



The Fiber Download

Beginners Guide To Cutting The Cord

Should I cut the cord?

Before we dive into how to cut the cord, step back and think about whether you should. Consider the following:

Are you paying at least \$50 per month for TV service? Most live TV streaming services start at \$50 to \$55 per month.

Do you already have home internet service? If you're paying for internet and use it, cord-cutting will probably make financial sense. We don't recommend using your phone's mobile hotspot for internet service if you're cutting the cord.

Are you just tired of cable? Some arguments in favor of cord-cutting aren't strictly about saving money. It's also a way to see fewer ads, unclutter your living room, set up TVs anywhere in the house, and avoid the ritual of haggling for lower rates.

Are you willing to be flexible? You'll need to be comfortable using new technology or new apps, and you might want to consider sacrificing some of what you watched with cable. The more you're willing to adapt, the better your experience will be and the more money you'll save.

Cord-cutting basics

Internet Service: You will need home internet service to cut the cord, along with a Wi-Fi router, so your streaming devices can get online from any part of the house. As a rule of thumb, home internet speeds should be at least 15Mbps for each device you plan to have running at the same time. If you tend to have three TVs playing at once, you'll ideally have home internet speed of at least 45Mbps.

Streaming Services: To replace your TV service, you will subscribe to one or more online video services. These can include on-demand video services such as Netflix or a bundle of live TV channels such as YouTube TV. There are also plenty of free sources of streaming video that you can use to pad your subscriptions.

Streaming Devices: Once you purchase one or more streaming services, you'll access them by downloading their apps on a streaming device, such as Roku's Streaming Stick or Amazon's Fire TV Stick. Each television must have its own way to stream, whether it's through a streaming device or a smart TV. These devices plug into your television's HDMI port and connect to the internet over your home Wi-Fi network or with a Ethernet Connection, and they'll work even if you don't own a smart TV. If you do have a smart TV, you can use it in place of a separate streaming device provided it has all the apps and services you want. **You do not need a smart TV to cut the cord.**

Local Channel Option: Many live streaming services do not include local stations. You can consider adding a rooftop antenna in lieu of buying a service that includes local channels.

How to choose a live TV streaming service

There are currently seven options available in the United States: Sling TV, AT&T TV Now, Hulu with Live TV, YouTube TV, FuboTV, Philo, and AT&T Watch. Each of these services has a different channel lineup, your first step should be to rule out the ones that don't have your channels.

Here are a few resources that can help:

The Streamable's channel finder tool lets you type in the channels, shows, and sports teams you want, then spits out a list of matching services based on your zip code. www.thestreamable.com

Suppose.TV offers a similar channel finder service, it offers some extra tools for refining your search. For instance, you can narrow down services based on which streaming devices they support, or by how many screens you can watch a given service on at the same time. www.suppose.tv

Sites to See

Watch this section for new or popular internet sites you may want to explore.

- www.consumerreports.org
Consumer Reports is an independent, nonprofit member organization that works side by side with consumers for truth, transparency, and fairness in the marketplace.

Glossary of Terms

Streaming Device: The device connects to both the Internet (via Wi-Fi or Ethernet) and your TV (via HDMI), streaming content from channels that are either free or require a monthly subscription. You browse through channels directly on your TV screen via a remote.

Streaming: In simpler terms, streaming is what happens when consumers watch TV or listen to podcasts on Internet-connected devices. With streaming, the media file being played on the client device is stored remotely, and is transmitted a few seconds at a time over the Internet.

Smart TV: The main benefit of a smart TV is access to a large number of channels that offer TV programs, movies, and music without the need to connect a TV antenna or subscribe to a cable/satellite service. Also, some smart TVs provide web browsing, gaming, and access to compatible media content stored on your computer.