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Cord Cutting 101: How to Cancel Cable and Start Saving Money in 2020

8-10 minutes

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Cutting the cord on cable TV without losing access to your favorite shows has never been easier.

But with the sheer amount of streaming services and cord cutting technology on the market, choosing the options that will save you the most money and that will work best for your needs can be challenging.

Fear not! We're here to help you ditch your expensive pay TV subscription and switch to a blend of streaming and Over-the-Air TV.

With the four simple how-to steps below, you can cut cable and start enjoying significant savings and more flexible TV viewing experience in 2020.



- [Cord Cutting Step 1 – Find Your TV Content](#)
- [Cord Cutting Step 2 – Choose Your Hardware](#)
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Cord Cutting Step 1 – Find Your TV Content



In the United States, virtually every TV show is available without a cable or satellite subscription – either live, on-demand, or via one-time purchase.

Step 1 in your cord cutting journey is to make a list of your family's 'must-watch' TV shows. Include network TV series like *The Good Place*, live sports, news, and events like the upcoming Academy Awards.

Using that list, you can figure out the best and most cost-effective combination of free Over-the-Air TV, paid video streaming channels, and other free streaming sources to meet your family's entertainment needs.

Free Over-the-Air Antenna TV



Not sure what antenna to buy? We've done the research for you on our [Antennas and OTA reception](#) page which includes a [Buyer's Guide for TV antennas](#), and how-to suggestions on [positioning](#)

and installing your antenna to ensure you get the best [Over-the-Air TV signal](#).

Paid Live TV Streaming Services







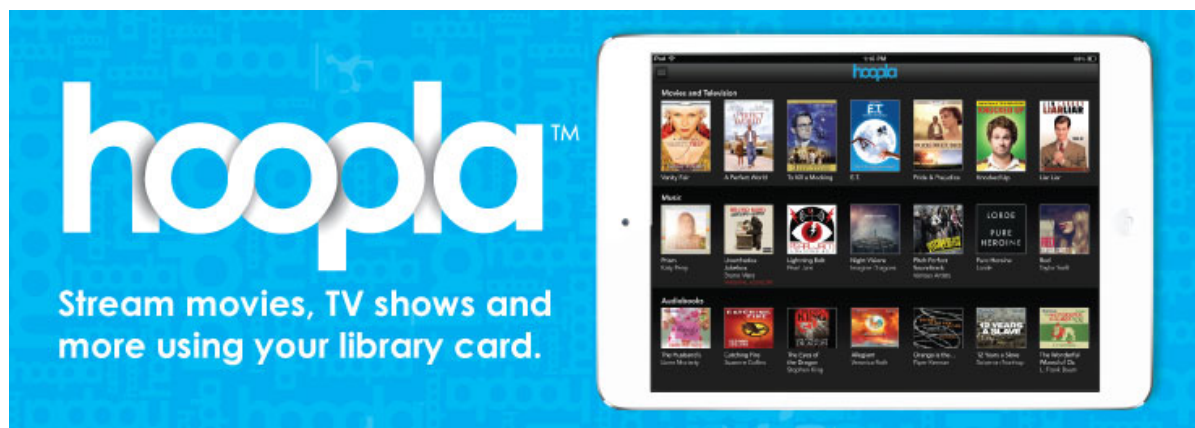

For a fraction of the cost of a cable subscription and with no contracts, paid internet-based TV streaming services are a great way to supplement free Over-the-Air TV broadcasts with your favorite cable channels like ESPN, HGTV, CNN, Fox News, Hallmark and more.

The best value options are [Sling TV](#) and [Philo](#) which focus on access to live cable TV channels.

'Bundles' from AT&T TV NOW, Hulu with Live TV, and YouTube TV can [cost \\$30-\\$45 MORE](#) per month (just for the base packages) simply because they include some local channels you can watch free with an antenna. That means these services are under the same pricing pressures as cable and satellite providers, which means fees for these live TV streaming services that include local channels will continue to increase over the coming years.

Not sure what services carry the network or show you need? Check out Cord Cutter's News for a complete and up-to-date list of the [TV networks each streaming service provides](#) or the [MyBundle.TV recommendation engine](#).

Free & Alternative TV Content Sources



The image shows the Hoopla logo on a blue background with the text "Stream movies, TV shows and more using your library card." To the right is a tablet displaying the Hoopla app interface, which features a grid of movie and TV show thumbnails under categories like "Movies and Television", "Music", and "Audiobooks".

There's TONS of [free TV content](#) available from online sources like YouTube, the [Roku Channel](#), [Pluto TV](#), [TubiTV](#), and more.

With a library card, you can watch even more movies and TV shows via [Hoopla](#) and [Kanopy](#).

Or you can purchase or rent movies, TV episodes, and even full series from iTunes and [Vudu](#).

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Cord Cutting Step 2 – Choose Your Hardware

You don't need to buy a brand-new Smart TV to become a cord cutter, but when you cancel cable you will need something to replace the outdated cable box you've been spending over \$200 a year to rent.

Step 2 is deciding how to make your TVs cord cutting-friendly, based on your budget, streaming needs, and the technology you may already have in place.

Streaming Set-Top-Boxes and Sticks



Any TV can be made 'smart' by connecting a [streaming stick or streaming player](#) via the HDMI port (found on the back or side of the television).

Roku and Amazon Fire TV dominate the lower end of the market with options starting at \$30. Higher-end models like Apple TV and the Nvidia Shield TV are faster, and in the case of Nvidia, offer more flexibility and features than their lower-end counterparts.

We've compiled a complete list of considerations and [recommendations for streaming set-top-boxes and sticks](#) to help you choose the best device for your needs.

Smart TVs



Got a fancy new [Smart TV](#)? If it's running an operating system built by Roku or Amazon Fire TV, you should have no problem [watching Over-the-Air TV](#) or running the latest TV streaming apps you'll need to cut the cord on cable.

Smart TVs made by LG and Samsung use their own operating systems, which unfortunately means [spottier support for streaming apps](#). Other manufacturers like Sony use the more 'open' Android TV operating system, but app support can still be somewhat limited on these Smart TVs.

But don't despair. If your TV's 'smarts' don't support what you need, or are starting to slow down, there's no need to buy a brand new television. You can always connect a set-top-box or stick to 'upgrade' it!

DVRs for Cord Cutters



Just because you're giving up cable, doesn't mean you have to give up the convenience of a DVR. The best DVR for most cord cutters looking to record Over-the-Air network TV broadcasts from an antenna

is [Tablo](#). (And don't take our word for it, the folks at [TechHive](#) agree and we're also the most popular DVR with the readers of [CordCuttersNews](#).)

We think the best things about Tablo OTA DVRs is that a single Tablo attached to your TV antenna can [stream live and recorded TV to all of the screens](#) in your home. We also have the broadest range of user-friendly [apps](#) featuring traditional Live TV grids for all of your favorite devices.

Recording content from live streaming services is a bit trickier. The majority offer their own cloud-based DVRs, but the [capabilities and playback features](#) vary from service to service and even channel to channel.

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Cord Cutting Step 3 – Prepare Your WiFi Network



A solid [home WiFi network](#) and access to high-speed internet are a must-have for cord cutters. If your WiFi network is flaky, or your [router is more than five years old](#), you might see a lot of buffering/pausing when you attempt to [stream high-quality live video](#)

We've made step 3 easy with our top [10 tips to get your WiFi network ready for cord cutting](#).

Worried about bandwidth data caps? There are [bandwidth saving tricks cord cutters can use](#) to avoid going over their data cap, including using an Over-the-Air [antenna instead of a streaming service](#) to watch live, local TV.

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Cord Cutting Step 4 – Save Money!



If you don't wind up [saving money](#) by cutting the cord on cable or satellite, you're probably [doing it wrong](#).

Even with streaming price hikes and the ever increasing number of paid streaming TV options, tips like taking advantage of free content from OTA TV and the web, as well as free trials from paid TV streaming services can significantly reduce your entertainment expenses.

No contracts means you can also rotate between several paid streaming services as shows, live events, and sports you want to watch come and go.

Consumers who follow cord cutting best practices wind up saving hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars each year when they cancel cable.

Instead of boosting Comcast's bottom line, they're paying down debt, creating [college funds](#), and doing more exciting things like going on trips and doing home renovations.

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Few! Now you've got all of the information you need to cancel cable for good.

So make a simple plan, put it into action, and by this time next year, you could be getting ready to spend the money you saved by canceling cable on a nice beach vacation!



And if you need some additional guidance or have a specific question about how your family can successfully cut the cord on cable, we're here to help.

Ask us your questions on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#) and/or sign up for our informative newsletter [Cord Cutting This Week](#).

Sign up for Tablo's [Cord Cutting This Week newsletter](#) to get the latest cord cutting industry news including updates on Over-the-Air TV shows, streaming services, set-top-boxes, gadgets, and more delivered straight to your inbox!