

Delay vs Reverb Cheat Sheet

DELAY VS REVERB

- Some things need a sense of space, and sound 'dry' without it
 - Lead vocals, for example
 - But not bass guitar or kick (main exceptions)
- So, if it *needs* a small sense of space, you use reverb and delay to do this
- Do you want something to sound close, or far away?
 - Close = delay
 - Far = reverb
- This is also how you create depth in a mix - by using various degrees of space

DELAY

- Stereo Delay
 - Slapback, low feedback (0-10%)
 - Different times on left and right (50-200ms)
- Mono Delay
 - Timed mono delay
 - Can have higher feedback if desired (0-30%)
 - Whole note (crotchet) or minim
 - Time manually if you want it to stand out more
- Plate Reverb
 - Really short decay time
 - For stereo width and sweetness, not noticeable reverb
- Reverb Throw
 - Long decay time
 - Can cut all the highs and boost the lows for a deep 'sub reverb throw'
 - Use as a spot effect (automate the send on the lead vocal buss)

REVERB

- Keep it short
 - Long decay times can quickly add mess to your mix
 - Keep it under 2 seconds
 - Adjust the decay time to the tempo of the track
 - Faster track = faster decay time
 - Doesn't need to be exact, just take the tempo into account

- Keep it simple
 - I prefer to use just one stereo room reverb on an effect buss
 - Send instruments to this buss by varying amounts to create a sense of depth
 - More reverb = further away
 - Less reverb = close

ADDITIONAL TIPS

Keep It Subtle

Only use effects if they compliment the vocals. Don't just use effects for the sake of it (or to show off).

Dial in the effect until you can just about *hear* it. Then, dial it back a bit until you can only *feel* it.

Spice Up Your Reverbs and Delays

Sidechain compression - This will help to prevent the reverb/delay from getting in the way of the vocal and give it some more definition.

Direct compression - Apply heavy compression before or after reverb/delay.

Add a reverb after your delay - Using subtle reverb on your delay aux can mellow out the delay and make it a bit less aggressive and harsh.

Automate the delay time and feedback - Try using a 1/4 delay in the verse with 0-10% feedback, but then change to a 1/2 note delay in the chorus with more feedback.

Automate the effect sends - Enhance your choruses by having more subtle reverb/delay in the verses (by dropping the send level).

Always apply EQ to your reverb/delay aux - Cut the lows with a HPF, cut the mud, cut the frequencies that are being boosted in the vocal, try cutting or boosting the highs.

Use several aux channels with slightly different sounds - Setting up several aux channels with different reverbs/delays allows you to easily automate between them.

Use a flanger on your reverb - Adding a subtle flanger effect to your reverb can make it less noticeable.

Pre-emptive reverb - Pre-emptive reverb can enhance haunting, mysterious vocals.

Effect Throws

Effect throws are simply effects that only occur on single words or phrases. This can add interest; enhance the emotion; make certain words stick out from the rest; and exaggerate the feel and vibe of a vocal (for example, making it more haunting or more epic).

Delay throws - The last word of a phrase is sent to a minim, crotchet or quaver note delay.

Reverb Throws - Send the vocal to a loud large room reverb for a single word or phrase.

Reverb Swells - By volume automating the reverb aux itself, you can create swells that lead into the next phrase or section.

Sub Reverb Throws - Send the vocal to an aux channel with a really long reverb (5 seconds plus), cut everything above 100Hz with a HPF and boost at 30Hz.

High Feedback Delay Throws - Send single words to a delay with a short delay time ($\frac{1}{4}$ note/80ms or less) and high feedback (50%+) for a haunting effect.

Breathe Throws - Try moving all of the breaths in a verse or section to their own track. Send this new 'Breath Track' to the large room reverb and a $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ or whole note delay.