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Smart Ideas: Things that will cost less this year

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One of the great things about technology is that we can count on prices dropping at a steady clip over time on the things we want most. The more demand, the faster the electronics industry seems to satisfy us with new, cheaper products. Here are some examples:

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Blu-ray player. You'll probably see a lot of Blu-Ray players bundled as extras with TVs, but you'll also see them as doorbusters.

Kindle e-book reader. Because \$99 is a major inflection point for consumer adoption, it was always the inevitable price for the Kindle. You'll pay just slightly more for newer models.

55-inch HDTV. The prices for 55-inch LCD HDTVs are now where 46-inch LCD HDTVs were in 2008.

Wii system bundles. Expect more price drops as new models come out and competition drives down prices.

Full-size digital SLR cameras. In 2011, these high-powered cameras will start to cost what point-and-shoots cost a few years ago. Why go for ridiculously high megapixel counts in a digital camera when you can get a great SLR instead?

15- or 16-inch dual-core laptop. Last year's \$300 laptop, now \$199, is today's cheap grab for those who still want computing power, but want to pay what they would for a netbook or a cheap Android tablet.

17-inch dual-core laptop. This basic desktop replacement, with a dual-core processor and at least 4 gigabytes of RAM, will drop even further in price.

Portable GPS. About \$40 appears to be the floor in GPS prices. As people have turned to their smart phones and in-car models, portable GPS manufacturers are desperately adding features, driving up prices for new models.

iPhone 3GS. This price drop is already here, for an 8 gig 3GS phone in 2011, at least. Prices will drop for other models, but you'll likely not see the 3GS on sale new for too much longer.

- dealnews

Watching your back

Beat the blues on a budget

Tiffany Fluhme, chief executive of Fluhme Beauty, doesn't believe women have to deny themselves to help balance the checkbook. Her tips for beauty and wellness on a budget include:

Skin care. You don't have to spend a fortune on high-end skin care to see results. There are over-the-counter products available that use similar ingredients as those sold at the dermatologist's office. Look for products that contain ingredients such as Retinol, Hyaluronic Acid, vitamin C and Matrixyl, and you'll see great results without the exorbitant cost.

Makeup. When using a great affordable skin care line, exceeding your budget on your makeup is unnecessary. Try a great tinted moisturizer with an SPF and a mineral pressed powder. And don't forget: A beautiful shade of lipstick or lip gloss is an instant pick me up for your look and your mood.

Working out. When the recession hit, many women eliminated their gym memberships, but you don't need a gym to stay fit. Pop in a workout DVD, take a jog around the block, or work out at home with a pair of dumbbells and a jump-rope. Exercise releases essential endorphins, which contribute to a great sense of well being.

- Tiffany Fluhme

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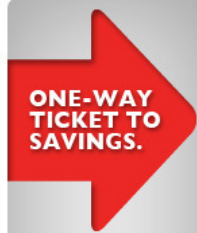
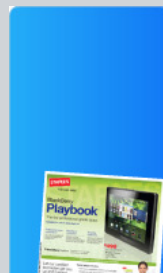


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