

# CNET Your guide to a better future

Tech > Services & Software

## A VPN Isn't the Only Way to Change Your IP Address

Whether you use a virtual private network or not, changing your IP address is totally legal. Here are the four easiest ways on Mac, Windows and mobile.



Rae Hodge

Sept. 10, 2022 3:30 a.m. PT

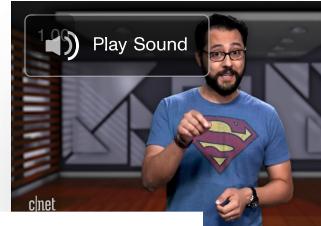
7 min read



Changing your IP address is easy, safe and legal.

Sarah Tew/CNET

Even without a user-friendly virtual private network, it's still easy to change your IP address. Whether you're a MacOS and iPhone user or a Windows 11 user with an Android device, any first-timer can safely change their IP address in a few quick steps. And -- as long as you're not using it to



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specific device with your online browsing), but we'll focus on the type normally changed to protect your privacy as you browse and those that make you appear like you're in a different country.

There are four simple ways to change your IP address in under five minutes. Jumping behind a proxy server or a VPN is the best way to not only temporarily change your IP address, but also protect your privacy. If you just want to change your IP address without the additional privacy boost, you can either enter your preferred IP manually, or you can just force your device to retrieve a new one automatically.

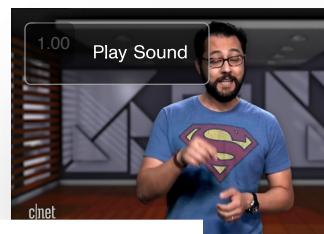


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Keep in mind, changing your IP address will temporarily disrupt whatever internet-connected services or programs you're using on your device. There's no harm done, but it's going to have the same effect as if you'd momentarily lost your Wi-Fi. Your Spotify might hiccup. Media streaming services will have a momentary brain freeze. If you're sending or receiving files, you may need to start over. And you might have to log back in to whatever secure site you're currently using.

Here are the quickest and easiest ways to change your IP address.

## How to change your IP address with a VPN or proxy server



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You can use a VPN to change your IP address.

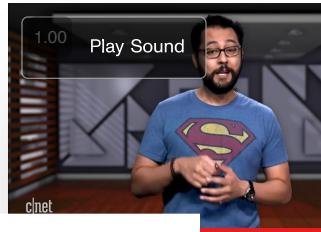
Sarah Tew/CNET

When you use any of the virtual private networks we've [reviewed in our directory](#), the service will automatically make you appear as though you have a different IP address originating from whatever country you select. Literally just open your VPN app and connect to any city other than your current one -- in less than 30 seconds, you've changed your IP so it appears to be from wherever you chose.

Browser-based VPNs and proxies are much more lightweight than standalone VPN apps. There are some key privacy differences that I've detailed elsewhere, but when you use a proxy, it also changes your visible IP address. [Chrome](#), [Firefox](#) and [Brave Browser](#) all have their own versions of proxies and browser-based VPNs that you can try for yourself.

Setting up a VPN on your iPhone or Android device is as easy as installing any other app on your phone, and I've got [a step-by-step guide](#) in case you'd like to see how to do it. If you're gaming from a console, I've also got a quick walkthrough for you on [setting up a VPN on an Xbox](#) along with a list of the [ones that performed best](#) in my tests.

If you've never toyed with VPNs but are considering one, I've got the Cliff's Notes version of [how to pick the right one](#), which you might find helpful. Whatever you do, just avoid [free VPNs](#). Seriously not worth the malware risk. Instead, pivot to the [cheapest ones](#) that I've test-driven for you.



## How to change your IP address by

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Changing your IP address is as easy as unplugging your router.

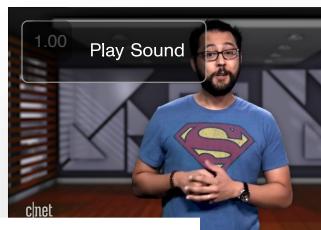
Ry Crist/CNET

The easiest and quickest way to get a new IP address is to see what your IP address is via an [IP-checking site](#), then walk over to your router and unplug it for at least five minutes. It may take several minutes longer, depending on how long your ISP normally takes to renew IP addresses in general. Once you plug it back in, refresh the website to make sure your IP address has changed.

Essentially, what you're trying to do is make the IP-assigning part of your router "forget" your device so that it treats your device like a newcomer and gives it a new address. This isn't foolproof, however. Sometimes it takes multiple tries, and in some cases you may have to leave the router off overnight. If you have a router that's separate from your modem (most are a combination device these days) you may need to unplug the modem and router, leave them off for 5 minutes or so, then first power the modem on, followed by the router.

But getting off the couch is overrated.

## How to automatically update your IP address on Mac, iOS, Windows and Android



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Changing your IP address will better protect your browsing.

Patrick Holland/CNET

Here's how to do this on Mac, iOS, Windows and Android:

**MacOS:** Click your Apple icon in the top left corner of your screen, and click **System Preferences** then **Network** then **Advanced**. At the top of the next screen, click **TCP/IP**, then click the **Renew DHCP Lease** button on the right side of the window.

**iOS:** Go to **Settings**, tap **Network** and choose the wireless network you're currently on. Under the IPv4 address section, tap **Configure IP** then **Automatic**.

**Windows 10:** Press the **Win+R** keys at the same time. This opens the **Run** box dialog. Type **cmd**, then hit **Enter** on your keyboard. This opens the command prompt.

For those who've never seen a Windows command prompt before: This is the part where you will either be immediately terrified something is about to get broken, or you will suddenly feel like you're about to do something extremely cool. Do not panic; neither of those things is going to happen. The magic black box has that effect on everyone their first time.

Type **ipconfig /release** (including the space) into the command prompt and hit Enter. Some text will zoom by. When it stops, type **ipconfig /renew** and hit Enter again. Then close your command prompt. You're done.

**Android:** Go to **Settings**, tap **Connections** then tap **Wi-Fi**. From here, tap on the network you're currently connected



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bottom-right corner). Your phone will forget the Wi-Fi network and be disconnected. Just reconnect to your network, and you should be issued a new IP address.



Now playing: Top 5 Reasons to Use a VPN ▶ 2:42

## How to manually change your IP address

Here's what to do if you've already got a new IP address that you know you want to use.

**MacOS:** Go to **System Preferences** and click **Network**. Click **Network Connection**, then click **Configure IPv4**. Select **Manually** and type in whatever IP you've chosen.

**iOS:** Go to **Settings**, tap **Wi-Fi**, then **Network**. Under the IPv4 address section, tap **Configure IP**. Manually type in whatever IP address you're trying to use.

**Windows:** Make sure you're working from your Administrator account and click **Start**, then go to **Control Panel**. From here, click **Network Connection**, and then click on your local area connection. Next, click **Properties**, then click **TCP/IP**. From here, you can type your new IP address in manually.

**Android:** Go to **Settings**, tap **Connections** then tap **Wi-Fi**. From here, tap on the network you're currently connected to. Tap the gear-shaped icon to the right of the network. Your IP address will be displayed here, but go to the bottom of the screen and tap **Advanced**, then tap **IP Settings**. Select **Static**. The next screen will let you manually type in whatever IP address you've chosen.

For more, check out [everything to know about the Tor browser](#), [three browser-based VPNs to try](#), and the [browser privacy settings you should change right away](#).

## FAQ

If you're tooling around with IP address changes, you might have some other questions. Here are some of the most common questions we've been asked.



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Yes, it's legal to change your IP address in the US. People change their IP addresses routinely when facing direct attacks on their online security, when testing a website before it goes live, or when they simply prefer to protect their privacy. Obviously, this FAQ is in no way offering legal advice and you should consult a licensed attorney for specific questions, but the legal boundaries on IP address changes usually start with what you change your IP to, and what you do with that new IP address.

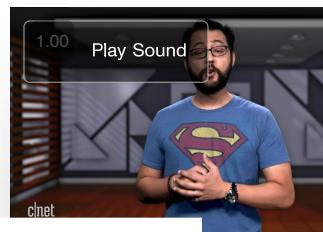
If you've changed your IP to impersonate an individual or a business -- often called IP spoofing -- you could be running afoul of the US Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. You might also run into trouble if you're changing your IP address to access a website you've been banned from. IP spoofing is also a tool used by some cybercriminals to perform a handful of well-known attacks, most commonly those related to identity theft and those aimed at crippling websites with organized distributed denial of service bombardment.

 Watch this: Which VPN should you pick? ▶ 4:28

## Why should I change my IP address?

Routinely changing your external, or public IP address, can help you improve your overall security and browsing privacy. There are other reasons, too. If you've just installed a new home router, you may need to reconfigure your network with a quick IP change. One common problem among home routers is that they sometimes give devices the wrong IP address, so changing your IP manually can solve those glitches.

If you want to access a country's catalog of streaming media services when you're outside of that country for whatever reason, changing your IP to one based in the right country can get you the catalog you're looking for. Likewise, if you're a gamer looking to lower your lag, changing your IP via a gaming



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search results and local publications written in the local language.

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**Top 5 Reasons to Use** 02:31/