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POLYDRIVE

Multiband Distortion Plugin

USER MANUAL



VST3 · Windows · macOS · Linux

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6 frequency bands, each with its own distortion	**16x** maximum oversampling	**VST3** Windows, macOS and Linux	**Offline** serial number license, no internet needed

01 Welcome

Thank you for choosing **Polydrive**. Polydrive is a multiband distortion plugin: it splits your signal into up to six frequency bands and lets you distort, shape and balance every band on its own.

A conventional distortion plugin hits the whole signal at once. Strong low frequencies dominate the distortion, the bass turns muddy, dynamics collapse and the highs get harsh. With Polydrive you decide *where* the distortion happens: keep the lows tight and clean, give the mids some bite and let the highs shimmer.

What you can do with it

- Add grit to guitars and synths without losing the low end.
- Give drums punch and attitude, band by band.
- Go from subtle warmth to musically driven destruction.
- Shape every band with its own EQ, mix and output level.
- See what you are doing in the real-time spectrum display.

> **TIP**
> Start subtle. Distortion adds loudness as well as character, so match the level with the **Bypass** button before you judge the sound.

02 Installation and licensing

Requirements

Polydrive runs as a **VST3** plugin on Windows, macOS and Linux. You need a host (DAW) that supports VST3 plugins.

Installing

1. Download Polydrive from your product page on audiowavez.com. If you received a ZIP archive, extract it first.
2. Copy the **Polydrive.vst3** file (or folder) to your system's VST3 folder (see the table below).
3. Start your DAW and rescan your plugins if it does not pick up Polydrive automatically.
4. Insert Polydrive on a track or bus. You will find it as **Polydrive** in the plugin list.

System	Default VST3 folder
Windows	C:\Program Files\Common Files\VST3
macOS	/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3 (all users) ~/Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/VST3 (current user)
Linux	~/.vst3 (current user) /usr/lib/vst3 or /usr/local/lib/vst3 (all users)

Demo and serial number

Unlimited time demo. You can try Polydrive for as long as you like. Every 60 seconds a gentle white noise sound is played for 3 seconds. Everything else works exactly like the full version.

Lifetime license. Polydrive is a one-time purchase. After your purchase you receive a serial number, which you activate in the plugin together with your user name. The license check works with these data only and needs **no internet connection**.

Activating your license

1. Open Polydrive in your DAW.
2. Click the **Audiowavez logo** in the top right corner of the plugin.
3. Click **“Licence activation”**.
4. Enter your **user name** and your **serial number**.

Once your license is active, the white noise of the demo version is gone.

> **NOTE**
> Keep your user name and serial number in a safe place. You need both to activate Polydrive on a new computer.

03 Quick start

1. Insert Polydrive on a track or bus and play your audio. The spectrum display shows the signal.
2. Set the crossover points so the frequency range is split into the bands you want (for example lows, mids and highs).
3. Select a band. Its settings appear in the band panel at the bottom.
4. Choose a distortion type for the band and raise **INPUT** until you hear the character you want.
5. Balance the band with **MIX** and **OUTPUT**. Repeat for the other bands.
6. Compare with the **Bypass** button and keep the loudness similar.
7. Save your settings as a preset with the disk icon next to the preset name.

04 The interface



The Polydrive interface. The numbers refer to the table below.

	Control	What it does
1	Preset browser	Browse presets with the arrows. The disk icon saves the current settings.
2	Oversampling	Sets the internal oversampling factor (up to 16x) to reduce aliasing. See chapter 9.
3	Bypass	Switches the whole plugin off and on for quick A/B comparison.
4	Spectrum display	Real-time signal display. The vertical markers are the crossover points; the selected band is highlighted.
5	Slope	Tilts the spectrum display for easier reading. It does not change the sound.
6	Level meter	Shows the output level. The number above it is the peak value.
7	Band panel	Shows the settings of the selected band (here: BAND 2).
8	INPUT	Level that drives the distortion of this band.
9	Distortion type	Chooses the algorithm of the band: Tube, Maximizer or Soft Clip. The controls beside it depend on the type.
10	Band EQ	Switches the band's EQ on or off and sets its type, frequency, gain and Q.
11	MIX / OUTPUT	Dry/wet blend and output level of the band.
12	MASTER	Overall output level of the plugin.
13	Audiowavez logo	Click it to open **"Licence activation"** (see chapter 2).

05 Working with bands

Crossovers and bands

The vertical markers in the spectrum display are the **crossover points**. They divide the frequency range into bands. In the example above, markers at 200 Hz and 3000 Hz create three bands: everything below 200 Hz, the range from 200 Hz to 3000 Hz, and everything above 3000 Hz. Polydrive supports up to six bands.

Selecting a band

The band you are working on is highlighted in the spectrum display, and its name (for example **BAND 2**) is shown in the band panel. Everything in the band panel applies to this band only, so you can give every band a different distortion type, drive, EQ and level.

Choosing crossover points

- **Start with two or three bands.** More bands give you more control, but also more to balance.
- **Keep the low end separate.** A crossover somewhere around 100 to 200 Hz lets you leave the bass clean or distort it only lightly.
- **Follow the material.** Use the spectrum display to place crossovers where the character of the sound changes.

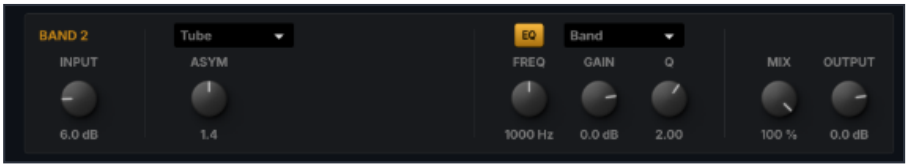
06 Distortion types

Every band has its own distortion type, chosen from the drop-down menu in the band panel. Polydrive offers three types. The controls next to the menu change with the selected type.

Type	Character
Tube	Warm and full, with adjustable asymmetry.
Maximizer	Aggressive and loud, for dense, powerful sounds.
Soft Clip	Smooth and controlled, rounds off the peaks gradually.

Tube

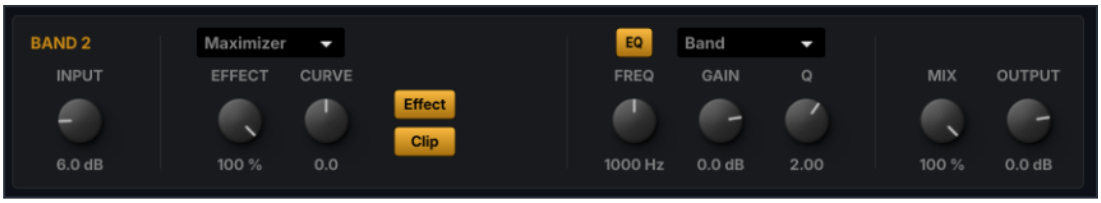
A warm, tube-like distortion. **INPUT** controls how hard the band is driven. **ASYM** (asymmetry) treats the positive and negative halves of the waveform differently, which adds even-order harmonics and a warmer, fuller character.



Band panel with the Tube type.

Maximizer

A more aggressive, loudness-oriented type. **EFFECT** sets the amount of the effect (100 % = fully active), and **CURVE** shapes the response of the algorithm. The **Effect** and **Clip** buttons switch the corresponding processing stages on and off; a lit button means the stage is active.



Band panel with the Maximizer type.

Soft Clip

Soft clipping rounds off the peaks of the signal gradually instead of cutting them off hard. The result is a smoother, more controlled distortion that adds density and tames peaks. As with the other types, the controls next to the drop-down menu belong to this type.

07 Band EQ

Each band has its own EQ for fine-tuning the tone. Use the **EQ** button to switch it on or off and the drop-down menu to choose one of five filter types:

Filter type	What it does
Band	Boosts or cuts a range around FREQ (bell filter). Q sets the width.
Low Pass	Lets the frequencies below FREQ pass and attenuates those above.
High Pass	Lets the frequencies above FREQ pass and attenuates those below.
Low Shelf	Boosts or cuts all frequencies below FREQ.
High Shelf	Boosts or cuts all frequencies above FREQ.

Three controls shape the filter:

Control	Function
FREQ	Center or cutoff frequency of the filter.
GAIN	Boost or cut at that frequency, in dB (for Band and the shelf types).
Q	Width of the affected range. For Band, higher values are narrower and lower values are broader.

> **TIP**
> Use a narrow cut to remove a harsh resonance in a distorted band, a Low Pass to tame fizz in the highs, or a High Pass to keep rumble out of a distorted band.

08 Mix, output and master

MIX blends between the unprocessed and the processed signal of the band. At 100 % you hear only the processed signal. Lower values keep more of the original, which preserves transients and dynamics.

OUTPUT sets the level of the band after processing. Use it to balance the bands against each other, especially after raising **INPUT**.

MASTER sets the overall output level. The stereo **level meter** on the right shows the output level; peak values above 0 dB are shown in red. Keep an eye on it when you drive the bands hard.

09 Oversampling, presets and bypass

Oversampling

Distortion creates new harmonics. Harmonics above half the sample rate fold back into the audible range as inharmonic digital artifacts called **aliasing**. Oversampling processes the signal at a higher internal sample rate and reduces these artifacts. Polydrive supports oversampling up to 16x.

Higher factors sound cleaner but use more CPU. A good workflow is a low factor while you write and mix, and a high factor when you render the final mix.

Presets

Use the arrows next to the preset name to step through your presets. The disk icon saves the current settings as a new preset.

Bypass

The **Bypass** button turns the plugin off so you can compare the processed and the original sound. Adjust **OUTPUT** or **MASTER** so both have a similar loudness, otherwise the louder one always sounds better.

10 Tips and workflows

Source	Idea
Guitars	Keep the lows clean for a tight low end, distort the mids for body and bite, and add a little grit to the highs with a lower MIX.
Bass	Distort only the upper mids and highs to add presence and definition on small speakers, and leave the sub range untouched.
Drums	Add punch to the kick with a gentle distortion in the low mids, and bring out the snare's bite in the upper mids.
Synths	Use different distortion types per band for movement and character instead of one broad, muddy distortion.
Mix bus and sound design	Use low MIX values for subtle warmth, or extreme settings and oversampling for effects and textures.
Automation	Most parameters can be automated from your DAW, so the distortion can move with the song.

11 Troubleshooting

Problem	Solution
Polydrive does not show up in my DAW	Make sure the VST3 file is in the correct folder (see chapter 2) and rescan your plugins. Check that your host supports VST3.
I hear a short white noise every minute	This is the demo version. The noise disappears after you activate your license (see chapter 2).
Where do I enter my serial number?	Click the Audiowavez logo in the plugin, choose "Licence activation" and enter your user name and serial number.
The sound is too harsh or too loud	Lower INPUT, reduce MIX, or use OUTPUT to compensate for the level. Try a higher oversampling factor.
The bass sounds muddy	Set a crossover around 100 to 200 Hz and reduce the drive of the lowest band, or leave it clean.
CPU usage is high	Lower the oversampling factor while you work and raise it again for the final render.

12 Support and credits

Questions, bug reports or feedback? Write to **support@audiowavez.com**. For updates and other plugins, visit **audiowavez.com**.

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