

Save Money on Your Recording Project

Don't Waste Your Money

We at Sounds Pretty Good Recording want you to get your money's worth when you record with us or at any recording studio. This document contains some common sense suggestions to save you money.

Prior Planning Can Save Money

Have a plan. Make a list of the songs you are planning to record. If you record with us, it will help us if you get the list to us before you show up for your first session. By doing so, you allow us to have those song titles entered in the digital recorder, prior to your arrival. This means we will not have to spend extra time identifying which project relates to which song.

Practice. Go over the songs you want to record so that you know them "cold." The software we use is capable of making corrections for some wrong notes, cutting and pasting phrases, and even fixing minor pitch problems. However, making these changes using the software is much more time-consuming than playing or singing the right notes in the first place. All performers should practice the song exactly as it will be recorded.

Know the arrangement. Know how you plan to put each song together. Are you going to use a written arrangement, a lead sheet, or will you play it by ear?

If you are a singer, are you going to sing two or three full choruses or will you sing then have an instrumental interlude? What will the introduction be like? What will you do at the end of the song? Will you stay in the same key during the whole song? If you are not using music, does your accompanist know your key? Can your accompanist play the song in that key? Do you have a printed copy of the words, just in case you forget a word or two during the recording?

Don't expect to use every song. A CD usually contains between eight and twenty songs. You may record something then decide you just don't like it. If you can't get the song to sound the way you want it to, just don't use it. Even the best recording stars don't use everything they record!

Use Less Playback Time. Studio time includes both the time the "tape's rolling" and the time you use listening to play-backs. If you ask to hear a playback after every track is recorded, it will more than double the time you spend (and are charged for) in the studio. Sometimes, it is a good idea to listen to just the first song, then only ask for play-backs for songs when you have questions about them. If you know there was a bad take, don't ask to listen to it. If you know a take was "just right," don't listen to it. If you make a small mistake while playing or singing, don't stop. It is possible to "punch in" or edit in a correction to a small mistake.

Sometimes a good strategy is to record each song a set number of times at the same tempo. This will allow you to pick the best take, or assemble the song from parts of several takes.

Minimize Changes in Loudness and/or your physical position relative to a microphone. If you are playing a keyboard or other instrument which has a built in pickup, set your volume and leave it alone. Let the recording engineer adjust the volume from that point on. If the instrument sounds too loud or not loud enough in your headset, ask for the monitor volume to be adjusted. If you turn the volume up or down on your instrument after levels are set, you could cause distortion or problems with fidelity.

If you are singing or playing an instrument that is being picked up by a microphone, it is important that you avoid unnecessary movement. Most of the microphones used in a studio are quite directional. Moving out of the area where the microphone is designed to pick up the most sound can cause loss of fidelity. If the desired signal is low, background noise could increase when the engineer makes adjustments. Being too close to the microphone can result in distortion.

Singers be aware of certain consonants. Singers should be careful to avoid singing directly into the microphone when pronouncing hard consonants such as "P," "T," "F." These consonants can cause a puff of air to be recorded as a noise. That noise is very difficult to edit out of the final recording.

Consider Using a "Click Track." A tempo that remains steady throughout the song makes it possible to do more efficient editing to cover mistakes. During editing, we can break the song into natural phrases. Then we can cut and paste sounds from another part of the song over that phrase. So, if you make a mistake in one phrase and play the same thing exactly right the next time, we can make it sound like you played it exactly right times.

We can provide a click track, by recording a metronome during your first take. The metronome is on a completely separate audio channel from the rest of the song. Each time you make an additional take, you will hear the metronome at exactly the same tempo. If you plan to use a click-track, however, you should practice your songs using a metronome before the recording session. If you are not used to practicing with a metronome, a click can be distracting. Because the click track is on a separate track, it will never be heard on the final recording.

Expect to Do More Than One Take. Rarely does anyone ever finish a full recording without having to re-record most tracks. In fact, if you plan to both sing and play an instrument, or if you plan to sing with a band, it is almost always better to record the instruments first, then add vocals to their own tracks. In the long run this is the most efficient way to vocals with instrumental accompaniment

Expect Mixing and Mastering to Take a Long Time. For example: a three minute song, that consists of one vocal track and one stereo instrumental track, and very few mistakes, often takes 45 minutes to an hour to mix and master. If you don't want to spend the money for mixes, you are welcome to take advantage of our **Plan One** package. We will record you and provide the raw data from the recording and recommend relatively inexpensive (around \$100.00) software that you can use to do your own mixing and mastering.

Sounds Pretty Good Recording

Plan One

You get

Up to 30 minutes setup and level check	No Charge
Studio recording time	\$40.00 / hr
Data CDs or Data DVDs w/ raw recorded tracks in .wav format	No Charge

We recommend mixing/master software for you to purchase. We'll give you limited free advice. You edit and master your own recordings

Plan Two

You get

Everything from Plan One, above	
Mixing and mastering time	\$50.00 / hr
Five copies of music CD	No Charge

Custom Plan: Let's talk

Notes:

1. You are responsible for acquiring all licenses for using copyrighted materials.
2. At this time, we do not do cover design or CD package insert design. You might want to think about this
3. We do not do duplication on a large scale.

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