

Windows laptops & PCs | Easy | 2 min read

# A program says 'Not responding': what to do and how not to lose your work

When a window goes white or grey and the title bar says **Not responding**, the program is busy or stuck. Often it recovers if you leave it alone. Here is how to deal with it with the least risk to your work.

## First, wait

1. Do not click repeatedly. Extra clicks stack up and make it worse.
2. Wait two minutes. Big spreadsheets, large photos and updates can take a while.
3. If Windows shows **Close the program** or **Wait for the program to respond**, choose **Wait** first.

## Check that the PC is not just slow

Look at the drive light and listen to the fan. If the PC is working hard, give it more time. If the whole PC is slow, restart it later, and see our guide on a slow computer.

## If it does not recover

1. Press **Ctrl + Shift + Esc** to open Task Manager.
2. In **Processes**, find the program, which is often marked as **Not responding**.
3. Click it and then **End task**.

Anything unsaved in that program will be lost. Word, Excel and PowerPoint save recovery copies, so when you reopen them look for a **Document Recovery** panel on the left. We have a separate guide on recovering unsaved Office files.

## Stop it happening again

- Save work often, with **Ctrl + S**.
- Close programs you are not using, and keep the browser's tabs down to a manageable number.
- Install Windows updates and update the program.
- Leave at least 15% of your drive free.
- If it is the same program each time, uninstall and reinstall it from the maker's website.

## If everything is frozen

If Task Manager will not open, press and hold the power button for about 10 seconds to force the PC off. This is a last resort, because unsaved work will be lost and there is a small risk of file damage.

## When to get more help

Get in touch if one program freezes every day, if a file will no longer open after a crash, or if the PC freezes completely. Note the program name and what you were doing at the time.

**Still stuck?** Email [admin@visiontech336.com](mailto:admin@visiontech336.com) and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.