

PRINTABLE GUIDE

Respond when a Windows computer stops responding

A frozen app may leave other controls working. Closing it or forcing power off can lose unsaved work. Try gentler controls first and avoid interrupting updates.

Windows 11 | 2 min read | 5 steps

Before you start

- ☐ A moment to wait for current work
- ☐ Knowledge of what was running when it froze

1. Check whether anything responds

Try moving the pointer and switching to another app with Alt + Tab. If another app works, the problem may be limited to one programme. Avoid repeated clicks, which can queue actions and complicate recovery.

- ☐ Done this step

2. Try saving and closing normally

If the app becomes responsive, save your work and close it using its normal Close control. If it says it is installing an update, follow that update's instructions rather than interrupting it.

- ☐ Done this step

3. Close only the stuck app

Press Ctrl + Shift + Esc for Task Manager. Select the app you recognise as unresponsive and choose End task. This may discard its unsaved changes. Leave unfamiliar background and system processes alone.

☐ Done this step

4. Restart through Windows

Save anything still accessible. Choose Start > Power > Restart. If Start will not open, try Ctrl + Alt + Delete and the power menu on that screen. Wait for the restart to finish before reopening everything.

☐ Done this step

5. Use forced power only as a last resort

If no controls respond and it is not progressing through an update, follow the manufacturer's forced-shutdown procedure. Afterwards, check recovered documents, install available updates and seek help if freezing repeats.

☐ Done this step

Try it for yourself

Locate Task Manager and close it without ending any process.

☐ I tried the task.

My notes

Will restarting fix the cause permanently?

Not necessarily. Repeated freezing can involve software, storage, overheating or hardware; record the pattern and seek trusted support.

Official help and the online guide

Windows keyboard shortcuts - <https://support.microsoft.com/en-au/windows/keyboard-shortcuts-in-windows-dcc61a57-8ff0-cffe-9796-cb9706c75eec>

Windows power options - <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/experience/power-battery/shut-down-sleep-or-hibernate-your-pc>

Read online: <https://plaintech-guides.pages.dev/guides/recover-frozen-windows-app/>