

*How to*

# Save Money on Your Next Recording Project

*Complements of*



**Sounds Pretty Good  
Recording**

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## **Don't Waste Your Money**

We at **Sounds Pretty Good Recording** want you to get your money's worth when you record with us. This booklet contains some common sense suggestions to save you money.

### **Prior Planning Can Save Money**

Have a plan. You should have a list of the songs you want to record. It is very helpful 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, or 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 is to be recorded.

Know the arrangement. Know how you plan to put together each song. Are you going to perform the song using written music? If you are a singer, are you going to sing two or three full choruses or will you sing a full chorus, then expect the accompanist to play for a while, before you begin singing again? 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 during the recording?

### **Don't Insist on Using 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 recording you like of a particular song, just don't use it. Even the best recording stars don't use everything they record!

### **Save Money by Using 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 that you have a question about. 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 either. If you make a small mistake, don’t stop. It is possible to “punch in” a correction to a small mistake.

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

### **Minimize Changes in Loudness and/or Your Physical Position**

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 that the monitor volume be adjusted. If you turn the volume up or down on your instrument, 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 pretty 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 mic can result in distortion.

Singers should be careful to avoid singing directly into the microphone when pronouncing hard consonants such as “P,” “T,” “F,” etc. These consonants can cause a puff of air to be recorded. That noise is difficult or impossible 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 the same way both 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 hear the metronome at exactly the same tempo. If you plan to use the 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, it 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 make vocal/instrumental recordings.

### **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, 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 (under \$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, but we can put you in touch with companies that do.

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