



Record Your Own 2

In August, before the horrors of September 11, we discussed how to set up your Mac to record music from an outside source such as vinyl records or tape cassettes. This month, let's conclude with a how-to for recording and creating CDs that you can play.

Time to record. Connect your Mac to your record turntable or tape deck using the cable mentioned last month. Next, launch the *SoundRecorder* application.

SoundRecorder's window opens. Note that it displays controls like you would find on a tape recorder or VCR. Click the Source button and choose the source appropriate for your Mac (Device: Built-in or USB Audio, Channel: Sound In or External Mic). Next, click the OK button and start your record or tape playing.

The level meters for the left and right channels will begin to show how loud your music is. Adjust the Input Level sliders until the loudest passages of music register just under the red. Once you have the recording levels set, click the Record button and restart your record or tape playing. When the musical selection ends, click the Stop button to halt recording.

Now, you can check your recording by clicking the Play button. If everything sounds good, click the Save... button, name the recording and choose a place to save it (I recommend the Desktop).

Editing. You can edit your recordings to fine tune them. Find the saved recording and double-click it. *QuickTime Player* opens and shows its control window. Click the Play button (the large, right-pointing triangle) and your music begins to play. Note the tab tracking left to right as the music plays. Let's use this to edit out the scratch of the phonograph needle as it hits the record at the beginning of your recording. Here's what to do:

- 1) Click the Play button.
- 2) As soon as the music starts, click the pause button (double vertical bars).
- 3) Click and hold on the Rewind button (double left-facing triangles). Release the mouse button as soon as the music stops (it's playing backward and quickly so listen carefully).
- 4) Hold down the Shift key on your keyboard and drag the place marking tab all the way to the left. Note that the section of the bar that you just dragged the tab over is now gray.
- 5) From the Edit menu, choose Clear.

Now, that annoying scratch is gone from your recording. You can use the same trick to eliminate a specific song or passage.

Time to choose a format. A decision must be made. Are you seeking to create a CD that will play in a standard CD player or one that requires a computer or a special MP3 capable CD player?

If you choose the former (AIFF format), you can figure one vinyl record equals one CD. If you choose the latter (MP3 format), ten or more record albums will fit on one CD.

AIFF. You're almost done. Gather together the AIFF music files that you want to record (burn) to CD and open your CD recording (burning) software. Follow your software's instructions for creating music CDs and that's it. Enjoy your new CD while preserving the fragile vinyl or tape original.

MP3. One more step before burning. You need to convert the AIFF files into MP3. To do so requires free conversion software. If you are using Mac OS 9 or above, *iTunes* is your best choice. If you are using an older Mac OS, *BladeEnc 1.4* will do. Get *BladeEnc* at <http://www.versiontracker.com/moreinfo.fcgi?id=676&db=mac>. *iTunes* is available at <http://www.versiontracker.com/moreinfo.fcgi?id=9688&db=mac>.

After you have downloaded and installed the MP3 converter, be sure to place an alias of it onto your Mac's desktop. To convert, do this:

iTunes—

- 1) Collect together the music files that you want to convert.
- 2) Open *iTunes*.
- 3) From the Advanced menu, choose Convert to MP3...
- 4) A window opens asking you to select an object. What it wants is for you to choose the music files to convert. Navigate to the Desktop, hold down the Shift key on your keyboard and click on each music file that you want to convert.
- 5) Click the Choose button.
- 6) *iTunes* will take a while to convert the files and when done will add them to it's library.
- 7) Quit *iTunes*, open your hard drive and find the Documents folder. Within the Documents folder you will find an iTunes folder. Open the iTunes folder and find the iTunes Music folder. Open the iTunes Music folder and find the Unknown Artist folder. Open the Unknown Artist folder and find the Unknown Album folder. Inside the Unknown Album folder will be your converted files. Whew!

- 8) Drag the Unknown Album folder to the desktop.
- 9) Rename the Unknown Album folder with the name that you want to give your CD.

BladeEnc—

- 1) Collect together the music files that you want to convert.
- 2) Select a music file and drag it to the BladeEnc alias on your desktop.
- 3) The BladeEnc settings window will open. Click to check the box next to *Quit after encoding*.
- 4) Click the OK button.
- 5) *BladeEnc* will take a while to encode the file. When done it will dump the MP3 encoded version onto the Desktop.
- 6) Repeat steps 2 through 5 for each music file.
- 7) Collect the converted music files (their names will all end in mp3) into a folder and name the folder with the name that you want to give your CD.

Now you can burn. As all CD recording software is different, consult your CD recording software for the proper techniques for burning an ISO9660 CD. ISO9660 is the proper format for an MP3 CD that will play on any computer with a CDROM drive or in a specialized MP3 CD music player.

There. Done at last. Whether you choose AIFF or MP3 you now have those fragile and hard to play records and tapes converted to nice, clean, durable CDs that will almost last forever (just don't sit on 'em!).

October Tip—

What do fingerprints, dust, dirt and sneezes have in common? They're all on your Mac's screen.

Cleaning the screen on your computer is a tricky business. Desktop monitors have delicate anti-glare coatings that are easily damaged by glass cleaners, soaps and alcohol. Popular flat panel LCD screens also have anti-glare coatings and can be scratched more readily than regular monitors.

To treat these delicate surfaces, use a clean, smooth, lint-free cloth moistened with just a little water. Be careful not to drip water down the screen and rub lightly.

For difficult dirt, I recommend Klear Screen pre-moistened cloths; they're the only cleaner I use. Klear Screen is available from <http://www.klearscreen.com>.

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