

## How to: A Car Stereo Installation Guide

Want to save some money? Ever wonder if you could do a car stereo installation yourself? Yes, you can do it yourself! Go ahead, spend that money on your hardware! Don't spend it on labor. Besides, doing a car stereo installation yourself can be a very rewarding experience, not to mention you can learn a lot from it too. Nothing beats the feeling of seeing your "creation" in action, running smoothly and perfectly.

But be very careful, you really won't want to damage your expensive hardware. Well, most car audio hardware are no-brainers to install, you'd find that most of the time the parts have specially shaped sockets and slots etc. and would only fit where it's supposed to be installed. Still, it's best to proceed methodically.

In a car stereo installation, you have to determine what kind of rig you're going to put into your vehicle. If you're a beginner, it's best you do a car stereo installation if it's just a simple system. You may want to leave the complicated stuff to the professionals, like installing delicate equipment like LCD panels, motorized parts etc. especially if it requires the creation of custom panels and such.

Head units are one of the easiest to do in a car stereo installation. Fortunately, most units follow the same size standards (DIN). In many cars, once the factory radio is removed the aftermarket radio will fit in the hole. In many other cars, a kit is needed if the factory hole is too big, or not deep enough. In some cases the dash has to be cut. Any car stereo store should have kits required for installation.

There are two types of mounting in a car stereo installation. ISO mounting is when the radio can be screwed to existing factory radio brackets, such as in most Japanese cars. Ring mounting is when an aftermarket radio comes with a metal ring that gets mounted to the factory radio hole or aftermarket kit via bendable tabs. In many cars, dash and trim rings have to be filed to enlarge the radio hole. Once the ring is installed, the radio slides in and is held by snaps. In most cases, special tools are required to remove the radio.

Speakers are very critical in a car stereo installation. No matter how expensive your speakers are, if they are not properly installed, the sound will not be up to par.

In a simple car stereo installation, you'll probably be using speakers that fit into a factory location. Just make sure there are no gaps or holes. Sometimes building a wood or fiberglass baffle helps reduce holes and gives you much better sound. But always be careful when using power tools around speakers. Car stereo installation warranties usually don't cover holes in speakers.

For unconventional speaker locations, sometimes metal has to be cut. You might want to leave this to the professionals, tools like plasma cutters and

pneumatics drills are required. But if you're going to insist, a pair of metal snips (left and right cut) will do.

A car stereo installation has to put up with vibrations and other noise sources in its environment. Even though it is impossible to eliminate these completely, there are products that will greatly decrease the noise and rattling, particularly on non-luxury cars. Liners, sprays and adhesive strips and even carpeting applied onto the panels can make a world of difference.