Creating strong passwords

You'll need to **create a password** to do just about everything on the Web, from checking your email to online banking. And while it's simpler to use a short, easy-to-remember password, this can also pose **serious risks** to your online security. To protect yourself and your information, you'll want to use passwords that are **long**, **strong**, **and difficult for someone else to guess** while still keeping them relatively **easy for you to remember**.

Watch the video below from Safety in Canada to learn more about creating a strong password.

Why do I need a strong password?

At this point, you may be wondering, **why do I even need a strong password anyway?** The truth is that even though most websites are secure, there's always a small chance someone may try to access or steal your information. This is commonly known as **hacking**. A strong password is one of the best ways to defend your accounts and private information from hackers.

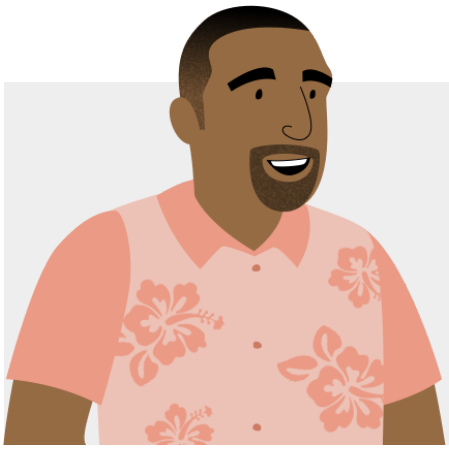
Tips for creating strong passwords

A strong password is one that's easy for you to remember but difficult for others to guess. Let's take a look at some of the most important things to consider when creating a password.

- **Never use personal information** such as your name, birthday, user name, or email address. This type of information is often publicly available, which makes it easier for someone to guess your password.
- **Use a longer password**. Your password should be **at least six characters long**, although for extra security it should be even longer.
- **Don't use the same password for each account**. If someone discovers your password for one account, all of your other accounts will be vulnerable.
- Try to include **numbers, symbols**, and both **uppercase** and **lowercase letters**.
- Avoid using words that can be **found in the dictionary**. For example, **swimming1** would be a weak password.
- **Random passwords are the strongest**. If you're having trouble creating one, you can use a **password generator** instead.

Common password mistakes

Some of the most commonly used passwords are based on **family names**, **hobbies**, or just a **simple pattern**. While these types of passwords are easy to remember, they're also some of the least secure. Let's take a look at some of the most common password mistakes and how to fix them.

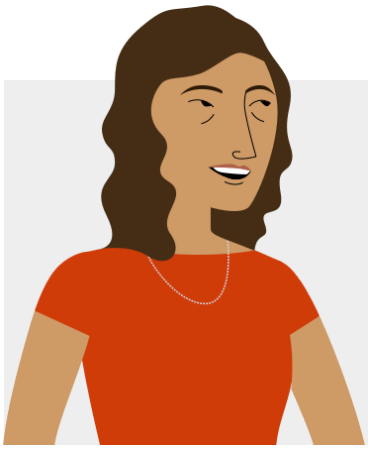


Password: brian12kate5

"I doubt anyone could guess my password! It's my kids' names and ages. Who else would know that?"

Problem: This password uses too much personal information, along with common words that could be found in the dictionary.

Solution: A stronger version of this password would use symbols, uppercase letters, and a more random order. And rather than using family names, we could combine a character from a movie with a type of food. For example, Chewbacca and pizza could become **chEwbAccAp!ZZa**.



Password: w3St!

"My password is so simple! It's just the beginning of my street address with a few extra characters."

Problem: At only five characters, this password is way too short. It also includes part of her address, which is publicly available information.

Solution: A stronger version of this password would be **much longer**, ideally more than 10 characters. We could also substitute a nearby street name instead of her current address. For example, Pemberly Ave could become **p3MberLY%Av**.

Password: 123abccba321

"My password follows a simple pattern, so it's easy to remember and type on my keyboard."

Problem: While patterns like this are easy to remember, they're also some of the first things a hacker might guess when attempting to access your account.

Solution: Remember that **random passwords** are much stronger than simple patterns. If you're having trouble creating a new password, try using a **password generator** instead. Here's an example of a generated password: **#eV$pIg&qf**.

If you use a password generator, you may also want to create a **mnemonic device** to make the password easier to remember. For example, **H=jNp2#** could be remembered as **HARRY = jessica NORTH paris 2 #**. This may still feel pretty random, but with a bit of practice it becomes relatively easy to memorize.

Password: BrAveZ!2

"I use the same passwords for all my accounts. This way, I only have to remember one password!"

Problem: There's nothing really wrong with this password, but remember that you should **never use the same password with different accounts**.

Solution: Create a unique password for each of your online accounts.

Using password managers

Instead of writing your passwords on paper where someone might find them, you can use a **password manager** to store them securely online. Password managers can remember and enter

your password on different websites, which means you won't have to remember longer passwords. Examples of password managers include **LastPass**, **1Password**, and **Google Chrome's password manager**.

Password: m#P52s@ap$V

"I use a password generator to create all of my passwords. They're not super easy to remember, but that's OK; I also use a password manager to keep track of them."

This is a great example of a **strong password**. It's strong, long, and difficult for someone else to guess. It uses **more than 10 characters** with letters (both **uppercase** and **lowercase**), **numbers**, and **symbols**, and includes no obvious personal information or common words. This password might even be a bit too complicated to remember **without a password manager**, which underscores why they're so helpful when creating a strong password.

Remember to use these tips whenever you create a password to keep your online information safe and secure.

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