

How to Get a VPN

Everything you need to know to get started with a VPN service

By **Kat Aoki** for [Lifewire](#)

You've probably heard of a VPN (Virtual Private Network) and how it can protect your privacy while you're browsing the internet. What you may not know is how to get a VPN and set it up. Don't worry, you've come to the right place!

In this article, we'll be covering the basics of VPNs, how to get the right VPN, and how to set one up. It's not as hard as you may think, and you can start reaping the benefits of greater privacy and online security right away.

Why Use a VPN?

A VPN is a service that allows you to browse the internet anonymously and privately. It does this through masking your real IP address and encrypting all of your internet traffic as it passes over public networks.

This two-fold process of IP masking and encryption allows VPNs to do three things very well:

- **Hide your identity and location:** IP masking anonymizes your online activities, thwarting attempts by your ISP, search engines, websites, and marketers to track you.

- **Encrypt your private data over public Wi-Fi:** VPN encryption helps prevent hackers from stealing your logins or passwords, or from eavesdropping on your chats, emails, or conversations at airports, cafes, libraries, etc.
- **Make it appear as if you're in another city or country:** IP masking is handy when you want to access blacklisted websites, geo-restricted content, and VOIP services such as Skype or WhatsApp.

How to Get a VPN

There are a couple ways to get a VPN service.

- Find a VPN provider online. Spend a little time researching the different VPN services to find the best provider for your needs. There are free, low-cost, and premium services to choose from.
- Get a VPN through your job or from your school or university. Both may provide a VPN to you for free, especially if you often work from home or while you're traveling.

Whichever option you choose, it's important to make sure the VPN service you're using has the right features, server locations, and speed for your needs.

How to Choose the Right VPN

The right VPN for you will depend on how you plan to use the internet.

- Basic online privacy at home, work, or school: Perhaps your main concern is browsing privacy. If so, consider going with a budget or premium provider offering the OpenVPN protocol.
- Protection over public Wi-Fi: If you want to protect sensitive data when using public Wi-Fi, you should generally avoid free services, and go with a provider offering protection (apps) for multiple devices.

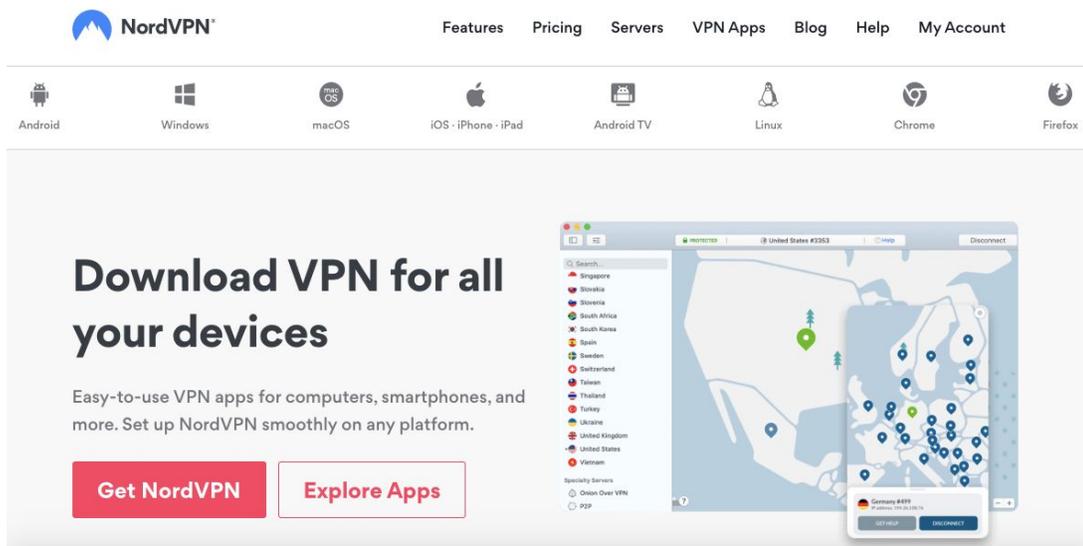
- Fast speeds for file sharing and torrenting: If you want a VPN for torrenting, you'll want to go with a premium provider that offers fast speeds, dedicated P2P servers, and strong encryption protocols.
- Outsmarting geo-restrictions. If your main objective is bypassing geo-restrictions for entertainment and communication purposes, a provider offering fast speeds and unlimited bandwidth is a good choice.

When it comes to choosing a VPN, free or cheap isn't always better. Often, it's worth it to pay extra for a service that's fast, reliable, and offers the best encryption and security protocols for your needs.

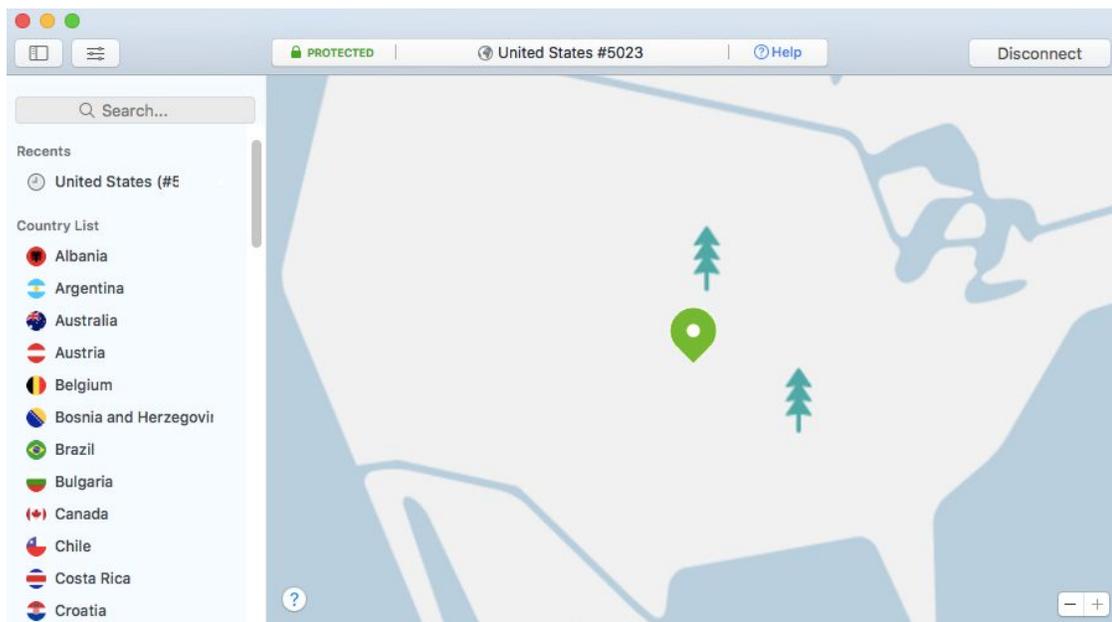
How to Set Up a VPN

Setting up a VPN is a relatively straightforward process. Once you've narrowed down your choice of VPN provider, the best place to start is that company's website.

- 1.) Select the appropriate software package for your device, e.g. Mac, Windows, Linux, etc.



- 2.) Select your preferred service plan. Most VPN services give you a choice of a free trial to start, or to pay monthly or annually.
- 3.) After you start the free trial or service, you should be given an activation code or login credentials for the service. Copy the activation code and paste it in a safe place. You'll be asked for the activation code or credentials later.
- 4.) Download and install the software on your device. Depending on the service, you may or may not be asked to install an additional server configuration file. If you have questions or get stuck, contact the service provider for assistance.
- 5.) Once the software is successfully installed, launch the VPN service. You'll be given a choice of servers to connect to. Choose which server and location you want to browse from, then connect to the server.



And that's it! Once connected to the VPN, you can enjoy all the benefits of having a VPN, including greater privacy and freedom as you move about the web.

* Original article can be viewed [here](#)