

Outdoor Entertainment: DIY Cinema on a Budget

With budgets tighter than ever, inexpensive entertainment options are in high demand — particularly those close to home. But there's no need to waste time and money holed up at the local cinema when you can watch a movie amid the fresh air in your own outdoor home theater.

According to Paul Holstein, COO of industry-leading eTailer CableOrganizer.com, "It's easier and more cost effective than you might think, and much more fun!"

Here's Holstein's advice on what you'll need to transform your backyard into a slice of home theater heaven:

Video Screen: When it comes to setting up a budget-friendly outdoor movie screen, just about anything goes, including white bedsheets, black-out cloth (available at most fabric stores), canvas dropcloths, plywood, backer board, or even a smooth white wall.

Projector: Dust off an old LCD or DLP projector and bring it outside. If you need to start from scratch, projectors can be

purchased new for anywhere from \$500 - \$1500. Or scour classified ads, garage sales and reputable online home theater forums for less expensive used projectors.

Speakers: Don't jump to the conclusion that you need to invest in full-on Surround Sound or dedicated outdoor speakers — while they do sound great, you're better off saving your cash and pumping the audio through old stereo speakers, instead.

DVD Player: Start by looking at what you already own before buying a new DVD player for your outdoor home theater. But even if you don't have an extra DVD player lying around, a brand-new basic model can be had for under \$50.

Video Game Console: If you or the kids are feeling too antsy to sit through an entire movie, break out the Xbox or PS3, hook it up to your projector, and find out how much fun the combination of summer breeze and Rock Band 2 can be.

Outdoor Extension Cord: Made to withstand weather

and the kind of wear and tear that can only occur in open-air environments, outdoor power cords are the safest and most effective way to power home theater equipment under the stars.

Surge Protector: Leave the expensive surge suppressor indoors where it belongs, and use a simple surge-suppressing power strip instead.

Cord Covers: Don't let the fun be interrupted by a trip-and-fall accident; instead, protect moviegoers by keeping power extensions concealed (and safely traversable) with rugged cord covers, like Rubber Ducts by Electri-duct.

Rolling Equipment Cart: Rolling carts reduce equipment-hauling woes by saving time, preventing lifting injuries, and decreasing the chances of that butterfingered neighbor dropping your projector.

Light Strands: It's always a good idea to have a little light to move around by without tripping in the dark. Create a soft glow that won't detract from the onscreen action by hanging a few strands of Christmas lights around your theater's perimeter.

