The Bass Hunter Technique (V5)

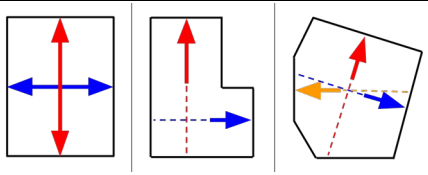
Fix the bass in your studio. Find the best possible sweet spot position in your (non-rectangular) room for a balanced low end. You need:

a. One speaker (a subwoofer is not necessary)
b. Music (I like to use Spotify so I don't have to adjust the volume)
c. Tape

Have an open mind, the results can be surprising. That's OK. Especially if you've been working from a massive bass hole or peak for while.
Sometimes facing the long side is actually better than facing the short side!
Test all your options first, then decide what is practical. Know what compromises you are making.
No need to empty your room, even bass traps. Just get everything out of the way of the speaker.
Moving stuff (like your desk!) out of the way does help though.. Believe me, it's worth it. You'll probably end up wanting to move it anyway. Otherwise you just have to do a bit of acrobatics. ;)

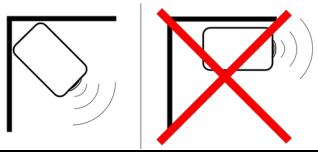
1. Identify the central axes of your room that split it in half.

a. Your listening position will end up on one of these axes to give you left-right symmetry.
b. In an asymmetrical room, find axes with localized symmetry and focus on that part of the room.
c. If symmetry is no option, compromise. Asymmetry is easier to fix than an unbalanced low end.



2. Place one speaker on the floor in the corner, facing the room.

a. Make sure to get right into the corner with the speaker.
b. Pick a corner close to where you'd ideally like your sweet spot to be.
c. Set EQ to flat on the speaker.
d. Disconnect the other speaker.



3. Pick 3 songs that you know in and out, in different keys and genres, covering the entire low end spectrum.

a. I like Shiba San – "Okay" and Monte - "True".
b. Set the volume so you can comfortably hear the bass, but not too loud.

4. Sit in your chair, making sure your head is at the height you work at.

a. If you use a standing desk, then do the test standing up.

5. Start playing the music.

6. Slowly roll along the central axes from one end of the room to the other.

a. Test all available axes.
b. I like to move in small steps, getting an idea of the low end balance at each point before moving on.

7. Pay attention to how the low end changes as you move through the room.

a. Try to ignore the mids and highs, you'll get those in check later by positioning your speakers.
b. Try and feel the bass in your body.
c. Closing your eyes helps.

8. For each song, make a mental note of where the low end sounds the most balanced.

a. Take your time, be deliberate. Get a ball park idea first, then focus your efforts on the prime locations.
b. To mark the position, you can drop a coin or pick a mental reference point along the wall.
c. Be accurate! 10cm can make a huge difference.

"But what exactly does "a balanced low end" sound like?"

You want a "conservative" low end where nothing sticks out too much or is lost completely.
Focus on the relationship between the kick and the bass.
In a melodic bass line, all the notes should roughly be at the same volume.
A standard kick should have some sub and some punch.
Put your head right up against the wall. That's what too much sub sounds like. Move back into the room. Where do you still hear the sub, but the punch comes back it?
Focus on the sub in your stomach and the punch in your chest. You want to feel both at equal strength.
It shouldn't be too much fun, or too boring to listen to!

9. Find the best compromise between all the songs. Mark the position on the floor with tape. This is your listening position!

10. If you are unsure, or cannot decide between 2 positions, you can refine further with a sin warble (click to download → download here).

a. Listen to the sin warble run through entirely at each position without moving your head.
b. Does the energy drop away at any point, or does it noticeably stick out?
c. Choose the position with the least change in volume.

11. Set up your speakers to form an equilateral triangle in line with your test axis. The apex should align with your listening positions.

a. Face the closest wall.
b. Make sure the distance to the left and right walls is exactly the same.
c. Don't worry about setting up some arbitrary distance x from the front wall.