

# Stop misusing Ethernet cables!

The problem is that every Ethernet cable has a built-in speed limit, and if you're using an older type of cable, that limit may be much lower than you think.

When network speeds drop sharply, we often blame the router first. Then the Internet Service Provider (ISP). We might even replace a perfectly working streamer, thinking that's the culprit. Rarely does anyone bother to check the Ethernet cable – because it just works, right? We plug it in, see the green light, and continue. However, the problem is that every Ethernet cable has a built-in speed limit, and if you're using an older cable, that limit may be much lower than you think. Cat5 and Cat5e cables are still ubiquitous today, silently clogging networks that should be much faster.

## Cable ratings really matter.

### The speed limit is built into the cable itself.



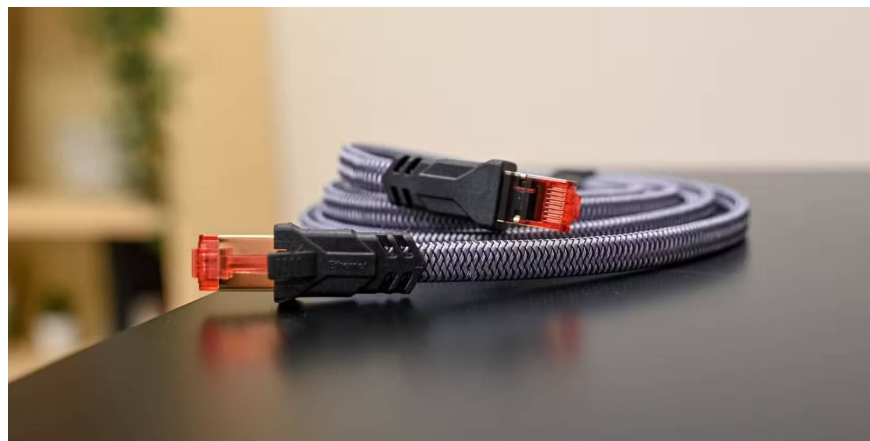
Look closely at any Ethernet cable, and you'll see the cable type designation printed on the sheath – Cat5, Cat5e, Cat6, etc. These aren't marketing terms designed to charge you more. Each type reflects actual differences in construction – different wire diameters, twist rates, and shielding materials.

Many users are driven crazy by slow speeds, constantly changing routers and calling their internet service provider (ISP) repeatedly, when the real problem is just an outdated cable running through the wall. A weak link in the chain will slow down everything that goes through it. You might be paying for 1200Mbps but wondering why your living room TV only gets around 95Mbps – all because a contractor used the wrong cable roll five years ago.

**Tip :** Many manufacturers now use identical or nearly identical components in Cat5, Cat5e, and Cat6 cables. You can save money by buying a lower-quality cable. Read reviews to see the actual maximum speeds achieved by customers.

## **Why isn't Cat5e a solution either?**

**Theoretical gigabits do not necessarily mean actual gigabits.**



Cat5e cable is widely accepted because, technically, it supports gigabit. And technically, that's true. In theory, Cat5e handles gigabit very well. In a short-distance, interference-free lab setting, it will probably work fine. However, your home isn't a lab. The cable might run dozens of meters from the basement to an upstairs bedroom. It might be bent during installation without anyone noticing. There might be a Romex cable running parallel to it for about 6 meters through the same wall cavity. Any of these things can reduce speeds without causing obvious errors. The frustrating thing is that nothing is completely broken. Instead, you'll experience choppy video calls, random stream quality degradation, and test speeds that never meet expectations.

**Cat6 is the optimal choice for home networks.**

**Better performance without increasing complexity.**

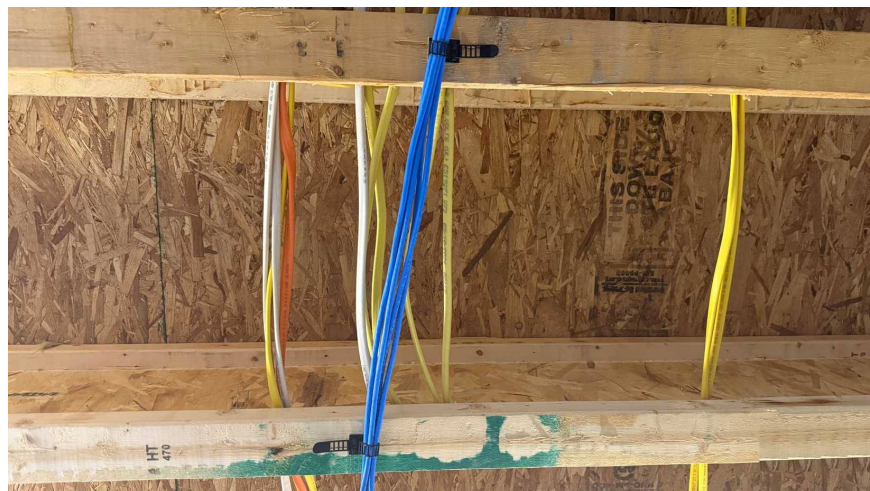


Cat6 sits comfortably in the middle ground for home use. It's not a high-end cable for businesses, but it's significantly better than Cat5e in key areas. Inside a Cat6 cable, the wire pairs are twisted more tightly – this may sound like a small detail, but it makes a real difference in signal separation.

The shielding has also been upgraded, preventing microwaves and dimmer switches from interfering with the connection. And despite the upgraded internal components, installation is no different than with lower-grade cables. You still use the same RJ45 connectors, the same crimping tools, and the same technique. Anyone who has ever wired Cat5e can handle Cat6 with ease – it's just a better cable.

## **Check what's already in place on your walls.**

**A 10-minute check can uncover potential bottlenecks.**



If your home was built or renovated within the last 15 years, chances are the Ethernet network was installed during construction. The question is whether the installer used the correct type of cable or just grabbed whatever was left in the car to get the job done. Finding the answer only takes about 10 minutes. Go to where your cables

end up, whether it's the utility area in the basement, the network equipment cabinet, or the electrical outlets scattered throughout the house. Look at the outer sheath of each cable. The type rating is printed regularly along the entire length of the cable. The real alarm sign is when you only see "CAT5" with nothing following it – no "e," no "6," just the basic designation. Even Cat5e lines may need to be marked for future replacement.

## The cables supplied by the contractor need to be inspected more thoroughly.

**Deadline pressure leads to cost-cutting.**



Contractors rush to meet deadlines, and when Cat6 cable runs out, they sometimes finish the job with whatever is available. The Cat5 line installed alongside is still good enough to pass testing, but it silently limits the speed for your main TV and PS5.

That cheap cable can haunt a room for years before someone figures out why it's always been the slowest spot in the house. The good news is you don't need to break down the wall to fix this. When the original cable runs along an easily accessible path, attaching the replacement cable to the old one before pulling it out allows you to thread the new cable through in a single motion.

In the worst-case scenario, a long Cat6 cable routed along the baseboard will solve the problem at an acceptable cost until you're ready for a more permanent solution. And once you've arranged the cables, proper management will keep things much tidier in the long run.

You finished reading the article "**Stop misusing Ethernet cables!**" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.