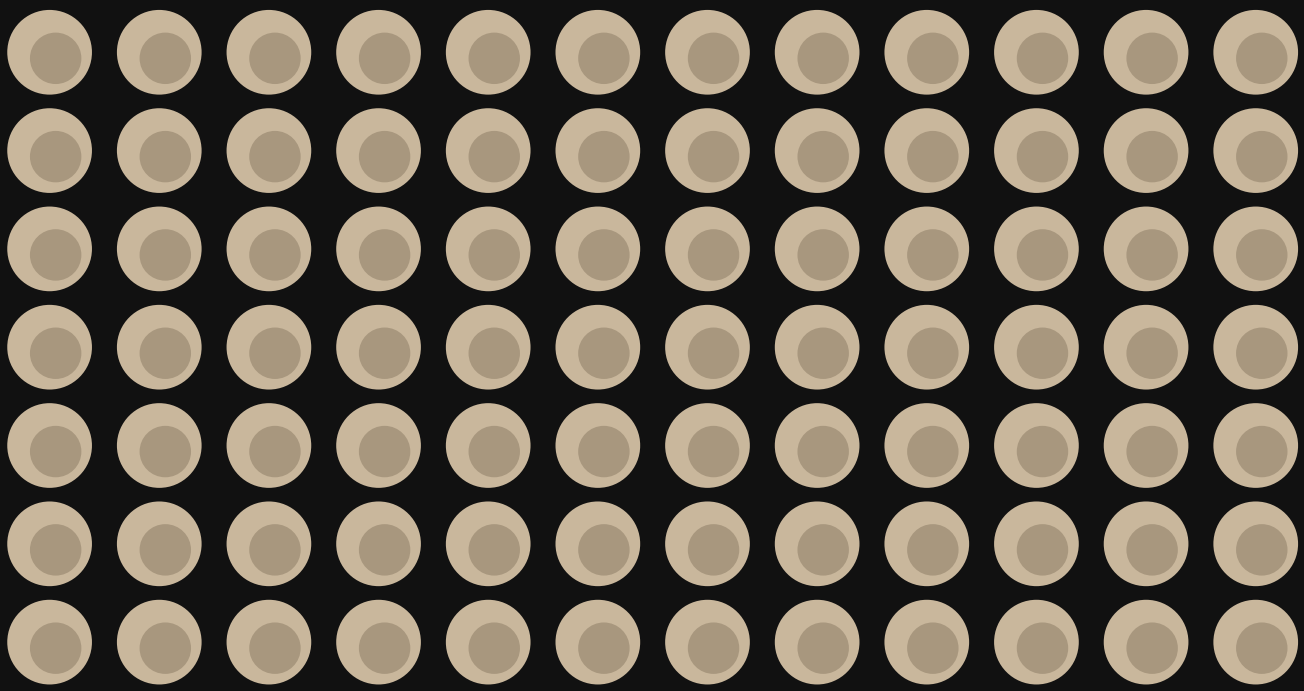
ACOUSTIC TREATMENT FOR $0

The Broke Producer's Guide to a Studio That Sounds Like a Studio (It Won't)



10 Steps

STEP 01 FIND YOUR ROOM

Your room is the bedroom. It was always the bedroom. Measure it: if you can touch both walls while sitting in your chair, the room is "intimate". Write "control room" on the door with a marker.

STEP 02 BASS TRAPS

Bass collects in corners. So does laundry. Pile all your clothes into the corners until the 808 sounds "tighter". If you run out of clothes, borrow your roommate's. Do not tell your roommate.

STEP 03 ABSORPTION PANELS

Glue egg cartons to the wall behind your monitors. Eat the eggs first. 12 eggs per panel; a full wall is about 400 eggs, so this step also covers your protein for the year.

STEP 04 FIRST REFLECTION POINTS

Sit in your chair. Ask a friend to slide a mirror along the side wall. Wherever you can see your speaker in the mirror, hang a poster of an artist you'll never work with. Science.

STEP 05 DIFFUSION

A bookshelf full of books you haven't read breaks up reflections beautifully. Fill it with music theory books still in plastic. Diffusion and decoration in one.

STEP 06 CEILING CLOUD

Hang your duvet from the ceiling above your head with four strings. You will now sleep without a duvet. That's the price of a flat frequency response.

STEP 07 VOCAL BOOTH

Open the closet. Push the coats to the sides. Put the mic in the middle. You now own a vocal booth (see also: Vocal Booth Emergency Evacuation Plan).

STEP 08 ISOLATION

Put a towel under the door. Put a pillow over the window. Put a sock in the cat. (Do not put a sock in the cat. Ask the cat to be quiet instead.)

STEP 09 MEASURE THE RESULT

Clap once. If you hear the clap, the room is treated. If you hear your neighbour, the room is very treated (see: Neighbour Complaint Letter).

STEP 10 FINAL CHECK

Play a reference track. If it sounds bad, it's the room. If it sounds good, it's also the room. Either way, buy a new plugin.

Budget

Egg cartons (400 eggs)	$0*
Laundry bass traps	$0
Duvet ceiling cloud	$0 (+ one cold winter)
Bookshelf diffuser	$0
Closet vocal booth	$0
Total	**$0**

** Eggs not included.*

Honest footnote: egg cartons do almost nothing for acoustics. Neither does this guide. Real panels are rockwool in a wooden frame wrapped in fabric — or, on a budget, moving blankets hung a few inches off the wall (they actually work). But where's the fun in that.