

PERFORMANCE TIPS

“People on the dance floor are there to have a good time.”

—Armin van Buuren

SUBCHAPTERS

- Connect With Your Audience
- Reading the Room
- Using the Microphone
- Know How to Seduce the Crowd
- The “One On, One Off” Rule
- Mind Your DJ Manners
- Be Ready for Anything
- Bring Exclusives and Rarities
- The Dance Floor Always Comes First
- If You Have Fun, They’ll Have Fun

CHAPTER REVIEW

Even after years of being the world’s number one DJ, Armin still gets nervous before sets. From the moment he enters a venue, his mind is on how many fans are there, whether there is a line outside, if there have been any technical issues, if the promoter is happy, etc. Armin reminds you that while you may have all of these thoughts too, your job is still to entertain the audience.

Armin shares some of his tips for delivering engaging performances:

- Don’t just look at the front row of fans—they’re usually the ones having the most fun. Challenge yourself to read the room and make eye contact with the back row and the people along the sides. These are the attendees who might be unsure of who you are or of the music you’re choosing to play. If you can make them dance, then you’re probably doing a good job.
- If someone needs to shout at the bartender to order a drink, you’re probably playing too loud.
- How much you talk between tracks is up to you, but don’t be afraid to let people know who you are and how much fun you’re having.
- If you’re playing for a mainstream audience, and not deep dance music fans, then follow Armin’s “one on, one off” rule. Play a classic, a Top 40 hit, or a recognizable mashup, and then play something unknown. Eventually, you can experiment and see how many unknown tracks you can get away with.
- Armin keeps an “if all else fails” folder handy full of fan favorites. If fans are asking for one of them, he tries to deliver.
- When playing in a lineup with other DJs, be a professional. Spend a little time researching who you’re sharing the night with and:
 - Don’t play tracks from the DJ before or after you.
 - Don’t play tracks from that DJ’s label.
 - Don’t play the next DJ’s big track as your last track.
 - Don’t go over your time.

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LEARN MORE

- Armin suggests studying the setlists of your peers and other DJs you love. You can begin by reviewing a number of Armin's setlists [here](#).
- Performing in loud environments can hurt your hearing over time. Learn about how hearing loss occurs and what you can do to protect yourself [here](#).

ASSIGNMENTS

- Do your homework. Look at what other DJs are playing and be inspired to adapt similar tracks to your setlist. Share your favorite websites, blogs, or other publications for finding artist setlists with your peers in [The Hub](#).
- Looking back at your short list of possible tracks from Chapter 26, make sure you have included classics and Top 40 tracks so that you can use them to practice the “one on, one off” rule.
- Compile tracks for your own “if all else fails” folder.