



THE MAKEOVER

✧ PRO ENGINEER AND PRODUCER TREV CURWEN COMES UP WITH SOME MAKEOVER SUGGESTIONS FOR STEVE'S BEDROOM SET-UP...

CHANGES



Steve has a tight budget, so all of Trev's makeover suggestions shouldn't cost him too much money...

TO SELL

Nothing!

TOTAL: £0

TO BUY

IKEA Stefano swivel chair (£35)
Set of 4 castors (£2)
Shelf verticals and brackets (c£50)
Three 7/8-inch MDF shelves (c£30)
Neoprene rubber mats to put under speakers (£27.35)
Sanyo TRC525M (£18) or Olympus S701 (£20) voice recorder from Argos

TOTAL: £162.35

STEVE IS VERY enthusiastic about making his music which is great to see but like so many others he is hampered by lack of space. The ideal situation is, of course, to have a room dedicated to the studio but for many the corner of the living room or bedroom has to suffice.

In Steve's case the situation is especially extreme as he even doesn't have a chair to sit on while working and has to make do with the edge of the bed. You have to admire a man who can do that! It has been said by many, including at least one well known US producer, that the most important item of equipment in the studio is a comfortable chair, and I'd be inclined to agree.

Buying a chair

In the long term it would make sense for Steve to move his studio into the loft, but for the present the goal is to rearrange the bedroom and make way for a decent chair.

Looking at the layout of Steve's bedroom the reason that his studio working position is cramped is because the bed is in the centre of the room, leaving enough room for someone to get in and out on either side. Moving the bed permanently against the wardrobes is not a viable option, but my proposal is to put some smooth running castors under the bed legs so it can be easily pushed out of the way when Steve wants to make some music. This would leave space for a wheeled office chair which could be pushed under the workspace desktop and pulled out when needed. The cheapest options are probably the IKEA Love or Stefano options, both at £35.

Rearranging the room

The workspace could also be a bit better organised; it's a bit busy and cluttered at the moment. I'd be inclined to move everything up a bit by getting rid of all those smaller shelves and building a series of larger shelves that can span the whole length of the room (a good excuse for getting rid of that wallpaper at the same time!).

This doesn't have to be a difficult job... I would use one of those systems where you fix those vertical slotted bars



BEFORE

Steve would get better use of his gear with a few layout changes

to the wall and slot the shelf supports into them. That way it's easy to move the shelves around as needed and there is always a gap between shelf and wall to run wires up. I use this system in my own studio using 7/8-inch MDF for the shelves (any decent timber supplier will cut shelves to a specified size from a sheet of MDF), with the vertical supports about 18-inch apart.

Not only can this support a lot of weight, but it's also great for keeping stuff off the floor and out of harm's way... very useful with Steve's young children. The other great thing about it is that you can dismantle it and take it with you when you move.

Steve's existing computer desk with sliding shelf for the computer keyboard could stay, but a shelf just above the level of the rack unit running the length of the whole room would be at just the right height to take the JBL speakers and computer monitor.

The turntable and other stuff under the desk could go onto a higher shelf, freeing up some space for Steve to fit in a chair and get his legs under the desk. The Korg M1 could also go on a higher shelf as presumably it's only being used for sounds rather than its keyboard (the DJX appears to do that task).

Soundproofing

One other thing Steve did ask us for advice about when we were at his studio, was soundproofing in order to minimise the bass frequencies. How-

ever, I would say that he just has to live with it. There is really no way to counter that in a house of that type (a modern-ish semi-detached), although isolating the speakers from the surface they are sitting on by using neoprene rubber mats could help to reduce the transmission of sound into the surface and onwards.

You can get hold of a set of acoustic mats at somewhere like QuietPC (the AcoustiPak costs £21) although it's worth you chasing some independent soundproofing and rubber companies as you can often buy smallish neoprene offcuts (you won't need them to be much bigger than the area of the speaker base) for small change.

I spoke to Custom Audio Designs (0870 747 5432, www.customaudio.com) who do neoprene blend mats at 5mm and 10mm. The 5mm costs £27.35 per square metre. Sound Service (01993 704981, www.soundservice.co.uk) do a 10mm rubber (not neoprene) mat at £19.91 per square metre, that you have to cut to size.

Moving into the loft

The whole idea of moving the studio to the loft is a workable one but Steve would have to find out if he could realistically convert it. It looks like there are service pipes and other stuff up there that would need access to on occasion. However, this kind of thing can always be built or converted around. Loft conversions for habitation have to meet