

Sound Check Guide



Step 1: Check Gain Levels

Develop a standard for setting gain and then check it at the beginning of every rehearsal - especially on guitars and new musicians/vocalists. There's a good chance amp and pedal settings are not exactly in the same place as last time.

For help with gain, see this post: [How to Set the Gain on Your Mixer](#)

Step 2: Set the Monitors

If you do not have the technology that allows band members to adjust their own monitors, the next step is to set monitor mixes. Before taking orders from each band member on what they want, have the band play through an entire song. While the band is playing, put on headphones and listen to each monitor mix, making adjustments to give them a nice, even mix. Of course, if it is a vocal monitor, have the vocals a bit louder than the instruments and vice versa.

Once this is done, ask if anyone needs changes and adjust accordingly. But, don't let band members abuse this privilege or way too much time will be spent on monitor mixes.

Step 3: Set the Main Mix

At first, I like to start with the faders all the way down. Then, as they are playing, use the following sequence to get a solid mix.

1. Bring up the kick drum and bass guitar until you have a nice solid foundation with plenty of energy in the room.
2. Bring up the guitars and keyboards to the appropriate place for the song. At this point, the sound should fill the room.
3. Bring up the snare drum until you feel its energy and punch. Then, mix in the toms and overhead microphones to complete the drum mix.
4. Mix in the background vocals so that they blend in with the instruments.
5. Bring up the lead vocal until it sits right at the top of the mix.

Step 4: Set It and Leave It (just kidding)

So, you achieved a great mix – awesome! You can just set it and leave it, right? Wrong. Every song should have a different sound. One song may have a prominent electric guitar while the next may have a prominent keyboard part instead.

A good sound tech listens to each song several times through so they understand how it should be mixed. Here are some things to listen for:

- What is the lead instrument? Electric guitar, acoustic guitar, keyboard, synth?
- Where do the other instruments fit in the mix? Are they audible or so blended you can't even pick them out?
- Where are the background vocals? Are they right under the lead vocal or mixed in with the instruments?

Bonus: Improve Your EQ Skills

Understanding how to use EQ is one of the best ways to take your mix to the next level. Here is a great place to get started:

[The Most Important EQ Techniques for Church Sound](http://collaborateworship.com/eq) (collaborateworship.com/eq)