

If your computer won't start, try safe mode

How to Access Safe Mode in Windows 10

Your Windows 10 computer should automatically start in Safe Mode if it crashes more than once while trying to start normally. However, you can also boot into Safe Mode manually.

*****Hold the Shift key while clicking Restart on the Start Menu.*****

After starting Windows in Safe Mode, you can perform most of the regular system maintenance and troubleshooting tasks to fix your computer:

- **Scan for Malware:** Use your antivirus application to scan for malware and remove it in Safe Mode. Malware that may be impossible to remove in normal mode—because it's running in the background and interfering with the antivirus—may be removable in Safe Mode. If you don't have an antivirus installed, you should be able to download and install one in Safe Mode. Of course, if you're using Windows Defender in Windows 10, you might be better off performing an offline malware scan.
- **Run System Restore:** If your computer was recently working fine but it's now unstable, you can use System Restore to restore its system state to the earlier, known-good configuration. Assuming your computer is unstable and crashing, it may be possible to run System Restore without crashing from Safe Mode.
- **Uninstall Recently Installed Software:** If you recently installed software (such as a hardware driver or an application that includes a driver) and it's causing your computer to fail, you can uninstall that software from Programs and Features. Your computer should hopefully start normally after you've uninstalled the interfering software.
- **Update Hardware Drivers:** Assuming your hardware drivers are causing system instability, you may want to download and install updated drivers from your manufacturer's website and install them in Safe Mode—the hardware drivers won't interfere and make your computer unstable in Safe Mode.
- **See Whether a Crash Occurs:** If your computer is unstable normally but works fine in Safe Mode, it's likely that there's a software problem causing your computer to crash. However, if the computer continues to crash in Safe Mode, this is often a sign that there's a hardware problem with your computer. (Note that stability in Safe Mode doesn't necessarily mean it's a hardware problem. For example, your graphics card may be faulty and causing crashes under load. However, it may be stable in Safe Mode because your computer isn't performing demanding operations with it.)