

CUT THE CORD

A GUIDE FOR NEW CORD CUTTERS



1

TAKE STOCK

Assess the costs and devices you have right now, and that you plan to use for streaming:

- Smart TV (that connects to the Internet) or media streamer?
- Own your own modem and router, or renting from your Internet provider?
- Internet speed fast enough to stream?

2

SET BUDGET

What do you plan to spend per month?

This amount will determine your monthly subscription costs. (And don't forget to factor in monthly Internet costs!) Remember to make room in your budget for one-time purchases, like a media streamer or antenna.

WHAT TO WATCH

3

Questions to ask when selecting a streaming service (or services):

- Do you prefer to watch on your own schedule, or watch live?
- Do you prefer to watch ad-free?
- Do you need to record for later viewings?
- What channels are your must-haves?
- What shows are your must-haves?

4

HOW TO WATCH

- Select a media streaming device that works for your television, and that supports the services you plan to use.
- Consider an indoor HDTV antenna for local channels.

Reminders:

Monthly subscriptions mean you can cancel at any time.

Many services offer free trials - be sure to explore their library and layout.

See following pages for links and recommended review sources.

What Can You Stream?

On-demand Streaming

Reminder: you pay for these services on a month-to-month basis. Because there are no long-term contracts, you can cancel at any time. Some may offer the option for an annual subscription, indicated by an asterisk (*).

What you'll need:

- An account with the service (including email address and password), and a method of payment
- Internet speed that meets the minimum recommendation

Major Streaming Services

- **Amazon Prime Video*** Also offers “add-on” services from providers like BritBox, HBO, and more: <https://www.amazon.com/>
- **Hulu** Also offers “add-on” services from providers like HBO, Showtime, and more: <https://www.hulu.com/welcome>
- **Netflix:** <https://www.netflix.com/>

Newer Streaming Services

- **Acorn TV*:** <https://acorn.tv/>
- **Apple TV Plus:** <https://www.apple.com/apple-tv-plus/>
- **BritBox*:** <https://www.britbox.com/us/>
- **CBS All Access** Mix of on-demand and live streaming: <https://www.cbs.com/all-access/>
- **Disney Plus*** Subscribe alone, or bundle with ESPN + and Hulu (ad-supported version): <https://www.disneyplus.com/>
- **HBO Max:** <https://www.hbomax.com/>
- **Peacock** Includes a free, ad-supported tier: <https://www.peacocktv.com/>

Things to look for in an on-demand streaming service:

- Cost
- Number of simultaneous streams (AKA, how many people can watch at once, while using different devices)
- Ad-supported or ad-free versions
- Movies and series you want to watch
- Free trials: try before you buy

Live Streaming

Reminder: you pay for these services on a month-to-month basis. Because there are no long-term contracts, you can cancel at any time. Some may offer the option for an annual subscription, indicated by an asterisk (*).

What you'll need:

- An account with the service (including email address and password), and a method of payment
- Internet speed that meets the minimum recommendation

Major Streaming Services:

- **Hulu + Live TV** Includes (ad-supported) Hulu on-demand: <https://www.hulu.com/Live-tv>
- **Sling TV:** <https://www.sling.com/>
- **YouTube TV:** <https://tv.youtube.com/>

Additional Live Streaming Services

- **AT&T TV Now:** <https://www.attvnow.com/>
- **FuboTV** Big focus on sports: <https://www.fubo.tv/welcome>
- **Philo TV** Lowest priced: <https://www.philo.com/>

Things to look for in a live streaming service:

- Cost
- Number of simultaneous streams (AKA, how many people can watch at once, while using different devices)
- Cable channels you want to watch
- Local and news channel availability
- Cloud DVR to record for later viewing. Check for storage space and duration of storage

Reviews and Price Comparisons for Live and On-Demand Streaming Services

- **PCMag:** Best Video Streaming Services <https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-video-streaming-services>
- **PCMag:** Best Sports Streaming Services https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-sports-streaming-services?test_uid=01jrZgWNXhmA3ocG7ZHxevj&test_variant=b
- **Reviews.org:** <https://www.reviews.org/tv-service/best-streaming-service/>
- **Tom's Guide:** Best Cable Replacements <https://www.tomsguide.com/us/best-cable-replacements,review-4387.html>

- **Tom's Guide:** Best Streaming Services for 2020 <https://www.tomsguide.com/us/best-streaming-video-services,review-2625.html>

Free Streaming from Your Library

These services are available on your mobile device, media streamer, and on your computer. Sign up for an account using your Upper Arlington Public Library card number and PIN; and your email address.

Learn more at <http://media.ualibrary.org/>

Hoopla offers movies and television, plus music, e-audiobooks, and e-books

- <https://www.hoopladigital.com/>
- Guide to getting started: <https://www.ualibrary.org/mediasvc/guides/hoopla>

Kanopy offers documentaries, independent and foreign cinema, and access to the Great Courses series

- <https://ualibrary.kanopy.com/>
- Guide to getting started: <https://www.ualibrary.org/mediasvc/guides/kanopy>

Watch our how-to video:

How to Watch Hoopla and Kanopy on Your TV: <https://youtu.be/kR2bDg68zWs>

This video demonstrates apps on a Roku device. For assistance with Hoopla and Kanopy using other media streamers, visit their help pages:

- Hoopla: <https://www.hoopladigital.com/help>
- Kanopy: <https://help.kanopy.com/hc/en-us/articles/360019042413-Kanopy-TV-Apps>

Free Streaming Resources

Reminder: the majority of these services do not require an account. Those requiring an account are indicated by an asterisk (*). Watch free at any time on your television, or through your laptop, smartphone, or tablet.

Browse the libraries and channels available for each service on their websites. They will look different depending on the device you use.

- **Crackle** <https://www.crackle.com/>
- **IMDbtv*** Available from Amazon. Account required if you do not sign in through your Prime Video or Fire TV account. <https://www.imdb.com/tv/>
- **PlutoTV** <https://pluto.tv/welcome>
- **Roku Channel** Available on Roku devices, or available to watch online <https://www.roku.com/whats-on/the-roku-channel>
- **Tubi** <https://tubitv.com/>

This is not a complete list of free streaming resources. We recommend the following review sources to learn more:

- CNET: Best Free TV Streaming Services <https://www.cnet.com/how-to/best-free-tv-streaming-services-peacock-plex-pluto-tv-roku-imdb-tv-crackle-and-more/>
- Consumer Reports: Guide to Free Streaming Video Services <https://www.consumerreports.org/streaming-video-services/guide-to-free-streaming-video-services/>
- Digital Trends: The Best Free Streaming TV Services Right Now <https://www.digitaltrends.com/movies/best-free-streaming-services/>
- Reviews.org: Best Free Streaming Services <https://www.reviews.org/tv-service/best-free-streaming-services/>

Where Can I Stream That?

Search for movies and series to see which streaming services, whether free or subscription-based, make them available.

- JustWatch: <https://www.justwatch.com/>
- ReelGood: <https://reelgood.com/>

Check Your Internet Speed

Make sure your Internet speed works for the services you want to stream!

Speed test websites used in our Cut the Cord video series:

- Speedtest.net: <https://www.speedtest.net/>
- Fast.com: <https://fast.com/>

See these articles for additional recommendations:

- Consumer Reports <https://www.consumerreports.org/broadband/internet-fast-enough-for-streaming-broadband-speed/>
- Lifewire: <https://www.lifewire.com/how-to-test-your-internet-speed-2617987>
- PCMag: <https://www.pcmag.com/how-to/how-to-check-your-internet-speed>

Devices to Consider

Media Streamers

A media streaming device - sometimes called a media streamer, streamer, or streaming player - connects your TV to the streaming service of your choice. First, connect the streamer to your TV; then, connect your Internet to the streamer; and finally, use the streamer to connect to and watch your streaming services.

Streaming devices are available at a variety of price points and come in different models. The most common models are set-top boxes and “stick” devices that plug in to your TV.

Popular brands of streaming devices include:

- [Amazon Fire TV](#): Amazon Fire TVs connect with your Amazon account and your Amazon Echo for Alexa voice control
- [Apple TV](#): Apple TVs connect with your Apple ID, so you can link your Apple account and other Apple devices
- [Chromecast](#) from Google. Chromecasts do not have a separate remote: you will need to use your phone or tablet to control your television.
- [Roku](#)

Things to consider when purchasing a media streamer:

- Is the cost within your budget?
- Is it easy to install and troubleshoot?
- Is it easy to find apps and connect to your services?
- Is it easy to add apps to its interface?
- Does it offer the apps for streaming services you want to watch?
- Does your Internet speed meet the device requirements, and does the media streamer support the resolution of the streaming service you plan to use (i.e., 4K, Ultra HD)?

Reminder: whether you purchase a media streamer or a smart TV, it is a one-time purchase that does not require a monthly fee. Just make sure to factor that cost into your cord cutter budget!

Media streamer reviews and price comparisons:

- **CNET**: <https://www.cnet.com/news/best-streamer-of-2020-roku-apple-tv-fire-stick-chromecast-with-google-tv-and-more-compared/>
- **Consumer Reports**: <https://www.consumerreports.org/cro/tvs/buying-guide/index.htm>
- **Digital Trends**: <https://www.digitaltrends.com/home-theater/best-streaming-devices/>

- **Wirecutter:** <https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-media-streamers/>

Antennas

Are you thinking of purchasing an antenna, so that you can keep your over-the-air local channels for free, even after you've cut the cable cord?

Find your channel range:

- Antenna Web: <https://antennaweb.org/>
- TV Fool: <http://tvfool.com/>

Reminder: An antenna is a one-time purchase that does not require a monthly fee, but make sure to factor the cost into your cord cutter budget!

Antenna reviews and price comparisons:

- **No Cable:** <https://nocable.org/reviews/most-popular-dtv-antennas/>
- **Wirecutter:** <https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-indoor-hdtv-antenna/>

Try before you buy:

The Upper Arlington Public Library circulates three indoor antennas so that you can test how they work with your television:

- 1byone Amplified Indoor HDTV Antenna: up to 50-mile range
- Mohu Leaf Indoor HDTV Antenna: up to 30-mile range
- TS-ant Indoor Digital HDTV Antenna: up to 150-mile range

Call us to request an antenna, or submit your request through our catalog, at catalog.ualibrary.org.

WiFi Routers

If you are looking for ways to cut costs on your monthly bills, consider a one-time purchase of a wi-fi router, versus paying the monthly rental fee through your Internet Service Provider. (This is not a requirement to cut the cable cord, and you can purchase a router whether or not you plan to cut the cord at all.) Upgrading your router may also help with a slow Internet connection, especially if you are relying on that connection to stream at the highest quality and on multiple devices. Mesh routers in particular are helpful for larger homes, since they create a satellite network of connections throughout your home.

Reminder: depending on the router, the up-front cost may be high, so be sure to compare the total cost to the amount you are paying per month!

Router reviews and price comparisons:

- **Consumer Reports:** <https://www.consumerreports.org/wireless-routers/best-wireless-routers-of-the-year/>
- <https://www.consumerreports.org/wireless-routers/best-mesh-routers-of-the-year/>
- *You can access Consumer Reports with your UA Library card! Visit ualibrary.org reference to sign in with your card.*
- **Cord Cutting:** <https://cordcutting.com/devices/wireless-routers/best/>
- **Wirecutter:** <https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-wi-fi-router/>

Creating a Budget

These resource guides will help you establish a cord-cutting budget:

- **Cord Cutters News:** <https://www.cordcuttersnews.com/the-beginners-guide-to-cord-cutting-2020/>
- **Cord Cutting:** <https://cordcutting.com/blog/cord-cutting-calculator/>
- **Lifewire:** <https://www.lifewire.com/cable-tv-alternatives-save-money-4138322>
- **PCMag:** <https://www.pcmag.com/news/the-ultimate-cord-cutters-guide>
- **Roku:** <https://www.roku.com/how-it-works/stream-and-save/how-to-cut-the-cord>
- **Untangle TV:** <http://untangle.tv/home>

Recommended General Resources for Cord Cutters

- **CNET:** <http://cnet.com/>
- **Consumer Reports** available through the Upper Arlington Public Library Reference Department <https://www.ualibrary.org/reference>
- **Digital Trends:** <https://www.digitaltrends.com/>
- **PCMag:** <https://www.pcmag.com/>
- **Tom's Guide:** <https://tomsguide.com/>
- **The Wirecutter:** <https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/>

Contact the Media Services Department with your questions:

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