



Learn how to...

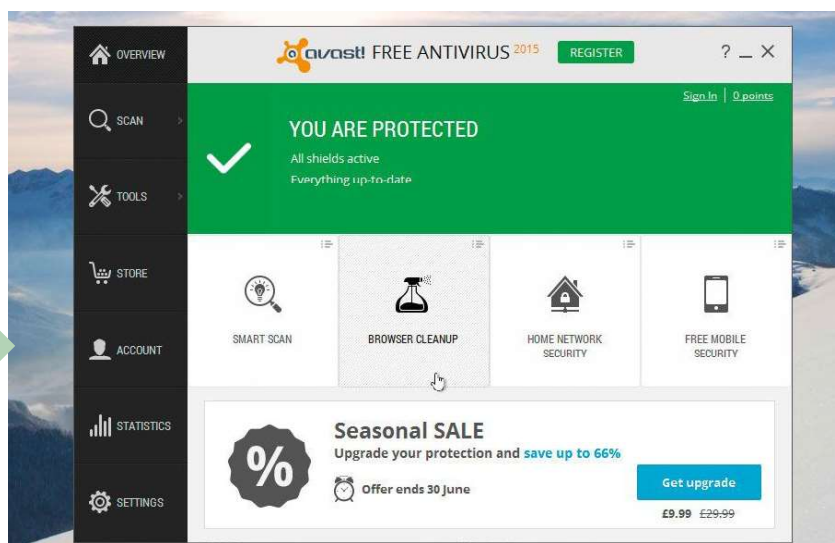
Avoid viruses and malware for free

Viruses, spyware, hackers, phishing – the web is dangerous, so use these tools to deliver great security at zero cost

TIME TAKEN
10 minutes

Avast Free Antivirus

Avast Free Antivirus (www.avast.com) is one of the most popular security tools around. The program is simple to install and its straightforward interface makes it a pleasure to use. A first scan identifies potential threats on your PC, and it'll have a minimal impact on your system's performance. Avast Free has some useful extras, too. A Software Updater alerts you to program updates you've missed, and its Browser Cleanup tool provides a simple way to remove add-ons.

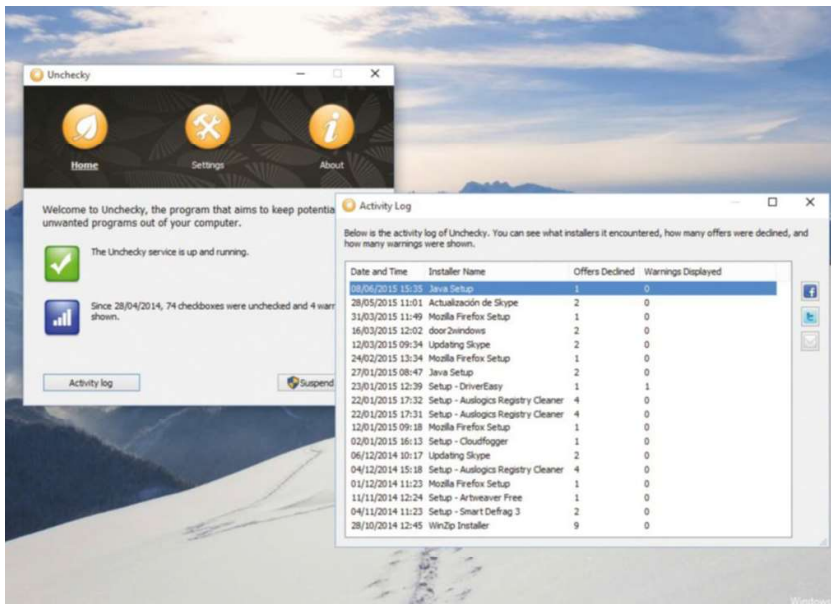
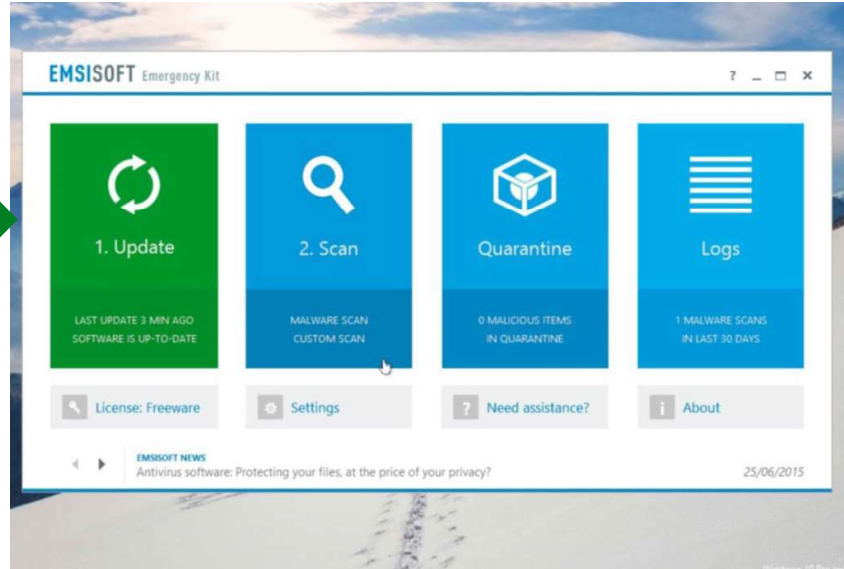


Comodo Internet Security Premium

If you're looking for combined anti-virus and firewall protection, then Comodo Internet Security (www.comodo.com) has your back covered. It includes the expected protections against viruses and spyware, of course, but also comes with some nifty additional protections: Defense+ protects critical system files to block malware before it can get a foothold on your system, while sandboxing ensures unknown files are automatically run in an isolated environment – if they turn out malicious, they're trapped inside the virtual box. A pop-up status also helps keep you informed as to the state of your system.

Emsisoft Emergency Kit

No antivirus app comes with a guaranteed 100 per cent detection rate and malware might occasionally slip through. You should always have a second tool available, then, just in case – and Emsisoft Emergency Kit (from www.emsisoft.com/en/software/eeek/) is a great choice. The program runs without requiring installation, reducing the chance of any conflicts with your existing antivirus package. Experienced users will appreciate tools such as HijackFree and BlitzBlank, which can help you manually detect and clean up malware.

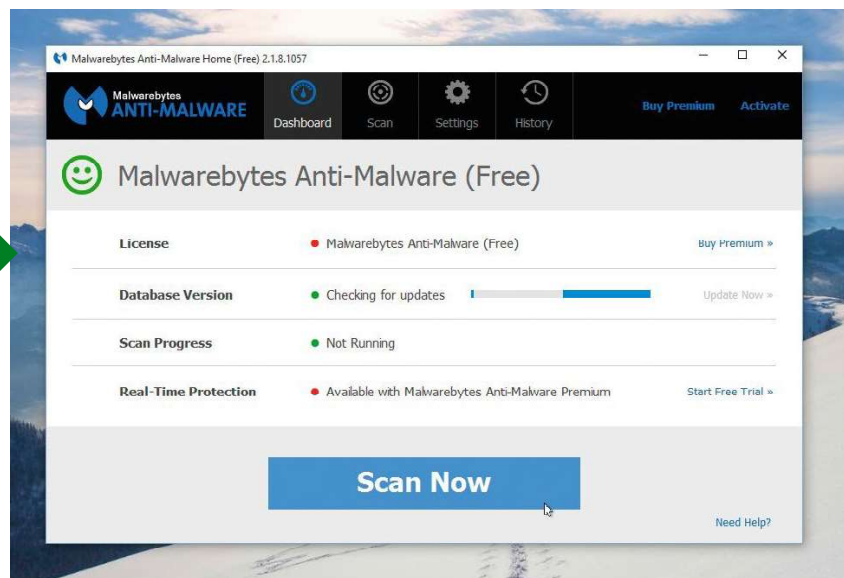


Unchecky

Some download sites, as well as program developers, wrap their programs inside installers that “offer” (usually not in a very clear way) additional program and toolbar downloads during installation. Look out for these offers appearing during the setup process – often the wording is confusing and designed to trick you into installing the offer. Unchecky (www.unchecky.com) is a free program that spots many potentially unwanted program installers. When it detects one, it not only alerts you to the fact, but changes the installer’s settings so that potentially unwanted software isn’t selected by default – you can still install it if you wish, but it’s your choice, not the software’s.

Malwarebytes Anti-Malware Free

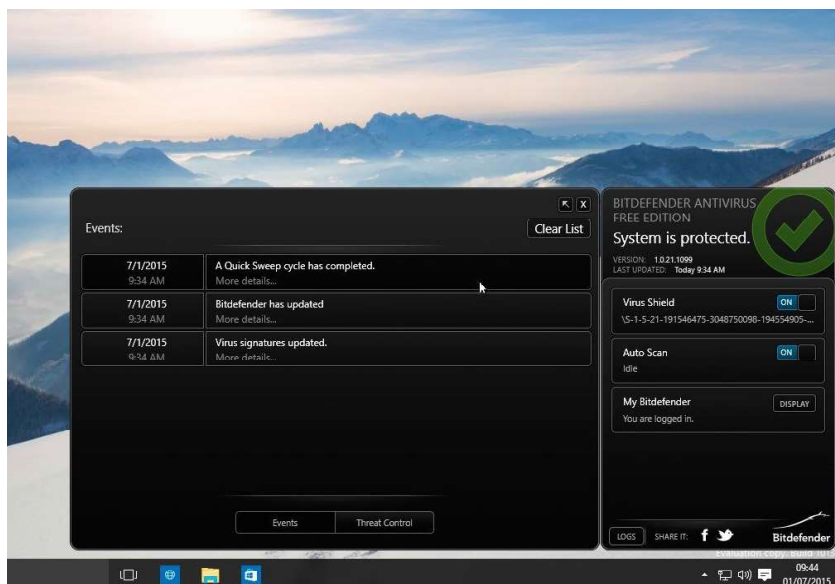
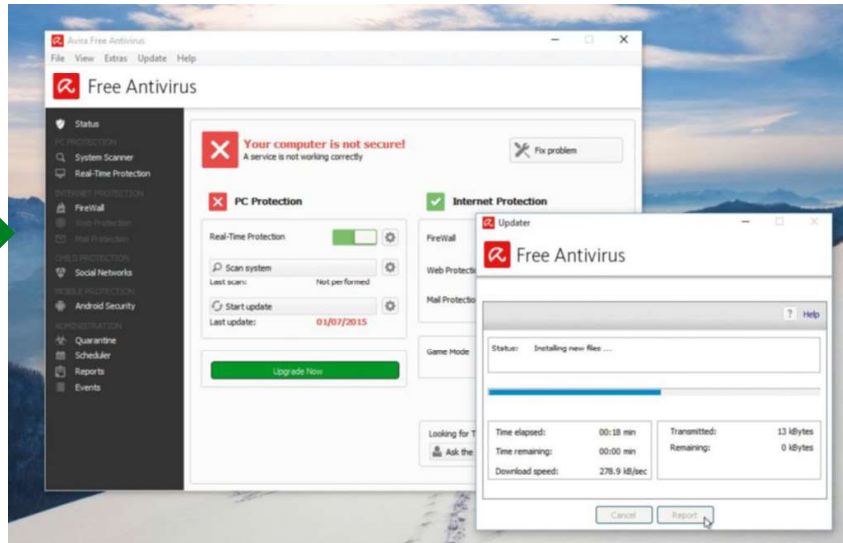
If you think your PC has been infected and your regular antivirus tool seems oblivious to the fact, grab Malwarebytes Anti-Malware Free from www.malwarebytes.org. It’s an excellent on-demand scanner, which can quickly find and remove all kinds of threats, including Potentially Unwanted Programs. It’s ideal for any PC user: beginners won’t have trouble using it – launch the program, click ‘Scan’ and it immediately checks your system. Experienced users will appreciate additional tools, which help you launch Malwarebytes on an infected PC to delete locked files.





Avira Free Antivirus

Avira Free Antivirus (downloadable from www.avira.com/en/avira-free-antivirus) provides two main areas of protection. The first is a strong antivirus engine (rated highly by independent labs for its file detection rates), which constantly monitors your computer, looking for and eliminating threats. It's not without a few problems, though. The interface can seem a little complex at first, for instance, and the program has more impact on your computer's performance than some other tools do. However, on balance, Avira Free Antivirus is a capable and effective security package.



Bitdefender Antivirus Free

Strong, silent, fast and unobtrusive. Four key words that mark out Bitdefender's free anti-virus solution from the competition. It may be a cut-down version of the full package, but you still get real-time protection from malware and scheduled scans to catch anything that might fall between the cracks. There's practically no configuration involved – just download and install it from www.bitdefender.co.uk/solutions/free.html. Note, you will need a free Bitdefender account (or connect with your Facebook or Google account) in order to use it long-term.

AVG Free Antivirus

AVG Free Antivirus (from <http://free.avg.com>) is a solid package with a good range of features: an antivirus engine, email scanner, identity theft protection, and LinkScanner Surf-Shield to keep you safe online. At first glance, this makes the program seem more complex, as there are lots of tiles, buttons and menu entries. Its smart interface design means you can carry out most common actions in a click or two, though, so you'll soon feel at home. This program gets mixed reviews on its effectiveness but, in our opinion, it's one of the best free antivirus packages around, possibly even better than some commercial solutions. ■

