



studio242

AUDIO &
VIDEO PRODUCTION

Guidelines for a successful Studio Session (common mistakes to avoid)

MISTAKE 1: MIXING TOO LOUDLY

Mixing too loudly will actually just ruin your mix....

It feels great when you get a great sounding track and you crank up the volume. It can sound big and exciting. A lot of things sound exciting when you blast them but there are good reasons to mix at lower volumes

Working at a lower volume will ensure that your mix doesn't sound too mid-range and enables you to hear the finer details in your mix and adjust them accordingly.

Plus, one of the most important reason is to protect your ears and those of others!! Exposure to any sounds at high volume are detrimental to your hearing and once you lose it, it never comes back.

MISTAKE 2: NOT ENOUGH PRACTICE

Practice makes perfect... No matter how well you think you know the song you're about to record, you can always be a little more rehearsed.

Playing a song, and recording a song are two very different things. Any musician will tell you that once you're set to record, and that "red light" goes on, something changes. You start to feel the pressure of trying to get "the perfect take", and end up playing very self-consciously, and that's when mistakes start happening.

By the time you're recording, you shouldn't have to be thinking about your part, you should be performing it and that lack of the need to be thinkingcomes from focused rehearsals.

Don't just "jam" with the thought that you will be able to simply "wing it" in the studio.

Build any solos, melodic hooks or harmonies meticulously. Record yourselves playing the song, and then have a discussion about anything that needs to be changed or improved. That's what rehearsals are for. BEFORE being in a studio! ***If any of those discussions are happening in the studio, it's too late!*** You will start to eat up valuable recording time. So, know your part and your song by heart. The more prepared you are, the better your track will sound.

MISTAKE 3: WEAK TUNING

Get your instrument in tune!

It seems an obvious statement to make but the importance of tuning cannot be overstated.

First, ensure that your instrument is in “recording shape”, meaning it’s in tune with itself. Proper intonation on every instrument will ensure that your track sounds as polished and as tight as possible.

For example: if your guitar sounds great when you play a G chord, but sounds a bit off when you play a D or an A chord, then your instrument may need a setup.

But before you make that decision, make sure your playing isn’t the culprit. Some guitar players squeeze chords too tightly, causing the instrument to sound out of tune, when in fact, it is simply a symptom of flawed technique.

Also, ensure all your accessories are in good working order. You don’t want to have to deal with faulty pedals, scratchy input jacks, pickup switches or tone knobs once you’re “on the clock”

When you’re in the studio, you don’t want to be focused on instruments and gear, you want to be focused on having good, clean signal chains, and performing the song to the best of your ability.

MISTAKE 4: LACK OF PROPER PREPARATION

Know your goals and objectives BEFORE you start recording...

Music is art, and art can be very subjective. Everyone has an opinion on what they think is good, and what they think is bad.

In a band situation, it’s vital that every member be on the same page, creatively. Once parts are being recorded, it’s too late to tell your bandmates or your producer that you think the song should have a different groove, a different arrangement, a different tempo, different lyrics, or a new bridge section that hasn’t been fully worked out.

Certain things CAN be changed while in studio, just make sure those changes don’t drastically alter the song, causing other wide-ranging issues. Be in agreement BEFORE you walk into the studio.

MISTAKE 5: LACK OF PROPER PRE-PRODUCTION

Being able to play your parts is one thing, ensuring that they all sound great together is another. Everything needs to sit right in context. Certain parts might sound great on their own, but for whatever reason, don’t work in the song. Melody or harmony notes might clash, certain tones might be the “wrong” colour” for certain sections, two people might be playing slightly different grooves, two great hooks may not complement each other, etc.

Create a blueprint. Important decisions get made while formulating that blueprint, so that there are as few delays as possible. All done before the actual studio session.

This is where ideas can be tested and fleshed out, not when the studio clock is ticking away. You should know as much as possible about what you want to build BEFORE you start trying to put the pieces together, so you don't end up wasting valuable recording time

MISTAKE 6: LACK OF PROFESSIONALISM

Be professional, at all times.

Professionals become professionals for a reason. The musicians at the top are not only there because they know how to perform but also because they know how to prepare and present themselves.

In the end, it's a matter of respect, respect for your bandmates, as well as your engineer, producer and any other studio staff involved in your project and importantly, that means showing up on time. This conveys a level of seriousness to everyone involved with your session, and says that you're there to work and accomplish your goal.

So have the demo of the song(s) you want to record ready, have all your gear in tip top shape, have a plan for how you'll be working and when you'll be taking breaks, be courteous to bandmates as well as engineering, production and managerial staff, have a positive and constructive attitude towards the material, and do your best to ensure a creative and productive atmosphere in the studio.

MISTAKE 7: LOSING SIGHT OF THE GOAL

HAVE FUN!!

Sometimes recording can be frustrating and it can get easy to lose sight of the reason so many of us do this in the first place: for the love of it.

Be passionate and enthusiastic about the art you're creating together