

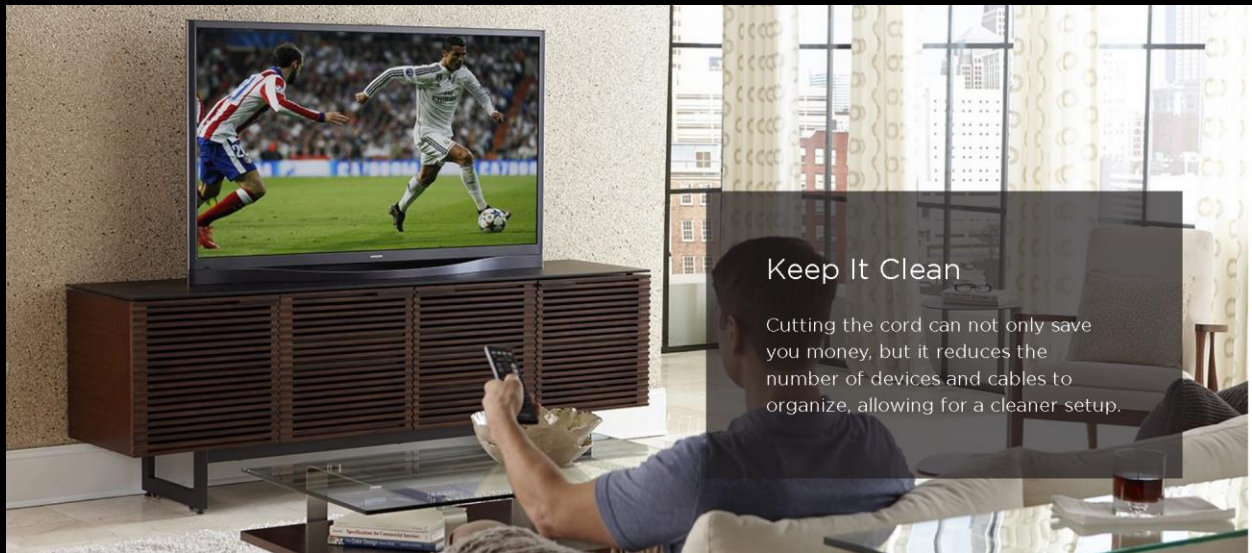


A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CUTTING THE CORD

By now, you've undoubtedly heard the term "cutting the cord" as a cost-effective way to shed a hefty cable bill—along with those hidden and unexplained fees—without sacrificing the ability to catch all of your favorite shows, news programs, and live sports.

More and more viewers are relying less on cable companies—and their binding contracts—and are instead turning to more affordable and flexible streaming alternatives, some of which you may already be paying for. For some, cutting the cord is about saving money—on average, \$1,236 a year—and for others, it's about control and only paying for what you use.

If you've wanted to cut the cord but don't know exactly how to go about doing it, [CordCutters.US](https://www.cordcutters.us) is here to help with this final step-by-step guide.



Step 3: Break Up With the Cable Company, Sort Of

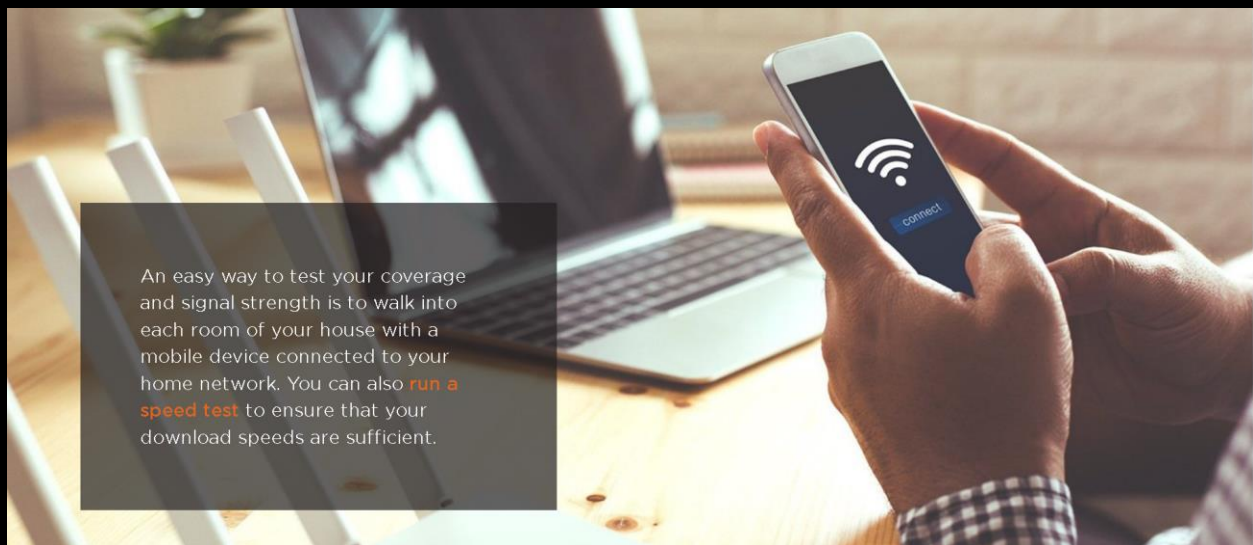
Your first order of business is to make sure that you have good Wi-Fi coverage and download speeds, so go ahead and cancel your cable service, but keep the internet.

Take a moment to assess the number of devices and people in your household that will need to connect to the internet. On average, 100 Mbps download speed will be sufficient for most families, considering that a single 1080p HD stream requires at least 5 Mbps. Still, in homes with multiple smart devices (i.e., Echo, Nest, Ring, smart lighting) or children streaming simultaneously on their tablets and gaming online, you may need to up your service to a higher tier.

You may also have to pay a cancellation fee because of an existing cable contract or if your cable service and internet are tied to the same bundle. However, almost all cable companies

offer a variety of internet-only plans at lower costs. Some may try and talk you into a more expensive bundle, such as an included home phone, but be firm that you only want internet service.

Lastly, now that your Wi-Fi will be doing most of the heavy lifting make sure that your router's range is powerful enough to cover your home's square footage. Most combination modem/routers that the cable company provides will reach every room in the house. Still, larger homes, or homes with brick walls, etc., might benefit from [a mesh network](#) or a more powerful third-party modem and router to cover any dead spots.



An easy way to test your coverage and signal strength is to walk into each room of your house with a mobile device connected to your home network. You can also **run a speed test** to ensure that your download speeds are sufficient.

Step 4: Select a Live TV Service

Next, you'll want to subscribe to a service that allows you to watch and record live television, along with other content

ordinarily available through cable, like local and cable news, HGTV, ESPN, etc., an option that is not available through most on-demand services like Netflix and Disney+.

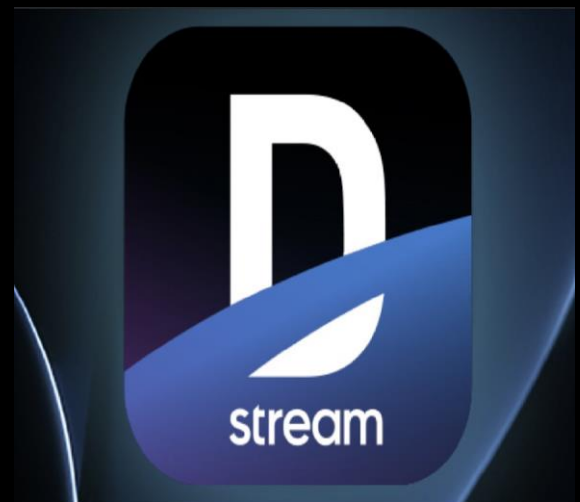
Many live TV services offer a cable-like experience with program guides that you can channel surf, record shows, have full access to on-demand content, and a supporting mobile app to make it easier to discover, favorite, schedule, and watch content across multiple screens and devices.

All of the services below offer free trials, so you can test-drive any options below to find the one that best suits your needs and budget.

DirecTV Steam

Our recommendation for the best live streaming service is [DirecTV Stream](#). It offers the most benefits, including 75 to 150+ channels with a 5 day free trial, you can watch unlimited streams at the same time on up to 20 compatible devices

while on your home network. You can watch up to 3 streams while away from home, and unlimited cloud DVR storage of all your recorded shows. We particularly like the unlimited cloud DVR, as other services will charge you additional fees once you reach a certain limit. Regional Sports Networks for no added



fees and Special offers on Premium Channels. Prices start at \$69.99 a month. [See Packages](#).

The app is available on all streaming devices and, as you watch, it learns what you like and will provide useful recommendations.

YouTube TV

Next up, YouTube TV may be one of two of the other best cable TV alternatives out there. Both offerings are well-regarded for offering all of the major broadcast networks (while competitor Sling TV is missing CBS and ABC) as well as some free perks. It

offers the most benefits, including 100+ channels starting at \$72.99 per month, three simultaneous streams per account, and unlimited cloud DVR storage of all your recorded shows.

[YouTube TV](#) includes premium channels like HBO/Max, Starz, and others at an additional cost and now offers NFL Sunday Ticket. Besides offering three simultaneous streams for no additional cost, you can increase it to six streams by adding a family group to your account.



The app is available on all streaming devices and, as you watch, it learns what you like and will provide useful recommendations.

Hulu + Live TV

The other best cable TV alternatives out there are Hulu Plus Live TV. You're probably familiar with Hulu, but Hulu Plus Live TV offers the same on-demand content of current and past TV shows and movies, but with live programming.



You get 95+ live channels, including sports and news, along with the entire Hulu streaming library. Plans start at \$76.99 a month and you can bundle with other services like Disney+ and ESPN+. They do offer cloud DVR and it's unlimited. A Hulu + Live TV subscription allows you to watch on up to two screens at a time. If you want to enjoy Hulu + Live TV simultaneously on more than two supported devices, you can always add the Unlimited Screens option, so everyone in your household gets to watch at home whenever they want.

If you are already a Hulu subscriber looking to consolidate your cord-cutting entertainment under one service, [Hulu + Live TV](#) might be worth a look.

Sling TV

[Sling TV](#) is currently one of the cheapest Live TV streaming options, and it offers the ability to include additional channels depending on the pricing tier you select.

However, it has a limited choice of local and network channels. For example, its entry and mid-level plans do not offer ESPN, only their highest-priced plan does. Still, you can find other popular live channels like CNN, HGTV, Comedy Central, Discovery, Bravo, and your local NBC affiliate.

Sling's DVR lets you record and watch up to 50 hours of your favorite shows for free or 200 hours for \$5 a month. You can watch Sling on all of your favorite compatible devices, but the number of devices on which content can be watched or 'streamed' at the same time varies based on the service or combined services you're subscribed to.

Philo

If you don't need sports or local stations and news, Philo is a cheap service with a variety of 70+ channels for only \$25 a month.



[Philo](#) offers staples like AMC, Comedy Channel, the Food Network, Nickelodeon, and BBC America, and also includes a cloud DVR and add-ons from Epix and Starz. They tout their cloud DVR as "unlimited". You can record an unlimited amount of live or future shows to your DVR and save them for up to 1 year. Stream on up to three devices at the same time and create up to ten profiles per account.

Generally, most people are better off paying a little more for one of Sling's offerings, but if Philo has the channels you want, it's a decent deal.

FuboTV

[FuboTV](#) offers a wide selection of channels. Its sports focus also makes it especially attractive to soccer and NFL fans since it's one of the only services, alongside YouTube TV and Hulu, with the NFL Network.

Last year, Fubo TV added many new channels, including ESPN and Disney channels, but it also dropped CNN, TNT, and TBS—the latter two also carry a lot of sports content, particularly NBA and MLB.



FuboTV is an excellent streaming service for sports fans that also features many appealing news and entertainment channels for mainstream audiences. Pricing starts at 79.99 specials and free trials are available. 185 to 260 channels available depending upon programming package. While Fubo's on-demand content is limited, each of its plans comes with 1,000 hours of cloud DVR recording.

All current Fubo US-English plans (Pro, Elite, Ultimate) at a minimum include Unlimited Screens, which allows you to stream from ten devices at a time. You can stream Fubo from as many different locations as you'd like, however, you can only stream on connected TV devices from one location at a time.

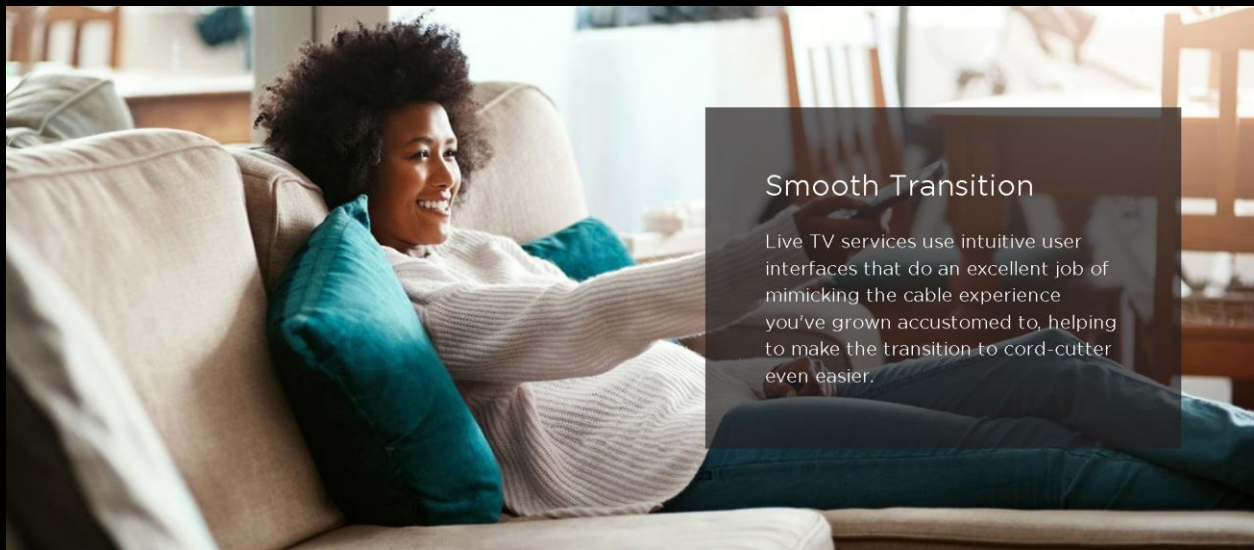
TV Antenna

If free is more your speed, you can connect an antenna (powered or not, indoor or outdoor) to pick up live 720p or 1080i television signals over the air from your local network affiliates and PBS.

It may sound ridiculous, but free broadcast TV offers noticeably higher visual quality than cable. So, if you're only using cable to watch networks like ABC, FOX, CBS, and NBC, you could be wasting up to \$1,000 a year on content you can get in higher quality with a \$15 digital antenna.



The main downside to using an antenna is the inability to record live shows, however, that problem can be quickly solved by using an over-the-air DVR like the [SiliconDust HDHomeRun Tuner](#) or [Tablo TV Tuner](#) . These Tuners not only record like a DVR but also connect to your Wi-Fi network allowing viewing from most any device or Smart TV in or outside of your home.



Step 5: Pick a Streaming Device

Next, you will need a dedicated streaming device to act as the primary hub and user interface to access all of your services and content.

Think of this device as your new "cable box." It is now the main interface you will use to access your live TV streaming service and any other streaming services you may use, such as Netflix, Movies Anywhere, Disney+, Discovery+, and Prime Video.

Most of these devices are a simple and space-saving "dongle" that connects directly to an HDMI port on the side of your television and includes a compatible remote control.

Once your streaming device is installed, you simply download the app for the services you use, consolidating all of your entertainment in one easy-to-use and intuitive interface. Below are some of our recommendations, all of which support up to 4K content.

Chromecast with Google TV

[Chromecast with Google TV](#). It integrates perfectly with other Google services—like YouTube TV, YouTube, and YouTube Kids—and it supports most streaming apps, including Netflix, AppleTV+, Prime Video, Disney+, etc.



It includes a remote control with voice-activated search, and, the more you watch, the more it learns what you like and will offer useful TV and movie recommendations.

Lastly, it allows you to link all of your other streaming services to make it easier to find content that is already available to you at no extra cost.

Roku

[Roku](#) offers a variety of devices to select from, and each comes with convenient functions for searching and discovering content.

Roku currently offers the widest selection of downloadable apps, and they don't promote or prioritize any one service provider over another (such as Amazon Prime or Apple).



Fire TV Stick 4K

Amazon's affordable streaming stick especially shines when paired with its companion Prime Video streaming service. But with a library of the most popular streaming apps, including YouTube TV, Hulu, Netflix, and others, along with a recent overhaul of its user interface, the Fire TV Stick 4K is among the top devices for cord-cutters to consider.

Be warned, however, that Amazon heavily promotes and prioritizes its content over that of other content providers.



Apple TV

If you use Apple devices or are otherwise tied to their content library, [Apple TV](#) is probably the streaming device for you.

Apple TV offers a wide range of available channels and apps and seamlessly syncs your digital movie purchases via iTunes.

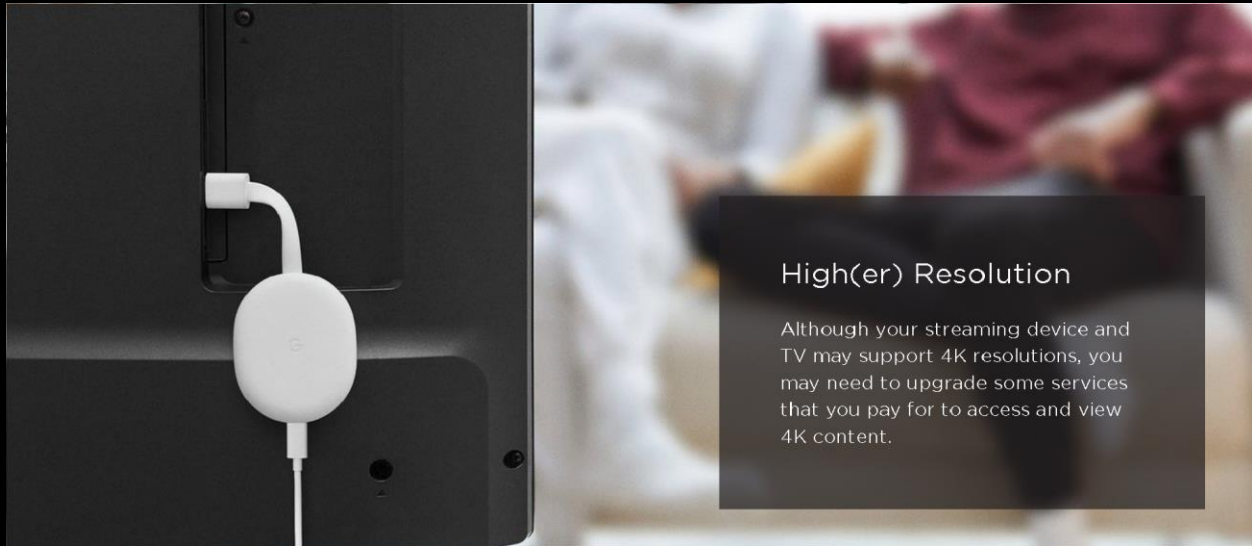


Your Television

Most televisions these days have built-in "Smart TV" features, allowing you to download and stream from the most popular services.

However, one downside to smart televisions is that they often have slow built-in processors and Wi-Fi antennas that do not always make for a snappy user interface or smooth streaming.





High(er) Resolution

Although your streaming device and TV may support 4K resolutions, you may need to upgrade some services that you pay for to access and view 4K content.

Step 6: Stream On

Congrats, you have cut the cord! You now have access to all of your streaming services in one place and are probably going to save yourself a few bucks each month without missing out on any of your favorite programs, award shows, or live events.

Should you need to save more money—either short or long term—you can easily cancel (and restart) any service since none of them require a contract. You can also add new services at any time, giving you more control over your home entertainment. Plus, some of the services this blog mentions offer similar programming, so—for example—if you have YouTube TV, you likely don't need to pay for (regular) Hulu since you can record or watch the same shows live or on-demand.

Technology has changed how we access and consume entertainment, and we are no longer beholden to the limitations of cable companies. It is easier now than ever to cut the cord from expensive subscriptions and binding contracts.

By following these simple cord-cutting steps, you can enjoy a more personalized, streamlined, and affordable alternative to the cable company.