
AXE-FX III FIRMWARE UPDATE GUIDE

FRACTAL-BOT

Fractal-Bot is required for **firmware updates**.

It can also be used to **back up** your unit prior to updating.

The program displays step-by-step instructions.

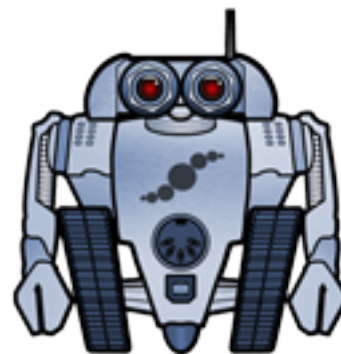
Fractal-Bot is built-in to **Axe-Edit**. Find it at <https://www.fractalaudio.com/axe-edit>

A standalone version is also available on our web site.

To use Fractal-Bot on a Windows PC, you will need to install a **driver**, available here:

<https://www.fractalaudio.com/axe-fx-iii-downloads>

Computers running MacOS do NOT require a driver to communicate with the Axe-Fx.



FIRMWARE

Firmware is like the operating system of your Axe-Fx. It is tracked using **version numbers** like 1.00, 2.00, etc. Every Axe-Fx is shipped from the factory with the latest firmware version installed. You can check your version any time by pressing the **SETUP** button (Push-knob **E**) on the **Home** page. The version is displayed at the top of the **Setup** menu.

UPDATING

NOTE: Before performing a firmware update, it is wise to back up your Axe-Fx (see next page).

Fractal-Bot makes updates easy. Before you begin, please QUIT any other audio or MIDI software applications such as a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation), Cab-Lab, MIDI utilities, etc. Then follow these steps:

1. **Launch Fractal-Bot.** It will automatically check for any updates to itself first.
2. When you select your device in **Step 1**, Fractal-Bot checks for new firmware and guides you through installation.
3. Please read any included **Release Notes**. These will let you know what's new and alert you to anything to be aware of before upgrading to the new version.
4. After file transmission is complete, the Axe-Fx still needs time to process the update. Watch its front panel display, which will eventually instruct you to power off, wait 5 seconds, and then power on again.
5. You can verify that the upgrade worked by checking the installed version. Press the **SETUP** button (Push-knob **E**) on the **Home** page. The version is displayed at the top of the Setup menu.

NOTE: Firmware updates will occasionally be accompanied by new versions of the Axe-Fx Factory Presets. These will be available separately and can also be installed using Fractal-Bot.

OPTIONAL MANUAL INSTALLATION: Besides automatic updates, you can also **manually download** firmware from <https://www.fractalaudio.com/axe-fx-iii-downloads>. The firmware itself is a MIDI System Exclusive or "SysEx" file but will be typically be in a zip archive also containing various documents. Extract the **.syx** file to a location you can easily find. **Do not double-click the .syx file**. Instead, go through the three steps of Fractal-Bot and browse to the extracted **.syx** file during step 2, "Choose a File to Send". Send the file and then see Step 4 above.

FORCING REINSTALLATION: In you already have the latest version installed but want to re-install it for any reason, hold Cmd (Mac) or Ctrl (Win) while selecting your device in Fractal-Bot. Similarly, if you Cmd/Ctrl click the blue "Ready to Install" prompt, you can save the downloaded file to a location of your choosing.

FIRMWARE Q&A

Q: Can I skip versions to go from a very old firmware version to a much newer one?

A: Yes. It can be important to read the **Release Notes** for versions that you skipped (always included).

Q: Can I downgrade from a newer firmware to an older one?

A: Yes, but newer presets are not compatible with older firmware. You'll need to restore a backup of presets compatible with the older firmware version you're installing, or find the older factory preset files.

Q: Will updating my Axe-Fx firmware erase my custom presets or user cabs?

A: No, updating firmware never erases your presets or cabs but we still recommend making a backup before you update. Also, updates may alter the sound of existing presets. Always read the Release Notes when updating.

Q: The firmware update failed mysteriously. What should I do?

A: If the Axe-Fx still boots normally, just try the update again. If successive failures occur, please delete and re-download the update file before trying again. Trying a different USB port or cable can also solve issues.

Q: After updating, my Axe-Fx will no longer boot normally.

A: Mishaps during firmware updates are rare but can occur. In the event that your Axe-Fx will not boot normally after an update, the Axe-Fx has a built-in recovery system known as the "Emergency Boot Loader" which you can use to get back up and running again:

1. Power down the unit and wait five seconds.
2. Power on holding both **PAGE LEFT** and **PAGE RIGHT** buttons down until the **Emergency Utility** appears.
3. Update as you normally would using **Fractal-Bot**.

BACKING UP

Fractal-Bot automates the backup process. Select the **RECEIVE** tab and follow the built-in instructions. Here are some things to consider when using Fractal-Bot:

- ▶ The Axe-Fx hardware doesn't emphasize this distinction, but its presets are divided into **banks**, each containing 128 presets. To backup all of your presets, be sure to backup ALL of the preset banks.
- ▶ A backup of the **SYSTEM** includes all of the custom settings in the **Setup** menu: Foot Controller, Global, I/O, MIDI/Remote, and Tuner settings.
- ▶ User Cabs can also be backed up individually or as "**cab banks**".
- ▶ In Fractal-Bot, you must specify a location for the backup files. It is wise to prepare this in advance. We recommend a consistent naming system for backup folders: "**yymmdd-Axe-Fx-Xpx**" (two digit year, two digit month, two digit day, product name, firmware version that was installed when the backup was created). Example: **211004-Axe-Fx-4p01** (Backup created October 4, 2021 for an Axe-Fx running firmware 4.01)

GETTING HELP

Our **forum** is a source of great help including product Q&A, tutorials, and more. Fractal Audio staff join in the conversations, and response times can be very fast. Find it at <https://forum.fractalaudio.com>.

You can get support directly from Fractal Audio at: <https://support.fractalaudio.com> or internationally via our dealers listed at <https://www.fractalaudio.com/international-ordering>.

Our **wiki**, maintained by members of the Fractal Audio community, is also an excellent resource: <https://wiki.fractalaudio.com>