

Word, Excel & Microsoft 365 | Medium | 2 min read

Outlook: search is not working or finds nothing

If Outlook says there are no results for an email you know is there, do not panic. The email is almost certainly still there, and the search just needs a nudge. Work down the steps below and stop when it works.

Step 1: check where you are searching

Click in the search box at the top. Look for a choice such as **Current Folder**, **Current Mailbox** or **All Mailboxes**. If you are searching only the folder you are in, change the choice to **Current Mailbox**.

Step 2: look for the 'try again' link

Outlook sometimes shows only some results. At the bottom of the results, click a link such as **Try again to include results from the server** or **More**. Older emails can then appear.

Step 3: restart

Close Outlook completely and reopen it. Then restart the computer, which fixes many oddities.

Step 4: check how much mail is stored on your computer

In classic Outlook, click **File**, **Account Settings**, **Account Settings**, then select your account and click **Change**. Look for the slider under **Mail to keep offline**. If it is set to a short period, older mail is searched on the server and may be slower or missing. Setting it to **All** brings it all to your computer, but needs disk space.

Step 5: rebuild the Windows search index

Classic Outlook relies on Windows search. Open **Settings**, then **Privacy & security**, then **Searching Windows**, and choose **Advanced indexing options**. Click **Advanced**, then **Rebuild**. It can take hours, and search may be patchy until it finishes. Leave your computer on.

Step 6: check for add-ins

Hold the Ctrl key while opening Outlook and answer **Yes** to start in safe mode. If search works, an add-in is likely the cause and we can help find it.

Tips

- Search for a sender with the **From** filter in the search bar for faster results.
- If your mailbox is very large, search can be slow while Outlook is syncing.

When to get more help

If search is still empty after a rebuild, or emails really seem to be missing, contact us before deleting or reinstalling anything.

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.