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## Choosing the right HDTV antenna for you

By **Kenny Hemphill**

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Choosing an HDTV antenna can be a frustrating business. However, if you prefer to receive HDTV through an antenna, rather than a satellite or cable subscription, there are a couple of things that will make life easier.

First of all, if you can, you should opt a roof or attic mounted HDTV antenna. This will give you the best chance of picking up a good signal and is a must if you are in an area where signal strength is poor such as where you live some distance away from the nearest transmitter or where your signal is affected by hills or other environmental factors.

If an external HDTV antenna is not an option, perhaps because you live in an apartment or in a building of historic interest, then you'll have to go for an internal, set-top antenna.

Unfortunately, every HDTV antenna is not alike and the quality of your picture can vary greatly depending on which antenna you choose. So how do you know which one to go for? Perhaps the best way is to find out from people who already have an internal HDTV antenna, how it works for them. The best way is to talk to people you know – particularly those in the same apartment block. Failing that, user reviews on the Web are a good source.

Amazon sells a number of antennae for HDTV and user opinion on them varies greatly. For example, this Terk HDTV Indoor VHF/UHF HDTV Antenna gets slated by users, while this Gemini ZHDTV1 HDTV-UHF Digital Indoor Antenna, which is actually cheaper than the Terk, gets great reviews.

## Choosing the right HDTV antenna for you

As with any item of electronics, the key is to do your research. Find out as much as you can about the HDTV signal in your area, and if possible speak to people locally who are receiving HDTV via an antenna, before you buy.

Kenny Hemphill is the editor and publisher of

### **HDTV FYI!**

#### **By Sharleen Standling**

With all of the abbreviations flying around the stores and commercials, it is very easy to become confused as to what it is you need to buy.

HDTV is one of these offenders! HDTV stands for High Definition Television and means the broadcast of television signals with a higher resolution than traditional formats (NTSC, SECAM, PAL) allow.

Generally HDTV is broadcast digitally, i.e. together with cable, satellite, or a digital receiver. You cannot view HDTV with an analogue aerial.

There are three things you need to be able to view HDTV and these are firstly a source, such as a local, cable or satellite HDTV station. Secondly, a way to receive the signal, like an antenna, cable or satellite service, and finally an HDTV set.

For the set you can choose from an integrated HDTV, which has a digital tuner, also known as an ATSC tuner, built in. If a station near you is broadcasting in HDTV, you can attach an antenna to an integrated set and watch the station in high definition. Or you can purchase an HDTV-ready set, also called an HDTV monitor, which does not have an HDTV tuner. HDTV-ready sets often have NTSC tuners, so you can still watch analogue TV with them. Your picture quality will still be better than on your old TV, but it won't be high definition until you get an HDTV receiver.

Once you've picked up your set and installed it in your home, you'll need to get a signal. To get a signal, you can use:

**Antenna** – Depending on your location relative to the stations you want to watch, a small antenna may suffice, but otherwise you might need a rooftop or attic antenna. You can buy an antenna that's specifically made for digital signals, but any reliable VHF/UHF antenna will work.

**Cable** – Remember that digital cable is not the same as HDTV. Check with your provider to find out which packages include HDTV stations. You'll also either need a set-top cable box or a CableCARDTM to allow your television to receive and decode the cable signal.

**Satellite service** – As with cable, check with your provider to find out which plans and stations use HDTV signals. You may need a different satellite dish and tuner to receive HDTV signals via satellite.

Sharleen Standling is a proud contributing author. Find more articles at

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