

# HOW TO COMPRESS ANY INSTRUMENT

## STEP 1

### FIGURE OUT YOUR GOAL



- ▶ Before you start compressing, ask yourself: WHAT am I trying to accomplish?
- ▶ Your answer will likely be one of the 4 Goals of Compression:
  - 1) To balance
  - 2) To enhance
  - 3) To glue
  - 4) To fix

FOR MORE DETAIL, SEE...

**THE GOALS AND  
STYLES OF  
COMPRESSION**

## STEP 2

### DECIDE ON A COMPRESSION STYLE



- ▶ To accomplish your goal, pick a Style of compression. These are the different combinations of settings that create different tones and effects.
- ▶ Each Goal will have a few Styles that you can use to get the sound you want.

FOR MORE DETAIL, SEE...

**THE GOALS AND  
STYLES OF  
COMPRESSION**

## STEP 3

### FIND YOUR STYLE'S SETTINGS



- ▶ Each Style has its own unique combination of settings.
- ▶ Use the chart "How to Create the Styles of Compression" to find a starting place for your compressor's settings.

FOR MORE DETAIL, SEE...

**HOW TO  
CREATE  
THE STYLES OF  
COMPRESSION**

## STEP 4

### FIND YOUR PEAKS OR VALLEYS



- ▶ Start with the settings described in the "How to Set Up Your Compressor" chart.
- ▶ If you're targeting the peaks, lower the threshold until you're getting short spikes of gain reduction.
- ▶ If you're targeting the valleys, lower the threshold until your gain reduction lasts for at least half the note.

FOR MORE DETAIL, SEE...

**HOW TO  
SET UP YOUR  
COMPRESSOR**

## STEP 5

### SET UP YOUR COMPRESSOR



- ▶ Adjust your attack and release to match your Style.
- ▶ Adjust your knee to make the compression more natural.
- ▶ Adjust your ratio to taste.
- ▶ Adjust your makeup gain to bring back the volume you lost.

FOR MORE DETAIL, SEE...

**HOW TO  
SET UP YOUR  
COMPRESSOR**