

# How to do a clean reinstall of Windows

Reinstalling Windows is an important strategy for anyone who wants to start over with a clean copy of the operating system. By doing so, you can remove bloatware, wipe out malware, and fix other system problems.

A full, clean reinstall is different from the *Reset your PC* option in Windows 10, or a manufacturer's recovery partition. Those built-in options will set your PC back to its factory-default state—which could include some vendor-installed junk you never wanted anyway. A **clean install** uses the generic Windows installation media that you can download from Microsoft (<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/software-download/windows10/>), and it'll have just the OS, no other frills.

You shouldn't need to regularly reinstall Windows to keep it performing well. But, if a computer is bogged down by startup programs, context menu items, and years of junk, reinstalling Windows may be the quickest way to speed it up again.

Reinstalling Windows can also save a computer infected with malware and other system problems caused by software issues.

Before you begin, back up all of your personal data. While you should back up your data regularly, it is especially important to do so before reinstalling an operating system.

In Windows 10's Anniversary Update (July 29, 2016), Microsoft is experimenting with a new "Give your PC a fresh start" tool that will allow you to reinstall Windows from here, erasing even all that manufacturer-provided junk. It should be just as good as installing Windows 10 from scratch. Look for a "Learn how to start fresh with a clean installation of Windows" option at the bottom of the Recovery pane after upgrading to the Anniversary Update.

Below is what the screen will look like!

