

# Korg Kaoss Pad Quad | £275

**Chris Barker** pokes his fingers where they're not wanted and as usual, Kaoss ensues

## WHAT IS IT?

A touch pad style DJ effects controller with multiple, controllable effects layers.

## CONTACT

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 1,295 different effects combinations
- 2 Freeze controls bank
- 3 Simple to set up and use

**T**he legacy of Korg's touchy-feely effects boxes is well known, with the first unit spicing up DJ sets and studio sessions way back in 1999.

But it's worth mentioning that this isn't a replacement to the flagship Kaoss Pad 3, but a new model that slots somewhere between the tiny KP Mini and the sampling and looping might that is the Kaoss Pad 3.

The main focus here is solely placed on effects and the ability to

achieve multiple combinations of effects and control their parameters fluidly with the touch pad in the usual Kaoss Pad style.

Twenty different effects are included, with the usual suspects such as high, band and low pass filters, distortions, delays, reverbs and modulation effects like flanging and phasing. These sit among more modern, chaotic loop chopping, slicing and vinyl-style break effects. These are all grouped in their relevant four

families on push buttons on the surface of the device.

## In sync

Unboxing the unit reveals a thin and light unit that feels quite plastic and not exactly gig-ready. The soft rubber buttons for effects selection and control are more pleasant, brightly backlit and look like they'll suffer a bashing. Each effect section is in four parts with a freeze button below to keep each effect at the point you left it on the touch pad if required.

There's the usual FX Depth control allows to feed through a certain percentage of the original signal and an input volume helps to keep things at the right level. So really, technically everything is relatively simple. But, this simplicity when you consider the price might raise a few questions.

Although the KP Quad's automatic bpm calculator is fairly accurate and tap tempo can adjust when necessary, when dealing with time sensitive effects like delays, the loop slicer or beat repeat style effects, the lack of MIDI means you can't completely sync 'worry-free' in all situations. Don't







expect the automatic bpm counter to figure out anything mildly complicated, as it seems many times more inaccurate than those present on the standard issue DJ mixers and CDJs.

Quad quandaries

The quality of the effects is fine but classic sounds like the filter and flanging and phasing effects do sound a little thin. There's a microphone input with quite an aggressive gain

amber to red when you're inputting a hot signal. The touch pad has four coloured corners to indicate the weighting given to each effect, glowing brighter as you put your finger nearer. The instinctive thing to do when using the pad is to swipe around but more often than not, this can make the time accurate effects quite hard to operate.

When using delays, it seems much better to choose a spot on the pad and poke it, rather than swipe around. With

Ableton or Sugar Bytes Effectrix rather than anything particularly original.

Still it's much more fun working this way and routing synths out of your DAW and through the Kaoss Pad Quad is a great way to chop and effect the sound in fresh ways, creating happy audio accidents for re-editing later.

The Kaoss effect

It's hard to whole-heartedly recommend the Kaoss Pad Quad.

Certainly, you WILL find yourself in awe of the 1,295 different combinations of effects. Until, that is, you realise that you don't really want to apply a

The most fun to be had is to freeze parameters and swap between them like tapping a drum machine

control on the rear, but this could work well in a live environment with a DJ or MC, or even more interestingly, to give on stage vocalists touch control over their mic effects.

But as the inputs are phono/RCA-type connectors, it's not the greatest signal path for that kind of use. In fact the sound quality overall can be questionable if you get the input level to hot. There is however a Peak LED, which will change from

this in mind it would have been much more useful for the FX depth control to be on a resilient fader rather than the rotary pot so you could quickly cut effects in and out.

Possibly the most fun to be had with this device lies in creating four effects, freezing their parameters then swapping and unfreezing them like you're tapping away at a drum machine. The trouble is, this still sounds like someone farting around in

'distorted reverse-looper-pitch-shifted-reverberated delay' over your entire DJ set and in fact the device is best used, like most things, much more subtly.

It is fun, it keeps all it promises, but the built-in effects on many DJ mixers and software have effectively copied what made Kaoss great and matched it for fidelity and then some. When you factor in the lack of USB, MIDI and balanced outputs you start to question if you really need a Quad.

Overall, it's mixed feelings – there were times when I really enjoyed using the Kaoss Pad Quad, both DJing and in the studio, but as an owner of the excellent KP Mini I have to say I probably won't miss it when it goes home to Korg. **FM**

Organised Kaoss

While the Korg KP Mini offers low cost, simple, single-effects control, the Kaoss Pad Quad effectively times that by four and adds a mic input. Unfortunately it loses the battery operation of the KP Mini and lacks the advanced features of MIDI, USB, SD card and sampling of the flagship KP3. This places the KP Quad bang in the middle of the Kaoss Pad range for both price and features, but also makes it very niche. Do you really need to control four effects at the same time?



SPECS

**Effect Modules and Types**  
**Looper Module:** Looper, Rev Looper, Loop Slicer, Grain Shifter, Vinyl Break  
**Mod Module:** Dist, Decimator, Ducking Comp, Flanger, Phaser  
**Filter Module:** LPF, HPF, BPF+, Jet, Pitch Shifter  
**Delay/Rev Module:** 1Delay, Delay, Tape Echo, Reverb, Delay Reverb

**Inputs**  
**Line inputs** (RCA jacks), Mic (1/4" phone jack)

**Outputs**  
**Line outputs** (RCA jacks), Headphones (1/4" stereo phone jack)

**Sampling Frequency:** 48kHz

**AD/DA:** 24-bit linear

**Dimensions:** 185 x 213 x 44mm

**Weight:** 754g

ALTERNATIVES



**Korg Kaoss Pad Mini**  
**£99**

Basic, pocket-sized and battery powered, but packed with enough power to spice up any DJ set. Fun in the studio too!

[korg.co.uk](http://korg.co.uk)



**Korg Kaoss Pad 3**  
**£315**

Lots more power, sampling, looping, USB, MIDI and more. Robustly built and well thought-out. Just might be too deep for many DJ sets, but great for a live show when its features are really explored.

[korg.co.uk](http://korg.co.uk)

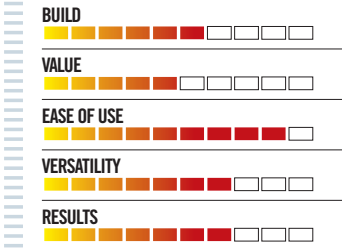


**Pioneer EFX-500**  
**£250**

Discontinued, but still stocked in some stores and eBay. Nice quality effects with an alternative control option of the Kaoss' touch.

[ebay.co.uk](http://ebay.co.uk)

FutureMusic VERDICT



Lives up to its promise, but is competing too closely with other KPs when it comes to value.