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What to do when it's moving day for your home theater

By Jim Hurley



Jim Hurley is an independent handyman with over 25 years of experience in residential repairs. Hopefully this free advice is helpful to someone attempting Do-It-Yourself home repairs. The information presented is intended for informational purposes and for use by persons having appropriate technical skill, at their own discretion and risk.

You might want a cleaning rag to wipe things down as you go.

Pick a box, any box, and assign a letter. "B" is good unless you used that for the sound bar under the TV. I got creative and used X for the X box and W for the Wii. Anyway, label the component with a letter and label each cord coming off it with a letter/number combination. Then label the points where each cord is inserted or take a photo. Label the power cords as well; it will be helpful when you reconnect later. Then unplug those cords and move to the next component.

Eventually, I had all the components and cords out of the cabinet and off the wall and boxed for the move. I know this sounds tedious, but it only took an hour and saved a lot of time and trouble later.

When things arrive at the new house, it is time for assembling the mess. First mount the TV (and sound bar if included) in their new location. Then unbox all the components and wires and sort them out by letter. Start at the TV again and then plug in one component at a time. Connecting letter to letter and number to number should go easily. Refer back to your pictures when in doubt. It might be a really good time to smooth out the cords and maybe even use zip ties to bundle things together for a clean look and more stability when the housekeeper starts dusting more frequently down there.

Hopefully, nothing got lost in transit and everything works on the first try when you turn it on. Hopefully too, your internet service provider has been able to get you connected to the outside world of digital information and entertainment. If something is not working, call a teenager. They seem to intuitively know how this stuff should be connected and which remote control to use.

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Let's face it, your modern home doesn't have just a TV anymore. You have a home entertainment center with game boxes, sound systems, and video players attached in a crazy quilt of cables going everywhere. Typically this has been set up over time as components are added by various installers, including your teenagers, and you have no idea what goes where or how it works. That's OK until the day comes to move. How to get this mess from the old home to your new home? Especially when the teenagers have moved out?

I recently tackled this problem for a client and had success by borrowing a concept from my buddy Sven at IKEA.

Grab your roll of masking tape and a marking pen and label each line before you unplug anything. I used a letter/number system. Assign a letter to the component and print it on a piece of tape, stick the tape on the component. Start at the back of your TV. Label the TV "A" and each cord with a number, A1, A2, A3 etcetera. Also label the back of the TV where each of those cords are connected with the corresponding letter/number. (Or take a picture of where they are connected, or both in case a label gets lost in transit.) Now you're ready to disconnect the cords and take the TV off the wall.

Next you want to label all the components in the console where they are hiding. It's probably pretty dark inside there, so get some extra light to make your job easier. Has the housekeeper possibly neglected to dust in there?