

Windows laptops & PCs | Easy | 2 min read

Task Manager explained simply, and how to manage start-up apps

Task Manager shows what your PC is busy doing. It can help you close a stuck program and stop unwanted programs from starting with Windows, making start-up faster.

Opening it

Press **Ctrl + Shift + Esc** together, or right-click the **Start** button and choose **Task Manager**. If it looks tiny, click **More details**.

What the main tabs tell you

- **Processes** lists what is running. The columns **CPU**, **Memory** and **Disk** show how hard each item is working. Click a heading to sort by it.
- **Performance** shows graphs for the processor, memory and drive. A drive stuck near 100% often explains a slow PC.
- **Startup** (called **Startup apps** in Windows 11) shows what runs when Windows starts.

Closing a stuck program

1. In **Processes**, click the app that is not responding.
2. Click **End task**.

Warning: anything you had not saved in that program will be lost. Do not end items you do not recognise, and never end anything whose name includes Windows, Security or Antimalware.

Reducing start-up apps

1. Open the **Startup** tab (Windows 11: **Startup apps**).
2. Look at the **Startup impact** column. Anything marked **High** slows start-up the most.
3. Right-click a program you do not need at start-up, such as a music app, a chat app or a printer helper, and choose **Disable**.

This does not uninstall anything. You can switch it back on at any time, and the program still opens normally when you click it.

You can reach the same list in **Settings**, then **Apps**, then **Startup**.

What to leave alone

Keep anything for your antivirus, your touchpad, your graphics card, your sound, and OneDrive if you use it. If you cannot tell what something is, search its name online or ask us before you disable it.

When to get more help

Get in touch if something you do not recognise is using a lot of CPU all the time, if Task Manager will not open, or if a program keeps restarting after you close it. A slow PC that is still slow after tidying up may need a hardware check.

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.