

FINDING MELODIC INSPIRATION

"You are your own sound."
—Armin van Buuren

SUBCHAPTERS

- Find Inspiration Organically
- If It Sounds Good, It Is Good
- Listen for Chords That Move You
- Let Rhythm Inspire You
- Sing Your Way to Catchy Hooks: "You Are"
- Use Friends to Test Your Ideas
- Overcoming Writer's Block

CHAPTER REVIEW

Armin's songwriting process usually begins with the music rather than the beats. But he emphasizes there's no one way to be musically creative. These are some of the different strategies he uses to find inspiration:

- Take a song you love, break it down, and find new uses for its basic parts. Armin demonstrates how a portion of Erik Satie's "Gymnopédie No. 1" can be broken down into two simple chords. These chords can be played different ways and can inspire new chord progressions and melodies.
- While Armin believes it is helpful to have a basic understanding of music theory, he suggests you experiment with chords that are musically incorrect. Something about unconventional sounds could inspire you. Play with wrong-sounding chords—record them, reverse them, add effects—until you find something that sounds right to you.
- Grab an exciting a cappella track and try to write new chords, melodies, and rhythm tracks that fit around it.
- Scroll through your DAW's library of loops and presets and try out different sonic combinations until something strikes your ear as interesting.

Inspiration can come from many different sources, but sometimes you can't escape writer's block. Don't be discouraged.

LEARN MORE

- Listen to the original, extended, and piano versions of "[I Live For That Energy](#)."
- Listen to the "[You Are](#) (Extended Mix)."
- Listen to Erik Satie's "[Gymnopédie No. 1](#)." You can look at the sheet music [here](#).
- Armin says working with a collaborator can bring new creativity into your process. Learn about Armin's frequent coproducer, [Benno de Goeij](#)—later you'll get to see them working together on a brand new track.

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ASSIGNMENT

- Armin shares a number of techniques he uses to get creative in and out of the studio. What have you found works best for you? Share your personal creativity tips in [The Hub](#).