

# Monitors for Mixing and Mastering – Which should I choose?

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## UPDATE 8/4/2014: [New Monitors Added in the “Perfect Price to Value Ratio” Monitors](#)

Hello my friends! In this very first post I will give you some tips on how to choose the best monitors for mixing and mastering for your home studio.

When you mix music you’ve got to be sure that you can listen to all of the frequencies with no distortion or alteration to the sound.



**The most important thing for us is to own monitors that they don’t give a unique “color” to the sound.**

You shouldn’t use your \$50 Logitech speakers with the Realtek Audio Equalizer for mixing and mastering purposes.

It might comprehend the sound when you’re listening to music but when mixing we must aim for a sound as **flat** as possible.

You should give the freedom to your listeners to adjust the bass (or mids or highs) if they wish to do so, according to their preferences.

But your job is to create the sound and the **sound must be real**. If you use monitors with drastic built-in EQ settings then you’ll end up with a fake “image” of the sound you’re mixing/producing.

For example, you may hear more bass (because of the construction of your monitors) and when you’re going to listen to your mp3 in your car, you will notice that there’s no bass at all!

**What needs to be done is that whatever you’re hearing must be the actual sound and not a “fake” sound that your monitors create. Monitors must be your friends and not your foes!**

For this reason we choose *flat* sounding monitors that they don’t color the sound.

## High Budget Monitors

Take into consideration that – *almost* always – the most expensive monitors are the ones that truly show you the “real” sound, they are honest to you and your ears, just like the [Genelecs 8040a](#) that I am using right now. This doesn’t mean that the cheaper monitors won’t help you create awesome mixes.

There are some really fantastic low priced – high quality monitors that I will show you in a minute! The reasons that I really love the [Genelecs 8040a](#) though are because of their honesty to my ears, the great bass they have for such a

small woofer and the mids are also easy to be mixed. And yeah I won't lie... Their design makes my studio prettier hehe. I will show you some fantastic monitors, cheaper that get the job done in this article below.

## What to look for in Monitors for Mixing and Mastering

No, you don't have to spend a fortune in order to create music.

Well if you have \$3.000 to spend then do it, it's not my business hehe, but still you are not obliged to pay somuch money for professional music productions, especially if you are just starting out. Just find a couple that you'll like – even if they are not “perfect” – spend some time with then and learn them.

That's the secret. To learn how your monitors are reacting. To master their “flaws”. If you learn your monitor's sound by heart then you've just created a perfect audio system for your studio.

Why did I choose the [Genelecs](#) then? Simple.

Cause they had the less flaws out of every monitor that I managed to listen to.

**It doesn't matter if your speakers cost \$3.000 or \$300 as long as you know how they perform .**

I know many people that mastered their \$400 monitors and they never asked for an upgrade. Why spend money and time on something new, since they can mix perfectly using their... “old” and “cheap” monitors?

**It's the human behind the hardware that makes the difference and not the actual hardware. Never forget this.**

If someone is telling you that you can't have a professional sound without expensive monitors chances are that he is better at impressing people rather than mixing professional sounding songs.

And, unfortunately, there are lots of these so called professionals that discourage new people to enter the “mixing world”.

Why? Because they create the false reality to the new mixing engineers – you – that you need thousands of dollars to get started while you just need an \$150 sound card, a couple of monitors, some programs and... passion.

Ok enough rant! Let me introduce you to some fantastic speakers my friends.

## Monitors with a Perfect Price to Value Ratio

Price ranges differ and options are plenty. Many famous producers say that the Yamaha NS10 are the best monitors that ever made. They say that they have the flattest soundavailable and if the mix sounds good there, then it would sound good in every possible audio system.

It's pretty hard or even impossible to find these monitors because they are discontinued. But you can get their “children” as many producers call them the famous [Yamaha HS80m](#) or the [Yamaha HS50m](#). Their main difference is that the HS80m has an 8-inch cone while the HS50m has a 5-inch cone.



Bigger cone doesn't necessarily mean that it's always the best option though.

The 8-inch cone produces way more bass and most home studio owners don't own large rooms and they have no other option than placing the speakers right next to the wall.

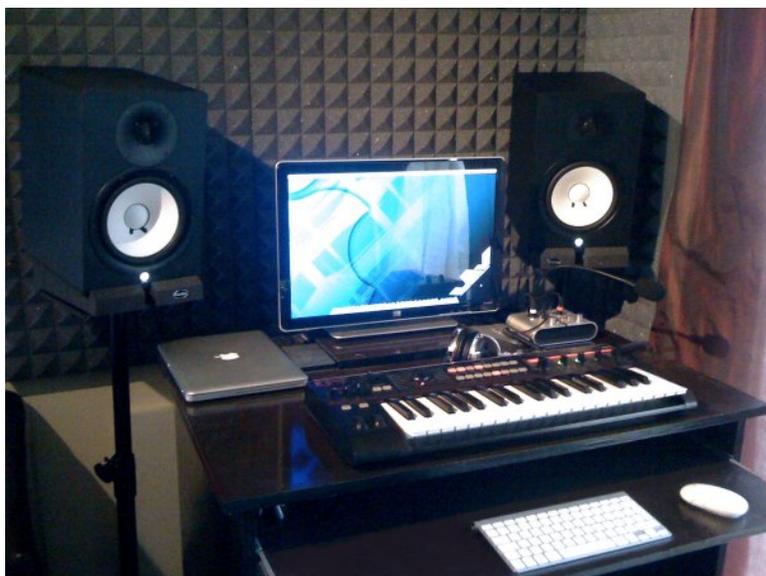
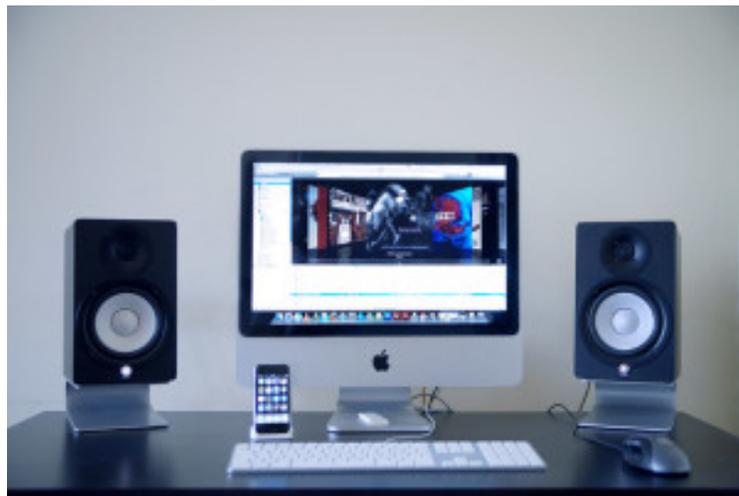
The reflections of the wall boost the bass frequencies even more and you end up creating the first problem that I talked you about above – “faking” the sound!

So, if you are going to place the speakers in a small room without a proper acoustic treatment or next to the wall, I highly recommend to aim for speakers with a **4”** or **5” cone**.

There's no need buy 8” cones cause you'll end up with less money and poorer quality. Let's not forget about the [KRK Rokit 5](#). They have more bass than the yamahas, but still, I believe they 've got more bass than needed.

They **do** boost the lower frequencies so I recommend them for people that love genres heavily relied to bass (Hip Hop, RnB, Dubstep, Electro, etc). Having said that, if you get used to this bass “flaw”, their mids and highs really rock and they translate really well on every audio system.

The [HS50m](#) are better for small rooms and for rock/metal genres. They are also good for the genres mentioned above too, but some producers need in-depth bass monitoring for Hip-Hop (etc) so they also get a sub woofer along with the HS50m.



## CRITICAL UPDATE

In this price range I would like to add the [JBL LSR305](#) monitors.

Now that I've discovered these monitors I feel that they are the clear winners in this price range.

They are the ones that sound the most balanced between the KRKs and the Yamahas. Don't go for an 8 inch cone, though. Either get the [5” JBLs](#) or the [8” Yamahas](#).

## Neither Expensive Nor Cheap Solutions

If you don't have \$3.000+ to spend for monitors but still, if you want to afford something better than the usual “low-end” options – more than \$500 less than \$1.500 budget – then there are some really great options:



- [Adam A7X](#) and [Adam A5X](#): Both are really great monitors, more expensive though, but you will need less time to get used to them.
- [Mackie HR824](#): A medium budget solution for our hip-hop fans. Still a bit “bassy” but flatter than the KRK Rokits.



## Conclusion

If you have the chance, I highly recommend to visit a music store and try them out.

Just get a favorite song of yours from a genre that you think you’ll mix the most. Listen to this song to as many monitors as possible and get whatever “feels right”.

If you can’t visit a store and you are just starting out, try to get a monitor from the \$300 range and start mixing.

Practice, practice and practice! It’s the only way to get better. Good luck!

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