**How to Set Up and Optimize Your Wireless Router for the Best Wi-Fi Performance**

Looking to update your wireless network for better performance or security? Follow these simple steps for configuring your router and wireless network the right way.

While networking-gear makers have been making installation utilities easier to use over the years, getting the best out of your new [wireless router](https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-wireless-routers) purchase usually means delving a little deeper than the standard installation routine will go. Just because you've plugged in everything and all the blinking lights have turned green doesn't mean your network's performance and its security are as good as they could be. Follow these basic steps to properly configure your router and optimize your wireless network.

## How Do I Connect My Wi-Fi Router?

These steps assume that you've already found the right router for your home. If you're still looking to make a purchase, check out our wireless router buying guide (link above) or, if you're looking for something a little cheaper, try our [budget routers](https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-budget-routers) roundup, which consists of our top players under $100. If you're looking for the fastest possible pipe with which to enjoy video gaming, then check out our [gaming routers guide](https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-gaming-routers). All these buying guides contain our best and latest reviews in each category with every player completing [PC Labs' wireless router testing suite](https://www.pcmag.com/about/how-we-test-wireless-routers).

When choosing a router, you’ll have to decide whether you want a [Wi-Fi 6 router](https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-wi-fi-6-routers), a Wi-Fi 5 (802.11ac) router, or a [Wi-Fi mesh system](https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-wi-fi-mesh-network-systems). There are still plenty of capable Wi-Fi 5 routers out there that will handle light to moderate networking needs, but if you want the latest technology and the performance it brings, you’ll want to go with a Wi-Fi 6 router. (Check out our [Wi-Fi 6 explainer](https://www.pcmag.com/how-to/should-you-upgrade-to-wi-fi-6) for more in-depth information first.)

Wi-Fi mesh systems are for folks willing to pay a little more for two primary benefits: easy basic setup, and whole-home Wi-Fi coverage. While you can increase the coverage in your home with a standard router and a [wireless range extender](https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-wireless-range-extenders), that solution tends to make users jump through a few additional hoops to get things working smoothly, notably forcing users to log into different wireless networks depending on where they are in the home. Wi-Fi mesh makes all that go away with a very quick and easy path to initial setup and a series of compatible "nodes" that integrate seamlessly into a single wireless network that blankets your entire home.

Newer Wi-Fi mesh systems, such as the [Amazon Eero 6](https://www.pcmag.com/reviews/amazon-eero-6) and Asus ZenWiFi AX (XT8), combine Wi-Fi 6 and mesh technology into a single package—and in the case of the new Eeros, add Zigbee [smart home](https://www.pcmag.com/news/the-best-smart-home-devices-for-2020) technology as well.

While Wi-Fi mesh is definitely the simplest option when it comes to achieving that basic set of green blinking lights, that still represents just basic router setup, mesh or otherwise. Let's say, though, that you want to improve security with a guest network and parental controls, or add quality of service (QoS) settings to protect the traffic coming from a specific application or traveling to a specific device. Then you're going to need to dig beneath your router or mesh system's basic installation utility. That's when the steps below will come in handy.