

# Comin' Right at Ya!

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In 1983, my buddy, Pearl, and I went to 'Treasure of the Four Crowns,' the first 3-D movie I ever saw. The movie is about J.T. Striker, a soldier of fortune who was hired to assemble a team of professional thieves to steal gems hidden inside two of the remaining four Mystical Crowns. I remember being blown away by the 3-D effects and dodging swords and snakes in my seat.

Later that year we went to 'Jaws 3-D,' the third installment in the 'Jaws' franchise. In the film, a gigantic great white shark gets into Sea World and eats skiers and other park employees. I can still recall seeing severed arms floating off the screen, not to mention all the fish guts when they blew up the shark at the end of the movie.

This year, my beautiful wife and I went to see 'Avatar.' Needless to say, special effects, especially 3-D imagery, have come a long way in the last quarter century. The colors and aliens seemed to literally jump off the screen, and it was an exciting and entertaining 2½ hours.

If we want to relive our 3-D experience at home, we'll soon be able to watch 3-D movies at home on TV. Several television manufacturers are releasing 3-D TVs this year.

Because our eyes are spaced apart from each other, we see objects at slightly different angles. Our brains then merge these two images into a single three-dimensional image. Three-dimensional movies and televisions recreate this experience by displaying two separate but overlapping images of the same scene simultaneously but also at slightly different angles. Special polarized glasses allow viewers to perceive the two 2-D images as one 3-D image.

While I really liked 'Avatar,' I did walk out of the theater feeling a little queasy. I am prone to motion sickness, so all of the weaving and zooming around Pandora made me a little green around the gills. Apparently, I'm not alone, and for some viewers, the effects of watching 3-D television could be dangerous.

Attorneys for Samsung actually put together a warning against prolonged exposure to 3-D TVs for teens, pregnant women, the elderly, the sleep-deprived, the intoxicated and kids, while kids under 6 are not advised to watch at all. The company even warns that people at risk for strokes or epileptic seizures, or those with ocular conditions such as weak eye muscles or lazy eye, should actually consult a medical professional before watching 3-D TV.

Samsung warns that too much 3-D TV can cause motion sickness, depth perception problems, disorientation and "decreased postural stability." Watching 3-D images strains your eye muscles in order to keep all of the images in focus. Accordingly, when many people stop watching, they get headaches or disoriented and lose their balance from the eye strain.

To prevent injuries from falling, Samsung tells viewers, "DO NOT place your television near open stairwells, cables, balconies, or other objects that can be tripped over, run into, knocked down, broken or fallen over." Also, viewers should take frequent 30-minute breaks from watching 3-D TV. Finally, Samsung warns that wearing its 3-D glasses when you're not watching 3-D TV, "may be physically harmful to you and may weaken your eyesight."

Maybe I'll just read the book.