

20 things you can get for free that you shouldn't pay for

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There are a ton of services you should never cut corners on. When it comes to security essentials like VPNs and cameras, for example, you get what you pay for

Then again, a dollar sign doesn't ensure a good product. In fact, a ton of great tools are free, like video editing software or even streaming platforms. If you want language lessons, smoke detectors or even a deep climb into your family tree, you can do it all without cracking open your wallet.

Check out these insider tricks to saving money that only the tech pros know.

1. Read free eBooks

Reading is one of the best ways to kick back and relax. But if you head to Barnes & Noble or even Amazon, you know how expensive books can be. Luckily, you can read free eBooks through this helpful website.

[OpenLibrary.org](https://openlibrary.org) lets you browse thousands of books to find your next favorite. Just sign up, verify your email and you're good to go. You can start browsing in just five minutes.

2. Take college-level classes

A year at Harvard University could burn a \$70,000 hole in your pocket. Instead of heading to an expensive college, you could check out **edX**, an enormous collection of online classes. It offers high-level lessons designed by America's top university professors.

Best of all, you don't have to apply to join these classes — anyone can learn. [Tap or click here to sign up for free edX classes today.](#)

3. Freeze your credit

Data breaches can annihilate your credit score. When someone is running wild with your bank account, you might panic and Google the best ways to defend yourself. In that situation, you might stumble upon an expensive solution.

Don't be hasty. Instead of dropping hundreds of dollars to save yourself, [try this easy trick to freeze your credit.](#)

4. Free photo editing software

Fun programs like Photoshop can elevate our old pictures to new levels. Whether you want to edit out your pimples or liven up an old family photo, you'll need high-quality photo editing software. There's just one problem: Good software usually comes with a hefty price tag.

Instead of shelling out for a well-known program, [check out these free alternatives.](#)

5. Free video editing software



Whether you're a new YouTuber or a student editing a project for a class, video editing software is critical.

Unfortunately, most dependable programs with high-tech features cost an arm and a leg.

Luckily, we found an amazing app that works just like the expensive programs you know and love. [Tap or click here to get video editing software for free.](#)

It even offers AI features. You can identify faces and

organize them in smart folders.

6. Word processing software

When it comes to productivity software, Microsoft Office is the gold standard. Of course, it's expensive. That's why you should try **LibreOffice**, an open-source software suite that works just like the apps in Microsoft Office.

It can even save new files in Office formats, so you don't have to worry about technical issues like file conversions. [Tap or click here for a step-by-step guide to downloading this amazing program.](#)

7. Streaming music

Music is the universal language of relaxation. But loud ads and paywalls can skyrocket your stress levels.

That's why we searched the web for the best free music streaming websites. We even compared the services and analyzed the pros and cons so you can decide which one works best for you. [Tap or click here for our guide on the nine best free sites to stream music.](#)

8. Set up a second phone number

This is a must-have for anyone who's sick of robocalls. Often, when you provide your phone number online, the websites turn around and sell your data to advertisers. In no time at all, your phone is buzzing with auto warranty or IRS scams.

That's why you should give out your secondary "burner" number when you sign up for websites or fill out surveys. [Tap or click here for helpful apps that create secondary phone numbers.](#)

9. Bank online

Online banks are just like the traditional ones: You can open checking, savings and investment accounts, along with other products. The only difference is that you can't bank in-person. To make up for that shortcoming, online banks offer perks like higher interest rates and cool sign-up bonuses.

[Tap or click here for our top five online banks.](#)

10. Smoke detectors



Do You Need a Smoke Alarm?

If you cannot afford to purchase smoke alarms or are physically unable to install a smoke alarm, the Red Cross may be able to help.

1. Contact your local Red Cross by phone.

or

2. Visit the website for your local Red Cross. In the "Our Work" section look for information about the Home Fire Campaign or a Home Fire Safety Visit.

[FIND YOUR LOCAL RED CROSS](#)

House fires kill seven people every day, so if you don't have an escape plan, you should start preparing. Step one: buy a smoke alarm. It could save your life.

If you can't afford one, the Red Cross is here to help. The Home Fire Campaign offers these life-saving gadgets for free. [Tap or click here for a free smoke alarm.](#)

11. Retirement planning

If you're nearing the end of your work career, you're probably analyzing your future income and costs. After all, no one wants to retire without a plan. Before you wrack your brain, check this out.

A free tool from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau estimates your monthly Social Security benefits. It even offers specific recommendations that match your situation. [Tap or click here to see how it works.](#)

12. Yoga classes

One of Kim's favorite YouTube channels is [Yoga With Adriene](#). This channel is hugely popular, largely because it's perfect for beginners who need a little extra zen in their lives.

Not only is yoga relaxing and fun, but it's also affordable. You don't have to shell out for expensive equipment. Just buy a good mat and you're ready to rumble.

13. Watch your favorite movies

Whether you want to stream classic movies or today's biggest blockbusters, free websites let you watch whatever you're craving ASAP. Instead of sinking \$10 a month into each streaming service, try these popular alternatives to Netflix or Hulu.

[Tap or click here for 10 ways to watch movies for free.](#)

14. Streaming TV

We found five great sites that stream TV shows for free. You may have to sit through a few ads, but those 30-second break times are good opportunities to practice your yoga moves from earlier. Either way, these sites are cheap alternatives to expensive Disney+, Netflix or HBO subscriptions.

[Tap or click here to learn about our five favorite TV streaming sites.](#)

15. Audiobooks



If you don't have time to sit down and read an entire book, why not listen to it instead? Audiobooks infuse fun into boring tasks, like washing dishes or taking out the trash. We found some free websites that let you listen to your favorite stories without paying.

[Tap or click to find out how to get free audiobooks.](#)

One website we found offers 50,000 free audiobooks. You're spoiled for choice!

16. Language lessons

Tons of folks are taking advantage of the quarantine to teach themselves new skills. One of the most popular past times? Learning a new language.

If you're planning to travel once the restrictions lift, now's the time to teach yourself French, German or another language so you can chat with the locals. You could spend money to go to a class — or you can use an app that teaches you for free. [Tap or click here for three language apps you don't have to pay for.](#)

17. Check or monitor your credit score

Earlier, you learned how to freeze your credit for free. What if you just want to check the score and see how you're doing? In that case, you've got a few different options to choose from.

We found three sites that can run a credit score check for you. They also offer guidance in case you find unpleasant surprises in your report. [Tap or click here to check your credit score for free.](#)

18. Genealogy

You don't have to rummage through hundreds of birth certificates to find out who you are and where you're from. Instead, you can take one of the trendy new DNA tests swirling around. Some of them ask for you to spit in a tube; others want you to rub some cotton around your mouth.

Many popular brands expect you to pay a good amount of money to crack your genetic code. But there are plenty of free websites with tons of valuable information that will help you build your family tree. [Tap or click here for no-cost ways to trace your genetic lineage.](#)

19. Counseling

Depression and anxiety can cripple your daily life. You can feel too overwhelmed to leave the house. When you need help but it's too hard to research, apps can be a gateway to a better life.

Of course, nothing can take the place of a medical professional. But these free telehealth apps help you find comfort without asking you to leave the house. [Tap or click here for five free ways to improve your mental well-being.](#)

20. Resume writing help

When you're applying for a new job, you only get one chance to make a first impression. That means you need a killer resume to help you stand out from the crowd. We found a helpful site with over 100 amazing templates in every style imaginable.

[Tap or click here to give your resume a much-needed face-lift.](#)