

5 Tips for Buying a New TV

Before you head to the store or browse online to purchase a TV, make sure you know what features are important to you. Consider how you plan to use the TV and the best time to buy to save yourself some time and—most importantly—money.

1. How much detail you want to see

Many TVs are LED, meaning they're LCD TVs that use LEDs (light-emitting diodes) in addition to cold cathode fluorescent lamps to light the screen. OLED TVs use organic light-emitting diodes that allow them to produce perfect black and true-to-life colors in the same image, while LED TVs can only get close.

In terms of resolution, 1080p high-definition TVs boast 1,920 pixels horizontally and 1,080 vertically. Ultra-high-definition 4K TVs have a resolution of 3,840 by 2,160 pixels—they're often called 2160p. So, 4K TVs have almost four times the number of pixels as those with 1080p resolution, meaning you can see the picture in finer detail on a 4K set.

2. What you plan to watch

If you like action-packed shows or sports, you'll want to pay attention to the refresh rate when choosing your next TV. Refresh rate is how often the image changes on the screen. TVs with a refresh rate of 60 hertz (Hz) refresh the picture 60 times each second. With a lower refresh rate, you may experience motion blur, or a slightly blurred picture.

Some 4k and OLED TVs are capable of 120 Hz, which reduces motion blur. But be careful; some models list the refresh rate in a way that's misleading. If the supposed rate uses a modifier and isn't explicit, the true refresh rate is probably less than what it claims to be.

3. The size of your space

TV screens are measured diagonally, so a 40-inch set may only measure about 36 inches across. If you're searching for a television for a kitchen or small bedroom, it's best to not choose anything larger than a 32-inch set. For living room or game room sets, search out 50- to 65-inch displays.

Another factor is distance from the screen. For 1080p TVs, it's recommended that you remain 1.6 to 2.5 times the diagonal measurement away from the display. For a 55-inch screen, you'll want to sit at least 88 inches (7.3 feet) away for optimal viewing. However, it's recommended you sit much closer to a 4K TV to enjoy all the extra detail. So, if you have a 55-inch 4K television, you can prop your couch 4.5 feet—the diagonal length of the display—away from the screen.

4. How much you want to spend

Bottom line: how much is this all going to cost? Although all of the features included with your dream TV are new and exciting, it's important to consider your budget.

If you don't plan on spending more than \$500, a new OLED TV is out of the question right now. That price will drop as the technology becomes more common, but it's difficult to find low prices on current models. The biggest discounts—and sometimes, the best deals—will be on older models. Setting a base price before you dive into comparing sets will save you from falling in love with something you can't afford.

5. The best time to buy

Price limitations aside, the time of year you purchase the TV can drastically change what specs you can get on a budget. Spring, when new TVs are introduced, is often the worst time of year to buy the latest model; November or February are typically your best bets.

During a great TV sales year, prices will be lowest in the weeks before Black Friday. If retailers didn't sell as many sets as anticipated, the discounted stock could sell for as much as 50 percent off the following spring. For example, a 55-inch OLED TV launched at \$2,300 in spring 2017 but dropped to \$1,600 a year later.

The process may seem overwhelming at first, but with the proper planning, you'll go home with the perfect TV for your family, home and budget.

