

TechTalk tips

HDTV Boot Camp

Government Deadline: June 12, 2009

- All analog broadcasts from TV towers will stop
- Only affects you if you currently get your TV using an antenna (rabbit ears or roof-mounted)

Converter Boxes

- The government will provide up to two \$40 coupons to help defray the cost of a digital to analog television converter box.
- Go to www.dtv2009.gov or call **1-888-DTV-2009** to apply for your coupon(s).

HDTV Terminology

- An HDTV picture is composed of hundreds of tiny horizontal lines.
- The more lines, the greater the “resolution.” Traditional TV maxes out at **480** horizontal lines, while HDTV is made of **720** or **1080** lines.
- In traditional television, two fields consisting of every other line are played in quick succession. This is called **interlace scan** mode (e.g., **480i**).
- In many HDTVs, the picture is drawn one entire frame at a time. This is called **progressive scan** mode (e.g., **720p**) and is especially good for action movies and sports.

HDTV Resolution requirements

In order for a TV to be considered high definition, it must be **720p**, **1080i** or **1080p**. Some experts suggest that unless your HDTV is over 50 inches, you won't be able to see the difference between resolutions.

Native Resolution

When you're buying an HDTV, learn what its native resolution is. It is the sharpest resolution of the TV. Generally speaking, it's better to have a native resolution of 1280x720 or 1920x1080 than a screen with a nonstandard resolution.

Screen Mounting Height

The middle of the screen should be at eye level

Screen Size Recommendations

- 42" screen for 4.4' to 5.8' from HDTV
- 52" screen for 5.2' to 6.9' from HDTV
- 65" screen for 6.7' to 8.8' from HDTV

Note: Multiply a screen's height by 2.5 to 3.3 to get the optimal distance to your viewing position.

Screen Technologies

- **DLP:** A good bang for your buck choice. Is usually bulkier than other designs.
- **LCD:** Bright, light and energy efficient, LCD screens are a fine choice for many applications, especially if a home theater computer will be attached.
- **Plasma:** The best image quality if you can control the light in your room. Note: many small plasmas (42" or less) have surprisingly low native resolution.

TV Connection Types

An HDTV with a large variety and number of connections will give you the maximum possible flexibility. Listed in order of preference:

- **HDMI:** All digital signal with built-in audio
- **DVI:** The same digital signal without audio
- **VGA:** The best analog HDTV signal available—very useful if you want to connect a computer to your TV.
- **Component:** Another analog HDTV capable connection. You'll often find this on cable boxes and digital video recorders (DVRs).
- **S-Video:** An analog connection not capable of HD.
- **Composite:** The lowest form of analog video connection. It is not capable of carrying HD video.

Factors to consider when purchasing

- Characteristics of the room
- Number and type of inputs on TV
- Wall mountable screen?
- Good remote control?
- Built in digital (ATSC) tuner?
- Return policy and warranty coverage/length



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MBO/ March 2008