

# How To...

A step-by-step guide to tweaking your PC Experience



## RIG YOUR

# POWER SUPPLY

## DREAM MACHINE-STYLE

**MAXIMUMPC**  
TIME TO COMPLETION  
**01:34**  
HOURS MINUTES

Ever since we unveiled Dream Machine 2002 last September, readers have hammered our mailboxes with requests for a how-to that explains the creation of the Dream Machine's power cables. Here it is—your wish fulfilled. But before we get started, there are a few things you need to know:

► If you do not put the wires back *exactly the way they were*, the power supply will probably catch fire. That's a very bad thing.

► If you follow our directions exactly, your system will continue to work perfectly. If you don't, and your PC gets hosed, don't complain to us. We warned you.  
► If you didn't pay for your PC, don't try this without getting the owner's permission. Ask your mom, dad, and/or wife.

The more hardcore materials used in this primer can be found at electronics stores and Wirecare.com.

—TOM MCNAMARA

## Ingredients

- Three-eighths-inch heat-shrink tubing: \$3.50
- Quarter-inch expandable tubing: \$5
- Half-inch expandable tubing (for mobo power cable): \$8
- Hot knife: \$15–\$25
- Heat gun: \$15–\$25
- Thumbtack or needle: one cent
- Good pair of scissors: priceless

## 1 Extracting the Power Supply (PSU)



First, unplug your rig. Then press the power button on the front of your box to discharge any remaining juice. Next, remove the PSU, taking care not to confuse the screws that fasten the PSU to the case (circled in red) with the screws holding the PSU together.

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## Preparing Your Connectors

Next you need to remove the white plastic Molex connectors from each of the wires coming from the power supply. The wires have small tabs that must be pushed in to be released from the Molex. This can be done with a thumbtack, needle, or very small jeweler's screwdriver. A magnifying glass helps here, but we were able to make do without one.

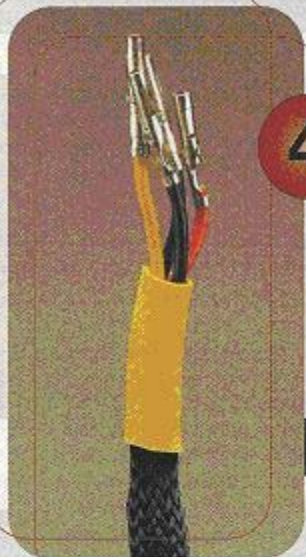
## Inserting the Tubing

We recommend covering eight-wire sections of cable with one half inch expandable tubing for the best fit, and four-wire sections with quarter-inch tubing. Line up the expandable tubing next to each section, and then take measurements. Leave at least half an inch of wire exposed at either end. We recommend using a hot knife to cut the tubing; this prevents ends from fraying.

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## Securing the Tubing

Cut a one-inch piece of heat-shrink tubing and slide it along the cable until it's covering the end of the expandable tubing. Make sure you leave enough room to easily attach the Molex connectors. Use a heat gun to shrink the tubing until it's snug. If the heat-shrink tubing begins to smoke, turn off the gun.



## Reattaching the Connectors

Re-insert the wires after pushing the little tabs back out to their original positions. Remember, you *absolutely must* put the wires back in the exact orientation as when they came out, or else you could cause permanent damage to your PSU and/or your computer. Because the mobo power connector is so complex, you're better off just bending it enough to slip a larger piece of tubing past it, rather than detaching it and dealing with disconnecting and reconnecting all those wires. ■

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