

## CREATING A GROOVE, PART 1

*“If your kick is not working, [or it] does not have the right low end, it won’t rock a crowd. You’ll find that out the hard way.”*

—Armin van Buuren

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Working With Drum Samples
- Every Kick Has a Top and Bottom
- Adjust Your Kick to Fit Your Track
- A/B-ing Kick and Bass Sounds: “Be in the Moment”
- Make Room for Your Kick to Shine Through

\*The Alloy family of plug-ins has been discontinued and replaced by iZotope’s [Neutron](#) mixing tools.

### CHAPTER REVIEW

It might sound simple, but dance music is made for dancing. The beat that gets people on their feet comes from the kick drum. Armin demonstrates how to sculpt kick drum samples to create powerful dance grooves. Every kick you build should have a top and a bottom to it. The top of the kick provides the transients that help it cut through your mix, and the bottom gives it the low end that anchors your sound.

If you need sonic inspiration when you’re building kick and bass sounds, you can A/B your track like Armin does with “Great Spirit” and “Be in the Moment.” Load a track with a sound you want to replicate into your DAW, adjusting the gain so it’s about the same volume as the mix you’re working on. Now listen back and forth, tweaking your mix as you go, until your track matches the sonic quality of your A/B track. Learning to duplicate sounds from songs you either love or know work well on the dance floor is a great way to improve your mixes and grow as a producer.

### EXPLORE THE PLUG-INS

In this chapter, Armin uses a variety of plug-ins to shape the sound of his kick and bassline. If you haven’t already, explore these plug-ins to create a groove as Armin does:

- [Kick 2](#)
- iZotope Alloy 2\*
- Native Instruments [Kontakt 5](#)
- [FabFilter Saturn](#)
- [Bark of Dog](#) (a free plug-in!)
- [ValhallaRoom](#)
- [FabFilter Pro-Q 2](#)
- [LFOTool](#)

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Experiment with your kick samples. See how different kick samples fit or don’t fit with the track sketches you’re working on. Can you take a kick that isn’t working and reshape it to make it useful? Or maybe roll off the low end and use it as a top kick? See how creative you can be in giving your kick maximum impact.

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### ASSIGNMENTS CONT.

- Create a groove in your original tracks by exploring new ways to use kicks and bass sounds. Start by A/B-ing your track against a track you love, as Armin did with “Great Spirit.” Try different kicks and basslines until you find the ones that give your track the sonic qualities you’re looking for.