

- Create a mix bus
- Group similar instruments together
- Put those instruments in group busses
 - don't be afraid of sub-groups!
- Color code like tracks together
- Add in the tempo map/BPM (if applicable)
- Set regions for verse, chorus, solos, etc
- Place markers for Emotional and Balance Map key points
- Set buffer to 1024 and ensure sample rate is same as recorded

0.4 Editing & Technical Preparation

This step isn't necessarily mixing and it's not exactly organizing, it's somewhere in between. First, line up tracks recorded with multiple mics so each part occurs in time. Next, check for phase cancelation (especially in the drums). After this, go through each track and cut out the silence (aka dead air). This will give you a visual representation of when each track is playing and will also get rid of not necessary rumble, and background noise. Finally, go through each track and EQ with a low cut to filter out the low-end energy on tracks that don't need it (like a tambourine) making sure not to cut too much low end from the mix. Here are these steps in an ordered list:

- Line up multiple-mic tracks
- Check for phase cancelation
- Cut the dead air (silence)
- EQ Low cut individual tracks

Steps for Mixing (the fun part)

1. The Static Mix

In the static mix, we will only change the volume and pan of tracks, nothing else, not even EQ! This will ensure that our balance will be set while we have the most objective view of the song. Start at the loudest region of your song, or a part where all the focal points are included (generally the last chorus). Then, pick your two or three elements from the Balance Map and set the singular most important element's volume to -5dB. After this, bring in the other one or two focal points'

volume(s) up so they are audible and clear. Next, with our focal points set, bring the volume up on each consecutive track starting in order of most importance. As you bring up the volume, try to do it at a moderate speed. Not too slow, not too fast. Stop bringing up the volume until each track feels right in the mix. Not every part needs to be the center of attention! Only the two or three from the Balance Map do; not everything can be the focus of the mix. This step is all about building the volume of the mix around the focal points that we mapped out in the balance map and zooming out until the whole mix is in picture. When you add in elements recorded in stereo, be sure to pan them out hard left and right. As far as mono elements though, make sure they are never more than 95% left or right. Otherwise headphone users will get a headache. As a general rule of thumb, all bass elements and lead (focal) instruments should be up the center. When you think you are done with the static mix, take a small break of a few minutes and come back to listen all the way through writing all the things you should change down. After making those modifications, next turn the volume down on your monitors until you can barely hear your song... are your focal points on top? If not, make some changes.

2. Leave Some Headroom

Once all the volumes for each track have been set, the track is guaranteed to be loud. In order to keep the signal processing down in mixing and to leave space for the track to grow in mastering, we need to turn down the overall track volume (aka the headroom). To do this, find the loudest part of the song (usually chorus) and pull down the volume on each individual track in unison so there is 8dB at peak volume remaining on the master fader. Remember not to pull down the volume for the group busses and sub groups! This will compound your gain reduction in a bad way. As a general rule of thumb, 8dB of headroom is good to start a mix and 3 - 6dB is recommended once finished. In addition to overall volume adjustments, add in any console emulation plugins that you will use on the tracks and dial in the gain/saturation. For busses, including the mix bus, place the emulation first on your FX chain and after dialing in the gain/saturation, correct any change in volume from it with an EQ right after (gain matching). An example of a good bus emulation would be a vinyl, tape, or tube preamp modeling plugin to add a vintage vibe. For individual tracks, repeat the same process placing the emulation first on your FX chain and correct any change in