

5 VOCAL REVERB TECHNIQUES

FREE GUIDE

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Let's talk about **VOCAL REVERB**.

These are a few **Vocal Vocal Techniques** to help you gain control, be more creative and will help you bring your Vocal Reverb sit better in your mix. You don't need to use these techniques all at once. Taking the time to experiment with these techniques will give you more leverage to cover most mixing situations.

1. USE your Vocal Reverb on an FX Channel Track

You can add a Reverb plugin straight to your Vocal channel as an Insert, that work, however not very convenient. A better way to use a Reverb is to create a, Effect Channel Track or a AUX Channel (Stereo). Then, you can "Send" your vocal signal in this Reverb Channel.

This way you keep better control on your Wet signal which is your Reverb channel , and this will give you more flexibility to craft your Reverb sound to make it sit better in the mix. **Make sure that the Reverb's Dry/Wet setting is set to 100% Wet.**

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2. EQ YOUR REVERB

EQ can be very helpful to craft your **Vocal Reverb** sound to sit better in your mix. Too much low frequencies can make a Reverb sound muddy. Same for High Frequencies, too much can make your Reverb sound harsh, edgy and too present, and that can affect the whole space of your mix.

Adding a High Pass Filter up to 300-600 Hz to your Reverb will keep your Vocal from sounding muddy.

Adding a Low Pass Filter down to 7 kHz and lower will make your Vocal Delay sound more warm and less harsh or sibilant.

On top of that, I like to add a Cut at around 2k to add even more transparency.

You can add an **EQ Plugin AFTER your Reverb** Plugin to EQ the signal coming out of your Vocal Reverb.

You can also experiment and EQ the Send signal going in your Reverb by adding an **EQ Plugin BEFORE your Reverb** Plugin.

Or you can use the **Reverb Plugin's EQ (Filter)** Parameters if available to EQ you Delay.

5 VOCAL REVERB TECHNIQUES

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Roomworks Reverb (Cubase)



On this stock Reverb, you can Filter the incoming signal going into the Reverb straight from the Reverb itself

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3. KEEP YOUR VOCAL UPFRONT

You like your Reverb sound, the Tail and Size of your Reverb sound's just right, but at the same time, the Reverb starts to take too much space and is starting to make your Vocal sound too much distant and further away.

Fortunately, there's some things you can do to your Reverb to keep what you like by making your vocal sound upfront and not distant.

Reverb Pre-Delay

You can keep your Vocal Upfront by using the Reverb Pre-Delay found on the majority of Reverbs out there. Adding Pre-Delay will keep the Reverb from starting right away by "Delaying" the start of the Reverb by "X" amount of milliseconds. This will keep the initial Vocal transient Dry from the Reverb.

At some point if you add too much Predelay, your Reverb will start to sound like a Slap Back Delay and you will lose the natural sound of the Reverb. Add just enough to keep your Vocal upfront. You can do by ear to set this up (Like I do) or you can the MS value according to the Tempo of your Project to add more precision.

5 VOCAL REVERB TECHNIQUES

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(BONUS) BPM TO DELAY TIME FORMULA

This is the calculation formula to get the Millisecond (ms) value out of the Delay Time according to the BPM (Beats per Minute) of your song.

There are 60,000 milliseconds in a minute so if you want to know how long a beat is in milliseconds for any tempo (BPM), just follow the below formula:

Formula: $60,000 / \text{BPM} = \text{one beat in milliseconds}$

- **Divide 60 000** by the **BPM** of your mix. That will give you a **1/4 note** value in milliseconds
- **Divide by 2 the 1/4 note value** and you get the **1/8 note** value (ms).
- **Divide by 2 the 1/8 note** value and you end up with the **1/16** value.
- To calculate **Dotted** Value **multiply** the calculated delay value **by 1.5**
- To calculate the **Triplet** value **multiply** the calculated delay value **by .667**

Side-Chain Compression

To keep your Vocal Upfront, another good alternative is to Duck your Vocal Reverb with **Side Chain Compression**.

Use a compressor on your Reverb FX Channel after the Reverb plug-in. Then **activate the Side-Chain from the Compressor Plugin**.



5 VOCAL REVERB TECHNIQUES

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Set the **Input Key to the Vocal Channel** so when the Vocal plays, the Reverb is ducked down according to the Compressor parameters then when the vocal isn't playing, the Compressor let's go off the Reverb. This will keep your Vocal Upfront by keeping the Tail of the Reverb.

You can access the **Side-Chain Compressor** as a **"Send" effect** from your Vocal Channel to send the Vocal Signal in the Side-Chain of the Compressor.

Set the compressor to a 3:1 Ratio with a fast Attack and Medium release.

Adjust the Threshold to the desired amount of Gain Reduction.

Make sure **"Auto Make-up Gain"** stays **OFF** on the Compressor.



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4. ADD FX TO THE SEND SIGNAL

Adding FX on the incoming signal (Send) is a good option to add more distance between the reverb sound and the Dry vocal and make your Reverb stand out.

Just insert an FX plugin before your Reverb plugin to achieve this.

For example, a **Flanger** FX will add modulation to the signal going into the Reverb. That will slightly affect the Reverb Sound and make it stand out a bit.

Saturation can also be a nice FX to add before the reverb. Maybe not suitable for all types of Vocal Mix, but when placed in the correct mixing situation, Saturation works well to make your Reverb stand out. You can experiment with light Saturation or even Hard Saturation for a more of a special FX.

Compression is a good way to keep a Dynamic vocal under control before hitting the Reverb.

5 VOCAL REVERB TECHNIQUES

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5. Automation

I'm a big fan of **Automation** when mixing, and when it comes to Reverb, the same applies. Automation can make your Vocal Mix sound more interesting and Pro.

A good example is Verses vs Choruses, Depending on the genre, the amount of Reverb needed in a Verse might not be the same in the Choruses.

You can adjust this using **Volume Automation on the Reverb FX Channel** itself, which is usually what I do, or if this Reverb Channel serves more than just the Vocal, you can **Automate the SEND Level** from your Vocal Channel going into the reverb

Conclusion

Those Vocal Reverb Tricks are tools you can use on your mixes, that doesn't mean you need to use them all at the same time. Always use your ears before using any Mixing Tricks :-) Enjoy!