

VOCAL RECORDING PLAYBOOK

Improve the quality of your vocals and
start producing better music at home



By Rob Mayzes

Room Choice

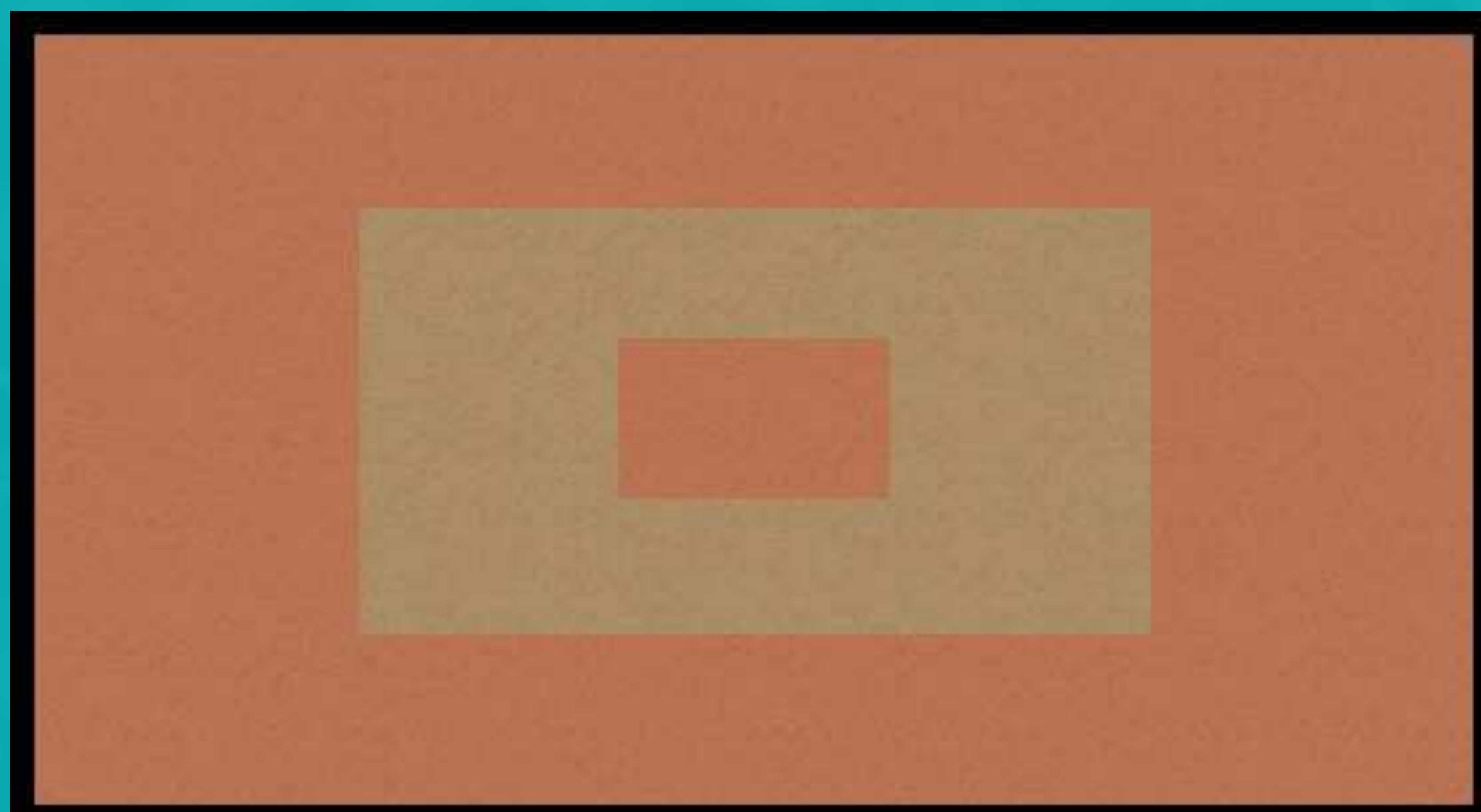
The room that you record your vocals in will have a significant impact on the final quality. It's important to spend plenty of time on room treatment and preparation. It can make the difference between professional and amateur sounding vocals.

Choose a room that fits the following requirements:

- Low amount of reverb.
- Not too many hard reflective surfaces (avoid kitchens and bathrooms, or rooms with large windows).
- Ideally, chose a room with lots of soft furnishings and heavy drapes.
- Larger than 6 square feet.
- Smaller than 200 square feet.

To avoid direct reflections and problematic frequency buildups, avoid the center of the room and the areas near the walls.

Avoid the red areas in the following diagram:



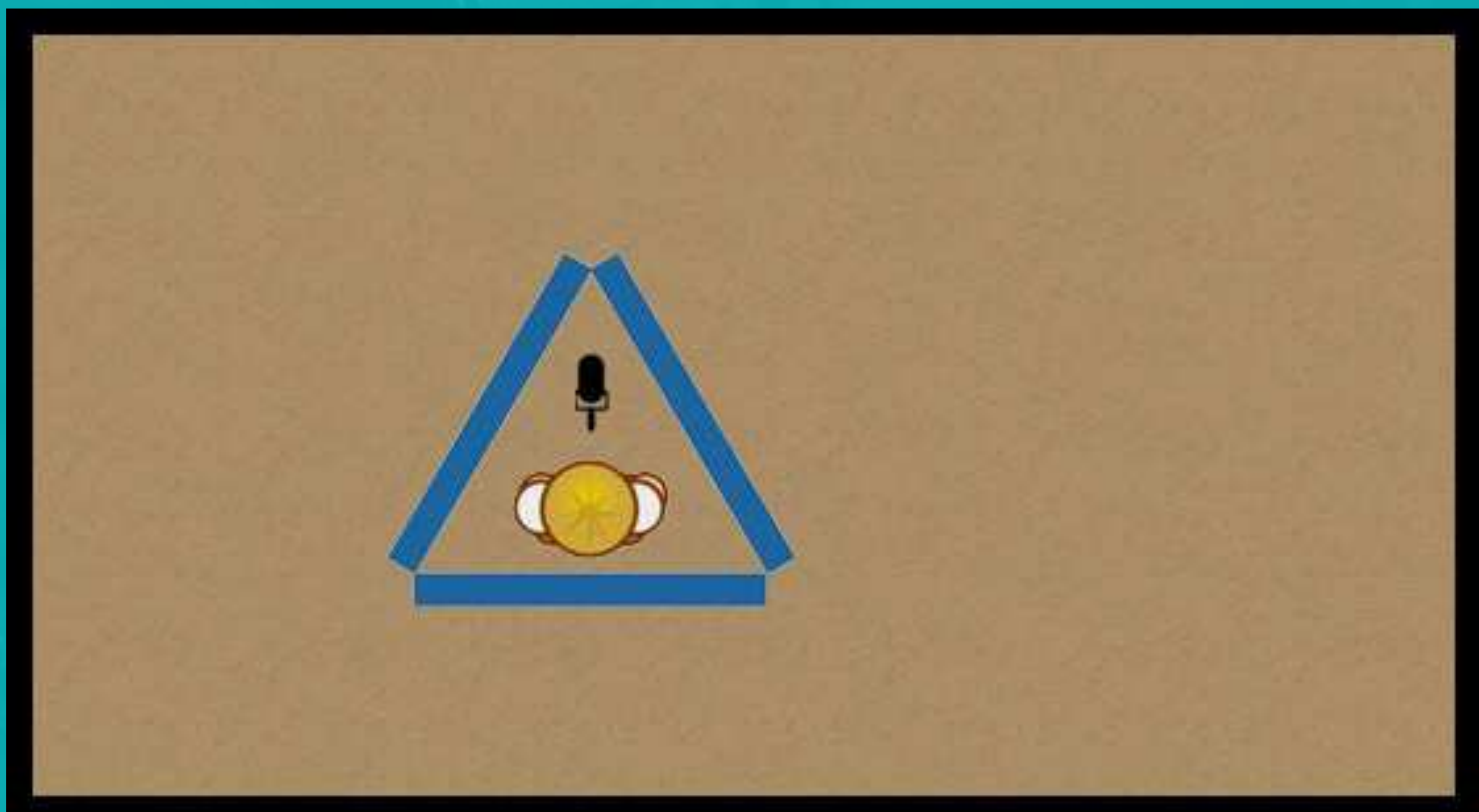
Acoustic Treatment

Ideally, use acoustic panels to treat your room ([like this](#)).

If you don't have the budget or time to build panels, you can also use the following household items:

- Mattresses
- Thick Duvets
- Thick Drapes (especially over windows)
- Thick Rugs
- Pillows

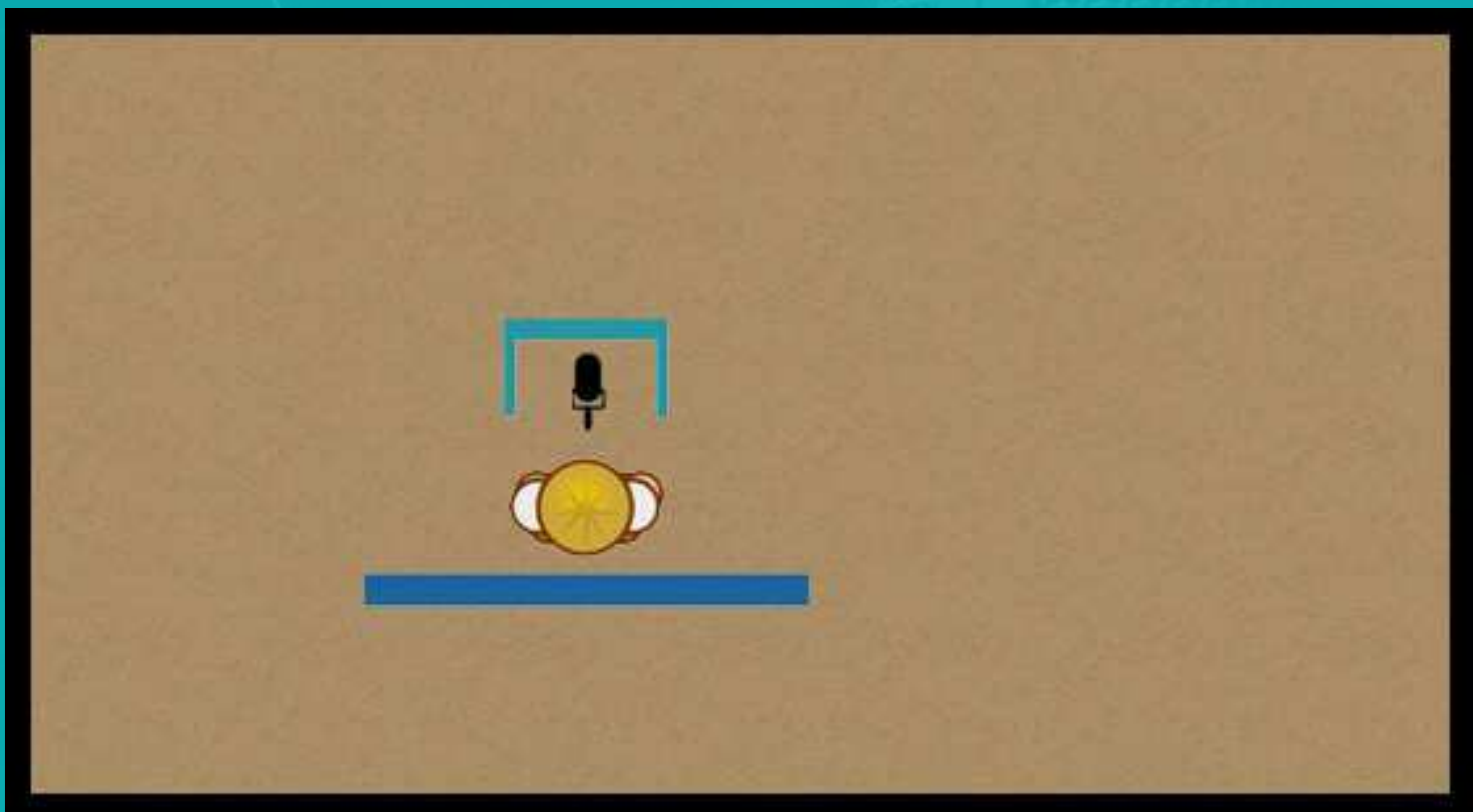
The vocal booth method (surrounding the vocalist with absorptive material) is the quickest and easiest way to treat your room.



Acoustic Treatment

If that's not possible (or is too inconvenient/temporary) you should place treatment in these locations (and in this order):

- Behind the vocalists head
- Above the microphone
- Between the vocalist and any close reflective surfaces
- To the sides of the microphone
- Behind the microphone



Microphone Choice

Cardioid Condenser Microphones

This is the go-to microphone for most vocal recording situations.

If you're recording at home (or in a bad sounding room) it's best to use a microphone with a cardioid pattern. You can point cardioid microphones away from the liveliest surface in the room to reduce reflections (a window, for example) or away from any noise sources (like a laptop or A/C unit).

Omnidirectional Condenser Microphones

Many people are scared of using omnidirectional microphones at home, but this should not be the case. Although they capture sounds from all around so are more prone to capture unpleasant room sounds, this problem can be easily fixed with some additional treatment and recording technique.

There are many benefits to using omnidirectional microphone, as they don't suffer from the proximity effect.

Dynamic Microphones

Dynamic microphones work really well in bad rooms and can give a warmer, closer sound.

They are also great for more aggressive vocal styles (like Rock, Metal and Punk).

Dynamic microphones are designed to be used up close, so the vocalist can often treat it more like a live performance.

Mic Technique

Cardioid Condenser Microphones

With cardioid condenser microphones, you need to remember the proximity effect. In most cases, you don't want to get closer than 5 inches.

Far away (12 inches) = open and airy.
Close (4 inches) = warm and intimate.

If you don't have trained ears and aren't 100% confident with your decisions, it's better to be further away than too close. The proximity effect can quickly ruin a good recording. 6 inches is a good starting point in 80% of situations.

Omnidirectional Condenser Microphones

As omnidirectional microphones don't exhibit the proximity effect, you can get much closer without affecting the tone.

For quiet, intimate sections you can ask the vocalist to get right up close to the microphone about 1 inch away (or less). This is a great technique for whispery vocals.

Dynamic Microphones

These microphones are designed to be used up close. The low end is artificially lowered to account for the proximity effect.

For this reason, it's a much simpler procedure. Simply ask the vocalist to get right up close to the microphone. This works particularly well for aggressive rock vocals (and even screaming).

Thanks for reading!

This is just a taster of what I could teach you...

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Stop Recording Amateur Vocals: The Simple Step-by-Step System for Recording Professional Vocals at Home

Use this link to get the ebook for only \$5...

Learn More

Inside this book you will discover proven recording techniques that result in clear, exciting and impressive vocals every time.

Produce great music on a small budget by learning how to record vocals that sound professional (without spending a fortune on expensive equipment)

Record vocals that naturally sound great and don't require any heavy processing (which makes mixing super easy and fun)

Create music that connects with the listener on a deeper emotional level by focusing on the vocals (so you can get more fans, reach more people and achieve your #1 goals)

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