

6 Affordable Ways to Stay in Touch with Your Senior



Especially if you live far away from a senior loved one, it can be tough to keep in touch. The good news is that it doesn't take a lot of expensive technology to communicate. Here are all your options when it comes to staying in contact with an older adult who is new to tech.

Reach out to Their Community

Though you might live far away from your loved one, you can help support healthy living by reaching out to their local community. Finding organizations that offer senior programming resources, such as the [San Francisco Interfaith Council's Aging and Disabilities resources page](#), could offer seniors a meaningful connection with their neighbors and community.

Even remotely, you can contact people and services in your loved one's city or neighborhood. Finding these resources can give your senior the jump start they need to participate in local events and stay socially connected – even when you're unavailable.

Use Discounts to Upgrade Devices

While smartphones and tablets can be handy in many scenarios, video chatting with your loved one requires a bigger screen. If you're in the market for an upgraded device, you might worry about extending your budget. Fortunately, you can save money on new tech by looking for discounts and cashback offers on products from [Lenovo](#) and more.

Then, setting up a new laptop for your loved one is the next to-do item on your list. Explore the device's [accessibility settings](#) to ensure your older adult can hear and operate the device – and view the text on-screen with ease.

Get High-Quality Internet That's Within Budget

Strong internet is essential for your new technology to work correctly. But even if you (or your loved one) live in a rural area, you can access [affordable and reliable](#) high-speed Wi-Fi service. Once your internet is up and running, video chatting and messaging will be faster (and easier) than ever.

Of course, depending on the device or tool, you might not need as much internet speed as you think. For example, the maximum bandwidth that [Skype requires](#) for HD video calling is 1.5 Mbps – but you can complete a standard video call with 500 kbps. [Zoom calls](#) require a similar speed – though specifics vary by operating system.

Download Free Apps for Communicating

Once you have a device for your senior – and fast internet – it's time to explore ways to stay connected. Skype and Zoom are both free video chat options, but they're not the only helpful technology for seniors.

Plenty of other [messaging apps](#) are just as senior-friendly, such as Whatsapp and Facebook Messenger. With chat apps, seniors can send emojis, photos, videos, and more – making keeping in touch more interesting and engaging.

Drop in with Home Devices

Another budget-friendly way to drop in on your senior loved one without booking a plane ticket is through smart home devices. From Facebook to Google to Amazon, there's a smart home hub from every big name.

And, as CNET notes, all these brands offer [video-chat capable devices](#). Unlike video calls, your senior doesn't even need to answer your call – you can enable “drop-ins” with their permission. This way, you can visually confirm their wellbeing whenever it's convenient.

Many of these devices can be extremely affordable – and the costs typically factor into existing services. Amazon's connectivity, for example, relies on you having an Amazon account – but you don't need Amazon Prime membership to use all the voice assistant features. You can also find [step-by-step guides](#) to help you set up Amazon Alexa and other services.

Teach Your Senior Tech

Seniors are just as capable of learning new things as any other generation. The key is putting the power in your loved one's hands. If you express an interest in connecting more, they may be open to learning how to navigate new technology together. Plus, providing your senior with the resources to [become tech-savvy](#) is totally free.

Remaining connected across distances is challenging no matter what your age. For seniors in particular, navigating modern chat platforms and setting up new devices may feel like a hassle. But with these budget-friendly solutions, you can make it easier – and more affordable – to head online, together.

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