

Jellyfin Direct Play Checklist

Reduce unnecessary transcoding by checking file formats, audio, subtitles, clients, and server settings.

Playback checks

- ☐ Open the Jellyfin dashboard while a file is playing.
- ☐ Check whether playback is direct play, direct stream, or transcoding.
- ☐ Read the reason Jellyfin gives for transcoding.
- ☐ Test the same file on a dedicated Jellyfin app, not only a browser.

Format checks

- ☐ Prefer H.264 for widest 1080p compatibility.
- ☐ Use H.265/HEVC only where your clients support it directly.
- ☐ Use AAC or AC3 audio where possible.
- ☐ Use SRT subtitles where possible to avoid subtitle burn-in.

4K checks

- ☐ Do not rely on real-time 4K software transcoding on a small server.
 - ☐ Use clients that direct play 4K files.
 - ☐ Avoid image-based subtitles for 4K playback.
 - ☐ Consider keeping a separate 1080p copy for remote playback.
-

Related guides

Find the full walkthroughs at <https://smallgrid.uk/guides/>
Tiny tools. Solid systems.