

Twelve checks before you frame the riser

Twelve checks before you build

1 Pick the seating first

Everything else (screen size, room dimensions, riser height) keys off the depth of the seat and the eye height of a reclined viewer.

2 Set the screen width to 0.6 of the viewing distance

For a 12 foot viewing distance, the screen should be about 86 inches wide (a 100 inch diagonal). Closer than 0.5 strains the eyes; further than 0.7 wastes the screen.

3 Centre of screen at eye level when reclined

Most adults' eyes sit at 38 to 42 inches off the floor when reclined. Centre the screen there, not higher.

4 Riser height: 9 to 14 inches

Below 9 inches and the back row sees over the front row only barely. Above 14 inches and you change the screen sightline angle.

5 Row to row depth: 36 to 48 inches

Less than 36 and reclined feet collide with the back of the front row. More than 48 wastes floor area.

6 Aisle width: 30 inches minimum

Below 30 and you cannot walk past a reclined recliner without stepping on a footrest.

7 Front row to screen wall: 1.5x screen width

Closer than 1.5x and the front row fatigues quickly. Further than 2x and the screen feels small.

8 Side wall to seat: 24 inches minimum

Reclined seats need clearance for armrests and side tables.

9 Lighting on dimmers, never overheads

LED cove lighting on a dimmer plus low wattage wall sconces. Recessed pot lights directly above seats kill picture quality.

10 Acoustic panels behind and to the sides

Soft panels (or framed velvet inserts) cover at least 20 percent of wall surface. Hard floors plus drywall create echo.

11 Plan the rear wall storage

A walnut credenza behind the back row absorbs sound and provides a surface for popcorn and drinks.

12 Confirm power and HDMI runs before drywall

Run conduit even if you do not need it now. Future you will thank present you.