

Ten Steps to Improve Your Songwriting Skills

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Do you want to sharpen your songwriting skills? Do you aspire to writing a successful song? Well, out of my own experience and out of several songwriting references I came up with these "Ten Steps To Improve Your Songwriting Skills".

1. Sharpen your Songwriting skills every day. Like an athlete who strives to practice so as to reach the peak of his/her performance, a songwriter or a composer should also practice regularly...OK. you are talented and everything, but your talent means nothing if your brain doesn't get used to using this talent. Make a 30 min. music writing time per day and use it to experiment with chords, write themes or maybe rearrange something. But always keep in mind that you are just practicing, so there probably isn't a "hit" coming out of these 30 min...[Hits come like a flash so be always prepared!](#)

2. Listen to music every day. The very famous Suzuki violin teaching method requires that the student listens to a tape containing the pieces he/she learns everyday to "develop musical ability"(Schinichi Suzuki). Guess what? It works. As you listen more you will unconsciously adapt more to music in general and, on the conscious level, discover tricks and techniques in music writing that you didn't know about. Nobody can create music De Novo, it has got to have some roots!!

3. Don't limit yourself to one style. My music education was classic, but I adore Rock and Metal (my favorite bands are [Scorpions](#) and [Pink Floyd](#)) as much as I adore [Bach](#) and [Dvorak](#) and ,since I'm Egyptian, I also like my share of [oriental music](#)..!! Such a style mix can create the most wonderful ideas, and this is how most songwriters come up with new styles (ex: Pink Floyd's Psychedelic Rock). Always explore and experiment with new styles, if you take a look at the history of any band, you find out that's what songwriting is all about.

4. Learn the rules of the game. You probably think that since you can come up with a nice theme, that your are on the right track ...WRONG ;). It is true that songwriting has no specific rules, but here you are looking for "Ten Steps To Improve", eh?!!. A song is music + words...As much as you can, learn [music theory](#) and the basics of [lyrics/poetry writing](#). Learning never stops and it's a fact that as you learn more about the rules of the game, you become more skillful bending those rules..!!And never forget that catchy melodies and [smart rhyming lyrics](#) need lots of practice.

5. Don't be shy. Make everybody know about your songwriting skills, and [show your songs to the world](#)...well, show it to friends and family first, then to [songwriting communities](#) and finally, seek professional critiques. As you get your work more fine tuned, you will become more confident and, consequently, more open to new ideas and suggestions. Remember, it's the people whom you are

writing for, their thoughts do matter.

6. Learn to play a "songwriting instrument". If you are reading this you probably can play an instrument. But, you should know that there are certain instruments that are not very helpful with songwriting or generally music composition. So far, a poll that runs on [Writing Fever Forum](#) showed that [Keyboard \(or Piano\)](#) is most useful and [guitar](#) ranks second. My guess is that it is so because those instruments are specially helpful with chords (unlike the violin for example, my original instrument) and make it easier to write chord progressions. You don't have to be a "Joe Satriani" on guitar or a "Yanni" on piano, you just have to be familiar with one of the songwriting instruments. (This means you shouldn't spend more than few weeks to get to the level where you can use the instrument for songwriting and I personally recommend the ["hearandplay 300pg.course"](#) for keyboard(piano) and the ["Amazing 7 day Guitar video"](#) for guitar...Those two programs will get you PLAYING in no time with no prerequisites whatsoever).

7. Look back on your previous work. It is very helpful if you listen to your past work so that you would know how far you've come. You might like your past more or less, so it actually shows you if you are still on the right track or not.

8. Introduce diversity to your music. Write in different scales, different time signatures, different genres and styles...etc. Also, write for different instruments. For example, you wrote a song for a rock band, now rearrange it for a string quartet !! I'm Serious!! I wrote an instrumental for a friend's rock band and later rearranged it for 4 violins. But why? It gives you insight on new "sounds of music", more experience with [music theory](#) and what do you know? It may actually sound better :).

9. Produce Demos. Well, if you are for real, make your music real. Don't keep your creations suppressed in music sheets or in midi files, if you can put out your songs, start doing business and don't be lazy promoting your song. You don't have to spend a lot of money to record your material; a nice mic and an [efficient computer software](#) are enough for most purposes. You might stumble upon a hot shot producer who happens to like your work...Good Luck!!

10. Seek Collaboration. [Songwriting collaboration](#) is one thing you should try and CAN do, group work and all. Nobody is a stand-alone genius!! Subscribe to [songwriting groups on the internet](#), get to know a guy or two in your local community who you like working with...etc. Collaboration on songwriting is great; simply imagine two people from different backgrounds pouring their different ideas in one think tank...Group work is the key to success, proved by research teams, bands and political parties ;).

Well, You can follow those steps or not, it's not the Bible!!
Although these steps seem to work fine with most people,
you should see what you like and what comforts you
most...and please come back to me and all Writing Fever
visitors with [your own songwriting experience](#), Let the whole
world know...

Mahmoud Ibrahim is a songwriter and owner of <http://www.songwritingfever.com>; a website dedicated to songwriting collaboration. This articles may be reproduced on the condition that this note remains intact.
