

Vision Tech

TVs, streaming & smart home Handbook

20 free step-by-step guides in plain English

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My TV has sound but no picture

If your TV plays sound but the screen stays black, the problem is often a setting or a loose cable rather than a broken TV. Menus and button names differ by brand (Samsung, LG, Sony, Panasonic, Hisense and others), so look for the closest match on your TV.

Check the basics first

- Turn the brightness or backlight up. Some TVs have a setting that makes the screen very dark.
- Look closely at the screen in a dim room. A faint picture can mean the backlight has failed.
- Switch to a different source, such as **Freeview** or another **HDMI** input, to see if the picture returns.

Check the cables

1. Turn the TV off at the wall.
2. Unplug the HDMI cable from the TV and the box (Sky, Virgin, Freeview recorder or console), then push it back in firmly.
3. If you have a spare HDMI cable or a spare HDMI socket on the TV, try those.
4. Turn everything back on.

Restart the TV properly

1. Unplug the TV from the wall.
2. Wait a full minute.
3. Hold the power button on the TV itself for about 10 seconds, if it has one.
4. Plug back in and switch on.

Try the built-in test

Many TVs have a picture test or self-diagnosis option in the settings menu, though the name and place differ by brand. If the test picture shows on screen, the TV is fine and the fault is with the box or cable. If the test picture is also black, the screen or backlight may be faulty.

Other things to try

- Turn off any energy-saving or "screen off" mode that blanks the picture while keeping the sound on.
- Unplug any soundbar or other equipment and try the TV on its own.

Please do not take the back off the TV. There are high voltages inside, even when it is switched off.

When to get more help

Get in touch if the picture is still missing after trying another cable and another source, or if you can see a faint picture only when you shine a torch at the screen. That usually means a backlight fault, which needs a repair or replacement decision.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

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My TV will not turn on

A TV that will not switch on can be alarming, but the cause is often simple. This guide helps you check the power, the remote and the standby light before you think about repairs.

Look at the standby light

The little light on the front or bottom of the TV tells you a lot. It differs by brand, so check your manual if you have it.

- **No light at all:** the TV is not getting power.
- **Red or white light on:** the TV has power and is in standby, so the remote or power button may be the problem.
- **Light flashing:** the TV may be trying to start up or reporting a fault. Count the flashes and write the number down.

If there is no light

1. Check the plug is pushed fully into the wall socket and the switch is on.
2. Try a different socket with a lamp or phone charger you know works.
3. If the TV is plugged into an extension lead or surge protector, plug it straight into the wall instead.
4. Check the fuse in the plug if it has one.

If there is a light but no picture

1. Replace the remote control batteries with fresh ones.
2. Press the power button on the TV itself, usually found on the back, underneath or on a small joystick.
3. If the TV comes on with the button but not the remote, see our remote control guide.

Do a power drain

1. Unplug the TV from the wall.
2. Hold the TV's power button for 15 to 20 seconds.
3. Leave it unplugged for five minutes.
4. Plug back in and try again.

Other causes

- A software update may have been running. Wait 10 minutes if the light is flashing.
- Very cold or damp rooms can stop a TV starting. Let it warm up.
- After a power cut or surge, the TV's power board can fail.

When to get more help

If there is still no sign of life after a power drain and a different socket, or you hear clicking, smell burning or see the light blinking in a pattern, stop and ask for help. Do not open the TV yourself.

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Freeview channels are missing: how to retune

If some Freeview channels have disappeared, or you see "no signal" on channels such as BBC One or ITV1, retuning your TV usually brings them back. The steps differ by brand, so we describe what to look for.

Why channels go missing

- Channels can move or change frequency.
- Weather, such as heavy rain or strong wind, can weaken the signal.
- A loose or damaged aerial cable is a common cause.
- Building work, a new neighbouring building or a moved aerial can affect reception.

Retune your TV

1. Press **Menu** or **Settings** on your remote.
2. Look for something like **Channels**, **Broadcasting**, **Tuning** or **Installation**.
3. Choose **Auto Tuning**, **Channel Scan** or **Search**.
4. If asked, choose **Aerial** or **Antenna** (not cable or satellite), and set the country to **UK**.
5. Wait until the scan finishes. It can take several minutes.

Warning: a full retune may delete your channel order and any favourites. Write down any channels you care about first, and be aware that recorded schedules on some TVs may need setting up again.

Check the aerial connection

1. Turn the TV off.
2. Check the aerial cable is pushed firmly into the back of the TV.
3. If you use a set-top box or recorder, check its aerial lead too.
4. Retune again once everything is secure.

Freesat, Sky and Virgin

This guide is for Freeview through an aerial. Freesat, Sky and Virgin boxes have their own settings, and they use a dish or cable instead. If those have no picture, look at the box rather than the TV.

Check for signal problems

On many TVs, the tuning menu shows signal strength. If it is low or flickers, the aerial or cable is likely at fault.

When to get more help

Get in touch if retuning does not restore the channels, the signal strength is low, you have a loft or shared aerial, or you only get a few channels. A faulty aerial, amplifier or cable may need replacing. Do not climb onto the roof yourself.

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My TV keeps disconnecting from Wi-Fi

Smart TVs rely on Wi-Fi for apps like BBC iPlayer, ITVX and Netflix. If the connection keeps dropping, apps will stall and you may see errors. Menu names differ by brand, so look for the closest match.

Find out if it is the TV or the Wi-Fi

Check whether your phone still has a good connection in the same room. If the phone also struggles, the problem is the router or the signal, not the TV.

Move closer or reduce the distance

- Walls, fish tanks, mirrors and kitchen appliances weaken Wi-Fi.
- If your router is upstairs and the TV is downstairs, the signal may be weak.
- Even moving the router off the floor and out of a cupboard can help.

Restart in the right order

1. Switch off the TV at the wall.
2. Turn the router off at the plug, wait 30 seconds, then switch it on.
3. Wait for the lights on the router to settle, usually two to three minutes.
4. Switch the TV back on.

Reconnect the TV to Wi-Fi

1. Open the TV **Settings** menu.
2. Look for **Network**, **Wi-Fi** or **General**, then network settings.
3. Select your home network and choose to forget it or disconnect if offered.
4. Join the network again and enter the password carefully.

Try the 5GHz option

Many routers have two networks: a slower one with longer reach and a faster one with shorter reach. If your router offers both, your TV may connect better to the one that suits its distance. Names are often similar, with a "5G" ending on the faster one.

Use a cable if you can

A network cable from the router to the TV is the most reliable option, if your TV has a network socket. If a cable cannot reach, ask us about powerline adaptors or a Wi-Fi extender.

Check for updates

Install any waiting TV software updates from the settings menu.

When to get more help

Get in touch if the TV drops out even when close to the router, if every device in the house drops out, or if you are not sure how to change router settings. We can check your router and set up a stronger connection.

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Netflix or iPlayer keeps buffering or crashing on my TV

When Netflix, BBC iPlayer, ITVX, Disney+ or Prime Video stalls, shows a spinning circle or closes by itself, the cause is usually a weak internet connection, a busy TV or an out-of-date app. App names and menus differ by brand, so use these steps as a guide.

Check whether it is just one app

Try a second app. If every app buffers, the problem is probably your internet. If only one app has trouble, the problem is that app.

Check your internet

- Test another device in the same room, like a phone, and see if videos play smoothly.
- Streaming in high definition needs a steady connection, and 4K needs much more.
- If lots of people are online at the same time, try again later.

Restart the app

1. Close the app fully. On most remotes, press the **Home** button and close or exit the app.
2. Open it again.
3. Try playing a different programme.

Restart the TV

1. Turn the TV off using the remote.
2. Unplug it from the wall for one minute.
3. Plug back in and switch on.

Update the app

Open your TV's app store (the name varies by brand) and choose **Update** if one is shown. Do the same for the TV's own software in **Settings**.

Clear the app's stored data

Some TVs let you clear an app's cache or data in the settings under **Apps**. Warning: clearing data may sign you out, so make sure you know your password first. If your TV does not show this option, deleting and reinstalling the app does the same job.

Sign out and back in

Sign out of the app, switch the TV off and on again, then sign back in.

Lower the quality for a while

Some apps let you pick lower picture quality under their own settings or account page. Lower quality uses less data and can stop buffering.

When to get more help

Get in touch if every app buffers even though phones stream fine, if the TV is more than a few years old and no longer receives app updates, or if you see an error code you cannot clear. Write the code down for us.

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My Fire Stick, Chromecast or Apple TV is not working

Streaming sticks and boxes plug into your TV and give you apps such as BBC iPlayer, ITVX, Netflix and Disney+. When they stop working you may see a black screen, a "no signal" message or an endless loading wheel. Names and menus differ between Amazon Fire TV, Google Chromecast and Apple TV.

Check the power

- Plug the device into its own mains adaptor, not into the TV's USB port. A TV USB port often does not give enough power.
- Use the cable that came in the box.
- Check the light on the device, if it has one.

Check the TV input

1. Press **Source** or **Input** on your TV remote.
2. Choose the HDMI number the stick is plugged into.
3. If you are unsure, try each HDMI input in turn.

Restart the device

1. Unplug the power from the stick or box.
2. Wait 30 seconds.
3. Plug it back in and wait a few minutes for it to start.

Check the internet

Make sure your home Wi-Fi works with another device. If you changed your router or Wi-Fi password, the stick will need to be connected to the new details. Look in its **Settings** for **Network** or **Wi-Fi**.

Check the remote

- Replace the batteries.
- If the remote still does nothing, see our remote control guide.
- Most sticks have a phone app that can act as a remote.

Update the software

Go into the device's settings and look for **System**, **About** or **Software update**. Install any updates found.

Resetting: last resort

Each device has a reset option in its settings. Warning: a factory reset erases your apps, settings and login details. You will need to set up the device again and sign in to your accounts, so make sure you know your Amazon, Google or Apple password first.

When to get more help

Get in touch if the device will not start at all, if it gets very hot, or if you cannot get through the setup screens. We can set the device up for you.

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TV remote control not working or needs pairing

When a remote stops working, it is usually the batteries, but there are other quick fixes. This guide covers the standard remote and the smart remotes that need pairing, which differ by brand.

Check the simple things

1. Replace the batteries with new ones. Do not mix old and new, and check they are fitted the right way round.
2. Remove any dirt or battery leakage from inside the battery compartment.
3. Point the remote straight at the TV and move closer.
4. Check nothing blocks the TV sensor, such as a soundbar, ornament or sticker.

Test the remote with your phone camera

Some remotes use invisible infrared light. Point the remote at your phone's camera, press a button and look at the phone screen. If you see a small light flashing, the remote is sending a signal. If not, the remote may be faulty.

Try the buttons on the TV

Most TVs have a power button on the back, underneath or on a small joystick. You can use this to turn the TV on and open basic menus. If the TV works this way, the remote is the problem.

Bluetooth or smart remotes

Many newer remotes, including Amazon Fire, Samsung and LG models, connect by Bluetooth or radio rather than infrared. To pair:

1. Unplug the TV for a minute and plug it in again.
2. Take out the remote's batteries and put them back in.
3. Hold the remote near the TV.
4. Press and hold the pairing buttons shown in your manual. This is often the **Home** button, or **Back** and **OK** together, for 10 seconds or so. The combination differs by brand.
5. Wait for the pairing message on screen.

Use a phone as a remote

Most TV brands, plus Fire TV and Chromecast, have a free phone app that can act as a remote. Your phone and the TV must be on the same Wi-Fi.

When to get more help

Get in touch if the remote has not been found by the TV after repeated pairing tries, if the TV has no buttons, or if the TV works with the phone app but never with a remote. We can help find the correct replacement.

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How to connect a laptop to your TV

Connecting a laptop to a TV lets you watch videos, photos or a presentation on the big screen. You will need an HDMI cable, and sometimes an adaptor. Menus differ by brand and Windows or Mac version, so use these steps as a guide.

What you need

- An HDMI cable long enough to reach.
- A free HDMI socket on the TV.
- A laptop with an HDMI socket. Many newer laptops only have USB-C sockets, so you may need a USB-C to HDMI adaptor or cable.

Connect the cable

1. Turn the TV and laptop on.
2. Plug one end of the cable into the laptop, via the adaptor if needed.
3. Plug the other end into an HDMI socket on the TV. Note the socket number, such as HDMI 2.
4. Press **Source** or **Input** on the TV remote and choose the same HDMI number.

Show the laptop screen

On Windows, press the **Windows key** and **P** together. Choose **Duplicate** to show the same on both screens, or **Extend** to use the TV as a second screen.

On a Mac, open **System Settings**, then **Displays**, and check the TV is listed. You can choose to mirror displays.

If the picture does not fit

- Look in the TV picture settings for **Screen size**, **Aspect** or **Just Scan**. The name varies by brand.
- Choose the option that shows the full picture without cutting off the edges.

If there is no sound

Sound should travel down the HDMI cable. If not:

1. Check the TV volume and mute.
2. On Windows, click the speaker icon in the bottom corner and choose the TV as the sound output.
3. On a Mac, open **System Settings**, **Sound**, then **Output**, and pick the TV.

No signal

Try another HDMI socket, a different cable and restart both devices.

When to get more help

Get in touch if the TV says "no signal" even with a new cable, if you are not sure which adaptor you need, or if the picture looks blurry. We can help choose the right cable and settings.

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How to show your phone screen on your TV

You can show photos, videos or apps from your phone on your TV without cables. The method depends on your phone and TV, so this guide explains the general ideas. Menu names differ by brand.

The main methods

- **AirPlay:** for iPhones, iPads and Macs. Works with Apple TV and many newer smart TVs.
- **Chromecast or Google Cast:** for Android phones and iPhones. Works with Chromecast devices and many smart TVs that have it built in.
- **Miracast or Smart View:** used by many Android phones and Windows laptops. The name differs by brand, for example Smart View on Samsung.

Check the TV's manual or settings for which ones it supports.

Before you start

1. Make sure the phone and TV are on the same Wi-Fi network.
2. Check that both have the latest updates.
3. Turn off any VPN on the phone for now.

Casting a video from an app

Many apps, including Netflix, YouTube, BBC iPlayer and ITVX, have a small cast or AirPlay icon in the player. Tap it, choose your TV, and the video plays on the TV while you use the phone for other things.

Mirroring the whole screen

- **iPhone:** open **Control Centre** and tap **Screen Mirroring**, then pick your TV.
- **Android:** look for **Cast**, **Smart View** or **Screen mirroring** in the quick settings panel. The name varies by make.
- If a code appears on the TV, enter it on the phone.

If the TV does not appear

1. Check both are on the same Wi-Fi network and not a guest network.
2. Switch the TV off at the wall and back on.
3. Restart the phone.
4. Check that AirPlay or casting is turned on in the TV's settings.

A note about paid apps

Some apps, such as Disney+ or Prime Video, may block mirroring while a film plays. Use the cast icon inside the app instead.

When to get more help

Get in touch if your TV never appears as an option, if the picture is jerky, or if you are not sure which method your TV supports. A streaming stick can add casting to an older TV.

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HDMI: no signal and HDMI-CEC explained

HDMI is the cable that carries picture and sound between your TV and devices such as a Sky box, games console or soundbar. If the TV says "no signal", or if devices turn on by themselves, this guide may help. Menu names differ by brand.

Fix "no signal"

1. Check the device (Sky box, console, Blu-ray player) is switched on.
2. On the TV remote, press **Source** or **Input**.
3. Choose the HDMI number the device is plugged into.
4. Check the cable is pushed in firmly at both ends.
5. Try a different HDMI socket on the TV.
6. Try a different HDMI cable if you have one.

Do a quick power reset

1. Turn off the TV and device at the wall.
2. Unplug the HDMI cable from both.
3. Wait a minute.
4. Plug everything back in and switch on, TV first.

What is HDMI-CEC?

HDMI-CEC lets devices control each other through the cable. For example, switching on your console can switch the TV on, or the TV remote can adjust the soundbar volume. It is helpful, but sometimes causes odd behaviour.

Brands use different names for it, such as **Anynet+** on Samsung, **Simplink** on LG, **Bravia Sync** on Sony and **Viera Link** on Panasonic. Look in the TV settings under **General**, **System** or **External devices**.

If CEC causes problems

- Devices turning on or off by themselves can be fixed by turning CEC off on the TV.
- If your soundbar or remote stops working, try turning CEC on.
- Turn it off or on in the TV's menu, then switch everything off and on again.

Special HDMI sockets

Some TVs have a socket marked **ARC** or **eARC**. This is the one to use for a soundbar. See our soundbar guide.

When to get more help

Get in touch if the picture flickers, goes black every few minutes, or shows sparkles. This often means the cable is faulty or not suitable for 4K. We can recommend the right cable.

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Soundbar setup and no sound

A soundbar can make TV speech and films much clearer. If you have just fitted one, or it has gone quiet, these steps can help. Menu names and socket labels differ by brand, so check your TV and soundbar manuals if you have them.

The best way to connect

1. Look at the back or side of the TV for an HDMI socket marked **ARC** or **eARC**.
2. Plug an HDMI cable from that socket into the soundbar's HDMI output marked **ARC** or **TV**.
3. Turn both on.

If your TV has no ARC socket, you may use an optical cable, which is a square-ended cable called Toslink.

Turn the TV speakers over to the soundbar

1. Open the TV **Settings**.
2. Look for **Sound**, then **Sound output** or **Speaker**.
3. Choose the HDMI ARC or optical option, or the name of your soundbar.

Check the soundbar

- Make sure it is switched on and on the correct input, often marked ARC, HDMI or TV.
- Check the volume is up and mute is off.
- Check the volume on the TV is not set to zero.

If there is still no sound

1. Turn off the TV and soundbar at the wall.
2. Unplug the HDMI cable and push it back in.
3. Wait a minute, then switch on again.
4. Try another cable if you have one.

If the sound is poor or missing in some programmes

- Look in the TV sound menu for **Digital audio** or **Audio format** and try **PCM** or **Auto**.
- Some channels use surround sound that not every soundbar can play.

Controlling the volume

If the TV remote does not change the soundbar volume, turn on **HDMI-CEC** in the TV's settings, or teach the soundbar remote to work with the TV.

When to get more help

Get in touch if the soundbar has no power light, if you cannot find the right socket, or if the sound cuts out every few minutes. We can help with setup and cables.

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TV picture settings explained simply

TVs come with picture modes and settings that can look confusing. A few simple changes can make the picture look better and help the TV use less power. Names differ by brand, so look for the closest match under **Settings**, then **Picture**.

Picture modes

- **Standard** or **Natural**: a balanced picture for everyday viewing. Often the best place to start.
- **Cinema** or **Movie**: warmer, softer colours, good in a dark room.
- **Vivid** or **Dynamic**: very bright and bold. It looks good in a shop but can look harsh at home.
- **Sport**: brighter with smoother movement.
- **Game**: see below.

Game mode

Game mode reduces the delay between pressing a button on your controller and seeing the result. It is useful for PlayStation, Xbox and Switch. Some TVs turn it on automatically when a console is connected. Turn it off for films if the picture looks plain.

Eco mode or energy saving

This lowers brightness to save power. If your TV picture seems dark, look for **Eco**, **Energy saving** or **Power saving** and try turning it off or lowering it. Be aware that your electricity use may rise a little.

Motion smoothing

This is sometimes called **Motion Plus**, **TruMotion** or **Motion Interpolation**. It makes films look like a TV soap opera. Many people prefer it off for films and on for sport.

Brightness and contrast

- **Brightness** or **backlight**: how bright the whole screen is. Lower it in a dark room.
- **Contrast**: the difference between light and dark.
- **Colour**: how strong the colours are.

Keep a note

Before you change settings, write down what they are now, or take a photo of the screen. That makes it easy to go back.

Resetting the picture

Most TVs have a **Reset picture** option. This returns the picture settings only, not the whole TV. It is safe, but you will lose your changes.

When to get more help

Get in touch if the picture looks very dark, has coloured lines or patches, or is the wrong shape however you adjust it. That can be a fault rather than a setting.

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How to limit adverts and data tracking on your smart TV

Smart TVs often collect information about what you watch and use it for adverts. You can reduce this using settings, though what is available differs by brand and model. Never invent or hunt for options that are not on your TV, and take your time.

Why TVs do this

Many TVs use something called ACR (automatic content recognition) to work out what is on the screen. It is used to suggest programmes and show targeted adverts. It is usually switched on when the TV is first set up.

Where to look

1. Press **Settings** on your remote.
2. Look for **General, Support, System, Privacy** or **Terms and conditions**. The name varies by brand.
3. Look for items mentioning **Viewing information, Advertising, Personalised ads, Interest-based ads** or **Voice recognition**.
4. Switch off the ones you do not want.

If you cannot see these, search your TV's support page online using the TV model number, which is on the back or in **Settings** under **About**.

Home screen adverts

Some home screens show adverts or sponsored tiles. You often cannot turn these off completely, but you may be able to hide "recommended" or "promoted" rows in the home screen settings.

Other privacy steps

- Turn off the TV microphone or voice features if you do not use them.
- Review the permissions on apps, such as location or camera access.
- Only accept terms and conditions you are happy with. You can often say no to extras and keep the TV working.
- Sign out of apps you are not using.

A word of caution

Turning off some options may mean fewer suggestions, or certain smart features, such as voice search, may stop working. Do not switch off software update options, as updates keep the TV secure.

Streaming apps

Netflix, Disney+, Prime Video and others have their own privacy and advert settings in your account on their website.

When to get more help

Get in touch if you cannot find the settings, you are unsure what an option does, or you want to use a streaming stick with a simpler, less cluttered home screen.

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Alexa, Google Home or HomePod says it is having trouble

Smart speakers such as Amazon Echo, Google Nest and Apple HomePod need Wi-Fi to work. If yours says "I'm having trouble" or "there was a problem", or will not connect during setup, try these steps. Names of buttons differ between apps and over time.

What the message usually means

The speaker has lost its connection to the internet, or cannot reach the company's servers. Most of the time your home Wi-Fi is the cause.

Check your Wi-Fi

1. See if your phone has working internet in the same room.
2. If not, restart your router. Turn it off at the plug, wait 30 seconds, then turn it on and wait a few minutes.
3. Move the speaker closer to the router if you can.

Restart the speaker

1. Unplug the speaker from the power.
2. Wait 30 seconds.
3. Plug it back in and wait for it to start. This can take a couple of minutes.

Check the app

Use the free app for your speaker: **Alexa**, **Google Home** or **Home** (Apple). Open it and check the speaker shows as online. If it shows offline, try the setup option again, or look for **Wi-Fi** or **Network** in the speaker's settings.

Did something change?

You may need to reconnect if you recently:

- Changed your Wi-Fi name or password.
- Changed router or broadband provider.
- Moved the speaker to a new room.

Use the app to select the new Wi-Fi and enter the password.

Resetting the speaker: last resort

Each brand has its own way of resetting, and the instructions are on the maker's support page or the box. Warning: a reset removes your Wi-Fi details, linked accounts, music services and routines. You will need to set the speaker up again.

When to get more help

Get in touch if the speaker does not appear in the app at all, if the light never changes, or if it works for a while then fails every day. We can check the Wi-Fi in that spot.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

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Smart plugs and smart bulbs will not connect

Smart plugs and bulbs from makers like TP-Link, Philips Hue, Wiz and others let you control lights from your phone or voice. The most common problem is that they will not join your Wi-Fi during setup. Steps differ by brand, so also follow the maker's own app.

Know the Wi-Fi rules

- Most cheap smart plugs and bulbs only connect to a 2.4GHz Wi-Fi network. Many routers broadcast both 2.4GHz and 5GHz under one name, which can confuse setup.
- Keep your phone on the Wi-Fi network you want the device to join.
- Make sure the device is close to the router during setup.

Get ready

1. Check the plug or bulb is powered on and in the correct socket or lamp.
2. Make sure the lamp switch on the wall is on. Smart bulbs do not work if the wall switch is off.
3. Install the maker's app on your phone and create an account.
4. Turn on Bluetooth and location on the phone if the app asks.

Put the device into setup mode

Each brand has its own way, but it often means:

- **Bulbs:** switch the bulb on and off a set number of times, or until it flashes.
- **Plugs:** hold down the button on the plug until the light blinks.

Check the instructions in the box for the exact pattern, as it differs by brand.

If it will not connect

1. Check the Wi-Fi password is typed correctly.
2. Try turning off mobile data on your phone during setup.
3. Restart the router and try again.
4. Try the other Wi-Fi band if your router lets you separate them.
5. Move closer to the router and try again.

Devices that go offline later

Check the router is working, then switch the plug off and on at the wall, or turn the bulb off for ten seconds.

Do not use smart plugs with heaters or cookers unless the plug says it is rated for them.

When to get more help

Get in touch if the device will not enter setup mode or will not join after several tries. We can set it up for you.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

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Video doorbell or camera shows offline

Video doorbells and cameras, such as Ring, Google Nest, Blink and similar, need a steady Wi-Fi link. When yours shows as offline in the app, you may miss alerts and recordings. Names of buttons differ between brands and apps.

Check the basics

1. Look at your phone. Does it have internet?
2. Check the router is on and other devices in the house are online.
3. If the router has just been restarted, wait ten minutes. Cameras can take time to come back.

Check the power

- **Battery doorbells and cameras:** check the battery level in the app and recharge or replace it if it is low.
- **Plug-in cameras:** check the cable and plug.
- **Wired doorbells:** a power fault may mean a blown fuse or faulty transformer. If you do not feel confident, ask an electrician.

Check the Wi-Fi signal

Doorbells at the front door are often far from the router. In the app, look for **Device Health**, **Signal strength** or **Wi-Fi**. If the signal is weak:

- Move the router closer if you can.
- Add a Wi-Fi extender or mesh unit near the front door.
- Be aware that thick walls, metal doors and foil-backed insulation weaken Wi-Fi.

Reconnect to Wi-Fi

Did you change your Wi-Fi name or password? If so, the device needs the new details. In the app, look for **Device settings**, then **Wi-Fi** or **Reconnect**, and follow the steps.

Restart the device

Each brand has its own way, often a small button on the device that you press and hold, or a battery removal. Check the maker's instructions. A restart should not delete your recordings.

Do not reset unless you need to

A factory reset removes the device from your account and erases settings. You would need to set it up again.

Security tip

If you see a camera you do not recognise or unusual activity in the app, change your password straight away and turn on two-step sign-in.

When to get more help

Get in touch if the device keeps going offline, the battery drains very fast, or you cannot find the device in the app. We can improve your Wi-Fi or help move it to a better position.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

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Smart home safety: updates, strong passwords and two-step sign-in

Smart TVs, speakers, plugs, cameras and doorbells are all connected to your home network. Like computers and phones, they need looking after to stay safe. A few simple habits make a big difference.

Keep everything updated

1. Turn on automatic updates in the device or its app, if it has the option.
2. Check the app now and then for update notices.
3. Update the apps on your phone that control the devices.
4. Replace devices when the maker stops providing updates, as they can become unsafe.

Use strong, different passwords

- Each account for a smart device, such as Ring, Amazon, Google or Apple, should have its own password.
- A good password is three or four random words together, with a few numbers or symbols.
- Never reuse your email password.
- Change any default password that came with a camera or device.

A password manager on your phone can remember them all for you.

Turn on two-step sign-in

Two-step sign-in, also called two-factor authentication or 2FA, asks for a code when you sign in on a new device. Even if someone gets your password, they cannot get in without the code.

1. Open the app or account page for the device maker.
2. Look for **Security**, **Account** or **Sign-in settings**.
3. Choose **Two-step verification**, **2FA** or similar.
4. Pick a text message or an authenticator app, and follow the steps.

Protect your Wi-Fi

- Use a strong Wi-Fi password.
- Do not share your main network with visitors. Many routers have a guest network.
- Keep the router updated too.

Be careful with cameras and microphones

- Check where cameras point, and avoid bedrooms and bathrooms.
- Turn off microphones or cameras when not needed.
- Review who has access to your account and remove anyone who should not.

When to get more help

Get in touch if you see sign-in alerts you did not expect, a device doing things you did not ask for, or you are unsure how to make a device safer. Change your password straight away if you think someone has your account.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

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PlayStation, Xbox and Switch: connection and slow download problems

Games consoles use your home internet for game downloads, updates and online play. If your PlayStation, Xbox or Nintendo Switch says it cannot connect, or downloads are painfully slow, these steps can help. Menu names differ by console, and each has a network test in its settings.

Run the network test

- **PlayStation:** **Settings**, then **Network**, then test the connection.
- **Xbox:** **Settings**, then **General**, then **Network settings**.
- **Switch:** **System Settings**, then **Internet**, then test the connection.

Read any message the test gives. It can point to Wi-Fi, a password or the internet itself.

Check your Wi-Fi

1. See that other devices in the house are online.
2. Restart your router by turning it off at the plug for 30 seconds.
3. Restart the console fully. Do not just use sleep or rest mode.
4. Re-enter your Wi-Fi password if the console asks.

Make it faster

- A network cable from the router to the console is the most reliable option, if the console has a network socket. The Switch needs a separate adaptor.
- Move the console closer to the router or move the router into the open.
- Pause other heavy use such as streaming or downloads on other devices.
- Download big updates at quieter times, such as overnight.

If a download is stuck

1. Pause the download and resume it.
2. Restart the console.
3. If it still sticks, delete the item and start the download again.

Check the service

Sometimes PlayStation Network, Xbox network or Nintendo online services have problems on their side. Check the maker's status page on your phone.

Rest mode downloads

Consoles can download in rest or sleep mode if you turn that option on in power settings. This can save a lot of waiting.

When to get more help

Get in touch if the test fails with every Wi-Fi network, if downloads are slow with a cable, or if you cannot find the network settings. We can check your router and set up a better connection for gaming.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

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Console storage full and controller will not connect

Two common console problems are running out of storage and a controller that will not pair. These steps cover PlayStation, Xbox and Nintendo Switch. Menu names differ by console.

Free up storage

1. Open the console's **Settings** and look for **Storage**. On some consoles it is under **System**.
2. Look at which games use the most space. Modern games can be very big.
3. Delete games you no longer play. You can usually download them again later for free if you bought them.
4. Remove old captures, such as video clips and screenshots, after copying anything you want to keep.

Warning: before deleting a game, check saved games are backed up in the cloud or kept. Some online saves need a paid subscription. Never delete save data unless you are sure.

Add more storage

Most consoles accept an extra drive. PlayStation 5 and Xbox work with specific types of external drive or storage card, and Switch uses a microSD card. The supported types differ by model, so check the maker's guidance before buying.

Controller will not connect

1. Charge the controller or fit fresh batteries.
2. Plug it in with a USB cable and see if it works that way.
3. Turn off other controllers that may be taking the connection.
4. Restart the console.

Pairing again

- **PlayStation:** connect the controller by USB cable first, then press the **PS** button.
- **Xbox:** press and hold the small pairing button on top of the controller until the Xbox button flashes, then press the pairing button on the console.
- **Switch:** attach Joy-Con controllers to the console, or look in **Controllers** in the settings to pair again.

The exact buttons differ by model, so check your console's guide.

Check for update

Controllers have their own software. Plug them in and look for update options in the console settings.

When to get more help

Get in touch if the controller drifts, buttons stick or it will not charge. Those can be signs of a fault. We can also help you pick compatible storage.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.

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Games console parental controls basics

Parental controls help you decide what children can play, who they can talk to and how long they can spend online. Each console has its own settings and apps, and the names change over time. This guide shows the general approach.

Set up an adult account

1. Make sure you have an adult account on the console.
2. Create a separate account for each child, with their correct age.
3. Link the child accounts to your own as a family or household.

Using the correct age matters, because it affects which settings apply by default.

What you can usually control

- **Age ratings:** block games above a certain PEGI age rating. PEGI is the European rating system shown on game boxes.
- **Playtime:** set daily limits or time-of-day limits.
- **Spending:** stop purchases or require a password or PIN for every buy.
- **Online chat:** limit voice or text chat with strangers.
- **Friend requests:** choose who can add your child.
- **Web access:** limit the browser or block it.

Finding the settings

- **PlayStation:** look for **Family and Parental Controls** in **Settings**.
- **Xbox:** use the free **Xbox Family Settings** app on your phone, or the settings menu.
- **Nintendo Switch:** the **Nintendo Switch Parental Controls** phone app is the easiest way.

Names may change, so check the maker's website if they look different.

Keep a PIN or password

Choose a PIN your child cannot guess, and do not share it. Write it down somewhere safe.

Talk about it too

Settings help, but conversations help more. Talk about what games they play, who they chat to, and what to do if something upsetting happens.

Games with their own settings

Games such as Fortnite, Roblox and Minecraft have their own safety and chat settings in addition to the console. Check these as well.

When to get more help

Get in touch if a child has found a way round the limits, you have forgotten the PIN, or you want help setting up each child's account. We can walk you through it.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.