

---

Subject: Reference Levels In Home Theater  
Posted by [Chase](#) on Thu, 07 Apr 2016 23:00:44 GMT  
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

I was talking to this friend-of-a-friend the other day and we were discussing home theater systems. I told him that I had recently purchased my first system and was looking forward to getting it set up in my new home. He started going into all this detail about setting the "reference" levels correctly. I had no idea what he was talking about. Can anyone explain?

---

---

Subject: Re: Reference Levels In Home Theater  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 08 Apr 2016 15:54:05 GMT  
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

When people mention "reference level" in respect to home theater, they're talking about SPL.

---

---

Subject: Re: Reference Levels In Home Theater  
Posted by [Chase](#) on Sat, 09 Apr 2016 13:46:22 GMT  
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

So if I am buying a boxed home theater system from Best Buy or Walmart, is this something I will have to set or does it come preset with my system? I'm eager to learn but really new at a lot of this audio stuff.

---

---

Subject: Re: Reference Levels In Home Theater  
Posted by [gofar99](#) on Sat, 09 Apr 2016 22:20:42 GMT  
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

Hi, Some like a Sony I have in my shed at present have a microphone on a long cord that you place where you expect to sit and then it runs a calibration program. It sends a set of tones to each speaker in turn and then remembers the settings. In theory it should be perfect. Cheaper systems make you do this by ear and manually. IMO nearly impossible. But then since most home theater sets are mid to low fi it hardly matters as other anomalies are present. I much prefer really high quality stereo, even 2.1 and 2.2 set ups to HT ones. Thus the Sony is in the shed and other stuff makes the sound.

All that aside, price does come into the picture. In my informal listening at lots of places that sell HT gear I find that everything below say \$600 with speakers is not worth taking home and really nothing below about twice that is worthy of calling decent. With an unlimited budget it ought to be possible to get high quality sound in an HT setting...but since much of the programming is yucky....why go to that extreme? Just my 2 cents, YMMV.

---