



Pinnacle Pro Sound

PRE-STUDIO CHECKLIST

General - Music

- o Practice as much as possible during the days/weeks before the session. This will help immensely!
- o Have basic session information ready to hand to the engineer on a USB drive (or email/Dropbox before the session), including:
 - Title
 - Tempo of each song (MIDI tempo map if there are any tempo changes during the song)
 - Key
 - Tuning
 - Lyrics
- o Ensure that you can play the song to a click or metronome.
- o If you have demos/pre-production recordings bring them.
- o If you want samples included in the track:
 - Make sure they are legally cleared for use
 - Bring a WAV file of the sample with a minimum quality of 16 bit 44.1kHz sample rate.
- o Unless the engineer asks for help, don't adjust/move/touch their gear.

General - Comfort

- o Bring water and snacks. Some studios might provide water and snacks, but many won't. Be prepared to leave the food in your car or the studio's lounge area, depending on studio policies.
- o Wear comfortable clothing, and bring an extra pair of socks and shoes. Nothing is better than putting on fresh socks and shoes halfway through a 12 hour day.
- o Get plenty of rest; you'll have a long day ahead.
- o There can be extensive downtime for some members of the band.
To help, we recommend:
 - Bring your laptop and charger, with a set of headphones so you can watch Netflix/Hulu without disturbing others.
 - Phone charger
 - A portable gaming system, if you have one.

Guitars

- o Put fresh strings on your guitars the day before the session.
- o Make sure the guitars are properly set up.
- o If you can, bring a backup/second guitar.
- o Ensure all electronics are in working order, don't crackle, and don't cut out.
- o Bring at least two extra sets of your strings of choice if recording 1-3 songs. Bring another extra set for every three songs over that.
- o Any allen keys, wrenches, etc.
- o New spare 9V batteries for pedals and active pickups.
- o Any power adapters you need for your pedal board and amp.
- o Picks! Whatever kind you use, bring them. Lots of them, at least two picks per song, per guitarist.
- o Spare cables
- o Tuner

Bass

- o Put fresh strings on your bass the day before the session.
- o Make sure the bass is properly set up.
- o If you can, bring a backup/second bass.
- o Ensure all electronics are in working order, don't crackle, and don't cut out.
- o Bring at least one extra set of your strings of choice if recording 1-4 songs. Bring another extra set for every four songs over that.
- o Any allen keys, wrenches, etc.
- o New spare 9V batteries for pedals and active pickups.
- o Any power adapters you need for your pedal board and amp.
- o Picks! Bring at least two picks of your choosing per song being tracked.
- o If you want to cut down on the pick attack in your recording, bring felt picks. They will smooth out the sound.
- o Spare cables
- o Tuner

Drums

- o Tuning key
- o Fresh heads for all drums
- o A spare set of batter heads PLUS:
 - Another spare snare batter head for every 3 songs.
 - Another set of spare tom tom batter heads for every 5 songs.
- o Expect to spend time tuning drums before the session gets started.
- o No cracked or broken cymbals. Replace them, if necessary.
- o No squeaky hardware or missing parts.
- o Make sure everything from stands to your throne is tightened properly to help cut down on squeaks (and potential injuries).
- o Extra felts for your cymbals. They like to run away and hide.
- o If at all possible use only straight stands for your cymbals.
- o Avoid boom stands as much as possible.
- o Bring at least one set of sticks per song being recorded, plus two extra pairs for warm up/practice/spares.

Vocals

- o Have lyrics printed out or emailed to yourself so you can read them from your phone.
- o Be prepared to double your vocal takes/sing overdubs and harmonies.
- o We will provide bottled or filtered water. Please bring any other drinks you may need.
- o Do not consume dairy products within four hours of your session. It will cause a build up of sticky saliva in your mouth/throat and make it more difficult for you to sing clearly.
- o Make sure you have a good warm up routine, you'll be using your voice a lot more than usual during tracking.
- o Bring tea or throat spray, whatever works best for you.
- o Don't exert your voice in the days preceding your session.

Keys

- o Bring all MIDI and 1/4" TRS cables and power adapters.
- o Have your patches programmed and easily recallable.
- o Stands

Horns/wind

- o Bring extra mouthpieces/reeds.
- o Make sure the instrument is in proper working order and isn't causing unnecessary noise.
- o Grease/lubricants and valve oils
- o Cleaning/polishing cloth and a spit rag. Most studios don't have a "floor slippery when wet" sign handy.

Strings

- o Resin
- o Put fresh strings on the instrument the day before the session.
- o A spare set of strings
- o Tuner

Checklist Info

This checklist was prepared by Pinnacle Pro Sound to help artists ensure they are ready for their tracking sessions at studios around the world.

If you have any questions about the content of the checklist, please email james@james-cross.com.

For more helpful resources for bands, including The Ultimate DIY Tour Budgeting Guide for Bands, visit pinnacleprosound.com/artist-resources/.