

tips

Bi-Wiring

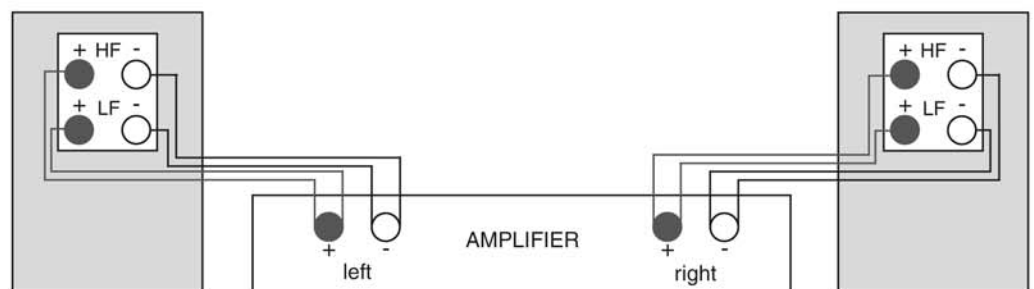
In the BBW- that's Before Bi-Wiring - days, connecting your speakers to your amplifier simply involved running a two-wire cable from each amplifier output to the two terminals on the back of each speaker. Nowadays, many loudspeakers have four terminals on their rear panel allowing you to bi-wire them. This is a simple "tweak" to elicit improved performance from them for the cost of an extra set of speaker cables.

In case you're not up to speed with how it's done, here's the only-slightly-technical low-down. In a regular, single-wired system, one pair of wires carries the full-range musical signal from the amplifier to each loudspeaker. A bi-wired system uses two pairs of wires per loudspeaker: one carries the high notes and the other carries the middle and low frequencies. The result is a clearer sound with improved stereo imagery.

You can bi-wire an existing installation by adding another set of loudspeaker cables or you can buy ready-made bi-wire cables. The ready-made option is tidier and easier to install if you're not confident about fiddling with loads of wires round the back of your amplifier deciding what needs to go where. All you need to do at the loudspeaker end is remove the bridging plates or jumper wires that connect the two "+" terminals and the two "-" terminals on the back of the cabinet and plug in your new cables. Follow the colour coding (red to "+" and black to "-") and connect one set of wires to the sockets marked "treble" or "HF", and the other set to the sockets marked "bass" or "LF". That's all there is to it.

It goes without saying, of course, that all your tuning efforts will be wasted if you're not using decent loudspeaker cables. Left-over lengths of mains cable or the speaker wire from your old midi system will not allow your hi-fi to give its all.

Finally, to keep all your leads in tip-top condition remember never to unplug them by tugging on the cable: always remove them by pulling on the plug. Keep connections clean but be wary of special contact cleaners and "enhancers": some leave residues that degrade the sound over time. The safest and cheapest way to keep connections clean and sounding good is to turn everything off, then unplug and reconnect all the plugs a few times. Do this every other month or more frequently if you're addicted to your Woodbines.



Also see: Loudspeakers, Stands, Cables and leads, Amplifiers and Plasma TV's.