SoX Audio swiss knife

START HERE

soxi *<file>*
Show file info

play *<file>*
Play audio

rec *<file>*
Record from mic

sox *<in>* *<out>*
Convert format

sox *<in>* *<out>* **trim 10 30**
Cut a piece

sox *<in>* *<out>* **rate 16k**
Resample

sox *<in>* *<out>* **norm**
Normalize peak

sox *<in>* **-n spectrogram**
Draw spectrogram

Input file(s) read, decoded → **combine** → **Effects chain** trim, gain, rate... → **encode** → **Output file** type from extension

CONCEPTS

Command shape: sox [global] [format opts] in... [format opts] out [effect args...]. Effects run left to right on the way to the output file.

Format options (-r -c -b -t) apply to the file name that follows them; the output extension picks the type. Effects go after the output name.

The sox on many distros (14.4.2) may lack MP3 support; install the libsox mp3 plugin if mp3 files fail. The sox_ng fork documented here is otherwise compatible.

INSPECT AND PLAY

soxi *<file>*
Show format, rate, channels, duration

soxi -D *<file>*
Duration in seconds

soxi -r *<file>*
Sample rate only

soxi -c *<file>*
Channel count only

soxi -T -d *<files>*
Total duration of several files

play *<file>*
Play through the default device

play *<file>* **trim 30**
Play starting at 30 seconds

play -n synth 3 sine 440
Play a 3 s test tone

sox *<in>* **-n stat**
Level statistics, no output

sox *<in>* **-n stats**
Peak, RMS and crest summary

RECORD

rec *<file>*
Record from default input until Ctrl+C

rec -c 1 -r 16k *<file>*
Record mono 16 kHz

rec *<file>* **trim 0 60**
Record for 60 seconds

rec *<file>* **silence 1 0.1 1% 1 2.0 1%**
Auto start and stop on silence

sox -d *<file>*
Same as rec, with sox directly

sox *<in>* **-d**
Same as play, with sox directly

CONVERT AND FORMAT

sox *<in.wav>* *<out.flac>*
Convert, type from extension

sox *<in>* **-r 44100** *<out>*
Set output sample rate

sox *<in>* **-c 1** *<out>*
Set output channel count

sox *<in>* **-b 16** *<out>*
Set output bit depth

sox *<in>* **-e signed-integer** *<out>*
Set encoding

sox -t raw -r 48k -e signed -b 16 -c 2 *<in.raw>* *<out.wav>*
Wrap raw PCM in a header

sox *<in>* **-t wav -**
Write to stdout as WAV

sox -t wav - *<out>*
Read from stdin

sox *<in>* *<out>* **dither**
Add dither on bit-depth reduction

sox -V3 *<in>* *<out>*
Show processing details

TRIM, JOIN AND MIX

sox *<in>* *<out>* **trim** *<start>* *<len>*
Cut a piece by start and length

sox *<in>* *<out>* **trim** *<start>* **=***<end>*
Cut up to an absolute position

sox *<in>* *<out>* **trim 0 -5**
Drop the last 5 seconds

sox *<a>* *<b>* *<out>*
Concatenate files
Inputs need the same rate and channels, or sox converts to the first file's.

sox -m *<a>* *<b>* *<out>*
Mix files on top of each other

sox -M *<l.wav>* *<r.wav>* *<out>*
Merge mono files into channels

sox *<in>* *<out>* **remix 1**
Keep only the left channel

sox *<in>* *<out>* **remix 1,2**
Mix both channels to mono

sox *<in>* *<out>* **pad 2 0**
Add 2 s silence at the start

sox *<in>* *<out>* **repeat 2**
Play the audio 3 times

sox *<in>* *<out>* **reverse**
Reverse the audio

TRIM, JOIN AND MIX (cont.)

sox *<a>* *<b>* *<out>* **splice -q** *<pos>*
Cross-fade join at position

sox *<in>* *<out>* **trim 0 10 : newfile : restart**
Split into pieces of 10 s

sox *<in>* *<out>* **channels 2**
Convert to stereo

VOLUME AND FADES

sox *<in>* *<out>* **norm**
Normalize peak to 0 dBFS

sox *<in>* *<out>* **norm -3**
Normalize peak to -3 dBFS

sox *<in>* *<out>* **gain** *<dB>*
Change level by dB

sox *<in>* *<out>* **vol** *<factor>*
Multiply amplitude by a factor

sox -v *<factor>* *<in>* *<out>*
Scale input before combining

sox *<in>* *<out>* **gain -l** *<dB>*
Boost with a simple limiter

sox *<in>* *<out>* **fade** *<in-s>* **0** *<out-s>*
Fade in and out
Fade-out needs the stop position; 0 means the end of the file. The input length must be known.

sox *<in>* *<out>* **fade t 3**
Linear 3 s fade-in only

sox *<in>* *<out>* **compand 0.3,1 6:-70,-60,-20 -5 -90 0.2**
Compress dynamic range

sox --norm *<a>* *<b>* *<out>*
Normalize whatever the mix produces

RATE, SPEED AND PITCH

sox *<in>* *<out>* **rate** *<hz>*
Resample to a rate

sox *<in>* *<out>* **rate -v 48k**
Resample, very high quality

sox *<in>* *<out>* **speed** *<factor>*
Change speed and pitch together

sox *<in>* *<out>* **tempo** *<factor>*
Change speed, keep the pitch

sox *<in>* *<out>* **pitch** *<cents>*
Shift pitch, keep the speed
100 cents are one semitone.

FILTERS AND CLEAN-UP

sox *<in>* *<out>* **highpass** *<hz>*
Cut low rumble

sox *<in>* *<out>* **lowpass** *<hz>*
Cut high hiss

sox *<in>* *<out>* **bass** *<dB>*
Boost or cut the lows

sox *<in>* *<out>* **treble** *<dB>*
Boost or cut the highs

sox *<in>* *<out>* **equalizer** *<hz>* *<width>***q** *<dB>*
Adjust one frequency band

sox *<in>* *<out>* **silence 1 0.1 1% -1 0.5 1%**
Trim silence at start and end

sox *<in>* *<out>* **silence -l 1 0.1 1% -1 1.0 1%**
Cap long silences, keep gaps

sox *<noise.wav>* **-n noiseprof** *<prof>*
Learn a noise profile

sox *<in>* *<out>* **noisered** *<prof>* **0.21**
Reduce noise with the profile

ANALYSE AND GENERATE

sox *<in>* **-n spectrogram**
Write spectrogram.png

sox *<in>* **-n spectrogram -o** *<out.png>*
Spectrogram to a chosen PNG

sox -n *<out>* **synth 3 sine 440**
Generate a 3 s sine tone

sox -n *<out>* **trim 0 5**
Generate 5 s of silence

RECIPES

Podcast clean-up and normalize

```
sox raw.wav out.wav highpass 80 \
  silence 1 0.1 1% -1 0.5 1% \
  gain -n -3
```

Speech data for ASR (16 kHz mono)

```
sox in.mp3 -r 16k -c 1 -b 16 out.wav
```

Mix voice over music

```
# music at 30% volume, ends with the voice
sox -m voice.wav -v 0.3 music.wav out.wav trim 0 $(soxi -D voice.wav)
```

Spectrogram of one minute

```
sox in.flac -n trim 0 60 spectrogram -x 1200 -o spec.png
```