

Nine Quick Ways to Speed Up a Slow Windows Computer

Windows PCs don't have to slow down over time. Whether your PC has gradually become slower or it suddenly ground to a halt a few minutes ago, there could be quite a few reasons for that slowness.

Don't be afraid to turn your computer off, wait 15 seconds, and then reboot if something's not working properly. This can fix quite a few problems and is faster than attempting to manually troubleshoot and fix the problem yourself.

Find Resource-Hungry Programs

If your computer is running slowly it may be because something is using up those resources. If it's suddenly running slower, a runaway process might be using virtually all of your CPU resources, for example. Or an application might be experiencing a memory leak and using a large amount of memory, causing your PC to swap to disk. Alternately, an application might be using the disk a lot, causing other applications to slow down when they need to load data from or save it to the disk.

To find out, open the Task Manager by right-clicking on the Taskbar and then selecting Task Manager. Its upgraded interface color-codes applications that are using a lot of resources. Click the "CPU," "Memory," and "Disk" headers to sort the list by the applications using the most resources. If any application is using too many resources, you might want to close it normally — if you can't, select it here and click "End Task" to force it to close.

Close System Tray Programs

Many applications tend to run in the system tray, or notification area. These applications often launch at startup and stay running in the background but remain hidden behind the **up arrow icon** near the bottom-right corner of your screen. Click the up arrow icon near the system tray, right-click any applications you don't need running in the background, and close them to free up resources.

Disable Startup Programs

Better yet, prevent those applications from launching at startup to save memory and CPU cycles, as well as speed up the login process.

On Windows 10, there's now a startup manager in the Task Manager that you can use to manage your startup programs. Click on the Startup tab and disable startup applications you don't need. Windows will helpfully tell you which applications slow down your startup process the most.

Reduce Animations

Windows uses quite a few animations, and those animations can make your PC seem a bit slower. To disable animations, go to Settings (Windows key + I), then click Ease of Access. In the center column under Simplify and Personalize Windows, turn OFF *show animations in windows*.

Lighten Your Web Browser

There's a good chance you use your web browser a lot, so your web browser may just be a bit slow. It's a good idea to use as few browser extensions, or add-ons, as possible — those slow down your web browser and cause it to use more memory.

Go into your web browser's Extensions or Add-ons manager and remove add-ons you don't need. In the Microsoft Edge browser, click on the More button (three horizontal dots), then click on Extensions.

Scan for Malware and Adware

There's also a chance your computer is slow because malicious software is slowing it down and running in the background. This may not be flat-out malware — it may be software that interferes with your web browsing to track it and add additional advertisements.

To be extra safe, scan your computer with an antivirus program. You should also scan it with Malwarebytes, which catches a lot of “potentially unwanted programs” (PUPs) that most antivirus programs tend to ignore. These programs try to sneak onto your computer when you install other software, and you don't want them.

Free Up Disk Space

If your hard drive is almost completely full, your computer may run noticeably slower. You want to leave your hard drive some room to work. You don't need any third-party software — just use Windows Storage feature. Go to Settings (Windows key + I), then System, then Storage. Click on *free up space now*.

Defragment Your Hard Disk. NOT!

Defragmenting your hard disk actually shouldn't be necessary on modern versions of Windows. It'll automatically defragment mechanical hard drives in the background. Solid-state drives don't really need traditional defragmentation, although modern versions of Windows will "optimize" them — and that's fine.

Uninstall Programs You Don't Use

Click Windows key + X, then F, to find the list of installed modern programs. Legacy programs can be located by clicking on the Programs and Features button located in the far right column. Uninstall programs you don't use and don't need. This can help speed your computer, as those programs might include background processes, autostart entries, system services, context menu entries, and other things that can slow down your PC. By uninstalling unused applications, you'll also save room on your hard drive and improve system security — for example, you definitely shouldn't have [Java](#) installed if you're not using it.

Refresh or Reset Your PC as a last resort

If the other tips listed above didn't fix your problem, the one timeless solution for fixing Windows problems (aside from rebooting your PC) is to do a fresh Windows installation.

In Windows 10, it's easier to get a fresh Windows installation than ever. You don't have to get Windows installation media and reinstall Windows. Instead, you can simply use the Refresh or Reset your PC feature built into Windows to get a new, fresh Windows system. This is similar to reinstalling Windows and will wipe out your installed application and system settings while keeping your files.

If you can access Windows 10, from the Desktop, press the Windows key + I, then click the *update and security* tile.

If you can't access Windows 10, now is the time to use your Recovery drive that you made immediately after installing the operating system. (You did do this, didn't you?)