

Printers, monitors & devices | Medium | 2 min read

Streaky prints and cleaning the print heads

Lines, bands or missing colours across your prints usually mean the nozzles that spray ink are partly blocked. This is most common on inkjet printers that are not used regularly.

What the problem looks like

- White or coloured lines running across the page
- A colour missing or the wrong shade, such as pictures looking too green
- Text that looks fuzzy or has gaps in it

On a laser printer, streaks are more often caused by the toner cartridge or drum, which is a different fix. See the last section.

Print a nozzle check

Most inkjet printers have a built-in **Nozzle check** or **Test pattern**. It may be on the printer screen or in the printer software on your computer. The wording differs between makes, so look through the menus. The test page shows whether any colour is missing or broken.

Clean the print head

1. Make sure there is paper loaded and enough ink.
2. Find the option often called **Print head cleaning** or **Clean heads**.
3. Run one cleaning cycle and wait for it to finish.
4. Print the test page again.
5. If it is still poor, run one more cycle, then wait a few hours before testing again.

Do not run cleaning many times in a row. Each cycle uses a lot of ink, and it can make the waste ink pad fill up faster.

Help prevent it happening again

- Print something in colour at least once a week.
- Turn the printer off using its own power button, not at the wall, so it can seal the print head properly.
- Keep it away from direct sunlight and radiators.

Laser printers

Streaks on a laser printer usually point to the toner cartridge or drum. Switch off, let the printer cool fully, and follow your manual to replace the cartridge. Do not touch the hot parts inside.

When to get more help

If streaks remain after two cleans and a fresh cartridge, the print head may be worn or damaged. Some printers have heads that can be replaced, others do not. Contact us with the make and model, and we can tell you whether a repair is worth it.

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.