

# ProTools - Preparing Project for Audio Mixing

## CHECKERBOARD YOUR AUDIO

First, when building your audio in the Timeline, consider checker-boarding it. This means to put all the same audio on the same track.



There are several benefits to checker-boarding:

Having a consistent organizational structure for editing your audio decreases mistakes and speeds editing.

It makes it easier to figure out what you did when you go back to re-edit a project you haven't worked on for a while.

It decreases the amount of time an audio engineer needs to reorganize your project if you send it out for mixing, which saves you money

It is a common-sense, professional way of working.

So, here is how I organize the audio in all my projects:

**A1, A2:** Main talking head audio - for example, the main speaker on V1

**A3, A4:** B-roll audio from clips on V2

**A5:** Narrator

**A6, A7, A8:** Sound effects - wild, not synced with video

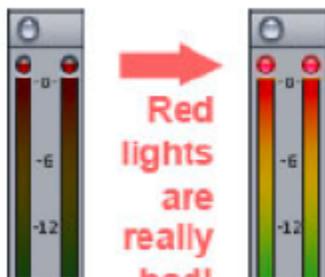
**A9, A10:** Music cue 1

**A11, A12:** Music cue 2

If I don't have a narrator, or don't need three sound effects tracks, I simply move everything up. But I ALWAYS build my sequences in this order.

If I have a guy narrator and a girl narrator, I'll put them on separate tracks, as they get different EQ and filters during mixing.

## NEVER GO OVER ZERO



The most important rule to remember with audio is that your audio MUST NOT EVER go over zero. Not once. Not even a little bit. Not even when no one is looking. **NEVER!**

Unlike analog audio, digital audio starts distorting as soon as your

audio levels exceed zero and those red clip lights flash on. While you are mixing, these red lights tell you that your audio levels need adjusting.

However, during final output, those red lights indicate that your audio has been permanently damaged and there is not a technology on the planet that can fix it. You'll need to go back to your source materials and remix.