

## **Buying guide – DVD PLAYER**

### **Introduction**

Brilliant audio and picture quality, coupled with low prices, has made the DVD player one of the top selling electronics of the past decade. But, as conventional DVD players fall out of favor, very low price DVD players are becoming widely available at markets and corner stores. While up-scaling players (or players that resize standard definition video to pseudo HD) now inhabit the price tier that standard DVD players used to occupy. Up-scaling DVD players are a great compromise between SD and HD, and they don't require the purchase of new HD media.

Due to Sony's victory in the format war with Toshiba's HDDVD format, we now know Sony's Blu-ray is *the* format that movie studios will print their new HD releases in. The real aftermath of this 'war' is an increase in HD equipment sales. During the format war, the fear of buying the wrong format stopped many would-be buyers from taking the HD plunge. Since these worries have been eliminated, the HD market has seen a general increase in sales.

If Blu-ray format's victory isn't enough of a reason for you to go HD, the approaching FCC mandated analog to digital switch, may do the trick. This transition only affects broadcast television transmission, but it gives reluctant HD adopters a great excuse to upgrade their TV sets. This activity has allowed the HD market to expand overall, and prices are coming down, as HD's popularity rises.

### **What's Available**

Magnavox, Panasonic, Philips, Sony, and Toshiba are among the top-selling brands of DVD players. Most new models are progressive scan and whether hooked-up to a conventional television or a HDTV these players provide the usual high quality picture. HDTV displays are going to look slightly better because they support 480p, the standard player's highest video resolution output.

Below are the main types of players and features to consider when choosing your console:

- 1. Single-disc player:** Accepts only one disc at a time. Lower end models should come with multiple analog video outputs, but may lack newer digital video connections, like HDMI or DVI.
- 2. Multi-disc players:** Similar to CD changers, and at times doubling as one, these consoles accept more than one disc at a time. Usually 3-6 discs are accommodated; however, commercially available DVD jukeboxes can hold hundreds of discs.
- 3. Portables:** These are DVD players that have a small built-in widescreen and rechargeable batteries that are good for at least three hours. Great for car passengers, train riders, or frequent flyers, these give you instant entertainment you can watch just about anywhere.

### **Features That Count**

- 1. Aspect-ratio control:** Allows a choice between a 4:3 screen ratio, which is formatted for conventional TV, and a 16:9 screen ratio, which is formatted for HDTV widescreens. Some players will offer in-between ratios as well; however these in-between picture ratio settings rarely give a natural looking picture.

2. **Picture zoom:** Freeze frame is a standard feature on all DVD players, but one that isn't is picture zoom. This feature gives users the ability to zoom into any point on a frozen frame. Picture zoom is great for finding those production mistakes the moviemakers hoped you'd missed.
3. **Black-level adjustment:** This allows you to set the black point of the picture. Most TVs can't display pure black so the darkest point of the picture is really grey. The black-level adjustment allows the user to define how light or dark the darkest point of the picture will be.
4. **Multi-angle capability:** Gives you the opportunity to view alternate camera angles or storyboard views of certain DVD scenes recorded to work with this function.
5. **Chapter preview:** Scans through each chapter on the disc and shows you a short clip, or preview from the beginning of that chapter
6. **Chapter gallery:** The large majority of DVD menus allow you to navigate chapters with or without this feature; the menus are displayed as galleries, or sometimes just a list. The advantage? If your player has a chapter gallery feature you won't have to return to the disc's top menu to navigate the disc by chapters. The player builds the gallery from the data on the disc and creates a menu that can be called up at any point and the movie keeps right on playing.
7. **Go-to time:** This facility allows one to find any frame on the disc by entering the time stamp for that frame.
8. **Marker functions:** Allows the viewer to create a bookmark of a certain frame or chapter.
9. **Video Output:**
  - a. **S-video:** The Separate video (S-video) output mode splits the video data into two separate analog signals, brightness and color. This connection produces the highest resolution of any analog video signal, at 480i or 576i.
  - b. **Composite video:** Enabling transmission of analog signals between the television and devices such as a video cassette player, game console, or a DVD player, this connectivity is versatile and preferred. The three pronged cable includes the yellow female RCA jack and two red and white audio jacks.
  - c. **Component video:** This connectivity offers superior quality and if your television can support this input, it is advisable to go in for a DVD player having component video outputs. This connectivity uses three RCA jacks, colored red, green, and blue.
  - d. **HDMI:** High Definition Multimedia Interface, this interfacing standard has been adopted over the DVI interface, because it carries both video and audio signals via one cord, if you want your DVD player to connect to an HDTV that you're planning to buy - buy a player that has HDMI. This ensures that you'll use the television's HD capabilities.

## 10. Audio Output:

- a. **S/PDIF:** Sony/Phillips Digital InterFace, carries compressed digital audio - used to connect the output of a DVD player to a home theater receiver that supports Dolby Digital or DTS surround sound
- b. **RCA Connectors:** Developed in the 50's, by RCA, this older interface technology is the most commonly used connection for any A/V component.

### **Making the right decision**

Familiarize yourself with the technology of DVD players in general before going in for one. This buying guide should serve the purpose. Check out the DVD players from different manufacturers on [www.etrronics.com](http://www.etrronics.com).

View the DVDs on offer from well-known and trusted brands such as [Pyle](#) and [Toshiba](#). A price-wise distribution of the DVD players can be viewed on the following links: [\\$50 - \\$100](#), [\\$100 - \\$200](#), [\\$200 - \\$300](#), [\\$300 - \\$500](#), [\\$500 - \\$1000](#).

Considering that the DVD player is a sophisticated electronic device, the after-sales service offered should be another consideration prior to purchase. With proper care and maintenance, your DVD player is set to last for years of trouble-free service.