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Tech Tip – Checking Signal Cables

One aspect of our systems that we often take for granted are the interconnection (RCA) cables going between our audio components. We often plug them in and never look at them again. If you experience certain audio channels cutting out or a significant reduction in output it is a good idea to check these audio interconnections. Here are some things to consider:

1. **Tightening loose RCA cables**
   If you have RCA connectors that have become loose over time you can use a pair of small pliers to gently pinch the "teeth" of the RCA connectors to bend them in just enough to make them fit tight on an input or output jack. Be careful not to pinch too hard or the "teeth" may break off.

2. **Tape or shrink wrap your RCA connections** If you are using "Y" connectors, barrel connectors or extending RCA's by connecting them together it is a good idea to wrap a small strip of electrical tape or shrink wrap around the connection to help prevent the connection from getting pulled loose. This can help prevent a situation that may be difficult to access and fix later on.

3. **Take care in routing RCA cables** Try to avoid having the RCA connectors and wires themselves pushed tight against another object close to an amplifier or another piece of audio equipment. While this may help prevent the connection from backing away it could risk pinching the wire itself and causing loss of signal.

4. **Use quality signal cables** Of course we suggest using quality RCA cables to start with to ensure they are of good construction and less likely to have an internal fault that could cause loss of signal even on a well thought out installation. If you suspect you have a bad cable, try running a different cable between the components to see if the issue goes away.

In addition to doing any normal troubleshooting, you may be able to save some time and frustration by quickly going through these suggestions.