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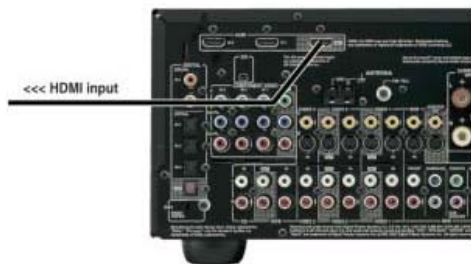
Sat, 06/05/2010 - 11:36 — Andrew

Five Things You Should Do After You Buy an HDTV

Whether you just bought your first HDTV, your second HDTV or just shopping for an HDTV, here are some tips for getting the most out of your new TV set.



1. Use the Right Inputs and Cables



Most TVs offer a wide assortment of inputs including composite video and audio that use yellow, red and white RCA connectors and provide the lowest quality signal and no HD. S-Video connectors that use round black connectors, are a little better, but still no HD. Component hook ups use 3 video and 2 audio RCA connectors, are still analog, but will get you HD and are the next best thing to HDMI. The best is HDMI with their small rectangular connectors which provide a high quality digital connection for audio and video.

Our advice is, use HDMI and avoid the super cheap cables, on the other hand, don't get fooled into buying expensive cables from the salesperson at your local big box retailer, Most HDMI cables work just fine for most programming but some are better than others. The one reason to spend the extra money is for a high speed (Category 2) capable cable used for "Deep Color," and lossless audio.

2. Adjust Room Lights and Eliminate Glare

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One of the easiest ways to make your TV look bad is to throw a lot of light on it creating reflections and glare. Plasma TVs are especially prone to problems with glare but LCD panels can reflect light too. Invest in a pair of drapes or put your TV in a room with few windows. Some experts recommend turning down the room lights and adding a soft light behind the TV.

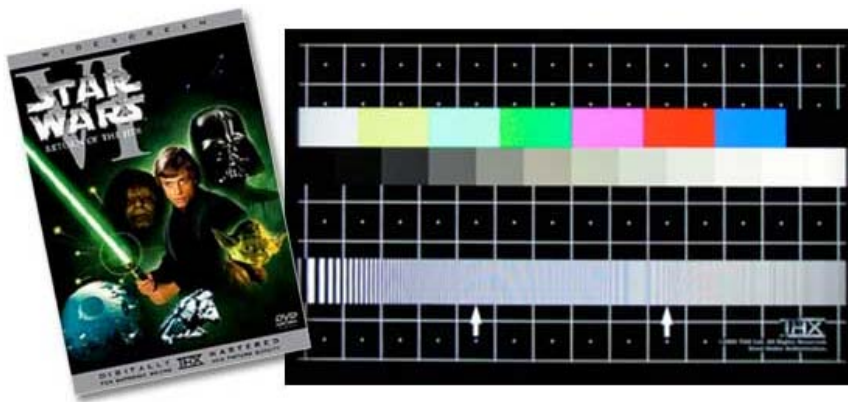
3. Calibrate, Calibrate, Calibrate



If there was only one thing we could recommend for getting the most out of your new TV it would be to adjust the TV out of "showroom" mode and into "your room" mode. You can adjust things like brightness, contrast and sharpness without a calibration disc but the discs (Blu-ray and DVD) aren't very expensive. On the other hand, you could always consider bringing in a pro, who would, most likely, use some expensive gear to give your TV a high quality calibration.

Here are some options for do-it-yourself calibration. Remember, a Blu-ray calibration disc on a Blu-ray player is going to display the best test patterns.

Cheap and Easy Calibration



George Lucas has seen to it that THX certified DVDs provide a set of calibration tools under the setup menu. If you don't already own a THX DVD like "Star Wars," try Netflix or your local library for one of the DVDs listed on this web site. The THX Optimizer will guide you through a set of test patterns so you can adjust contrast, brightness, color/tint, aspect ratio, and sharpness. In case you mess up, most TVs have a default setting you can use to restore the factory settings.

Purchase a Calibration DVD



For around \$25 you can invest in a calibration disc that may include a set of filters you look through or hold up against the screen to help set color levels. [Spears & Munsil's](#) Blu-ray calibration disc gets high marks from users. [Joe Kane's Digital Video Essentials \(DVE\)](#) is another popular one as well as the [Monster/ISF HDTV Calibration Wizard](#). Tutorials on the discs explain how to perform the tests and what the tests mean.

Call a Professional or Buy Their Gear



If you can afford about \$300 to have a specialist from someplace like [Geek Squad](#) come to your house, you'll get someone trained to use professional equipment like this colorimeter which suctions onto the front of your TV and provides feedback for adjusting the settings. You can always purchase the gear they use like this [SpyderTV](#) analyzer which starts at around \$100.

4. Add Speakers



Good sound can make a huge difference in the way the picture looks. Don't make the mistake of buying a good quality high definition TV and then add a set of poor quality speakers or home theater system.

Studies have shown that viewers think the picture looks better when the audio sounds better. Most high definition TVs have outputs for added speakers. The first thing you should consider adding is a subwoofer that will boost the bass. A [good subwoofer](#) will cost around \$100. For the full immersive effect of surround sound you'll need to purchase a [set of speakers](#) and place them around the room. A 5.1 speaker set which includes a subwoofer, could run you a few hundred dollars for a decent set. Another option is a [sound bar](#) that sits under the front of your TV and "projects" simulated surround sound.

5. Mount It



Mounting your big flat panel TV may require more skill and tools than you have on hand but a TV mounted on an articulated arm against a wall of your room can not only make the TV look more attractive it can even improve the viewing experience since articulating arms can extend from the wall and be tilted to optimize the viewing angle. They can also make it easier to access ports when you want to change connections on the back of the set. Installers typically warn against mounting a TV too high in order to avoid stiff necks from "star gazing." For more info on TV mounts [click here](#).



Here are some HDTV resources available on Retrevo

- [Top Rated 1080p LCD TVs](#)
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