

The Guitar Looper Pedal Checklist

Kalymi Loop Method Edition: plan the music first, then record the loop.

Use this as a pre-flight sheet while practising or performing. The aim is not to use every layer. The aim is to make each part clear, repeatable, and necessary.

1. BEFORE YOU PRESS RECORD

- ☐ **Know the loop length:** Know the number of bars, tempo, time signature, and where beat 1 returns.
- ☐ **Rehearse the first layer:** Play it several times without the pedal before you record.
- ☐ **Plan the record order:** Write the sequence on the Loop Chart before you start stacking parts.
- ☐ **Set your sound:** Check levels, effects, pickups, and any octave or modulation settings before recording.

2. STRUCTURE - GIVE EVERY LAYER A JOB

- ☐ **Choose only the layers the music needs:** Riff, Bass, Chord, Rhythm, and Extra are roles, not requirements.
- ☐ **Keep individual parts simple enough to repeat:** Complexity multiplies when layers are stacked.
- ☐ **Make the Riff recognizable:** It may be a riff, hook, melody, or another identity line.
- ☐ **Let Extra solve a problem:** Add colour or contrast only when the arrangement is missing something.

3. REGISTER - LEAVE MUSICAL SPACE

- ☐ **Protect the low end:** Keep Bass clear of dense low chord voicings and unnecessary sustain.
- ☐ **Thin the Chord layer when needed:** A smaller voicing can work better once Bass and Riff are present.
- ☐ **Keep Rhythm distinct:** Short, dry, muted, or percussive attacks can separate it from sustained harmony.
- ☐ **Listen for crowding:** Separate parts with register, rhythm, articulation, note length, density, tone, or dynamics.

4. HARMONY - MAKE THE ENDING CONNECT TO THE BEGINNING

- ☐ **Play the progression in a circle:** Repeat it several times without the looper and listen to the return.
- ☐ **Make the return intentional:** A tonic return, dominant return, turnaround, ostinato, modal connection, or another clear device can work.
- ☐ **Check the last event:** The final chord, note, or rest must lead convincingly back to the first.

5. TIMING - CLOSE THE SEAM

- ☐ **Internalize the beat:** Tap your foot, count, or use a drum loop or metronome before recording.
- ☐ **Close on the next beat 1:** The end of the recorded phrase must meet the beginning of the next pass cleanly.
- ☐ **Start small:** Practise short two-bar loops until the seam feels natural.
- ☐ **Redo a bad first pass:** Do not build five overdubs on top of a loop that is already the wrong length or poorly timed.

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Setup, overdubbing, performance, and quick troubleshooting.

6. AFTER THE FIRST PASS

- ☐ **Clean seam:** Does the repeat land exactly where you expected?
- ☐ **Correct length:** Did you record the intended number of bars?
- ☐ **Stable time:** Does the loop feel steady without pulling or rushing?
- ☐ **Room for the next layer:** Is there enough register and rhythmic space left to add something useful?
- ☐ **Fix problems now:** Undo or restart before the problem becomes part of the whole arrangement.

7. WHILE OVERDUBBING

- ☐ **Add one musical role at a time:** Listen to what changes when each layer enters.
- ☐ **Manage level as the loop grows:** More overdubs can make the mix feel louder and denser.
- ☐ **Leave air:** Silence and open space are part of the arrangement.
- ☐ **Use Undo/Redo deliberately:** Correct mistakes, create breakdowns, or bring layers in and out when your looper supports it.
- ☐ **Stop adding when the arrangement is complete:** A spare loop often sounds larger than an overcrowded one.

8. BUYING AND SETUP CHECKS

- ☐ **Define your use:** Practice, songwriting, live performance, or a combination.
- ☐ **Prioritize workflow:** Decide whether you need a single switch, dedicated stop/undo, multiple tracks, or tabletop control.
- ☐ **Check connections:** Mono or stereo, amplifier or P.A., external footswitches, MIDI, USB, and other connections you actually use.
- ☐ **Check storage only if it matters to you:** Saved loops, memory slots, or computer transfer can be useful, but controls and workflow are often more important.
- ☐ **Consider built-in rhythm tools:** Drum patterns or metronome functions can help practise timing.
- ☐ **Read the manual and watch real demonstrations:** Make sure the pedal's record, stop, undo, and track workflow make sense before buying.
- ☐ **Test size, switch feel, and build:** Especially if the pedal will live on a board or be used on stage.

SIGNAL CHAIN

A looper is commonly placed near the end of the signal chain, but this is not a fixed rule. Place effects before the looper when you want them recorded into a layer; place effects after it when you want them applied to the completed playback.

9. QUICK DIAGNOSIS

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| Muddy loop: | Simplify low chord voicings, reduce sustain, or separate layers more clearly. |
| Bump at the repeat: | Check the harmonic return and the exact timing of the seam. |
| Layers lose the groove: | Return to a simpler first layer and rebuild the record order. |
| Everything sounds the same: | Change register, articulation, note length, density, tone, or dynamics. |
| Too busy: | Remove a redundant layer. Extra is optional. |

KEEP PRACTISING

Guitar Looper Hub: brentrobitaille.com/guitar-looper/

Looper Guitar Learning Path: brentrobitaille.com/learning-paths-looper-guitar/

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