

Why won't Docker Desktop Start

Asked 2 years, 4 months ago Modified today Viewed 89k times



23



I am trying to install Docker Desktop for Windows and once I have completed the entire process as mentioned in their official documentation, including installing and enabling the wsl 2 on Windows. However, when I try to launch the application, nothing happens except for a process showing up in the task manager. Even the taskbar icon is not coming up. I have already browsed for information regarding this issue and tried the following solutions, but to no avail:



1. Reinstalling Docker Desktop
2. Removing the settings.json file in %APPDATA%\Roaming\Docker
3. Running Docker Installer as Administrator
4. Checking the WSL Feature in Windows Features is on.
5. Installing an older version of Docker, on which the same issue persisted

System Specifications:

- Dell Inspiron 5521 running Windows 10 Pro (Version 21H1, Build 19043.1826)
- Intel i7 3rd gen processor, 16GB RAM
- Docker version 20.10.17, build 100c701

This is the log file generated: [Docker generated Log file](#)

Can someone please guide me regarding this?

Edit: When I installed docker on my friend's computer, and running the `wsl -l -v` command, he gets 3 entries namely Ubuntu, Docker desktop and docker desktop data, but on my pc it is only showing Ubuntu.

docker

windows-subsystem-for-linux

docker-desktop

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edited Oct 7 at 13:32



djvg

14.1k ● 7 ● 82 ● 111

asked Jul 23, 2022 at 5:49



shubham salunke

405 ● 2 ● 8 ● 18


@JRichardsz Anyhow, if you have ever installed docker for windows, could you guide me for a clean installation, including proper uninstallation – [shubham salunke](#) Jul 23, 2022 at 7:22

It would be a pain the installation. In some cases, bios changes are required. I advice to install a vmbox with ubuntu server (without ui). You could have docker in 2 minutes with just one click

gist.github.com/jrichardsz/... Also you could use Linux instead windows. – JRichardsz Jul 23, 2022 at 7:38

If you choose linux in the hole system or in a vmbox, I would be glad to help you

github.com/jrichardsz/contact_me/discussions – JRichardsz Jul 23, 2022 at 7:42

- 2 `common/cmd/com.docker.backend/main.go:94 +0x25 [2022-07-23T05:32:38.131207600Z]`
`[com.docker.backend.exe][F] exec: "powershell": executable file not found in %PATH%`
This message appears several times in the logs. Is powershell.exe available on the %PATH% and functional?
– DrHopfen Jul 26, 2022 at 6:53 
- 1 @DrHopfen Thank you so much, that was the case, somehow I deleted that entry, docker is launching now
– shubham salunke Jul 26, 2022 at 12:26

13 Answers

Sorted by: Highest score (default) 



11



1. Install WSL 2:

- Follow the official steps on how to install WSL 2 at [Microsoft Docs](https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/wsl/install).

2. Update WSL:

- Open PowerShell and run the command:

```
wsl --update
```

3. Uninstall Docker:

- If you have Docker installed, uninstall it.

4. Delete Temporary Data:

- Delete the following folders:
 - C:\Users<USER>\AppData\Roaming\Docker
 - C:\ProgramData\Docker
 - C:\ProgramData\DockerDesktop

5. Reinstall Docker:

- Reinstall Docker, and make sure to tick the option for WSL during the installation.

6. Restart Computer:

- After installing Docker, restart your computer.

7. Run Docker as Administrator:

- Find Docker in your programs and run it as an administrator.

8. Run PowerShell as Administrator:

- Open PowerShell and run it as an administrator.

9. Switch to Docker Daemon for WSL:

- Run the following command in PowerShell:

```
& 'C:\Program Files\Docker\Docker\DockerCli.exe' -SwitchDaemon
```

- If it doesn't work, you may need to run the above command one or two more times.

That's it! These steps should help you fix the problem.

Edit:

I've encountered the same problem again, which turned out to be **related to my DNS settings**. Initially, I was using NextDNS, but the problem was resolved after I switched to Cloudflare.

It's peculiar behavior from NextDNS, as I had not set up any blocking rules. However, upon reviewing the Docker engine logs, I noticed it was attempting requests to the Docker servers, which appeared to be blocked or unfulfilled when using NextDNS (although NextDNS didn't log any blocked queries, which is odd). Consequently, the Docker engine would get caught in an infinite loop during startup, continuously trying to complete these requests.

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edited Sep 26 at 8:37



Community Bot
1 • 1

answered Sep 11, 2023 at 18:51



Alessio
119 • 1 • 5

1 ProgramData is at the drive root so `C:\ProgramData` not `C:\Users\ProgramData` – Sherwin F Dec 7, 2023 at 23:11

1 Just updating WSL by command `wsl --update` worked for me. Docker engine successfully started. – Vinuka Vinnath Mar 5 at 20:23

Running just steps 7, 8 & 9 fixed my problem. Thank you! – DeepThunder Oct 1 at 20:16



5



It might be because an instance of Docker Desktop is running in the background, try opening you Task Manager/Activity Monitor, searching for "Docker Desktop", then quitting all of those processes.

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answered Nov 13, 2023 at 10:07



Tin Timmy McCormack
McCc 59 • 1 • 1



Your answer could be improved with additional supporting information. Please [edit](#) to add further details, such as citations or documentation, so that others can confirm that your answer is correct. You can find more information on how to write good answers [in the help center](#). – sidharth vijayakumar Nov 13, 2023 at 15:24



4

As this is one of the main Google hits for "Docker Desktop doesn't start", let me also add another potential solution here for future readers: your user was not added to the `docker-users` group yet. As explained in the [Docker installation documentation](#), if the current user is not an administrator, the current user must be added to the `docker-users` group for Docker to work.



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answered Sep 4, 2023 at 9:29



user2842685

184 ● 1 ● 3 ● 8



3

```
common/cmd/com.docker.backend/main.go:94 +0x25 [2022-07-23T05:32:38.131207600Z]  
[com.docker.backend.exe][F] exec: "powershell": executable file not found in %PATH%
```



This log message suggest the absence of a functional powershell on the Path. After fixing this Docker Desktop should start.



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answered Jul 26, 2022 at 14:41



DrHopfen

837 ● 4 ● 13



1

For those encountering this problem in 2024, this issue cropped up after I attempted to upgrade Docker Desktop by clicking the "New version available" notification in the status bar...Big mistake!



Because I didn't want to destroy my containers, and felt in my gut, that the solution would not require such drastic action, I tried a few "non-destructive" fixes that didn't work, but was finally able to get Docker Desktop working again without blowing away my current install.



Note: Steps 1-4 were performed after the initial "prompted upgrade", which when started, would throw an actual error that suggested that the upgrade did not properly complete, or was corrupted. Steps 5-8 were performed after I downloaded and reinstalled OVER the "corrupted" upgrade, and the app would just silently fail after starting.

If you're NOT receiving an actual error message, but the app just "silently fails" after attempting to start, my suggestion would be to first try skipping to step 5, before reinstalling over your current instance. And if that doesn't work, start over at step 1...Just a suggestion.

1. Download the install the current exe for your version, from the Docker web site.
2. In Task Manager, kill all Docker processes
3. Run the install to re-install Docker OVER the currently installed instance (Again, I did not uninstall beforehand, because I wanted to keep my containers, but your mileage may vary)

4. Initially, after this step, Docker Desktop successfully started with my containers intact...UNTIL, I restarted my laptop. When I attempted to restart Docker Desktop after the restart, the app would start, but when it prompted me to start a service dependency, it would then stop, and just silently fail, but background processes would still be running in Task Manager. If this is your experience, continue with following steps...
5. In Task Manager, kill all Docker background processes
6. **Backup %AppData%\Roaming\Docker\settings.json**
7. ***** THIS IS THE KEY *** DELETE %AppData%\Roaming\Docker\settings.json** -Docker Desktop will automatically recreate this file when restarted).
8. Restart Docker Desktop as an Admin and your containers/data/settings should still be intact, and everything should work as expected.

Caveat: I have not rebooted my system yet, as I've burned too much time on this today, and reboot takes too long, so the issue could possibly recur once I reboot.

Good luck!

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answered Aug 2 at 13:45



TWebby

43 ● 1 ● 5

Update - This issue recurred, and rather than going through the whole process of reinstalling Docker Desktop, I decided to try just backing up/deleting the settings.json file...Worked like a charm! So, I recommend trying THAT first, if Docker Desktop "silently" fails when you try to start it. Also, I've got it configured to run at startup, and this issue recurred after a warm reboot, so it might be related to that.

– TWebby Aug 10 at 13:00



1



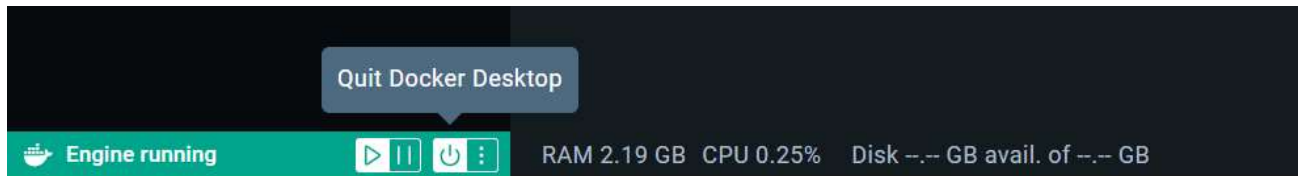
I was having a similar issue (on windows fyi). On startup I could open the app but after closing it I wasn't being able to start it up again. For me the issue was I was just exiting the app (obvious way: clicking on the red cross) but by doing that the docker engine seemingly kept running on the background. Going in to task manager I saw:

Processes

Name	Status	13% CPU	83% Memory	1% Disk	0% Network
Apps (0)					
Background processes (2)					
> Docker Desktop (3)		0%	111.9 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
> Docker Desktop Backend (4)		0.8%	80.6 MB	0.1 MB/s	0 Mbps

So I had to manually end those tasks and then I was able to start Docker again.

In order to avoid these task manager steps you can, when in the app and want to close it, click on the 'Quit Docker Desktop' icon, usually located at the bottom-left side of the screen, it will also stop any background processes:



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answered Sep 23 at 12:16



Frederico Portela

91 ● 6



1

This is because Docker and Docker Desktop instances are already running in your system's background process.



Open task manager and search for Docker. Right-click on them and click end task. After that run the Docker Desktop application and now it will run smoothly.



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answered Sep 7 at 23:37



killer47

21 ● 4



0

For future readers, yet another possibility that I just had to figure out from hours of trial and error: If you're using a *custom WSL2 Kernel*, it might be the cause for docker-desktop woes.



I was originally using Podman that was running just fine on custom compile of WSL kernel but turns out Docker really didn't like it. There was no obvious error but removing that one line pointing WSL (in `%USERPROFILE%\wslconfig`) to my custom kernel fixed the issue.



Hope it saves future searchers, some time.



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edited 17 hours ago

answered May 29 at 15:43



Maverik

5,663 ● 37 ● 49



0

I have tried every approach under the sun for the past two weeks, trying to get this thing to work. I purged all mentions of Docker from my PC files, updated my WSL, restarted my computer a billion times, and nothing worked.



The only approach that ended up solving my problem was downgrading to a far older version (4.24.0). I'm guessing there's some bug in the code that just doesn't let docker work on some aspect of my setup.



If you're in a situation like I was in, just try uninstalling your current version through the Windows uninstall apps page and then installing an old version from here:

<https://docs.docker.com/desktop/release-notes/>

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answered Aug 30 at 18:44



Aadi Adgaonkar

77 ● 1 ● 2

I wonder why you had downvotes, I've faced quite a lot of irregularities with Docker Desktop, on two different machines, and at one I had to downgrade as well – [Rafael Karosuo](#) Nov 5 at 0:43



0

I faced the same issue where once I open the docker desktop in admin mode, it was not opening(tried restarting and opening it again but the issue still remained the same) and in services docker desktop was not running, I tried starting it in services and then try to open but nothing worked for me.



The solution that worked for me is: I have deleted below folders in my machine



1. C:\Users<username>\AppData\Roaming\Docker
2. C:\Users<username>\AppData\Roaming\Docker Desktop

After deleting the above folders I have restarted my machine and tried to open docker desktop in admin mode and it worked

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answered Mar 24 at 22:06



manjunath kuruba

1



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I've tried This ways that i searched in Q&A forums and communities :



1. checked my BIOS Setup for Virtualization Setting
2. Install Hyper-V feature(in Win11 named Hypervisor)
3. trying to Reinstall & Update WSL



4. Delete %AppDate% files of Docker



5. Reinstall Docker

6. Starting Docker and Hyper-v Services Manually

But the final way that helped me was:

installing lower version of Docker instead of latest version(I've installed 4.12 instead 4.27)

and it finally properly worked

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edited Feb 4 at 17:08

answered Feb 4 at 17:04



SepehrShojaee

9 ● 4

Your answer could be improved with additional supporting information. Please [edit](#) to add further details, such as citations or documentation, so that others can confirm that your answer is correct. You can find more information on how to write good answers [in the help center](#). – Community Bot Feb 7 at 14:57



0

For those who still have the problem, what solved it for me was that I uninstalled Docker and reinstalled it, when installing I unchecked the option to install the required Windows components for WLS 2



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answered Aug 4 at 15:03



Jearvardor

1



-1

Here are another 5c,

I had added non-Json to my `~/.docker/config.json` that made the start fail rather silently, though there were hints in the log ('C:\Users<username>\AppData\Local\Docker')



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answered Oct 10 at 16:43



rexsuecia

399 ● 2 ● 2

