

# Guide on troubleshooting common computer problems

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## My computer won't turn on

To troubleshoot power related issues, follow the steps below.

A. Make sure the computer is plugged into a working power outlet.

B. If your computer has a power switch on the back (it is usually located where you plug in the power cable), flip the switch into "ON" position.

C. Try turning the computer on by pressing the power button. Listen for any sound from the fans inside and look for any messages on the monitor's screen. If you hear the fans inside but the screen is black, verify the monitor is turned on and the cable between the computer and the monitor is connected properly.

D. If there is no sound from the fans inside follow the steps below

1. Disconnect the power cable and press and hold the power button for 10 seconds.
2. Disconnect every cable (mouse, keyboard, VGA, DVI, HDMI, speakers, microphone, web camera, etc.).
3. Place the computer's tower on a flat surface. Open the computer case by either unscrewing the screws on the back or using the latch on one side panel to take it off (or follow the instructions specific for your case). You must discharge any static electricity from your body by touching a grounded metal part of the case prior touching anything inside the computer! The static electricity may damage the internal parts (motherboard, processor, memory chips, video card, etc.)
4. Verify the memory chips are properly seated/locked in their slots and re-seat them if necessary.
5. Verify the video card (if your computer has a separate video card) is inserted securely into its slot.
6. Verify the cell type battery, which keeps the internal clock, is good. If not, replace it with the same type and model.
7. Verify the biggest connector from the power supply is properly plugged in and secured to the motherboard.
8. Remove any recently installed hardware (sound card, card reader, WI-FI card, etc.).
9. Try turning on the computer with only the memory chips inserted, video card (if separate) inserted, keyboard and mouse plugged in and monitor connected. If you see any messages on the screen, power off the computer.
10. Then start adding one component at a time - hard drive, sound card, WI-FI card, web camera, USB devices - after following step one and verify the computer turns on normally and boots the operating system. If there is a faulty component and the computer won't turn on after adding it, replace that component and confirm normal powering on and booting the operating system.
11. If the computer still doesn't turn on seek professional computer service for further troubleshooting and repair.

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## My monitor won't turn on

1. Check if the monitor is plugged into a good power source. Turn on the computer and the monitor and verify the monitor shows the POST (Power On Self-Test) message.
2. Then, check if the video cable is plugged into both the monitor and the computer.
3. If your computer has a separate high-end video card which requires additional power, open the computer by following the instructions specific for your case. Then, verify the necessary power connector(s) are securely plugged into the video card. Your power supply should have sufficient power to run this video card.
4. Verify the separate video card is well seated in the slot of the motherboard.
5. After that, using the buttons on the side of the monitor, change the input source according to the cable plugged in. White is DVI or DVI-D, blue would be VGA, HDMI would say it's "HDMI" on the actual cable, and Display port would be the one that doesn't fit anyone these descriptions. The newer display port cables have a "D" on either side of the cable.
6. The last part is to make sure there are no missing or bent out pins on the connectors.
7. If none of this works, then you have to seek professional service.

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## Windows won't start

There are two main reasons for the operating system not booting – either failed hardware or a software problem. This guide covers some common hardware issues.

1. Verify your memory module(s) are good by replacing them with same type and size and try booting the operating system. They must be seated properly in their slots.
2. While your computer starts, try accessing the BIOS or Setup options. This is usually done by pressing one of the F keys (F2, F5 or specific to your computer). Once in the BIOS (or Setup) options, confirm the correct amount of memory is recognized. Then use the arrow keys to navigate to the tab that shows “Boot Options and devices”.
3. Check that the hard drive is being recognized by the computer. If it is, continue to step 6, if it is not recognized by the computer, go to step 4. Exit the BIOS (or Setup) options.
4. Turn off the computer by holding the power button. Disconnect the power cable, press and hold the power button for 10 seconds. Discharge yourself from any static electricity by touching a grounded metal case.
5. Open the computer case by either unscrewing the hand screws on the back or using the latch on one side of the computer to take off the side panel. Locate the hard drive which should be connected to the power supply and the motherboard. Once the hard drive is located, make sure both cables are snug into their designated places. Try powering on the computer and certify it boots into the operating system. If it doesn't, go to step 7. Since the case is open, make sure the fans and motherboard are free from any dust and clean them if needed with pressurized air. Make sure the processor, motherboard or video card are not overheating.
6. Turn off the computer by holding the power button. Turn it back on and if a screen pops up indicating “Windows didn't start properly”, the computer should automatically repair itself and boot to Windows. If it doesn't you may have to “repair it” by following the prompts. If it still doesn't boot go to step 7.
7. If the operating system doesn't start, you may have a software problem and you need professional service.

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### My keyboard or mouse devices won't work

1. If they are wired, plug them into the back or the front USB ports or older PS-2 ports of the PC (personal computer). If they are wireless devices, plug their receiver into a USB port on the PC.
2. Change or add batteries to the peripherals if they are wireless.
3. Press the connect button in the keyboard/mouse, and if available, on the receiver as well.
4. The keyboard/mouse might take a while to connect to the receiver.
5. If none of this works, try with a different keyboard or mouse.
6. Try plugging into the computer a wired device to check if the computer is outputting any power through the USB and recognizes that device. Try different USB ports.
7. If no devices are recognized or powered on, the problem could be the PC itself.
8. Try re-installing the drivers by obtaining the newest ones from the manufacturer's website.
9. If nothing works, seek professional service.

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## How to check your version of Windows

1. Click on the Windows “Start” button in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen.
2. Right click on “Computer”
3. Left click on “Properties”
4. At the top, under “Windows edition,” it should indicate your version of Windows
5. Once you have verified the type of Windows, you can search for solutions specific to your operating system (or, you can keep reading this guide).

**Some of the solutions in this guide may work for other versions of Windows.**

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### How to transfer files from phone/tablet to computer

1. Use a USB cable that plugs into both the phone and computer
2. Once plugged in, a notification on the phone may pop-up asking for permission if you allow USB data connection.
3. Click “allow,” “accept,” or “yes”
4. Then, after the PC recognizes the phone/tablet, open Windows Explorer (hold the Windows logo key and press “E”) or click on the Windows “Start” button. Then click on Computer.
5. On that screen, you should see the name of your phone/tablet.
6. If the phone/tablet is not listed there, unlock your device and confirm it is recognized on the PC screen.
7. Double click on the device's icon.
8. The location of the files on the device depends on if you are using a separate micro SD card or the device's internal storage.
9. If you have a separate card, then double-click where it says “SD Card,”. If you don't have a separate card double click on “Phone” or “Tablet”.
10. The media files are either located in a folder called “DCIM,” or “Pictures” and “Videos.”
11. If there is a DCIM folder, open it by double-clicking, and then there will be all the media files
12. If there are more subfolders, open them to see if there are any pictures or videos inside.
13. Once the files are found, open up Windows Explorer again and then do one of the following steps:
  - If you want to copy the files to a thumbstick or a CD, insert it now if you haven't already.
  - If you want to copy the files to your computer, open the desired folder (Picture, Music, Videos, etc.)
14. Put the two windows side by side.
15. Select the images you want to copy over.
16. Click and drag the highlighted images over to the other window.

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## How to add a printer if you don't have the original instructions or installation CD

These instructions cover installing a wireless printer

1. Plug your printer into the computer using the cable provided with the printer and turn it on. In most cases that will be a USB cable (but very unlikely could be Parallel or Serial cable).
2. Click on the Windows "Start" button.
3. Click on "Devices and Printers".
4. At the top, click on "Add a printer", then "Add a local printer" and choose the specific port the printer's cable is plugged in.
5. Once the computer finds the printer, click on it, and then click "Next".
6. Click on "Windows Update" to update the list of printers. This may take a while.
7. Once that finishes, find and select the manufacturer and the model of your printer.
8. Click "Next".
9. Name the printer.
10. Click "Next".
11. The driver for the printer will now install. Follow the prompts.
12. When finished to test the printer, click "Print a Test Page." If you don't want to print a test page, click "Finish".

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## My screen looks bigger than it should be

1. On the Desktop, right click on an empty area.
2. Then, click on "Screen Resolution".
3. In the drop-down menu next to resolution, select the highest resolution. Windows will even recommend the best resolution for your screen.
4. If the problem persists try installing, updating, or reinstalling the graphics' card software from the manufacturer's website.

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## My computer is running slow or it freezes

First, you need to identify if this is a software or hardware related issue.

The hardware-related issues/solutions are not limited to:

- Overheating – try cleaning up the fans and heat sinks inside of the computer case including the ones for the CPU, video card, and power supply.
- Insufficient amount of RAM – add more RAM or replace the current one with a larger memory chip.
- Slow or fragmented hard drive – you may need to upgrade or defragment your hard drive.
- Slow video card or CPU – you may need to upgrade these components.

The software solutions could include the following:

1. Uninstall any unnecessary programs by:
  - Click on the Windows “Start” button
  - Click on “Control Panel”
  - Click on “Programs and Features”
  - Click on any program you want to remove and, at the top, click “Uninstall”. Read the prompts and uninstall the program.
2. Move any large files from the Desktop folder into a different folder on the hard drive.
  - Click on the Windows “Start” button.
  - Click “Computer”.
  - Find the folder where you want to relocate the files.
  - Click and drag the large files from the Desktop over to the folder you have chosen.
3. Stop any already started unnecessary programs and prevent them from starting every time when Windows starts.
  - In the settings of a specific program, if there is an option, uncheck “Start when my computer starts” or check “Don't start when my computer starts.”
  - Hold the Windows key and press “R” at the same time. This opens the “Run” command.
  - Type in **msconfig** and press “Enter”. A “System Configuration” window will open.
  - Go to the “Start Up” tab and uncheck the unnecessary programs you don't want to start automatically every time the operating system starts.
  - Click “Apply” and “Ok”. Then close all programs and click “Restart” when the window prompts this.
4. Keep your operating system up to date.
  - Click on the Windows “Start” button
  - Click “Control Panel”
  - Click “Windows Update”
  - Install the necessary updates
5. Keep your anti-virus or anti-malware protection up-to-date.
6. Low virtual memory – increase the amount of virtual memory by clicking on “Start”, type in the search field “Advanced System Settings”. On the System Properties window go to “Advanced” tab, “Performance Settings”, “Advanced” tab on Performance Options, “Virtual Memory Change”, click on “Custom size” and type the recommended amount. Click “Apply” and restart the computer.

## Internet browsing is slow or unresponsive

1. Check your Internet connection speed by going to any website which provides a speed test. Your speed should be at least 2 Mbps.
  2. Clear the cache and cookies on your browser:
    - Go into the settings of the browser
    - Go to advanced settings
    - Search for “Clear browsing data” or “Browsing data”
    - You'll want to clear the history and the cache. You can clear the cookies if you want, too.
  3. Turn off any other devices that may be using the Internet
  4. There may be programs on your computer consuming all the Internet speed. Close them and Turn them off too.
  5. Check that your internet provider has not turned off your Internet access because you didn't pay the bill
- If none of this works, contact an expert.

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### Unusual noise is coming from my computer

1. Turn off the computer.
2. Clean out all the fans with compressed air (be careful not to break them).
3. Turn the computer back on.
4. If there still noise, identify where the sound is coming from if it isn't from the fans.
5. Turn the PC off again.
6. Remove the suspected hardware (unless it is the RAM, CPU, Motherboard, or fans)
7. Add the hardware one by one until you identify where the sound is coming from
8. Turn the computer back on.
9. Confirm there are no more unusual sounds.
10. Identify the problem of the hardware (if it is visible) if not, give to an expert
11. Buy new hardware if needed.

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I keep seeing “There is a problem with this website's security certificate”

1. Check if the system time and date are correct.

- Click on the clock in the bottom corner.
- Click on “Change time and date settings”.
- Click on “Change Date and Time”. Adjust the date and time and confirm the computer is set to synchronize its time automatically from a time server on the Internet.

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### My computer keeps restarting

1. Check you have the newest operating system's updates from Windows Update:
  - Click on the Windows “Start” button
  - Click “Control Panel”
  - Click “Windows Update”
  - Install the necessary updates
2. Check your antivirus program isn't causing the problem
3. Make sure all your drivers are up to date
  - Click on the Windows “Start” button
  - Right click on “Computer”
  - Click on “Properties”
  - In the top corner, click on “Device Manager”
  - If you have a device with an exclamation mark, try updating its driver
  - The computer will now search online for driver's update and install it. If no driver is found, you need to install that driver from the manufacturer's support site.
4. The computer may keep rebooting due to overheating or BIOS issue.

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