

Absolutely. Here is a practical guide designed to encourage someone to **start making music, keep developing, and gradually find their own creative voice**. I've included free and accessible resources, as well as options for developing skills and connecting with other musicians.

A Practical Guide to Your Creative Journey in Music

Making music is not about having all the right equipment, knowing music theory, or producing a perfect song on your first attempt. It is about **having ideas, experimenting, learning, and finishing things**.

The most important step is simply to begin.

1. Start with the music you already love

Before buying equipment or downloading lots of software, spend some time listening.

Choose 5–10 songs that really inspire you and ask:

- What do I like about this song?
- What makes the rhythm interesting?
- What instruments or sounds can I hear?
- How does the song develop from beginning to end?
- What is happening in the verses, chorus, bridge or instrumental sections?
- What emotion does the music create?
- Is it the lyrics, melody, beat, sound, performance—or a combination?

This isn't about copying someone else's music. It's about **learning how music works by listening carefully**.

BBC Introducing's beginner guidance also recommends studying music you enjoy and experimenting with chord progressions and melodies as part of developing songwriting skills.

2. Don't wait for the perfect equipment

You can begin with remarkably little.

A simple starting setup

Option A – Almost completely free

- Phone or computer
- Headphones
- Free music-making software
- Your voice
- Whatever instrument you already have

Option B – Basic home setup

- Computer
- Headphones
- USB microphone
- Small MIDI keyboard
- Digital Audio Workstation (DAW)

You don't need a professional studio to make your first song.

A great free starting point

BandLab provides a free, cloud-based DAW that works in a browser or on a phone. You can record vocals, use virtual instruments, import audio/MIDI and build songs using multiple tracks.

Its beginner guide covers making beats, recording vocals and getting started with songwriting.

3. Learn the four basic building blocks

You don't need to learn everything at once.

Concentrate initially on four areas:

Rhythm

Learn about:

- Beats
- Tempo/BPM
- Drum patterns
- Groove
- Timing

Try creating a simple drum pattern and then playing something over it.

Melody

A melody is the part you might hum or sing.

Experiment with:

- Short musical phrases
- Repeating ideas
- Call and response
- Changing the final note
- Singing melodies before worrying about lyrics

Chords and harmony

Start with a few simple chords.

You don't need advanced music theory. Learn a handful of chords and experiment with how they sound together.

Song structure

Start recognising structures such as:

Intro → Verse → Chorus → Verse → Chorus → Bridge → Chorus → Outro

But don't feel obliged to follow that formula. Structure is a tool, not a rule.

Ableton Learning Music is particularly useful here. It lets you experiment with beats, melodies, basslines, harmony and song structure directly in your browser.

4. Make lots of small pieces

One of the biggest mistakes beginners make is thinking:

“I need to write a complete song.”

Instead, try making **musical sketches**.

For example:

- 30-second drum beat
- 8-bar chord progression
- Vocal melody
- Bassline
- Interesting sound
- Chorus idea
- Guitar riff
- Lyric idea
- Atmospheric intro

Create something small and save it.

You might call them:

- Idea 001
- Idea 002
- Summer Riff
- Dark Beat
- Chorus Idea

- [Guitar 7](#)

After a few weeks, you'll have a collection of ideas that can be developed into complete songs.

5. Keep a creative notebook

Have somewhere to capture ideas immediately.

It could be:

- Notebook
- Phone notes
- Voice recordings
- DAW project folder
- Cloud storage

Write down things such as:

Lyrics

"I remember the night..."

Song titles

"Last Train Home"

Sounds

"Rain against the window + distant traffic"

Ideas

"Slow verse, huge chorus."

Don't judge the ideas when you write them down.

Capture first. Edit later.

6. Develop a regular creative habit

You don't need to spend three hours every day making music.

Try:

20-minute creative sessions

5 minutes: Listen to something inspiring.

10 minutes: Make something.

5 minutes: Save it and write down what you learned.

Do this several times a week.

The goal isn't to produce a masterpiece every session.

The goal is to **keep the creative muscle active**.

7. Learn by finishing songs

Finishing is a skill.

Your first songs may not be very good—and that's completely normal.

Finish them anyway.

A useful progression might be:

Song 1

Just get something recorded.

Song 2

Try a proper structure.

Song 3

Concentrate on melody.

Song 4

Concentrate on lyrics.

Song 5

Experiment with production.

Song 6

Try recording vocals.

Song 7

Try collaborating.

After 10 songs, go back and listen to Song 1.

You may be surprised how much you've improved.

8. Learn music production gradually

Once you're comfortable making basic songs, start learning about:

- Recording
- Editing
- EQ
- Compression
- Reverb
- Delay
- Panning
- Automation
- Sampling
- Synthesis
- Mixing
- Mastering

Don't try to learn all of these simultaneously.

Pick **one subject each week**.

For example:

Week 1: EQ

Week 2: Compression

Week 3: Reverb

Week 4: Mixing vocals

Ableton's free learning resources cover music production, synthesis and songwriting fundamentals, while its classroom projects provide practical exercises involving composition, recording and sound design.

9. Experiment with sounds around you

Music doesn't have to come entirely from traditional instruments.

Record:

- Doors
- Footsteps
- Rain
- Traffic
- Birds
- Machinery
- Household objects
- Voices
- Clapping
- Your surroundings

Then manipulate the recordings.

You can turn a sound into:

- Percussion
- Bass
- Texture
- Rhythm
- Atmosphere
- Musical samples

Ableton has a particularly useful project on creating music from everyday sounds, taking you through field recording, sound design and composition.

10. Collaborate

Music becomes much more interesting when other people become involved.

Try working with:

- Singers
- Guitarists
- Drummers
- Producers
- Songwriters
- Rappers
- DJs
- Visual artists
- Filmmakers

You don't need to know them personally at first.

Online communities can help you find collaborators, but local relationships are valuable too.

The **Scottish Music Industry Association (SMIA)** provides free membership and connects people across Scotland's music industry, including musicians, producers, songwriters, engineers and other music professionals.

Scottish Music Industry Association

11. Share your work before you think it's perfect

You can share:

- A demo
- A 30-second idea
- A live performance
- A finished song
- A remix
- An instrumental
- A work in progress

Feedback can be uncomfortable, but it can also accelerate learning.

When asking for feedback, ask specific questions:

“Does the chorus feel too long?”

rather than:

“Is my song any good?”

Specific questions produce much more useful feedback.

12. Build your own creative identity

Eventually, start asking:

What makes my music mine?

It could be:

- Your voice
- Your lyrics
- Your melodies
- Your choice of sounds
- Your production style
- Your cultural influences
- Your subject matter
- Your unusual approach to songwriting

Don't worry about finding your “sound” immediately.

Your sound usually develops naturally from **the things you repeatedly choose to do**.

13. Don't compare your beginning with somebody else's middle

It's very easy to look at an established musician and think:

“I'll never be able to do that.”

Remember that you're seeing the finished product.

You don't see:

- Their first terrible recordings
- Their unfinished songs
- Their mistakes
- Their abandoned projects
- Their years of practice

Instead, compare **your current work with your own earlier work**.

That's a much more useful measure of progress.

14. Protect your creative energy

Not every session needs to be productive.

Sometimes you should:

- Listen to music
- Go for a walk
- See a live performance
- Watch a film
- Read
- Photograph things
- Travel somewhere new

- Have a conversation
- Do absolutely nothing

Creative ideas often come from experiences outside music.

15. Start building a small portfolio

Once you've created several pieces, keep your best work organised.

Create folders such as:

Music

- Ideas
- Demos
- Finished Songs
- Instrumentals
- Collaborations
- Artwork
- Lyrics
- Releases

Keep backups.

It's surprisingly valuable to be able to look back six months later and see your progress.

A simple 12-week creative journey