How to Troubleshoot Home WiFi and Router Issues

> The bottom line: 99% of home WiFi issues can be fixed by unplugging the router, waiting five seconds, then plugging it back in. This resets the device and frequently improves the speed.

Our aim with this guide is to provide you a to-the-point reference for dealing with some of the most common home WiFi issues, including:

- WiFi not working
- WiFi slowed down
- WiFi network disappearing
- Devices that won't connect to Wifi

We'll cover what to do if your connection is running slower than usual, as well as how to troubleshoot a network that won't connect at all. We'll also take a look at several tools you can use to help troubleshoot your connection when problems crop up.

Home WiFi Quick Fix

If your wireless connection suddenly stops working, before trying anything else, restart your router. Here's the process:

1. Unplug or power off your router.

2. Wait 2-5 minutes before plugging it back in.

3. Wait 5 more minutes and retry the connection.

In most cases, this should fix your issue and allow you to get back online. If you go through these steps and something still isn't working, you may need to contact your internet service provider for assistance.

Understanding Your Router's Icons

Most routers have a series of icons that illuminate to convey different status messages at a glance. Though these can vary from brand to brand, most manufacturer's include at least three primary status indicators:

- Globe icon: solid when modem is connected to the Internet.

WiFi icon: solid when WiFi is being broadcast with no issues. status

Ethernet icon: solid when ethernet cables are connected and working properly.

When everything is working properly, you can expect the icons to be solid or blinking green or blue light. This signals that a device is plugged in and functioning normally.

When there is a connection issue, you can expect the icons to turn red or orange.

An orange or amber light may indicate a problem or limited connectivity, whereas a red or unlit icon may signal that there is no current connection.

Important point: in order to be clear on what your specific device is communicating to you, be sure to refer to the user manual for a more detailed explanation.

> *Pro tip: You can usually find a digital copy of your router's manual by typing your device model number followed by "user manual" into Google.*

How to troubleshoot WiFi

The appearance of routers differs from brand to brand, but the core functionality is the same: directing digital traffic over WiFi.

If you've tried the quick fix above to no success, there are still several other ways you may be able to troubleshoot your WiFi connection. In order to identify the technique most likely to actually help you, let's break them down by their core issue:

"I'm experiencing slower-than-normal network speeds."

> *Try this: Plug an ethernet cable directly into your router and test your internet speeds using our [speed test tool](#). Next, test your speeds on the WiFi connection. If they are both slow, the issue is likely with your service provider, and not your equipment. Give them a call.*

If the hardwired connection is much faster than the wireless one, however, there may be more you can do to optimize your network. Wired connections will usually always be faster than wireless in some capacity, but the difference shouldn't be so vast that your WiFi is unusable. First try moving your router to a more central location. If that's not an option, it may be worth exploring how to [extend your Wifi connection](#) to all areas of your home.

Also, you may be encountering interference from networks adjacent to yours. If you think this may be the case, you can try changing the channel your router is broadcasting on. For starters, you'll want to use the 5Ghz band whenever possible, if your router supports it. These tend to be less congested, and therefore better performing than their 2.4GHz counterparts.

"I have no internet connection at all."

> *Try this: Plug an ethernet cable into your router and see if you're able to get a signal on a desktop or laptop. If you can't, your access has been cut, and you should contact your ISP.*

If you find that you're able to load web pages through a hardwired connection, there's definitely something wrong with your WiFi network itself. If restarting the router didn't fix the issue, you may need to set it up again completely. Most routers have a small "reset" button that needs to be held down with a paperclip or other small object. Doing this will restore the device to factory settings, and you'll be able to go through the first-time setup once again.

If you've been through this process and still can't get connected, you'll likely need to contact your ISP for help. You could have an unpaid balance that has caused the company to suspend your account, or there may simply be an outage in your area.

"My WiFi network disappeared completely."

> *Try this: Check to see where your router is positioned. If it is somewhere cramped, such as behind a couch, or crammed into a crowded equipment cabinet, it may be overheating and shutting down automatically to prevent any damage.*

If you're able to move your router somewhere where it has more airflow, you should be able to solve the overheating issue.

If you feel that your router is positioned somewhere ideal and that overheating isn't the problem, there are a few other things that could be happening.

For one, your network may have reset itself due to an update. Take a look at the default network name (usually printed somewhere on the router itself) and see if you recognize that network when looking for a connection.

**"My phone/laptop/tablet won't connect, even though my other devices are fine."**

Try this: Turn off the offending device and turn it back on. You can also try turning the WiFi off and on again in the settings of your device, just to be thorough.

If this doesn't help, you may need to delete your network from the device entirely. On an iOS or Android device, you can simply click on the network name and hit "Forget This Network."

This will mean you'll have to find the network again and put the password in like you did the first time you set it up, but it should solve any remaining connection issues in the process.

Tools for WiFi troubleshooting

Speed Test
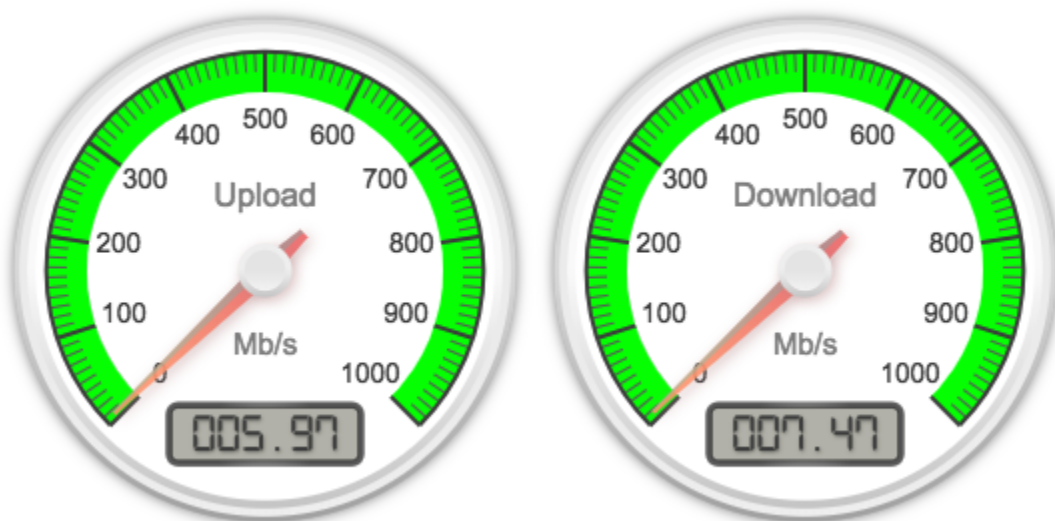
Use our speed test tool to check for reductions in your upload and download speed.

Our speed test tool will allow you to see how your current network is performing in terms of both upload and download speeds. You can use this at any time to test the quality of your connection, and if you're having any issues, you can use it to gauge your progress on getting them resolved. You can also use Speed Test periodically to see if you are really getting the speeds that you are paying for. Just remember that using WiFi will always slow things down a little bit!

Wireless Diagnostics (Mac)

The Network Diagnostics tool is a robust program that allows you to get a clear picture of your network health, as well as troubleshoot any issues you may be experiencing. You can find this program by hitting Command + Spacebar and typing "Wireless Diagnostics" into the search bar.

When you first open the program, it will scan your immediate area for any available WiFi networks. Once this is done, you'll be presented with two options: Monitor my WiFi connection and Continue to summary. Choose neither of these. Instead, at the top of your screen, select "Scan" from the Window drop-down menu. You will see a list of networks. Select "Scan Now."

The service will then show you a full list of connections around you, including what channel they are operating on. In addition, the program will show you the best channels for both the 2.4GHz and 5GHz bands based on network congestion. In order to actually change the channels your router is operating on, you'll need to google the brand of the device followed by "IP address." You will then type this in just like you would any regular website (detailed instructions below).

1. Open the program by clicking Command + Spacebar and typing "Wireless Diagnostics"
2. Once open, select "Scan" from the Window drop-down menu.

 Select "Scan Now."

1. Observe the channel your network is operating on, as well as the channels recommended by the program.
2. Log in to your router's control panel and change the broadcast channel to the one recommended above.

NirSoft (Windows)

NirSoft functions very similarly to the Wireless Diagnostics tools for Mac, scanning your WiFi environment and displaying all available networks, as well as a number of useful statistics for each. Like with the Wireless Diagnostics tool for Mac, you'll still need to log into your router's control panel to actually change its configuration.

NetSpot (Mac & Windows)

NetSpot is a fantastic alternative to both options above, and even features some additional tools that intermediate users may find valuable. Above and beyond being able to view detailed information about your network, NetSpot also allows you to visualize its footprint in your home, showing you any dead zones and weak points that need to be patched up. Available as a free download, you'd be hard-pressed to find a more feature-complete troubleshooting program.

Why does my computer keep disconnecting from WiFi?

How to Troubleshoot Home WiFi and Router Issues

If you find that you are consistently getting booted from your WiFi network, there are a few things that could be happening.

The first step we recommend taking is looking for any patterns in the service disruptions. Do they only happen at a certain time of the evening? Maybe it even drops when you pop something into the microwave? Believe it or not, there are many signals constantly flowing through your home that can disrupt your internet connection.

If you've ruled out network interference using the tools listed above, you may need to try updating your router's firmware. This is essentially the device's "operating system," and like any other piece of software, it needs to be updated from time to time to keep functioning properly.

If you've updated your firmware and are still getting disconnects, you may need to consider replacing the router outright, especially if it is more than a few years old. Routers are computers, and computers unfortunately do tend to fail after a few years.

Firmware Updates by Brand

Netgear

Linksys

Asus

TP-Link

How to log into your router's control panel

Click on your router's brand below to see in-depth instructions on how to log in to its configuration area, where you can adjust network passwords and names, as well as change the channels they are operating on.

Netgear login tutorial

Linksys login tutorial

Asus login tutorial

TP-Link login tutorial

If All Else Fails, Contact Your Service Provider.

Though technical support from many companies can be a hit or miss experience, if you've tried everything above and nothing seems to be working, it may be best to simply reach out to request a tech to come to your home and sort the issue out directly. This may entail a service fee of some kind, but if it gets you back online, it may well be worthwhile in the end.

Tech Support Phone Numbers for Common ISPs:

AT&T Internet tech support: (800) 288-2020

Cable ONE tech support: (877) 692-2253

CenturyLink tech support: (888) 723-8010

Charter Spectrum tech support: (855) 757-7328

Cox Cable tech support: (800) 234-3993

Frontier Communications tech support: (888) 884-0504

HughesNet Satellite Internet tech support: (866) 347-3292

Mediacom Cable tech support: (800) 883-0145

RCN tech support: (800) 746-4726

Rise Broadband tech support: (877) 910-6207

Suddenlink Communications tech support: (877) 794-2724

TDS Telecom tech support: (866) 571-6662

Verizon Fios tech support: (800) 837-4966

Verizon High Speed Internet tech support: (800) 837-4966

Viasat Internet (formerly Exede) tech support: (855) 463-9333

Wi-Power tech support: (877) 877-6861

Windstream tech support: (800) 347-1991

WOW! tech support: (855) 496-9929

XFINITY tech support: (800) 934-6489

ENTER A ZIP CODE TO FIND PROVIDERS IN YOUR AREA.

Enter your zip code

BROADBAND SHOPPING GUIDE

A Complete Guide to Internet Service During The Coronavirus Pandemic

How to Shop for Internet Service

Determine what Internet speed you need

Internet Bandwidth Calculator

Compare Urban Internet Options: DSL vs Cable vs Fiber

Compare Rural Internet Options: Satellite Internet vs DSL

Decide Between a Bundle or Internet-Only

Decide Whether to Buy or Rent Your Modem

Internet Contracts and Fees 101

Order and Install Internet Service

INTERNET TROUBLESHOOTING AND GUIDES

How to Set Up A Home WiFi Network

How to Extend Home WiFi

WiFi Security Basics

How to Optimize a Home Network for Gaming

How to Fix Home WiFi and Router Issues

How to Tell if You're Being Throttled

BROADBAND CONSUMER RESOURCES

How to Switch or Cancel Internet Service

Low and Fixed Income Internet Options

FCC and FTC Internet Service Complaints

How to Negotiate With Your Internet Provider

SATELLITE INTERNET RESOURCES

What is Satellite Internet?

Satellite Internet Pros & Cons

Best Satellite Internet Providers

Satellite Internet Data Caps Explained

Satellite Internet For Gaming

Satellite Internet for Vans & RVs

Satellite Internet for Boats

Author: Tyler Cooper   Last updated: 12/18/2019

General

About BroadbandNow

Reports

Our Data

Consumer Guides

Advertise with Us

Contact Us

Privacy Policy

Terms of Service

Do Not Sell My Personal Information

Provider Coverage

AT&T Internet

Spectrum Internet

CenturyLink Internet

Cox Internet

Frontier Internet

Viasat Internet

Xfinity Internet

HughesNet Internet

Provider Deals

AT&T Internet Deals

Spectrum Internet Deals

Centurylink Internet Deals

Cox Internet Deals

Frontier Internet Deals

Viasat Internet Deals

Xfinity Internet Deals

HughesNet Internet Deals

City Internet Coverage

Los Angeles Internet Providers

Chicago Internet Providers

Houston Internet Providers

Dallas Internet Providers

Phoenix Internet Providers

San Antonio Internet Providers

Seattle Internet Providers

San Francisco Internet Providers

12130 Millenium Drive, Ste 600
Los Angeles, CA 90094