

Windows laptops & PCs | Advanced | 2 min read

How to reset this PC (and keep your files safe)

Reset this PC reinstalls Windows. It can fix serious problems or prepare a laptop for a new owner, but it is a big step and can erase your files and programs if you choose the wrong option.

Back up first

Before you start, copy everything you care about, such as photos, documents and downloads, to a USB drive or OneDrive. Check you can open the copies. Make a note of your Microsoft account sign-in, your Wi-Fi password, and any licence keys for programs. Plug in the charger. You will need to reinstall your programs afterwards.

Step by step

1. Open **Settings** by pressing the Windows key and I together.
2. Windows 11: choose **System**, then **Recovery**. Windows 10: choose **Update & Security**, then **Recovery**.
3. Under **Reset this PC**, click **Reset PC** (Windows 11) or **Get started** (Windows 10).
4. Choose **Keep my files** to remove apps and settings but keep personal files. Or choose **Remove everything** to erase all. Pick **Keep my files** unless you are selling or giving the laptop away.
5. Choose **Cloud download** or **Local reinstall**. Either is fine. Cloud download needs the internet and uses a few gigabytes of data.
6. Read the final summary carefully, then click **Reset** and leave the laptop plugged in. It restarts several times. Do not switch it off.

If that did not work

- If you cannot reach Settings, hold the power button to switch off during start-up two or three times to bring up the blue recovery screen, then choose **Troubleshoot**, then **Reset this PC**.
- If the reset fails and rolls back, try again with **Keep my files**, or make more space first.
- Afterwards, run **Windows Update** and reinstall your apps from their official websites.

When to get more help

Stop and email us if you do not have a backup and cannot make one, you are asked for a recovery key, the laptop belongs to work or school, or the reset fails more than once. Please do not use **Remove everything** if there is any doubt about your files. Tell us what is on the laptop and what problem you are trying to solve.

Still stuck? Email 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.