

# The Little Details of Home Theater Installation

There are plenty of considerations when building a media room or dedicated home theater: choosing the size of your display, brand of speakers and so on. It's easy to overlook some basics, so here are five simple installation tips from Paul Holstein, COO of CableOrganizer.com.

**1. Account for power requirements.** Make sure that your home's circuits will be able to handle the power load placed on them by home theater devices. Before you plug in and run all of those audio/video components, find out how much power you will have running to your home theater room, as well as the total amount of power that will be drawn by the electronics. If the load is too heavy, reconfigure your equipment so that you don't blow the circuit.

**2. Go easy on your cables.** It's only natural that you're going to delicately care for expensive, top-of-the-line home theater components like screens, DVD players and audio equipment, but you need to make it a point to treat your cables gently, too. A pair of tips to relieving cable stress follows here.

**a.** No sharp angles. If you need to work cable into or around a corner, don't force it to form a sharp 90-degree angle. That interrupts audio/video signals during their journey from

point A to point B and will leave you with garbled pictures and sound. Instead, allow cables to gently curve, or sweep, into relaxed bends that will allow signals to flow freely.

**b.** Don't squish your cables. Stapling to the wall or floor is a pretty common method for keeping coaxial cables secure and out of the way, but you need to watch out for how it's done. The wrong types of staples can dig into cabling, damaging its insulation and impeding signal flow. To avoid cutting off circulation, either use staples that are specifically designed for use with coaxial cable, or go with an even better option: a surface raceway. A raceway covers all the bases. It gently routes cables without squeezing or harshly bending them, it keeps them neat and organized, and it won't leave holes in your wallboard.

**3. Give your equipment some room to breathe.** Just like people, electronics tend not to function well when they're overheated and kept in close quarters. When you're deciding on how you're going to mount your A/V gear, remember that correct spacing and thermal management are two key elements for a smooth-running viewing room. Be sure to consult the manufacturers' specifications to see how much clearance is recommended for each

piece of equipment. Rack-mount fans are also a terrific option for home theater thermal management.

**4. Keep the dust in check.** Have you ever accidentally inhaled dust and ended up sneezing, hacking and sputtering all over the place? If you thought that was bad, you should see what dust can do when it gets into electronics. To put it simply, dust interferes with the functions of home theater components, and left to build up, it can drastically shorten the lifespan of your equipment. If your home theater components are housed in an open entertainment console, be sure to dust them thoroughly and often.

**5. Hang onto warranty documents.** In the excitement of setting up brand new home entertainment equipment, you may be tempted to just tear into boxes and start throwing around packing material and instruction manuals, but be sure to find—and hold onto—the paperwork for manufacturers' warranties. Register your gear as soon as possible, and then store all the documents together in a safe place for quick and easy reference. This will save you a ton of time and frustration if one of your components malfunctions.



