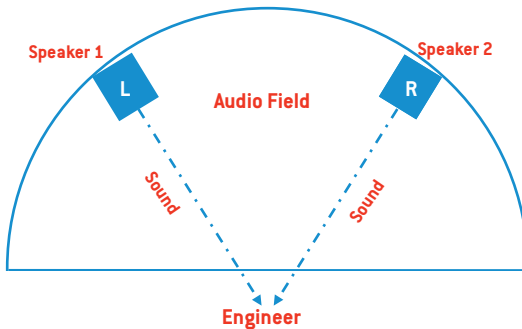




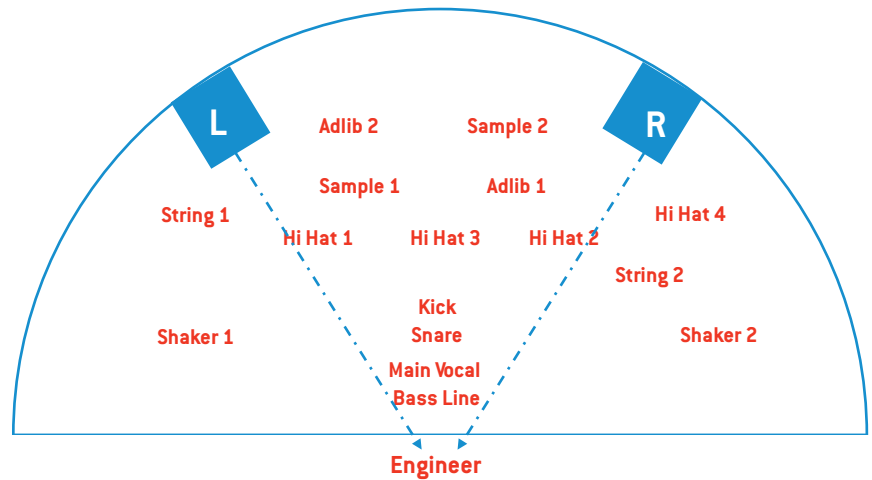
Mixing down will, if done properly and effectively, transform your music from a basic balance of sounds into a planned and creative blend that will be both creative and specific to what you are trying to achieve. Mixdown does not just involve balancing volumes so that you can “hear” everything. Mixing down is both the creative aspect of balancing all the sounds on your song sequence into a stereo file and the art of fixing audio problems such as unevenly recorded vocals, as well as the adding of effects for creative rather than corrective purposes.

### STEREO SPREAD



### The stereo spread and creating space

This is a simple outline of the sound spectrum you can use for a stereo mix down, you have a full 180 degrees of possible stereo spread when mixing down. This means if you pan a sound fully to the left, you will only be able to hear that sound out of the left speaker when you play it back. The pan however only applies to the spread of your sound from far left to far right. If you want to design and control the size of your 180 degree space you have to add reverb. Reverb gives you this ‘space’ or depth by adding slight delays and reverberations that mimic the natural effect of different environments on sound.



### MIXDOWN PLAN

Above we have an example of a basic mixdown plan, the shakers and high hats are spread out along the 180 to create a wider spread. We have set the adlibs at the back in order for them to act as backing to the main vocal which together with the bass, the kick drum and the snare drum tend to always be panned dead middle. The reason for this is that normally there is only one of them (i.e mono, only one voice, one kick drum etc) as well as the fact these elements tend to be the driving force in a track. However they can sometimes be stereo or spread from left to right in order to create an effect you desire. Part of the mixing process is using EQs and other audio processing units such as compressors. Typically audio/signal processors are used in mixing for correctional purposes such as rolling the low end frequencies off a high hat or a female vocal. However as with the panning these are guidelines and these processors can be used creatively as an effect in order to create a specific and planned result for your sound.

The mix down process is a creative one with infinite possibilities, so you should not necessarily be locked into guidelines. However, it can not be over stressed how important planning your mix down and sticking to it is, otherwise you can easily get lost with reverbs, eq's and effects and end up with a confusing muddled and poor mix down.

### Hints and tips

- Make sure your output does not peak when you record/bounce down your track, try to keep it to or below 3 Db (Peaks cause distortion)
- Try and keep the main vocal, snare and kick drum and bass line centred in your panning.
- Turning up sounds is not the only way to make a sound clearer, use EQs in order to clean, accentuate or cut out frequencies and make certain sounds more audible
- Vocals and snares are the main sounds that can be used to create space, so apply correct reverb to these elements.
- On vocals you should roll off the low end frequencies to avoid resonance and also give the high mids a slight boost.
- Do not double or triple your main vocals. It will NOT make them sound “BETTER”. All it will do is muddle it and create unwanted noise.
- Do not start adding effects units for the sake of experimenting. Use your plan and stick to it otherwise you will end up creating a mess.
- Do not normalize a track just because it will make it sound louder, you will destroy the dynamics of your song.