

BUILDING A SET: EDITS AND MASHUPS

“[In] my entire DJ career, every track that I’ve used or played first I’ve put into the right key and BPM.”

—Armin van Buuren

SUBCHAPTERS

- Starting Your Setlist
- Editing Tracks for the Stage
- Making Mashups

CHAPTER REVIEW

Performing a great DJ set takes careful planning and editing. Armin doesn’t pre-program every song in his set, but he does put in a lot of work at home that enables him to be more creative on stage. He makes an edit to every track he is considering for his set to ensure he can keep the attention of the audience while introducing them to new music. Armin demonstrates how to quickly edit a track by cutting down the intro of Beatsole’s “Before I Wake.”

When it comes to making mashups, Armin surveys the songs he knows he wants to play for a specific set and looks for songs in the same key. He considers what his favorite parts of each track are, and how they might merge effectively. He pulls them into Ableton, makes sure each track is on the grid, and starts making edits. He finds the best way to piece the tracks together, then adds samples, drum fills, and effects to smooth out the rough transitions.

Making mashups like these can help you to create exciting and unique sets that will set you apart from other DJs.

LEARN MORE

- Armin uses the [Mixed In Key](#) harmonic mixing software to identify the key and BPM of his selected tracks before starting to create a mashup.
- Armin demonstrates a quick way to edit tracks using Beatsole’s “Before I Wake.” Listen to the track [here](#).
- Armin’s mashup demonstration consisted of these tracks:
 - “The Creator” by KhoMha
 - “Flashlight” by Armin van Buuren and Ørjan Nilsen
 - “You Are” (a cappella) by Armin van Buuren and Sunnery James & Ryan Marciano

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ASSIGNMENT

- What are the tracks you love to dance to? Create a shortlist of tracks you would play in an upcoming DJ set. Take note of their keys and tempos. Select 2–3 songs that would sound good edited together and pull them into your DAW to create your own mashup. Remember to make sure each track is on the grid and at a volume that is loud enough without distorting. Share your mashups with your peers in [The Hub](#).