

THE 4-WEEK SONGWRITING CHALLENGE

WEEK 2: THE MELODY

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Now that you've written (or at least started) a hook-based song, we're going to try the opposite approach: writing a song starting with the melody.

For this challenge, I'd recommend recording yourself every step of the way, because melodies can be really difficult to remember!

1. Set a tempo/mood

First decide if you want your song to be upbeat, mid-tempo, or slow. Snap, clap, or tap a beat and try to envision the groove of the song. (Or pull up a drum beat online or using a drum machine if that's more your style!)

(Don't play your instrument yet! - I don't want you to worry about the chord progression until you have the melody down.)

2. Improvise

Here's the hard part. While you're tapping the beat or listening to the drumbeat, start singing. You can either sing on repeated syllables ("dah, dah, dah") or stick in filler lyrics ("baby, i love you, blah, blah") if that comes more naturally to you.

Don't worry about sounding ridiculous or stupid, just keep trying until you come up with a melody you like. (And remember to record it everything you do!)

3. Listen and review

Chances are, after your first try, you'll have a whole bunch of garbage and a few little clips of killer melodies. So decide which pieces you like and which ones you don't.

Then decide where they would fit best in the song. Remember the chorus is usually the most memorable part of the song, so I'd put the catchiest bit of melody in the chorus.

Also keep in mind, the verse and the chorus should be somewhat contrasting (ex. faster paced chorus, slower melody in verse).

Now go back and repeat steps #2 and #3 until you have your verse and chorus pretty much worked out.

4. Repeat the process for the bridge

Now that you've got the verse and the chorus worked out, try something crazy different for the bridge! Try improvising in a higher (or lower) part of your vocal range, or slowing down the rhythm of the words. If your song isn't very repetitive, maybe make the bridge the most repetitive part. Or vice versa.

5. Start adding lyrics

Take some time to consider what you want the song to be about, and start adding in lyrics piece by piece.

You may need to tweak the melody a little bit to fit the right number of syllables in (or avoid awkward pronunciations), but you should be able to keep the overall structure of your melody the same.

This can be a great way to write songs for you natural lyricists out there, because it forces you to put more thought into the melody itself, instead of just singing the default melody that comes easiest to you based on your lyrics.