

Shape the balance.

Tilt & Contour EQ | User manual



Two moves. A different balance.

Tilt changes the balance between lows and highs. Contour shapes the middle. Use both for broad tonal decisions on individual tracks, buses and full mixes.

Start gently

Load Init - Clean Start, play your source, and move Tilt by 1 or 2 dB. Adjust Contour next. Enable Gain Match, give it a few seconds to settle, then compare with Bypass.

Your first session

A short route from a clean start to a useful setting.

1 / Start clean

A fresh instance opens with filters off, flat EQ, SAT off and no output gain change. Choose a source preset if you want a faster starting point.

2 / Set the direction

Turn Tilt right for more high end and less low end. Turn left for more low end and less high end. Pivot sets the frequency around which this balance turns.

3 / Shape the middle

Turn Contour down to scoop its center region; turn it up to add body or presence. Move Center to place the adjustment. The three curve buttons change its width.

4 / Clear the edges

Use High Pass for unwanted low frequencies and Low Pass for unwanted high frequencies. Start with the gentler 6 or 12 dB/oct slope; use 24 dB/oct when you need a steeper cut.

5 / Compare fairly

Enable Gain Match and allow several seconds for its response to settle. Use Bypass and A/B/C to judge the tone. Watch the output meters and leave enough level margin.

Tilt, Contour and filters

The core controls, explained.

Tilt / -12 to +12 dB

Positive values lower the low shelf and raise the high shelf; negative values reverse that. A +2 dB setting approaches -2 dB in the lows and +2 dB in the highs: a 4 dB difference between the ends. Pivot spans 200-2000 Hz. Gentle, Smooth and Focused change the transition width.

Contour / -12 to +12 dB

A bell-shaped boost or cut, with Center from 200-2000 Hz. Broad, Medium and Focused correspond to Q values of 0.35, 0.7 and 1.4. Start broad for overall balance, then narrow it when you want a more localized change.

Link

Links the Contour center to the Tilt pivot. The independent Center value is retained and returns when you unlink. Its numeric field is disabled while linked.

High Pass and Low Pass

High Pass spans 10-1000 Hz; its 10 Hz endpoint switches it OFF. Low Pass spans 400 Hz-40 kHz; its 40 kHz endpoint switches it OFF. Each filter offers 6, 12 and 24 dB/oct slopes. Cutoffs are constrained to valid processing frequencies.

Channels, color and level

Stereo / Mid / Side / Left / Right

Stereo EQs both channels. Mid EQs the shared center while leaving Side dry; Side EQs the difference while leaving Mid dry. Left and Right EQ only the selected channel. On mono input, Stereo and Mid process the signal; Side has no difference signal.

SAT

Adds fixed soft saturation after channel selection. Higher incoming level produces more saturation. SAT affects both output channels, including the channel or component left dry by the EQ mode.

Output / -12 to +12 dB

Sets overall gain before Gain Match. Output, SAT, Gain Match and polarity are global controls. They do not follow the EQ channel selection.

Gain Match

Estimates input/output energy and smoothly compensates by up to +/-12 dB. Allow several seconds to settle. It is an RMS-style comparison aid, not a LUFS matcher; trust your ears as well as the meter.

Phase and Bypass

Phase reverses polarity on both channels. Bypass crossfades to latency-aligned dry audio over 10 ms. Host bypass uses the same path.

Processing quality

Fixed 2x oversampling is built in; there is no quality selector. The plugin reports its latency to the host. SAT is not a true-peak limiter, so keep watching peak levels downstream.

Read, edit and compare

Spectrum and response

PRE, POST and BOTH select the live 2048-point spectrum. The left +/-12 dB scale belongs to the EQ response; spectrum amplitude uses dBFS with a 0 to -72 dB display range. EQ toggles the response curves.

What the curves show

The colored curves show Tilt and Contour; white shows the combined linear EQ response, including the filters. These curves do not show SAT, Output or Gain Match. Colors follow the selected digital theme.

Graph handles and values

Drag the Tilt or Contour node horizontally to change frequency and vertically to change gain. The Tilt handle stays on the 0 dB pivot line. Drag knobs vertically; hold Shift for finer movement. Double-click a knob to reset it, or double-click its value to type. Frequency fields accept k notation, such as 1.2k.

Meters

IN and OUT show stereo sample peaks, not true peaks. The response plot can stay visible when playback stops; the spectrum and meters need incoming audio.

A/B/C and Undo/Redo

Store three audio settings with A/B/C and switch between them to compare. Undo/Redo retains up to 100 intentional GUI edits. Host automation remains authoritative and does not become part of the GUI undo history.

Presets and appearances

60 starting points

Banks cover START HERE, drums, bass, guitars, vocals, keys, mix bus and mastering, plus Init. Use presets as starting settings and adjust for your recording and level.

Find and keep your settings

Click the preset name to open the browser, then search or choose a category. Arrows step through presets and the star marks favorites. Save, rename and delete your own presets; factory presets are protected. Click outside or press Escape to close the browser.

Five themes, one EQ

Press the shark logo to cycle Blue Digital, Black Analog, Silver Analog, Purple Digital and Green Digital. The digital themes use the approved smaller matte knobs. All five appearances share the same sound and controls.

What your session remembers

Audio parameters, A/B/C states and the selected theme are saved with the host session. Theme, zoom and analyzer preferences survive editor closing. Preset recall and A/B/C changes do not change your theme.

Menu and window size

Open the hamburger menu for zoom, Manual, Credits / About and license information. Zoom spans 50-120%; a fresh instance uses 75%.

Try it on a track

These are suggested experiments, not automatic corrections.

Dark mix / Tilt +0.5 to +1.5 dB

Start near a 650 Hz pivot and leave Contour flat. Compare at matched level. If cymbals become too bright, reduce Tilt before adding other processing.

Thick low mids / Contour -1 to -3 dB

Try a broad Contour centered around 350-600 Hz. Leave Link off so the center can move independently of the Tilt pivot. Stop before the source loses body.

Hard or thin source / Tilt -0.5 to -1.5 dB

A gentle negative tilt can rebalance brightness and weight. Adjust Pivot while listening to the whole source, then use a small Contour boost only if it needs more body.

Side information / small moves

Select Side to adjust tonal balance in the difference signal. Compare stereo and mono in your DAW. Remember that SAT and the level controls still affect both output channels.

A useful comparison habit

Put the original in A and your adjustment in B. Alternate while listening to the same phrase. A good setting should keep working when the level advantage is removed.

Setup and troubleshooting

Find the plugin

Look for Shark Filthy Q under Shark Plugs in your DAW. The project targets AU and VST3 on macOS. The approved interface has been run in the user's DAW; broader host and Intel/Apple Silicon validation is still in progress.

Building the current source package

Open Shark Filthy Q.jucer in Projucer with JUCE 9.0.2 module paths configured, then Save. Run `Build_and_Install.command` on the Mac. Restart or rescan your DAW. The project targets macOS 12 or later and requests arm64/x86_64 builds; this is not a signed installer.

No sound or unexpected tone

Check the DAW input, Bypass, Output and channel mode. Try Init - Clean Start. On mono material, Side-only EQ has no difference signal to change. Turn SAT off when comparing clean EQ behavior.

No scan or a build error

Keep the first actual compiler or host error and `Shark_Filthy_Q_Install.log`. Confirm the installed plugin bundle contains an executable. Remove only Shark Filthy Q.component or Shark Filthy Q.vst3 if uninstalling; keep user presets unless you intend to delete them.

Support and version

This guide describes version 0.1.2. Use the support page at sharkplugins.com with your DAW, macOS version and a short description of the issue. Commercial activation and purchase routing are not connected in this development build.