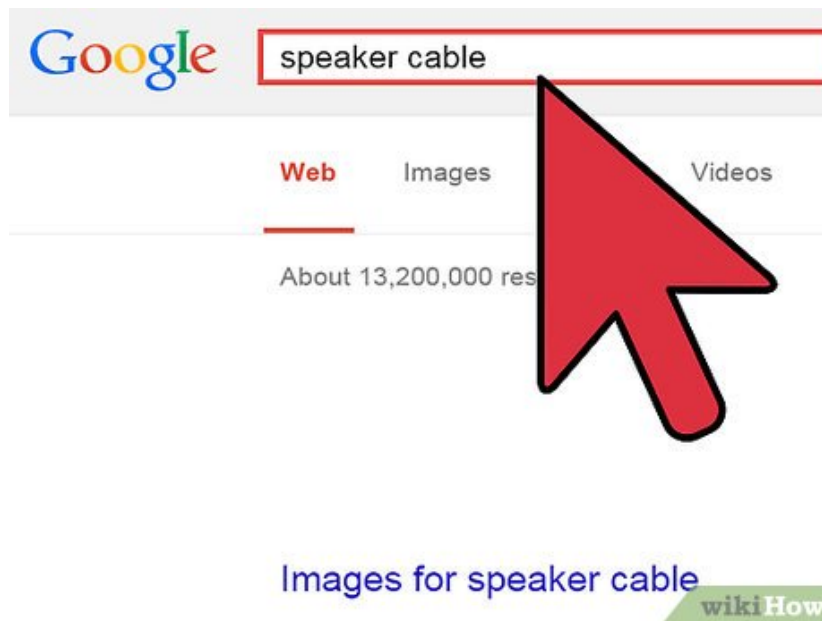


How to Buy Speaker Cables

You have an incredible speaker system, but now you need to buy speaker cables to finish your audio setup. But, as with many electronic devices, buying the cheapest cable on the market isn't always the best option. You can check your...

Method 1 of 2:

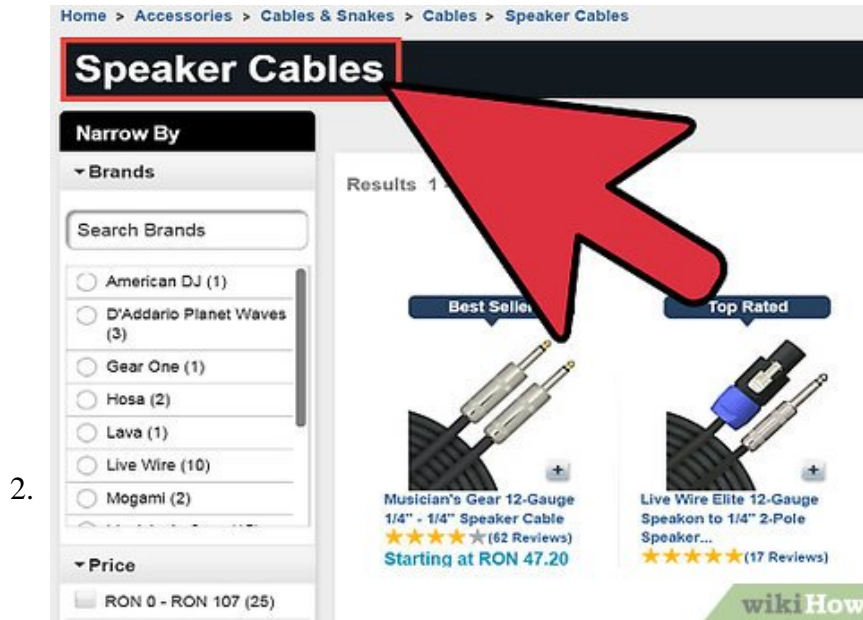
Run a Test Before You Buy Speaker Cables



1.

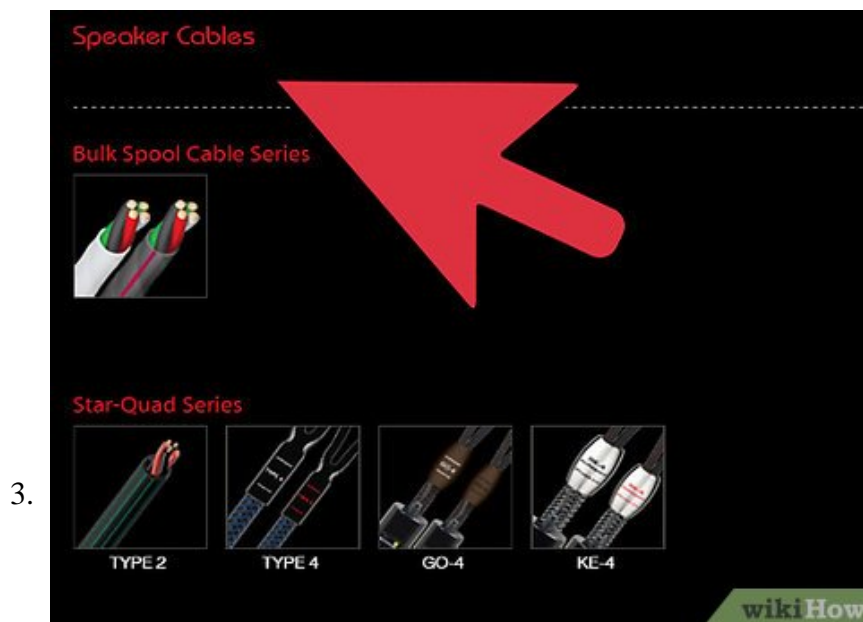
Upgrade to the more expensive wire if quality is an issue.

1. If you have a basic home theater system and your speakers are fairly close to your receiver, you will be fine with standard speaker cables. However, better wiring has higher quality metals that actually increase conductivity, which can lead to a higher quality of sound.



Test a variety of speaker cables in different price ranges to see which you like best.

1. If you have high quality speakers, you'll likely hear a noticeable difference between high end and low-end speaker cables. However, if you don't hear enough of a difference to warrant the price difference, simply return the higher priced cables.
2. Make sure the store where you purchase your speaker cables has a good return policy if you plan to run a test at home.



Listen to your speakers for an hour when attached to each cable; that way you can hear a variety of audio samples.

Method 2 of 2:

Choose the Appropriate Speaker Wire



1.

Run a string from your amplifier to your speaker locations to determine how much speaker wire you need.

1. Allow a little extra slack in your speaker wire in case you measure wrong or if you ever need to move your speakers in the future.
2. If you plan to run your speaker wire behind your walls or ceiling, safety code requires you to use CL2 or CL3 UL-rated speaker wire. The Underwriters Laboratory (UL) examines the heat generated from the wire, how quickly the speaker wire might catch fire when exposed to a flame and how prone the wire is to damage if it encounters external stresses to set this rating.
3. If you plan to run speaker wire outdoors, you'll need speaker wire that's rated for direct burial.

2.

AWG gauge	Conductor Diameter Inches	Conductor Diameter mm	Ohms per 1000 ft.	Ohms per km	Maximum amps for chassis wiring	Maximum amps for power transmission
0000	0.46	11.684	0.049	0.16072	380	302
000	0.4096	10.40384	0.0618	0.202704	328	239
00	0.3648	9.26592	0.0779	0.255512	283	190
0	0.3249	8.246	0.0983	0.322424	245	150
1	0.2893	7.346	0.1239	0.406392	211	119
2	0.2576	6.5416	0.1563	0.512664	181	94
3	0.2294	5.8216	0.1972	0.64616	158	75
4	0.2043	5.19204	0.2512	0.81508	135	60
5	0.1819	4.62524	0.3192	1.027624	118	47
6	0.162	4.1148	0.402	1.295928	101	37
7	0.1443	3.65208	0.508	1.634096	89	30
8	0.1285	3.2639	0.642	2.060496	73	24
9	0.1144	2.90576	0.812	2.598088	64	19
10	0.1019	2.58826	0.9989	3.276392	55	15
11	0.0907	2.30378	1.26	4.1328	47	

Consider the gauge of speaker wire required for the job. The AWG (American Wire Gauge) number identifies the gauge, or the thickness, of a speaker wire.

1. Use 16 gauge if you need fewer than 80 feet (24 meters) of speaker wire.
2. Use 14 gauge if you need 80 feet to 200 feet (61 meters) of speaker wire.
3. Use 12 gauge if you need more than 200 feet of speaker wire.



Identify the type of connector required for your speakers.

1. You might connect with bare wires, pin connectors, banana plugs, spade connectors or dual banana plugs.
2. Some high-end brands of speakers, like Bose, do not have standard connectors for speaker wire or audio cables. Contact the company to find speaker wire or audio cabling that's compatible with those speakers.

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