

From the Bedroom to the Stage with DJ Tech

Part 1. By DJ Tech

Hi there, everybody. My name's DJ Tech, and I'm here to take you on a journey from your bedroom to the stage.

Like anything you do in life, you have to have solid foundations for whatever you're doing to succeed. If you don't have solid foundations, you're going to have problems down the road.

So, I'm going to lay out some basics that I think you're going to need.

We're going to be talking totally digital. We're not going to be talking about vinyl.

The first thing you need is a controller. Now, there are loads of different controllers out there. Some are fully onboard, some aren't, and some you need a laptop to work with.

I personally recommend an all-in-one controller. Two of the best out there are Pioneer's XDJ-RX3 and Denon's Prime 4.

Pioneer is what I use and it's what I recommend. The reason for that is exactly the same reason I use Technics 1210s when I DJ using vinyl.

Almost every club in the world will be using these as a standard: Technics for vinyl, Pioneer for digital.

In other words, if you get used to the Pioneer layout now, when you're starting out, you'll be able to walk into a club and recognise where everything is. You'll instantly feel a lot more comfortable.

Having said that, one of the advantages of the Denon Prime 4 is that you can have four decks instead of two, which is really quite handy. And I'll be honest with you, the Prime 4 has one of the best brains for controlling out there.

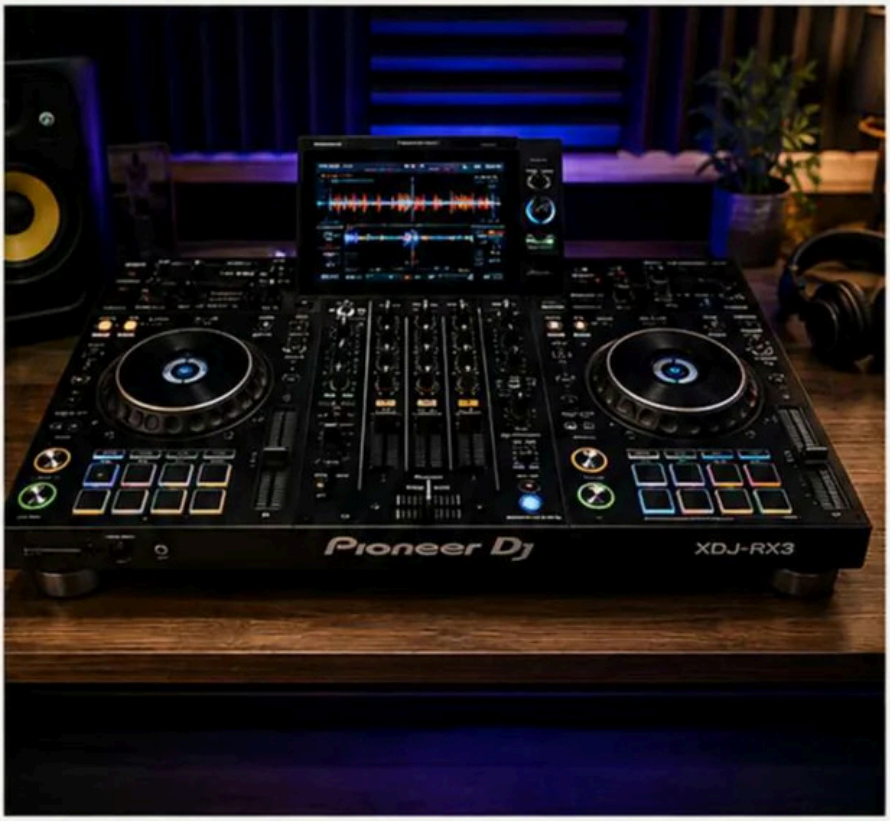
But the Prime 4 is a little bit more expensive.

If you're looking at playing out, I recommend the Pioneer. If you're just looking at staying at home in your bedroom, I recommend the Prime 4.

Right, so we'll carry on and imagine that you've got your controller. The next thing you need is a decent set of speakers.

1. CONTROLLERS

YOUR FOUNDATION



The first thing you need is a controller. There are loads of different controllers out there. Some are fully on board, some aren't, and some you need a laptop to work with.

I personally recommend an All-In-One controller. The two best out there are Pioneer's XDJ-RX3 and Denon's Prime 4.

We're talking totally digital here. We're not talking about vinyl.

ALL-IN-ONE CONTROLLERS

Two of the best out there...

PIONEER XDJ-RX3



- 2 Decks
- Industry standard in clubs worldwide
- Same layout as Pioneer club equipment
- Get used to it now, walk into any club and know exactly where everything is
- Feels more natural and comfortable when you're playing out
- My personal choice and recommendation

DENON PRIME 4



- 4 Decks instead of 2
- Best brain for controlling in my opinion
- Brilliant features and performance
- A little bit more expensive

WHICH ONE SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?



LOOKING AT PLAYING OUT?

I recommend

PIONEER.

It's the industry standard in clubs worldwide, just like Technics are the standard for vinyl.

OR



STAYING IN YOUR BEDROOM?

I recommend

DENON PRIME 4.

More decks, amazing features and the best control brain out there.

TOP TIP: If you're starting out, get used to the Pioneer layout. It will make you feel right at home in any club.

From the Bedroom to the Stage with DJ Tech

Getting Your Setup Together

As far as speakers go, you can go two different ways. You can either have active speakers, which means they've got power amplifiers built into the speakers, which is what I recommend, or you can get separate speakers and amps and do it that way around.

If you're looking for a recommendation, what I use are M-Audio BX5s. They've got Kevlar drivers on them, so they're really tough and really good, and I've never had a problem with mine.

The next thing you're going to need is a decent USB memory stick. What I recommend is a company called SanDisk. They're really good, really reliable, and that's exactly what you need when you're out in front of hundreds of people.

Once you've got all that equipment together, the next stage is streaming.

It's really important to stream, whether you actually want to put yourself out there on the internet or you just want to stick to the bedroom, because you need to record yourself and what you do.

It's one of the best ways of learning. You can actually see what you're doing and, when you make a mistake, see what you did wrong as well as hear what you did wrong.

That will mean that eventually you hopefully won't make that same mistake again.

For your streaming setup, what I recommend is two cameras. I personally go for Logitech C920s. They're really high-quality cameras, they're robust and they really work.

I've taken them out, I've taken them to parties, and I use them at home when I stream. They're absolutely first class and fully recommended.

Next up, you're going to need a sound card. This isn't some big, complicated thing; it's a small bit of kit and you can get them fairly cheaply.

What you're going to need to do is take the output from your controller into the input of the sound card. You then connect that to your laptop so you can bring your controller's audio into your streaming or recording software.

They're relatively cheap. You can find basic ones for around a tenner or less online. Not that I'm advertising Amazon!

2. SPEAKERS & ESSENTIALS

SOUND & STORAGE

Once you've got your controller, these essentials will complete your setup and get you ready to stream, record and play out with confidence.

These are the items I personally recommend and use in my own setup.

ACTIVE SPEAKERS (RECOMMENDED)



M-AUDIO BX5

- Active speakers with built-in power amplifiers
- Kevlar drivers – tough, reliable and high quality
- Excellent sound and perfect for home or studio use
- My personal recommendation – I've never had a problem with mine

USB MEMORY STICK (RECOMMENDED)



SANDISK USB STICK

- Reliable, fast and built to handle your entire music library
- A good quality USB stick is essential when you're playing out
- I recommend SanDisk – really good and really reliable

TOP TIP: Always have a spare USB stick with you. Better safe than sorry!

STREAMING & RECORDING ESSENTIALS

Everything you need to stream, record and improve your sets.

WEBCAMS (RECOMMENDED)

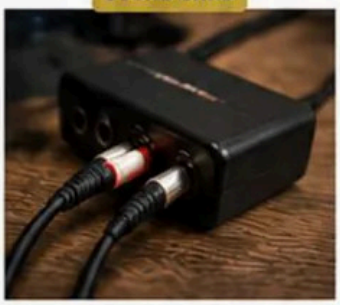


LOGITECH C920

- Two webcams for multiple angles
- High quality, reliable and robust
- I've taken mine out to parties and use them at home – absolutely first class

USE TWO ANGLES:
SIDE DJ (side view)
& SKY (overhead view)

SOUND CARD



SIMPLE SOUND CARD

- Small, simple and not expensive (around £6.50)
- Connect output from your controller to the input of the sound card
- Then connect the output of the sound card to your laptop input
- Brings your controller audio into your streaming software

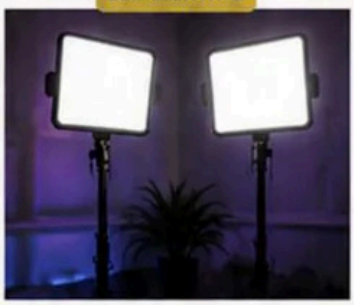
ACOUSTIC PADS



ACOUSTIC PADS

- Blocks of acoustic padding that go on the walls behind your speakers
- Helps improve the sound in your room
- Reduces unwanted echo and reflections

LED LIGHTING



LED LIGHTS WITH STANDS

- Improves the quality of your video
- Fairly cheap (around £25 for a pair)
- Essential for a better streaming setup

SET IT ALL UP AND TEST

Once you've got all this equipment together, set it all up, do a test and make sure everything works: sound, video and lighting.



From the Bedroom to the Stage with DJ Tech

Building Your Streaming Setup

The other thing I'm going to recommend is some acoustic pads. These are basically blocks of acoustic padding that go on the walls behind your speakers and can help with the sound in your room.

Next, you're going to want some lighting. You can get that fairly cheaply as well. You can pick up a pair of decent LED lights with stands without spending a fortune.

This is important because good lighting will give you much better-quality footage from your cameras.

Right, so that's all your equipment sorted. Now all you need to do is set it all up and do a test.

As far as software for actually streaming and recording your sets goes, I recommend OBS Studio. It's free, it's really easy to use, and it's a solid and stable platform.

You can go directly to the official website and download the latest, up-to-date, all-whistles-and-bells version of the program, but I recommend you check your plugin compatibility first, and I shall explain why.

When OBS Studio brought out version 27.2.4, it was the last version I used where all the third-party plugins I relied on worked correctly with the program.

With later versions, some older plugins may not work unless their developers have updated them to support newer versions of OBS.

One of the plugins I recommend looking at is Advanced Scene Switcher. This allows you to automate how and when your different scenes and cameras change while you're recording or streaming.

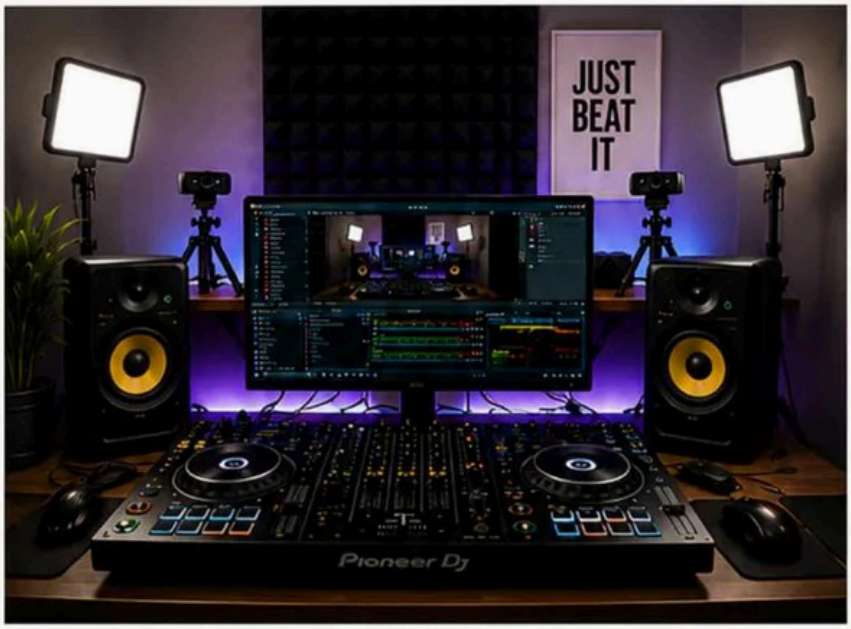
OBS basically gives you two important functions for what we're doing here: recording and streaming.

And remember, you don't actually have to stream anywhere.

You can simply press record and, once everything is set up, record all your sets privately. That alone is an incredibly useful tool for learning.

3. BEDROOM 2 STAGE

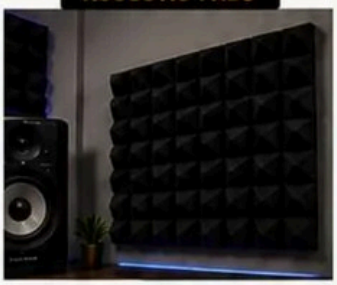
BUILDING YOUR STREAMING SETUP



Now that you've got all your equipment, it's time to put everything together and create the best possible environment for your streaming and recordings.

A good setup now will save you problems later and help you focus on what matters – your mixes.

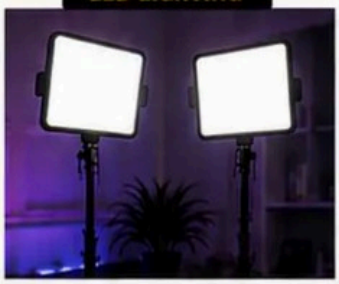
ACOUSTIC PADS



Blocks of acoustic padding that go on the walls behind your speakers and help improve the sound in your room.

- Reduces unwanted echo and reflections
- Gives you a cleaner sound
- Improves overall audio quality in your recordings and streams

LED LIGHTING



Good lighting gives you much better-quality footage from your cameras.

- Pick up a pair of decent LED lights with stands
- Fairly cheap (around £25 for a pair)
- Essential for a professional looking stream or recording

SET IT ALL UP



Once all your equipment is sorted, set everything up and do a test.

- Check your audio levels
- Check your camera angles
- Check your lighting
- Make sure everything works together smoothly

TEST EVERYTHING



Do a full test before you go live or start recording.

- Test your audio
- Test your video
- Test your lighting
- Test your recording and streaming

TOP TIP: A little time spent setting up and testing now will make a massive difference to the quality of your streams and recordings.

SOFTWARE: OBS STUDIO

OBS Studio

OBS Studio is my recommended software for streaming and recording.

- It's FREE
- Really easy to use
- Solid and stable platform
- Perfect for both beginners and advanced users

Download the latest version from the official website: **obsproject.com**

VERSION COMPATIBILITY

When OBS Studio brought out version 27.2.4, it was the last version I used where all the third-party plugins I relied on worked correctly with the program.

With later versions, some older plugins may not work unless their developers have updated them to support newer versions of OBS.

IMPORTANT:
Check your plugin compatibility before updating to a newer version of OBS.

RECOMMENDED PLUGIN: ADVANCED SCENE SWITCHER

Advanced Scene Switcher

This powerful plugin allows you to automate how and when your different scenes and cameras change while you're recording or streaming.

- Automate scene changes
- Automate camera switching
- Makes your streams look more professional

WHAT OBS DOES FOR YOU

REC

RECORDING

Record all your sets privately. This is an incredibly useful tool for learning and improving.

STREAMING (OPTIONAL)

You don't have to stream anywhere. You can simply press record and save your sets for yourself.

REMEMBER: The most important thing is to practice, experiment and have fun. Record your sets, listen back, learn and keep improving!

BEDROOM 2 STAGE



From the Bedroom to the Stage with DJ Tech

Your First Set

Now you're ready to go.

Get your music on, do your first set and, most importantly, watch it back afterwards.

When you finish your first recording in OBS, find the folder where your recordings are being saved. OBS gives you a default recording location, although you can change this in the settings to wherever you want your sets stored.

Open your recording and watch the whole thing back.

Don't just listen to the mix. Watch what you were doing as well.

Look at your hands. Look at what you were doing on the controller. Listen to your transitions. Pay attention to anything that didn't sound quite right and then look at what you were actually doing when it happened.

That's the whole point of recording yourself.

Everybody makes mistakes when they're learning. The important bit is understanding why you made the mistake, because once you understand that, you can work on stopping yourself from making it again.

And that's where the journey really starts.

You've got your basic equipment, you've got your controller, your speakers, your cameras and your recording setup.

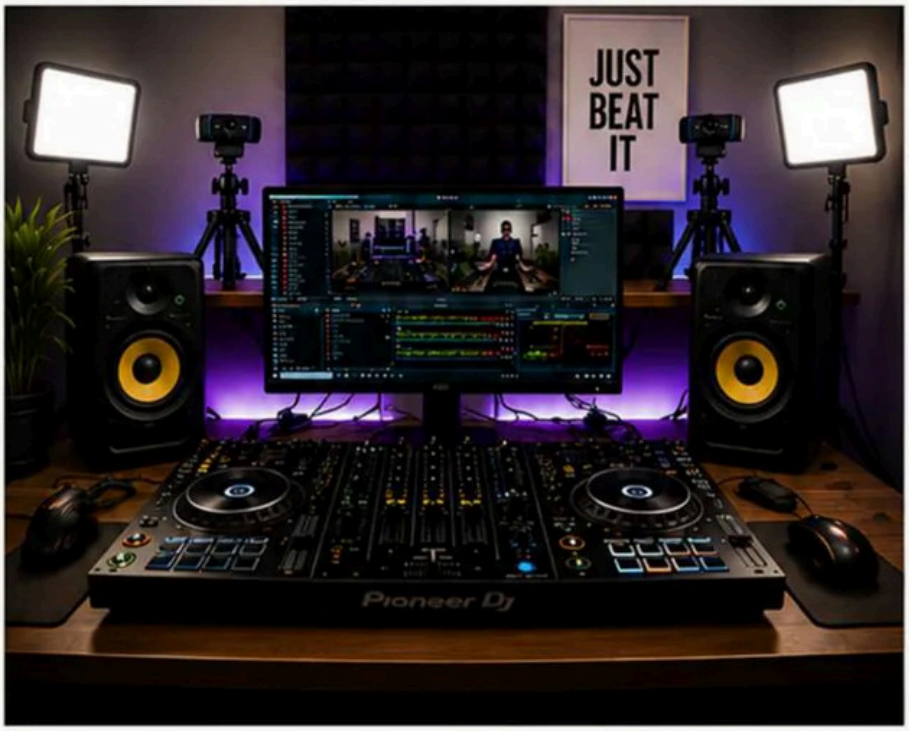
Now it's time to start using it properly, learning your equipment and developing your skills.

From the bedroom to the stage, you've got to start somewhere.

Tech

4. YOUR FIRST SET

YOUR JOURNEY STARTS NOW



Now you're ready to go.

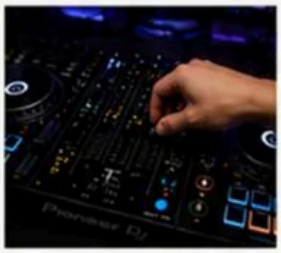
Get your music on, do your first set and, most importantly, watch it back afterwards.

Recording your sets is one of the most valuable tools you have as a DJ – it's where you learn, improve and start to take things seriously.

From the bedroom to the stage, you've got to start somewhere.

YOUR FIRST SET – WHAT TO DO

1 DO YOUR SET



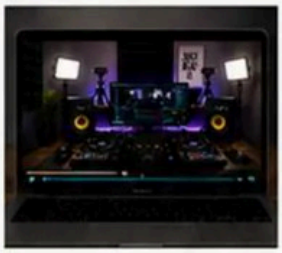
Get your music on and do your first set. Don't worry about being perfect – just enjoy the process and get comfortable.

2 FIND YOUR RECORDING



When you finish recording in OBS, find the folder where your recordings are being saved. OBS has a default location, but you can change it in settings.

3 WATCH IT BACK



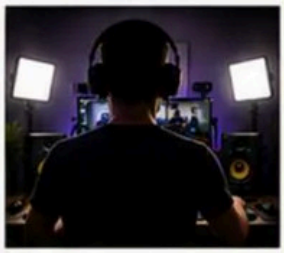
Open your recording and watch the whole thing back. Don't just listen to the mix – watch what you were doing as well.

4 ANALYSE EVERYTHING



Look at your hands.
Look at what you were doing on the controller.
Listen to your transitions.
Pay attention to what didn't sound right.

5 LEARN & IMPROVE



Understand why you made any mistakes.
Once you understand that, you can work on stopping it happening again next time.

WHY IT MATTERS

Everybody makes mistakes when they're learning. The important bit is understanding why you made the mistake, because once you understand that, you can work on stopping yourself from making it again. That's where the journey really starts.

WHAT YOU'VE GOT

CONTROLLER



The heart of your setup. Learn it inside out.

SPEAKERS



Hear your mix clearly and make better decisions.

CAMERAS



Capture your performance from different angles.

AUDIO SETUP



Get clear, clean audio into your recordings.

RECORDING SETUP



Record, review and improve every time.



PRACTICE. REVIEW. LEARN. IMPROVE.

THAT'S HOW YOU LEVEL UP.



REMEMBER: The most important thing is to practice, experiment and have fun. Record your sets, listen back, learn and keep improving!