



# How to Strengthen Your Wireless Connection When You're on the Road

NOVEMBER 14, 2023



Nothing beats getting out of town for a little reset. Sometimes all you need is a quick weekend somewhere quiet a couple hours away, other times you need weeks spent abroad as you contemplate your place in the world. But for many of us, it's difficult to disconnect completely from your regular life—and some of us have to take our work life on the road.

No matter which kind of trip you're taking and which kind of traveler you are, it helps to have some tips and tricks that will help you boost your wireless connection so you can stay online while you're away. Check out these recommendations to help you stay connected on your next trip.

## Take advantage of established networks

Chances are you'll be able to find a solid Wi-Fi connection at your hotel, particularly in the business center. But what if you're staying in a rental that seems to be running 14.4 dial up? Head out and find a local restaurant or café that offers a wireless connection and set up shop there—or near there. Another good option? Libraries often offer an internet connection to users, though—much like restaurants and cafes—you may need to get a password to log on to their connection.

## Invest in an external wireless card

Your laptop comes with a wireless card, and in general, it's a safe bet that it'll do the job you need it to while you're traveling. But if you really want your internet to have some extra oomph, an external wireless card might make the difference.

## Consider a wireless plan

No matter how mindful your planning is, there will probably be times when you just can't find a Wi-Fi network to connect to. This might be a good reason to [sign up for a data plan for your computer or tablet](#). If that's not in your budget right now, with the right [phone plan](#), you can also use your phone as a Wi-Fi hotspot to connect some of

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your other devices.

## Reduce interference as much as you can

Wi-Fi is great, but it's not foolproof—a number of seemingly innocuous things can ruin your connection and slow down speeds. For example, garage door openers, microwave ovens and baby monitors can sometimes cause interruptions. And, if a router is blocked by a wall or furniture, sitting on the floor, or close to metal, that can also interfere with the connection between your device and the router.

There are some instances where you can easily remedy this situation. For example, if you're staying with friends or family, it's easy enough to unplug or reduce use of devices that might be interrupting your connection. They may even thank you for moving the router to an unobstructed spot in their home, thereby boosting the connection for everyone—not just you!

## Double check what your computer or phone is doing without you knowing

Do you have your apps set to automatically update? Did you maybe leave a hog of a program running in the background? Did you start streaming something and forget to stop? If your device is running slow and you can't get the zippy internet you'd like, double check if you've left some unnecessary programs take up your computer's juice, or if your programs or applications are set to automatically update or download new versions.

## If all else fails, try a wired connection

It may not be the most exciting of options, but if you and your laptop absolutely must be online and you just can't keep a solid connection despite everything you've tried, the problem probably isn't you or your device. This is where traveling with an ethernet cable is handy, so you can plug right in and get a super strong Internet connection—and breathe a sigh of relief as you download all your email.

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