

How to get the Audio Visual balance right for a Home Cinema, Media or Gaming room

 TraffAudioVisual

Setting up

- Design for purpose priority
- AV options
- Room flexibility
- AV quality & control

Firstly thinking about how your media room will be actually be used – mainly for gaming, or relaxing, watching TV, or as a home cinema is the place to start. From here we can make sense of your priorities and requirements. Different setups benefit from different audio visual equipment and budget balances. The available space will also set a basis for what's required, what's worth spending on, and what not. Speakers, amplifiers and screens all have spatial thresholds. Floor standing speakers need a certain amount of surrounding acoustic space to work well. Alternatively in-wall and ceiling speakers is a space-saving consideration. Then there's the screen size and viewing distance correlation, which will make the difference between watching a film comfortably and not feeling like you're on the front row at Wimbledon. We have seen many media room and home cinema setups done well, and not so well. After all we're here to advise and help you make smart home decisions.



On usage flexibility – whilst it may be a TV snug, media (gaming) room, playroom, or home cinema, could it also be somewhere to escape to for peace and quiet, to go read a book in, somewhere to put your favourite soundtrack on and get some work done or, just relax, or entertain? Could the space also work for a yoga session? Thinking all the possibilities through helps when designing the ideal AV room for you and your home.

- To improve audio quality consider incorporating a combination of soft furnishings, including the carpeting, seating and curtains to baffle the corners. Naturally, all small to mid-size rooms all have uneven bass response. If you prefer minimal styling we can introduce bass traps in to the room design to minimise frequency reflections and handle any bass intensity areas.
- For better visual concentration and atmosphere, like in a cinema, consider black-out blinds and a darker colour scheme. Wall art, feature objects or a highlight colour will add pop, alongside lighting presets for before and after film viewing.

- For simplified and consolidated control, we can program all the equipment remotes in to a single unit. We can preset sound, screen and lighting specifically for what you are using the room for at the time.
- And have you thought about putting a (silent) drinks fridge in – it's not that expensive to have a cool refreshments supply, right there, to hand. Cheers!

Audio vs. Video budget balanced

- Existing AV equipment
- Project budget fixed costs
- Balancing the audio visual budget
- TV, gaming room
- Home cinema

Depending on your budget, the percentage ratio worth spending on audio versus visual equipment will vary. There may also be existing audio visual equipment to take in to account. You may be interested in how to upgrade an existing AV setup without spending a fortune. To establish a media room AV budget it helps to isolate the relative fixed costs such

as design, installation, and control. For example Control4 will typically cost the same regardless of the size of the room. When considering the audio visual budget for a media, gaming or home cinema room – as the investment increases the amount of speakers increases and a high-end projector over a TV unit becomes the consideration. At every level we always recommend great speakers and then increase the quantity, thereby maintaining Hi-Fi audio quality. Projectors do come in to their own over TV screens as the budget increases, i.e cheap projectors aren't worth entertaining.



The following example expenditure splits will give you a great audio visual balanced solution as a guide:

£11000

Audio 50% – £2k on 5:1 in-ceiling speakers + £1k sub + £1k amp.

Visual 50% – £4k on TV screen.
+ £1k Control4, £200 cable, £2k install.

£21000

Audio 70% – £5k on floor-standing speakers + £2k in-ceiling speakers + £2k sub + £4k amp, for a 5.1 Dolby Atmos system.

Visual 30% – £4k TV screen.
+ £1k Control4, £600 cable, £3k install.

£36,500

Audio 66% – £8k on 11:2 floor-standing speakers + £4k in-ceiling speakers, £1.6k side speakers, £4.5k subs, £1.2k centre speaker for a 11:2 Dolby Atmos system.

Visual 33% – £2.5k retractable screen, £8k projector.
+ £1k Control4, £1.5k cabling, £5k install.

Tips to get the best out of your space and system

- Installs by us always include an acoustic levels calibration with your preferred and bespoke presets programmed in. We will also calibrate existing speakers and systems.
- Don't go cheap on speaker cable, there's a qualitative link between the sound source and the speakers via their 'arteries'.
- Ensure you have integrated lighting control with some preset levels, so you can set the scene at the touch of a button. We can advise and program this for you.

Centralise control, install Control4 and expand functionality throughout the house, bolt on your Nest, Ring doorbell, Hive, CCTV, etc.

- This is a good time to review your network and WiFi throughout the house.
- Consider adding multi-room Alexa's for round-the-house voice controlled intercoms.



- Have you experienced haptic seating for 'seat of your pants' cinema? Tactile transducers vibrate chairs and sofas through explosions, rocket launches, racing engines, jet fighters, music and more. They are also an especially good addition for immersive gaming experiences too.

- Acoustic boarding is worth installing for sound quality and isolation.

Decor and furnishings are always a preferred choice but consider acoustic wallpaper to manage the sound quality. You can never have too much soft furnishings but you can have too little.

- Apply foam strips to door frames to eliminate possible rattle and sound leakage.

- Don't put subs in cabinets, place subs near seats for near-vicinity vibrations.

- Listen to demo discs and watch demo clips to understand the full range of your speakers and video setup. See our website for our recommended examples.

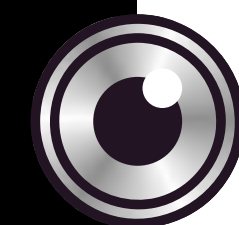
- Designing the space with the flexibility to go from a lounge to an immersive home cinema or gaming room at the flick of a switch will certainly add value to your house and lifestyle.

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We hope you found this helpful, for any advice or queries go to our website and contact page.

More posts coming soon,
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