



## Choosing AAC custom import settings

If you use AAC (Advanced Audio Coding) encoding, you can use custom settings for greater control over the quality and size of imported files.

### To use custom settings with AAC encoding:

1. Choose iTunes > Preferences, click Advanced, and then click Importing.
2. Choose AAC Encoder from the Import Using pop-up menu.
3. Choose Custom from the Setting pop-up menu.
4. In the dialog that appears, choose settings:
  - Stereo Bit Rate: The higher the Mono or Stereo kilobits per second (Kbps), the higher the audio quality and the larger the file size. The most common bit rate for stereo AAC files is 128 Kbps. Lower bit rates are more appropriate for sound files containing voice recordings (as opposed to music).
  - Sample Rate: The number of times per second the music waveforms are captured digitally. The higher the sample rate, the higher the quality and the larger the file size. Don't choose a rate higher than the rate used to store the music originally or you'll waste space. CD quality, for example, is 44.100 kHz, so choosing a higher rate when you're encoding from a CD is unnecessary. In general, the best choice is Auto, which uses the same rate as the original music.
  - Channels: If you don't have stereo speakers or if your audio files are monaural (mono files are about half the size of stereo files), choose Mono. If you'll be listening through headphones or a stereo system, choose Stereo or Auto. Auto converts monaural tracks that into mono files and stereo tracks into stereo files.

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## Choosing MP3 custom import settings


If you use MP3 encoding, you can use custom settings for greater control over the quality and size of imported files.

### To use custom settings with MP3 encoding:

1. Choose iTunes > Preferences, click Advanced, and then click Importing.
2. Choose MP3 Encoder from the Import Using pop-up menu.
3. Choose Custom from the Setting pop-up menu.
4. In the dialog that appears, choose settings:
  - **Stereo Bit Rate:** The higher the Mono or Stereo kilobits per second (Kbps), the higher the audio quality and the larger the file size. The most common bit rate for stereo MP3 files is between 128 Kbps and 192 Kbps. Lower bit rates are more appropriate for sound files containing voice recordings (as opposed to music).
  - **Variable Bit Rate Encoding (VBR):** This setting varies the number of bits used to store the music depending on the complexity of the music. This can help keep file size to a minimum.
  - **Sample Rate:** The number of times per second that the music waveforms are captured digitally. The higher the sample rate, the higher the quality and the larger the file size. Don't choose a sample rate higher than the rate used originally to store the music or you'll waste space. CD quality, for example, is 44.100 kHz, so choosing a higher rate when you're encoding from a CD is unnecessary. In general, the best choice is Auto, which uses the same rate as the original music.
  - **Channels:** If you don't have stereo speakers or if your audio files are monaural, choose Mono (mono files are about half the size of stereo files). If you'll be listening to your MP3 files using your stereo system, choose Stereo or Auto. Auto converts tracks that are already monaural into mono MP3 files, and stereo tracks into stereo MP3 files.
  - **Stereo Mode:** In Normal mode, your MP3 files contain one track for the right stereo channel and one track for the left. In many cases, the two channels contain related information. In Joint Stereo mode, one channel carries the information that's identical on both channels, and the other channel carries the unique information. At bit rates of 160 Kbps and below, this can improve the sound quality of your converted audio.
  - **Smart Encoding Adjustments:** Select to have iTunes analyze your encoding settings and music source, and then adjust settings to maximize quality.
  - **Filter Frequencies Below 10 Hz:** Filtering inaudible frequencies results in smaller, more efficient files without perceptible loss of quality.

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## About import settings and hard disk space

When you import a song into iTunes, the song is stored on your hard disk. How much disk space the song uses depends on the song and the import settings you choose in iTunes preferences. The import settings also affect the audio quality. In general, the larger the file the better the sound.

This chart provides an overview of the formats in which you can play and save files in iTunes.

Encoding format	Can be played using	File size (approx)	Comments
AAC (MPEG-4)	iPod, applications that support QuickTime	> 1 MB/min (High Quality setting)	Default for Windows-based computers and Mac computers with QuickTime 6.2 or later
MP3	iPod, computers, most digital music players	1 MB/min (High Quality setting)	Default for Mac computers with QuickTime 6.1 or earlier
AIFF	Many applications	10 MB/min	Use for burning high-quality audio CDs from imported songs
WAV	Macs, Windows-based computers without iTunes and computers without MP3 software	10 MB/min	
Apple Lossless	Some iPod models, applications that support QuickTime	5 MB/min	Use for burning high-quality audio CDs from imported songs

AAC-encoded files rival the quality of audio CDs, and sound as good as or better than MP3 files encoded at the same or even a higher bit rate. For example, a 128 Kbps AAC file should sound as good as or better than a 160 Kbps MP3 file. Because the bit rate is lower, the AAC file will also be smaller than the MP3 file. AAC files enable you to store the most music on your hard disk or iPod. You can fit the same number of songs on an audio CD using Apple Lossless, AIFF, or WAV; the song files are smallest with the Apple Lossless encoder.

### Related Topics

[Choosing import settings](#)





## Choosing import settings

You can choose the encoding format and other settings that iTunes uses to import songs. Your choices affect the audio quality and size of the song file (the higher the quality, the larger the file size).

AAC (Advanced Audio Coding) encoding is available only if you have QuickTime 6.2 or later installed. (iTunes supports MPEG-4 AAC files, not older versions of AAC.)

### To choose import options:

1. Choose iTunes > Preferences, click Advanced, and then click Importing.
2. Choose an encoder from the Import Using pop-up menu.
  - You can listen to songs encoded in AAC or Apple Lossless formats in iTunes and on iPod models that come with a dock connector. If you plan to listen to your music using a different program or MP3 player, choose MP3 Encoder.
  - If you want to burn high-quality audio CDs with the songs you're importing, without losing quality, choose Apple Lossless or AIFF. (Keep in mind that songs imported using this format use much more disc space.)
  - If you'll be playing your songs on a computer that does not have MP3 software, choose WAV.
3. Choose a bit rate from the Setting pop-up menu (not available with Apple Lossless Encoder). In most cases, the default selection works well.
  - Higher Quality: Choose if you chose MP3 Encoder and plan to create your own audio CDs or listen to your music with high-quality stereo speakers.
  - High Quality: Choose if you play music in a noisy environment. This setting creates files that are about 1 MB in size per minute of music.
  - Good Quality: Use to fit more songs on a portable MP3 player with limited storage capacity.
  - Custom: Choose for greater control over the file size and sound quality.

### Related Topics

[About import settings and hard disk space](#)

[Choosing AIFF and WAV custom import settings](#)

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[Choosing MP3 custom import settings](#)

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## Saving a copy of a song in a new file format

You can convert a song to a different file format (and keep a copy of the original). For example, you can save a copy of a compressed song file such as MP3 or AAC in an uncompressed song format (AIFF or WAV).

When converting from a compressed to uncompressed file format (for example, from MP3 to AIFF) you shouldn't notice any reduction in sound quality. However, when converting between compressed formats (for example, MP3 and AAC), you may notice a reduction in the sound quality. For the best results, if you want your music encoded in a different file format, import the music again from the original source using the new encoding format.

### To convert a song's file format:

1. Choose iTunes > Preferences, then click the Advanced button at the top of the window and click Importing.
2. From the Import Using pop-up menu, choose the encoding format that you want to convert the song to, then click OK to save the settings.
3. Select one or more songs in your library, then choose Advanced > Convert Selection to MP3, Convert Selection to AAC, Convert Selection to Apple Lossless, Convert Selection to AIFF, or Convert Selection to WAV. (The menu item changes to show what's selected in your Importing preferences.)

To convert all the songs in a folder or on a disk, hold down the Option key and choose Advanced > "Convert Selection to," then choose the folder or disk containing the songs you want to convert. All the songs in the folder or on the disk will be converted except songs you purchased from the iTunes Store. (Purchased songs are encoded using a protected AAC format that prevents them from being converted.)

The song in its original format and the newly converted song appear in your library.

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