

Title:

Home Recording Basics

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Summary:

You can easily spend thousands of dollars for a studio-quality recording, or you can spend some quality time with a computer and some software and make your OWN studio recording! If you'd rather spend time than cash, then spend some time with me and learn Home Recording Basics.

Keywords:

home, studio, recording, music, maker, quality

Article Body:

Home recording can be a fun and rewarding hobby, but it can also turn into a lucrative business, if that's what you want! Just a few years ago, studio quality recordings were only done in sound-proof studios with thousands of dollars worth of equipment. But now, common hobbyists like you and I can produce studio-quality recordings for personal or professional use. There are some basics to be learned, though. This article will cover some of those basics.

First off, what do you need? You can spend a lot of money on equipment, but it isn't necessary. But if you don't want to spend the money, then the cheapest and best way to get studio-quality recordings is with a computer, preferably a fairly new and powerful computer with CD burning capabilities. Sound files can take up a lot of space, and the programs that create and edit sound files can take up a lot of RAM, or temporary memory. Since you're reading this article, I have to assume you already have a computer! If it's an older model, you may want to look into upgrades, such as more RAM, a bigger hard drive, and a faster processor. You may be able to manage without upgrades, but if you can afford them I promise you won't regret it!

Then you need to look at software. You'll need a good multitrack recorder, a sound editor, and something to burn your recordings to audio CD format. We'll assume you already have something that plays sound files and audio CDs, since nearly everyone does. There are several programs you can buy for this purpose, and the prices range from cheap to ridiculous. But again, if money is an issue to consider, you should do a search for "freeware" or "open source." Quite

often, you can find software for free that compares well in quality with the big and expensive brand names.

Once you have your software, make sure it all works together to produce a good quality recording. Sometimes the programs that are the easiest to work are also the worst in the final product. Do some recording, save it to mp3 or wav format, then put your headphones on and turn the volume up. Listen for hisses and clicks in the final version, and notice how far you have to turn it up to get it loud. If there are lots of hisses and clicks, this is known as a "dirty" or "noisy" recording. Many programs will edit out the noise, but when they do they will also reduce the total volume and negatively affect the over-all quality. Why? Because in editing out the noise, it also filters out the high-level sounds that needed to be there. Your recording will come out sounding muffled, bassey, and too quiet. That's why it's so important to get a recorder that gives you a clean recording the first time around!

One thing you're going to need that doesn't get mentioned often is a good quality microphone. You simply cannot afford to cut corners in this area! A cheap mic will result in poor quality recordings no matter how good everything else is. That doesn't mean you need to spend hundreds or thousands of dollars on microphones, but I do recommend you spend at least \$100 per mic. That will give you a good, mid-quality microphone that will work in nearly any situation. If you're involved with a church or other group that uses sound equipment, maybe you can borrow one rather than buying one. Be sure and buy or borrow a stand, too! The worst thing for a good mic is to be thrown around and dropped because there was nothing to rest it on. Besides that, when you get ready to record vocals, you do NOT want to be holding it! Every movement of your hand, every brush against your clothing, will be recorded.

One thing you DON'T need - an outside amplifier. Musicians like their amps, and tend to insist on using them even for recording. What I discovered was that the quality and effects I gained by using my amp were far outweighed by the loud hiss that also came from my amp. And once again, the cleaner your original recording, the better quality your final outcome.

Spend some quality time recording and experimenting with effects and arrangements. I learned a great deal in a relatively short time, but I also went through about 100 blank CDs, because every time I thought "This is great!" and burned it to CD, I learned something soon afterward that made the old recording useless and made re-recording necessary! So listen to it with the headphones, listen to it without the headphones, listen to it saved in wav and mp3 format, and when you think you've improved it as much as you can, then burn it to audio CD and take it to a large system and listen to it again. Every

SINGLE time you do this, you will hear something you could have improved. Get used to it! It's all about continual improvement, and being willing to learn from every single mistake without ever, ever giving up and quitting.