

If you're diving into the world of mini splits for your older home renovation or a stylish new addition, one of the common questions that comes up is around line set length and whether you really have to coil extra line set when using a 20-foot run. With brands like **MRCOOL**, **Zone Air**, and **Pioneer** dominating the DIY-friendly mini split scene, it's a hot topic for both first-timers and seasoned installers.

In this post, I'm going to unpack the technical and aesthetic considerations of coiled line sets, discuss true DIY versus "not-really-DIY" mini splits, and share how your line set strategy can affect leak risk, visual impact from the patio, and what happens if you mix different air handlers on one condenser. I'll also mention some helpful tools like the **Zone Air Build Your Own tool** and talk about the use of newer **quick connect fittings**. Ready? Let's get into it.

Coiled Line Set: Why Does It Matter?

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First, let's clear up exactly what a "coiled line set" is. In HVAC lingo, the line set is the pair of copper pipes—one for refrigerant going out to your air handler, one for refrigerant returning—that connect your outdoor condenser to the indoor unit. These lines come in fixed lengths, often 25 feet, 50 feet, or longer. If your planned run is shorter, say 20 feet, that means you have excess piping that must do something. That "something" often is coiling the extra line set in a neat loop near the condenser.

This might feel counterintuitive if you're thinking about straight lines and clean aesthetics, but here's the technical reality: the compressor and refrigerant circuit are designed for a minimum length and a maximum length tolerance. Coiling ensures you don't stress the system by "shortening" the loop physically. This housing of extra length creates "room" for the refrigerant to properly circulate without increasing the risk of leaks or compromised performance.

Is Coiling Extra Line Set a Must for a 20-Foot Run?

For a run of just 20 feet, which is just under the typical 25-foot line set packaged with most mini splits—like those from MRCOOL or Pioneer—you might wonder if coiling is a strict requirement. The answer depends on:

- **Manufacturer guidelines:** MRCOOL, as well as Zone Air and Pioneer, all publish minimum and maximum line set lengths and require you to stay within these parameters to keep your warranty valid.
- **Line set length differences:** If your pre-packaged line set is 25 feet but your actual run is 20 feet, you'll have 5 feet of slack.
- **Local code and installation best practices:** Some local codes require coiling to reduce kinks and sudden bends.

Most manufacturers, including MRCOOL, recommend coiling that extra 5 feet as gentle loops, typically just a few feet in diameter, to provide a buffer and reduce stress on the refrigerant lines. It's not just tradition—it really does reduce the chance of leaks and performance issues long-term.

True DIY vs Not-Really-DIY Mini Splits: What's the Difference?

The mini split market has exploded with options that tout "DIY installation friendly." MRCOOL made waves with their patented **quick connect fittings** that eliminate vacuum pumps and professional brazing for certain models.

Zone Air offers a full **Build Your Own tool** that helps you tailor configurations. Pioneer offers sleek units that also encourage DIY installs but sometimes require more tools or professional callbacks.

But let's get real: true DIY means you can install, connect refrigerant lines, and wire your mini split without a licensed HVAC technician—within local code. Not-really-DIY means you may be able to mount and wire the unit yourself but will likely need professional refrigerant handling.

If your home has plaster walls and original trim (raises hand here), cutting into walls to recess or carefully place lines is part art, part science. Coiling your line set neatly and considering how the exterior *line hide* will look from the patio becomes a true decor decision.

Why You Should Still Consider Professional Help for Refrigerant Lines

No matter how slick the quick-connect tech is, don't gloss over local electrical code realities and refrigerant handling safety. Overstating DIY can lead to leaks or voided warranties. The extra coil means you also have to ensure the copper lines don't kink or get compressed when coiled. Professionals know how to do this safely. If you're DIY-ing and have a 20-foot run with excess line set, my advice is to:

1. Use cardboard cutouts to test your head (indoor unit) placement on the wall considering original moldings and trim.
2. Plan the line hide route carefully for the exterior wall—will the coil look tidy or messy from the patio?
3. Consider consulting an HVAC technician to either check your coil setup or handle line brazing beyond quick connects.

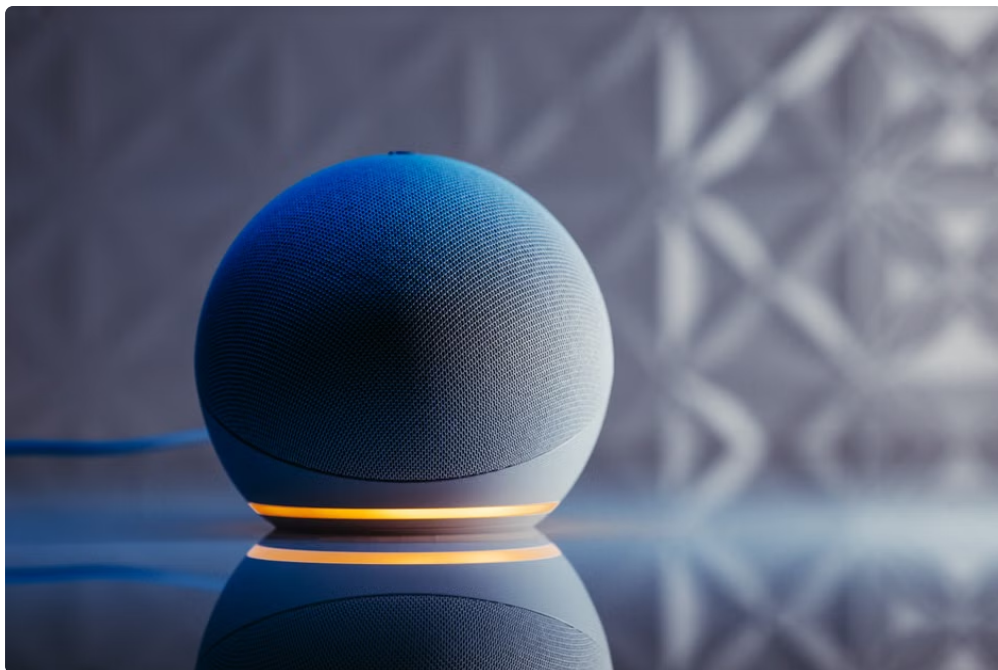
Line Set Strategy and Leak Risk: What You Need to Know

Coiling that extra line set is more than an aesthetic decision or mechanical "filler." It directly impacts the long-term durability and leak risk of your mini split system. When line sets are too short, you risk 1/4" and 3/8" lines pulling at the connections each time the compressor cycles, eventually loosening fittings or causing micro leaks hard to detect under typical use.

On the flip side, be wary of over-coiling. Too tight a coil—or bunching line set in an alcove—can kink tubing or trap moisture. To avoid this:

- Make your coils gentle, minimum 8-10 inch diameter loops.
- Use insulated line set covers, especially if the coil is exposed on the exterior wall behind decks or patio furniture.
- Test for kinks before securing the coil in place.

Remember, it's always easier to coil a little excess than trying to fix a pinch point later. This is one reason I keep a short list in my DIY notes of "things that ruin a gallery wall"—and a messy, bent line set coil should be on yours when doing mini splits.



Mixing Air Handler Types on One Condenser: What About Line Sets?

Have you considered mixing different air handler types—say, a wall-mounted head and a concealed ducted unit—on one condenser? Pioneer and Zone Air systems allow some flexibility here, but it comes with added line set planning complexity.

Each air handler may have slightly different line set length requirements and operating pressures. That means you'll need to carefully plan your maximum combined refrigerant loop length. You might end up with multiple coils or offsets near the condenser to cater to each air handler's requirements. MRCOOL's quick connect models sometimes get complicated in these setups unless using multi-zone systems designed specifically for it.

Using the Zone Air Build Your Own Tool

The **Zone Air Build Your Own** tool is fantastic for visualizing and ordering a system that fits your layout—taking into account line set lengths, wiring harness sizes, and equipment compatibility. If you're mixing air handlers, this tool can help prevent costly ordering mistakes and line set miscalculations.

Aesthetics and Placement as Decor Decisions

Remember, in older homes with unique plaster walls and original trim, mini split installation is also a fine art of decorating and preserving character. Before finalizing your head placement, I recommend making cardboard cutouts matching the indoor unit's dimensions and tacking them onto the wall. This lets you visually check the balance and impact on the room's gallery wall, trim lines, or a soffit you want to preserve.

For the exterior, think like a neighbor or guest sitting on your patio. The location and neatness of the line hide—and how the coiled line set looks placed behind a shrub or near a garden feature—matter just as much as the unit's efficiency.

Summary: To Coil or Not to Coil Extra MRCOOL Line Set at 20 Feet?

Consideration Recommendation Manufacturer Requirements Always coil extra line set to stay within specs and protect warranty Line Set Length Coil gently 5 extra feet when using a 25 ft line for 20 ft run Aesthetic Impact

Plan coil location for discreet line hide, test indoor head placement with cardboard cutouts Leak Risk Gentle coils reduce stress and leak points, avoid kinks DIY Status True DIY with quick connect fittings possible but check local codes and consider pro evaluation Mixed Air Handler Systems Requires more complex line set planning, best done with tools like Zone Air Build Your Own

Ultimately, if your run is 20 feet and your pre-packaged line set is 25 feet—as with many **MRCOOL** DIY models—you do really need to coil that extra line set. It's a small step that significantly benefits system longevity and performance while giving you a chance to be thoughtful about aesthetics inside and out.



So cut out those cardboard cutouts, plan your line hide like a decorator, use tools like **Zone Air's Build Your Own** system configurator, and don't underestimate the value of a neat, gentle coil in your mini split installation. Your future self (and your gallery wall) will thank you.