

How to Fix PC Freezes in Windows Quickly

Illustration: [Gordon McAlpin](#)

Everyone's PC freezes sometime. Doesn't matter if you're using Windows XP, Windows Vista or Windows 7 — PC freezes happen. Sometimes you get the blue error-filled screen called a Blue Screen of Death (BSOD). Most of the time, though, the system just stops responding. Here are some ways to get control of your PC back, and if that fails, restart it.

Method 1: The Task Manager

The Task Manager lets you view and manage individual applications and processes. Normally, you'd hit **Ctrl+Alt+Del** and click **Task Manager**, but if your computer is slow or unresponsive, then you want to get there in as few steps as possible.

- Hit **Ctrl+Shift+Esc** to bring up the Task Manager immediately.
- Click the **Performance** tab.

Is the graph maxing out on either [CPU](#) Usage or [Memory](#) Usage? That means you have processes running that are using up available system resources.

- Click the the **Processes** tab.
- Click the **Memory** column to sort by memory. Look for processes that are taking up a lot of memory. You can also click the CPU column and look for processes that are taking up a lot of CPU. These can often be culprits for a nonresponsive system.
- Click on the process and click **End Process**, then click **End Process** again in the window that pops up.

Method 2: Restart

Sometimes killing processes isn't enough, and you just need to restart the PC. Try the software method first, and if that doesn't work, you'll need to restart from the button.

Soft Restart

- Tap the **Windows** key to bring up the Start Menu.
- Press the **right arrow** twice
- Press **R**.

If your PC is unresponsive, each of these steps may take some time, and the restart process could take several minutes. This method has the benefit of giving you a chance to save your work, or saving autorecovery files in the case of [Microsoft Office](#).

Hard Restart

On the front of your desktop PC, or in front of your laptop's keyboard, should be a power button. Press and hold it for several seconds. This causes the PC to shut down immediately regardless of what it is doing. You'll lose all your open documents and applications, so keep that in mind. After a few seconds, press the power button again once to restart your PC.

If the power button refuses to work, look for a switch on the back of the desktop PC, or pull out the battery from your laptop. That'll do the trick.

Now, if your PC continues to be unresponsive after restarting, check out our separate guide to [fixing a crash](#). Good luck!

