

Creating Your Ideal Listening Space

You don't have to be an audiophile to enjoy a great listening space. Having that extra space to enjoy your favorite music and relax can make it that much more enjoyable. This unique room can give your home that extra flavor to make the space your home.

Type of room, Media? Solo?

The first thing you should determine, when creating a space that is your own, is what type of space you want it to be. Are you a movie buff who wants the movie theatre surround-sound experience right in your own home? Do you like to play your music loud? Or do you want a quiet, intimate place to offer respite with a cup of coffee and a classical music record? However you choose to enjoy your media, your space should reflect and support that.

Walls, Windows, Doors

The first thing to consider is the layout of the room. Your walls, windows, and doors are important. They not only affect the feng shui, but the sound. Glass on windows can disrupt the sound and give it a "tinny" feel. Thick curtains can help keep the integrity of the sound, and not to mention provide better insulation to keep you comfortable when you listen to your favorite songs.

This is also true for the type of walls you use. Bare walls will bounce the sound all around the room creating an unpleasant echo. But this is easily fixed with various miscellany like posters, tapestries, or even an accent wall, if you really want to spice things up.

This extends to the type of door as well. In addition to having the best sound quality *in* the room, you want to make sure you have the best sound quality *outside of* the room, (which should be zero). A sealing door prevents sound from leaking out, which lets you keep the music at the volume *you* want without worrying about disturbing anyone else in the house (or the neighboring houses, for that matter).

Tip: Have a collection of posters but don't want them to look tacky on their own? Consider buying frames to keep them and your room looking pristine.

Flooring

Perhaps most important of all, however, is the flooring you choose. A spongy, hardwood floor will prevent sound from traveling well throughout the room, and can even bleed into the floors below. Thick carpets will keep the sound from getting out as well as any unwanted noise coming in. This is imperative in rooms on higher floors, so that your house isn't flooded with washed-out sound.

Equipment (Placement, Type)

Largely, this affects the question of whether or not you'll want to include a television. Whether you want a media room with a huge flat-screen television, a projector, or none at all; your space should always be designed *around* its purpose. There are pros and cons to any type of equipment: an in-home projector sacrifices image quality for sheer size and gravitas, while a high definition television can produce an incredibly clean and crisp image. But if music is your primary focus, you'll probably want to skip a television altogether and go with a better sound system.

There are a ton of ways to listen to music and your space should accommodate your favorite. The most popular by far is digital, but many people (myself included) still hold their analog collections close to their heart. Upgrading your space does not mean you have to say goodbye to your favorite CD or record collection. A proper sound system should include, at the very least, a digital input, a CD player, and a record player. A built-in sound system can save and create a ton of space as well.

Where your speakers are placed is of no small consequence either. Two at the front will serve as your main source of sound, while two at the back will provide a supplementary surrounding experience. Speaker spikes and pads can eliminate shaky bass that can give your room an upsetting vibration and distorted sound.

Go for a retro look

Your room and your sound should be an extension of *you*. The look of the room should reflect that. This is a space to be creative and branch off from the rest of the house. Do you enjoy moogy and atmospheric soundscapes? Why not try a mid-century modern look, complete with space-age retro furniture to create a Mad Men-esque bachelor pad? Or perhaps you're more drawn to the eighties and want a colorful display of your eight-track collection with an eccentric display of pastels? When your furniture and sound combine, it creates a unique and deeply personal atmosphere that draws you in and makes your space your own.

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