



AXE-FX II FIRMWARE UPDATE GUIDE

What is Firmware? Why do I need to update?

Firmware is simply semi-permanent software. Programmed into chips, it “runs” like an operating system to enable an electronic device to function. Like software, firmware is tracked using version numbers: 1.0, 2.0, etc. Every Axe-Fx II sold by Fractal Audio Systems is shipped with the latest version pre-installed. You can check your version any time by pressing the UTILITY button on your Axe-Fx II and paging to the FIRMWARE screen.

The firmware in our products is upgradeable, and Fractal Audio Systems is dedicated to continual improvement. The free updates we release several times per year are highly anticipated by our customers, who really get excited about this cycle. We add new amps, cabs, effects and features, upgrade sound capabilities, fix problems, and more. We recommend that you keep the firmware in your Axe-Fx II up to date as new updates are released.

Should you encounter any challenges with the update process, please refer to **Troubleshooting & FAQ** (p. 2).

How do I update my Axe-Fx II?

Updating the firmware of your Axe-Fx II is easy with Fractal-Bot, our free MIDI utility. Before you can use it however, you'll need to install a driver to enable communication between your computer and the Axe-Fx II, install Fractal-Bot itself, and download the firmware update file (if you haven't done so already).

I. Install the Axe-Fx Driver (This step is required only the first time you connect to a particular computer.)

- a. Download the driver for your operating system from the support page of our web site:
<http://fractalaudio.com/support.php>
- b. Connect your Axe-Fx II to your computer using a standard USB cable (not included).
IMPORTANT! Be very careful not to insert a USB cable into the MFC jack of the Axe-Fx II or damage could occur.
- c. Power on the Axe-Fx II.
- d. Install the Driver you downloaded, following any on-screen instructions.



II. Install Fractal-Bot (Required only the first time, or when an updated version becomes available).

Download and install Fractal-Bot from our web site at <http://fractalaudio.com/fractal-bot.php>

NOTE: 3rd party applications such as [Snoize SysEx Librarian](#) (OS X) or [MIDI-OX](#) (Win) can also be used to update firmware. Since the launch of Fractal-Bot, however, we no longer provide support for configuring or using these applications.

III. Download and Unzip The Firmware... And Read The Release Notes!

Since you're reading this file typically packaged with firmware, you've probably done this already...

If not, the latest firmware can be found on our web site at <http://fractalaudio.com/support.php>

Firmware is packaged in a **zip archive** that may contain various documents in addition to the actual firmware—a MIDI System Exclusive or “SysEx” file. Extract this .syx file to a location you can easily find when required. Do not double-click the .syx file; Fractal-Bot will prompt you for its location when it is needed.

Please read the “Release Notes” included with the firmware download. They'll let you know what's new and alert you to anything you may need to be aware of before updating to the new version.

IV. Launch Fractal-Bot And Perform The Update

Fractal-Bot is easy to use. Simply launch the application and proceed through three self-explanatory steps. For additional information, consult the **Fractal-Bot Manual**, included with the Fractal-Bot download.

Before performing a firmware update, it may be wise to back up the settings of your Axe-Fx II. Fractal-Bot's RECEIVE feature provides a convenient and self-guided way to do this.

NOTE: Firmware updates will frequently be accompanied by new versions of the **Axe-Fx II Factory Presets**. These will be available on our web site [support page](#) and can also be installed using Fractal-Bot.

Troubleshooting & FAQ

Most firmware update problems are easy to solve once you've identified the source of the trouble.

How do I know it worked?

During transfer, the Axe-Fx II will show a progress bar. After Fractal-Bot finishes transmitting, your Axe-Fx II will take a moment to process and program the new update. Once complete, the Axe-Fx II will display an UPDATE COMPLETE! message and provide further instructions. To check your firmware version at any time, press UTILITY and change to the FIRMWARE page.

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

You can always upgrade from any version to any other version. When you skip like this it is recommended that you also read the Release Notes for all interim versions, all of which are included with every firmware release.

Skipping to a much newer version also makes it far more important to understand that updates can change the sound of existing presets. Release Notes provide more information. Also remember that Factory Presets are updated for major firmware changes, and may require a separate update of their own.

Will updating my Axe-Fx II Firmware also update my factory presets?

Updating firmware does not update Factory Presets. Updated Factory Presets, when offered, are released as a separate update on our web site [support page](#). Fractal-Bot can be used to transmit this update in the same way it is used to update firmware.

Will updating my Axe-Fx II Firmware erase my customized presets?

Firmware updates do not erase customized presets. However, firmware updates MAY include changes which alter the sound of existing presets. Always read the Release Notes included with a given version before updating.

Saving presets after a firmware update can render them incompatible with previous versions. It is always wise to back up your Axe-Fx II using Fractal-Bot before a major update.

The firmware update failed mysteriously. What should I do?

If the Axe-Fx still boots normally, please try the update again. If successive failures occur, please delete and re-download the update file before trying again. Many problems can be traced to USB or MIDI problems on your host computer (especially where 3rd party MIDI drivers cause interference in the MIDI subsystem. The brand we most often see problems of this type with is MBOX.) If none of these options work, please contact support via the information provided below.

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

Please disconnect USB, MIDI, and MFC-101 cables and try to boot the unit while holding down the RECALL button. If this works, the problem may be a single preset. Change to a different preset and try again, and consider overwriting the problem entry with one that works.

In the rare event that the Axe-Fx will only boot to a blank screen (sometimes with one or more LEDs frozen) this indicates that the firmware update process has failed and the unit will require a new bootable ROM. Please contact support via the information provided below.

What if I need further assistance?

If you need additional help, please contact our support team via <http://support.fractalaudio.com>

Customers outside the US or Canada may also contact the [official distributor](#) for their region.

Our forum at <http://forum.fractalaudio.com/forum.php> can also be a valuable resource, with members helping members around the clock.