

Planning out a home theatre

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Larry Gullins of G & G Electronics in Whitby, Ontario builds home theatres so we sought him out for some design recommendations. Locate the screen in the centre of a wall at the longest point in the room, not on the short side -- you need depth for the best effect. The best room shape is rectangular. Avoid putting the TV in the corner -- the sound will not be the same. Speakers are always placed high. Place the centre channel as close to the screen as possible because it carries all the dialogue and you want it to seem to be coming from the screen. Rear speakers should also be high and in the corners. Plan out where any heavy objects need to be attached so you can be sure to have solid structure for them behind the drywall at exactly the right place. Hide the wires. If possible do all the wiring before any drywall is put up. You need lots of power so get electrician to put in dedicated circuits sized to match the equipment. Put in any possible wires for new features, like more speakers, that you see coming in the near future or simply that you want to add later. It is much harder to hide wires after the drywall is up. Put acoustic insulation in the ceiling, even the walls to buffer the rest of the house from the theatre. And a few tips from me for those of you working on your own. If your drywall is already up you can hide speaker wires by installing crown moulding and using the hollow behind the moulding. If you don't have colour coded wires, be sure to label each wire as it comes out near the amplifiers, otherwise they all end up looking the same and it can take a long time to sort them out. If you need heavy support where there is none, span a piece of wood across two or three studs and then attach to it. You can do this with nicely finished pieces of wood or even plywood to combine decoration and structure. If you need to screw speaker brackets into concrete you need to take some extra precautions because of the vibration that could loosen the screws. Don't use the common lead anchors and screws, they are not strong enough. You could use Tapcon screws where you drill a specific sized hole and the screw threads bite right into the concrete. The best would be a bolt with an expansive shield, or bolts with epoxy anchors.

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