

PSYCHOACOUSTIC SOUND SHAPER

SHARK SUBLIMINAL

Shape what the listener feels.

A musical finishing processor for producers, mix engineers and mastering engineers who want control over impact, openness, density, tone, motion and width—without building a long chain.



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01 / THE IDEA

One decision above a complete chain.

Subliminal combines tone shaping, program-dependent dynamics, harmonic density, transient behavior, stereo control and parallel blending in one instrument. The central Influence control scales the audible transformation, while the surrounding controls determine how that transformation behaves.

The operating principle

- 1 Choose a character.
- 2 Raise Influence until the intention is obvious.
- 3 Balance Control and Energy.
- 4 Refine transient, motion, tone and width.
- 5 Use Gain Match and Delta before committing.



02 / QUICK START

A result in sixty seconds.

01 Load a preset close to the job

Start in MASTER, MIX BUS, DRUMS, VOCALS, BASS, GUITARS, KEYS & SYNTHS, INSTRUMENTS, RESCUE or CREATIVE.

02 Choose the engine

FINISH is balanced; OPEN is spacious; LIFT adds forward energy; PUNCH protects impact; SMOOTH softens movement; DENSITY adds weight.

03 Raise Influence

Move from 0% until the sonic intention is clear. Back down slightly for mastering; push harder for production or parallel work.

04 Set Control and Energy

Control determines how firmly the dynamics are held. Energy determines how strongly harmonic and forward motion is introduced.

05 Check honestly

Toggle Gain Match, listen to Delta, check mono, and trim Output so the processed result wins for sound—not level.

MASTERING RULE

If the change disappears when level-matched, it was probably loudness. If it remains useful at the same perceived level, it is shaping.

03 / SIX PROCESSING CHARACTERS

Choose behavior before parameters.

FINISH

Balanced glue, restrained saturation and final-record cohesion.

BEST STARTING POINTS

Master, mix bus, instrument buses.

OPEN

Lower ratio and added openness for breathing room and separation.

BEST STARTING POINTS

Dense mixes, vocals, acoustic material.

LIFT

Forward energy and upper-detail movement without a static brightness boost.

BEST STARTING POINTS

Vocals, keys, guitars, dull buses.

PUNCH

Crest-aware protection that lets important attacks speak through.

BEST STARTING POINTS

Drums, bass, rhythmic masters.

SMOOTH

Gentler ratio and softer dynamic movement for calm, polished control.

BEST STARTING POINTS

Harsh vocals, strings, bright mixes.

DENSITY

Lower threshold and stronger nonlinear drive for weight and body.

BEST STARTING POINTS

Parallel buses, drums, thin material.

04 / MAIN CONTROLS

The musical control surface.

INFLUENCE

Global intensity. At 0%, the core processor is neutral; as it rises, tone, dynamics and character become more audible.

CONTROL

Sets the working threshold and ratio of the program-dependent dynamics. Higher values hold the body more firmly.

ENERGY

Scales saturation and forward character. Its exact feel changes with the selected engine.

BLEND

Parallel dry/wet mix after the character engine. Use lower settings for parallel excitement and subtle finishing.

WIDTH

Scales the side signal from 0% mono to 200% wide. Its effective change follows Influence.

INPUT / OUTPUT TRIM -18 to +18 dB gain staging. Input changes how hard the processor is driven; Output sets final level.



05 / TRANSIENT, MOTION AND TONE

Shape time and spectral impression.

TRANSIENT — ATTACK / SUSTAIN

A bipolar control that changes fast-versus-slow detector timing. Positive values favor attack definition; negative values lean toward sustain and softness.

MOTION — AMOUNT / FLOW

Changes detector release behavior and therefore the way the processor breathes between events. Lower values feel tighter; higher values create slower, more flowing recovery.

TONE — LOW / HIGH

Program-scaled low and high shelves centered around approximately 180 Hz and 5.5 kHz. The audible gain follows Influence so the tonal contour grows with the overall effect.

LISTEN FOR THE ENVELOPE, NOT THE GRAPH

The response displays communicate direction. Final settings should be judged from attack shape, vocal consonants, low-end recovery and how the groove returns after each peak.

06 / MONITORING AND COMPARISON

Trust the decision.

GAIN REDUCTION

PRE, BODY and POST divide the displayed reduction into three perceptual stages. They are meters, not controls.

INPUT / OUTPUT METERS

Stereo peak meters show signal activity and return to zero when transport stops.

GAIN MATCH

Slow RMS compensation, limited to ± 6 dB, reduces level bias during processed-versus-dry comparison.

DELTA

Outputs the difference between processed and dry signals. Use it to hear what is being added, removed or reshaped.

BYPASS

Uses a short smoothed transition to avoid abrupt switching artifacts.

A / B / C

Three internal comparison slots. Each slot stores a complete processing state while the interface theme remains unchanged when switching.

07 / WIDTH AND MONO SAFE

Open the field. Protect the foundation.

Width operates in mid/side: the mid channel remains the anchor while the side channel is scaled. Mono Safe removes low-frequency side information below approximately 150 Hz, keeping bass energy centered while the upper spectrum remains spacious.



PRACTICAL CHECK

1. Set Width while the full mix is playing.
2. Toggle Mono Safe and listen to kick, bass and low synths.
3. Collapse the monitor path to mono.
4. If the center loses authority, reduce Width or Influence.
5. Recheck after any large tone or density move.

IMPORTANT

Mono Safe is a protection tool, not permission to ignore correlation and mono listening.

Fast starting points, not finished answers.

The factory library contains 100 presets organized into ten practical categories. Category headers follow the active accent color; preset names remain white for fast navigation.

MASTER

MIX BUS

DRUMS

VOCALS

BASS

GUITARS

KEYS & SYNTHS

INSTRUMENTS

RESCUE

CREATIVE

- FAVORITE

Star the presets you want to revisit.
- TRASH

Hide presets that do not belong in your personal workflow.
- ARROWS

Move through the visible library while hidden entries are skipped.
- THEMES

Click the Shark logo to cycle Red, Purple, Green, Blue and Yellow. Theme does not alter audio.

09 / ENGINEER WORKFLOWS

Four dependable starting workflows.

MASTER — POLISHED MOTION

- Choose FINISH or SMOOTH.
- Influence 10–25%.
- Control 25–45%; Energy 20–40%.
- Width 95–115%; Mono Safe on when needed.
- Gain-match before deciding.

DRUM BUS — KEEP THE HIT

- Choose PUNCH.
- Influence 25–50%.
- Raise Transient toward attack.
- Use Blend 60–90% for parallel authority.
- Watch BODY reduction and preserve groove.

VOCAL — FORWARD WITHOUT EDGE

- Choose OPEN, LIFT or SMOOTH.
- Use modest Influence.
- Raise High tone only after Tame/Smooth behavior is right.
- Use Motion to place breaths and phrase recovery.
- Delta-check consonants and sibilance.

RESCUE — LIFE INTO A FLAT MIX

- Start from RESCUE presets.
- Try OPEN or LIFT before adding Density.
- Use low Energy, then add only what survives Gain Match.
- Keep Width conservative until the center works.
- Finish with Output Trim at matched loudness.

10 / SIGNAL FLOW AND DSP NOTES

What happens under the surface.

INPUT TRIM

TONE SHELVES

DUAL ENVELOPES

DYNAMIC GAIN

ENGINE COLOR

WIDTH / MONO SAFE

BLEND

GAIN MATCH

DELTA

BYPASS

OUTPUT TRIM

PROGRAM-DEPENDENT DETECTION

Fast and slow envelopes estimate crest behavior and body level. Engine, Control, Transient and Motion alter how those envelopes drive gain and recovery.

NONLINEAR COLOR

A normalized tanh stage adds harmonic density. Drive depends on Influence, Energy and engine selection; DENSITY is intentionally the strongest.

tone SCALING

Low and high shelf gain scales with Influence. This keeps the tonal curve integrated with the overall transformation instead of acting as a disconnected EQ.

SAFE TRANSITIONS

Trim, Gain Match and bypass are smoothed to reduce zipper noise and abrupt switching artifacts.

11 / VERIFICATION AND TROUBLESHOOTING

Before a session becomes a release.

- 01 Confirm Influence at 0% is neutral except trim and Mono Safe routing.
- 02 Sweep every control at minimum, midpoint and maximum.
- 03 Check Width at 0%, 100% and 200%, then audition mono.
- 04 Verify meters stop when transport stops.
- 05 Compare every engine on the same source at matched loudness.
- 06 Test presets, favorites, trash, arrows, A/B/C, Undo and Redo.
- 07 Save, close and reopen the DAW session; confirm exact state recall.
- 08 Test AU and VST3 in supported hosts at 44.1, 48, 96 and 192 kHz.
- 09 Inspect resizing at minimum, default and maximum sizes.
- 10 Listen for clicks when changing Bypass, Delta, presets or engines.

SUPPORT NOTE

When reporting an issue, include DAW, plugin format, operating system, sample rate, buffer size, exact preset and repeatable steps. Audio before/after files make diagnosis dramatically faster.