



Tip #12 Will the sound of a 3-in-1 LCR speaker be “squashed” together?

Three-in-one LCR speakers are really gaining in popularity because they offer true hi-fidelity sound from a neat, easy-to-install package that doesn't require any walls to be cut, and doesn't take up any floor space. Is there a sonic drawback? Will your left-right “imaging” be compromised if you use this kind of speaker?

Good question. The answer is not anywhere near as much as you think, if—and this is a HUGE if—the 3-in-1 speaker is fundamentally good to begin with. Lucky for you, the FS-4000 and FS-5000 are fundamentally excellent.

The key here is to understand how the human ear responds to sound. By far the most important determinant of perceived sound quality is what the engineers refer to as “wide, even frequency response.” That is, it's the ability of an audio device to be able to play all the low, middle, and high tones correctly—and in the proper proportion to each other—that tells our ears whether or not this is a high-fidelity unit.

That's by far the biggest thing. Concepts like “Imaging,” left-right “separation,” all that kind of stuff is secondary. If the tone isn't rich and undistorted, nothing else really matters.

Here's a good example: You know those high-priced, fancy table radios

that are so popular these days? They cost \$300, \$400, even \$500. They're sold by some of the best-known companies in the audio business. There is no doubt that they sound really good. REALLY good. Yet all of them are barely more than a foot long—hardly big enough to deliver anything even close to “stereo separation.” (See Figure 2)

Now imagine that you had two \$5.00 AM pocket radios. They sound scratchy, tinny, and distorted. If they were 8 feet apart, would you choose their sound over the rich sound of that really terrific table radio? (See Figure 3)

See? We didn't think so. That's an example of good vs. lousy frequency response. Good wins every time.

The FS-4000 and FS-5000 have terrific frequency response, just as good as any of our other speakers. Combine that with the three-dimensionality afforded by some good surround speakers and the power of a good subwoofer, and a home theater sound system built around our 3-in-1 LCR speakers is every bit as satisfying as a conventional system.

Enjoy.

Figure 1: Atlantic 3-in-1 Speaker



Rich, vibrant tone

Figure 2: High-Quality FM Table Radio



Rich tone is more important than stereo separation

Figure 3: Cheap AM Pocket Radios



Separation doesn't matter if the tone is lousy

Other Tech Tips:

Tip 8: Why the IWGB?

Tip 9: Why sealed subwoofers?

Tip 10: 7.1 Dipole Placement

Tip 11: Why the LRT?