

Foley & Sound Effects Creation — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a working foley practice. You will build a treated recording space, run a real spotting session, record and tag a starter library, and assemble a license-ready effects pack. Work through one section per module, and fill the templates as you go so your library and licensing terms grow with your skills.

The Foley Studio You Already Own

Set up a quiet recording space, lock your signal chain, and prove your levels are safe before any real session.

Exercise: Measure Your Noise Floor

Record 30 seconds of silence in your intended recording space with all gear armed but no performance. Open the file in your DAW, inspect the meters, and note the result. Then turn off one noise source at a time (HVAC, fridge, chargers) and re-measure to find your biggest contaminant.

- What is your measured room-tone level in dBFS, and is it below minus 60?

- Which single noise source dropped the floor the most when switched off?

- What time of day was quietest, and can you schedule sessions then?

Worksheet: My Signal Chain Spec

Document your exact recording chain and the settings you will standardize on. Pin this near your workstation so every session starts identically.

Microphone model

Polar pattern used

Audio interface model

Sample rate (target 48 kHz)

Bit depth (target 24-bit)

Default mic distance from prop (cm)

Headphones model

Checklist: Pre-Session Room Setup

- Turn off forced-air heating, AC, and any nearby fans
- Unplug buzzing chargers and devices within a few feet of the mic
- Drape moving blankets or clothing to kill slap echo
- Place a blanket under the prop surface to isolate it from the floor
- Record and inspect a 10-second silence test before performing
- Confirm interface is set to 48 kHz and 24-bit

Recording Everyday Objects

Stock a prop pantry, perform the classic substitution recipes, and capture multiple perspectives of each sound.

Worksheet: Prop Pantry Inventory

Walk through your kitchen, recycling, and garage and list the props you can record today. For each, note the screen sound it could stand in for. Aim for at least fifteen entries before your first session.

Prop or object

Where it lives in the house

Screen sound it substitutes for

Footstep surface? (yes/no)

Need to source or buy? (yes/no)

Exercise: Record Three Substitution Recipes

Pick three classic recipes from the course (for example fire from cellophane, rain from rice on paper, bone-break from celery). Record each in three intensities, slating the prop and intensity verbally before every take. Listen back on headphones and keep only the cleanest performance of each.

- Which recipe sounded most convincing, and why do you think it worked?
-

- Where did handling noise or off-mic moments ruin a take?
-

- How did changing intensity change the believability of each sound?
-

Exercise: Capture One Prop From Four Perspectives

Choose a single prop and record it close (about 5 cm), mid (about 30 cm), far (about 1 m), and as a stereo pair. Compare the four files and note how perspective changes the usefulness of the sound.

- Which distance gave the most usable detail for a small specific sound?
-

- Where did the proximity effect add unwanted boom?
-

- Which perspective would you reach for to place this sound across a room?
-

Checklist: Clean Capture Checklist

- Rehearse at full energy to find the loudest hit before committing
- Slate prop and intensity verbally before each take
- Record at least 10 to 15 seconds of continuous performance
- Monitor on closed-back headphones throughout

[] Capture each prop in more than one intensity and perspective

Syncing Foley to Picture

Spot a scene, perform the three foley passes live to picture, and tighten every hit to the frame.

Worksheet: Spotting Cue Sheet (Single Scene)

Choose a short scene (30 to 90 seconds) and watch it twice. Log every sound the picture needs with its timecode and foley category. Use this as your record-day checklist.

Timecode (HH:MM:SS:FF)

Action on screen

Foley category (feet / cloth / specific)

Prop needed

Special note or sourcing flag

Exercise: Perform the Three Passes

Loop your chosen scene with video visible in your DAW. Record footsteps first as one stem, then cloth as a second stem watching your own movement, then specifics as a third. Do several full passes of each so you can comp the best moments later.

- How many passes did it take before the footstep rhythm felt natural?
 - Where did matching the character's weight change your performance?
 - Which pass was hardest to keep in sync, and why?
-

Exercise: Frame-Accurate Sync Pass

Pick five key hits in the scene (a footfall, a door, a set-down). Scrub the video one frame at a time to find the visual impact, place a marker, and nudge each audio transient onto it. Audition at full speed to confirm it feels right in motion.

- How many frames off was your best live take on average?
 - Did landing a sound slightly late read better than slightly early?
 - Which hit needed the most correction, and what caused the drift?
-

Checklist: Sync and Edit Checklist

- [] Confirm DAW session frame rate matches the video before import
- [] Record feet, cloth, and specifics on separate tracks
- [] Mark the exact frame of visual impact before nudging audio
- [] Add 5 to 20 ms crossfades at every edit to kill clicks
- [] Bounce each layer as its own stem for the mix

Library, Design, and Licensing

Clean and tag your recordings, design a new sound from layers, and package a pack with clear license terms.

Exercise: Repair and Tag Ten Sounds

Take ten of your best recordings. Top and tail each, apply gentle de-noise from a captured noise profile, normalize the peak to a consistent target, and export as 48 kHz 24-bit WAV. Then embed metadata using a consistent naming scheme.

- What peak normalization target did you choose, and why?

- Where did denoising start to introduce a watery artifact?

- What naming convention did you adopt, and will you stick to it?

Exercise: Design One Sound That Doesn't Exist

Build a creature, weapon, or sci-fi sound from three layers: a transient, a body, and a tail, each pulled from your own library. Pitch-shift, reverse, or time-stretch as needed, then balance and bounce the result.

- What three source recordings did you layer, and what is each one's role?

- Which processing move (pitch, reverse, stretch) transformed the sound most?

- Does the final sound read as one source or do the layers separate?

Worksheet: Effects Pack License Sheet

Draft the license that will ship inside your pack. Fill every field in plain language so a buyer immediately understands what they can and cannot do.

Pack name

License type (e.g. royalty-free)

Permitted use (personal / commercial / both)

Number of projects allowed

Attribution required? (yes/no)

Reselling raw files allowed? (should be no)

Broadcast, film, game, and AI-training rights

Your contact for licensing questions

Checklist: Pack Delivery Checklist

- Every file is 48 kHz, 24-bit WAV with a consistent peak ceiling
- Dynamics left intact (peak-normalized, not over-compressed)
- Metadata embedded in each file, not just the filename
- License and a file-list read-me included in the download

- [] Confirmed you fully own every recording in the pack
- [] Chosen a distribution channel and noted its revenue share

Your Action Plan

1. Treat your recording space and run a silence test until the noise floor sits below minus 60 dBFS
2. Lock your signal chain at 48 kHz and 24-bit and write it on the Signal Chain Spec sheet
3. Stock a prop pantry of at least fifteen items using the Prop Pantry Inventory
4. Record three substitution recipes in multiple intensities and perspectives
5. Spot a short scene and complete a Spotting Cue Sheet before recording
6. Perform feet, cloth, and specifics as three separate stems to picture
7. Run a frame-accurate sync pass on the key hits and add crossfades at every edit
8. Repair, normalize, and metadata-tag at least ten finished sounds
9. Design one original sound by layering a transient, body, and tail
10. Draft a license sheet and assemble a delivery-ready effects pack you fully own

