

TiVo-like DVR system called Windows Media Center. When paired with an inexpensive TV tuner and a decent antenna, it lets you watch and record broadcast television--in high-def!

The PC part is up to you. It can be a laptop or desktop, as long as it runs Windows 7 Home Premium, Professional, or Ultimate. (Windows 7 Starter doesn't come with Windows Media Center, nor does Windows 7 Enterprise.)

You'll also need a reasonably large hard drive with a decent chunk of free space. A one-hour recorded TV show can easily consume 7-8GB, so if you're envisioning recording multiple episodes of multiple shows, make sure you have ample storage to spare.

Before we talk tuners, make sure you live in an area that gets decent over-the-air (OTA) reception of local channels. A site called [AntennaWeb.org](http://AntennaWeb.org) can answer that question for you and tell you what kind of antenna you might need to get. (If you're already watching OTA shows on your TV, just without a PC in the mix, you're all set.)



Your antenna will screw into the tuner, which in turn will plug into one of your PC's USB ports. Then you'll run Windows Media Center and walk through the TV setup process.

So, what kind of tuner should you get? I recommend sticking with a well-known brand like Hauppauge, just to ensure proper compatibility with Windows Media Center. I've had good luck with the [WinTV-HVR-950Q](http://www.pcworld.com/shopping/detail/prtprdid,85662262-sortby,retailer/pricing.html),

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which has a list price of \$99 but routinely sells online for around \$75. The tuner enables the PC to display and record broadcast TV shows.