

Straight outta Oakton

Seven steps to being a succesful suburban rapper

Rapping is the biggest fad to hit the area since Pokemon. Anybody who's anybody is doing it, but only a few anybodies have what it takes to be the very best, like no one ever was (duh-duh-duh!). It takes minutes, even hours to recycle enough beats and lyrics for a hit track. Also, rolling like a boss and thugging like a straight P-I-M-P is tough to do, especially with the workload of several AP classes (not to mention regular Robotics Club tournaments and National Honor Society meetings). Sadly, most of us aspiring Northern Virginia rappers can't afford such passion or devotion. Luckily, making bank in the music industry requires neither. Get on yo' grind and follow these seven steps to becoming the next rap sensation to rise from the mean streets of Fairfax County.

1 Make a rap name: If your song is similar to any other rap song, one can assume that the audience will likely "already know who it is up in there", but you'll need to give yourself a sweet rap name just in case a particular audience "ain't already heard" properly. Simply take the first sound from either your first or last name and tack a "y" on the end. Throw in a prefix like "Li'l" or "Dr." along with a few sounds ending in "eezy" and you've got a phat rap title sure to be the envy of everyone at your 20th high school reunion. Oh, they'll have plenty of reason to remember the name.



2 Say your name a lot: Slow down there Li'l T-Bone, coming up with a dope lyrical identity is only half the battle. The best-known rappers say their names repeatedly throughout a song (Hahaa! it's Weezy baby!). A tad egocentric? Possibly, but before you write off all rappers as self-obsessed tools, consider the fact that maybe they're just giving listeners a reminder who they're listening to- not because all rap sounds the same or anything, but because checking an Ipod is difficult for rap fans, being buried under the cash flow linin' their pockets and all. Or did you ever consider the fact that perhaps rappers have been repeating their names over and over again in an attempt to brainwash us into buying more iTunes singles? Now who's the tool...

3 Autotune everything: So you spit mad game but your voice still cracks like a prepubescent middle-schooler. Not a problem: actual talent is so 1990's. Just get some autotune up in thurr. If pioneering 'tuners like T-pain have taught us anything, it's that learning to make music is pointless when you can have a computer to do it for you. Pop one of those totally gangster tubes in your mouth and soon your rhymes will be as colorful as a Cher disco chorus. Y'all best be believin' in life after love.

4. Hype it up: As you record your hit track, you'll have to insert snippets of other music, often taken from real songs. Be sure to scratch and remix a stolen record to the point of disrespect to its original artist, then, rap over the mutilated noises with the sounds of you attempting to pump up a crowd that isn't there. This part's actually a lot easier than it seems: just imagine yourself receiving a lecture on how your oversized, flat-billed baseball lid tipped to the side doesn't conform with the school dress code ("yeah, yeah, uh-huh, uh-huh"). Sprinkle in a few "yeeeeaaaahhhhs" and "leeggoooss" for good measure and pretty soon you'll sound like you have some form of Tourette's syndrome. At least this way the audience can be blessed with the sexy, artificial sound of your computer-generated robot voice for an entire three minutes.

5. Go hard: Getting that "A" in AP Chem is pretty darn impressive, but surprisingly, academic achievement doesn't have much cred on the streets. Your best bet is to rap about how tough it is growing up in "the hood". So what if your neighborhood has as much gang violence as "Sesame Street"? "Keep it real" and brag about how tough you for are long enough and maybe, just maybe, people might actually start to believe you.

6. Turn on some swag: This is by far the most important part of being a successful rapper. Polish those Jordans and pop that American Eagle colla, you gotta be lookin' fresh when you roll up to the club (wing night at Glory Days). Mom says she'll take away the Mustang if she catches you with holes in your ears? Try rocking some super fly and not at all douche-y magnetic diamond studs. Looks alone won't cut it though, to truly get your swag on you have to live at swag status. That means saying "swag" all the time, even while doing monotonous, everyday tasks. Remember, if you think you look cool, then other people probably do too.

7. Love the haters: They're a problem every rapper has to face at some point in their career. Eventually, some punk critic sippin' on Hater-ade or some snobby women's rights group practicing haterbation will bash your music for being too "unoriginal" or "degrading to women". While that janx might seem pretty whack, it's important to keep in mind that these haters only be frontin' because they're jealous of your swag (see tip 6). In fact, you should be sure to tell everybody how much you love haters. Not only will it make people think you're cool, but it will help mask the fact that in reality, you handle criticism as well as a temperamental first grader. Haters gon' hate.



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