BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

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Find the Local Channels You Already Pay For

Your local ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX — and where to watch them, free or already included

Plain-English TV help from:

Bill's Home Tech

Portage County, Ohio

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

Your local ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX are easier to get than they seem, often free or already included. A simple antenna pulls them in free over the air with no monthly fee — connect it, set the TV to Antenna, and run the channel scan; search “TV antenna signal locator” to see what your address can get.

The networks' own apps (and Peacock for NBC, Paramount+ for CBS) let you catch missed shows. Live-TV streaming services include locals for a monthly fee — confirm yours are carried first. And if you still have cable, its app streams your locals at no extra cost.

The main thing is not to pay twice for channels an antenna gives you free.

1 The Short Version

Your local network channels are more reachable than they seem once you have moved to streaming. You can get them free over the air with a simple antenna, through the networks' own free apps, or included in a live-TV streaming service or your existing cable subscription's app. The trick is knowing which route fits your situation — and that often one of them is free.

This guide lays out each way to get your locals, so you can pick the one that costs you the least for the channels you want.

- A simple antenna gets your local channels free, forever, with no monthly fee.
- The networks' own apps offer some local content, sometimes free.
- Live-TV streaming services include locals, but for a monthly fee.
- Your existing cable subscription likely includes an app that streams your locals.

GOOD TO KNOW

Before paying for anything, remember that your local channels broadcast free over the air — a one-time antenna, with no monthly cost ever, may be all you need for the local news and network shows. It is the only truly free option, and for many homes it is enough on its own.

2 What "Local Channels" Really Means

"Local channels" usually means the major broadcast networks as they come to your area — ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, and often PBS and a few smaller ones — carrying your local news and weather alongside the national network shows. These are the channels that, in the old days, came free over an antenna or were the basic tier of cable.

When people say streaming made them "lose their locals," they usually mean they can no longer easily watch the local news or catch a network show live. But those channels are still broadcasting, and still available through several routes — it is only a matter of reconnecting to them in the streaming world.

GOOD TO KNOW

The local news, in particular, is what most people miss when they cut cable — and it is also the easiest to get back, since local stations broadcast free over the air and increasingly stream their news online too. You rarely have to pay to get your local news back.

3 The Free Way: An Antenna

The oldest way is still the best value: a simple indoor or outdoor antenna pulls in your local channels free, over the air, with no monthly fee ever. Modern broadcasts are in high definition, often sharper than cable, and once the antenna is set up there is nothing more to pay.

1. Get an indoor antenna (inexpensive) or an outdoor/attic one for weaker areas.
2. Connect it to the antenna socket on the back of the TV.
3. Set the TV's input or tuner to “Antenna” or “Air.”
4. Run the TV's channel scan (Auto Program) to find all the channels it can receive.
5. Position the antenna higher and near a window, toward the towers, for the most channels.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> An antenna is the only way to watch local channels with no ongoing cost at all — you buy it once and watch free for years. For anyone who mainly wants the local news, network shows, and sports, it is often the single best money-saver in all of television.

4 How Many Channels Will an Antenna Get?

How many channels an antenna pulls in depends on where you live and how far you are from the broadcast towers. In and near towns you may get dozens; farther out, hills and distance reduce what reaches you. It is worth knowing roughly what to expect before you buy.

- Online coverage maps estimate your channels — search “TV antenna signal locator” and enter your address.
- Close to the towers, a small indoor antenna may get plenty.
- Farther out, an outdoor or attic antenna reaches much more than an indoor one.
- Hills, dense trees, and large buildings genuinely block signals, whatever the antenna.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> Working out what an antenna can realistically pull in at your address — and choosing and placing the right one — is part science and part local knowledge of where the towers sit around Portage County. I am glad to sort that out, so you get the most channels your location allows rather than guessing with the wrong antenna in the wrong spot.

5 The Networks' Own Apps

Each major network has its own app, and these offer a mix of free and sign-in content — often letting you catch recent episodes, and sometimes watch live, depending on the network and whether you have a TV provider to sign in with.

- The ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX apps each carry recent episodes of their shows.
- Some let you watch live if you sign in with a cable or streaming-TV account.
- NBC's content lives largely in Peacock; CBS's in Paramount+; these have free and paid tiers.
- Your local station may also have its own app with a free local news stream.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> The networks have reorganized their streaming over the years — much of NBC now sits in Peacock and much of CBS in Paramount+ — but recent network episodes and some live content remain reachable through the apps. For catching a show you missed, the network's app is often the simplest route.

6 Live-TV Streaming Services

Several streaming services bundle live local channels together with cable-style channels, delivered over the internet — a cable replacement without the box. They include your locals but carry a monthly fee, so they suit people who want the full live-TV experience.

- These services carry your local ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX along with many cable channels.
- They work over the internet on your streaming device, no cable box needed.
- They cost a monthly fee, often comparable to a slimmed-down cable package.
- Most offer a free trial, so you can confirm your locals are included before committing.

GOOD TO KNOW

Before signing up for a live-TV service, check that it actually carries your particular local stations — coverage varies by area, and the service's website will confirm your locals when you enter your address. The free trial is also a good moment to make sure the local news channels you want are really there.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

7 The App You Already Pay For

If you still have cable or satellite, you very likely already have access to an app that streams your local channels on your phone, tablet, and TV — included in what you pay, at no extra cost. Many people pay for this without ever using it.

1. Find your TV provider's app — for example the one named for your cable company.
2. Install it on your streaming device, phone, or tablet.
3. Sign in with your cable or satellite account details.
4. Your local channels and much of your lineup stream right there, included.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you are keeping cable anyway, its app often lets you watch your locals and more on every device in the house at no extra charge — a benefit people routinely overlook. It is worth setting up simply because you are already paying for it.

8 Which Route Is Right for You?

With several ways to get your locals, the best one depends on what you want and what you already pay for. A moment's thought saves you from paying twice for channels you could get free.

If you want…	Best route
Local news and network shows, free	An antenna — one-time cost, no monthly fee
To catch a show you missed	The network's own app
A full live-TV, cable-like lineup	A live-TV streaming service (monthly fee)
To use what you already pay for	Your cable/satellite provider's app

For many households the honest answer is an antenna for the free local news and network shows, topped up with the networks' apps to catch anything missed — all at no monthly cost. A paid live-TV service makes sense mainly if you want a broad cable-style lineup, and your existing provider's app is the obvious choice if you are keeping cable regardless.

9 Local Sports and Live Events

Live sports and big events are where local channels earn their keep for many people, and they are also where getting the right route matters most, since a game is no good the day after. The happy news is that much local sport airs on the broadcast networks, which an antenna gets free and in crisp high definition.

- Many games and events air on ABC, NBC, CBS, or FOX — free over an antenna.
- The networks' apps may stream some live sport if you sign in with a TV provider.
- Live-TV streaming services carry the sports channels, for a monthly fee.
- Some leagues have their own apps or services for games not on broadcast TV.

GOOD TO KNOW

For the big nationally-broadcast games, an antenna often delivers them free and looking sharper than cable ever did. It is only the games on dedicated sports channels that generally need a paid service — so for casual sports watching, the free antenna goes a surprisingly long way.

10 Tidy Up Your Local Channels

Once you have your locals — whether by antenna or through an app — a little organizing makes them pleasant to reach, so the local news or a network show is always a button or two away rather than a hunt.

1. On an antenna setup, use the TV's channel menu to hide blank channels and mark your locals as favorites.
2. In an app or streaming service, add your local channels or shows to a favorites or watchlist.
3. Note which channel number or app each of your regular locals lives on.
4. Keep that short list by the TV, so anyone can find the local news quickly.

TIP

A simple note — “local news is channel 8.1” or “use the NBC app for the evening news” — taped by the TV means anyone in the house can find the locals without hunting. It is a small kindness that saves a lot of “where did the news go?” moments.

11 Don't Pay Twice

The most common mistake is paying for local channels through a streaming service when you could get them free with an antenna, or paying for a service while already having access through cable. A little checking keeps you from doubling up.

- If you have cable, use its app for locals before paying a streaming service for the same.

- If you mainly want free local news and shows, an antenna beats any monthly fee.
- Check whether a live-TV service's locals duplicate what your antenna already gets free.
- Add up whether a paid service is really worth it just for channels you can get free.

WATCH OUT

It is easy to end up paying a monthly fee for local channels that are broadcasting free over the air right past your house. Before committing to a paid route, make sure you are not paying for something a one-time antenna would give you at no ongoing cost.

12 One-Time Cost vs. Forever Fees

It is worth pausing on the simple economics, because they are striking. An antenna is a one-time purchase — you buy it once and watch your local channels free for as many years as it lasts, which is usually a very long time. A streaming service that carries your locals, by contrast, charges every single month, forever, for channels that are broadcasting past your house for free.

Over a few years the difference is large. A modest antenna can pay for itself within the first month or two compared with a paid route, and everything after that is free. For anyone whose main interest is the local news, network shows, and the big broadcast sports and events, the antenna is very often the thriftiest choice in all of television — and the picture is frequently sharper than cable delivered.

- An antenna: buy once, watch free for years — no monthly fee ever.
- A paid service for locals: a fee every month, indefinitely.
- The antenna often pays for itself within a month or two.
- Free broadcasts are frequently in sharper high definition than cable's version.

> *Your local channels are broadcasting free past your house right now — an antenna simply catches them, once, for years of news and shows at no monthly cost.*

13 When to Call Bill

Finding your local channels is usually a matter of picking the right route, and this guide lays them out. But choosing and placing an antenna for your address, setting up the apps, and making sure you are not paying twice are all things I am glad to handle — and knowing the towers around here, I can get you the most channels for the least money.

I come to you, work out the best way to get your locals for your home and budget, set it up, and confirm it works — whether that is the right antenna in the right spot, your provider's app, or a live-TV service that genuinely carries your stations. I leave you with your local news and network shows back, at the lowest cost that fits what you want.

- You want an antenna chosen and placed for the most channels at your address.
- You are not sure which route gets your locals for the least money.
- You want help setting up the network or cable-provider apps.
- You suspect you are paying for local channels you could get free.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this handy. Your locals are reachable — often free or already included.

I want to...	Do this...
Get locals free	An antenna connect to the TV, set input to Antenna, run the channel scan
Know what you'll get	Search “TV antenna signal locator” and enter your address
Catch a missed show	Use the network's own app (ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX / Peacock / Paramount+)
Full live-TV lineup	A live-TV streaming service — check it carries your locals first (monthly fee)
Use what you pay for	Your cable/satellite provider's app streams your locals, included
Don't pay twice	Don't pay a service for locals an antenna gives you free
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

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