

Windows Startup Settings - Microsoft Support

Archived: 2026-04-29 02:03:11 UTC

► Applies To

Support for Windows 10 has ended on October 14, 2025

After October 14, 2025, Microsoft will no longer provide free software updates from Windows Update, technical assistance, or security fixes for Windows 10. Your PC will still work, but we recommend moving to Windows 11.

[Learn more](#)

You might need to change Windows startup settings to troubleshoot issues, optimize startup processes, or alter the system's boot behavior for specific tasks.

For example, a common troubleshooting option is to enable *Safe Mode*, which starts Windows in a limited state, where only the bare essentials services and drivers are started. If a problem doesn't reappear when you start in safe mode, you can eliminate the default settings, basic device drivers, and services as possible causes.

Other startup settings include advanced features intended for use by system administrators and IT professionals.

This article describes how to modify the Windows startup behavior, and the available options.

Change startup settings

Note: If you've encrypted your device, you'll need your BitLocker key to complete this task. If you don't know your BitLocker key, see [Find your BitLocker recovery key](#).

1. [Access the Windows Recovery Environment](#)
2. Once in Windows RE, select **Troubleshoot > Advanced options > Startup Settings > Restart**

Choose an option



Continue
Exit and continue to Windows 11



Turn off your PC



Use a device
Use a USB drive, network connection,
or Windows recovery DVD



Troubleshoot
Reset your PC or see advanced options

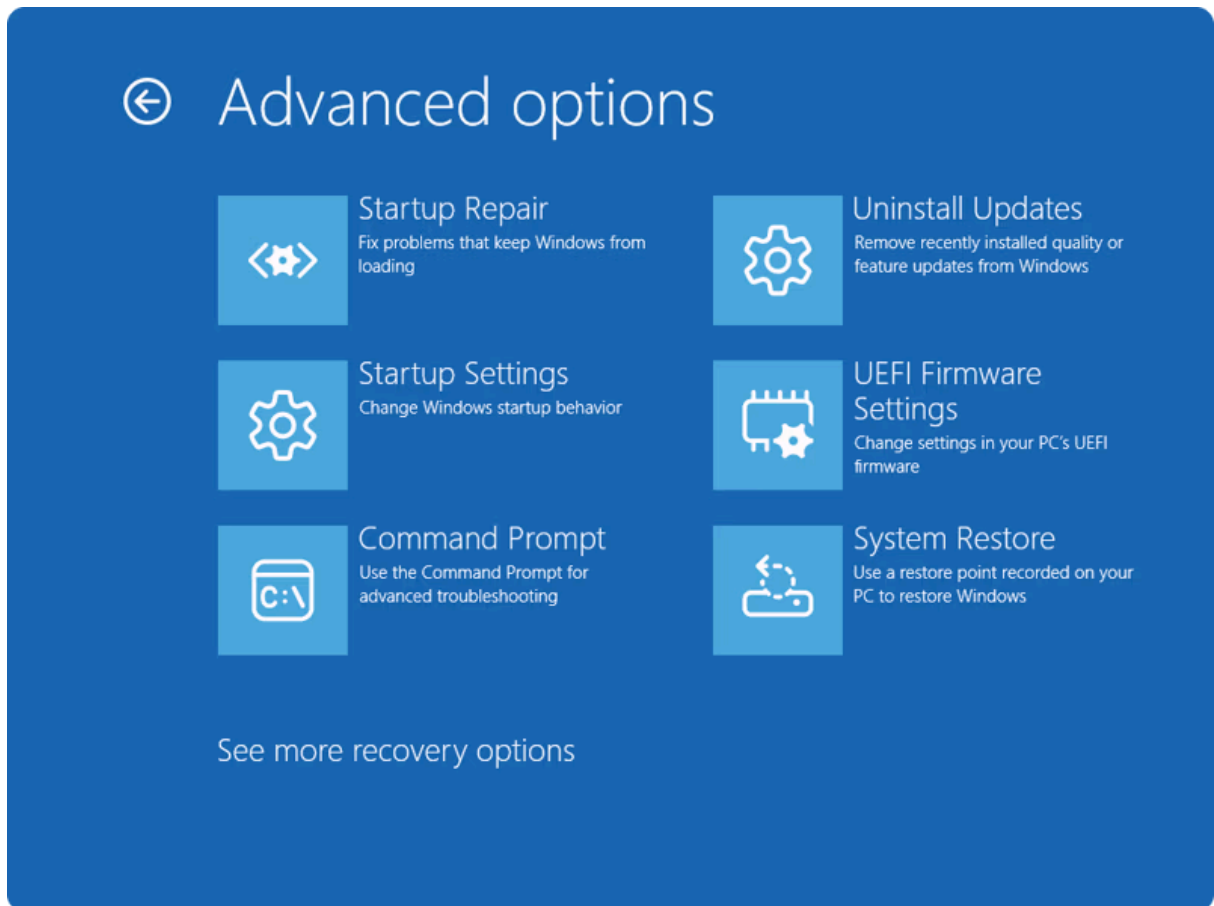
← Troubleshoot



Reset this PC
Lets you choose to keep or remove
your personal files, and then reinstalls
Windows.



Advanced options



3. Select **Restart**

4. Once the device reboots, in the **Startup Settings** screen pick one of the available options, or press Enter to boot Windows normally

Startup Settings

Press a number to choose from the options below:

Use number keys or functions keys F1-F9.

- 1) Enable debugging
- 2) Enable boot logging
- 3) Enable low-resolution video
- 4) Enable Safe Mode
- 5) Enable Safe Mode with Networking
- 6) Enable Safe Mode with Command Prompt
- 7) Disable driver signature enforcement
- 8) Disable early launch anti-malware protection
- 9) Disable automatic restart after failure

Press F10 or 0 for more options

Press Enter to return to your operating system

Startup settings list

Here's a list of startup settings that you can choose from. To select one, use the number keys or function keys F1-F9:

1. **Enable debugging.** Starts Windows in an advanced troubleshooting mode intended for IT professionals and system administrators
2. **Enable boot logging.** Creates a file, nbtlog.txt, that lists all the drivers that are installed during startup and that might be useful for advanced troubleshooting
3. **Enable low-resolution video.** Starts Windows using your current video driver and using low resolution and refresh rate settings. You can use this mode to reset your display settings

4. **Enable Safe Mode.** Safe mode starts Windows in a basic state, using a limited set of files and drivers. If a problem doesn't happen in safe mode, this means that default settings and basic device drivers aren't causing the issue. Observing Windows in safe mode enables you to narrow down the source of a problem and can help you troubleshoot problems on your device
5. **Safe Mode with Networking.** Safe Mode with Networking adds the network drivers and services you'll need to access the internet and other computers on your network
6. **Safe Mode with Command Prompt.** Starts Windows in safe mode with a command prompt window instead of the usual Windows interface
7. **Disable Driver Signature Enforcement.** Allows drivers containing improper signatures to be installed
8. **Disable early launch anti-malware protection .** Early launch anti-malware protection (ELAM) is a security feature in Windows that allows anti-malware software to start before all other third-party components during the boot process. ELAM ensures that the system does not initialize unknown boot drivers that could be malicious. Select this option to temporarily disable ELAM
9. **Disable automatic restart on system failure.** Prevents Windows from automatically restarting if an error causes Windows to fail. Choose this option only if Windows is stuck in a loop where Windows fails, attempts to restart, and fails again repeatedly

You can press **Enter** to start Windows normally.

What if Windows keeps booting in Safe Mode?

Restarting your device should be sufficient to exit from Safe Mode back into normal mode. However, if for some reason your device is still booting into Safe Mode, try this:

1. Press the **Windows key + R**
2. In the **Open** box, type msconfig and then select **OK**
3. Select the **Boot** tab
4. Under **Boot options**, clear the **Safe boot** checkbox

Need more help?

Want more options?

Explore subscription benefits, browse training courses, learn how to secure your device, and more.