

## SESSION PREP

# HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR SESSION

A little preparation goes a long way. Use this checklist to get ready before you arrive, stay focused during the session, and know what to expect after the last take. Check items off as you go.

## 1. PLAN THE PROJECT BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

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**Sketch the project scope**

How many songs, their rough length, and what role you want the studio to play. A clear picture makes every session decision easier.

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**Send demos ahead**

A voice memo or rough home recording is perfect. We are not listening for polish – we are listening for structure, arrangement, and feel so we can plan mic choices and tracking order.

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**Pick two or three reference tracks**

Choose songs that sound like the song you want to make – not necessarily songs you love, but songs that point toward your target sonically.

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**Know each song end to end**

Be able to play through the song top to bottom. Arrangements can still shift in the room, but the foundation – form, key, tempo, your main parts – should feel familiar under your fingers.

## 2. REHEARSE WITH RECORDING IN MIND

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### Lock tempos before the session

Decide the final tempo for each song and rehearse to it. If a tempo is still an open question, flag it so we can work through it together early in the day.

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### Practice to a click for non-live recordings

We recommend tracking to a click when the record is built part by part. If you have never played to one, spend some rehearsals getting comfortable – and let us know ahead of time so we can talk through the pros and cons for your project.

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### Play each song through cleanly

You should be able to play the song from top to bottom without stopping. Small mistakes are fine – that is what takes and comping are for – but the form should feel automatic.

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### Stay open to changes in the room

Rehearse enough to feel confident, but not so rigidly that you cannot respond to a better idea when it shows up. Some of the strongest moments come from small changes made during tracking.

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## 3. BRING WHAT YOU WILL NEED

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### Instruments in good playing condition

Fresh strings, solid intonation, new drumheads if yours are worn, fresh batteries in active pickups and pedals. Small issues get magnified under a microphone.

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### Backups for anything that can break or wear out

Extra strings, sticks, picks, drumheads, 9V batteries, patch cables. We do not keep spares on hand, so plan to bring your own.

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### Tuner and capos

Two of the most commonly forgotten items. A clip-on tuner and any capos your songs use will save real time.

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### Lyric or lead sheets for every song

Printed or digital – whichever you prefer. Easier to reference in the room than scrolling through notes on a phone.

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**Your reference tracks, ready to play**

Queue them up on your phone, laptop, or a streaming service so we can pull them up quickly when the conversation calls for it.

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**Water, snacks, and anything that keeps you comfortable**

Sessions can run long. Staying hydrated and fed makes a real difference in the last takes of the day.

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**No need for an external drive**

Final files and session deliverables are sent via the cloud, so you do not have to bring storage of your own.

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## 4. HOW A SESSION RUNS

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**Plan on tracking the rhythm section first**

Most sessions start with drums and the core rhythm instruments. Once that foundation is strong, other parts can be redone or layered on top with confidence.

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**Expect to play together in one room**

The studio is set up so most of the band can track in the same space, with electric amps tucked into isolated closets. You get the feel of playing together while the signals stay clean.

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**Decide how polished you want the record to feel**

Some artists are after a live, jazzy feel and let small imperfections stay. Others want every detail tight. Both are fine – knowing which one you want helps everyone make faster decisions in the moment.

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**Speak up when something feels off – but finish the take**

Feedback is always welcome. When you can, try to play through to the end before calling it. A full pass usually reveals more than stopping at the first rough spot.

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**Hold still and leave silence at the end of each song**

When the last note lands, stay quiet and still for a few seconds. Don't set down your instrument or start talking. That tail gives us clean room tone and lets the song fade naturally if the arrangement calls for it.

# 5. AFTER TRACKING

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## Plan time for mixing and mastering

Mixing and mastering shape just as much of the final record as tracking does. Build enough time into your release schedule to let both steps get the attention they deserve.

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## Decide how you want the record mixed

Mixing can happen in house, or the project can hand off to an external engineer. We are happy to share recommendations for top-tier external mixers if that is the direction you want to go.

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## Decide how you want the record mastered

Mastering can also be done here or routed to a trusted outside mastering engineer, depending on what fits the project.

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## Know what you will receive

WAV stems, stereo mixes, and masters prepared for streaming are all available as deliverables. Let us know early what formats you need so nothing is missing at the finish line.