



Microphones

# snowball

USB microphone



User guide



A close-up photograph of a silver oval grille. The grille features a white mesh pattern with a central silver oval badge. The badge contains the word "Blue" in a stylized, metallic font. The grille is set against a white background.

Blue

The Snowball USB condenser microphone from Blue Microphones is the number one selling USB wired condenser microphone on the planet. Its unique design and proprietary condenser capsule developed by Blue deliver legendary sound for everything from podcasting to recording instruments. The Snowball benefits from Blue's legendary professional audio heritage to record at a level unmatched in the market.

## technical specifications

- Transducer Type ● Condenser, pressure gradient with USB digital output
- Polar Pattern ● Cardioid (position 1); Cardioid with -10dB pad (position 2); Omnidirectional (position 3)
- Sample/Word ● 44.1 kHz/16 bit

# 1, 2, 3 ...

## position

First position

Second position

Third position

## setting

activates cardioid capsule

activates the cardioid capsule  
with a -10dB PAD

activates the omni capsule

## applications

speech, vocals, podcasting

live music, loud sound sources

conferences, interviews, environmental  
recordings

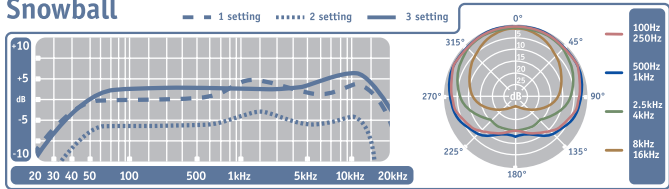
SNOWBALL



1 2 3



# Snowball



Frequency Response

Polar Response



This frequency chart is only a start. It gives the recordist a basis of the sound provided. How the microphone reacts in a particular application will differ greatly because of many variables. Room acoustics, distance from sound source (proximity), tuning of the instrument and mic cabling are only a few of the interacting issues. For an artist or an engineer, how the microphones are used creates the basis of the sound.

## how to set up

The Snowball features a unique swivel mount located on the bottom center of the mic body. Be sure to mount the Snowball on the Blue Snowball desktop tripod or on a standard-thread counter-weighted tripod mic stand. For reduction of low-frequency rumble and additional positioning options, mount the Snowball in the Blue Ringer, available from your authorized Blue dealer. Be sure to position the Snowball over the center leg of the tripod to further prevent tipping. Once mounted, you can gently pivot the Snowball back and forth for optimum positioning in front of the sound source.

Once safely mounted, connect the Snowball to the USB port on your Macintosh or Windows computer (the Snowball is USB 2.0 compatible— see the right sidebar for full system requirements). Make sure that the active, on-axis side of the diaphragm (the side with the BLUE logo) is facing the desired source. When connected, the LED just above the Blue logo will glow red, indicating power has reached the Snowball and it is ready to roll. For additional set-up information, FAQs about the Snowball and the latest news regarding software compatibility, visit the Blue Microphones Snowball page at [www.bluemic.com/products/snowball](http://www.bluemic.com/products/snowball).

## System Requirements

### Macintosh

Mac OS X

USB 1.0 or 2.0

64 MB RAM (Minimum)



### Windows

Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista

Windows XP Home Edition or XP Professional

USB 1.0 or 2.0

64 MB RAM (Minimum)

## Macintosh Setup Procedure

- In system OS X: in the Apple menu, open System Preferences.
- Double-click the Sound preference file.
- Click on the Input tab.
- Double click Blue Usb Ball Mic under Choose A Device For Sound Input dialog box.
- Set input volume to the appropriate level. The mic is sensitive and may require a very low volume setting.
- Exit System Preferences.



## Windows Setup Procedure

### Windows 8 and Windows 7:

- From Start Menu, access the Control Panel
- Select Sound, or if in Category View select Hardware and Sound and then Sound
- On the Recording tab, right-click on Blue Snowball and select Properties
- Select the Level tab, and select appropriate volume level (start at midway point of the slider & adjust from there)
- Hit Apply and Exit Control Panel

### Windows Vista:

- Under Start Menu open Control Panel then select Sound.
- Select Recording tab; insure Blue Snowball is selected as Working with check mark next to the icon (Disable any alternate mic if necessary).
- Click on Properties; select the Levels tab, set your input level, click Apply, then OK.
- Exit control panel.

### Windows XP Home Edition or XP Professional:

- Under Start Menu open Sounds And Audio Devices control panel.
- Select Audio tab; insure Blue Ball Usb Mic is selected as Default Device.
- Click on Volume; select appropriate volume level.
- Exit control panel.

## suggested applications



podcasting



home video voiceover



instant messaging





## music

vocals, guitars, drums,  
strings, brass, woodwinds



## Optional Accessories

The Ringer: Universal shockmount for the Snowball—  
or any mic with a standard thread mount.

# software setups

## how to get audio from my snowball with...

### Garage Band

- Go to Preferences->Audio and select the Blue mic as the input device (it will only show up when The Snowball is plugged in).
- Create a vocal track and select the Blue mic as the input device for that track.
- You may need to adjust the Snowball's input level in the control panel if you experience any distortion (crackling).

### Logic 7

- Open the Audio and MIDI setup program in your Apps->Utilities folder.
- Create an Aggregate Audio Source (Audio menu - open Aggregate device editor).
- Add the devices you want to use to the aggregate device (Built in audio and Blue mic).
- Change the audio device in Logic's audio preferences from Default to Aggregate.

### Sonar

- Select "USB Audio Device" ( 1, in, 0 out) from an audio track.
- From within that subcategory, there are 3 selections: Left USB Audio Device, Right USB Audio Device, and Stereo USB Audio Device.

- Select Left or Right for mono audio tracks.
- Press "R" to arm the track for recording.
- Roll disk.

#### Adobe Premier Elements 4 (Windows Vista/XP)

- If you should experience any problems getting the program to recognize the mic, Adobe recommends the following: If the device does not allow you to record, then your microphone is not being detected as a valid input device in Premiere Elements. You can use an open source program called ASIO4ALL, which is a device driver that essentially wraps existing WDM devices, like USB microphones, as ASIO-compatible sound devices. Use the following steps to utilize this tool:
- Quit Premiere Elements.
- Visit the following web page and download the latest available version of ASIO4ALL:  
<http://www.asio4all.com/>
- Install the software, and restart the system if asked to do so by the installer.
- Make certain that your microphone is plugged in.
- Launch Premiere Elements. Go to the 'Edit->Preferences..>Audio Hardware' menu option. For the Default Device, choose the ASIO4ALL option. Click the ASIO Settings button, then select your microphone from the list of devices, click Exit, and then click OK on the Preferences dialog. Close and then restart Premiere Elements.

## snowball faq

My Snowball sounds like it's really far away from me. I'm hearing lots of room noise.

- This sounds like your onboard mic is in use. Check both System and Software Preferences to ensure that Snowball is the Default input device.

Do I need any special software to use The Snowball? Do I need any drivers?

- Technically, no. Depending on your application, your OS may have sufficient features to utilize the capabilities of the Snowball. But, to get the most out of your Snowball, you'll want to have some kind of software that allows for digital signal processing and non-linear editing that will accept audio from the USB port. Some examples of these programs are listed below. As long as you are using Windows XP or Apple OSX, you will not need any drivers.

Can I use the Blue Snowball with ProTools?

- The Snowball is a USB device. At present, Protools software requires proprietary hardware to input audio in real time. At the time this document was created, there is not a USB input on Protools hardware. Important Note: You can import audio files previously recorded with the Snowflake into a ProTools session. Please note that the Snowball has a fixed digital output of 16 bit /44.1 kHz.

My Snowball is plugged in, but I'm not able to see or hear levels.

- Things to double check:
  - Is the red LED on the front of the Snowball illuminated?

- Is the Snowball connected to a native USB port? Hubs will not provide the appropriate current to power the Snowball.
- Is the Snowball selected as the default input device in both the System and software Preferences? Also, make certain you have an adequate amount of volume set.
- Does the recording software I am using support a USB input?

Is the Snowball compatible with Windows Vista?

- Snowballs manufactured after July, 2007 (with serial numbers higher than 76-065000) are Vista compatible. Snowballs with serial numbers lower than this are not Vista compatible.

Can I use The Snowball with a traditional analog audio mixer?

- No. The Snowball features digital output only. It must be connected to a USB port in order to function.

What sample rate and word length does The Snowball use?

- The Snowball's digital output is set to 44.1 kHz / 16-bit, just like an audio CD. But this is something that only audio geeks really need to worry about.

How can I select a different sample rate?

- Because The Snowball is designed for the greatest ease of operation and setup, sample rate/word length are not user-definable. Sorry, geeks.

Can I use more than one Snowball at a time?

- Some audio editing software allows for multiple USB connections. Check with your software vendor—they should have technical support staff who can answer all of your questions about their product.

What does cardioid and omnidirectional mean? Why should I care?

- These are the two polar patterns The Snowball is capable of producing. If you think of polar patterns as the shape of the area that a microphone “hears” omnidirectional hears everything at equal volume from all angles (in a 360 degree sphere surrounding the mic), while cardioid only hears what’s right in front of it at full volume and other sounds at increasingly diminished volume as the sound source moves further away from the center of the mic (audio techs call this off-axis). You should care because one of the most useful features of a microphone is the ability to control its pickup. We like polar patterns so much, that some of our professional studio microphones have as many as nine different patterns! With The Snowball, we’ve given you the two most likely to be useful to you.

What is The Snowball used for? Is it a vocal mic, an instrument mic or both?

- The Snowball was designed to provide a wide range of applications where a high-quality transducer (a fancy way to say microphone) is needed, but so is ease of use and setup. Though most professional engineers prefer certain microphones for certain applications, we designed The Snowball for use with a wide variety of sources. Here are some suggested applications we came up with when we were locked in Blue’s patented anechoic think tank: instrument and voice for music production/pre-production/demos, DV-looping/dialog, podcasting, sound effects, audio sampling, interactive programming, video sweetening/post, internet telephony, internet conferencing, recording lectures,



poetry slams, spoken word performances and speeches by your favorite politician— generally anywhere where you need an easy-to-use microphone and you have access to a computer with a USB port. Happy recording!



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In keeping with our policy of continued product improvement, Baltic Latvian Universal Electronics (BLUE) reserves the right to alter specifications without prior notice.

## Warranty

Blue Microphones warrants its hardware product against defects in materials and workmanship for a period of TWO (2) YEARS from the date of original retail purchase, provided the purchase was made from an authorized Blue Microphones dealer. This warranty is void if the equipment is altered, misused, mishandled, maladjusted, suffers excessive wear, or is serviced by any parties not authorized by Blue Microphones. The warranty does not include transportation costs incurred because of the need for service unless arranged for in advance. Blue Microphones reserves the right to make changes in design and improve upon its products without obligation to install these improvements in any of its products previously manufactured. For warranty service or for a copy of Blue's Warranty Policy including a complete list of exclusions and limitations, contact Blue at 818-879-5200.



Microphones

[www.bluemic.com](http://www.bluemic.com)



Designed in USA. Made in China.