
Rapid
MIXING CHEATSHEET
Discover a proven step-by-step system for mixing radio-worthy tracks in record time
ORPHEUS
AUDIO ACADEMY

Mixing Cheatsheet

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Inspired by Hardcore Music Studio

TRACK	EQ BOOST	EQ CUT	COMPRESS
BASS	**50-80hz** for sub/low-end **1khz** to cut through mix **2-2.5khz** for pluck sand presence	**350-700hz** for boxiness LPF **7-4khz**	Medium attack Medium-fast release
KICK	Between **60-80hz** for low-end **2.5-4.5khz** for snap **8khz** for click & attack	**150-350hz** for mud **700-900hz** for boxiness (basketball sound)	Slow attack Fast release
SNARE	**8khz** for crack/snap **2.5khz** for midrange attack **200hz** for low end thump	**500-700hz** for boxiness	Slow attack Fast release
OVERHEAD	**12khz** shelf for high-end brilliance	HPF **200hz** or higher **400-700hz** for boxiness and reduce kit sound	Medium-fast attack Fast release
TOMS	**120-200hz** for low end **70-90hz** for low end **4.5khz** for attack **8khz** for attack	**150-300hz** for mud **700-900hz** for boxy or “basketball” sound	Slow attack Fast release
ROOMS	**80hz** for low end **5-8khz** for presense	**150-300hz** for mud **700-900hz** for boxy or “basketball” sound	Fast attack Fast release Compress hard
LEAD VOX	**8khz** for aggressive brightness **4.5khz** for clarity **1-2.5khz** to get up-front	**200hz** Low-Shelf for mud	Fast to Medium Attack Fast Release COMPRESS HARD Slower Attack = harder consonants
BKG VOX	**12khz** for air / brightness **3-4.5khz** for definition **800hz** for fullness	Could also LPF **12khz** **1-2.5khz** to make space for LD Vocal **200hz** Low-Shelf for mud	Fast attack Fast release
GUITAR (DISTORTED)	**1.5khz** to cut through the mix **2.5khz** for extra aggression **5-8khz** for brightness	HPF at **90-120hz** LPF at **9-12khz** **250-350hz** for mud	Medium attack Medium-fast release
GUITAR (CLEAN)	**1-2.5k** to cut through **8-12khz** for brightness	**250-600hz** for mud or boxiness	Medium attack Medium release

EQ & Compression Tips

EQ TIPS

- Only use the frequencies above as a starting point. Move up or down to find the sweet spot for each track.
- Use cutting to fix and boosting to enhance
- Boost as much as you need to get the job done (don't hold back)
- In general, make narrow cuts and wide boosts
- Try EQing in mono to more easily hear where tracks are clashing
- Listen back to your track at 85-90db while using EQ to hear the most accurate picture of the frequency content and make the best decisions (mix at low volumes the rest of the time).
- Don't use EQ unless you need it (use your ears)

COMPRESSION TIPS

- Punch is derived from the tail of a sound, not the initial transient. This is why slower attacks are great for punchy drums.
- If you want to soften the initial transient of a sound, use a faster attack speed
- Higher ratios are great for adding aggression and more obvious compression
- If you want to be transparent, use lower ratios
- Make sure to volume balance (keep the volume the same after compression as before with makeup gain)
- Don't worry about the meter (use your ears)

How To Finish Songs Fast

The faster you can finish your songs, the more songs you'll be able to create and release, which means more fans for you!

But this isn't the only reason why you want to mix fast. In fact, I'd probably say the number 1 reason to mix fast is listening fatigue. You're always on the clock when you're mixing, because the longer you go, the less objective you come, and the poorer decisions you start to make.

Sure, you can take breaks, but there is also a cumulative impact. I've mixed songs over and over to the point where I could hear in the end was noise, and I couldn't even figure out what to do next.

So mix fast, and you'll actually produce better quality songs.

here many different productivity hacks out that you can employ to help you finish songs faster, but what is going to help you THE MOST is following a proven, step-by-step, repeatable system.

Not only will this help you save time because you'll know exactly WHAT to do, and when, but you'll actually start producing higher-quality music more consistently. This proven system involves 4 phase, and I include checklists for each of these 4 steps below, but here is a summary of each phase:

Phase 1

Cleanup

Before we dive into mixing, we want to make sure we clean up and organize our tracks. This will allow us to be the most efficient and get the best results.

Here are the steps you'll want to follow in phase 1 of mixing a song:

- DeNoise Tracks (This could include gating amped guitars)
- Aligning any tracks that need it so they are in sync
- Any other needed cleaning (plosives, clicks, pops, etc.)
- Vocal tuning

BONUS TIP /REMINDER

Don't go overboard trying to over correct everything. For example, you don't need to try and remove every instance of headphone bleed. Sound too quiet to show up can be ignored. But if you listen through your song and hear anything annoying, you can fix it in this phase.

Phase 2

Preparation

After clean-up, we're still not quite ready to mix. We want to prep your DAW so that you can be as efficient and effective as possible, which will in turn, produce the best results possible.

Here are your next steps:

- [ ] Color & name tracks
- [ ] Create group & effect busses
- [ ] Set stereo output to mono & import references
- [ ] Gain Staging
- [ ] Subtractive EQ & vocal automation

BONUS TIP /REMINDER

Try to always use the same colors and buss numbers when mixing.

This way, at a glance ,you can know what track is what, and what effect is what.

Phase 3

Mixing

In order to create consistent results, save time, and not lose our minds, we'll want to follow a mixing system. There are multiple schools of thought when it comes to how to go about mixing, but one great approach I like is the "Top Down" mixing approach, where you start with mixing your whole track first, then you move to your instrument groups, and then finally, your individual tracks. This gives you a faster result, requires fewer plugins, and reduces your odds of getting lost in the weeds and losing your mixing objectivity. Here are the 5 steps to Top Down mixing...

- Volume balance
- Make a plan
- Mix buss processing
- Group processing
- Individual channels

BONUS TIP /REMINDER

Always keep "Unity Gain" in mind when you're mixing. This is so important, the college I attended to learn audio engineering is named "Unity Gain Recording Institute". Unity Gain just means input = output, level-wise. Anytime you add a plugin to a track, such as a compressor or EQ, make sure that the track is the same volume after the plugin as before. This will help you to achieve the highest quality sound as possible and prevent you from running into problems later.

Phase 3 Continued...

Processing Order

So now we know WHAT to work on first when it comes to processing, but now what processing do we apply first, and in what order? Well, we'll want to start with the 3 "signal controllers" (EQ, Compression, Expansion), and then move on to the 3 "signal processors" (Reverb, Delay, Pitch). But before any of these, if you're working completely "in the box", meaning computer only and you're not using any outboard gear or a console, then you'll likely want to apply some saturation first(more on this later on). Here is a good processing order of operations:

- Saturation
- EQ
- Compression
- Panning
- Effects & Automation

BONUS TIP /REMINDER

Often, less is more when it comes to mixing. Stick to the concept of "minimum effective does." Don't add a bunch of plugins and effects just because you think you're "supposed to." Always use your ears, and if you think a particular track sounds great the way it is in the mix, then move on.

Phase 4

Mastering

Mastering is the final step. This is where you put on the finishing touches that make your song meet commercial standards. Now, you generally don't want to master a song by itself. If you're releasing an EP or an album, then you would want to master all of your songs together to make sure they have a consistent feel. But if you're just mastering a single, then just use a reference track for perspective. A reference track is any other song you like that sound similar to your track. You can then use this reference track as a measuring stick to guide you.

- [x] EQ
- [x] Compression
- [x] Limiting
- [x] Check against reference
- [x] Test on multiple systems

BONUS TIP /REMINDER

Mastering should only take you about 20-30 minutes. If you find yourself getting bogged down trying to fix too many problems, then you may need to go back to the mix, make corrections there, and re-export..

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Mixing Prep Workflow

Phase 1 - Editing

DeNoise Tracks → **ALIGN** Tracks → **VOCAL** Tuning

Phase 2 - Preparation

COLOR & NAME Tracks → **CREATE** Group Busses → **CREATE** Effect Busses

SET STEREO Output to mono → **IMPORT** references → **GAIN** Staging

SUBTRACTIVE EQ → **VOCAL** Automation → **TAKE A BREAK**

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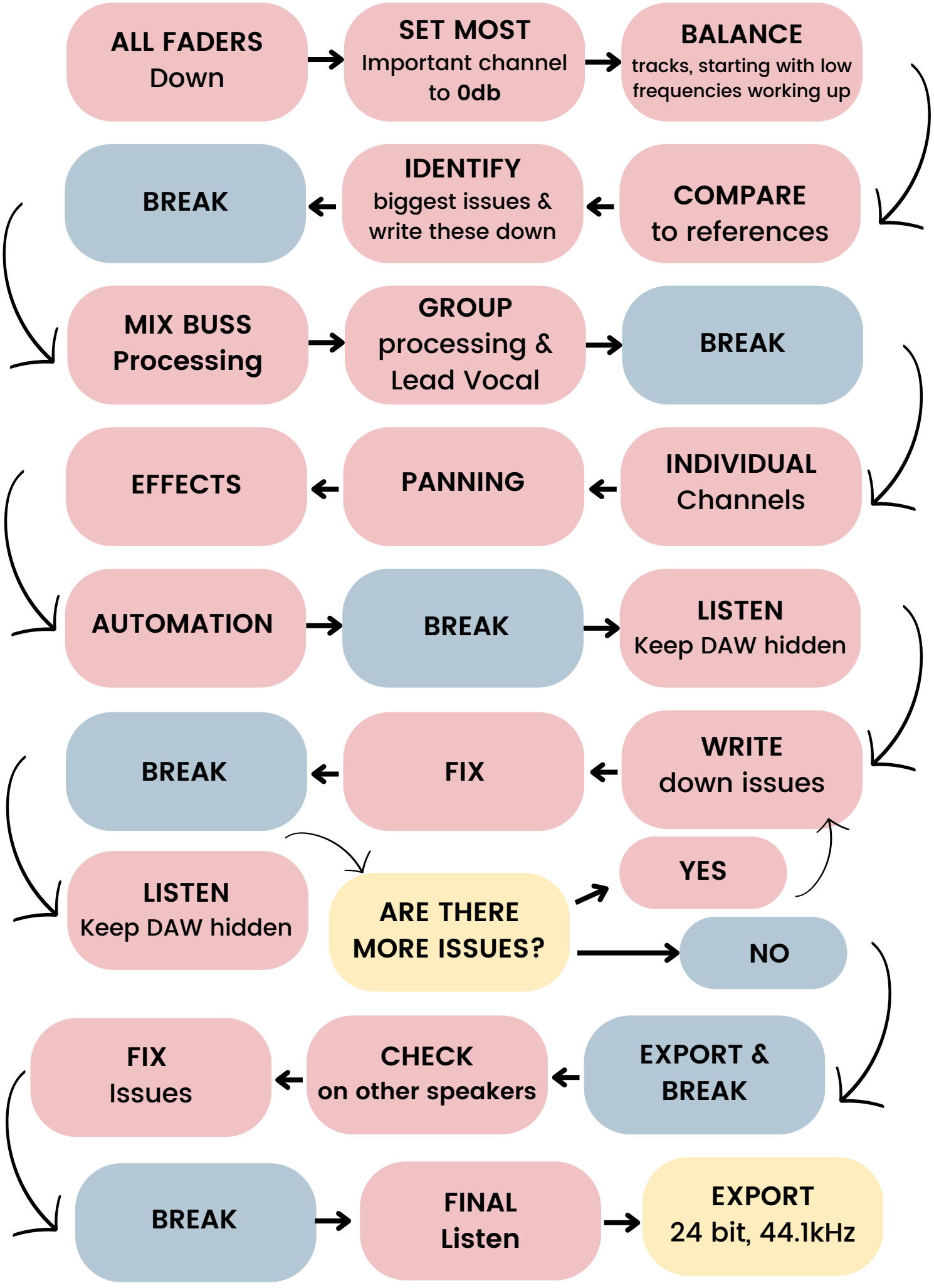
Mixing Workflow



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THANK YOU

I hope you found this resource helpful on your music journey!

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to email me at:

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