

Unlock Your Sound presents...

Mastering in Logic Pro X

A workflow to get you making great sound
masters at home



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1 How To Prepares Your Mix(es)

All you need to do is make sure you have a great mix that isn't clipping.

If you are confident in the sound of the mix then just bounce it down to a 24 bit wav file.

Then master the mix in a brand new session another day with fresh ears.

Just make sure there is an appropriate amount of dynamics in the music.



2 Calibrate Your Mastering Level

Measuring EQ, dynamics, and loudness are not things you can rely solely on meters for.

This is why it's ever so important to calibrate your mastering level and stick to it.

We wrote an easy-to-follow guide on how to do that using simply your ears, your amp/speakers, and Spotify:

<https://unlockyoursound.com/monitoring-spotify/>



3 Gain Stage Your Reference Track(s)

There is only one tip you need to know about using reference tracks...

Turn them down (or up) to your mastering level!

That way, there is no loudness bias between your master and the reference track.

The easiest way to do this is to use a gain utility on the reference track until it's playing back at your mastering level. Do this by ear and make adjustments along the way so that comparisons are always fair.



4 Set The Ceiling

A limiter is very much a usual suspect in your mastering chain.

Not because it makes things louder, but because it allows you to adjust the gain of the track whilst retaining a peak ceiling.

We advise you use Logic Pro X's Adaptive Limiter.

Load it as the final plugin in your chain and set the ceiling to -1.0 with True Peak Detection turned on.

Now just make sure it's not applying any extra gain by default, so make sure the gain dial is at 0dB.



5 Find Loudness

This where we start to work backwards.

Before, I mentioned how playback volume has a huge bearing on how we perceive frequency balance and dynamics. This is where we work to minimise that variable.

Earlier, we shared [this article](#) on how to set up your monitoring level.

Now that's done, it's time to raise the mix to your playback level. You can do this by ear now, slowly turning up your mix via a gain stage before the limiter, until you start to feel it's loud enough for listening purposes.



6 Problem Solving

Now that you are close to the goal, any issues with regard to dynamics and EQ will start to make themselves apparent.

Now you can work your way back into the chain, tackling these specific issues. Such issues could be unbalanced frequencies, dynamics, or distortion at the limiter's ceiling.

Use the tools at your disposal to solve the problems, whether that be frequency imbalances or dynamics.



7 Bounce/Export

This is where you actually create the master files. Simply use the 'Bounce' command in Logic Pro X and select the appropriate formats for your purposes.

Tip: If you are uploading your music to an online distributor or Soundcloud, definitely use WAVE (.wav) as your format. The platforms will encode it to their chosen lossy format (MP3, AAC, Ogg etc) on their end.

Tip: Dither your master. Don't worry so much about which dither. Any dither is better than truncation distortion!



Questions?

Feel free to get in touch with any questions:

<https://unlockyoursound.com/contact/>

