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Cord Cutting Guide 2020: Save Money With These Cable TV Alternatives

by

10-13 minutes

Cable and satellite monthly bills keep creeping up, but thanks to new technology and tons of [streaming](#) services, there are lots of cable TV alternatives out there.

This [cord cutting](#) guide will help you decide if it will work for you, show you how you can still watch live TV and network TV, lay out the popular streaming services you may want to add, and let you know how you can still watch your favorite sports games.

Deciding If Cutting the Cord Is Right for You

It may sound obvious, but you really want to make sure that cord cutting is right for you before you take the plunge. If you change your mind, new contracts and activation fees are going to get expensive.

Lifewire / Maddy Price

Before you decide to cut the cord, you'll need to figure out just how much your cable or satellite bill is. You can do this by checking your monthly statement. Since you're looking into cord cutting already, it's a good guess that it's already much higher than you would like it to be. Looking at the total of your bill will give you something to compare the other costs that you'll rack up after adding any of the options below. Of course, the goal is to make sure that you're actually saving money.

While you're checking your monthly bill, take a few minutes and see if there's a smaller bundle that you may be happy with. Cable companies are starting to take cord cutting seriously and are beginning to offer slimmer bundles for a decent cost. You may just find one that you'll be happy with.

If you are going to be depending on some streaming services, you'll want to make sure that your [internet](#) speed can handle the streaming you'll be doing. You can run an [internet speed test](#) to find this out. [Here's how to run an internet speed test](#) which also includes how to test it for a specific streaming service.

Watching Live TV Without Cable

If watching live TV is important to you, you have several options available with more popping up every day. You have the option of installing an [antenna](#) or subscribing to a streaming service that includes a live TV option. If you choose the later, you'll need to figure out a way to access it either through your TV, a [streaming stick](#), a set-top box, or a game console.

Watching Local Stations With an Antenna

The cheapest way to still get your local stations live is by hooking up an antenna. Once a thing of the past, antennas are all the rage now and new technology has made sure that they work better than the rabbit ears you may remember.

All those network stations will be free to watch, you'll just need to [purchase a good antenna](#) and follow the directions to hook it up. Keep in mind that what channels you get with an antenna are going to depend on [what's available in your local area](#).

Even if you have live TV, you may not want to watch your shows while they're actually live, and you don't have to. There are [DVRs at every price point](#) that can record your over-the-air TV shows.

Hulu With Live TV

Hulu has a subscription option available called [Hulu With Live TV](#). You'll get to view live TV channels in your area, live sports, live news, kids' content, and access to their library of streaming content.

The cost is \$54.99 a month which includes a cloud DVR and unlimited screens. You can also add a subscription to premium networks like [HBO](#), [Cinemax](#), [Showtime](#), and [STARZ](#).

Hulu Live TV is available on iPhone and iPad, [Android](#) phones and tablets, Windows and Mac, Apple TV, Xbox One and [Xbox 360](#), Roku, Amazon Fire TV and Amazon Fire TV Stick, Chromecast, Nintendo Switch, various TVs, [and more](#).

Sling TV

With [Sling TV](#), you can watch live TV with no contracts and your choice of three different packages that range from \$30–\$45 with the ability to add mini bundles for comedy, sports, kids, news, lifestyle, premium channels (STARZ, Showtime, etc.), and international stations.

Sling TV is available on a [wide range of devices](#) that includes TV and video players, [phones](#) and tablets, gaming consoles, and laptops and computers. They use a Cloud DVR which means you can record your shows and watch them at any time.

All those options mean that you can choose the channels that you really want and stop paying for those that you never end up watching. There's a [free trial for Sling TV](#) that allows you to try it out for 7 days.

AT&T TV NOW

[AT&T TV NOW](#) (previous called DirecTV Now) is an online streaming service that lets you access live TV channels. There's no contract (you pay month-by-month) and it runs \$65–\$80 depending on which package you pick.

HBO is included in the cheaper Plus plan, and you can add Cinemax, Showtime, or STARZ for an additional \$11 each. The Max plan includes HBO and Cinemax, and the other two are also \$11 each.

You can use a [variety of devices and browsers](#) to access AT&T TV NOW including Chromecast, Roku, and Apple TV. There's also a cloud DVR option available for some channels.

YouTube TV

There's also the option of [YouTube TV](#), which lets you watch live streaming TV from dozens of networks including ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, and other cable channels. It also has a cloud DVR with no storage limits.

YouTube TV has a 1-month free trial available, after which you'll be charged month-by-month at \$49.99. There's the option of adding Showtime, STARZ, CuriosityStream, NBA League Pass, AMC Premiere, Shudder, Sundance Now, and other networks for an additional fee.

When you sign up for YouTube TV, you're given access to six accounts within your household so that each person gets their own login.

Philo

Another cord cutter you might consider is [Philo](#). There's live and on-demand TV, over 50 channels, unlimited recording, and no contract for \$20 /month.

Philo can be used on the web, your Apple TV, iOS or Android device, Roku, and other devices.

This live TV streaming service is free for the first seven days, and then five more days if you add your billing information.

fuboTV

[fuboTV](#) is another option for watching live TV on the internet without a traditional cable service. It comes with 30 hours of free Cloud DVR space and 3-day replays for most games and TV shows.

There are [four plans to pick from](#): Standard, Family, Ultra, and Fútbol Quarterly, which cost \$54.99 /month, \$59.99 /month, \$79.99 /month, and \$19.99 /month, respectively.

The Fubo Standard plan comes with 99 channels and lets you watch from two screens at once, whereas the most expensive option, Ultra, supports 166 channels, 500 hours of free Cloud DVR storage, three screens for family sharing, and other extras.

Watching Network TV and Premium Channels Without a Cable Plan

If you don't want to miss out on network TV, you have quite a few options. You don't need to wait years to get the shows you want, either; many of them are available a few days after they air and sometimes even immediately.

Network Websites

You can visit some of the network websites to catch up on your favorite shows. They all have certain limitations and you'll need to watch commercials. You can watch full episodes of shows on [FOX](#), [NBC](#), [ABC](#), [CBS](#), [The CW](#), and [PBS](#).

CBS All Access

If you're a big fan of CBS shows, [CBS All Access](#) will give you over 10,000 full episodes, live TV, and some original programming.

CBS All Access is \$5.99 /month with commercials and \$9.99 /month without (or cheaper if you order a whole year at once). There's a 1-week trial you can get for free with either plan.

HBO, Showtime, and STARZ

If you don't want to miss your premium cable channels when you cut the cord, you don't have to. HBO, Showtime, and STARZ all have their own standalone subscription services that you can subscribe to without having a cable or satellite contract.

[HBO NOW](#) costs \$14.99 /month with commercial-free HBO programming, including their original programming and movies. There's a free 7-day trial and it works on [lots of devices](#).

Cutting the Cord and Adding Streaming Services

Streaming services are very popular with cord cutters, and it's no surprise. They have tons of content including TV shows along with movies. In addition to the below selections, you can review our [list of best streaming apps and services](#).

Before you subscribe to a streaming service, you'll want to make sure that you have something to stream it on. Visit each service you're interested in and make sure that you have the device, or don't mind investing in a device, that will let you access the shows and movies.

There's also the option of renting DVDs of your favorite movies and TV shows, with the library being a great place to start since you can [get your rentals for free](#). There's also ways to get [free Redbox codes](#), and you may want to consider a subscription to [DVD Netflix](#) which has plans available for \$7.99–\$14.99 a month.

Netflix

[Netflix](#) is by far the most popular streaming service available right now. You can choose from three plans that cost anywhere from \$8.99–\$15.99 with different options for HD content and the number of screens that can be viewing Netflix at the same time.

All of the Netflix plans have a 1-month free trial.

Hulu

[Hulu](#) is another popular streaming service that has a huge library of movies, TV shows, and original content. Hulu costs \$5.99 /month, or \$54.99 /month if you want the Live TV option.

Add-ons for Hulu include STARZ, Showtime, Cinemax, and HBO. If you go with the Live TV plan, you can add other features like enhanced cloud DVR, unlimited screens, and an entertainment add-on.

The cheaper Hulu plan has a free 1-month trial, and Hulu With Live TV is free for the first seven days.

Amazon Prime

A subscription to [Amazon Prime](#) includes streaming access to TV shows and movies with no cost on top of your Prime membership, called [Prime Video](#). You also can rent or buy new releases of movies and TV shows within the player.

Prime membership costs \$119 a year (or \$12.99 /month if you pay monthly) but you get more perks than just streaming video: free two-day shipping, on-demand music streaming, unlimited reading of thousands of books and magazines, free unlimited photo storage, and more.

Prime Video can be purchased alone for \$8.99 /month.

Vudu

[Vudu](#) gives you more flexibility than other streaming services because there's no subscription plan; you only pay for movies and TV shows that you want to buy or rent. Prices range from \$1.99 to \$19.95.

Watching Sports Without a Cable Plan

[Cutting the cord](#) can be tough for sports fans if nothing compares to the variety of local and national sports that you'll get with your cable or satellite subscription, but you do have a few options.

Installing an antenna for your local stations will get you access to the local games that air in your area on the networks, so this is a great option for those.

Almost every major sports channel also has a streaming subscription offer that you can take advantage of. Keep in mind that these can be very expensive and if you want several of them, it may be cheaper to stick with your cable subscription.