



Alpine Home Media

Custom Home Systems

Home Theater & Audio • Networks • Automation

66 Autumn Drive
Tappan, New York
10983

845.398.4582
johnv@alpinehomemedia.com
www.alpinehomemedia.com

Electronic lifestyle tips for new movers and homeowners.

As you move into your new home, it is likely that you accumulated a variety of electronic convenience and entertainment devices over the year in your previous residence. And while you may have taken all that stuff for granted, now that you have moved it is likely that you have a pile of things to set up before you can begin to feel at home again.

This is a good time to do a little planning so that the setup goes smoothly and you get the most out of the new configuration. It is also a good time to plan for the future while everything is in flux and changes can be made easily without disrupting the soon to be settled household.

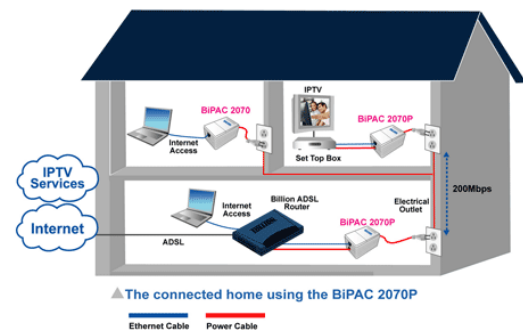
This paper is broken down into the following sections:

1. General Planning
2. Television
3. Program Content
4. Music
5. Remote Control
6. Computer Networks
7. Lighting & Window Treatments
8. Remote Access

General Planning Tips:

The major electronic systems that should be considered when planning include the following. Each has its own wiring and placement needs. Some also have wireless alternatives.

Standard and High Definition Television
Telephone
Multi-Room Music
Computer and Internet Access
Automated Lighting & Window Treatments
Alarm & Security
Surveillance Cameras





Alpine Home Media

Custom Home Systems

Home Theater & Audio • Networks • Automation

66 Autumn Drive
Tappan, New York
10983

845.398.4582
johnv@alpinehomemedia.com
www.alpinehomemedia.com

Tip #1 – Plan ahead before you redecorate

Chances are that you will be painting, wallpapering and/or carpeting as you settle in. It is best to consider how you will be setting up your electronic systems before hand so that you can conceal any necessary wires before you redecorate.

Tip #2 – Consider future technologies and room uses while planning

Remember that technologies change and that the wire you currently have installed may not be sufficient in the future. For example, some of the wires used for standard definition television are not capable of delivering a high definition picture.

Remember also that a young child's bedroom will likely become a high school student's bedroom or perhaps a home office down the road. Now would be a good time to make sure that telephone, television and Internet access cabling is installed and ready for when it is needed.

Tip #3 – Use a wired solution if you can, a wireless one if you must

While it's true that wireless telephones and internet connections work well and are getting better all the time. Wired solutions are (and will likely remain) the pinnacle of performance, economy and reliability. So, if the right wire already exists or is easily installed, use it. Use wireless solutions only where wire would be difficult to install or if mobility is desired such as with a roaming laptop.

Tip #4 – Install extra wire whenever possible

Remember that the wire itself is relatively cheap. It's installing that wire in an existing home that costs most of the money. So, if you are adding new wires to your home, consider adding extra wire at the same time to insure greater flexibility and an added measure of future proofing.

Tip #5 - Balance and prioritize what you want to do and when

Try and determine up front the full extent of your requirements by each system and room. That will let you determine what needs to be done before you redecorate. After the wires are in and you begin to settle in, you can hook up your existing equipment and add to it as time and budget permits. At the same time, you will be confident in the fact that you have the foundation necessary for now and as your requirements grow down the road. Consider sketching out a matrix such as the following to help you sort things out.



Alpine Home Media

Custom Home Systems

Home Theater & Audio • Networks • Automation

66 Autumn Drive
Tappan, New York
10983

845.398.4582
johnv@alpinehomemedia.com
www.alpinehomemedia.com

Room	Hi Def TV	Std Def TV	Computer	Intercom	Music	Alarm	Telephone	Automatic Lights & Shades
Family Room	Now				Now		Now	Now
Kitchen		Soon		Now			Now	
Master Bedroom				Now	Now		Now	Now
Billy's Room	Later	Now	Soon	Now			Soon	
Sally's Room	Later	Later	Later	Now			Later	
Front Door				Now		Now		Now
Living Room					Later			Later
Dining Room					Now			Later
Home Office		Later	Now	Now			Now	

Television Tips:

Tip #1 – Determine your viewing habits

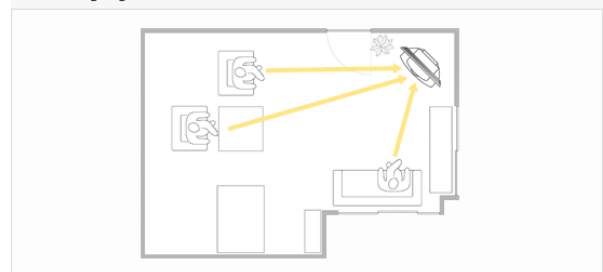
Some people really enjoy television, music and movies. Others, less so. Think about what you like to watch and your level of involvement with it. If you usually just watch the news, sit-coms or put on programming for the children, a modest system, maybe just your existing TV hooked up to basic cable is the way to go. If on the other hand, you or someone in your family really enjoys movies, sports, drama or music, then you may want to consider High Definition TV, a larger screen size, surround sound and maybe a BluRay disk player. Let your budget and passion decide.

Tip #2 - Consider the TVs location

The two most obvious things that people consider when placing a TV are the furniture and the location of the existing cable connection. You should also consider viewing distance, viewing height and angle, sound dispersion and room glare.

Try to come up with a configuration that suites your furniture and the traffic flow throughout the room. Be careful to have the television close enough and facing straight on to the main viewing position if possible. Remember also that if that the TV is too low, it will be easy for people and pets to block the view. If it is too high, your neck will likely get cramped after long viewing periods. Ideally an upward angle of about 15 degrees seems about right when viewing the TV from the main seating area.

Wide viewing angle





Alpine Home Media

Custom Home Systems

Home Theater & Audio • Networks • Automation

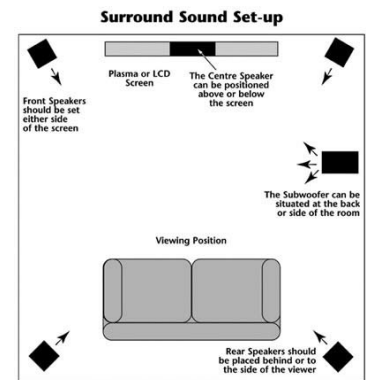
66 Autumn Drive
Tappan, New York
10983

845.398.4582
johnv@alpinehomemedia.com
www.alpinehomemedia.com

Glare can be a problem for the larger, newer sets because the screen is perfectly flat. That can cause big, distracting reflections. Try to position the set so no south facing windows or any lamps reflect on the screen when sitting in any of the main viewing positions. Some screens come with anti-reflective coatings but these don't cut the reflections entirely. Consider motorized window shades or drapes for any window glare that can't be avoided.

Tip #3 – Consider surround sound

Surround sound systems create a VERY lifelike experience but require additional speakers and equipment. If you are the type that enjoys movies, sports, music or drama, a surround sound system to go with your TV is really worth considering. Be aware that additional wires will likely be necessary to support the sound system so plan accordingly before you redecorate.



Tip #4 – Use a flat screen TV on a wall, a box TV in a cabinet

Flat panel TVs look great on a wall and are a real space saver. However, if you are inclined to place your TV in a corner or a cabinet, consider a rear projection model. They have great pictures, are much less expensive than flat panels and look virtually the same when housed in a cabinet.

Tip #5 – Get the right size screen

If you are using HDTV, the viewing distance to the set should be 1.5 times the width of the screen. This rule of thumb often suggests a screen bigger than people initially think is appropriate. But, in reality, the clarity of the picture makes a size based on this rule, very immersive and engaging.

Widescreen TV Size (Diagonal)	Screen Width in Inches	Viewing Distance in Feet
37"	32	4.0
42"	37	4.6
50"	44	5.5
58"	51	6.4
65"	57	7.1



Alpine Home Media

Custom Home Systems

Home Theater & Audio • Networks • Automation

66 Autumn Drive
Tappan, New York
10983

845.398.4582
johnv@alpinehomemedia.com
www.alpinehomemedia.com

Program Content Tips:

A few years back, cable TV, VCRs and DVDs were the only options for playing content material on the television. Today there are a lot of options that allow other forms of digital content to be shown on the home entertainment system. For instance, there are several products available to let you:

- Watch TV programs whenever and wherever you want
- Display your digital pictures on your television
- Listen to your iPod music through your sound system

The important thing is to use quality devices, designed specifically for the task and set up in a way that fits both the family's needs and their capabilities. If it isn't simple to use, it won't get used and that's a shame given the fun and richness they bring to parties, family gatherings etc.

Below is a brief overview of some of the options from each group, ranked roughly from the simplest solutions through more sophisticated ones.

Movies & TV – simple to deluxe:

- Try the pay per view option from your cable company
- Get a DVR/Tivo so you can easily watch your favorite programs at the time of your choosing
- Get a subscription to Netflix or Blockbuster online to conveniently rent DVDs at home
- Get an AppleTV or similar device to download movies from the internet on demand
- Selectively send the output of that device to any of the TVs throughout the home

Digital Snapshots – simple to deluxe:

- Use a cable between the camera and one of the TV inputs
- Get a TV with a built in memory card reader
- Use a picture viewing device to show slide shows on your TV directly from your PC
- Set up that device to send the pictures selectively to any TV in the home

Digital music – simple to deluxe:

- Take advantage of the commercial free music available from your cable service provider
- Get an XM or Sirius satellite radio and connect it to your stereo
- Install a cable directly between your iPod and your stereo
- Use a docking station to listen to and view your iPod on your home entertainment system
- Get a device with a remote control to listen to your digital music directly on your stereo
- Set up that device to selectively send the music to speakers throughout the home



Alpine Home Media

Custom Home Systems

Home Theater & Audio • Networks • Automation

66 Autumn Drive
Tappan, New York
10983

845.398.4582
johnv@alpinehomemedia.com
www.alpinehomemedia.com

A word about service providers

In this geographic area you generally have four options:

1. “Over the Air” TV using an antenna
2. Cable TV - CableVision, Comcast, Time Warner etc.
3. Satellite TV – Direct TV, Dish Network
4. The Fios fiber optic service from Verizon.

“Over the air” service is free but has limited channel availability. You must also be careful about selecting the right antenna and placing it in the right direction with a relatively unobstructed view. Suburbs far from the broadcasting centers in NYC will have spotty reception regardless of antenna selection or placement.

Both high definition and standard definition channels are available over the air but note that the old analog signals are discontinued as of February 2009. Newer sets can accept digital signals directly from the antenna but older sets require a converter box. All of the other paid services listed are mostly immune to the February 2009 elimination of analog signals.

Cable TV, satellite and Fios are all subscription services that require separate equipment either near the TV, in the basement or up on the roof. All offer different packages of standard and high definition programming and all offer DVR options on their equipment for easy recording and playback of your favorite show. Note that the satellite TV is sensitive to antenna placement and weather conditions to receive a signal. It also requires extra wiring that is seldom pre-installed in existing homes.

Beyond the technical aspects, all three services offer competing bundles of programs and services using different pricing models. Some aren't available in all areas and others give discounts for adding in telephone and/or internet service etc. Obviously these issues should be carefully considered when choosing your service provider.



Alpine Home Media

Custom Home Systems

Home Theater & Audio • Networks • Automation

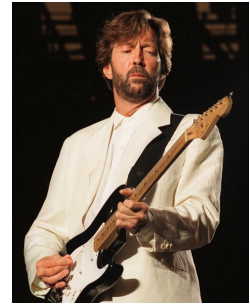
66 Autumn Drive
Tappan, New York
10983

845.398.4582
johnv@alpinehomemedia.com
www.alpinehomemedia.com

Music Tips:

Tip#1 – Listen to more music

Many people like music but just don't seem to find the time to listen to it. Music is a great stress reliever and an ideal background activity. Instead of just leaving the TV on to a random channel while working around the house, try putting on one of the commercial free music channels provided by the Cable TV service. This works especially well at dinner time. Instead of turning the TV completely off during dinner, try one of the lighter music channels or turn on the radio.



Tip #2 – Listen in unusual places

Listening in the kitchen while cooking or eating are obvious but also consider music in the office, formal dining room or out on the deck. Music is ideal as a backdrop to other activities and gives you mind a place to momentarily rest between tasks. Equipment is available that will allow the same or different songs to be played in every room in the house with the touch of a button.

Tip #3 – Explore music

Many of us learned to love music when we were in our teens and then lost interest as we moved on into adulthood. We therefore know certain bands, songs and radio stations and gravitate to them again and again through familiarity. Sadly, this soon becomes tiring and reinforces our current lack of interest in music.

There are a number of tools available today that let you easily find new music that is as close or as far from your current tastes as you wish. Much of it is free and lets you easily note what suits you and what doesn't so you can better cultivate your interests. Many of these tools are Internet based so they naturally lend themselves to exploration while using a computer. However, virtually any service that is available on a computer can now be set up for use on your home entertainment system. There are many devices that allow you to navigate internet music with a remote control on your TV.

Explore the following web sites. If you find an interest in music reemerge, consider bring your new found interest to your home entertainment system.

Pandora.com – build your own personalized radio stations

Rhapsody.com – flat rate subscription to a vast library of music

Shoutcast.com – repository of Internet music stations from around the world

iTunes.com – purchase songs, albums and videos individually



Alpine Home Media

Custom Home Systems

Home Theater & Audio • Networks • Automation

66 Autumn Drive
Tappan, New York
10983

845.398.4582
johnv@alpinehomemedia.com
www.alpinehomemedia.com

Remote Control Tips:

Today, each entertainment device generally comes with its own remote control. If you are just interested in watching cable TV you will have a remote for the TV and likely one for the cable box. While that is a manageable scenario, once you start adding sound systems, digital picture viewers or internet music options, you will quickly collect a number of remotes that will become unwieldy for you and your family. There are solutions but they need to be put into perspective.

Tip #1 – Budget for and balance the level of control to the complexity of the system

If you have only a few devices, it is likely one of them came with a ‘universal’ remote. That will usually ‘learn’ the functions of the other remotes. This is an inexpensive route and will likely allow you to need only one remote going forward. However, although you have only one remote, you will still have to press multiple buttons on that remote for anything to happen.

The next step up is a universal remote that has automated capabilities. For example it will generally have a single button called “TV” that will turn on all of the equipment and set it appropriately to watch television. Automated remotes are ideal for families as everyone can easily use them for the activities they want.

Remotes can go beyond even that to control multiple rooms, list out what song is playing, control the lights and room temperature etc. The point is that the more complicated your system, the more sophisticated your control needs to be in order to keep the overall experience simple and enjoyable.



Tip #2 – Select a control device that suites your usage patterns

There are hand held remotes, touch panels, wall mounted devices etc. Hand-helds are good for watching TV, wall mounted keypads are better for listening to music in the kitchen. Choose a device that is intuitive and easy for everyone to use. Be especially careful about selecting a remote based on its looks. Many good looking remotes have buttons that are too small to find in low light. A well designed remote should become an extension of your hand with little need to look at the labels on the buttons once you become familiar with it.

Tip #3 – Beware of distance limitations

Most remotes operate in a line of sight fashion and must be pointed at the equipment in order for it to work. If the equipment is behind a glass door that is ok but if it is a solid door you will likely have trouble. Likewise, if you want to use the remote to control speakers out on the deck or in another room, a radio based remote will be needed as it can operate through walls and over greater distances.



Alpine Home Media

Custom Home Systems

Home Theater & Audio • Networks • Automation

66 Autumn Drive
Tappan, New York
10983

845.398.4582
johnv@alpinehomemedia.com
www.alpinehomemedia.com

Tip #4 – Balance simplicity vs. sophistication

Although most remotes have dozens of buttons on them, in reality you only use a few of them most of the time. Resist the temptation to have your remote do everything imaginable. Keep it basic and simple. Guests and your family will greatly appreciate the ease of use. There is nothing worse than having a beautiful system that no one can operate but you. Save the original remotes and use them for set-up, configuration etc.

Tip #5 – Consider the importance of 2 way communications to the remote

When watching TV you push a button and the channel changes. You look at the TV and know what is on. Simple. However, if you use your remote to control music out on the deck, you may want it to include a small screen that will tell you what station is playing or what song is next. The further you are away from the equipment, the more status information needs to come back to the remote so you know what is going on.



Tip #6 – Take a holistic approach

Everyone expects a remote to change channels and adjust volume. However, when you consider all of the systems and devices that we are talking about throughout this paper, you should consider a common control platform for all of them. There is no sense in controlling the music one way, the TV another and the lighting system with a third. Look over the list of things you want to accomplish and try to control as many as is practical with a common device. That will save money and increase simplicity as the control for each system will have the same look and feel.

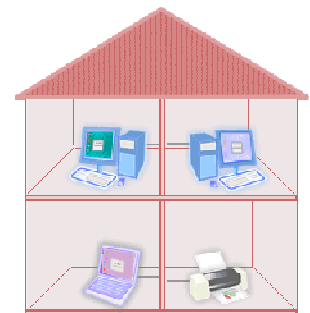
Computer Network Tips

Tip #1 – Use a wired solution wherever possible

As said before, a wired connection is faster, cheaper and more reliable than a wireless one. If it is easy to use a cable, do so. If not, use a wireless solution but only where you have to. Avoid an all wireless solution if some connections can be easily made with cable.

Tip #2 – Centralize your wireless equipment

The range of wireless equipment, while improving is still limited and the connections get slower as the signal weakens. If you have a wireless laptop and you will always be using it at one end of the house, try to place your wireless router at that same end of the house.





Alpine Home Media

Custom Home Systems

Home Theater & Audio • Networks • Automation

66 Autumn Drive
Tappan, New York
10983

845.398.4582
johnv@alpinehomemedia.com
www.alpinehomemedia.com

If you will be using the laptop or other equipment throughout the house, try to place the router/antenna in the center of the house, on the middle floor and away from any metal appliances, air condition ducts etc. This will give you the best chance of getting acceptable service throughout the house.

In larger homes, multiple antennas or ‘wireless access points’ may be needed. These will all need to be tied together through wired connections and back to your router.

Tip #3 – Secure your wireless connections

Most wireless routers come unsecured from the factory to simplify installation. However, you should change the settings on the router once it is installed to protect your wireless data from unauthorized access by outside parties,

Lighting and Window Tips:

Years ago, the only dimmer in the home was on the dining room chandelier. Today many rooms are equipped with dimmers because people appreciate the warmth and ambiance that they bring. As houses become larger and saving energy becomes an issue, more people are automating their lights and window treatments for comfort, savings and convenience.



Lighting control can work in several ways. The simplest is to put a light on a timer so you don’t have to worry about it and you can be sure that you aren’t wasting electricity. This scenario can be complimented with timers that take the changing seasons into account and randomize the lighting events to make it appear that someone is always at home.

Lighting scenes can also be set up so that multiple lights throughout the home can be precisely set with the press of a single button. Examples of lighting scenes include: Dinner Time, Cooking, Evening, Sleep Time, Movie Time and Emergency/Panic. Any of these scenes can be triggered from any of the remotes or keypads throughout the house. This ensures that all the lights are set correctly for safety and efficiency and it eliminates the need to walk throughout the house to turn off all of the lights just before bedtime.

Similarly, curtains, blinds and window shades can be set either by timers or by the press of a button to adjust to various conditions. This allows you to set the mood, save energy on heating and cooling and protect your furnishings from the sun’s damaging rays. You can even set a curtain or shade to automatically close when you turn the TV on.



Alpine Home Media

Custom Home Systems

Home Theater & Audio • Networks • Automation

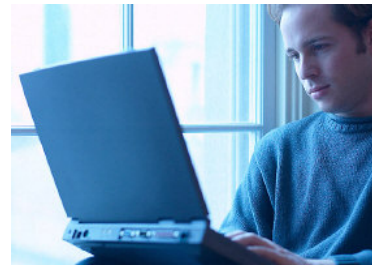
66 Autumn Drive
Tappan, New York
10983

845.398.4582
johnv@alpinehomemedia.com
www.alpinehomemedia.com

Remote Access

Today it is possible to access many of these systems through the Internet. If a member of the family is generally home this isn't so important. But, if you both work or travel frequently it may be worth considering. Common systems that can benefit from remote access include:

- Security/nanny cameras
- Lighting
- Heating and Air Conditioning
- Door access



Common scenarios include:

- Logging on to see what the nanny or pets are up to on the indoor or outdoor cameras.
- Checking the current temperature in the home while on vacation to ensure the furnace is still working.
- Adjusting the lights from work if you are going to be late getting home.
- Opening the garage door for a delivery and then closing it again while monitoring the delivery via a garage mounted camera.

Conclusion

We have covered a lot of different areas here paper. Some in depth, others less so. All of these solutions come in a variety of configurations to suit any budget. We hope that you have found this paper to be helpful and informative and if you have any further questions or need any assistance, please don't hesitate to call us at (845) 398-4582. It would be my pleasure to speak with you.

Kind regards,

John Vitiello
President - Alpine Home Media Inc.
(845) 398-4582
johnv@alpinehomemedia.com
www.AlpineHomeMedia.com