

## The art of making the perfect mixed CD

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**Photo by Rachel Campbell.**

With the increased popularity of services like [Spotify](#) , [Pandora](#) and good ol' [iTunes](#) , many people often forget about the joy that CDs used to bring them. Try mixing it up - no pun intended - for a change! Buy some blank CDs and sharpies, raid the deepest, darkest corners of your music collection and surprise your friends or significant other with a one of a kind gift that only you can provide.

**DETERMINE YOUR AUDIENCE.** Ask yourself who will be listening to your wonderful creation. Is it a “Flashback Mix” for a friend? A list of “Songs with Love in Them: Literally and Lyrically” for a crush? A “Road Warrior” mix for that summer away from home? A “Show Preview” for the concert you’re en route to? Or maybe a “Pump Up” playlist to get you in the zone before a night of partying or a workout session? Whatever the case, you need to set the theme before you dig in and start picking songs. Failure to do so will result in a sporadic song selection or the inability to narrow it down.

**KEEP IT SHORT** in terms of song length. The shorter the songs, the more you can fit. Keep those 5 minutes songs out of it unless it’s really significant to relaying the message of your mix.

**IF IT’S NOT HARD, THEN YOU’RE DOING IT WRONG.** The best mixes are the ones that won’t fit on a CD. If you continuously receive an error message from iTunes stating that “the songs in this playlist will not fit on one Audio CD” and asking if you “want to create multiple Audio CDs with this playlist split across them,” then you’re on track to becoming a fantastic mix maker. These speed bumps in your creative process just show that you’re dedicated to making a mix that truly means something.

**ACTUALLY MIX IT UP.** Unless it’s part of your theme, you should probably avoid repeating an artist. Give the recipient a real feel for your taste in music by varying it up as much as possible with a bunch of songs from a bunch of bands.

**GO ALL THE WAY.** Once there’s music on it, then it’s no longer a blank CD therefore the actual CD should reflect this. You could get all technologically advanced and create one on your computer and print it out on a label, but where’s the fun in that? Keep it as old school as your CD and use some sharpies to decorate the surface of your disc. It could be as simple as writing the title with some fancy lettering or as crazy as some sketches to reflect what the listener is about to hear.