

The TV Antenna Making A Comeback

After this year's cable and satellite rate increases, the average American is now spending \$550 a year on basic cable television. With declining middle class incomes and increasing energy and health care costs busting the budget, something had to give. Increasingly, it is cable and satellite TV. Now consumers are combining the past with the future to find a cheaper way to watch television — over the air “free TV” with streamed online video entertainment. Many broadcasters even offer extra channels that are made possible through digital signal compression.

Some marketers are **going over the top** with the renewed interest in over the air television, pitching “futuristic” television antennas at a steep price to customers who want to cut cable's cord. While your parents and grandparents were well-acquainted with antenna technology, today's younger generations are not, and are overpaying for antennas you can find for a fraction of the price at Wal-Mart.

The concept of cord cutting is simple. You can watch live sporting events and local news and network shows from over-the-air broadcasters and catch up on favorite movies and TV series streaming shows online. The days of the snowy picture are over since the country converted to digital TV. But in many cases, an antenna is essential to getting the best reception.

Satellite and cable companies are trying to compete, offering discounts and, in some cases, pared down packages. But prices will need to come down further: the average video streamer and over-the-air viewer pays \$180 a year on average for a premium streaming package from Netflix, Hulu or other online viewing option.