

# MIXING CHECKLIST

## PART 01

### PREPARATION

*Set yourself up before making mix decisions.*

- ☐ Remember to take breaks often.
- ☐ Save a new version before starting your mixdown.
- ☐ Import 3–4 reference tracks.
- ☐ Gain match your reference tracks to your mix.
- ☐ Turn your monitoring level down to a comfortable volume.
- ☐ Remove any muted, unused, or unnecessary tracks.
- ☐ Organize and colour code your session.
- ☐ Leave at least 6 dB of headroom (peak around -6 dBFS) before mastering.

## PART 02

### BALANCE & LEVELS

*A great mix means the elements have a great balance.*

- ☐ Balance the most important elements first (kick, bass, leads, vocals, etc.).
- ☐ Can every important element be heard clearly?
- ☐ Are supporting elements *actually* supporting the main elements?
- ☐ Is there enough depth & contrast between foreground and background sounds?
- ☐ Does the mix still work when listening quietly?
- ☐ Does the low end feel balanced, clean, and controlled?
- ☐ Are your channel levels properly gain-staged before processing?

**PART**  
**03**

## CLARITY & SEPARATION

*Make room for every element.*

- ☐ Are any instruments masking each other unnecessarily?
- ☐ Have you used EQ where necessary to create separation?
- ☐ Are unnecessary low frequencies removed?
- ☐ Does every element occupy its own space?
- ☐ Is sidechain compression creating clarity and groove where appropriate?
- ☐ Does the kick and bass work together instead of competing?
- ☐ Does anything sound muddy, harsh, or boxy?

**PART**  
**04**

## DYNAMICS & PROCESSING

*Bringing the loudness up without sacrificing power or impact.*

- ☐ Are your compressors controlling dynamics or only making things louder?
- ☐ Have you avoided over-processing?
- ☐ Do transients still have impact?
- ☐ Have you used saturation, clipping, or distortion to increase perceived loudness?
- ☐ Have you bypassed plugins to confirm they are actually improving the mix?
- ☐ Does the track feel punchy and dynamic?

**PART**  
**05**

## STEREO IMAGE & SPACE

*Create width without compromising your mix in mono.*

- ☐ Is the centre of the mix strong and stable?
- ☐ Have you panned elements thoughtfully and intentionally?
- ☐ Does the stereo image feel balanced?

- ☐ Have you checked your mix in mono?
- ☐ Are reverbs and delays supporting the mix instead of washing it out?
- ☐ Is there enough depth from front to back?
- ☐ Are wide elements helping the mix rather than distracting from it?
- ☐ Have you removed unnecessary stereo information from the low end?
- ☐ Have you checked the phase alignment of your kick and bass?

## PART 06

### FINAL MIX CHECK

*Listen like a fan, not a producer. Do this section with fresh ears.*

- ☐ Compare your mix against your reference tracks using gain matched volumes.
- ☐ Listen from beginning to end without touching anything.
- ☐ Compare your frequency balance to reference tracks using a spectrum analyzer.
- ☐ Check RMS, LUFS, and peak levels of your kick, bass, and mix with and without a limiter.
- ☐ Turn the volume down, slowly bring it up. The first elements you hear *may* be too loud.
- ☐ Test on multiple playback systems (headphones, car, phone, monitors).
- ☐ Listen at both very low and moderately loud volumes.
- ☐ Take a long break and listen again with fresh ears.

## PART 07

### BEFORE YOU SEND TO MASTERING

- ☐ Remove unnecessary plugins.
- ☐ Check for clicks, pops, clipping, or automation mistakes.
- ☐ Add one second of silence at the beginning and end of your track.
- ☐ Export at the correct sample rate and bit depth.