

HP, Canon, Epson & Brother printers | Medium | 2 min read

HP printer prints streaky or faded: cleaning and aligning the print head

Please note: independent guidance. Vision Tech is not affiliated with the maker. Menus differ between models and software versions, so check the manual or on-screen help.

Streaks, white lines or faded colours on an HP inkjet usually mean the print head needs cleaning or the ink is low. Here is a safe order to try things.

Check the simple causes

- Look at ink levels in the HP Smart app or on the printer's display.
- Use plain A4 paper that is not damp or creased, and choose the right paper type in the print settings.
- Print at normal quality rather than draft or economy mode.

Find the maintenance tools

Most HP printers can print a print quality report. In the HP Smart app, look for **Printer Settings** or print quality tools. On Windows, open the printer's **Printing Preferences** and look for a **Maintenance** or **Services** tab. Menu names differ, so your model may differ; check the display or the maker's manual.

Clean the print head

1. Load plain paper in the tray.
2. Choose the **Clean Printheads** or **Clean Cartridges** option from the app, software or printer menu.
3. Wait for the printer to finish, then print a test page.
4. If lines remain, repeat once or twice, but do not do it many times in a row.

Cleaning uses ink. If a second clean does not help, wait several hours and try again, as dried ink may need time to soften.

Align the print head

If lines look doubled or text is fuzzy, run **Align Printheads** from the same menu. The printer prints a page, and you may be asked to scan it or confirm the result.

Ink and cartridge notes

Genuine and compatible cartridges can both cause streaks if they are low, old or poorly seated. Cartridges left out of the printer for a long time can dry out.

When to get more help

Get help if cleaning does not improve things, if a cartridge leaks, or if the printer shows a print head error. Do not remove parts or open the casing. Ink can stain skin and clothes, so wash it off promptly.

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.