button on track 15/16 to un-arm it.
18. Rewind to the required start position and play/review the recording.
The faders on track 13/14 and 15/16 control the relative playback levels of the original recording and the overdub.