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Subject: Re: Home theater questions

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 11 Mar 2024 18:23:48 GMT

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You're exactly right, Steve. The layout for many center channel speakers is very bad. A horizontal array isn't good for sound quality. It is done solely for convenience and the only reason they sell is most people don't understand why they're bad.

So for me, I always recommend that people either run the same kind of speaker in their center channel as they do for their left and right mains. That usually requires an acoustically transparent screen, with the center channel placed behind it. If that's not possible - like is usually the case with a monitor or television with a hard screen - I suggest running no center channel, and depending on a phantom center instead. It actually works very well when the mains are constant-directivity and their forward axes are crossed in front of the listeners, like works so well for stereo. But a physical center is better, especially if the screen is wide and the distance between right and left mains is far.

As for the surrounds, it's wonderful if those can also be the same as the mains but I find bookshelf monitors are more than adequate. It is best if they are spectrally similar to the mains though. It's not as important that they be as similar to right/left mains as the center channel should be - left/center/right should be matched - but I do find it distracting when surrounds are too dissimilar from the mains. I find it gives a better illusion of reality when all speakers are fairly similar in tonal character.