



GAIN STAGING AND PREPARING YOUR GUITAR FOR TRACKING WITH YOUR FOCUSRITE PRE-AMP

Gain Staging refers to setting the optimal gain (or volume level) in a musical signal. For the best results, we want our signal to be as loud as possible without distorting, with the least amount of noise

For this video we will be comparing plugging a guitar directly into your Focusrite vs. using a Direct (DI) Box. A DI Box converts your instrument level into mic level.

FOCUSRITE 2I2, PLUGGED IN DIRECT, INSTRUMENT

- Plug your guitar cable directly into FocusRite is very loud and at around volume 3 (or 8 o'clock) the signal begins to peak / distort.
- The Focusrite has an indicator light to let you know when the signal is too loud. If it's green you're okay. If the light turns red, you're peaking/distorting
- It's very important to not clip / distort your signal, which can negatively impact your tone
- Recommended to start from a low volume and gradually increase to see how it impacts the sound
- The Focusrite tends to run very loud, so we're going to compare it's signal against the Countryman, which will convert it into a mic level

COUNTRYMAN TYPE 85 DIRECT BOX: MIC LEVEL

- Plug your guitar into the Countryman Inst. Input. On the other side of the Countryman, run a microphone cable from the Countryman's output into the mic input on the Focusrite 2i2
- On the Focusrite, make sure to switch from Line to Instrument (Line is used for things like Keyboards). Make sure to turn on Phantom Power (48V button), which supplies power to the Countryman
- The DI Box will often give you a cleaner sound at a lower volume, and is recommended by top producers

SET UP YOUR GUITAR BEFORE TRACKING:

- Put on new guitar strings (or boil them. See: Spectre Sound Studios video "Boiling Bass Strings: Does it Actually Work?") The same technique applies to guitar strings)
- Make sure the input jack is working properly. If it is cutting out, get it fixed!
- Get the guitar intonated (which means to ensure the guitar is in tune with itself), especially if you have switched to a different gauge string
- Get a good cable. Glenn recommends the George L's guitar cables which have a lower impedance than most cables
- Get a good clip-on tuner, such as the SNARK or TC Electronics Polytune. Good tuning is a must!