

The Right Antenna for the Job

For hikes and other outdoor activities, the so-called rubber duck antenna that came with your handheld transceiver will let you communicate over several miles, depending on the surrounding terrain. If you want greater range in all directions, consider a larger antenna, such as the ground-plane design described on page 16.

For radiosporting on VHF and UHF, including foxhunting, you'll want a directional antenna, such as a Yagi. Directional antennas focus your signal like a flashlight beam, maximizing your power and bringing in weak signals you wouldn't otherwise hear.

Satellite communication is best with directional antennas. Satellites are hundreds and even thousands of miles away, so you'll need a dual-band (VHF/UHF) directional antenna to concentrate your power.

On the HF frequencies, wire antennas such as the multiband dipole antenna described on page 19, are good choices. There are directional antennas for HF frequencies as well, but they are large and expensive. If you're not ready for that, a wire antenna will do just fine.