

## Preparation for your Session at Mojo Recording Studio

The following guide isn't intended to be a patronising list of dos and don'ts. Hopefully you'll think of it as a helpful checklist to make your session at Mojo Recording Studios more enjoyable.

Although it's aimed more towards preparation for bands, many of the points are also applicable for the solo artist coming into the studio.

An Acrobat file is available by clicking on the link - [Preparation Guide](#). Print off the guide and give it to all the band members.

### Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse!

Your time in the studio is costing you money, so it's definitely not the place to be working out your parts or be unsure about the structure of a song. Make sure everyone knows every aspect of the songs inside out and back to front. In the studio everything needs to be well nailed down, otherwise you will end up wasting a lot of valuable time with endless takes.

Your final rehearsal should be at least a couple of days before the session, so that everything is still fresh in everyone's mind and you'll all be good to go.

### Make recordings

Make recordings at your rehearsals as they can often highlight weak areas that still require some work. Is the kick and bass really tight? Is that break or change in the song really together, or is someone unsure of where it comes in? Common sense stuff, but it's easy to miss even the most obvious, when everyone's playing at high volume in a rehearsal room.

If you have a laptop with a small recording interface - that's ideal. There are also plenty of inexpensive recording apps available for smart phones. Record a feed from your PA system or throw up a microphone in the centre of the room. The quality doesn't need to be fantastic, just good enough to hear and evaluate what everyone's playing and singing.

Your producer at Mojo Recording Studio will also ask you for recordings of your songs as a reference after you've booked your session, so it's a good idea to start this process early on at your rehearsals.

## Establish song tempos & practice to a click track

Work out the tempos of all the songs you intend to record. This is particularly invaluable to your producer who will want to set up the songs in the DAW at the correct BPM (beats per minute).

For Drummers: Once you have established the correct BPM for a song, practice playing along to a click wearing a set of headphones. It can be daunting at first if you haven't done this before, but like everything, you'll soon get used to it. You can download a metronome app for your smart phone and plug headphones into it if you don't have access to a laptop with DAW software. Your songs will be much tighter as you lock into the groove, and will make it much easier for the rest of the musicians to do likewise.

99% or all songs are played at a set tempo from beginning to end. If one or more of your songs falls into the 1% that have tempos varying throughout the song, please refer to the ['Recording Process'](#) page where this is addressed.

## Make lyric/chord sheets

Print out lyric and chord sheets (with a note of tempo) so that (literally) everyone is on the same page. This can be a big help to everyone in the band during your rehearsals and when you get into the studio. The sheets can also be invaluable to your producer as a reference during the recording and production process.

## Sing and play within your Limits

Less is more. The studio isn't really the place to overstretch yourself. Attempting to record the most astounding guitar solo you've ever done,

playing mega fast drum rolls, or vocally stretching for extreme high notes, isn't a good idea if it's right on the edge of your capability. The recording process in the studio should be enjoyable. It can equally turn into a pressure cooker as you go for take 10!

Better to strip things back a little so that everything you do is well within your capability. It'll be tighter, better, take less time to record and be much more enjoyable.

## Be well rested.

Going into the studio is an exciting process. It'll probably be the culmination of many months of work if not longer, so it's easy to get nervous beforehand. Try your best to get a good night's sleep before the session and cut back on the coffee! If you're a party animal, missing one night on the town isn't going to change your life, but the recording you do the next day may do, especially if you're suffering from a hangover and are well below par!

For singers; giging the night before a session in the studio is not advised. Try to organise your session for a day when your not out the night before. Give your voice a rest for at least a day beforehand and be at the top of your game.

## Sort out your equipment

If you intend to bring some of your own equipment to the studio, please speak to your producer first to ensure that what you are intending to bring is suitable. What works well on stage may not work well in the studio. For instance, small low wattage combos work well in a studio environment, high wattage amps don't. Microphones don't like high volume levels.

For the equipment you do bring along, make sure that it's in 100% working condition. Recording in a studio can be unforgiving and will quickly highlight any equipment issues that may not have been apparent on stage or in a rehearsal room.

Guitar, Bass and Keys: Get your amp serviced especially if it's a valve amp.

Get jack sockets and pots on all equipment fixed if they causing intermittent buzzing or crackling. Ensure guitars and basses are well set up, especially the intonation. Ensure any leads specific to your set-up are in 100% condition. Replace strings a few days before the session and ensure you always have an extra set in your case.

Drums: Check for rattling hardware. Replace drum skins a few days before the session and ensure they are well seated and tuned correctly. Bring more than one set of sticks.

## Reference Tracks

It's very helpful for your producer to know the bands/artists that have influenced the band's musical direction. Compile a list of 5 or 6 songs and send them through to the studio before the session starts. Any notes you want to include will also be helpful, such as what it is in each song which you particularly like. Nobody wants to be a clone; you want to be yourself and have your own unique take, but it will ensure your producer takes your sound in the right genre specific direction. Then again, you could be so inspired that you give birth to your own new genre!