The Complete Beginner's Cybersecurity Roadmap (2026)

With Free Resources for Every Step

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This guide is designed for complete beginners. Every phase includes free resources so you can start immediately without spending money.

Phase 1: Foundations (Weeks 1–8)

Goal: Understand how computers, networks, and systems work before learning security tools.

What to Learn
- Networking fundamentals (DNS, HTTP, TCP/IP)
- Basic Linux usage
- Core security concepts

Free Resources
- TryHackMe – Pre Security Path
- Professor Messer – Free Security+ videos
- NetworkChuck beginner networking videos
- Linux Journey (free)

Phase 2: Hands-On Practice (Weeks 9–16)

Goal: Apply theory through guided labs and scenarios.

Free Resources
- TryHackMe – Blue Team paths
- Hack The Box Academy – Free modules
- CyberDefenders – Free blue team labs

Phase 3: Proof of Work (Weeks 17–20)

Goal: Build a portfolio that shows how you think.

Free Resources
- GitHub – Free repositories
- GitHub Guides – README basics
- Medium or Notion – Free documentation tools

Phase 4: Certifications (Optional)

Certifications help structure your learning but are not required at the start.

Free Resources
- Professor Messer – Security+ free playlist
- CompTIA Exam Objectives (free PDF)

Phase 5: Getting the First Job

Focus on exposure to systems and real-world environments.

Free Resources

- LinkedIn – Networking and job postings
- Cybersecurity Discord communities
- Reddit r/cybersecurity – Career threads

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to spend money?
No. This roadmap is designed to be followed using free resources.

How long will this take?
Most beginners take 6–12 months with consistent effort.

What if I feel lost?
Feeling lost is normal. Revisit foundations and keep going.