

Session Prep:

GUITARS:

Fresh strings

Set up and intonation

Make sure your amp doesn't buzz or rattle when played loud

BASS:

Fresh strings

Set up and intonation

Make sure your amp doesn't buzz or rattle when played loud

DRUMS:

Fresh drumheads

Drums properly tuned

All mechanical hardware free of noise - if your pedals squeak it will be on your recordings

KEYBOARDS/MIDI INSTRUMENTS

Make sure you know how to set up your instrument for recording. MIDI IS NOT AUDIO. Sort out your system for recording prior to entering the studio.

VOCALS:

Voice healthy and in good shape. You might need to sing for several hours straight.

Memorize lyrics. They will sound better.

BAND:

Playing with a click track:

Playing to a click track while recording is a way to synchronize the performances of each instrument and allow for the use of powerful digital editing techniques. However, it is rarely a requirement and should be avoided if it is a distraction. If certain members of the band plan on playing to a click but have never done so, it is important to prepare in rehearsal. Use a metronome playing through a PA or headphone amp so that each member can listen. Many experienced musicians have been surprised to find out that they have trouble playing to a click track if they have never done so and it can turn a smoothly running session into a nightmare.

Doubles:

Vocalists and guitarist will often double parts to add texture. In many cases the doubled part needs to be 99% the same as the original. If the doubled part is performed loosely or with differences from the original it can ruin the effect. And sometimes a "loose double" is exactly what the track needs.

Quality instruments:

The quality of the instruments used for the recording can make a big difference in the quality of the sound. Sometimes a cheap instrument is just what a song calls for, but trying to make a cheap instrument sound expensive can be a losing battle. There are a number of high-end instruments and amplifiers available in the studio and it is worth it to rent whatever equipment necessary to capture a quality sound.