

WordPress Local Setup Guide

Complete Step-by-Step Tutorial for Windows

Using XAMPP & WordPress

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1. Introduction

Welcome to this comprehensive guide on setting up WordPress locally on your Windows machine. This tutorial will walk you through every step of the process, from installing the necessary server software (XAMPP) to getting your WordPress site up and running on your local computer.

Why Set Up WordPress Locally?

- Test themes and plugins safely before deploying to a live site
- Learn WordPress development without affecting a production website
- Build and test new websites offline
- No hosting costs during development
- Work without an internet connection

Note: This guide uses XAMPP, a free and open-source cross-platform web server solution that includes Apache, MySQL, and PHP - everything you need to run WordPress.

2. System Requirements

Before we begin, ensure your Windows computer meets the following requirements:

Component	Requirement
Operating System	Windows 7/8/10/11 (32-bit or 64-bit)
Processor	1 GHz or faster
RAM	Minimum 2 GB (4 GB recommended)
Hard Disk Space	At least 1 GB free space
Administrator Access	Required for installation

3. Part 1: Installing XAMPP

XAMPP is a completely free, easy-to-install Apache distribution containing MariaDB, PHP, and Perl. It creates a local server environment on your computer, allowing you to run WordPress without needing a web hosting service.

Step 1: Download XAMPP

Visit the official Apache Friends website to download XAMPP:

<https://www.apachefriends.org/>

1. Navigate to the XAMPP download page
2. Click on the **XAMPP for Windows** button
3. Download the latest version (PHP 8.x recommended)
4. The file will be approximately 150-160 MB
5. Save the installer (xampp-windows-x64-xxx-installer.exe) to your Downloads folder

Step 2: Run the XAMPP Installer

1. Locate the downloaded installer in your Downloads folder
2. Right-click on the installer and select **Run as Administrator**
3. If you see a User Account Control prompt, click **Yes**
4. If Windows displays a security warning, click **OK** to proceed

■■ Warning: If you have Skype or another application using port 80 or 443, you may need to close them before installation or configure XAMPP to use different ports.

Step 3: XAMPP Setup Wizard

Follow the installation wizard:

1. **Welcome Screen:** Click **Next** to begin
2. **Select Components:** Ensure Apache, MySQL, PHP, and phpMyAdmin are checked (default selection is fine). Click **Next**
3. **Installation Folder:** Leave the default path as C:\xampp or choose a custom location. Click **Next**
4. **Language:** Select your preferred language. Click **Next**
5. **Ready to Install:** Click **Next** to start the installation
6. Wait for the installation to complete (this may take 2-5 minutes)
7. Uncheck 'Learn more about Bitnami' if you don't want additional information
8. Click **Finish** to complete the installation

Step 4: Start XAMPP Control Panel

1. After installation, the XAMPP Control Panel should launch automatically
2. If not, find XAMPP in your Start Menu and click on **XAMPP Control Panel**
3. The control panel shows all available services (Apache, MySQL, FileZilla, Mercury, Tomcat)
4. For WordPress, you only need **Apache** and **MySQL**

Step 5: Start Apache and MySQL

To start the required services:

1. In the XAMPP Control Panel, click the **Start** button next to **Apache**
2. Wait for Apache to start (the background will turn green and display 'Running')
3. Click the **Start** button next to **MySQL**
4. Wait for MySQL to start (the background will turn green)
5. You should now see port numbers displayed (Apache: 80, 443 | MySQL: 3306)

■ **Note:** If you encounter port conflicts (Apache won't start), it usually means another program is using port 80. Common culprits are Skype, IIS, or other web servers. You can either close those programs or configure XAMPP to use different ports.

Step 6: Test XAMPP Installation

1. Open your web browser (Chrome, Firefox, Edge, etc.)
2. Type **localhost** or **127.0.0.1** in the address bar
3. Press Enter
4. You should see the XAMPP dashboard/welcome page
5. If you see this page, congratulations! XAMPP is installed and working correctly

■ **Success:** XAMPP is now installed and running on your computer. You're ready to proceed to downloading WordPress!

4. Part 2: Downloading WordPress

Now that XAMPP is installed and running, the next step is to download WordPress and place it in the correct directory where XAMPP can serve it.

Step 1: Download WordPress

Get the latest version of WordPress:

1. Visit the official WordPress website: <https://wordpress.org/>
2. Click the **Get WordPress or Download WordPress** button
3. The latest version will download as a .zip file (approximately 20-25 MB)
4. Save it to your Downloads folder

Step 2: Extract WordPress Files

1. Navigate to your Downloads folder
2. Find the downloaded WordPress zip file (e.g., wordpress-6.x.x.zip)
3. Right-click on the zip file
4. Select **Extract All...**
5. Choose C:\xampp\htdocs as the destination
6. If prompted for administrator permission, click **Continue**
7. Click **Extract**

■ **Important:** The htdocs folder is the web root directory for XAMPP. Any folder you place in htdocs becomes accessible through your browser at localhost/foldername.

Step 3: Rename WordPress Folder (Optional)

After extraction, you'll have a folder named 'wordpress' in C:\xampp\htdocs. You can rename this folder to something more descriptive for your project.

1. Open File Explorer and navigate to C:\xampp\htdocs
2. You should see a folder named **wordpress**
3. Right-click on the folder and select **Rename**
4. Choose a name for your project (e.g., 'mysite', 'testsite', 'myblog')
5. For this guide, we'll use **mywordpress**

■ **Note:** The folder name will determine your local site URL. If you name it 'mywordpress', your site will be accessible at <http://localhost/mywordpress>

5. Part 3: Setting Up WordPress

Before WordPress can run, it needs a database to store all your content, settings, and user information. We'll create this database using phpMyAdmin, which comes with XAMPP.

Step 1: Create a MySQL Database

Access phpMyAdmin:

1. Make sure Apache and MySQL are running in XAMPP Control Panel
2. Open your web browser
3. Type **localhost/phpmyadmin** in the address bar and press Enter
4. The phpMyAdmin interface will load

Step 2: Create a New Database

1. In phpMyAdmin, click on the **Databases** tab at the top
2. Under 'Create database', enter a name for your database (e.g., **wordpress_db**)
3. Leave the collation as 'utf8mb4_general_ci' (default)
4. Click the **Create** button
5. You should see a success message confirming the database was created
6. Your new database will appear in the left sidebar

■ **Note:** Remember the database name you choose - you'll need it during WordPress installation. Common names include: wordpress_db, wp_local, mysite_db

Step 3: Note Database Credentials

You'll need the following information for WordPress installation:

Setting	Value	Description
Database Name	wordpress_db	(or whatever you named it)
Username	root	(default XAMPP username)
Password	(empty)	(default XAMPP has no password)
Database Host	localhost	(always localhost for local setup)
Table Prefix	wp_	(default, can be changed)

■■ Security Note: The default XAMPP MySQL setup has no password for the root user. This is fine for local development but should NEVER be used on a production server.

6. Part 4: WordPress Configuration

Now that the database is ready, we can run the WordPress installation wizard to configure and install WordPress.

Step 1: Access WordPress Installation

1. Open your web browser
2. Navigate to **http://localhost/mywordpress** (replace 'mywordpress' with your folder name)
3. You should see the WordPress language selection screen
4. Select your language and click **Continue**

Step 2: WordPress Welcome Screen

1. Read the welcome message that explains what information you'll need
2. WordPress will list the required information (database name, username, password, host, table prefix)
3. Click **Let's go!** to proceed to the database connection screen

Step 3: Enter Database Information

Fill in the database connection details:

1. **Database Name:** Enter **wordpress_db** (or whatever you named your database)
2. **Username:** Enter **root**
3. **Password:** Leave this field **empty** (no password for default XAMPP)
4. **Database Host:** Leave as **localhost**
5. **Table Prefix:** Leave as **wp_** (or change if you prefer)
6. Click **Submit**

■ **Note:** The table prefix is useful if you want to run multiple WordPress installations in the same database. Each installation can have a different prefix (wp_, wp2_, blog_, etc.)

Step 4: Run the Installation

1. If the database connection is successful, you'll see a confirmation message
2. Click **Run the installation**
3. WordPress will now create the necessary database tables

Step 5: Site Information and Admin Account

Set up your WordPress site and create an admin account:

1. **Site Title:** Enter your site name (e.g., 'My Local WordPress Site')
2. **Username:** Create an admin username (avoid 'admin' for security)
3. **Password:** WordPress will suggest a strong password - you can use it or create your own
4. **Your Email:** Enter your email address
5. **Search Engine Visibility:** Check this box to discourage search engines from indexing (recommended for local sites)
6. Click **Install WordPress**

■■ Important: Remember your username and password! You'll need these to log into your WordPress dashboard. Write them down or save them in a password manager.

Step 6: Installation Complete!

1. After a few seconds, you'll see a success message: 'Success!'
2. Click **Log In** to access your WordPress admin dashboard
3. Enter your username and password
4. Click **Log In**
5. Welcome to your WordPress dashboard!

■ **Congratulations!** You have successfully installed WordPress on your local Windows machine. Your WordPress site is now ready for development and testing!

Step 7: Accessing Your WordPress Site

Now that WordPress is installed, here are the important URLs:

Purpose	URL	Description
View your site	http://localhost/mywordpress	Your public-facing website
Admin Dashboard	http://localhost/mywordpress/wp-admin	WordPress backend/control panel
Login Page	http://localhost/mywordpress/wp-login.php	Direct login URL

■ **Bookmark These:** Save these URLs to your browser's bookmarks for quick access during development.

7. Troubleshooting Common Issues

Issue 1: Apache Won't Start

Problem: Apache service fails to start in XAMPP Control Panel

Possible Causes & Solutions:

- **Port 80 is already in use:** Close Skype, IIS, or other web servers. Or configure Apache to use a different port (8080)
- **Windows Firewall blocking:** Add an exception for Apache in Windows Firewall
- **Antivirus interference:** Temporarily disable antivirus or add XAMPP to exclusions
- **Corrupted installation:** Uninstall and reinstall XAMPP

Issue 2: MySQL Won't Start

Problem: MySQL service fails to start

Possible Causes & Solutions:

- **Port 3306 in use:** Check if another MySQL instance is running. Stop it or change XAMPP MySQL port
- **Insufficient permissions:** Run XAMPP Control Panel as Administrator
- **Corrupted database:** Restore from backup or reinstall XAMPP

Issue 3: Can't Connect to Database

Problem: WordPress shows 'Error establishing database connection'

Solutions:

- Verify MySQL is running in XAMPP Control Panel
- Check database name, username, and password in wp-config.php
- Ensure database exists in phpMyAdmin
- Confirm 'localhost' is the correct database host

Issue 4: 404 Not Found Error

Problem: Accessing localhost/mywordpress shows a 404 error

Solutions:

- Verify the WordPress folder exists in C:\xampp\htdocs
- Check that Apache is running
- Ensure you're using the correct folder name in the URL
- Clear browser cache and try again

Issue 5: Blank White Screen

Problem: WordPress displays a blank white screen

Solutions:

- Increase PHP memory limit in php.ini (find it via XAMPP Control Panel > Config > PHP)
- Disable all plugins by renaming the plugins folder
- Switch to a default theme (Twenty Twenty-Four)
- Check error logs in C:\xampp\apache\logs\error.log

Issue 6: Cannot Upload Files/Media

Problem: Upload errors when adding media to WordPress

Solutions:

- Check file permissions on wp-content/uploads folder
- Increase upload_max_filesize and post_max_size in php.ini
- Ensure the uploads folder exists and is writable
- Temporarily disable antivirus software

8. Additional Resources

Useful Tips for Local WordPress Development

- **Auto-start services:** In XAMPP Control Panel > Config > Service Settings, you can set Apache and MySQL to start automatically with Windows
- **Multiple WordPress installations:** Create separate folders in htdocs for different projects (project1, project2, etc.)
- **Backup regularly:** Use phpMyAdmin to export your database and copy your htdocs folder
- **Use SSL locally:** Enable SSL in XAMPP to test HTTPS functionality
- **Version control:** Use Git to track changes in your theme/plugin development
- **Debugging:** Enable WP_DEBUG in wp-config.php for development troubleshooting

Helpful Resources

Resource	URL	Purpose
WordPress Codex	https://codex.wordpress.org/	Official documentation
WordPress Support	https://wordpress.org/support/	Community forums
XAMPP Documentation	https://www.apachefriends.org/docs/	XAMPP guides
WordPress Developer Resources	https://developer.wordpress.org/	For theme/plugin development
WordPress Stack Exchange	https://wordpress.stackexchange.com/	Q&A community

Next Steps

Now that you have WordPress running locally, here are some things you can do:

- Explore the WordPress dashboard and familiarize yourself with the interface
- Install and test different themes from Appearance > Themes
- Add plugins to extend functionality (Plugins > Add New)
- Create sample posts and pages to test your site

- Start developing custom themes or plugins
- Learn about child themes for safe customization
- Experiment with page builders like Elementor or Gutenberg blocks

Congratulations on setting up your local WordPress development environment!

You now have a powerful platform to learn, experiment, and develop WordPress sites safely.
Happy developing! ■

*This guide was created to help beginners set up WordPress locally on Windows.
For questions or updates, visit wordpress.org or [xampp forums](https://forums.xampp.org).*