

Aguilar TLC DLX Compressor EQ - Owner's Manual V1

Welcome to the TLC DLX Compressor EQ

If you've used the original TLC Compressor, you'll recognize the musical feel right away. If you're new to compression, don't worry — this pedal was designed to make dynamic control feel natural, intuitive, and rewarding. The TLC DLX is built around a simple studio idea: first control your dynamics, then enhance your tone.

What you get is a full-featured bass compressor paired with broad, musical EQ — a compact, bass-focused channel strip designed for real-world playing, whether you're on stage or in the studio.

Quick Start

If you want to get up and running fast, start here.

1. Connect your bass to the INPUT jack.
2. Connect the OUTPUT to your amp, DI, or interface.
3. Power the pedal with a standard 9V DC 500mA center-negative power supply.
4. Set Threshold to noon, Attack / Release to around 9 o'clock, and Ratio to 8.
5. Set Output for unity gain (same volume on and off).
6. Start with Blend fully clockwise (full compression), EQ flat (fully counterclockwise).

Play a few notes and adjust from there.

If it feels smoother and more controlled without sounding “squashed,” you're on the right track but feel free to adjust to taste!

How the TLC DLX Works

Compression helps control the natural dynamics of your playing — evening out peaks, adding sustain, and helping your bass sit more consistently in a mix. Once dynamics are dialed in, the EQ section lets you enhance your tone in a broad, musical way — adding weight, clarity, and presence without losing the natural character of your bass.

Compression Controls

Threshold - Sets the level at which compression begins. Turning the control clockwise lowers the threshold, meaning more of your playing will activate the compressor. Use the LED meter to see how much gain reduction is happening as you play.

Attack - Controls how quickly the compressor responds to the front of each note. Faster attack (counterclockwise) smooths out sharp peaks immediately. Slower attack (clockwise) lets more of the natural note attack come through.

Release - Controls how quickly compression stops after the note decays. Faster release (counterclockwise) feels tight and responsive. Slower release (clockwise) feels smoother and more sustained.

Ratio - Determines how strongly the signal is compressed once it passes the threshold.

- Lower ratios provide subtle, transparent control.
- Higher ratios create more noticeable compression.
- At higher settings, the TLC DLX can function as a limiter.

2:1 - This is the lightest touch. 2:1 softly evens out peaks while preserving your natural dynamics and touch. It feels transparent and forgiving, making it great for players who want control without hearing the compressor working. Great for fingerstyle playing or as an “always on” setting that stays out of the way.

4:1 - 4:1 adds noticeable control while still sounding natural. It tightens your playing, adds a bit of punch, and helps notes sit more evenly without flattening your expression. Great for consistent groove playing and a nice balance of feel and polish.

8:1 - This ratio starts to feel more like studio compression. 8:1 delivers strong, even control that smooths out performance inconsistencies and keeps your bass steady in denser mixes. Great for recording and a clean, modern bass sound that feels dialed in.

12:1 - At 12:1, compression becomes more assertive. Dynamics are tightly controlled, and sustain becomes more prominent. Your bass feels solid and focused, with very little level variation. Great for slap or aggressive playing where you want it tight in a mix.

20:1 - This setting moves into heavy compression territory. Peaks are firmly controlled, and the bass stays locked at a consistent level. It's dramatic but still musical when used thoughtfully. Use it for strong peak control, tight, punchy styles or parallel compression with the Blend control.

∞ (Infinity) - Infinity engages limiting. At this setting, the compressor prevents the signal from exceeding the threshold at all. It's designed for maximum control, protecting your signal from sudden peaks while keeping things controlled and contained. Use it for hard peak protection and aggressive styles or where you want. If you want the pedal to act more like protection than compression, this is the setting.

A Helpful Tip

Higher ratios don't have to sound extreme. Using the **Blend control** lets you combine strong compression with your dry signal, giving you power and consistency while keeping your natural feel intact. When in doubt, start low and increase only as much as you need.

LED Gain-Reduction Meter - The LED meter shows how much compression is being applied in real time. This visual feedback makes it easier to dial in compression accurately and consistently, especially in different rooms or with different instruments.

Output - Compression reduces overall level. The Output control lets you bring your volume back up. Toggle the pedal on and off and adjust Output so your level stays the same. This helps you hear what the compression is actually doing.

Blend - The Blend control lets you mix your uncompressed signal with the compressed tone. Fully clockwise = full compression and turning counterclockwise blends in more dry signal. This parallel compression approach adds punch and consistency while preserving dynamics, articulation, and feel.

EQ Section

Once your dynamics are under control, the TLC DLX lets you shape tone using broad, **boost-only** EQ inspired by Aguilar's DB 925 circuit.

Bass - Adds fullness and weight across the low-frequency spectrum without muddying your tone.

Treble - Adds clarity and articulation, helping notes speak clearly while remaining smooth and musical.

These controls are designed to enhance what's already there, not drastically reshape your sound.

Sound Recipes

Starting points — adjust to taste!

Light Dynamic Control

- Ratio: 2:1
- Attack: Noon
- Release: Noon
- Blend: Fully clockwise
- EQ: Flat

Great for subtle smoothing that keeps your tone natural.

Punchy & Controlled

- Ratio: 4:1–6:1
- Attack: Slightly slower than noon
- Release: Faster than noon
- Blend: Noon

Adds punch and consistency while keeping articulation intact.

Studio-Style Leveling

- Ratio: 8:1
- Attack: Fast
- Release: Slow
- Blend: 1–2 o'clock

Smooth, even dynamics that sit well in a dense mix.

Parallel Compression Feel

- Ratio: 6:1
- Attack: Medium
- Release: Medium
- Blend: 10–11 o'clock

Adds body and sustain without losing touch sensitivity.

Polished & Present

- Compression: Moderate
- Bass: Slight boost
- Treble: Slight boost

A finished, mix-ready tone for live or studio use.

Power

Uses standard 9V DC, 500mA center-negative power