



MONEY WISE

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MANAGING IN TOUGH TIMES INITIATIVE



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: CUTTING THE CABLE CORD

If you are like every other cable consumer in the United States, you have most likely noticed a sharp increase in the cost of cable over the past decade. As a result of these rising costs, many consumers have chosen to cut the cable cord. Fortunately, increasingly widespread home Internet access and the introduction of streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, and HBO Now have made cutting the cable cord much easier.

Even after cutting the cable cord, it can still be costly to use a streaming service. Figuring out which combination of streaming services is best for you and your family's television viewing habits is important. Furthermore, finding ways to save on your Internet service is a great way to maximize your savings.

Below are a few steps that can help you to cut the cable cord:

- **Purchase an indoor TV antenna.** You can purchase an indoor TV antenna for \$10 or less that will provide you with free access to the major television networks. While you may miss

out on some of your favorite channels, you will still have access to most major sporting events and award shows.

- **Downsize.** If you are hesitant to cut the cable cord, consider downsizing your current cable package to a basic package. Chances are that you are paying for a number of channels that you never watch!
- **Subscribe to a streaming service.** Streaming television through your home television requires that you purchase a streaming device. These





devices take up little space and provide instant access to hundreds of television shows and movies. Streaming services offer unique features such as instant pick up where you last left off viewing a program, fast-forwarding, and the ability to save shows to view at a later time.

- **Streaming service calculators.** Before signing up for streaming services, it is a good idea to research which combination of services will save you the most money. A quick Internet search will bring you to websites that will allow you to figure out which streaming services will be most cost effective.

A downside to streaming services is that they require home Internet access. With the average broadband Internet connection now at \$50 per month, the cost of Internet service and streaming services can quickly add up. However, following the suggestions below can help you save money on your Internet costs:

- **Buy your own modem and router.** Purchasing your own equipment will spare you from having to spend anywhere from \$5 to \$10 per month on equipment rental fees through your Internet provider.

- **Pay for the speed that you really need.** Do not be tricked into buying a faster speed than you really need. The Federal Communications Commission has stated that standalone Internet service at 10 to 25 megabits per second (Mbps) is all you need for streaming.
- **Be sure that you are getting what you are paying for.** A simple Internet search will provide you with a list of websites that will allow you to test the speed of your Internet connection. If you are receiving significantly less than what you are paying for, address the issue with your Internet provider and ask for an adjustment on your next bill.
- **Use competition to your advantage.** If you live in an area with more than one Internet provider, call your provider's competitors to try and snag a better rate. You can always call your current provider to see if they will price match to avoid the hassle of switching providers.

Downsizing your current cable package, purchasing an indoor cable antenna, and subscribing to one or more streaming services are all great ways to save. As with any other financial decision, be sure to do your research first to determine which option is best for you.

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