



The Tapesmith Manual

Record your screen, your cameras and your voice at once. Get back a finished video.

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1. Welcome to Tapesmith

1.1 What Tapesmith does

Most screen recorders give you a file. Tapesmith gives you a finished video.

While you work, it records your screen, your camera or cameras, your microphone and the sound coming out of your Mac, and composites them into one frame in real time. When you are done, it transcribes what you said, burns in animated captions, cuts the silence, removes the filler words, balances your voice against your music, and sets the whole thing to a loudness that sounds right on a phone.

It was built for music producers talking over a DAW, so the audio decisions are made with music in mind: your voice sits on top, the music ducks under it and comes back, and nothing gets squashed on the way out. It works just as well for anything else on your screen.

Everything happens on your Mac. Your audio is transcribed on-device. Nothing is uploaded.

1.2 What you need

Mac	Apple Silicon (M1 or later)
macOS	14.2 Sonoma or later
Camera	Optional. Built-in, USB, iPhone Continuity Camera, or any phone over Wi-Fi
Microphone	Optional. Built-in, USB, or an audio interface
Disk	A few GB free. Recordings are large, and Tapesmith stops a take safely if the disk runs low

Headphones are strongly recommended when you are talking over music. See [9.8 Headphones](#).

1.3 How to use this manual

You do not need to read it in order.

- **New to Tapesmith?** Read [2. First Steps](#) and [3. Tapesmith Concepts](#). Fifteen minutes, and everything after that will make sense.
- **Looking for one control?** Every panel has its own chapter (6 through 16), and [22. Settings Reference](#) lists every setting with its default in one table.
- **Something is wrong?** Go straight to [20. Troubleshooting](#).

- **Want better results?** 19. Getting the Best Results is the short list of habits that make the biggest difference.

Tip boxes look like this. They are optional advice, not required steps.

2. First Steps

2.1 Installing Tapesmith

Download Tapesmith from **tapesmith.app**. There are two ways to install it, and both give you exactly the same app.

The installer (recommended). Open the downloaded `.pkg` and follow the steps: Welcome, the licence agreement, Install, done. It puts Tapesmith in your Applications folder for you.

The disk image. If you prefer the classic Mac way, download the `.dmg` instead, then drag **Tapesmith** into your **Applications** folder and eject the image.

Both downloads are signed with an Apple Developer ID and notarized by Apple, so macOS recognizes them and opens Tapesmith normally.

2.2 Opening it the first time

Double-click Tapesmith in Applications, or open it from the Dock or Spotlight. There is no unlock step and no security workaround to perform.

The first launch asks for the permissions it needs, one at a time, as described next.

2.3 Keeping it up to date

Tapesmith checks once a day whether a newer version exists. When there is one, a small banner appears in the window: **Tapesmith 1.1 is available**, with a **Get it** button that takes you to the download.

The check is a plain request for a file on tapesmith.app. It sends nothing at all: no identifiers, no license, no information about you or your Mac.

Staying current is worth it. Each release is where fixes and new features arrive.

2.4 Granting permissions

Tapesmith asks for permissions the first time it needs them. Each one is used for exactly one thing:

PERMISSION	USED FOR	ASKED WHEN
Screen Recording	Recording your screen and your Mac's audio	First launch
Camera	Filming you	First time you turn on Webcam
Microphone	Recording your voice	First time you turn on Microphone
Local Network	Letting a phone on your Wi-Fi act as a camera	First time you open Connect a Phone

Screen Recording is the one that needs care. macOS only applies a newly granted Screen Recording permission after the app restarts. If your screen shows as black, or a yellow banner appears at the top of the window:

1. Click **Open Settings**. macOS opens **Privacy & Security > Screen Recording**.
2. Switch **Tapesmith** on.
3. Come back and click **Relaunch** in the banner.

Tapesmith quits and reopens itself, and the permission takes effect.

Tip: If your camera is black, quit any other app that might be holding it (Zoom, FaceTime, Photo Booth, OBS). Only one app can use a camera at a time.

2.5 Your trial and subscription

Tapesmith comes with a **7-day free trial**. No card, nothing to enter. A small pill in the window counts the days down.

When the trial ends, Tapesmith stops starting **new** recordings. Everything you have already recorded and saved stays yours, in your Movies folder, forever. Nothing is locked, watermarked or removed.

A subscription is **\$19 per month** or **\$149 per year**, and covers **2 Macs**. Cancel anytime.

To activate on a Mac: click **Already subscribed? Sign in**, enter the email you subscribed with, and Tapesmith activates on that machine.

If you go offline: Tapesmith keeps working. It checks your subscription periodically, and if it cannot reach the internet for a while it shows a friendly banner with a date, and keeps recording until then. Connect to the internet once before that date and it renews silently.

If a Mac cannot reach the internet at all, for example a studio machine that is deliberately kept offline, you can still activate it. On the sign-in sheet, click **Can't connect? Activate with a license file**. Tapesmith shows a **machine code** for that Mac. Email it to support@tapesmith.app and you will get back a license file

for that machine, which you paste into the same sheet and click **Activate this Mac**.

2.6 The welcome question

The very first time Tapesmith opens, it asks one question:

What do you want to make?

Pick one of four answers and Tapesmith configures itself around it: format, captions, silence trimming, motion effects, the lot. This is the same thing as the **Quick Setup** menu, which stays available forever in the header, so you are not locked into your answer. See [5. Quick Setup Presets](#).

There is also **I'm just exploring**, which changes nothing.

After you answer, Tapesmith highlights the two panels a preset deliberately leaves to you: **CAMERA** and **AUDIO**. Those are your personal hardware picks, and only you know which mic and which camera you want.

3. Tapesmith Concepts

Five ideas explain almost everything about how Tapesmith behaves. They are worth the five minutes.

3.1 The Take

A **Take** is one continuous recording, from the moment you press Record to the moment you press it again.

Every take is written to its own finished file the instant you stop. It is not held in memory, not pending, not at risk. If your Mac crashes on take 5, takes 1 through 4 are already complete files sitting in your Movies folder.

3.2 The Session

A **Session** is all the takes you record before you press Finish & Export.

This is the part that makes Tapesmith feel like a studio instead of a screen recorder. You do not record one perfect pass. You record a take, listen back, record another, scrap a bad one, keep going. Each press of Record **banks** a take. The counter under the record button shows how many you have banked and how long you have been rolling.

When you press **Finish & Export**, Tapesmith stitches every banked take together in the order you recorded them and runs the whole batch through the edit in one pass.

While a session is active, your settings are locked. You cannot change the format halfway through a session, because takes 1 and 2 would not match take 3.

3.3 The Bubble

The **Bubble** is the circular webcam inset that floats over your screen recording. One camera is live in the Bubble at a time, and you switch between cameras during a take.

The Bubble is one of three ways you can appear. See [7.4 How you appear](#).

3.4 The HUD

The **HUD** is the small floating control strip that hovers over your DAW while you record. It has the record button, a timer, the fps meter, and the camera switch buttons.

It exists so you never have to leave your DAW to run a take. **It never appears in the recording.** Tapesmith excludes it from what it captures.

3.5 What Finish & Export actually does

Knowing the order helps you understand why some things are possible and others are not. When you press **Finish & Export**, Tapesmith runs these stages in sequence:

1. **Combine.** Every banked take is joined in order into one video.
2. **Find filler words.** If Remove filler words is on, Tapesmith locates every um, uh, ah, er and mm, and shows you the list to confirm. See 12. [The Filler Word Review](#).
3. **Remove filler words.** Confirmed fillers are cut or erased.
4. **Set loudness for social.** The whole mix is measured and brought to a social-ready loudness. See 9.7 [Automatic loudness](#).
5. **Remove pauses & dead air.** Silent gaps are jump-cut out.
6. **Tighten the edit.** The cuts are cleaned up so nothing clips a word.
7. **Transcribe for subtitles.** Your voice is transcribed on-device with word-level timing.
8. **Review & Adjust.** Tapesmith stops and shows you the result, with the captions editable, before it renders anything final. See 13. [Review & Adjust](#).
9. **Save.** Captions are burned in and the final file is written.

The status line under the record button names each stage as it runs.

3.6 Live-safe and post-only

Some Tapesmith features happen **while** you record. Others happen **after**.

Live features run in the recorded frame in real time: the camera Bubble, Green Screen Mode, camera switching, the polished card look, cursor follow, auto zoom, your logo, and the voice and music mix.

Post-only features cannot exist until the recording is finished, because they need the whole file: subtitles, remove pauses & dead air, remove filler words, and the Review & Adjust screen.

This is why post-only features grey out the moment you set up a livestream. A live broadcast has no "after." Tapesmith still saves a full-quality local copy while you stream, and you can caption that copy afterward by dragging it back onto the window. See 17. [Re-Captioning Any Video](#).

4. The Main Window

Everything lives in one window. There is no menu of hidden preferences.

4.1 The header

Across the top:

- **TAPESMITH** wordmark on the left.
- **Trial pill**, showing days left, if you are on a trial.
- **HUD button**. Toggles the floating controls that appear over your DAW. On by default.
- **Phone button**. Opens Connect a Phone. See 8. Using a Phone as a Camera.
- **Help button (?)**. Opens **How Tapesmith Works**, a short in-app guide with troubleshooting and a one-tap support email that pre-fills your app and macOS version.

4.2 Quick Setup

Under the header. Click it and pick what you are making; Tapesmith sets the rest. Available at any time, not just on first launch. See 5. Quick Setup Presets.

4.3 Format

Two buttons:

- **9:16** for Reels, TikTok and Shorts. Renders at 1080 x 1920.
- **16:9** for YouTube long-form. Renders at 1920 x 1080.

Format changes the shape of everything downstream: how you are framed, how captions wrap, whether the 9:16 motion effects apply. Choose it first.

4.4 The settings panels

Seven collapsible panels. Click a header to open it; opening one closes the others, so the window never scrolls away from you.

PANEL	WHAT LIVES THERE
CAPTURE	What gets recorded: screen or iPhone, area, one app only, framing
CAMERA	Webcam on/off, which cameras, how you appear, Green Screen Mode
AUDIO	Microphone, voice level, voice cleanup, the level meters
SUBTITLES & EDITING	Captions, dead air removal, filler word removal
BRANDING	Logo and watermark
LIVESTREAM	Platform, stream key, go live
9:16 MOTION	Follow cursor, auto zoom on clicks

Many rows have a small **(i)** button. Tap it for a plain-language explanation of what that setting does, written for that exact situation (the text changes depending on what else is switched on).

4.5 The live preview

The right side of the window shows a live preview of exactly what will be recorded: your camera, your framing, your split ratio, your logo. What you see is what gets composited.

When the webcam is on but you are not recording, the preview shows your camera so you can frame yourself. The number keys switch cameras here too, so you can check all four before you roll.

In **Split screen** mode, drag the line between the two panels in the preview to set how much space each side gets.

4.6 Levels

Below the preview, before you record, two bars:

- **VOICE.** Your microphone.
- **MUSIC.** What your DAW or player is actually putting out.

Get both into the green and Tapesmith balances the rest.

The music bar shows the level Tapesmith **records**, which is your DAW's own output, not your headphone volume. Turning your headphones up does not move it. Turning your DAW's master up does.

Once a take starts, the left column switches to a single live meter of the recording.

4.7 The record bar and status line

The big button at the bottom. It reads **RECORD**, then **NEXT TAKE** while a session is running, and shows how many takes are banked and how long you have been going.

Around it:

- **Redo last take.** Scraps the previous take so you can do the line again.
- **Discard.** Throws away every take in the session and unlocks your settings.
- **Finish & Export.** Ends the session and starts the edit.

The **status line** narrates everything: which take is recording, which stage of the export is running, what saved and where. When something goes wrong it says so explicitly, with the reason.

4.8 The fps meter

A small number next to the record controls, and on the HUD. It shows how many frames per second Tapesmith is actually capturing, and it is colored:

- **Green.** Your Mac is keeping up.
- **Amber.** It is starting to fall behind.
- **Red.** It is struggling.

This matters most at the very start of a take, when your Mac is spinning everything up. See [10.9 Reading the fps meter](#).

5. Quick Setup Presets

A preset points the whole app at one scenario in a single click.

5.1 The four presets

	REELS, TIKTOK & SHORTS	LONG-FORM YOUTUBE	LIVESTREAM	TUTORIALS
Format	9:16	16:9	16:9	16:9
Auto subtitles	On	On	Off	On
Remove pauses	On	Off	Off	On
Polished card look	On	Off	Off	Off
Fill frame	On	On	On	On
Auto zoom on clicks	On	Off	Off	On
Follow cursor	On	Off	Off	On

All four also set: full Mac screen, webcam on, microphone on, voice cleanup on, countdown on, filler word removal off, and the Bubble appearance.

The reasoning behind each:

- **Reels, TikTok & Shorts.** Vertical, captioned, silence trimmed, polished card, and the cinematic motion effects on, because that is what short-form rewards.
- **Long-form YouTube.** Wide and captioned, but the editing is kept light so the video breathes. No motion effects, no silence trimming; long-form needs pacing, not compression.
- **Livestream.** Wide and live-safe only. Everything post-only is switched off rather than left on and greyed out, so nothing surprises you.
- **Tutorials & walkthroughs.** Wide, captioned, silence trimmed, with cursor follow and click zoom on, so a 9:16 cut of the same take still tracks the pointer.

After you click one, the status line names exactly what changed, including that it trims silence. A preset is never a hidden surprise.

5.2 What a preset never touches

A preset owns the **scenario**. It never touches what is **yours**:

- Which microphone and which camera you picked
- Your voice level
- Your phone camera connection
- Your logo and branding
- Your caption color
- Your pause removal strength
- Your split screen ratio
- Your stream keys

Set those once and they survive every preset click.

5.3 When presets are locked

Quick Setup does nothing while a session is active or an export is running. You cannot change the scenario halfway through a batch of takes. Finish or discard the session first.

6. Capture

What actually goes in the frame.

6.1 Main feed: Mac screen or iPhone screen

Two buttons at the top of the panel.

- **Mac screen** is the normal choice: this Mac's display, or a region of it.
- **iPhone screen** puts a connected iPhone's screen in the frame instead. See 6.6.

6.2 Capture area

- **Full screen** records everything.
- **Set area** lets you draw a rectangle. Tapesmith shows the selector with your current format's aspect ratio so what you draw matches what you get.
- **Freeform** inside the selector lets you draw any shape, not just a rectangle.

Tip: A region that roughly matches your output shape gives the sharpest result. A very wide region squeezed into 9:16 wastes most of the frame.

6.3 Record one app's window and audio only

RECORD ONE APP'S WINDOW & AUDIO ONLY

On: Tapesmith records only that one app. Its windows, including its plugin windows, and only its sound. Audio from other apps (a browser, Spotify, a reference track) is left out. Your microphone always comes through regardless.

Off: your whole screen (or the region you set) and the sound from every app on your Mac.

When it is on, a picker appears listing the apps Tapesmith can see. The refresh button next to it rescans for newly opened apps.

Tip: Shape the app's window roughly to your output ratio. A very wide window in a 16:9 frame adds black bars top and bottom. Keep the window a good size on screen for a sharp result.

6.4 Fill frame

FILL FRAME (crop to remove black bars). 16:9 only.

On: your screen fills the whole 16:9 frame. A screen wider than 16:9 (an ultrawide) is cropped left and right, so keep your key content near the middle.

Off: your entire screen is shown, and a non-16:9 screen gets black bars top and bottom.

6.5 Polished card look

POLISHED CARD LOOK (backdrop + shadow). 9:16 only.

Rounds your screen's corners, adds a soft shadow, and sets it on a gradient backdrop, like a floating card. It is the difference between "a screenshot" and "a designed video."

It is not available in **Split screen** mode, because each panel already fills its half of the frame edge to edge, so there is no card to frame.

6.6 Using your iPhone screen as the main feed

Tapesmith can record an iPhone's screen as the main feed, on a clean backdrop, with your face as a Bubble on top.

1. Plug the iPhone into this Mac with a cable.
2. Tap **Trust** on the phone if it asks.
3. Click **Refresh**, then pick your iPhone from the list.

About the audio. Your Mac plays the iPhone's audio at your system volume while recording, so you can hear it. Use your Mac's volume keys to set how loud that is. If you are talking over phone audio, keep your Mac at **50% or less** so it does not cover your voice.

The recording always captures the phone's audio at full quality, even if it sounds quiet to you live. What you hear is monitoring, not the recording.

7. Camera

7.1 Webcam

WEBCAM turns your camera on. Everything else in this panel appears only when it is on.

7.2 Choosing up to four cameras

Under the toggle is a strip of camera slots. Add up to **4**.

The number on each slot is the key you press to cut to it while recording. Camera 1 is key 1, camera 2 is key 2, and so on. Phones connected over Wi-Fi appear after your Mac cameras, so a phone typically becomes camera 2 or 3.

The refresh button rescans, which you need after plugging in a new camera or connecting an iPhone by Continuity.

7.3 Switching cameras while recording

This is the feature people forget they have. Three ways, all live, all mid-take:

- **Tap a camera on the HUD.** The floating bar hovers over your DAW. Nothing to set up.
- **Press `⌘1` / `⌘2` / `⌘3` / `⌘4`** from anywhere, including inside your DAW.
- **Press plain `1` / `2` / `3` / `4`** while the Tapesmith window is focused.

The cut is a fast crossfade, roughly 0.15 seconds, not a hard jump.

7.4 How you appear

Three options:

Bubble. A circular inset floating over your screen. The classic look, and the default.

Square. The same idea with a rounded square instead of a circle.

Split screen. You get your own panel and the screen gets its own. In 9:16 you are on top and the screen is below. In 16:9 you are on the left and the screen is on the right.

The important thing about Split screen: **your whole screen always stays visible.** It scales down to fit its panel instead of being cropped, so nothing you are pointing at ever falls off the edge.

7.5 Split screen and the divider

In the live preview, drag the line between the two panels to set how much space each side gets. It defaults to 60/40 in favour of your camera in 9:16, and 50/50 in 16:9, because a wide screen next to you needs more room than one below you.

The percentages are shown under the preview as you drag.

7.6 Swapping the big view and the corner bubble

Normally your screen is the big view and your camera is the corner Bubble.

Press ` (the backtick, left of the 1 key) to swap them: your camera becomes the big view and your screen drops to the corner. Press it again to swap back.

Use **⌘`** to do this from inside your DAW.

This is the single best tool for pacing. Swap to your face when you are explaining, swap back to the screen when you are demonstrating.

7.7 Green Screen Mode

GREEN SCREEN MODE (remove background), a virtual green screen.

Removes your camera's background so you appear standing over your screen, exactly the look a green screen gives you. You do not need one, and there is no lighting setup.

- Turning it **on in the panel** means your take **starts** in Green Screen Mode.
- Toggle it **live** anytime with the person button on the HUD, or press **⌘P** from anywhere, even inside your DAW.

It is available with Bubble and Square. Split screen does not use it, because you already have your own panel.

7.8 Live preview

Before you record, the preview shows your camera live so you can frame yourself. The number keys switch cameras here too, so you can check every angle before you roll.

8. Using a Phone as a Camera

Any phone on your Wi-Fi can be a camera. There is nothing to install on the phone.

8.1 How it works

Tapesmith runs a tiny secure web server on your Mac. The phone opens a link in its browser, and the browser streams its camera back to Tapesmith. Tapesmith treats it exactly like any other camera: it can be in the Bubble, it can be the big view, you can cut to it with a number key.

It works with iPhones and Android phones, and with your friends' phones. It never leaves your local network.

8.2 Connecting a phone

1. Click the **phone button** in the header.
2. Click **Start phone camera**.
3. On the phone, scan the QR code, or type the link shown.
4. Allow camera access when the phone's browser asks.

When frames arrive, the sheet shows a live preview with a **LIVE** badge.

8.3 The security warning

The phone's browser will show a warning about the connection not being private, or an unrecognized certificate. **This is expected, and it is safe.**

Browsers only allow a page to use the camera on a secure (HTTPS) connection. Tapesmith therefore creates its own security certificate on your Mac. Because that certificate was made by your Mac and not bought from a certificate company, the phone does not recognize the issuer and warns you once. Nothing is being intercepted; the connection is encrypted, and the video never leaves your Wi-Fi.

Tap **Advanced**, then **Proceed** (the wording varies by browser), and the camera page loads.

Every connection is also protected by a one-time pairing token embedded in the link, so nobody else on the same Wi-Fi can open the page or push frames into your recording.

8.4 Using it in a recording

Switch on **USE AS A CAMERA IN RECORDINGS**. The phone joins your camera list after your Mac cameras, and its number key cuts to it just like any other.

8.5 Troubleshooting

The phone will not connect. Click **Turn off phone camera** (in red), then **Start phone camera** again. That refreshes the address, which is the usual fix after your Mac changes Wi-Fi networks or gets a new IP. If that does not do it, quit and reopen Tapesmith.

The page loads but the camera is black. The browser was denied camera access. On iPhone, check Settings > Safari > Camera. On Android, check the site permissions from the padlock in the address bar. Then reload the page.

Both devices must be on the same Wi-Fi network. A guest network is usually a separate network and will not work.

9. Audio

The audio chain is the part of Tapesmith with the most thought behind it, and the part you should need to think about least.

9.1 Microphone

MICROPHONE turns your mic on, then a picker lists every input device on your Mac.

Tip: If you are on a real microphone, get close: about 6 to 8 inches, the same distance as if you were singing into it. A close mic gives a clean, strong voice with almost no hiss. Sitting far back makes your voice quiet and noisy, and Tapesmith has to boost it, which boosts the noise with it.

9.2 Mic input

If the selected device has more than one input channel (most audio interfaces do), a second picker appears: **MIC INPUT**.

Leave it on **Auto** and Tapesmith finds the channel with signal on it. Set it explicitly (Input 1, Input 2, and so on) if your interface has several things plugged in and you want to be certain which one is recorded.

9.3 Voice level

VOICE LEVEL sets how loud you sit in the mix, relative to your music. It runs from 0% to 200%, default 100%.

This is a mix control, not a gain control. It does not replace setting a healthy level on your interface. See [9.5 Levels](#).

9.4 Clean up my voice

CLEAN UP MY VOICE (hiss, fans, room, speaker bleed). On by default, and worth leaving on.

Tapesmith uses your Mac's built-in neural voice isolation to lift your voice out of everything around it. Microphone hiss, interface noise, computer fans, room tone and speaker bleed drop away, while your voice stays natural. It adds no delay.

Turn it off only if you are deliberately recording something other than speech through the microphone, such as an instrument or room ambience, since it is specifically tuned to keep human speech and discard the rest.

9.5 Levels

At the bottom of the Audio panel, two meters:

VOICE. Speak normally and watch it. Aim for the green.

MUSIC. Play your track and watch it. Aim for the green.

Get both into the green and Tapesmith balances the rest.

Two things worth understanding:

- The music bar shows the level Tapesmith **records**, which is your DAW's or player's own output. Your headphone volume does not affect it. If the music bar is too low, turn up your DAW's master, not your headphones.
- The voice bar is the level arriving from your interface. If you cannot reach green without leaning into the mic, turn up your interface's input gain rather than leaning. Set it so your loudest words peak around two thirds up, roughly -12 to -6 dB, exactly as you would when tracking a vocal.

This is the single biggest thing you can do for caption accuracy. Too quiet and the transcription misses words. Too hot and it distorts.

9.6 Ducking

Music automatically dips under your voice while you are speaking, and comes back up when you stop. There is no control for it because it does not need one; it is sidechained to your voice and tuned for speech over music.

9.7 Automatic loudness

Every export is measured and brought to a social-ready loudness, around -14 LUFS, which is where Instagram, TikTok and YouTube all sit.

If a mix needs more than a simple level lift to get there, a look-ahead limiter catches the handful of peaks (drum hits, plosives) that would otherwise pin the ceiling and hold the whole video quiet. It is a look-ahead limiter, not a compressor: it starts easing down **before** a peak arrives, so transients are shaped rather than clipped. The body of the mix comes up; the punch stays.

Nothing about this needs setting. It is measured per export.

9.8 Headphones

Wear headphones when you are talking over music. This is the one piece of advice worth repeating.

Speakers bleed into your microphone, and that includes your interface's studio monitors. When they do, your voice and the music arrive on the same track, which means the ducking cannot separate them, the voice cleanup has more to fight, and the transcription gets worse.

Everything still works on speakers. Tapesmith warns you when it detects them and does what it can. But headphones are the clean path, and the difference is audible.

10. Recording

10.1 Countdown

By default, each take begins with a 3-2-1 countdown so you are not caught mid-breath. It appears over the whole window.

The **3-2-1 COUNTDOWN TO LIVE** switch sits directly above the record button. It is visible whenever you are not already in a session, so you can turn it off for a take you want to start instantly.

To cancel during the countdown, tap the record button again. It reads Canceling and the take never starts.

10.2 Recording a take

Press **RECORD**. The status line says which take is rolling, the timer starts, and the HUD appears over whatever app you switch to.

Wait for the fps meter to go green before you start talking. This is the single habit that separates a smooth take from a choppy one, and it costs you two seconds.

When a take starts, your Mac is spinning up screen capture, your cameras and the encoder all at once, so the first moment is the busiest it will ever be. The meter often starts **red**. Glance at it, wait for **green**, then begin.

With **Remove pauses & dead air** on, that pause is cut from the video for free. With it off, it is a clean lead-in you can trim. Either beats a stuttering opening line, which no amount of editing can repair.

Everything you can change live is available now: camera switching, the big view swap, Green Screen Mode. Nothing else can change; your settings are locked for the session.

10.3 Banking takes

Press the record button again to stop. The take is written to its own finished file immediately, and the button becomes **NEXT TAKE**.

Record as many takes as you want. The counter reads something like **3 banked • 04:12**.

This is the workflow Tapesmith is built around: work like you are in a session. Start, stop, go again. Do not try to nail it in one pass.

10.4 Redo last take

Scraps the previous take so you can do that line again. Everything before it is untouched.

While a take is recording, the same button reads **Scrap this take** and throws away the one in progress.

10.5 Discarding a session

Discard throws away every take in the session and unlocks your settings.

Tapesmith asks first, and the takes go to the **Trash**, not to oblivion. They are recoverable until you empty it.

10.6 Finish & Export

Ends the session and starts the edit described in 3.5. Depending on what you have switched on, Tapesmith may stop twice to ask you something: once for the filler word review, once for Review & Adjust.

If the last take failed to save for some reason, Tapesmith tells you exactly that, keeps every earlier take, and lets you fix the problem (usually disk space) and press Finish again.

10.7 The HUD

The floating strip over your DAW. It carries:

- Record / stop
- The timer and banked take count, or **LIVE** while streaming
- The live fps meter
- Camera switch buttons, numbered
- Swap big view and Bubble
- Green Screen Mode
- Redo last take
- Finish & Export

Toggle it from the header button. On by default. It never appears in the recording.

10.8 Keyboard shortcuts while recording

The **⌘ (Option) shortcuts work from anywhere**, including inside your DAW, with no setup. The plain keys work when the Tapesmith window is focused.

See 21. Keyboard Shortcut Reference for the full list.

10.9 Reading the fps meter

Recording your screen, filming your camera, and reframing to 9:16 all at once is real work for your Mac, and a busy DAW competes for the same power.

The fps meter shows you live how you are doing. Green means your Mac is keeping up. Amber or red means it is falling behind.

The habit worth building: when a take goes live, glance at the meter. If it is red, wait a beat and start talking or playing when it turns green. With **Remove pauses & dead air** on, that little wait is cut from the video automatically. With it off, it is a clean lead-in you can trim later, instead of a choppy start you cannot fix.

If it is consistently amber or red, close other apps. That is almost always the whole answer.

10.10 Disk space

Recordings are large. Tapesmith watches your free space and **automatically stops and safely saves** the current take if the disk runs low, rather than letting the file corrupt.

Because every banked take is already a finished file, running out of space costs you at most the take in progress.

11. Subtitles and Editing

11.1 Auto subtitles

AUTO SUBTITLES transcribes your voice and burns animated captions into the video.

The transcription runs **on-device**. Nothing is uploaded, it works offline, and it is fast.

It is not perfect. On-device transcription mishears things, especially proper nouns, producer slang and plugin names. That is why every caption is editable in **Review & Adjust** before anything is rendered. A healthy mic level means fewer fixes.

Auto subtitles is a post-only feature, so it greys out in livestream mode.

11.2 Caption color

Tap the rainbow wheel next to the toggle to pick your caption color. There is a one-click **Reset to white** so you can always get back to the default.

Use it to match your brand color across every video.

11.3 How captions behave

Worth knowing so you can predict the result:

- Captions appear **a line at a time**, popping in together and holding until the next line, rather than lighting up word by word. On-device word timing has about 100 milliseconds of unavoidable wobble; revealing a whole line at once makes that wobble invisible.
- A line holds a maximum of **4 words in 9:16** and **6 words in 16:9**.
- Lines are set in a heavy sans face, sized to the frame, on a rounded pill so they stay readable over any background.
- A long line automatically shrinks to fit rather than running off the edge.
- Filler words never appear in captions, whether or not you remove them from the audio.

11.4 Remove pauses & dead air

Jump-cuts the silent gaps out, so a rambling take becomes a tight one. This is what makes a 4-minute recording into a 90-second video.

Post-only, so it greys out in livestream mode.

11.5 Removal strength

A slider from **Gentle** to **Aggressive**, with a marker at the point labeled **optimal for social media** (the default).

- **Gentle** leaves natural breathing room. Better for long-form, where pacing matters.
- **Aggressive** cuts hard, leaving almost no air. Better for short-form, where every second counts.

The marker is where most people should sit for Reels, TikTok and Shorts.

11.6 Remove filler words

Deletes um, uh, ah, er and mm. It requires the microphone to be on, and it is post-only.

Tapesmith handles fillers two different ways depending on what is underneath them:

- **A filler in a quiet moment is cut out entirely**, which makes the video shorter.
- **A filler spoken over music is erased in place**, while the music keeps playing. The track never skips, never jumps a beat, and never gives away that anything was removed.

That second behavior is the reason this feature can be used at all on a video with music in it.

Filler removal always shows you the list before it does anything. See the next chapter.

12. The Filler Word Review

If **Remove filler words** is on, Tapesmith stops during the export and shows you every filler it found.

Filler detection makes mistakes. Some catches are real fillers, and some are the first syllable of a real word. This screen exists so a wrong catch never reaches your video.

For each candidate row you get:

- ▶ Play just that moment, so you can hear it in context.
- **A switch** to keep or remove it. Uncheck anything you want to keep.
- ✕ Remove the row from the list entirely.
- Rows found by the sound detector rather than the transcript are labeled **by sound**. Those are the ones most worth listening to.

To add one it missed: scrub the video to the filler, park the playhead on it, and tap the **+** row at the bottom. It is added at that timestamp and labeled **added**.

Two buttons finish the screen:

- **Skip (remove none)** keeps every filler and moves on.
- **Continue** applies exactly what you confirmed.

Tip: Play each row before you continue, at least the first few times. Once you see how the detector behaves on your voice, it goes quickly.

13. Review & Adjust

The last stop before anything final is written. Tapesmith shows you how the video came out and lets you fine-tune it.

13.1 The preview

Plays the edited video with captions in place. Any black bars you see are the preview window only; your saved video fills the frame edge to edge.

13.2 Speed

0.8x to 1.5x, in steps of 0.05. Default 1.0x.

Speeds up or slows down the whole clip. Your voice pitch stays natural (it is not chipmunked), and the captions stay in sync automatically.

A gentle 1.05x or 1.1x is a common finishing move for short-form: it tightens the pacing without being noticeable.

13.3 Volume

-8 dB to +6 dB, in 1 dB steps. Default 0.

The overall loudness of the finished clip, applied after the automatic loudness stage. Most videos need nothing here. It is for the occasional take that wants a nudge.

13.4 The caption editor

The list of every caption line. **Tap any word to fix it.** Correct a misheard plugin name, fix a proper noun, add a word the transcription dropped.

This is where on-device transcription stops being a limitation. It is fast and private and it gets 95% of the way there; you spend thirty seconds on the rest.

Your edits are remembered. If you re-caption the same video later, your corrections come back rather than being lost.

13.5 The four buttons

- **Discard.** Throw this away and record again.
- **Back to filler review.** Reappears if you removed fillers, so you can change your mind about which ones went.
- **Skip.** Keep the clip exactly as recorded, with no captions and no adjustments.
- **Save Final Video.** Burns in the captions and writes the file.

14. Branding

LOGO / WATERMARK overlays your logo on every recording.

Choose Image. A **PNG with a transparent background** works best. Your file is copied into Tapesmith's own storage, so moving or deleting the original later does not break it. **Remove** clears it.

Position. Four corners: bottom left, bottom right, top left, top right.

Size. 5% to 30% of the frame width. Default 20%.

Opacity. 20% to 100%. Default 65%, which reads as a watermark rather than a sticker.

Both sliders show a live percentage. Double-click a slider, or press the small **default** button next to it, to reset that one control.

Preview (over your screen). A live preview of the logo composited over a snapshot of your actual screen, so you can judge it against real content instead of a blank rectangle. The refresh button grabs a fresh snapshot.

Tip: Branding is more than the logo. Set your caption color (11.2) to your brand color as well, and every video you make is recognizably yours.

15. 9:16 Motion

Two cinematic effects. Both apply to **9:16 only**, and both are baked into the recording live.

FOLLOW CURSOR. The vertical frame pans smoothly to follow your mouse. Without it, a wide screen squeezed into a vertical frame leaves your cursor somewhere off in the distance. With it, the frame goes where your attention goes.

AUTO ZOOM ON CLICKS. Punches in briefly when you click, then eases back out. It gives an otherwise static screen recording a dynamic, focus-pulling feel, and it draws the eye exactly where you just did something.

Both are on in the **Reels, TikTok & Shorts** and **Tutorials** presets, and off in the others.

Tip: They work together. Follow cursor handles where you are looking; auto zoom handles what you just did. Turning on only one usually feels half-finished.

16. Live Streaming

Tapesmith broadcasts your screen, camera and voice directly to Twitch, YouTube or TikTok over RTMP, with the same compositing you get in a recording.

16.1 Going live

1. Open the **LIVESTREAM** panel.
2. Pick a platform: **Twitch**, **YouTube**, **TikTok Live (9:16)**, or **Custom**.
3. Paste your **stream key**. For TikTok and Custom you also paste the server URL.
4. Click **Go Live**.

A 3-2-1 countdown gives you a moment to get ready, then you are broadcasting.

Picking a platform also sets the format that platform wants: 16:9 for Twitch and YouTube, 9:16 for TikTok Live.

Your stream key is a password. Anyone who has it can broadcast to your channel. Do not film your screen with the LIVESTREAM panel open on a real key, and do not share screenshots of it.

16.2 The status pill

The panel header shows one of three states, so a stored key is never mistaken for a live broadcast:

- **● LIVE** in red: you are broadcasting.
- **READY** in purple: set up, but nothing is going out yet.
- **OFF**: recording normally. A saved key is just stored for later.

16.3 Recording while live

Tapesmith keeps a **full-quality 1080p copy** in your Movies folder while you stream at 720p. The local file finishes and saves when you press **End Stream**.

This is the answer to "streams cannot have captions." Stream live, then drag the saved copy back onto the Tapesmith window afterward and caption it for clips. See **17. Re-Captioning Any Video**.

16.4 What is unavailable while live

Post-only features grey out with an explanation, because they happen after recording and a live broadcast has no after: auto subtitles, remove pauses & dead air, and remove filler words. See 3.6.

16.5 On the HUD while live

The floating bar shows live **fps**, **kbps** and connection status, so you can watch your stream health without leaving your DAW. If the connection drops, Tapesmith reconnects automatically.

Back to normal recording in the panel exits stream mode and returns everything to a regular session.

17. Re-Captioning Any Video

Drag any video file onto the Tapesmith window and drop it.

Tapesmith transcribes it fresh, opens the caption editor so you can fix the wording, and renders a new captioned copy. The original is never modified.

This works on:

- Tapesmith recordings you saved without captions
- The local copy Tapesmith saved while you were live streaming (which could not be captioned live)
- Any other video at all, from any source

It is also how you **fix the wording without re-recording**. Made a caption typo, or want to change what a word says after the fact? Drop the video back in, fix the word, render again.

Your previous caption edits are remembered per video, so re-captioning something you already corrected restores your corrections rather than starting over.

18. Where Your Files Go

Everything Tapesmith saves goes to:

```
~/Movies/Tapesmith
```

That is your home folder, then **Movies**, then **Tapesmith**. Click **Reveal in Finder** after an export and Tapesmith opens it for you.

Naming. Files are named by timestamp, so they sort chronologically:

```
Recording 2026-07-29 at 15.33.35.mp4
```

Format. H.264 in an `.mp4` container, 30 fps, at 1080 x 1920 (9:16) or 1920 x 1080 (16:9), with a bitrate chosen for a visually clean result at those dimensions. These files upload directly to any platform with no conversion.

Every banked take is a real file. They are in the same folder, saved the moment each take ended. If an export fails, your raw takes are still there.

19. Getting the Best Results

Five habits, in order of how much difference they make.

1. Set a healthy mic level. On your interface, set the input gain so your loudest words peak around two thirds up, roughly -12 to -6 dB, the same as tracking a vocal. Too quiet and the captions miss words and you get hiss. Too hot and it distorts. This is the single biggest thing you can do for better subtitles.

2. Wear headphones. Keeps your speakers out of the mic, so your voice stays clean over the music and the captions transcribe accurately. Everything works on speakers; headphones are the clean path.

3. Get close to the mic. About 6 to 8 inches, the same distance as if you were singing into it. Close and loud beats far and quiet every time.

4. Quit other apps before a take. Recording your screen, filming your camera and reframing to 9:16 at once is real work for your Mac, and a busy DAW competes for the same power. Watch the fps meter: green is good. When a take goes live and the meter is red, wait a beat and start when it turns green.

5. Fix the stragglers in Review. On-device captions are fast and private but not perfect. Tap any word to correct it before you render. Thirty seconds there beats re-recording.

And one workflow habit: record in takes. Do not try to nail it in one pass. Start, stop, redo the line, keep going. Finish & Export polishes the whole batch at once.

20. Troubleshooting

The screen looks black, or Tapesmith cannot see your screen

macOS needs to grant screen recording. Open **System Settings > Privacy & Security > Screen Recording** and turn on **Tapesmith**. Then click **Relaunch** in the yellow banner at the top of the app so the permission takes effect. macOS only applies a newly granted screen recording permission after a restart of the app.

Your camera is black or does not show up

Grant camera access in **System Settings > Privacy & Security > Camera**, then relaunch Tapesmith.

Also quit any other app that might be holding the camera (Zoom, FaceTime, Photo Booth, OBS). Only one app can use a camera at a time.

A phone will not connect as a camera

Tap **Turn off phone camera**, then **Start phone camera** again to refresh the address. If that does not do it, quit and reopen Tapesmith. Confirm both devices are on the same Wi-Fi network, not a guest network. The browser warning about the certificate is expected: tap through it. See 8.3.

No sound from your iPhone screen while recording

Plug the iPhone in, unlock it, and tap **Trust This Computer**. Pick the iPhone as your source in Capture. Your Mac plays the phone's audio at your system volume, so keep the Mac around 50% so it does not cover your voice. The recording always captures the phone audio at full quality even if it sounds quiet live.

The music is too quiet compared to your voice

Check the **MUSIC** meter in the Audio panel while your track plays. It shows your DAW's own output, not your headphone volume. If it is not reaching green, turn up your DAW's master. Then check **VOICE LEVEL**, which sets how loud you sit relative to the music.

A caption is wrong or missing a word

Every caption is editable before you render. On **Review & Adjust**, tap any word to fix it, then **Save Final Video**.

You can also fix it after the fact: drag any video onto the Tapesmith window (the uncaptioned original, or any video at all) and it transcribes fresh and reopens the word editor, then renders a new captioned copy.

The fps meter is amber or red

Your Mac is falling behind. Close other apps, especially browsers with many tabs and anything else doing video. If it is red at the start of a take, wait for green before you start talking. See 10.9.

A take did not save, or the export failed partway

Check that you have free disk space. Tapesmith automatically stops and saves a take if the disk runs low.

Every banked take is a finished file in **~/Movies/Tapesmith**, so earlier takes are safe even if the last one failed. Free some space and press **Finish & Export** again.

This Mac has no internet, so you cannot sign in

Use the offline path. On the sign-in sheet, click **Can't connect? Activate with a license file**, email the machine code it shows you to support@tapesmith.app, and paste the license file you get back. See 2.5.

Filler word removal caught the wrong thing

It shows you the list before it does anything. Uncheck any wrong catch on the filler review screen, or press **X** to remove the row. Tap **►** on each row to hear it first. See 12. The Filler Word Review.

Still stuck

Try the steps above first; they solve almost everything. If something is still wrong, use **Email support** at the bottom of the in-app help sheet. It pre-fills your app and macOS version so support can actually diagnose it.

21. Keyboard Shortcut Reference

Global shortcuts work anywhere, including inside your DAW, with no setup.

SHORTCUT	ACTION
\1	Cut to camera 1
\2	Cut to camera 2
\3	Cut to camera 3
\4	Cut to camera 4
\`	Swap the big view and the corner Bubble
\P	Green Screen Mode on / off

Window shortcuts work while the Tapesmith window is focused.

SHORTCUT	ACTION
1 / 2 / 3 / 4	Switch cameras (also works in the live preview)
`	Swap the big view and the corner Bubble
P	Green Screen Mode on / off

To cancel a countdown, tap the record button again rather than pressing a key.

Every one of these is also a button on the HUD, if you would rather tap than type.

22. Settings Reference

Every setting, its default, and where it lives.

Format

SETTING	DEFAULT	NOTES
Format	9:16	9:16 renders 1080x1920, 16:9 renders 1920x1080

Capture

SETTING	DEFAULT	NOTES
Main feed	Mac screen	Or an iPhone screen over cable
Capture area	Full screen	Set area draws a region; Freeform draws any shape
Record one app's window & audio only	Off	Records that app only, including plugin windows. Your mic always comes through
Fill frame	On	16:9 only. Crops to remove black bars
Polished card look	Off (on in the Reels preset)	9:16 only. Not available in Split screen

Camera

SETTING	DEFAULT	NOTES
Webcam	Off (on in every preset)	
Cameras	Up to 4	Slot number is the switch key
How you appear	Bubble	Bubble, Square or Split screen
Split ratio	60/40 in 9:16, 50/50 in 16:9	Drag the divider in the preview
Green Screen Mode	Off	Also toggles live with ⌘P
Use phones as cameras	On	Phones appear after Mac cameras

Audio

SETTING	DEFAULT	NOTES
Microphone	Off (on in every preset)	
Mic input channel	Auto	Appears on multi-channel devices
Voice level	100%	Range 0% to 200%
Clean up my voice	On	Neural voice isolation. Leave on for speech
Ducking	Automatic	No control; music dips under your voice
Loudness	Automatic	Around -14 LUFS with a look-ahead limiter

Subtitles & Editing

SETTING	DEFAULT	NOTES
Auto subtitles	Off (on in 3 of 4 presets)	Post-only. On-device transcription
Caption color	White	One-click reset available
Remove pauses & dead air	Off (on in 2 of 4 presets)	Post-only
Removal strength	Optimal for social media	Gentle to Aggressive
Remove filler words	Off	Post-only. Requires the mic on. Always confirmed first

Branding

SETTING	DEFAULT	NOTES
Logo / watermark	Off	Transparent PNG works best
Position	Bottom left	Four corners
Size	20%	Range 5% to 30% of frame width
Opacity	65%	Range 20% to 100%

9:16 Motion

SETTING	DEFAULT	NOTES
Follow cursor	On (off in YouTube and Livestream presets)	9:16 only
Auto zoom on clicks	On (off in YouTube and Livestream presets)	9:16 only

Livestream

SETTING	DEFAULT	NOTES
Platform	Twitch	Twitch, YouTube, TikTok Live, Custom
Stream key	Empty	Stored per platform. Treat it as a password
Countdown to live	On	3-2-1
Record while live	On	1080p local copy, saves on End Stream

Recording

SETTING	DEFAULT	NOTES
Countdown	On	3-2-1 before each take. Switch sits above the record button; tap Record again to cancel
HUD	On	Floating controls over your DAW. Never recorded

Review & Adjust

SETTING	DEFAULT	NOTES
Speed	1.00x	Range 0.8x to 1.5x. Pitch stays natural, captions stay in sync
Volume	0 dB	Range -8 dB to +6 dB

Tapesmith for macOS. Support: use Email support in the in-app help sheet, which pre-fills your app and macOS version.