



cdbaby™ Presents

THE 30 MINUTE YOUTUBE BOOTCAMP FOR MUSICIANS

The 30 Minute YouTube Bootcamp for Musicians

YouTube is the **2nd largest search engine in the world**, one of the most powerful music discovery tools in human history, and the first place many talent buyers, festival bookers, and other industry professionals will look when they're considering your music for an opportunity.

This guide will serve as a quick primer to help you:

- Optimize your channel and videos
- Build your following on YouTube
- Increase video engagement
- Better understand YouTube revenue streams
- Create more compelling video content without going broke

It shouldn't take you much more than thirty minutes to read through this guide, but if you're just starting to familiarize yourself with using YouTube as a music promotion tool, the recommendations within will keep you busy for a long time to come.

Alright, let's get started...

The Anatomy of a Highly Optimized YouTube Video

You probably put a lot of time into producing your videos and you're excited to publish them on YouTube. But don't rush! Spend the extra few minutes optimizing your videos, making it easier for users to find and share them. Otherwise some of your hard work and creativity could go to waste.

The YouTube Video Optimization Checklist:

1. CHOOSE A GOOD VIDEO TITLE

It all begins here. A good (accurate) title helps viewers know they're in the right place, and a keyword-rich title is crucial for users to find your video when searching YouTube.

description of your video, and links to your website, social profiles, retail store, etc. If you want to get viewers to leave YouTube (to go to your own website, for instance) put that URL at the very beginning of your video description so it will appear before the "show more" section.

2. UPLOAD A CUSTOM THUMBNAIL

The thumbnail gives people a snapshot of your video. To hook viewers, upload a custom image that teases something exciting in the video. Your thumbnail image should have a 16:9 aspect ratio.

6. USE AN INTRO

Create a short intro (1-5 seconds) that can be used across multiple videos in a series to provide your channel with a sense of cohesion, continuity, and vibe. You can upload an intro to YouTube as a private video, and then use the video editor tool to combine that intro with any new videos you want to publish.

3. INSERT YOUTUBE CARDS

Add some interactivity to your video when it's viewed on most desktop, Android, and iOS devices. You can use cards to link viewers to a specific URL, point them to another video or playlist, ask them to subscribe, and more.

7. CREATE HD VIDEOS

In the Settings section, a viewer can change the speed and quality of your video, so make sure you upload the highest quality video possible (ideally at least 720p or 1080p).

4. LIST RELEVANT TAGS

Enter any keywords that are associated with your video content, location, subject matter, or featured artist. Good tags can boost your ranking in YouTube search results. Stumped for how to tag your video? Try searching for similar content on YouTube and see what they auto-suggest.

8. ADD END SCREENS

With mobile-friendly end screens, you can drive more engagement at the end of your videos, directing viewers to other videos or playlists, asking them to subscribe to your channel, offering merch, and more.

5. WRITE A GOOD VIDEO DESCRIPTION

Like your title, your video description helps power YouTube's search function (along with relevant tags), so be sure to make use of this space with good keywords, a compelling

9. PUT YOUR VIDEO IN A PLAYLIST

Add your video to a playlist and, whenever you share the video, embed the "share with playlist starting from current video" code. That way if a viewer clicks "next," you can lead them to another one of your videos.

Now that we've looked at optimizing your videos, how about optimizing your whole channel?

A Quick-Start to Optimizing Your YouTube Channel

Here's another simple checklist you can reference to make sure you're doing everything you can to boost views, build a loyal audience, and earn more money through YouTube.

The YouTube Channel Optimization Checklist:

1. CHOOSE YOUR CHANNEL NAME

The channel name is different from your channel URL, so this name CAN be edited. But it's best to pick a name and stick with it for consistent channel branding. Choose something that is short & memorable (like your band or artist name), and that also lets viewers know what to expect from your channel.

2. CHOOSE YOUR CHANNEL ICON

Upload a square image (800x 800 px) that is recognizable and looks great when displayed at smaller resolutions (so use text sparingly). This image will be your channel's icon throughout all of YouTube.

3. UPLOAD YOUR CHANNEL ART

Channel art is the banner/header that appears towards the top of your channel when viewed on a desktop. Upload a large image (2560x1440 pixels recommended) with the most important visual elements located in the inner area (so they'll still appear when the image is scaled for mobile and tablet. Make sure your channel art reflects your personality and doesn't just come off as some kind of boring brand logo.

4. WRITE A CHANNEL DESCRIPTION

Tell viewers what they're about to experience. Be sure to highlight the most important content you create, use relevant keywords, and include your upload schedule to set expectations for your audience.

5. ADD WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS TO THE ABOUT TAB

Corresponding icons will be displayed as overlays on your channel art. Include links to

your official website, store or product page, social accounts, newsletter signup form, or promotional campaign pages.

6. SET "FEATURED CHANNELS"

On the right-hand side of your channel, you'll see the "Featured Channels" header. Add any related or similar channels, including channels for other creative projects you're involved in, your record label, etc.

7. CUSTOMIZE YOUR CHANNEL LAYOUT & ENABLE DISCUSSION

If you'd like to customize the way content appears on your channel and also allow fans to comment on your channel, go to your "Channel Settings" page and enable both features.

8. SELECT OR UPLOAD A CHANNEL TRAILER

Once the browse view has been enabled, select a channel trailer video for your channel. A channel trailer is a short video that will autoplay whenever an unsubscribed viewer visits your channel, so here's your opportunity to get them hooked! Your trailer should be informative and fit the overall vibe of your channel (oh, and did we mention it should be brief?). Also, you should ask viewers to subscribe. The trailer will automatically display a card at the end of the video giving viewers an easy way to do just that.

9. ADD SECTIONS TO ORGANIZE YOUR CHANNEL

Sections are a great way to organize videos (by theme, style, series, genre, etc.) and give viewers an easy way to explore your content from the Home/Browse page. Sections can consist of videos, playlists, or channels, and can include your own videos as well as content

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uploaded by other YouTube users.

For most viewers, only your top section will be visible without scrolling – so make sure your most important videos are included in the section at the top of your channel page.

Also, because sections can contain content from other channels, you have a great opportunity to cross-promote with other artists and curate an interesting viewing experience for your audience. To add a section, just click the “Add a Section” button from the bottom of your channel home page.

10. CUSTOMIZE YOUR CHANNEL URL

YouTube.com/MyName is a lot easier to remember than *YouTube.com/GigglyWiggly-123CuzItWasMyEmailAddressBackIn2007*, right?

11. VERIFY YOUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Go [here](#). If your account status has not already been verified, click “Verify” and select to verify by Voice Call or SMS.

How the Money Works: YouTube Revenue for Musicians

If you’re distributing your music through CD Baby, we can help you earn money from YouTube in several different ways. The details can be a bit confusing though, so let’s clarify the distinctions.

Can you really make money from YouTube?

The short answer: Yes.

The longer answer: Serious money is being earned by artists who understand their audience, invest time in the YouTube platform, use it properly, and make great videos. Because the YouTube universe is vast (and free), it’s up to you how much potential is here for your music, but YouTube ad money can be an important part of your increasingly diversified music revenue streams (along with ticket sales, [CDs and vinyl](#), [merch](#), [downloads](#), [streaming](#), [sync licensing](#), [publishing royalties](#), SoundExchange royalties, etc.).

Since YouTube monetization is included with CD Baby distribution, why not set yourself up to collect what’s yours and be ready for when a song or album catches on? Some CD Baby artists are earning tens of thousands every quarter from YouTube alone.

The Various Avenues for Driving Revenue from YouTube Activity

1.) Collecting ad revenue through Content ID

Let's be honest: most people on YouTube are not paying to legally license the music they use in their videos. That's where Content ID comes in!

Through [CD Baby's YouTube Monetization Program](#), we'll make sure YouTube takes an audio fingerprint of your songs using their [Content ID system](#), and properly identifies every instance of your music across all of YouTube – not just official music videos you've uploaded to your own channel, but also videos uploaded by other people (known as user-generated content, or “UGC”).

When they find **ANY** instance of your music on their free platform, YouTube will serve up advertisements on those videos. Any time advertising revenue is generated from an ad placed on a video containing your music, you earn a share.

Granted, payment from a single ad click or ad view won't be much to shout about, but in the modern music industry what your fans do (and want to do) with your music has real value. Cumulatively, ad revenue through Content ID can add up, especially when you consider that these earnings are possible in perpetuity.

Rather than the one big moment, it's about volume over time.

Want to know more about how and when ads are selected for display on your videos? Check out [“How Monetization Works on YouTube.”](#)

What's the deal with “includes copyrighted content” warnings?

If you see an “includes copyrighted content” notice on a video you've uploaded to your own channel, that means YouTube's Content ID system has identified some element within the video (the song, the recording, or the video) that is being monetized by someone else. If you're monetizing your music on YouTube through CD Baby, you will see these warnings on your own videos – which can be a bit confusing at first – because CD Baby is claiming the right to collect ad revenue on your behalf. In this case, you know that Content ID is working properly since YouTube has identified CD Baby as the authorized party administering your rights.

How can you generate more advertising revenue on YouTube? Try a few of these techniques to encourage your fans to create video content using your music:

- **Make sure your fans know they can use your songs** for their wedding videos, family reunion videos, company or school projects, vacation slideshows, etc. **BUT** it's also important to educate your fans about this process. If they **DO** use your music, they will see an "includes copyrighted content" warning on the related video. If that person files a dispute, no one will be getting paid ad revenue until the issue is settled. So make sure they know to just leave things be when they see a copyright notice.
- **Host a video contest and ask your fans to create music videos.** It doesn't have to be a big-budget production: It could be footage of a dance party, a stop-motion animation, a bunch of kids lip-syncing, or a lyric video.
- **Create and upload videos for ALL your songs** (even if they're just simple [album art videos](#) — what YouTube calls "Art Tracks").
- **Sign up your entire back catalog** for [CD Baby's YouTube Monetization Program](#), because you never know which of your songs might be perfect for a content producer's needs. Even your oldest songs can keep working for you long-term.

2.) YouTube Music

YouTube has two subscription streaming offerings. The first is YouTube Premium, which grants ad-free access to YouTube and YouTube Music content, plus YouTube Originals.

The second is YouTube Music, where subscribers can watch videos and listen to music ad-free and offline, including full albums in high-quality audio.

As a CD Baby client, if you're distributing your music to streaming services such as Apple Music and Spotify, we will deliver your music to YouTube as well. This means you will automatically have "Art Tracks" on YouTube for all your songs. (Art Tracks are videos that contain your song's audio along with your cover art image).

Art Track videos are available NOT ONLY to YouTube Music subscribers, but also as ad-supported content accessible to EVERYONE on YouTube.

3.) Publishing Revenue

If you're a songwriter, you're owed additional publishing royalties whenever your music is streamed on YouTube. To collect these royalties, sign up with a publisher or publishing rights administrator such as [CD Baby Pro Publishing](#).

4.) Elbow Grease

There are, of course, plenty of other ways to use YouTube to earn money.

These include:

- Harnessing the power of your fan community through a service such as Patreon.

- Using YouTube Cards, End Screens, calls-to-action, and video descriptions to drive external sales or crowdfunding.
- And the most obvious of them all: crossing your fingers and hoping that exposure/activity/promotion means that if people enjoy your music and videos on YouTube, they'll be more likely to buy an album, sign up for your mailing list, or attend one of your concerts down the line.

The Importance of Watch Time

Musicians really like to focus on view count. It's the metric they think matters most. **BUT...** there's something even more important than view count when it comes to YouTube's algorithm, which determines what videos get recommended to users: watch time!

Having 1000 views on a video where each viewer on average watched four minutes is going to look a lot better to YouTube than having 10k views where the average viewer bounced after 30 seconds. The first of those two videos will have a great chance of organically reaching beyond your existing audience.

This speaks to the importance of creating quality videos that engage your viewers **THE WHOLE TIME.**

Why You Should Be Scheduling Your Youtube Videos (and How To Do It)

Creative people – especially musicians – don't always work well with deadlines. You might go for months without posting anything to YouTube, then inspiration strikes and you film three new videos in a single week. Of course you're itching to post them all in rapid succession, but it's probably smarter to hold back and put together a more deliberate plan.

Many of the biggest YouTube stars talk about the importance of posting new videos on a set schedule, even if it's only once a month. While many artists don't aim to use the platform in the same way that "YouTubers" do, there's still a lot to learn from the strategies of popular YouTube personalities.

Why is it important to post YouTube videos according to a schedule?

Subscribers are alerted every time you upload a video, drawing them back to your page to watch new and old content. So why not just publish videos whenever they're ready to go? What's the benefit of sticking to a schedule?

1.) You don't overwhelm your subscribers

A new video needs time to announce itself to the world (through YouTube subscriber notifications, your email newsletter, social media updates, etc.). It takes time for your video to be noticed, watched, and shared.

If you post two or more videos around the same time, you're basically cannibalizing the reach and impact of your own content, diluting the power that any individual video might've otherwise possessed.

So, for instance, rather than publishing all your Art Track videos off your latest album at once, schedule them out over the course of a few weeks or months. Give each video (and song) its moment to shine.

2.) You create anticipation

Popular YouTubers often talk about the anticipation their subscribers feel leading up to the posting of a new video. It's much easier to build that anticipation when your fans know **WHEN** they should be expecting something.

Again, it doesn't need to be every week. It could be every third Thursday of the month, or something along those lines – but setting the expectation goes a long way towards drawing your fans towards your new videos once they're online.

3.) You set a challenge for yourself

Need to light a creative fire and boost your video output? Set a YouTube schedule and promise your subscribers you'll deliver!

Remember: not every video has to be a big-budget production. Your schedule can consist of – and account for – different types of content, including high-production videos, lyric videos, Art Tracks, vlogs, and more (each format requiring a different amount of time to shoot and edit).

4.) You'll boost your ranking in YouTube search

According to an article by 3PlayMedia:

“Newly published videos get an SEO boost during the first week they're published on YouTube, so publishing regularly ensures you'll always have a video higher up in SERPs. Regular views and repeated visits to your channel signal to YouTube that your content is valuable, and therefore deserved higher search rank.”

How to Create Your YouTube Schedule

Well, first, be realistic. Do you have a day job? Are you on tour 11 months out of the year? You're probably not going to be able to pump out a video three times a week.

Factor in the time it takes you to adequately shoot, edit, share, and promote each video. Now figure how that time investment works with all your other responsibilities in life. Strike a balance so your YouTube goals are achievable. Otherwise you'll get burned out.

As for the frequency of posting, set a baseline goal of once a month – which should be easy enough to do if you include Art Tracks, snippets of live shows, etc. If you have the time, talent, or resources to publish videos more often, good for you. You totally should. Try twice a month and see how that goes. Adjust accordingly.

Next, figure out when your fans are most likely to interact with your videos; is it Thursday at 2pm? Probably. [Check out this chart](#) with the best days and times to post new videos to YouTube.

Also think about days when you consistently have free hours – because we all know that once you publish a video on YouTube it's followed up with more time on social media and email, sharing and promoting. Don't publish a video on a day when you're running from obligation to obligation.

Consider using a tool like Hootsuite (or some similar app) to schedule social media posts and manage responses. This type of tool will also give you further insight into when your audience is most engaged, and you can adjust your content schedule accordingly.

Okay, so you've got your schedule worked out. Now: what kinds of videos are you going to produce?

12 Kinds of Videos to Promote Your Music

You don't need to have a giant budget or be as visually brilliant as Michel Gondry to make compelling videos. Affordable video and editing technology now allows DIY artists to get really creative when it comes to making content for YouTube.

Here are 12 different approaches you can explore:

1. THE STANDARD MUSIC VIDEO

Ya know, like Michael Jackson's "Thriller." This would be anything staged, with props, costumes, scripts, extras, and synced to the studio recording of the track.

2. LIVE CONCERT FOOTAGE

Just like it sounds: a video of you playing a single song live, or one that splices together multiple performances from a concert or tour. It could be shot on film like *The Last Waltz* or captured with your iPhone.

3. TAKEAWAY SHOW

A kind of guerrilla-style music video, named for the Take-Away Shows shot by Vincent Moon for [La Blogothèque](#). Think of it like field recording. Your band goes to a strange location outside of your normal rehearsal space, stage, or recording studio setup; you perform for the camera, for the passersby, for whomever. And the intention is generally to capture the whole performance in one uninterrupted take.

4. INTERVIEWS

People love to hear about the inspiration for songs, the meaning behind lyrics, the band chemistry, the drama, the highs...so give it to 'em. Get someone you know to

interview you, or interview yourself (ala David Byrne or Cee-lo Green)!

5. MINI-DOCUMENTARY

Document the story of your band. Not much of a story to tell yet? Then make it a very short mini-documentary. People don't have the attention span for much more these days anyway.

6. VIDEO PRESS KIT

A quick (1-5 minute) movie that sells the story of your band, your latest album, your latest achievement, or an upcoming tour. You want to include any information that would be vital for a music journalist to know before they cover you in their paper, magazine, or blog.

7. BEHIND THE SCENES

We all love to get a glimpse inside the creative process. Keep your fans invested by showing them behind-the-scenes snippets of you writing, recording, putting up posters, fixing your gear, eating at your favorite taco cart, or practicing. These can be very short and very informal. Frequency can be more important than slickness with this approach.

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8. PUT YOUR SONGS ON YOUTUBE WITH A SLIDESHOW

Add a slideshow of photos to your studio recordings and post them so fans can “listen” to your songs on YouTube. No time to make a fancy slideshow? Just add the album cover, band name, album name, song title, and your web-site address.

9. ENCOURAGE FANS TO RECORD COVERS OF YOUR SONGS

Why not? It worked for Steve Winwood! Maybe the next Justin Bieber will perform your song in his living room for millions of tweens.

10. ANIMATION TOOLS

There are a number of easy animation tools online you can use for free. Use one of these tools to make a quirky advertisement for your CD release party.

11. STOCK/ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

Check out public domain video clips or archival footage in libraries like the National Archives. If you have video editing abilities, this is a great option when you want to create a video quickly and cheaply.

12. VIDEO SONGS

Video songs, popularized by Pomplamoose, are music videos that show actual footage of the song’s recording as if it were a unified performance. You hear the finished song, but all of the visuals are of individual tracks being recorded, then edited together at a fast pace to keep things interesting.

6 Tips for Making a No-Budget Music Video

If you’re like most DIY musicians, there’s probably not a whole lot of extra cash left in the band’s bank account after shelling out for recording, mixing, mastering, duplication, registering your copyrights, and distribution. But you still have to promote your new record, right?

These days a music video is practically required in order to properly promote an album. And while yes, you could spend thousands or even tens of thousands of dollars shooting a music video, why would you? Especially when you’re at a place in your music career where every dollar counts.

On the following page are a few quick-and-dirty production tips that might come in handy when you’re brainstorming ideas for your next low-or-no-budget music video.

6 Tips for Making a No-Budget Music Video

1. GET YOUR FRIENDS INVOLVED

If you have friends with videography or editing skills, enlist them! But even if you don't have a friend with film equipment or experience, you probably have a smartphone and a friend who knows how to press that red record button, right? Maybe you can get a few friends to bring their smartphones, giving you multiple camera angles to cut between when you edit.

Also, if you need actors or extras who'll work for free, call your friends. If you need a crowd, put out the call via social media or your email newsletter. Or you could even hold a kind of contest for your fans to appear in one of your videos.

2. PLAN TO WORK QUICKLY

Here's the thing about relying on free/cheap help: you want to be **VERY** respectful of everyone's time.

A friend might love to hang out for a few hours on a Saturday afternoon, drink some beer, and do a dozen takes or so, but if the shoot drags on too long or if you have to call people back on a separate day, it might start to feel like you're taking advantage of their time. So don't.

Whatever concept you come up with for your video, make sure it can be shot quickly, preferably in 4-6 hours on a single day (including set-up and breakdown).

3. SHOOT IN ONE LOCATION, AND MAKE IT COUNT

You might have a dozen elaborate sets in mind, along with a climactic helicopter shot of you at the top of the Eiffel Tower. But yeah, that's not gonna happen.

You have a lot to worry about already, especially if you're going to be the main person on camera. Make the production as simple as possible for yourself, for the person worried about lighting and focus, and for anyone else who shows up to help.

Location, location, location! Find an interesting spot (consider places in your local region that might have a ton of character), get everyone together, and put all your energy towards making the thing happen – not driving around, co-ordinating arrivals, etc.

If you're shooting outside, be aware of the changes in natural lighting.

Also, don't be afraid to ask for access to locations that might seem out of reach: a monument, museum, etc. You might be surprised by how excited some facility manager or program director gets about the prospect of an artist shooting a video at their location.

4. COME UP WITH ONE INTERESTING VISUAL ELEMENT THAT CAN CARRY THE WHOLE VIDEO

You might not have a lot of time to alter the environment, add a bunch of props, or use special effects, so it helps to rely on one visual motif that won't get dull even if it has to be repeated a bunch of times.

For instance, in [Chris Robley's video for his song "Anonymous,"](#) he defies gravity, rising up out of a swimming pool again and again while lip-syncing the song. To do this, he needed to memorize his song backwards and shoot everything in reverse.

Maybe for you the visual motif is dancing. or slowly setting your face

painted, or wearing a ridiculous costume. The idea is to find one thing that works and center the video around that concept. Without this kind of thematic through-line, you might find yourself grasping at straws on the day of the shoot.

5. KEEP THE PRESSURE ON YOURSELF

Both the marvelous and frustrating part of doing things yourself is that you have to follow through because the entire burden is on YOU. Volunteers might disappoint you or they might deliver, but that's a big gamble when you only have a few hours to make a video.

Unless you're sure the other people involved in the production are really committed and willing to put in dozens of hours, it's probably a good idea to handle the heavy-lifting yourself in terms of acting, stunts, or anything else that requires a lot of preparation.

Which brings us to...

6. PREPARE

If your band members are going to [choreograph a dance routine involving treadmills](#) for your video, well, you better practice, practice, practice. Need a couple dozen stuffed cats for your set? Start gathering those furballs early. The shoot will be a disaster if you aren't prepared to execute the concept.

This upfront work might be tedious, but ultimately you'll show up to the shoot ready to go. When everyone is prepared, you can really focus your energy and get the best out of everyone involved.

Bonus Tips

Be ready to edit the video yourself. Even if you have someone lined up to edit the video, be prepared to edit the footage yourself. You never know when other commitments will push your project to the back of the line. Of course, that means you'll need iMovie, FCPX, or some other consumer editing program. But it's probably a good idea to familiarize yourself with video editing anyway.

Discuss everyone's involvement beforehand. Things can change along the way, of course, but it's a good idea to iron out everyone's responsibilities ahead of time: who's editing, who's bringing snacks, who's in charge of wardrobe, etc.

Take stills during the shoot to share on social media. Capture some extra footage for a behind-the-scenes video. And when the final video is ready, do all the usual things: email your fans, promote on social, tease it on Instagram, and mention it at shows. For extra points, do a blog premiere or host a live-premiere event.

Conclusion

YouTube is one of the most powerful outlets for promoting music. It can also be a fantastic platform to show your personality and creativity, limited only by the time, skill, and energy you put into it. Hopefully this guide gives you a good foundation to build upon.

Happy video-making!

[Sign up for CD Baby's YouTube monetization program today.](#)