

# Strategies for hiding pesky wires

- By Erik J. Martin/CTW Features
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There are many solutions for hiding the wires for electronics. If you have a wall-mounted flat screen TV, consider hiring an electrician to either install a receptacle right behind the screen or hide the wires within a cable management kit inside the wall.

If you've got spaghetti-like clusters of cords congregating in the corners of your home and wires snaking out from nearly every visible AC outlet, it's time to admit you have a problem. And unless you get control over this cable clutter, your home's aesthetic appeal — and safety — will be at risk, say the experts.

“Our homes are quickly filling up with devices, and homeowners today face a big challenge in hiding the cables and wires for these technologies,” said Daria LaMoure, a decluttering coach and consultant. “Messy, multicolored and tangled cords make a home look like a warehouse instead of a place of respite.”

But eyesores are the least of your worries.

“Wires strewn about the floor get stepped on, rolled on by furniture and tugged on. Cords are also appealing targets for pets and children to play with or chew on. This can lead to frayed insulation and exposed wires, which can pose an electrocution or fire hazard,” said Brian Phillip, a home organizing/improvement blogger. “Loose wires can also be accidentally yanked out of devices, which can lead to software corruption or data loss caused by a sudden shutdown of power.”

Additionally, cord clutter can present a tripping hazard, said Darla DeMorrow, a certified professional organizer.

“Plus, too many cords plugged into one circuit can cause an electrical overload. And excessive exposed cords can be hard to clean, trapping household dust and allergens,” DeMorrow said.

This cord conundrum isn’t likely to get easier anytime soon. Survey results of a recent Pew Research Center poll reveal that one-third of Americans have at least three smartphones in their home, 23 percent have three or more desktop PCs, and nearly one in five have 10 or more connected devices.

The solution, say the pros, is to get organized and apply clustering and concealment techniques.

“First, take all your chargeable devices out of your bedroom, which should remain a space where you can relax, recharge and feel at rest,” LaMoure said. “Next, create a primary charging station in another room for all your portable devices — laptops, phones, music players, book readers, smart speakers and tablets. This eliminates the clutter of tangled wires around the house and consolidates most of your cord problem to one area.”

To power your primary charging station, consider buying a USB charging station dock with multiple ports that can hold and recharge all your devices. Alternatively, DeMorrow recommends buying or making an open-top bin with interior compartments, which can serve as a storage and charging hub for all your gadgets.

Plastic or metal tubing, which can be affixed to baseboards or walls, and cord protector/concealment products like Wiremold “also work wonderfully and come in various lengths, widths and colors. Most of these covers can be painted to perfectly match the color of your walls, trim and floor, creating a near seamless transition,” said Dawn Totty, a Tennessee-based interior designer.

Totty also suggests using a basket or covered box beneath outlets, within which you can keep multiple cords and a power strip hidden.

“You could also try a few twist ties and tightly pull all the cords together at the top, center and bottom of the cord cluster to keep them all in one condensed straight line,” Totty said.

When bundling your cables together, label each carefully at the furthest end to keep track; it comes in handy whenever you need to disconnect/reconnect or troubleshoot connection problems.

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“For your home office, try to utilize wireless network connections to eliminate Ethernet cables and use wireless keyboards and mice to eliminate USB cables. Opt for printers, scanners and speakers that connect to your computer and devices wirelessly, too,” Phillip said.

By investing a little time and money, “you can protect yourself and your electronic possessions and also improve the aesthetics of your home, ensuring that visitors will always have the best first impression,” Phillip said.