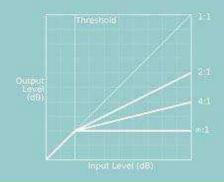


### Ratio

The ratio determines how much the volume is reduced by

## **Threshold**

This is the level at which the compressor kicks in

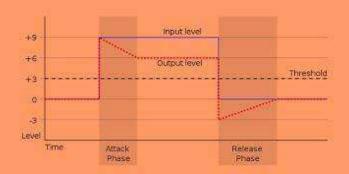


### **Attack Time**

How quickly the compressor engages and reduces the volume of the audio

### **Release Time**

How long it takes the compressor to dis-engage and return the audio to it's normal level



### Gain

Increases the output level to compensate for loss in volume due to compression

# 10 TOP COMPRESSION TIPS

- 1. Start with an attack time of roughly 40ms and a release time of 60ms for instruments (but this is a HUGE generalization)
- 2. Start with a medium-fast attack time (around 10ms) for vocals
- 3. You don't always have to use compression don't just do it for the sake of it
- 4. Have an intention
- 5. Stack compressors for more control
- 6. Parallel compression on drums or vocals (lighter genres) is more subtle
- 7. Plugin order doesn't matter much don't obsess
- 8. Pick a compressor plugin a stick with it, learn it
- 9. Keep an eye on the gain reduction meter
- 10. Adjust the output gain to volume match the plugin (same volume going out)

## ATTACK TIME

- Think of it as attack amount
- Two main settings (forget everything else for now)...
- Slow attack time = lots of transient, lots of attack, lots of aggression
- Fast attack time = less transient, less attack, more thickness
- Make sure you know how your plugin works (analogue modelling is backwards)
- Always err towards slower attack times, otherwise you can ruin transients and dynamics (2ms or more in general)
- Normally, if something sounds over-compressed, it's due to fast attack times
- Only use fast attack for a particular reason (e.g. snare or kick might require 1ms or less)
- Start slow, make faster until start to lose aggression, then back off

# RELEASE TIME

- How long it takes the compressor to disengage after the audio drops back below the threshold
- Could be on a small scale (ms) or even seconds (unlike attack time)
- Fast release times can cause distortion, pumping, and a range of other issues
- Don't be afraid of auto-release, works well in most cases
- Err towards slower times (40ms or more)
- Adjust to be as slow as possible while breathing in time with the music
- Compressor should drop to around 0-1dB of gain reduction every few beats, otherwise release time potentially too slow
- There are some exceptions where really slow release times work (2 seconds plus), so remember that these are just guidelines
- Fast release better for more apparent volume, but be very careful as can lead to distortion

# DIFFERENT GENRES

- Pop focus more on dynamic control and constant compression than tonal shaping
- Rock lots of compression, be bold, use slow attack times to add aggression
- Hip-Hop older hip-hop is more like Rock (adding aggression), modern Hip-Hop is more like Pop (controlling dynamics)
- Electronic focus on the vocals, as samples and virtual instruments don't need compression for dynamic control
- Acoustic lighter genres (acoustic, jazz etc.) require little or no compression

# KFY USF CASES

#### Vocals

- They need to be incredibly consistent, so combine compression with automation
- Opt for slower attack times (5-20ms) to maintain aggression and keep the vocal upfront
- Lower ratios are normally sufficient, around 2:1

#### Drums

- Kick and snare should be super consistent, compress individually
- Can rely solely on compression in most cases (no need for excessive automation as with vocals)
- Will need a fast attack time to catch the drum hit spend plenty of time tuning this parameter
- Will probably need a higher ratio, like 4:1
- If compressing the entire drum buss, use parallel compression to avoid audible pumping on the cymbals

#### Bass

- As with drums, needs to be consistent and provide a solid foundation
- Similar process to drums, but more care with release time (tune to the tempo)

#### Group busses

- Backing vocals buss, guitars buss, keys buss etc.
- Compress lightly (if needed) to add more control, 2:1 ratio, 2-5dB of gain reduction

#### Guitars

For a crunchy, hard rock sound, sometimes heavy compression is needed

#### Samples

- Make samples more interesting by using slow attack times and adding aggression
- But, no need for dynamic control here, as samples are all the same volume already