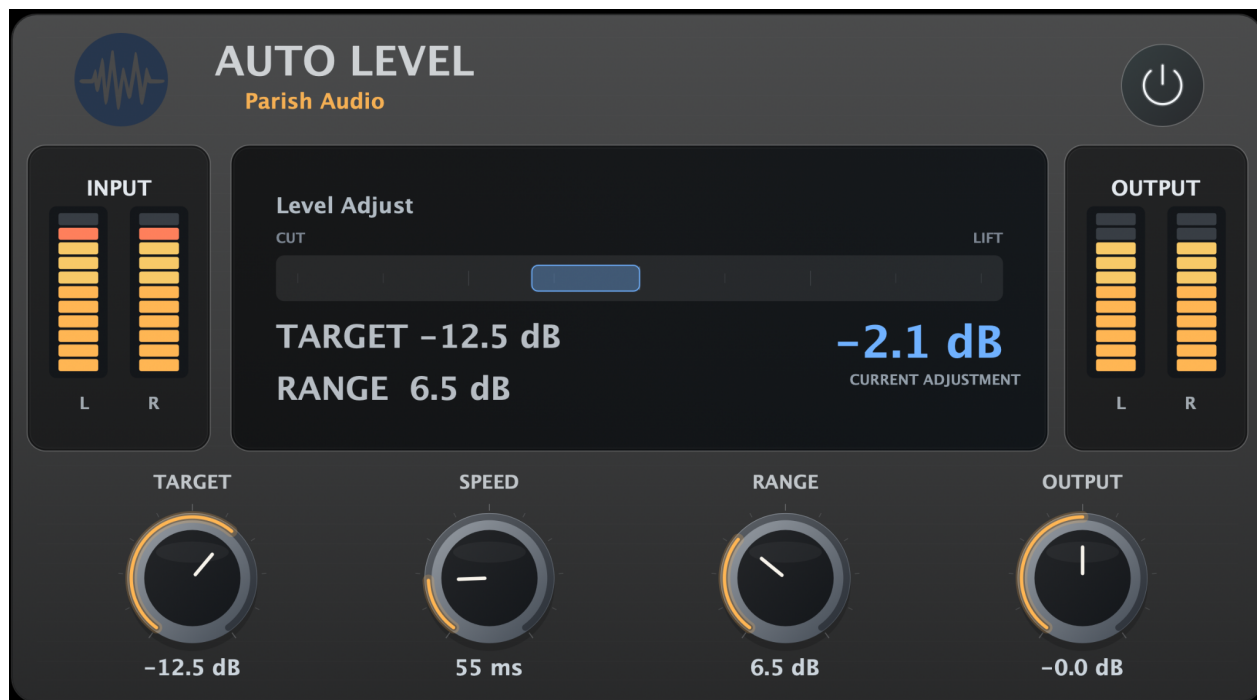


Auto Level - User Guide

Automatic gain riding for steady, natural level control

Auto Level v1.0.1

Auto Level keeps your audio sitting where it should without making you ride the fader all the way through a performance.



Product page: <https://parishaudio.com/products/auto-level>

1. Overview

Auto Level listens to the incoming signal and continuously adjusts gain toward a target level. When the source drops back, it can gently lift it. When the source becomes louder, it can pull it down. The goal is a steadier overall level while preserving the natural short-term movement of the performance.

This is especially useful on vocals, bass, podcasts, voiceovers, dialogue, and other sources where the average level changes from phrase to phrase. Auto Level is intentionally smoother than a peak processor, so it works naturally alongside a compressor rather than trying to replace one.

2. Quick Start

- **1. Set Target.** Choose the approximate level you want the source to sit around.
- **2. Set Range.** Choose how much Auto Level is allowed to boost or cut. Start conservatively.
- **3. Adjust Speed.** Use a lower millisecond value for quicker following or a higher value for smoother, slower rides.
- **4. Watch Level Adjust.** The center display shows how much gain is being added or removed in real time.
- **5. Level-match with Output.** Use Output to compare processed and bypassed levels fairly.

3. Understanding the Interface

The interface is divided into three practical areas: input metering, the central Level Adjust display, and output metering. Four main controls along the bottom set the leveling behavior.

Display	What it tells you
Input meters	Show the incoming left/right signal level before automatic correction.
Level Adjust	Shows the live gain ride. Movement toward CUT means gain is being reduced; movement toward LIFT means gain is being added.
Current Adjustment	Displays the exact current correction in dB.
Target / Range readout	Shows the current target level and maximum allowed correction range.
Output meters	Show the final left/right level after leveling and Output gain.
Power	Smoothly bypasses or enables Auto Level.

4. Controls

Target

Range: -24.0 dB to -6.0 dB. Default: -14.0 dB.

Target is the level Auto Level aims toward. If the detected signal is below Target, the plugin can add gain. If it is above Target, the plugin can reduce gain. Target should be treated as a working reference point, not a promise that every moment will land on exactly that number.

Speed

Displayed range: 10 ms to 260 ms. Default: approximately 140 ms.

Speed controls how quickly the level ride follows changes in the source. Lower millisecond values react more quickly. Higher values move more gradually and are usually smoother on phrases, sustained notes, and spoken material. If you hear the level moving too obviously, try a slower setting. If the plugin feels late to follow the source, try a faster setting.

Range

Range: 1.0 dB to 18.0 dB. Default: 8.0 dB.

Range limits the maximum amount of automatic boost or cut. This is one of the most important controls for keeping the effect natural. A smaller Range provides subtle correction; a larger Range allows Auto Level to manage wider level differences.

Output

Range: -12.0 dB to +12.0 dB. Default: 0.0 dB.

Output adjusts the final level after automatic correction. Use it for level matching or to place the processed signal where you want it in the mix. Output does not change the Target or the amount of leveling behavior.

Tip: the numeric readouts are editable. Click a value and type the desired setting directly. Target, Range, and Output use dB; Speed is shown in milliseconds.

5. How Auto Level Differs from Compression

A compressor normally reacts to signal above a threshold and reduces it according to a ratio, often on a relatively short time scale. Auto Level works differently: it continuously compares the smoothed signal level with a target and can either add or remove gain to keep the overall level more consistent.

That makes the two tools useful together. Auto Level can take care of broad level changes across words, phrases, or notes, while a compressor can catch faster peaks and shape the character of the dynamics.

6. Practical Workflows

Vocals

Use Auto Level to keep softer phrases from falling away and louder phrases from jumping too far forward. A moderate Range usually works best. Place a compressor after Auto Level if you also want tighter transient and peak control.

Podcasts, Voiceovers, and Dialogue

Auto Level is useful when a speaker changes distance from the microphone, varies emphasis, or fades at the end of sentences. Use a relatively smooth Speed so the ride follows phrases rather than every syllable.

Bass

Uneven picking, fingerstyle, or register changes can make a bass line move around in the mix. A restrained Range can help keep the overall line present while leaving a compressor free to handle punch and peaks.

Other Instruments

Auto Level can be useful on sustained or dynamically uneven instruments when you want broad level consistency without heavy compression. Listen for whether the automatic ride supports the musical phrasing; if it begins to fight the performance, slow it down or reduce Range.

7. Suggested Starting Points

These are starting points, not rules. Set Target to fit your gain staging and adjust by ear.

Use	Starting approach
Natural vocal ride	Range 4-7 dB; Speed around 120-190 ms. Aim for a few dB of movement most of the time.
More active vocal control	Range 6-10 dB; Speed around 60-130 ms. Pair with a compressor for fast peaks.
Podcast / voiceover	Range 6-10 dB; Speed around 120-200 ms for smooth phrase-level leveling.
Bass consistency	Range 4-8 dB; Speed around 80-160 ms. Keep enough movement for the performance to breathe.
Subtle mix utility	Range 2-5 dB; Speed around 150-220 ms for gentle long-term correction.

8. Factory Presets

Preset	Best for
Gentle Ride	Subtle and smooth. Useful when you want the leveling to stay mostly out of the way.
Pop Control	Moderate general-purpose control for a source that needs a steadier forward level.
Broadcast Seat	A wider correction window suited to spoken content and larger level changes.
Fast Catch	Faster behavior for more active tracking of level changes.
Dynamic Tamer	The broadest factory ride for material with larger differences between quiet and loud passages.
Transparent Lift	Slow and restrained for gentle support of quieter material.

Selecting a preset preserves your current Output setting, which makes it easier to audition different leveling behaviors without changing the final level match.

9. Pairing Auto Level with a Compressor

A very effective chain is Auto Level -> Compressor. Auto Level feeds the compressor a more consistent overall signal, so the compressor does not have to work as hard on long-term changes. The compressor can then focus on fast peaks, punch, and character.

You can also use Auto Level after compression when you want a final gentle ride across a compressed performance. There is no single correct order; choose the order based on which processor you want responding to the more stable signal.

10. Best Practices

- Start with a smaller Range and increase it only when the source actually needs more correction.
- Watch the Current Adjustment display. Constant movement at the Range limit is a sign that Target or Range may need reconsideration.
- Use slower settings when you want the ride to follow phrases instead of every short-term level change.
- Do not rely on Auto Level as a peak limiter. Fast peaks can pass before smooth leveling catches up.
- Level-match with Output when judging whether the processing is improving the source.
- For spoken content, avoid setting Target so high that room noise and breaths are pulled forward unnecessarily.

11. Troubleshooting

Symptom	What to try
The level sounds like it is pumping or moving too obviously.	Use a slower Speed and/or reduce Range.
The plugin is not doing enough.	Increase Range, use a faster Speed, or move Target closer to the level you want the source to occupy.
Fast peaks are still too loud.	That is normal for a smooth level rider. Add a compressor or limiter for faster peak control.
Quiet sections are not being lifted all the way to Target.	Auto Level intentionally reduces correction on very low-level material to avoid aggressively raising silence and noise.
Noise becomes more noticeable.	Reduce Range, lower the Target, improve source gain/noise where possible, or automate/bypass Auto Level in sections that should remain quiet.
The stereo image should not shift.	Auto Level uses a common gain correction across channels, so the left/right balance is preserved rather than independently leveled.

12. Technical Summary

Specification	Details
Supported channel layouts	Mono and stereo.
Windows	VST3.
macOS	VST3 and AU.
Target range	-24.0 dB to -6.0 dB.
Speed display range	10 ms to 260 ms.
Range control	1.0 dB to 18.0 dB.
Output range	-12.0 dB to +12.0 dB.
Factory presets	Gentle Ride, Pop Control, Broadcast Seat, Fast Catch, Dynamic Tamer, Transparent Lift.

13. Final Note

Auto Level is designed to solve the broad, practical problem of keeping a source consistently present without spending the entire mix riding a fader. Use it gently for transparent support or allow a wider Range when a performance needs stronger correction. The best setting is the one that keeps the level steady while still letting the performance feel natural.

For downloads, updates, and product information: <https://parishaudio.com/products/auto-level>