

# Akai LP Wireless Controllers £70

Akai have updated their LPK25 and LPD8 controllers with wireless functionality and more. Dan 'JD73' Goldman has a fiddle

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**KEY FEATURES** USB-powered, Bluetooth MIDI, iOS/MacOS/Windows compatibility.

**LPK25:** 25-note mini keyboard with velocity, arpeggiator with latch, octave switches, tap-tempo.

**LPD8:** 8 MPC-style, backlit, velocity-sensitive pads (2 banks), note-repeat, swing, eight Q-links.







**A**kai's new LPK25 Wireless controller features a 25-note minikey keyboard with velocity sensitivity. It's a very compact unit, bus-powerable over USB from your laptop or studio computer. For travelling, its diminutive size and low weight mean you can sling it into a bag and not even realise it's there, and battery power is now included, making a big improvement over the wired models. The real killer feature, though, is Bluetooth MIDI, which allows pairing with iOS, Mac or Windows devices. This is, thankfully, easy to set up using the Pair button, and works reliably, enabling triggering of iPad software over Bluetooth without the need for a USB cable or camera connection kit.

The general build quality impresses, and the overall look has been updated in line with Akai's other controllers (red side panels and black casing). There's just enough weight for it to not feel flimsy, plus grippy feet to stop it sliding about. The mini-keyboard works fine for simple note, chord or drum input, and Akai have also replaced the hard-to-read red labelling found on the wired models with white – a big improvement in darker conditions. While there's still no room

## Battery power and Bluetooth MIDI are liberating and indispensable

for pitch or mod wheels (or a joystick), a handy six-mode arpeggiator is included, and there's now a sustain pedal socket and a tap tempo button.

Four programmable memories are accessed via a Program Select button. The software editor allows you to fine-tune settings and tweak the four slots to taste. The LPK25 Wireless does the job well, for a very modest outlay.

The LPD8 Wireless is also very compact and portable, and like the LPK25, it's thicker than the wired model to accommodate the battery compartment (three AAs). It's also USB-powered and features eight MPC-style orange/green-backlit pads (now with two banks for 16 sounds). These feel surprisingly nice under the fingers (better than some competitors' more expensive offerings, even), and there are eight assignable knobs for easily controlling DAW parameters.

The general build is pretty solid here too, similarly giving you four program (scene) memories, plus the

ability to send MIDI program change and CCs too. Everything works great in practice, and again, the battery power and Bluetooth MIDI are liberating and indispensable features that offer big improvements over the originals. If you're looking for reasonably priced, portable, battery-powerable Bluetooth MIDI controllers, the LPK25 and LPD25 come highly recommended. **FM**

### FM VERDICT

# 8.0

**Wireless ability isn't the only improvement made to these controllers – they also have plenty of expanded functions that will be indispensable**

### THE PROS & CONS



Both units are compact and very portable with battery power and Bluetooth MIDI

**There's now a sustain pedal socket on the LPK25, plus Note Repeat, Swing and an extra pad bank on the LPD**

Intuitive editing software allows further customisation of controls and easy setup with your chosen software



There are still no pitch or mod wheels on the LPK25

**No MIDI DIN breakout connector sockets**