

Music Production & Beat Making — Workbook

This workbook is your hands-on companion to the Music Production & Beat Making course. Use it to apply every concept immediately after each lesson — the exercises, worksheets, and checklists are designed to move you from watching to doing. Complete each section in order and you will have a finished, released beat by the time you reach the action plan at the end.

DAW Setup and Drum Programming

Solidify your DAW configuration and build a polished, layered drum kit before moving on to melodic content.

Exercise: Build Three Drum Patterns in One Session

Open your DAW and create three separate 16-step drum patterns at three different BPMs using only your built-in samples. Do not use loops. Program each pattern from scratch and export a one-minute render of each.

- Pattern 1: 85 BPM — boom bap hip-hop feel. Kick on 1 and 3 only. Snare with ghost hits. Hi-hat as eighth notes.
- Pattern 2: 140 BPM — trap feel. Rolling hi-hats with triplet timing. 808 kick with pitch automation. Snare on 2 and 4 with a clap layer.
- Pattern 3: 120 BPM — house feel. Four-on-the-floor kick. Open hi-hat on the end of 2. Minimal snare.
- After listening to all three renders, write two sentences about which pattern felt most natural to you and why.

Worksheet: Drum Layer Design Sheet

For each drum element in your main beat, document the samples you are layering and the EQ decisions you made to blend them. Complete one row per drum voice.

Drum Voice (kick/snare/hat/etc.)

Sample 1 (name or source)

Sample 2 (name or source)

Low-cut frequency applied (Hz)

Frequency boosted (Hz) and amount (dB)

Frequency cut (Hz) and amount (dB)

Velocity range used (min-max)

Groove or swing amount (%)

Checklist: DAW and Drum Session Checklist

- Set sample rate to 44100 Hz in your DAW audio preferences
- Set buffer size to 128 or 256 samples
- Name your project file with date and BPM (e.g. beat-2026-06-06-90bpm)
- Set BPM before adding any sounds
- Program a kick-snare-hat pattern of at least 16 steps
- Vary hi-hat velocity — no two consecutive hats at the same level
- Layer at least two samples on the kick drum
- Check the layered kick in mono for phase cancellation
- Add at least one percussion layer (shaker, rim, tambourine)
- Export a 30-second loop render and listen on headphones and speakers

Sampling and Melody Building

Develop your ear for samples and build your first original melodic loop using chopping and the piano roll.

Exercise: Flip a Sample into an Original Melody

Download one royalty-free loop from Looperman or Splice. Chop it into at least 6 slices using your DAW (SliceX in FL Studio or Slice to New MIDI Track in Ableton). Rearrange the slices in a new order and pitch at least 3 of them to different notes to create a melody that sounds nothing like the source loop. Render the result over your drum pattern.

- What was the key and tempo of the original loop? How did you match or shift the tempo to your beat?

• Which 3 slices were the most musically interesting on their own? Why?

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- Describe the emotional feel of your chopped melody compared to the original. Did it become darker, brighter, or more rhythmic?

- What would you do differently if you started the chop session again?

Worksheet: Chord Progression and Bass Line Planner

Plan out your chord progression and bass line before drawing notes in the piano roll. Use this sheet to map your choices and then verify them after building in the DAW.

Selected key (e.g. C minor)

Scale type (major / minor / pentatonic / other)

Chord 1 (root note and chord type, e.g. Cm)

Chord 2

Chord 3

Chord 4

Bass line note for each chord (usually the root)

Bass line rhythm (whole notes / half notes / quarter notes / syncopated)

Instrument used for chords (plugin name or sample name)

Instrument used for bass

Checklist: Melodic Content Quality Check

- Identify the key of your beat before writing any melody
- Use your DAW scale lock feature or a reference chart while writing your first melody
- Write a bass line that follows the root note of each chord
- Listen to the melody alone (solo the track) and confirm it has a memorable hook moment
- Play the full beat (drums + melody + bass) and confirm no note clashes feel jarring
- Save separate versions of your melody MIDI before heavy editing — keep the original as a backup
- Test your chord progression on a different instrument sound to confirm it works beyond the patch you wrote it on

Exercise: Write a Melody in the Pentatonic Scale

Using only the five notes of the minor pentatonic scale in your chosen key, write a 4-bar melody in the piano roll. Start on the root note, end on the root note, and vary the rhythm — do not use all quarter notes. Layer the same melody one octave higher at 30 percent volume for thickness.

- What is your key? List the five notes of its pentatonic scale.

- How did constraining yourself to five notes change how you approached the melody?

- Does the layered octave make the melody feel more or less professional? Describe the difference.

Arrangement and Song Structure

Transform your core loop into a complete, structured beat with a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Worksheet: Beat Arrangement Blueprint

Plan your full beat arrangement before touching the DAW timeline. Map every section, its bar count, and the specific elements that are active or muted in each section. Use this as your blueprint when building in the Playlist or Arrangement View.

Section name (Intro / Verse / Pre-Hook / Hook / Outro)

Start bar

End bar

Bar count

Drums: active or muted?

Bass: active or muted?

Main melody: active or muted?

Chord pad: active or muted?

FX or transition element planned

Energy level for this section (1-10)

Exercise: Strip-Back and Drop Drill

Take your existing loop and build a 32-bar arrangement using only the strip-back technique. In bars 1-8 play only the melody with no drums. In bars 9-16 bring the full beat in. In bars 17-24 remove the melody and play only drums and bass. In bars 25-32 bring everything back at full energy. Render the result and listen critically.

- Did the full-beat drop at bar 9 feel impactful? If not, what was missing?
 - Did the melody-only intro make you want to hear the drums come in? Describe the feeling.
 - What single element, if you brought it back in bar 25 instead of everything at once, would have created the biggest impact?
 - What automation move would improve this arrangement most?
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Checklist: Arrangement Completion Checklist

- Beat is at least 2 minutes and 30 seconds long
- Intro does not start with the full beat — at least one element held back
- A distinct hook or chorus section exists with the highest energy in the track
- At least one transition effect (snare roll, white noise sweep, drum drop) used before a section change
- Volume or filter automation applied to at least one track
- The outro mirrors the intro — elements removed gradually
- Beat has been listened to in full, in real time, without touching the DAW, at least twice

Mixing Basics and Releasing Your Beat

Polish your mix, check it on multiple speakers, and execute the steps needed to get your beat live on streaming platforms.

Worksheet: Mixdown Decision Log

Document every significant EQ and compression decision you make during your mix session. This creates a reference you can learn from across multiple beats and begin to develop a consistent mixing approach.

Track name

High-pass filter cutoff (Hz)

Frequency cut 1 — Hz and dB

Frequency cut 2 — Hz and dB

Frequency boost 1 — Hz and dB

Compressor threshold (dBFS)

Compressor ratio

Compressor attack (ms)

Compressor release (ms)

Reverb send level (%) if applicable

Panning position (L/C/R and amount)

Exercise: Reference Track Mix Comparison

Choose a commercially released beat in the same genre as yours. Import it into your DAW on a separate track (do not process it). Match its loudness to your mix using a gain plug-in. A/B between the reference and your mix every 5 minutes during the mixing session. Do not try to copy the reference — use it to identify where your mix is lacking.

- Describe the most obvious frequency difference between your mix and the reference. Is your mix too bassy, too harsh, too muddy?
- Does your kick and snare have similar impact to the reference? What EQ or compression adjustment helped most?
- Is the stereo width of your mix comparable to the reference? Which element sounded most different when panned correctly?
- After one full round of reference-driven adjustments, describe the improvement in one sentence.

Checklist: Release Readiness Checklist

- Mix checked in mono — no critical elements disappear or sound weak
- Mix listened to on at least three different playback devices (headphones, laptop speakers, phone speaker or car)
- True peak level does not exceed -1 dBTP on the master bus
- Integrated loudness falls between -14 and -10 LUFS (measure with Youlean Loudness Meter free version or your DAW's built-in meter)
- Final master exported as 24-bit WAV at 44100 Hz
- Cover art prepared at 3000x3000 pixels, square, JPG or PNG
- Track metadata entered: title, artist name, genre, explicit content flag if needed
- Release date set at least 7 days in advance to qualify for Spotify editorial pitch
- Track uploaded to SoundCloud for early feedback before streaming release goes live
- Spotify for Artists profile claimed and verified after first release appears

Your Action Plan

1. Install your chosen DAW (Ableton Live, FL Studio, or Logic Pro) and complete the audio settings configuration in the first 24 hours
2. Program three drum patterns from scratch (boom bap, trap, house) using only built-in samples — no loops yet
3. Download a royalty-free sample pack from Splice orLooperman and chop one loop into a new original melody using SliceX or Ableton Slice to New MIDI Track
4. Write a four-chord progression and bass line in the piano roll using a minor key of your choice

5. Build a full 2.5-minute arrangement in your DAW timeline using the blueprint worksheet from Module 3 — intro, verse, hook, outro with transitions
6. Mix your beat using the reference track method: A/B against a professional beat every 5 minutes until the gap closes
7. Export your final mix as a 24-bit WAV and upload it to LANDR, eMastered, or CloudBounce for a first master
8. Set up a DistroKid account and prepare your release: title, cover art, metadata, release date 7 days out
9. Upload the mastered WAV to SoundCloud and share the link with at least three people for feedback before the streaming release goes live
10. Publish your first beat and immediately start beat number two — the skill builds through repetition, not through perfecting one track

