

# How to record multiple tracks on Zoom H4N

Three or Four Track Recording Step by Step: by Jennifer Cluff, July 2012

This simple guide explains the easiest way to create multi-track recordings with the Zoom H4N for playing one person duets, trios or quartets. The word "Jog" in the procedures below means that you scroll the Jog thumbwheel on the upper right side of the Zoom H4N so that the on-screen cursor moves up or down to a new selection. You then click on that same thumbwheel in order to select that particular menu item.

## A - STARTING SETUP

1. Plug the AC power plug into the center bottom of the Zoom H4N and plug in to electrical outlet. Plug your headphones into the PHONES jack and adjust the output VOLUME (volume output button on left side of unit). Adjust all equipment such as music stand, headphone cord length, Zoom recorder etc so you can play flute with headphones on and not accidentally pull the recording unit onto the floor (!)

2. Turn the Power on by sliding the HOLD/Power button downward for approximately two seconds. This button is on the lower left side of unit. The front screen will then light up.

*Note: When you turn the power on, the Zoom H4N always starts exactly wherever you left off last time. The latest project will be displayed just as you left it. I find it easiest to delete these old projects and start fresh each time so as not to have to write down or sort through older project numbers. More on that in section E below.*

3. Press in the MENU button on right side of the Zoom H4N. (2 second hold). Main menu appears.

4. Jog\* down the menu to the word MODE, then press the jog wheel in to select it.

5. Jog to MTR which stands for Multi-Track Recording. Press the thumbwheel in to select MTR. The MTR indicator lights up on unit's face to tell you you're in Multi-Track Recording mode now.

6. Press MENU button again in order to start from top of menu again. (two second press takes you back to the topmost menu; a shorter press of the MENU button takes you back one page of menu only).

7. Jog to REC MODE in menu; choose it by clicking in the jog wheel.

8. Jog until OVERWRITE is highlighted and click jog wheel. This setting allows you to go back later and correct any tracks at any point in the project or to \*\*punch in\*\* corrections to tracks later.

8. Press MENU button for 2 seconds to escape the menu now, or at any time. This will send you back to your four track recording screen.

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\* Jog means SCROLL the thumb wheel up or down. Depress thumbwheel to select highlighted item.

\*\* For re-recording smaller corrections to tracks, see: Punch In corrections on pg 63 in H4N manual.

## **B - TO START A NEW PROJECT (a new piece of music in multiple track recording)**

1. Press MENU button on right side of unit. Hold for 2 seconds until main menu appears.
2. Jog to PROJECT, and click jog wheel to select it.
3. The current or most recent project is saved automatically. If you choose SELECT, you can take note of the most recent project's name (PRJ001). See E below if you need to delete older projects by name.
4. Jog down to NEW PROJECT and click jog wheel. It will be called, for example, PRJ 002. Using pen and paper, write down that number next to your sheetmusic title. You can rename the project later, but it's far easier if you keep a simple system with very few project numbers to sort through later.
5. Jog down now to EXECUTE to create the new project number, then a highlighted OK appears; press jog wheel in to say OK. You now have a new multi-track project with a name you've written down to remember.

You are ready to record your tracks, but you'll want to add the handy metronome now.

## **C - SET METRONOME**

To count you in and to make it easier to play in real time, use the built in metronome which will be audible over your headphones, but not heard in the final recording. Here are the steps:

1. Press MENU button on right side of unit.
2. Jog down to TOOL and click jog wheel in to select it.
3. Jog to choose METRONOME, click jog wheel to select it.
4. Select the first choice for the metronome, the CLICK, by clicking the jog wheel.
5. Under CLICK there will be four choices: Off, then ●/▶ (play-record) then ● (record) and ▶ (play.) Choose the circle ● alone (record), in order to hear the metronome on the headphones only.
6. Select PRECOUNT and choose 1, 2 or 3 bars count-in. Your choice. I like two bars of count-in.
7. Select TEMPO, set the tempo numbers using the jog-wheel, up or down. (ie: mm = 120)
8. Select SOUND to choose metronome sound type you prefer.
9. Select PATTERN to set the number of beats per bar and finally LEVEL, 1-5, to set the volume.

Now, when you go to create your multi-track recording, the metronome will count you in every time, and yet not be audible in the final recording. MTR recording without the metronome is almost impossible.

## **D - SELECT YOUR INPUT SOURCE: MIC**

If using the built-in microphones to record your performance, press MIC on the face of the unit (front, and left of the Stop and Play buttons on the face of the Zoom) so that the MIC button on unit front is lit up. If you've never used channels 1 and 2 (guitar plug-ins), MIC will always be selected and lit up already.

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Note: You can watch an easy video tutorial on MTR recording here: [http://youtu.be/Jog1K\\_LW2ro](http://youtu.be/Jog1K_LW2ro)

## TO RECORD ON TRACK 1

1. Press the 1 BUTTON on unit face. It turns red. That means it's ready to record track 1.
2. Press the big REC BUTTON. It blinks red and is now standing by to record, allowing you to set your recording volume which is visible on the screen. Unit is still on recording standby.
3. Sing or play your instrument aloud to see volume level. Adjust the visible recording level with the recording volume button on the right side of the unit. For a flutist wearing headphones at less than 3 feet from unit, under 50 should be a good starting volume. You will hear a too loud volume in your headphones.
4. To record, press the PLAY triangle ► on the face of the unit to start recording. You will hear your bars of count in and continuous metronome through the headphones. Play your first track 1.
5. To stop, press the stop button on unit's face. ■
6. If you want to listen to track 1, press the rewind button on unit's face: ◀◀|  
The screen display will 00:00 (return to zero). Press the PLAY triangle ► to listen back.
7. If you want to re-record track 1, press the rewind button on unit's face: ◀◀| to return to zero. Press the big REC button and then the PLAY triangle ► to start to re-record/over-write any track.

## TO OVERDUB ON TRACK 2

1. In MTR mode, track 1 will play back automatically when you record track 2.
2. Return track 1 to zero with the rewind button.◀◀|  
Then press the 1 track button to un-select it. ( 1 will be grey and no longer lit red)
3. Press the 2 BUTTON so that it lights up in red. That means it's ready to record track 2.
4. Press the big REC button so it turns red and blinks. To record press the PLAY triangle ►.  
Listen to the metronome count-in on headphones and to track 1 and play along with it.
5. To stop, press the stop button on unit's face. ■
6. Press the rewind button ◀◀| to return the screen display to 00:00 (return to zero). Press play button to listen to tracks 1 and 2.
7. If you want to re-record track 2, press the rewind button ◀◀| to reset to zero. Press 2 to make it light up in red. Press the big REC button and then the PLAY triangle ► to re-record that track.

If you were playing a duet, you are now finished and can transfer the duet to mp3 or to your computer. If you want to re-record or improve either track, just re-record them as above.

### TO OVERDUB ON TRACK 3

1. In MTR mode, tracks 1 & 2 will play back automatically when you record track 3.
2. Return track 1 or 2 to zero with the rewind button. ◀◀|  
Then press earlier track button to un-select it. (grey, no longer red)
3. Press the 3 BUTTON so that it lights up in red. That means it's ready to record track 3.
4. Press the big REC button so it turns red and blinks. To record press the PLAY triangle ▶.  
Listen to the metronome count-in on headphones and to track 1&2 and play along with them.
5. To stop, press the stop button on unit's face. ■
6. Press the rewind button ◀◀| on the unit's face in order to return the screen display to 00:00 (return to zero). Press PLAY triangle ▶ to listen to tracks 1, 2 and 3.
7. If you want to re-record any track, press the rewind button ◀◀| to reset to zero. Select the track number you wish to re-record. Press the big REC button so that it blinks on standby, and then press the PLAY triangle ▶ to re-record or over-write that track.

### TO OVERDUB ON TRACK 4

1. In MTR mode, tracks 1,2 & 3 will play back automatically when you record track 4.
  2. Return to zero with the rewind button from any track you're listening to. ◀◀|  
Then press that earlier track button to un-select it. (grey, no longer red)
  3. Press the 4 BUTTON so that it lights up in red. That means it's ready to record track 4.
  4. Press the big REC button so it turns red and blinks. To record press the PLAY triangle ▶.  
Listen to the metronome count-in on headphones and to track 1,2 & 3 and play along with them.
  5. To stop, press the stop button on unit's face. ■
  6. Press the rewind button ◀◀| to return the screen display to 00:00 (return to zero). Press play button to listen to tracks 1, 2, 3 and 4.
  7. If you want to re-record any track, press the rewind button ◀◀| to reset to zero. Select the track number you wish to re-record. Press the big REC button and then Play button to re-record the track.
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## TO PLAY THE 4-TRACK RECORDING

1. Press the track number that corresponds to your tracks of overdubbing.  
If you recorded a Trio, press 3; If you recorded a quartet, press 4.
2. Zero the counter with the rewind button ◀◀| so that the screen display says 00:00.
3. Press the PLAY triangle to listen through headphones, or attach to your computer with a simple cable, or attach better speakers to the unit. (built in speaker on back of Zoom H4N is poor quality for flute.)
3. To stop, press the stop button on unit's face. ■

## E. TO DELETE A PROJECT

Because Zoom creates project numbers that may pile up and confuse you, I like to transfer projects quickly to the computer, and then delete them from the Zoom. This keeps everything simpler.

1. Press MENU button on side of unit 2 seconds. This brings you to the top of the main menu.
2. Select PROJECT by clicking on the jog wheel.
3. Jog to DELETE (it's off screen so scroll down and look for it) and click the jog wheel.
4. Jog to the Project number and click jog wheel.
5. Are you sure? Jog up to YES, and click the jog wheel.

## TO RECALL A PROJECT TO PLAY IT

1. Press MENU button on side of unit for two seconds to bring up main menu.
2. Jog to PROJECT and press jog wheel.
3. Jog to SELECT and press jog wheel.
4. Jog to the Project number and press jog wheel.
5. It will say "Now Loading." The project is ready to play. Listen by pressing the PLAY button.

## TO TRANSFER PROJECTS TO A COMPUTER USING A SIMPLE CABLE

The Zoom H4N is set up to use Cubase Software for sound editing and saving. If, like me, you're unwilling to load it and learn it, you can use [Audacity](#) (a free sound recording program online) to make Wav files or add Audacity's "[Lame encoder](#)" to easily create smaller Mp3 files for sharing or storing.

Just plug a cable from the headphone jack of the Zoom unit into the LINE IN at the back of your computer, and then open the Audacity program and record your project straight into your computer, and save it as a .wav or .mp3. These files can be backed up, or easily edited (cut, fade, trim, splice) and later transferred to CD or an mp3 player. Anyone with Cubase simple instructions do please offer flutey help. :>)