

APPENDIX

Configuring HDTV

Once everything is hooked up, you'll need to configure your TV to display the picture properly. Many HDTV's are pre-set to show a very bright, vivid picture. This might look amazing in the store, but it can seem harsh or too bright in a darkened room.

Most HDTV's have several pre-set display settings with names like "normal," "vivid" or "film." You can browse through them and see which one suits your taste and the kind of movies or TV shows you watch the most. Or, you can adjust your TV manually. To do this, you'll need to access your TV's menu and adjust several settings:

- **Black level** determines how dark the color black appears on your screen. Black level is important for displaying detail, but if the picture is too dark you won't be able to see what's going on in dark scenes. Some types of HDTV sets, including flat-panel and older [LCoS](#) sets, aren't as good at creating true black. The pictures on these sets still look good, but no amount of adjustment will make them produce very dark black.
- **Contrast** determines the brightness of white parts of the screen and of the display as a whole. It may also be labeled as "picture" or "white level." If the contrast is set too high, the picture will be too bright for comfort. If it's too low, your picture won't be crisp and sharp.
- **Color saturation** determines how vibrant the colors are on screen. Too much color saturation will make a picture look unnaturally gaudy. Too little will make it appear washed out or faded.



You can adjust your TV's settings using ordinary [DVDs](#). First, put a DVD that you enjoy watching in your player and pause it on the frame you want to use as a test image. Adjust the control all the way up and all the way back down to see how the level affects the picture. Then, turn it up to the maximum setting and then slowly reduce the level as follows:

- For black level, choose a **letterboxed** scene that has light and dark areas. Slowly decrease black level until the bars are black and you can still see the details on the screen.
- For contrast, choose a scene that shows lots of detail on a white surface. Slowly decrease the contrast until the intensity of the white surface doesn't hurt your eyes but you can still see the details clearly.
- For color saturation, choose a scene that shows a person with fair skin. Reduce the saturation until the person appears to have a healthy glow rather than a [sunburn](#).

Your TV may have other adjustable settings that determine picture sharpness or color balance. It may also have enhancement features that are supposed to make broadcasts look better. Exactly how these settings affect your picture and whether they should be turned on or left off depends on your TV and what you choose to watch on it.

To get your picture to look even better, you can use a **calibration** or **setup DVD**. Calibration DVDs come with instruction manuals and use test patterns to help you adjust all of the controls correctly. Your TV may come with a simplified

setup DVD, but you can also buy one separately. If you want the best possible quality, you can also hire a professional to calibrate your television for you.

If you use your HDTV primarily to watch DVDs, these steps should make your set display a clear, accurate picture. You may still want to upgrade to a high-definition player, such as an [HD-DVD](#) or [Blu-ray](#) player, especially if you have an exceptionally large set. But if you hope to watch TV programs or sports broadcasts in high definition, you'll need to make sure that you're really getting a high-definition signal. We'll look at how to do that in the next section.



HDTV's