

## WHEN YOU HAVE “NO INTERNET ACCESS,” WHAT NOW?

Let’s quickly outline the steps first, then we’ll go into detail on each one:

1. Confirm other devices can’t connect
2. Reboot your computer
3. Unplug your modem and router
4. Reboot your modem and router
5. Run the Windows network troubleshooter
6. Check your IP address settings
7. Check your ISP’s status
8. Try a few command prompt commands
9. Disable security software
10. Update your wireless drivers
11. Reset your network

### WHAT DOES NO INTERNET ACCESS MEAN?

When you use a wireless device like a laptop, it connects to your **router**. The router is a device that handles the connections between the devices in your home. Your router plugs into a **modem**, a device that bridges the traffic from your home network to the internet.

When you see **Connected, no internet access**, it means that your computer is connected to the router correctly but can’t connect to the internet. On the other hand, if you see **Not connected, no internet** or **No internet connection** messages, it means that your computer is not connected to a router at all.

#### Step 1: Confirm That Other Devices Can’t Connect

Before you do any troubleshooting, it’s important to determine whether it’s only your PC having an issue. Grab another computer or phone that’s also on your Wi-Fi and see if it’s connected. On Android, you’ll see an **X** icon over the Wi-Fi symbol and notice you’re connected to your mobile network. iOS users can visit **Settings > Wi-Fi** and check for a **No Internet Connection** message.

If your computer is the only device that won't connect, it's likely due to a misconfigured setting on just that device. But if you can't get anything online, the problem lies with your network equipment and you can thus skip some of the PC-only steps below.

Before you proceed, *if the problem affects all your devices*, you should perform a quick test. Disconnect the **Ethernet cable** that connects your modem to your router, and use it to connect your PC to the modem instead. If you can get online with this setup, the problem lies with your router. Should you proceed through the following troubleshooting and not fix your issue, your router is likely faulty.

## **Step 2: Reboot Your Computer**

**This step isn't necessary if your connection issues are affecting multiple devices.**

As with many issues, **rebooting your computer** is the first troubleshooting step you should try. If you're lucky, you might clear up some temporary glitch by doing a restart.

## **Step 3: Unplug Your Modem and Router**

Since most network issues involve your modem and/or router, rebooting them next makes sense. However, you don't restart them through an interface like you do with your computer. Simply **pull the power plug** from both devices and leave them unplugged for a minute or two.

## **Step 4: Reboot Your Modem and Router**

Plug the **modem** in first, let it boot up, then plug in your router again. Wait a few minutes for them to get sorted out. While you're doing this, confirm that your router and modem are working properly. If you don't see any lights on one of the devices, you may have a bad piece of hardware.

If you still can't get online after this, continue on. Your issue is more complex than a basic reboot.

Note that you're **rebooting**, not **resetting** your equipment. Resetting means putting the device back to its factory default settings and you don't want to do that yet!

### **Step 5: Run the Windows Network Troubleshooter**

**This step isn't necessary if your connection issues are affecting multiple devices.**

If you're only having an issue with your desktop or laptop, something is wrong with your computer's network settings. While **the built-in Windows troubleshooter** usually doesn't fix issues, it's worth trying before you move on.

Find the troubleshooter at: **Settings > Network & internet > Status**. Select **Network troubleshooter** and follow the steps to see if Windows can solve the problem.

### **Step 6: Check Your IP Address Settings**

**This step isn't necessary if your connection issues are affecting multiple devices.**

Next, it's worth checking to make sure your computer **has a valid IP address**. In most home networks under normal circumstances, the router hands out an address to devices when they connect. If your computer's IP settings aren't correct, it can cause the problem you're having. The internet isn't so different from the regular postal service. Instead of a home address, we have IP addresses. Instead of names, we have MAC addresses. Together, they get the data to your door.

Right-click on the network icon in your System Tray (right side of the Taskbar) and choose Open **Network & internet settings**. Click the **Change adapter options** entry and then double-click the connection you're using.

From here, click the **Properties** button. Find **Internet Protocol Version 4** in the list and double-click that. Here, make sure you have **Obtain an IP address automatically** and **Obtain DNS server address automatically** both selected. *Setting an IP address manually is for advanced users; chances are if you have something entered here, it's invalid.*

Click **OK** and then try to get online again.

### **Step 7: Check Your ISP's Status**

At this point, if you can't get any devices online, it's worth checking if your internet service provider (ISP) is having an issue. Though this is rare, it could be why you can't get online.

Use your smartphone's data connection to see if Cox, CenturyLink, or whoever provides service to you has reported outages in your area. **DownDetector** (this is a hyperlink) is a great site for this.

### **Step 8: Try a Few Command Prompt Commands**

**This step isn't necessary if your connection issues are affecting multiple devices.**

Windows features several networking commands in the Command Prompt. You should attempt a few of them to see if they clear up your issue. Type **cmd** into the search box, then right-click on it and choose **Run as administrator** to open an elevated **Command Prompt** window. If you want full and absolute control over your network, then you'll have to start using Command Prompt. Here are the most useful commands for managing and troubleshooting your home network.

To reset some of the files Windows uses to access the internet, use these two commands:

```
netsh winsock reset  
netsh int ip reset
```

If that doesn't work, try releasing your computer's IP address and obtaining a fresh one with these two commands one at a time:

```
ipconfig /release  
ipconfig /renew
```

Finally, refresh your computer's DNS (domain name system) settings with this command:

```
ipconfig /flushdns
```

It doesn't hurt to reboot your PC again at this point. If you still can't get online, there are a few more steps to try.

### **Step 9: Disable Security Software**

**This step isn't necessary if your connection issues are affecting multiple devices.**

Another uncommon, but plausible, scenario is that you have some security software on your PC preventing access to the internet. For example, in 2017, Avast's free antivirus prevented many of its users from getting online due to a glitch. Those who manually installed the latest update found that their problems disappeared.

Disable any third-party antivirus apps you may have installed and see if your connection comes back. While we're on the topic of security, it's worth running a scan for malware. A malicious program could have knocked out your internet connection.

### **Step 10: Update Your Wireless Drivers**

**This step isn't necessary if your connection issues are affecting multiple devices.**

Normally, you don't need to update your computer drivers, as doing so often causes more problems than it's worth. But since you're still having an issue, you should check for driver updates.

If you have a manufacturer update app, like HP Support Assistant or Lenovo System Update, installed on your PC, open that up and check for wireless driver updates. Otherwise, use Windows + X to find the Device Manager.

### **Step 11: Reset Your Network**

If you've proceeded through all these steps and still can't get online, there's not much you can do other than reset your network settings.

If your Windows 10 PC is the only device you can't connect with, you can reset your network by visiting **Settings > Network & internet > Status**. Click the **Network**

**reset** text at the bottom of the screen, then **Reset now**. This will completely remove all network adapters and set all your network settings back to the defaults. You'll have to set everything up again, but it might be the fix you need.

### **If you can't get online with any of your devices...**

When you can't get online with any devices, your best bet is resetting your router (and modem, if needed). Look for a small pinhole on the back or bottom of your router and hold it in for several seconds to reset it to factory defaults.

With everything reset, you can run through the initial setup with factory defaults. If it still won't work after that, you likely have faulty equipment.