

PRINTABLE GUIDE

Check a slow Windows computer

Start with software checks you understand. Improvements are not guaranteed on old or faulty hardware. Save and back up important files before investigating.

Windows 11 | 2 min read | 5 steps

Before you start

- ☐ A backup of important files
- ☐ Time to restart and finish updates

1. Save and restart

Save your documents, close apps and select Start > Power > Restart. After signing in, give startup activity a few minutes to settle. Check whether one simple app is still slow before opening many programmes.

- ☐ Done this step

2. Check what is busy

Press Ctrl + Shift + Esc to open Task Manager. Look at Processes for unusually busy CPU, memory or disk usage. Close an app normally if you no longer need it; avoid ending unfamiliar system processes.

- ☐ Done this step

3. Review free storage

Open Settings > System > Storage. Review suggested temporary-file cleanup carefully. Keep copies before deleting personal documents, Downloads or Recycle Bin items. Do not remove folders merely because their names look unfamiliar.

- ☐ Done this step

4. Reduce unnecessary startup apps

Open Settings > Apps > Startup. Turn off only apps you recognise and do not need at sign-in. Leave security, accessibility and required work software alone. This changes startup behaviour, rather than uninstalling the app.

☐ Done this step

5. Update and check security

Use Windows Update and the computer's built-in security tools. Keep power connected for updates. If the computer stays unusually slow, overheats or makes abnormal noises, seek support instead of installing an advertised cleaner.

☐ Done this step

Try it for yourself

Record whether restarting improves one simple task, such as opening a document.

☐ I tried the task.

My notes

Does a full cloud account mean my computer disk is full?

They are separate storage limits. Check local Storage and your cloud account independently; either can affect different tasks.

Official help and the online guide

Windows performance checks - <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/experience/performance-optimization/tips-to-improve-pc-performance-in-windows>

OneDrive local and online files -

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/onedrive/save-disk-space-with-onedrive-files-on-demand-for-windows>

Read online: <https://plaintech-guides.pages.dev/guides/check-slow-windows-pc/>