



Cutting the Cable Cord

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Is it right for me?

Getting out from a major bill each month sounds like a no-brainer, but here are some questions to consider when thinking about cutting cable.

- What genres or shows are most important to me, and how much do I watch?
- Will my internet connection be strong enough to support streaming to all my devices?
- Is this going to be any cheaper than my cable bill, and will my internet and phone bill go up if I drop cable?

Hardware

Features and Considerations

- 4K Resolution
 - This is the new standard of high definition, which is enabled in many new televisions, but typically only the newer televisions have this display capability.
- Universal Search
 - Search across Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu...etc without having to go in each app
- Dual-Band WiFi
 - Devices with dual band can offset the traffic of your wireless network if both your streaming device and your wireless router support it. Think of dual-band as adding an express lane to a highway.
- Voice Activation
 - Searching for your favorite shows can be made much easier by having a voice activated assistant, whether it is built into the remote or is compatible with a separate voice assistant.
- Budget
 - There is a variable price-range based on features, so be conscious of your budget

Devices

Roku (\$29 - \$99)

There are currently six different streaming devices offered from Roku. The main concessions you will make with the lower priced options are the 4K video, dual-band wireless and Ethernet port, the remote will not be fully featured, and the device will not have expandable storage.

Amazon (\$37.99 - \$113.99)

Similar to Roku, you will get more features, including 4K and voice activation with the higher priced Fire TV Cube.

Apple TV 4K (\$149.99 - \$179.99)

This is best for people already in the Apple ecosystem and allows users to mirror their devices and content to the television seamlessly. For a reduced price you can get the Apple TV HD.

Google Chromecast (\$39 - \$69)

Similar to the Apple TV, this is a good option for people invested in the Google/Android ecosystem. Chromecast allows you to mirror your laptop or phone screen on the television. 4K is the main difference between Chromecast and Chromecast Ultra HD.

Additional Devices

If you have a game console, Smart TV, or Blu Ray player, it may support the apps listed below. These devices may not support all of the apps you subscribe to.

Streaming Networks

No matter the service, **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TRIAL PERIODS!!!** (if they are offered 😊)

Prices listed are monthly, except where an * is shown to denote yearly pricing.

Acorn TV (\$5)

An offering of British television shows. It has been fairly popular in the United States and in our area, recently.

Amazon Prime Video (\$9)

Get access to original Amazon Prime content as well as IMDbTV. Prime Video is included if you purchase a yearly Amazon Prime membership for \$119.

Apple TV+ (\$5)

Original and backlist content is available and the platform can support additional streaming services like HBO and Showtime.

Curiosity Stream (\$3)

Watch a wide variety of historical, science, technology, and nature documentaries.

Discovery+ (\$5)

Watch shows from a variety of networks including: Discovery, HGTV, Food Network, Animal Planet, History Channel and others.

Disney Plus (\$7)

A host of original content and all of the Disney back-catalog is the main advantage of this platform. Additionally, they have bundles that allow customers to *potentially* receive more products at a lower cost.

Disney Bundle (\$13)

All of the Disney and Marvel content, plus it includes ESPN+ and Hulu

ESPN+ (\$5)

Live and recorded sports, original programming, and additional sports-related media.

HBO Now (\$15)

Offers big-name television shows for kids and adults as well as blockbuster movies. HBO Now will be migrating to HBO Max (WarnerMedia) in May 2020.

Hoopla (Free through library)

Watch popular comedy and drama movies and TV shows. Borrow 10 titles per month.

Hulu (\$0-\$45)

A basic subscription to Hulu starts at \$6 and will include advertisements. You can move up a step to remove the advertisements and pay \$12 a month, or get Hulu + Live TV for \$45 a month. This includes approximately 70 channels from major broadcasters and cloud DVR. The last option is to check with your phone provider to see if they offer Hulu for free as an incentive. If you are a Spotify Premium member, you also get Hulu at no additional cost.

Kanopy (Free through Library)

Watch a great selection of documentaries, educational and foreign films. Borrow 5 titles per month.

Netflix (\$9-\$16)

The most popular streaming service has a large selection of both original content as well as a rotating selection of comedy, dramas, and documentaries.

Sling TV (\$20 - \$35)

This is similar to a traditional, live-tv, cable experience. There are different channels you can browse through in two separate packages. The orange package is \$20, and the blue package with different stations is \$20, but if you bundle them, you can save \$5 a month. Cloud DVR also allows you to watch content that you might have missed, or on-demand content provided by Sling TV.

YouTube TV (\$50)

Similar to Hulu + Live TV or Sling TV, YouTube TV offers about 70 channels, cloud DVR, and access to additional services that YouTube offers, such as YouTube Red (original programming).

Additional Information

Barrington Area Library has a subscription to Consumer Reports. Their independent experts have created a buying guide for a variety of items, including Streaming Devices and Streaming Video Services. To see the buying guide for Streaming Media Devices:

- Go to www.balibrary.org/databases
- Click on Consumer Reports
- Use the search box to search – streaming media devices
- On the left sidebar, click Buying Guide, and Best Streaming Media Devices Buying Guide

Resources for searching specific programs

<https://thestreamable.com/matchmaker> - Live TV programming

<https://reelgood.com/> - On-demand programming