Subject: High-performance cables
Posted by musicluvr on Wed, 07 Aug 2019 20:10:41 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Are any of the audio-video high-performance cables worth paying more for or is it a rip off and you should use the cables that came with your system or what you already have on hand? Can you really tell a difference between the two?

Subject: Re: High-performance cables
Posted by Wayne Parham on Wed, 07 Aug 2019 20:36:27 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

This is a subject that gets some pretty enthusiastic debates going in some audiophile circles. Some people think they find night-and-day differences between cables, but most people say they can't tell any difference.

I'll tell you what I think, coming from an engineering point of view.

Video cables are used at a frequency where inductance and capacitance matter, so the cable itself is important, especially longer lengths. Audio cables are used at a relatively low frequency, so inductance and capacitance are less relevant.

In general, I like to use a good pure-copper conductor of adequate size for the current required and an insulator that won't break down over time. Conductor size is generally only an issue in power and speaker output cables.

Beyond that, the connector and assembly is always important. A gold-plated connector will work better than a tin-plated connector, especially after it has been in place for a while. Tin oxidizes and forms resistance, reducing signal quality. Crimped conductor assembly is common, and it can be acceptable, but if the crimp bites into the conductor's copper and leaves it exposed, then the copper will oxidize and create resistance. It has to be sealed, soldered or welded for best quality.

Subject: Re: High-performance cables
Posted by Porter on Fri, 09 Aug 2019 19:43:26 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Wayne Parham wrote on Wed, 07 August 2019 15:36
A gold-plated connector will work better than a tin-plated connector, especially after it has been in place for a while.

Have you run across people that shy away from the words "gold-plated" like I have? I keep explaining that while gold-plated jewelry might be bad, that doesn't mean gold-plated connectors

are too. It's not all the same.

Subject: Re: High-performance cables
Posted by Wayne Parham on Fri, 09 Aug 2019 20:28:35 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Most people I know are aware of the benefits of gold-plated connectors because of its resistance to oxidation. In computers, gold-plated connectors have been around for several decades for this very reason. And like you said, the benefit is in the electro-mechanical properties, not the intrinsic value that a jeweler would appraise.

Subject: Re: High-performance cables
Posted by Rusty on Tue, 13 Aug 2019 22:25:33 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

File it over at area 51. Believers swear by both. Neither can be proved.

Subject: Re: High-performance cables
Posted by Madison on Thu, 15 Aug 2019 00:09:29 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Forget audio and video appeal, or they at least less likely to fray? Were Monster Cables better or just a gimmick? Remember them? They were heavily pushed a few years ago and rather expensive when compared to regular cables.

Subject: Re: High-performance cables
Posted by gofar99 on Thu, 15 Aug 2019 02:21:10 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Hi, I'm with Wayne. You can get quality cables at modest prices. I use a rule of thumb.... if an audio cable costs over $5 a foot (with connectors) it is probably a gimmick and overpriced. If a video cable is over about $10 a foot likewise. If a cable of either type is less than $.50 a foot it is probably going to cause problems. Usually the first thing to go are the terminations. I make all my audio cables and buy only reasonable video and RF ones. Thus far as picky as I am this has worked fine for many years.

Yes indeed you can get into real arguments on the subject...mostly IMO from people either make (and sell) or that just bought $1000+ wires.

Subject: Re: High-performance cables
Posted by Prince on Sun, 03 May 2026 06:05:20 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Madison wrote on Wed, 14 August 2019 19:09Forget audio and video appeal, or they at least less likely to fray? Were Monster Cables better or just a gimmick? Remember them? They were heavily pushed a few years ago and rather expensive when compared to regular cables.
I never saw much difference between those expensive cables and the regular ones. You can get pretty good, less popular cable wires instead of spending above your budget buying those expensive ones. I fell for the trap of "it's premium" in the past, but not anymore.