



Fast Facts: Cutting Your TV Bill

FACT SHEET

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Do I want to drop cable service?

Yes

- Consider buying an HDTV antenna for basic channels.
- Consider streaming TV shows/movies (You'll need high-speed internet and a TV with HDMI ports. You'll also need a streaming device to watch shows on TV.)

No

- Scan your cable bill for extra services/products you don't need.
- Tell your provider you want to cut your bill—request the cheapest plan possible. (See more tips below.)

Tips on cutting cable bills

- Look at your current bill. Are there optional charges you can drop? Can you cut down on equipment (cable boxes, DVRs)?
- Buy your own modem. If you get internet service through your pay-TV company, find out if you can skip the \$8 to \$10 monthly modem rental fee and buy your own device. (Not all companies allow this.)
- Ask for the cheapest deal. Cable companies offer “skinny” bundles—cheaper packages with fewer channels.
- Go to your company's cancellation department, which has the most power to give you a better deal. If the phone menu gives you an option like “Cancel my service,” take it and ask for a better rate. See if your company will meet or beat a rival's offer.
- Be a polite, confident negotiator. If your company offers to lower your bill, ask: “Can you do better than that?” If you negotiate a better bill, ask for a one-time credit on top of the lower rates. If there's any charge for changing service, ask the company to waive it.

(Read tips on dropping cable on the back page.)

Tips on dropping your cable service

- Consider buying an HDTV antenna, for local, live TV channels. One-time cost: \$10 to \$275.
 - Before buying, check what your local channel selection would be with an antenna. One source is the Federal Communications Commission: fcc.gov/media/engineering/dtvmaps
 - Make sure the antenna you buy covers your specific service needs. For example, make sure it covers both “very high frequency” (VHF) and “ultrahigh frequency” (UHF).
- Consider streaming additional shows and movies over the internet: One-time cost of a streaming device (\$30 to \$150+) plus monthly subscription cost (\$5 to \$150/month).
Note: If you stream shows, make sure to factor in monthly internet bills.
 - Basic streaming services: These services, like Netflix, Amazon Prime and Hulu, offer online libraries of TV shows and movies for \$20 a month or less. Other streaming services offer specialized content, such as Peacock and ESPN+.
 - Free streaming services: There are free (and legal) streaming services available, such as Hoopla, Pluto and Vudu.
 - Cable-replacement streaming services: Sling TV, FuboTV, Hulu + Live TV and Philo, for example, offer packages that resemble traditional cable plans—with on-demand shows, movies, DVR service and even live TV— for \$25 on up.

A breakdown of your options

- Check your cable bill for unnecessary charges or services. Negotiate for a lower cable bill (consider a “skinny” cable deal).
- Drop cable and buy an HDTV antenna for basic live TV. Use your public library’s DVD collection to access free movies.
- Subscribe to a streaming service, watch on your computer, tablet or phone.
- Buy a streaming device, so you can stream shows through your TV.
- Consider a cable-replacement streaming service that allows you to watch Live TV.

For more details, read CUB’s 12-page “Guide to Cutting Your TV Costs,” at www.citizensutilityboard.org