

# **Creating a proton.me account**

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Proton provides a number of services—some of which you can use for free; some of which you have to pay for via a subscription. You have to have a proton.me account to use these services regardless of whether you want to use the free services or subscription-based services.

This document takes you through the process of creating a proton.me account in the minimum amount of steps. It is not a very complicated process. Based on my experience creating my proton.me account, there are a couple of potential mistakes that may be easy to make. In the pages that follow I have included notes/comments that should help you avoid making those mistakes.

Note that Proton (the company) places a lot of value on privacy. Proton does not prompt you to provide any personally identifying information (e.g., your cell phone number or an existing email address) when creating a proton.me account. You can add an email address and/or cell phone number after your account is created if you want to. Why might you want to? Storing an email address or cell phone number in your account will make resetting your password fairly easy if you loose or forget it. In this document, I don't describe how you add an email address or cell phone number to your account for this purpose; if you want to add email address/cell phone number to your account for password recovery, let me know and I'll show you how to do that.

#### **Can you use two-factor authentication (2FA) with a proton.me account?**

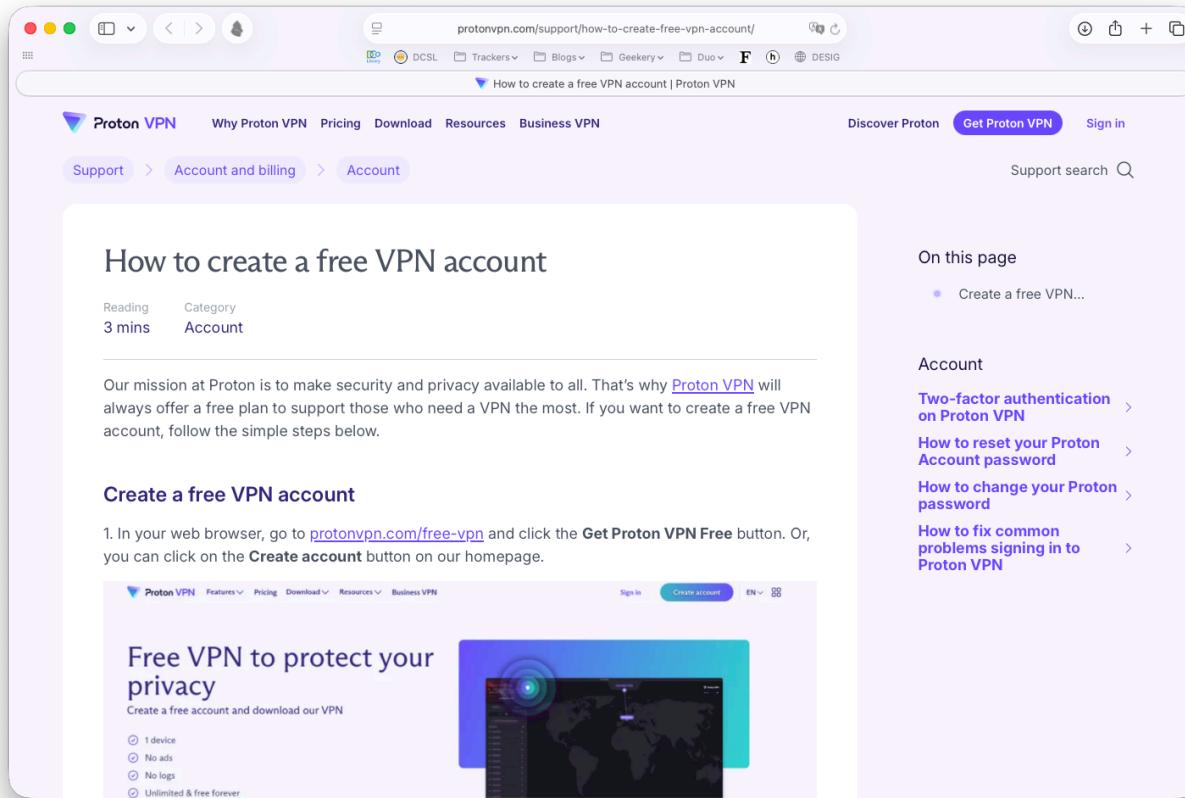
You can, but Proton only supports 2FA with an authenticator app or security key; it does not support 2FA with text or email. We talked about using an authenticator apps and security apps for 2FA very briefly in one of our sessions last Fall; I imagine we need to talk about these things in more detail if anyone wants to enable 2FA with your proton.me account. Let me know if you are interested in enabling 2FA with your proton.me account; I have found a way to use the Passwords app that is part of macOS and iOS as an authenticator app and can show you how if you are interested.

# Step 1: Getting to the proton.me account creation page

In your browser, go to the page at this URL: <https://protonvpn.com/free-vpn>.

Note that Proton has multiple account creation pages; it is important that you use the URL above to create an account for use with the free version of ProtonVPN. The other account creation pages I have found are associated with subscription plans and or other online services Proton provides.

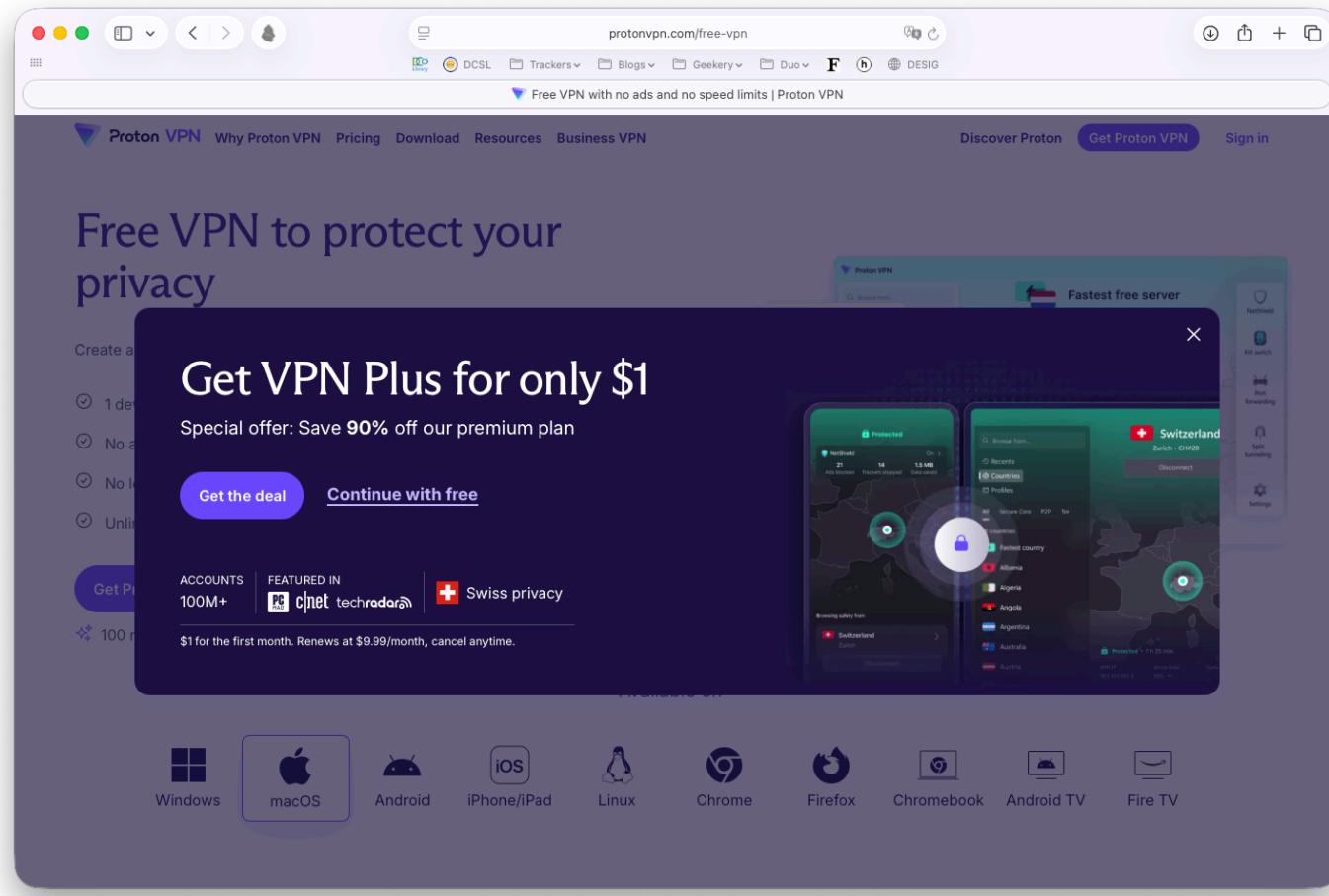
Once your browser has loaded the above URL, you should see a page that looks like the following.



## Step 2: Getting to the proton.me account creation page

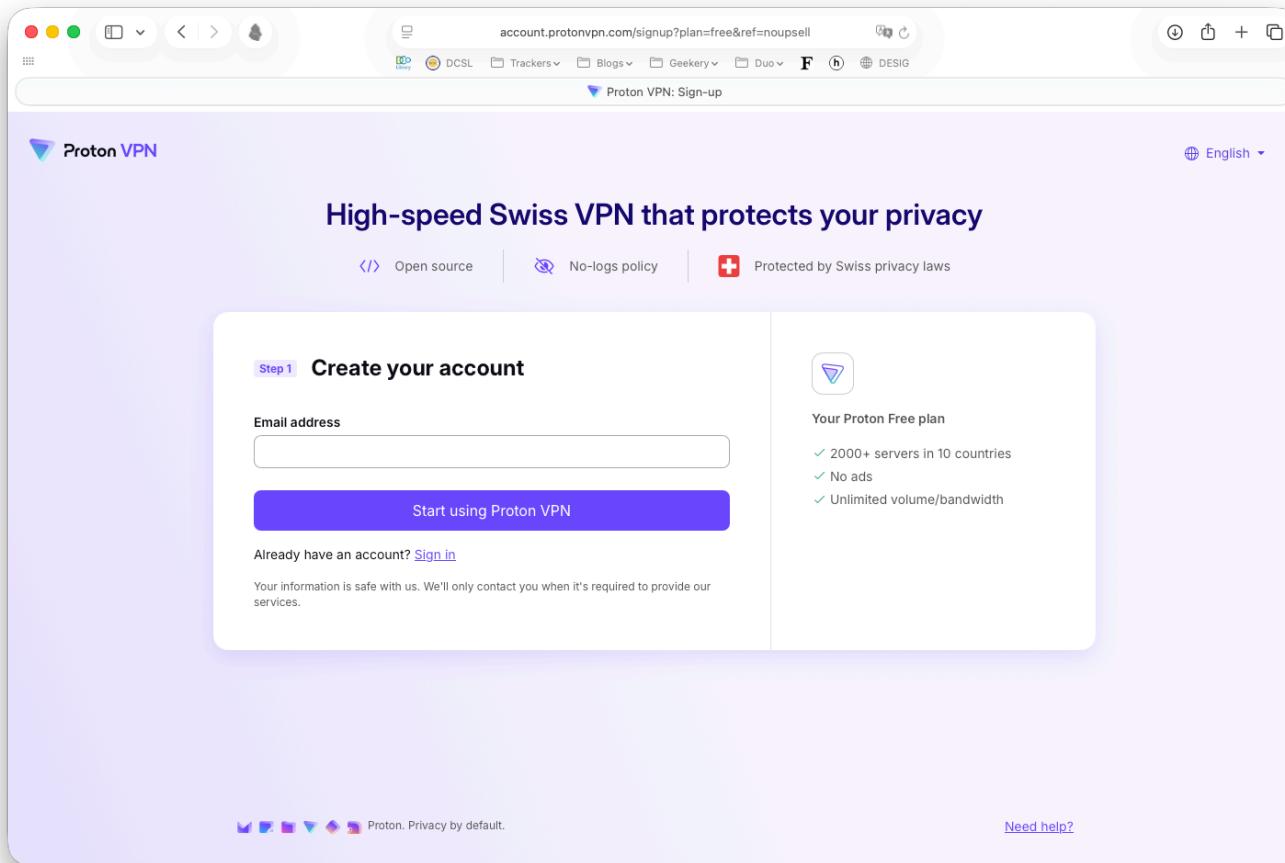
You should find a "Get Proton VPN Free" button on the page that is currently loaded in your browser. Click that button!

After you click the "Get Proton VPN Free" button, your browser window may look like the following. At the time I created this "how to" document, Proton was offering a discounted VPN subscription rate; if you are creating your Proton account after this discounted offer "expires", you likely won't see this page. If you do see this page, just click the "Continue with free" link.



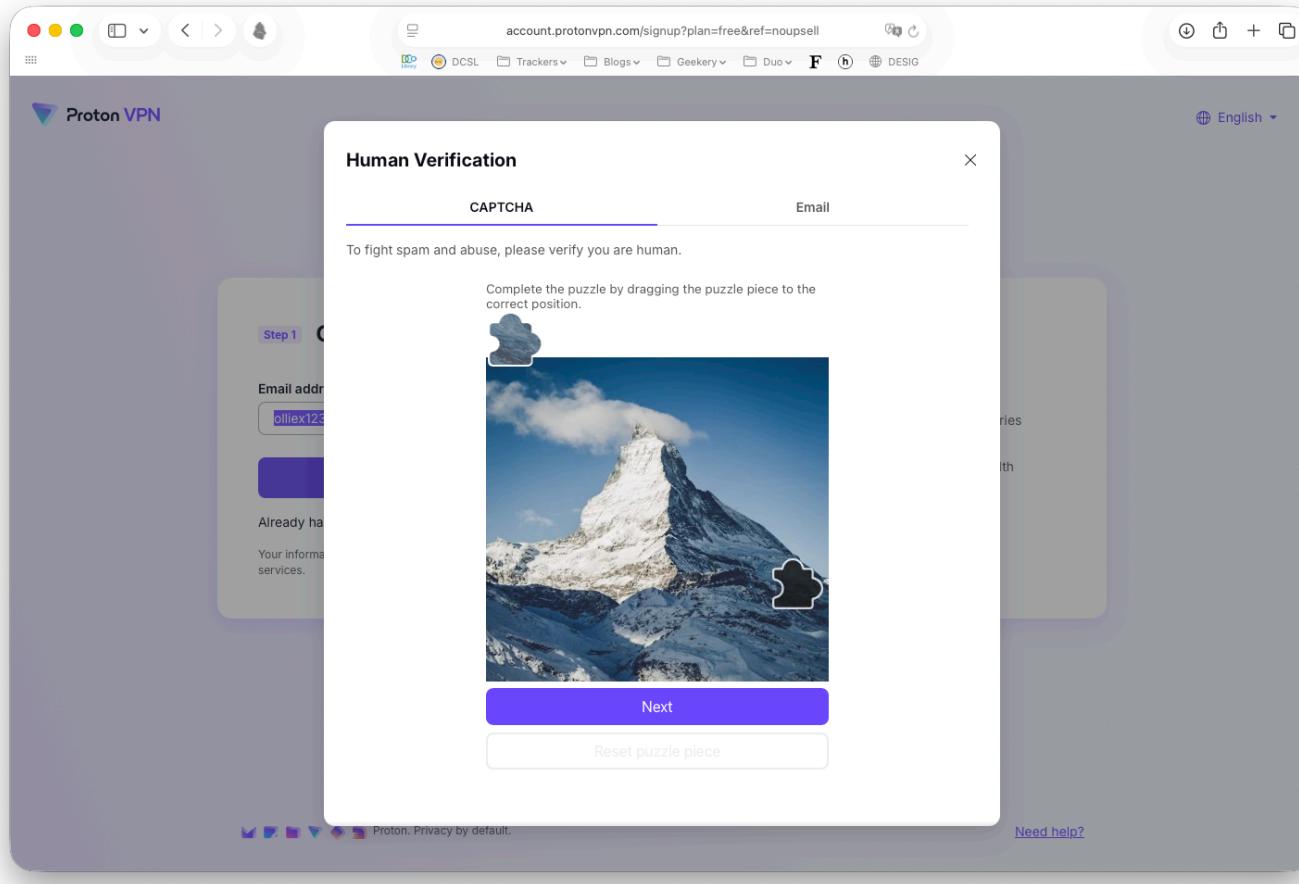
# Step 3: Choose your proton.me email address

Your browser should now be showing you a page that looks like the one below. You need to enter an email address for your Proton account in the "Email address" text box on this page. This email address should be of the form "*id*@proton.me" where "*id*" is a string of characters of your choosing; e.g., "myProtonAcct@proton.me". The string of characters you enter must be unique relative to other Proton accounts; if you enter a value for *id* that someone else is already using, you will see a message that reads "Username already used" appear beneath the text box and will need to modify the value of *id*. Once you have found a unique *id*, click the "Start using Proton VPN" button.



# Step 4: Solve the Captcha challenge

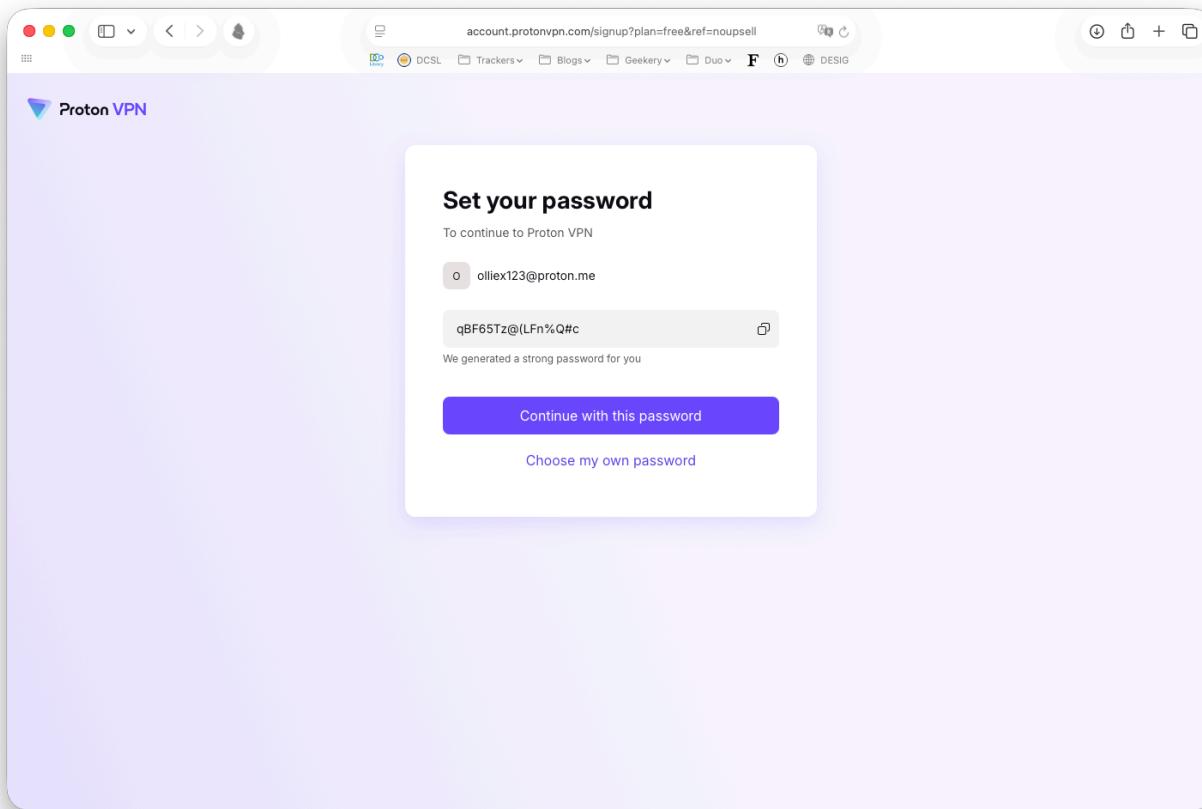
Your browser should now look similar to the image below. You will likely see a different picture than a mountain top. Proton makes you prove you are a human by solving a simple jigsaw puzzle. I suspect you've encountered Captcha challenges like this before and know what to do.



# Step 5: Set your password

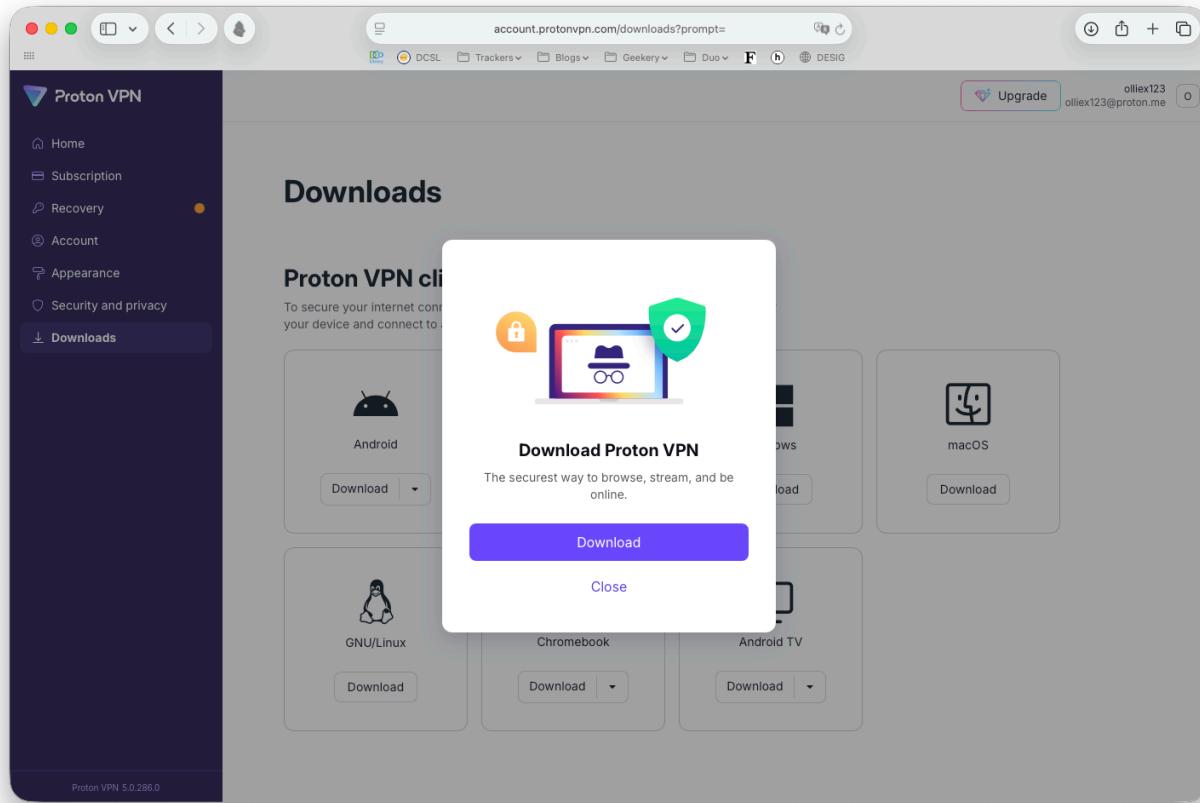
Once you've proven you're a human being, your browser should now be showing you a page that looks similar to the one below. You can use the password the site generated for you or make up another one. (If you want to create your own password, I think you can just type the password you want into the textbox; if that doesn't work try clicking the "Choose my own password" link.)

**Make sure you write down in a secure/private location both your id (ie, new proton.me email address) and password before you proceed.**



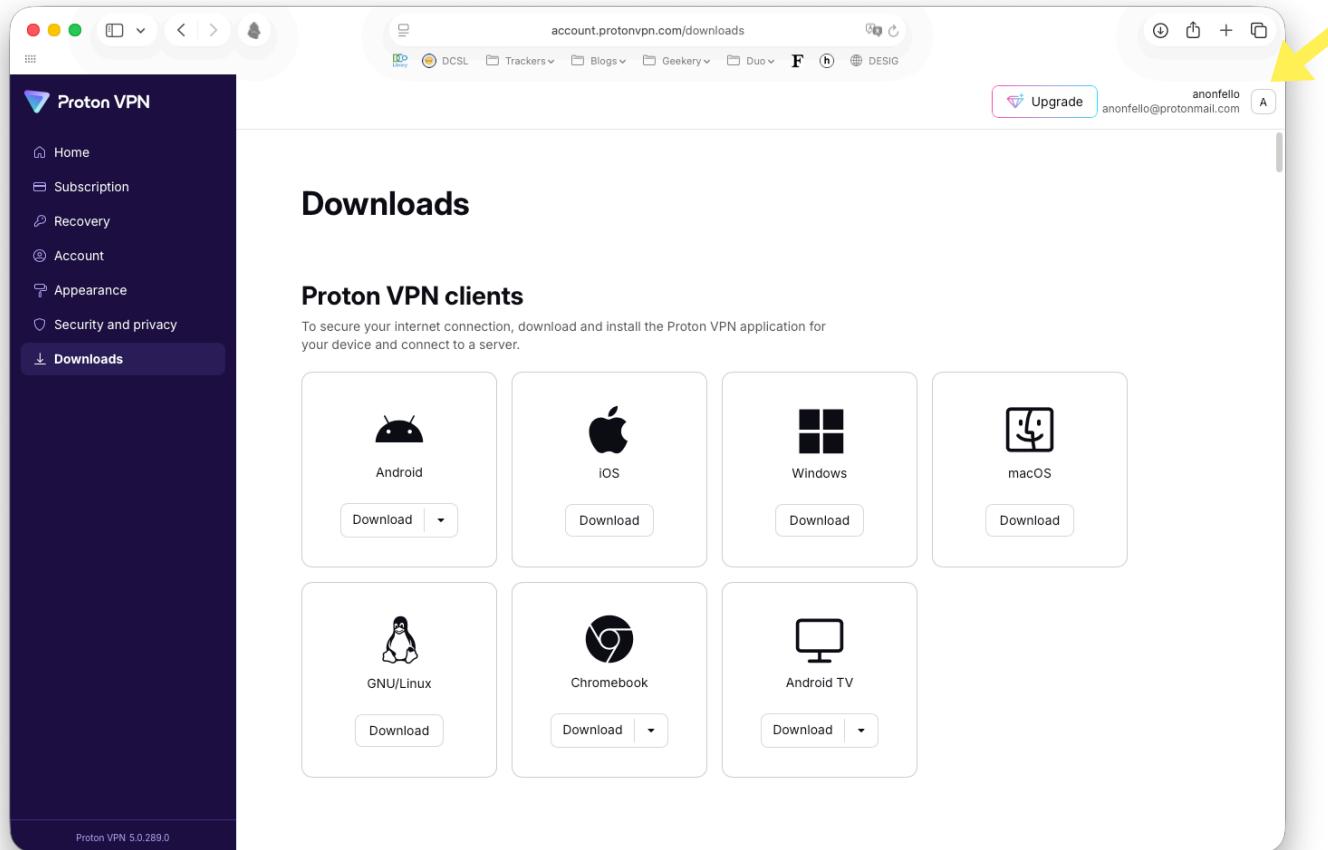
# Step 6: Almost done!

You're done creating your new account and you are signed in to proton.me in your browser. Your browser window should look similar to the image below if **you created your account using a laptop (or desktop) computer**. If you used your iPhone or iPad, you **probably won't** see the box giving you the option of downloading Proton VPN. (Note, I am speculating/taking an educated guess; I have not gone through the process of creating a proton.me account using my iPhone or iPad to see exactly what that looks like.). Regardless, if you do see a "Download Proton VPN" box similar to the one below, click "Close"; the reference document describing how to install and use ProtonVPN covers downloading the software.



# Step 7: Creating a proton.me account

Having dismissed the “Download Proton VPN” box by clicking the word “Close” (if in fact that box appeared in your browser window), sign out of your new proton.me account before you move on to next steps. (You won’t need to be signed into proton.me in your browser in order to use ProtonVPN.) To sign out, click on your proton.me account name/email address in the upper right hand corner of your browser window (highlighted by the yellow arrow); a dialog box will appear with a sign out button you can click.



**Congratulations! You did it!**

Here's a gold star for a job well done.

