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In analogue days, connecting the device to the TV meant understanding spaghetti of different colored wires and hoping for the best. Fortunately, in the digital age, we have consolidated into one agreed interface that transmits video and sound to our TVs. The new standard high-definition multimedia interface (HDMI) cables connect all our favorite gadgets to our TVs and ensure perfect pixel quality. But there's a catch. Although HDMI is standard on all devices, there are different types of HDMI cables, and using the wrong one can limit the quality of the image or even prevent you from fully enjoying certain broadcasts. Before you connect your favorite console or streaming box to your fancy new 4K smart TV, make sure you know which cables to use. We at BestReviews can help you find the right HDMI cable for your needs. Read on for our best tips on HDMI cables, the hidden heroes of your house party. Different types of HDMI cableSHDMI is a standardized physical interface, but as we use HDMI cables it has evolved as new versions of HDMI technical specifications came out. This means that every few years a new version of HDMI comes out that improves functionality, which is great news for fans of new standards like 4K and High Dynamic Range (HDR), but it also means you have to pay attention to which version of hdmi cable supports. Three versions of HDMI are currently available. HDMI 1.4, about since 2009, is the most commonly used standard in HDMI cables. HDMI 1.4 is still relevant today. It can support 4K content (as long as it's 30 frames per second, like most TV content), 3D Blu-rays and even HDMI's Audio Return Channel (ARC), allowing you to send audio from your TV back to an AV receiver or soundbar. HDMI 2.0 also added support for high-bandwidth digital content protection (HDCP), a feature for legally playing copyrighted content, as well as the ability to use surround sound formats based on an object such as Dolby Atmos. HDMI 2.0 cables are critical for any home theater with premium surround sound. (In particular, a later version, HDMI 2.0a, added support for newer TV technologies like HDR and Dolby Vision, so if they're important to you, be sure to pick up HDMI cables that support version 2.0a or higher.) HDMI 2.1 significantly improves uploaded content types. It adds support for 4K at high frame rates (which is perfect for 4K gaming) and expands support for next-generation technologies such as 8K TVs. If your 4K TV supports HDR or Dolby Vision, or if you simply want to be future-proof, make sure it's built on hdmi 2.1 standard. HDMI cable features that matter most Although all HDMI cables perform the same basic functions, not all cables are the same. There are three basic features to track when comparing Cable. HDMI version: HDMI cable version should be aligned with your video needs. While most electronics like soundbars or DVD players will be fine with older HDMI cables, newer technologies like high-speed console gaming or Dolby Atmos sound will require cables built to a more recent specification. HDMI certificate: Hdmi quality cables are self-certified to meet HDMI standards, so you can trust that the cables will meet the advertised requirements. If you see an HDMI cable that doesn't have a certificate, there's no guarantee it'll run at the expected levels. Most HDMI cables list the certificate on the cable itself or on the packaging. Length: One of the most important features to consider when buying an HDMI cable is how long you need it. Cables longer than 50 feet can suffer from signal loss problems, resulting in glitchy or unsightly videos. When it comes to HDMI cables and length, remember two things: never buy cables that are longer than what you need, and if you're buying an extra-long cable, buy one with an extra shield to avoid signal degradation. HDMI cable features that you do not need Manufacturerselectronics are constantly looking for new ways to improve and place HDMI cables on the market. While this has resulted in some impressive functional improvements, it has also created a market full of expensive upgrades that add no value. This is where they're most common. Knitted HDMI cables are made of a woven layer of fabric on top of the wiring. Knitted cables first became popular with guitarists who needed cables that could withstand a lot of abuse while traveling from gig to gig. While it's true that a braided HDMI cable will protect it from breaking and damaging the wires inside, most HDMI cables don't move much. If you need an HDMI cable for travel or for frequent use with multiple video devices, a wicker cable will help you last a long time. If you're using an HDMI cable for your TV and don't expect it to move, don't bother paying extra for it. Premium HDMI cables are often used as manufactured with a special fabric or a particularly durable form of plastic and can cost two to three times more than traditional HDMI cables. Cables made of high-quality materials are definitely better than standard cables, but the improvements these materials bring are very often difficult to notice. If you're not sure if a premium cable would make a difference in your particular TV lineup, try doing a blind test between one and traditional HDMI cables. Most people don't see a noticeable difference. Gold-plated HDMI cables make sense in the home theater environment, but are excessive for most TV rooms. Gold plating on any type of cable has two main advantages: it provides better signal protection (so that there is less chance of interference or degradation), and does not oxidize and does not worsen the way other others do, such as copper. Gold-plated HDMI cables make sense if you use one longer than 50 feet or pass a long cable through the wall, but if you're just connecting electronics directly to the TV, you won't see any benefit. On most HDMI cables, the version number is printed. If you do not know the version of the cable, keep it under the light. Some cable printing can be hard to see. If the version number does not exist, the cable probably uses STANDARD HDMI 1.4. STAFFBestReviewsit is easy to overpay for HDMI cables, so before you pull out a credit card, make sure you know how much you should spend. You can expect to pay between \$5 and \$100 for an HDMI cable. Bargain: You'll find reliable HDMI cables that measure six feet or less for between \$5 and \$19. In this price range, it is definitely possible to find great deals. Just read the fine print carefully to make sure the cable you're buying supports your needs. If you need an HDMI cable longer than six feet, you'll need to spend a little more. Longer cables need to be more durable, and this is worth paying extra. Mid-range: You'll find overpriced shorter HDMI cables with longer high-quality cables for between \$20 and \$50. If you're just connecting a nearby video source to your TV, don't spend as much. If you're doing an HDMI cable across the room or through walls, this is the price range to watch. Expensive: You'll find so-called premium HDMI cables and extra-long typical HDMI cables for between \$51 and \$100. Premium cables are somewhat controversial because they offer minimal additional benefits compared to more affordable cables, but some people swear by them, insisting on the quality of workmanship and the materials used improve overall video quality. If you're a home theater fanatic with a TV room full of state-of-the-art equipment, spending this so much on HDMI cables can help your setup shine, but in most cases there's no good reason to spend as much on an HDMI cable. Did you know? Some HDMI cables can also transmit ethernet data signals, making it easy to connect TVs and other devices to your local network. These cables cost more and are not compatible with all devices, as well as some research before purchase. STAFFBestReviewsMeasure in advance to determine what length of HDMI cable you need. Don't buy a cable that's too long. Most components such as a cable box, game console or streaming box are designed to sit near the TV, so most people only need HDMI cables between three and six feet long. Resist the urge to buy cables that are longer than you need. An additional length will create a nest of wires that you will need to untangle. And if you buy a cable that's too long, you risk the signal breaking down by the time it gets to the TV. When it comes to HDMI, a little goes a long way, and there's no benefit to get more than you need. Avoid HDMI cables that come included with electronics. Some electronics and even some TV carriers include their own HDMI cables so consumers don't have to buy them separately. While the idea sounds like a convenience for customers, in most cases, the HDMI cables included are low quality and built on outdated versions of HDMI. Make sure your TV image looks as good as it can and stick to the HDMI cables you buy yourself. Use HDMI cables of different colors to differentiate related components with each other. Some HDMI cables come in different colors and designs, and while the differences are cosmetic, you can use them to encode the colors of your connected devices. HDMI cable color encoding is an easy way to know right away which cable is connected to which component.Q. What is HDCP and how it relates to HDMI cables?A. Digital Copy Protection (HDCP) is copyright protection that broadcasters can add to their TV signal. It prevents other devices from making illegal recordings. If the broadcast or video stream includes HDCP, in order for everything to play correctly, the device playing the broadcast must be hdcp compliant, the TV must be HDCP compliant, and the two must be connected by an HDCP-compliant HDMI cable. Some cable providers and video streaming sites use HDCP to protect content. Play it safe and make sure the HDMI cables you buy are HDCP.Q support. Can I get older, non-HDMI devices like my VCR to work with HDMI?A. Yes, with an adapter. HDMI cables are designed to digitally connect HDMI devices, but can also work with older analog video technologies using third-party adapters. While buying an adapter can be a great way to connect legacy technology to a newer TV, keep in mind that older content will never look as good as anything recorded in recent times. Your VHS tapes will still look weird and fuzzy as before.Q. Can I use an HDMI cable to connect my smartphone to your TV?A. It depends on the smartphone. Some Android smartphones have built-in mini-HDMI ports, so getting a phone screen on a TV is an easy thing to use mini-HDMI-to-standard-HDMI cables. That's pretty rare. Other phones require the use of adapters to use the TV as a monitor. For example, Apple makes Lightning-to-HDMI cables for its iOS devices, and many Android phones support the use of micro-USB-to-HDMI cables. Cable.