How To EQ A Snare Drum And Compress It

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Hello there! Now I'll show you how to eq a snare.

I'll show you some of the exact VSTs I use but any plugin will do. Even the **stock plugins** will work fine! The trick is to understand what you need to do and use your gear – analog or digital – at its best.

Let's start then!

Snare Tracks – Top and Bottom

We mostly use **2 microphones** on the snare drum. The **bottom** mic and **top** mic.

The top mic gives you the **body** or **fatness** of the drum and the bottom mic adds some **brightness** to the drum.

Top Snare – EQ

I start with a **high pass filter** at around **70Hz** to **80Hz**.

Then I use a **low pass filter** at around **12Khz**.

If you snare rings too much then try some **notch filtering** (cutting with really narrow Q) from **280Hz** to **1Khz**. You may use many notch filters to remove more than 1 annoying resonances in this spectrum area.

To **remove mud** try cutting at around **200Hz** to **500Hz**.

If you snare sounds **flat/two dimensional** cut at around **500Hz** and **1Khz,** this will give a "3d sense" to your snare.

If you snare still doesn't sound **fat enough** try boosting at around **100hz** to **200hz**.

For brightness try a boost from **7Khz** to **10Khz**. Beware of the cymbal bleed.

Still can't be heard to your dense mix? Boost at around **2Khz to 5Khz**. Beware though cause these frequenices can really hurt your ear if you boost them way too much.

My EQ of choice.

Top Snare – Compression

Slow attack, **10ms** to **30ms**. Release from **50ms** to **120ms**. Ratio from **4:1** to **8:1**.

You're trying to add **punch** to your snare that's why you need to use slow attack so you can let the attack of the snare drum through.

Too much compression may bring up the hats so care about this.

Bleed Problem?

Try a **transient designer**.

I use this as a last resort and can really help you get what you need.

Bottom Snare – Compression

Really Fast Attack and **Fast Release**. Use the compressor mostly as a Limiter so the Ratio should be more than **8:1**.

As you can understand we **do not want** any **transients** or **punch** from this snare track. We want its dynamics to look like a brickwall and its main purpose is to **shape the sound of the whole snare drum** by blending it with the top snare track.

Feel free to add a **Limiter** on the back end to cut any remaining sudden transients.

By keeping it squashed to death we can manipulate it easier and prevent some sudden snare spikes to our mix.

Bottom Snare – EQ

High Pass Filter at around **100Hz**.

Boost around **5Khz** for brightness.

Since the top snare contains more mud at the low frequencies we may use the bottom snare's track to **boost** the **low end** and get away with some more fatness… **100Hz** to **200Hz** can be fine!

Bottom Snare – Limiter

On the back end use a **Limiter** to remove the really annoying and untamed transients.

Don't kill the punch though!

Blending The 2 Tracks

Now feel free to **blend these 2 tracks** and create an awesome snare sound!

When the blending stage is done **send these tracks to a group track** so you can alter the volume level with just a single fader.

Happy mixing!

UPDATE: I forgot to add that snares love **Plate** reverbs. It's always a must for a snare drum. And now you've got a full snare drum signal chain Talk to you soon!

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