

# Top 10 tips for getting session work

1. There is no guaranteed way to get sessions. Having a good reputation and knowing people who are already undertaking session work and can recommend you is key.
2. As a session musician you will be expected to turn up, sight-read and get to grips with the music very quickly. If you haven't got hold of the music before the session, try to get to the studio early to work through anything that is particularly tough.
3. Conductors, record producers and film companies can all book players for sessions directly. However, more often than not work comes through fixers or established session contractors.
4. There isn't a particular playing style for sessions. Play as a sensitive musician would in any performance to suit the style of the piece you are playing.
5. People are sometimes asked to do sessions for free as a way of entering the industry. The ISM strongly advises against this. **Professional musicians shouldn't play for free.** Music isn't just a hobby. It is a profession and should be valued as such.
6. There are clearly outlined fees for recordings available. £120 pounds for a three-hour session is pretty standard. Fees for TV and radio recording sessions are likely to be higher. The BBC/ISM Agreement specifies a minimum fee of £159 for a 3 hour audio recording session and £349 for an audio-visual recording session. If you are in any doubt about whether you are being offered a fair rate, seek advice. ISM members can get advice on session fees from the ISM staff team.
7. A contract should always be in place for session work. Something simply stating the duration of the session and the fee may suffice. This could be in an email, text message but a more formal document is definitely preferable.
8. If a performer is creating any of the material that is being recorded, including improvisation, a writing credit and appropriate recognition should be sought.
9. There's no secret to getting rebooked after doing a session. All you can do is be professional, do the best job you can, have a good attitude and be yourself.
10. Not all session work is straight up sight-reading notes on a page. There's a lot of fun collaborative work out there. Keep an open mind and look to develop other skills like improvisation as this can make you more bookable.