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Download Article Fully erase and install a clean version of Windows 10 or Windows 11 on your PC Download Article Slow shutdown, frequent reboots, blue screen errors, and boot failure can be a result of incomplete software installation and uninstalls, virus infection, improper PC shut down, and software crashes. Once you've exhausted all other troubleshooting steps, it may be time to reinstall Windows. This wikiHow will show you how to format and reinstall Windows. Open Settings and select Update & Security. Click Recovery. Click Get started next "Reset this PC". Click Remove Everything. Select Clean Download. Review your settings and select Reset. 1 Click the Windows Start menu . It's the icon with the Windows logo. It's typically in the lower-right corner. If you are still able to log in to Windows, you can reinstall and reset your computer using the Windows Start menu. Warning: This will erase all data on your hard drive. Be sure to back up your computer before you reformat your computer.[1] If you're setting up Windows on a new computer, see the next section for USB set-up. 2 Click the Settings icon . It's next to an icon that resembles a gear. It's generally in the lower-left corner of the Windows Start menu. Advertisement 3 Click Update & Security . It's the last option in the Settings menu. It's next to an icon that resembles two arching arrows. On Windows 11, click System in the left panel. 4 Click Recovery. It's in the menu panel to the left. On Windows 11, this is in the panel on the right. 5 Click Get started. It's the first button below "Reset this PC". On Windows 11, click Reset PC. 6 Click Remove Everything. It's the second option in the menu. This will reformat your computer and reinstall Windows. Alternatively, if you don't want to erase all data on your computer, click Keep my files instead. This will reinstall Windows without deleting all your files. 7 Click Cloud Download or Local Reinstall. "Cloud Download" will download a fresh new version of Windows from the internet and install it. "Local Reinstall" reinstalls Windows from data stored on your computer. Installing a fresh version from online is usually a better option than installing Windows from your local computer. 8 Review the settings and click Next. Make sure the settings look correct. If you decide you do not want to reinstall Windows, click the Back or Cancel button. 9 Review the settings and click Confirm. If you want to download Windows from the internet, make sure the toggle switch below "Download Windows" is turned on. If you want to reformat your hard drive and erase all your data, make sure the toggle switch below "Clean data?" is turned on. 10 Click Next. Windows once again displays the settings you have selected and informs you that you need 4 GB of hard drive space to reinstall Windows. 11 Click Reset. It's in the lower-right corner. This will begin the process of downloading Windows and resetting your computer. This may take several minutes and your computer may restart several times during the process. Once your computer is finished reinstalling Windows, you will need to go through the initial setup process again. Advertisement 1 Get or create a Windows installation disk. If you ordered your copy of Windows, it may have come with a USB installation drive. If you do not have one you can make one. You will need a Windows PC with this and a USB drive with at least 8 GB of space on it. If your Windows computer cannot load Windows, you'll need to use a separate computer. Use the following steps to create a Windows install disk: Go to one of the following download websites: Click Download tool now below "Create Windows 10/11 Installation Media." Open the MediaCreateTool.exe file in your web browser or Downloads folder. Click Yes. Click Accept. Insert a USB drive into a USB port. Click the radio option next to "Create installation media" and click Next. Select your language. Select which Windows edition you want to install. Select which architecture your computer has (32-bit or 64-bit). Click Next. Click the radio option next to "USB flash drive" and click Next. Click your USB drive and click Next. 2 Boot your computer from the USB drive. Make sure the Windows installation media disk is inserted before you boot up your computer. Some newer computers have a button you can press to open a boot menu during the boot-up process. This is usually "F12". Press the button during the startup process and select the option to boot from your USB drive. Some computers enter the boot menu automatically when a USB boot disk is inserted. On some computers, you will need to boot into the BIOS menu and then change the boot order so that it boots from the USB drive first. The way you do this is different on each computer make and model. 3 Select your language, time and currency format, and keyboard format and click Next. Once you boot from the Windows installation media, it will ask you to select your language, time and currency format, and keyboard format. Use the drop-down menu to select the correct language, time, and currency, and keyboard format. Then click Next. 4 Click Install Now. It's in the center of the screen. This starts the installation process. 5 Enter your activation key and click Next. Your activation key is needed to register your copy of Windows. If you purchased Windows online, it was most likely emailed to you. If you purchased a physical copy of Windows, it came in the box that Windows came in. If you do not have an activation key, click I don't have a product key at the bottom. This allows you to skip this step for now, but you will need to purchase an activation key once you finish installing Windows. 6 Click the Windows edition you want to install. You'll need to check your Windows receipt or activation key to see which Windows edition you purchased. If you are reinstalling Windows, be sure to click the same version of Windows you had before. Click the correct Windows edition and click Next. 7 Agree to the license terms and click Next. You can read the license terms on-screen. When you are finished, click the checkbox next to "I agree to the license terms" and then click Next. 8 Click "Custom: Install Windows only (advanced)". If you want to reformat your computer and install a fresh version of Windows, click the option to do a custom install. Warning: This will erase all data on your hard drive. Be sure to back up your computer before you reformat your computer. Alternatively, if you want to try to keep all your files, you can select the option to "Upgrade: Install Windows and keep files, settings, and applications." 9 Click a drive you want to install Windows on and click Next. If you have multiple drives on your computer, click the drive you want to install Windows on and click Next. You can usually tell which drive is which by how much hard drive space they have on them. This will install Windows on the drive you selected. This may take several minutes. Once Windows is finished installing, you will need to go through the initial setup press. If you have a drive that has multiple partitions, you can delete the partitions. To do so, click a partition and then click Delete. Warning: Any data on the drive before it was deleted will be erased and cannot be recovered. If your computer keeps booting into the boot menu after Windows is installed, remove the USB drive so that it boots into Windows. Advertisement Add New Question Question How do I increase space in local drive C., D., and E.? You can either buy a new drive (expensive option) and transfer the data over, or buy an external hard drive if you want to directly increase the space. Before you do that I would suggest running a quick sweep through your computer. If you find an app you don't want, uninstall it, a video, delete it, etc. Ask a Question Advertisement Co-authored by: Computer & Tech Specialist This article was co-authored by Luigi Oppido and by wikiHow staff writer, Ran Kengly. Luigi Oppido is the Owner and Operator of Pleasure Point Computers in Santa Cruz, California. Luigi has over 25 years of experience in general computer repair, data recovery, virus removal, and upgrades. He is also the host of the Computer Man Show! broadcasted on KSDQ covering Central California for over two years. This article has been viewed 340,470 times. Co-authors: 17 Updated: August 6, 2024 Views: 340,470 Categories: Windows Print Send fan mail to authors Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 340,470 times. "I have now been able to successfully install windows 7." Share your story Use Local Reinstall to reinstall Windows if you have slow internet or want to avoid using data. Use Cloud Download if you have fast Internet without a data cap. Windows was badly corrupted, or if Local Reinstall failed. When resetting your Windows 10 or Windows 11 PC, you'll be asked whether you want to do a "Cloud Download" or "Local Reinstall." These options work a little differently, and each has its upsides and downsides. Here's the difference between the two. Both Will Reinstall Windows on Your PC The "Reset" option reinstalls the Windows operating system on your computer. You also have the option to keep your personal files — or even wipe your PC clean. But, whatever you choose, Windows will replace your system files with a clean copy. Afterward, you'll have a like-new system and you'll have to configure it and reinstall your programs once again. Be sure to select the correct option; you couldn't want to accidentally wipe all of your files. On Windows 10, head to Settings > Update & Security > Recovery and click "Get Started" under Reset This PC to find this feature. On Windows 11, you'll find this feature at Settings > System > Recovery > Reset PC. Both "Cloud Download" and "Local Reinstall" are different ways of getting to the same state: That like-new Windows 10 or Windows 11 system. Think of it as a factory reset feature for your Windows PC. Because they operate in entirely different ways "under the hood," so to speak, there are situations where one may be a better choice than another. When you select "Cloud Download," Windows will download fresh system files from Microsoft's servers and uses them to re-install Windows on your computer. As the Reset This PC interface notes, this download may be more than 4GB in size. If you have internet data limits or are on a slow connection, this may be a problem and you may want to use Local Reinstall instead. This option is essential if your PC's system files become corrupted. If the "Local Reinstall" option fails and can't reset your PC properly, you should try Cloud Download instead. Believe it or not, if you have a fast internet connection, Cloud Download may actually be faster than Local Reinstall. That's because of the way Local Reinstall works. If you pick "Local Reinstall," Windows will use the system files already on your PC to reinstall Windows. This is a bit more work for Windows than it sounds. Windows has to go through its files, find the original ones, and reassemble them into a fresh Windows system. For this reason, Local Reinstall can actually be slower than Cloud Download, especially when you have a fast internet connection. Microsoft's Aaron Lower said that Local Reinstall can take more than 45 minutes to "[construct] a new copy of Windows from the existing installation" when he explained how Cloud Download works differently. Local Reinstall is particularly useful when you have internet access but no portable storage. In the tutorial, we'll talk you through the process of using the USB drive. Finally, we'll walk you through getting the OS installed on a target drive. Provide ample storage for the more reliable. For the typical PC, either Cloud Download or Local Reinstall will work fine. Assuming you have a fast internet connection without lower hard download limits and your PC doesn't seem to be in a corrupted state, either should get your PC to a like-new state in a reasonable amount of time. However, certain options are better for certain situations: If you have a speedy internet connection and data isn't a concern, use Cloud Download. You might save some time. If you have a slow connection or want to avoid extra downloads, use Local Reinstall. You'll avoid unnecessary downloads. If your PC isn't working properly or you've already tried Local Reinstall and it failed, use Cloud Download. Whichever you choose, your PC will end up in the same place with a like-new Windows installation. No, not really. Assuming that you don't accidentally pick the option to wipe all of your files when you want to keep them, the odds of something going catastrophically amiss are very low. If Local Reinstall fails, you'll see a message telling you there was a problem. It won't just reinstall Windows with corrupt system files. If the Reset This PC process completes, it worked properly. And, critically, you can always fall back on a Cloud reinstall if the local install fails. It is possible for the Cloud Download to fail if your Internet goes out, but that isn't likely to cause serious problems either. The process will just need to be restarted once your connection is restored. Even in an absolute worst case scenario, your files will still be present on the drive — you'll just have to recover them. What if the Reset This PC process completes but you still have crashes, blue screens, or other system problems? That's a sign your computer may be having hardware problems rather than software problems. The ultimate guide to installing OS from USB drive To start, make sure you have a blank USB drive with at least 8 GB of space and a Windows ISO file on hand. This approach reduces the installation process down to minutes by simplifying it further than conventional methods. It's ideal for any computer technician who wants to quickly install operating systems. Using a third drive works as a portable solution. In the tutorial, we'll talk you through the process of using the USB drive. Finally, we'll walk you through getting the OS installed on a target drive. Provide ample storage for the more experience. Key Takeaways Confirm that your system is compatible hardware-wise with the version of Windows you plan to install. This means verifying the required specs for the CPU and RAM. To begin, you'll need to download the Windows ISO file directly to your PC. Next, ensure the USB drive is formatted properly so that it can successfully boot the installation process. Prior to beginning the installation process, please back up any important data to prevent loss. Additionally, make sure your BIOS/UEFI settings are set to allow booting from the USB drive. When you first start the installation make sure to choose the appropriate installation type. Then don't rush—read the prompts carefully—remember to accept the license agreement and select the appropriate partition for the install. Once plugged in, complete the initial setup screen, install required drivers and undergo system updates to make your device more functional and secure. Make sure you write down your installation steps. Be sure to add any troubleshooting advice to make it easier for the next person who has to do the same kind of install down the road. System Requirements for Windows Installation Before you install Windows from USB drive, knowing the system requirements is very important. This will make sure your hardware is capable of dealing with the installation process and running the operating system smoothly. The most important things to look out for are hardware requirements, compatibility, available disk space, and firmware configuration. 1. Check Hardware Compatibility Start by checking the architecture of your CPU. Windows usually requires a 64-bit (x64) processor, although some versions support ARM. After that, check that your motherboard supports the appropriate functionality for installation, including support for UEFI. Options include the built-in Windows compatibility checker or third-party software that can automatically scan your system and check hardware compatibility. Check your device's manufacturer documentation for any special compatibility instructions. 2. Ensure Sufficient Storage Space Determine how much storage you will need to accommodate the installation files, which can differ depending on what version of Windows you'll be installing. If you're using a USB drive, it needs to have at least 8 GB of space. Make sure you have enough free storage on the target drive. Provide ample storage for the Windows installation and any applications you plan to install. It's always wise to leave additional room for future upgrades and your own documents. 3. Backup Important Data Before beginning the installation, make sure to back up any important data. Take advantage of cloud storage services or external drives to back up crucial files. Ensure that your selected method of backup is safe and convenient to use. Verify that your backups exist and are working properly before starting the installation. Boot your computer into BIOS or UEFI to check the current configuration. If your hardware is on the older side, make sure legacy support is on. Disable any fast boot options that would prevent the USB from being detected during POST (power on self test). Finally, verify secure boot settings to ensure compatibility with your installation media. Creating a Bootable USB Drive Creating a bootable USB flash drive is one of the first steps for installing the Windows operating system. Users can easily create effective installation media using this simple method, making it ideal for on-the-go personal use and assisting manufacturers in preparing Windows devices. Start by visiting the official Microsoft website to download the correct Windows ISO file. Pick the version that's most suited to your hardware and individual needs. You will need to have your product key available when prompted during the installation process. Make sure to look for any updates and supplementary files that you'll need. 2. Format the USB Drive Properly Getting the format of the USB drive right is important. Choose FAT32 or NTFS file system depending on the size of the installation files. Insert your USB drive into the computer and boot into Disk Management or File Explorer. By right-clicking on the USB drive and selecting "Format," you can reformat the drive to make it easier to identify. Note that all data currently on the USB will be lost in this step. 3. Transfer Windows Files to USB Take advantage of your preferred software application tool to create installation media by moving the Windows setup files to the USB flash drive. Keep an eye on the transfer progress to ensure that all required files are included and properly transferred. 4. Confirm USB Drives is Bootable Use the USB drive on another computer to make sure the USB drive can boot. When you reboot, access the boot menu and choose the USB drive. This step makes sure that the installation process goes smoothly and without complications. Properly configuring the BIOS or UEFI settings is a key step to successfully installing the Windows operating system from a bootable flash drive. To start, enter the menu and change the boot order, ensuring your system detects the USB flash drive as the first boot device. To enter the BIOS/UEFI menu, identify the appropriate key—typically F2, DEL, or ESC—during startup. Turn on your computer and slowly tap the key until the menu interface pops up. Get to know the physical layout, paying attention to key settings that may need to be changed, including boot priority or security options. 2. Set USB as Primary Boot Device Find the boot order configuration in the BIOS/UEFI menu and set USB as the primary boot device. Set the USB drive to the top of the booting priority list. This tells the system to boot from the USB before anything else. This step is pretty important; if you don't do this, the installation will not continue. Save and exit the BIOS/UEFI settings to apply these changes. 3. Manage Secure Boot Options Determine if secure boot is enabled or not. If so, you will want to disable it in order to boot from your USB drive. On some motherboards, it is necessary to disable Compatibility Support Module (CSM) in order to enforce UEFI boot. Check for any compatibility warnings about secure boot and your installation media before saving changes. 4. Save Changes and Exit Check that everything you've changed in the BIOS/UEFI settings is correct before exiting. Press the appropriate key, often F10, to save these changes. After saving these changes, restart your computer to start the installation process from the USB drive. Check the boot sequence to make sure it sees the USB. Installing Windows from USB Installing Windows from a USB flash drive is the process of upgrading or setting up a new operating system from scratch. First things first, ensure your bootable flash drive is plugged into the system. This should be a no-brainer, but it's worth mentioning anyway for clarity. 1. Restart your computer and enter the BIOS/UEFI settings. The first step is to insert the bootable USB stick into a free USB port. Next, you'll want to reboot the computer. This will initiate the computer's boot sequence. Keep an eye out for messages that tell you the system is trying to boot from the USB. If that's not the case, you can quickly select it from the boot menu options. The computer ignores it, especially during boot. Simply tap the correct button, such as F2 or ESC, at the boot to bring up that menu. 2. Choose Installation Type (Upgrade or Custom) You will next be asked whether you want to upgrade a current installation or do a custom (clean) install. An upgrade keeps your data and programs intact, whereas a clean install will erase the entire drive. Think through the implications for your data and applications before you make this decision. Choose the option that most accurately describes your scenario and click through the prompts to proceed. 3. Accept License Agreement Once you get to the license agreement, take your time to read the agreement thoroughly. Indicate that you agree by checking the correct box. This step is very important, as this step will ensure you are aware of the conditions of software use. 4. Select Partition for Installation Last but not least, you need to select the partition where you want to install Windows. Pay attention to the drives displayed and select the right one to prevent data loss, format it if needed. Make sure you have the right partition selected before proceeding with the installation. Troubleshooting Installation Issues While installing Windows OS from a flash drive, some problems can occur which might stop the installation procedure. Knowing how to address these frequent issues can help ensure a smooth installation. Learn to interpret common error messages and what they indicate. Always have your troubleshooting tools on hand and write down any errors that occur so you can follow up on them later. 1. USB Not Recognized by System USB Not Detected by the System If your system isn't detecting the USB drive at all, make sure it's plugged in firmly first. Trying a different USB port, ensuring the drive is properly connected to the system, and making sure your PC is properly formatted with FAT32 and contains the Windows installation files are the first steps to troubleshoot this issue. Restart your computer and reinsert the BIOS/UEFI settings to confirm your boot priorities are correct. 2. Installation Fails Midway While installing, keep an eye out for error messages. If the installation is failing, make sure your USB drive is working and not corrupted. Making sure that you meet the system requirements will make sure that you're compatible with the new OS. If all else fails, go back through the installation process from the beginning, fixing any issues you found while troubleshooting. 3. Common Error Messages Explained Understanding installation error messages early can save you valuable time. Error messages such as "Windows cannot be installed to this disk" and "Setup was unable to create a new system partition" indicate particular problems. These are issues that can often be fixed easily if you know what to look for. 4. Solutions for Driver Issues Determining what drivers you're missing is key to a successful installation. Manually download drivers from the manufacturer's website as needed. If problems continue, consider using a new USB drive or installation media. You can use driver update tools to make sure all parts are detected. Post-Installation Steps After the Windows installation is done, there are a number of basic steps that make sure that the system is up and running safely and securely. Complete out the installation steps and get the appropriate drivers loaded. After that, apply all available system updates and configure the system settings for a better user experience. 1. Complete Windows Setup Process Start by walking through the basic on-screen prompts to complete your Windows setup. This means setting up user accounts, preferences, and initial network connections. Keep an eye on privacy settings, because they control sharing of your data. Make sure all Windows setup steps are done before first entering the Windows desktop; otherwise, you may run into issues down the line. 2. Install Necessary Drivers First, determine the hardware components that will need drivers installed. Run Device Manager to identify any drivers that might be missing. Visit the official website for each of your computer's hardware components and download their drivers to avoid any compatibility issues. Once you've downloaded the drivers, install them on your PC to ensure all changes take effect properly. Open the Windows Update settings and view available updates. This step is extremely important and can help improve your system's security by downloading and installing any available critical updates. To ensure that your system continues to run well, plan to install updates on a periodic basis. This will help you review the update history to see what has been installed and assist you in the event of troubleshooting. 4. Optimize system Settings Lastly, change performance options settings to improve speed and performance for your system. Select high performance or balanced power mode based on usage. Turn off unnecessary startup applications to optimize boot times, and adjust visual effects to maximize performance on less powerful hardware. Best Practices for a Smooth Installation Whether installing the Windows operating system from a bootable flash drive to a physical or virtual machine, proper preparation is key to a smooth installation. This section details the best practices that are most effective at minimizing or eliminating the challenges that can arise during the Windows installation process. 1. Prepare for Data Recovery Options Preparing recovery options is key in case your installation doesn't go as expected. Make use of the built-in Windows tools to create a recovery drive, which can return your system to its original state if necessary. Learn the recovery options that are built into Windows settings, and keep recovery media where you can find it quickly. 2. Use Reliable USB Drives This is why investing in high-quality USB drives is key. Choose trustworthy drives that are proven in the field for durability and performance to avoid installation headaches. We have found that old or damaged drives assure failures, so don't go there. Ensure faster read/write speeds on USB drives to optimize file transfer time, and make a point to frequently test the drives for overall functionality. 3. Verify Integrity of Installation Files Prior to installation, always check the integrity of your downloaded ISO files with checksum tools. Checking file sizes and versions against those provided by official sources to verify the authenticity of all installation files is critical. If integrity checks do not pass, re-download the files to prevent installation errors from occurring. Maintaining a library of pre-verified installation files can help identify any issues with the system. 4. Document the Installation Process for Future Reference Documenting your installation steps for future reference is key. Pay attention to any unique settings or configurations that yielded the best results and distribute your documentation to others who might benefit from your experience. Refining your documentation will improve installations down the road. Conclusion Installing Windows OS from a USB drive is the best way to get complete control and flexibility. If you follow the steps as laid out in this guide, you'll have a successful installation. Make sure your system can handle it, build your bootable USB, and change your BIOS settings to get up and running in no time. Avoid ruining your install by keeping your USB drive clean and updating afterwards. Troubleshooting Common install issues and installation tips Troubleshooting Install/Installation Tips Fixing the issues you encounter Follow up with some tips to ensure smooth install By following these steps, it becomes a simple process that can save you from many mistakes. Don't make Windows installation harder than it has to be. If you have more questions or helpful installation tips, connect with online communities or support networks. Your adventure is just beginning—let's go! Frequently Asked Questions What are the system requirements for installing Windows from USB? Check that your PC meets the requirements before you start. The minimum requirements are a 4 GB RAM and 16 GB free storage space to create a windows installation flash drive. Ensure that the blank USB flash drive has a minimum capacity of 8 GB. How do I create a bootable USB drive for Windows? To create a bootable Windows USB drive, use the Windows Media Creation Tool. Download it from Microsoft's website, select 'Create installation media', and follow the onscreen instructions to make your windows installation flash drive. Restart your computer and tap the appropriate key (typically F2, F12, DEL, or ESC) at boot to access the boot menu for creating a windows installation flash drive. How do I install Windows from USB? Plug in the USB flash drive, reboot your PC, and boot off of the bootable flash drive. Finally, follow the on-screen instructions to finish installing the Windows operating system. What should I do if the installation fails? If the installation fails, first ensure your BIOS settings are properly configured. Additionally, verify that your hardware specifications meet the requirements for creating a bootable flash drive. What steps should I take after installing Windows? After installing Windows, remember to create installation media, install Windows updates, and set up your user accounts and settings. What are some best practices for a smooth installation? Always use a high-quality USB flash drive to ensure the integrity of your data and create a windows installation flash drive as a backup before proceeding. Reinstalling Windows 10 can seem like a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be. With the right guidance, you can have your computer up and running in no time. To reinstall Windows 10, you'll need a USB drive with at least 8GB of space, your Windows 10 product key, and an internet connection. The process involves creating a bootable USB drive, booting from it, and following the on-screen instructions to reinstall the Windows 10 operating system. Before we dive into the steps, it's important to understand that reinstalling Windows 10 will give you a fresh start. Any existing data on your computer could be lost, so make sure to back up your files before proceeding. To get started, you need to download the Windows 10 Media Creation Tool from the official Microsoft website. The Media Creation Tool will help you create a bootable USB drive for the installation process. Make sure you're downloading the tool from the official Microsoft website to avoid any potential security risks. Using the Media Creation Tool, follow the prompts to create a bootable USB drive. This involves selecting the correct version of Windows 10 and choosing the USB flash drive as the media to use. Once the process is completed, you'll have a bootable USB drive ready to go. Insert the bootable USB drive into your computer and restart it. You may need to access the BIOS settings to change the boot order to boot from the USB drive. Different computers have different ways to access the BIOS, but it often involves pressing a key like F2, F12, or Delete during startup. Once you've set the USB drive as the primary boot device, save the changes and exit the BIOS. After booting from the USB drive, you'll be greeted with the Windows 10 installation setup. Follow the on-screen instructions to install Windows 10. The installation process will ask you to select a language, time and currency format, and keyboard or input method. You'll also need to enter your Windows 10 product key and choose the type of installation (Custom: Install Windows only). Once you've followed all the prompts, the installation process will begin. Your computer may restart several times during this process. After the installation is complete, you'll need to go through a few more steps to personalize your Windows 10 experience. This includes setting up a user account, choosing privacy settings, and connecting to the internet. After completing these steps, you'll have a fresh installation of Windows 10 on your computer. You can now begin the process of restoring your files from backup and reinstalling any necessary software. Make sure you have your Windows 10 product key handy before starting the process. Back up all important files to an external hard drive or cloud storage before reinstalling. Ensure your computer is plugged into a power source during the installation to avoid interruptions. Keep your computer connected to the internet during the installation to ensure all updates are applied. If you're unsure about any step, refer to the official Microsoft support pages for guidance. If your computer came with Windows 10 pre-installed, you might not need to enter a product key. The activation details are usually stored on the motherboard and will be applied automatically during installation. It's possible to reinstall Windows 10 without losing files if you choose the "Keep my files" option during the installation process. However, it's always best to back up your files just in case. The time it takes to reinstall Windows 10 can vary depending on your computer's hardware and the installation method. It generally takes about an hour. While you don't need an internet connection to install Windows 10 from a USB drive, it's recommended to have one to download updates and drivers during the installation process. Yes, as long as the computers are compatible with Windows 10, you can use the same bootable USB drive to install the operating system on multiple computers. After downloading the Windows 10 Media Creation Tool, create a bootable USB drive. Boot from the USB drive. Follow the installation prompts. Complete the installation. Reinstalling Windows 10 might seem like a complex process, but by following the steps outlined above, you can have your system running smoothly in no time. Remember to back up your files and have your product key ready, and ensure your computer stays connected to power and the internet throughout the process. Always use official tools and software to avoid any security risks. If you run into any issues, Microsoft's support pages are a great resource for troubleshooting. With a fresh Windows 10 installation, you can enjoy a clean slate and set up your computer exactly how you like it. Happy computing! Matthew Bureleigh has been writing tech tutorials since 2008. His writing has appeared on dozens of different websites and been read over 50 million times. After receiving his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Computer Science he spent several years working in IT management for small businesses. However, he now works full time writing content online and creating websites. His main writing topics include iPhones, Microsoft Office, Google Apps, Android, and Photoshop, but he has also written about many other tech topics as well. Read his full bio here. A clean installation of Windows 11 using a USB flash drive offers several key advantages over an in-place upgrade or system reset. This process involves wiping the hard drive and installing a fresh copy of the operating system, which helps ensure optimal performance, stability, and a clean slate free of existing issues. While Microsoft officially recommends performing an in-place upgrade to preserve settings, apps, and files, I always prefer to start with a clean installation. Over the years of helping users troubleshoot upgrade issues, I've seen how modifying an existing installation can introduce unexpected problems, often caused by compatibility conflicts, old drivers, or custom system customizations. A clean installation reduces the likelihood of errors by eliminating leftovers from the previous setup. Removing everything and starting from scratch makes you less likely to inherit problems from your old installation. If your current Windows setup has been running for years, this method can also resolve persistent performance issues, improve memory usage, and provide a faster and more reliable system overall. It's like giving your PC a fresh start, free from all the clutter and potential conflicts that may have accumulated over time. This process erases everything on the computer, meaning that you will lose your personal files, apps, and settings. The solution is to create a backup of your files before proceeding. Back up all your personal files—documents, photos, and other important data—to an external drive or cloud storage, such as OneDrive or Google Drive. You can also perform a full backup of your computer to an external storage device. Note: installed apps - Create a list of essential programs so you can reinstall them later. Save product keys and passwords - Ensure you have access to software licenses, email accounts, and other important credentials. The backup process only applies when trying to reinstall or upgrade the operating system. If you're installing Windows 11 on a new computer or on an empty hard drive, you don't have to worry about creating a backup. Will Windows 11 remain activated? Yes. If the previous setup was running an activated version of Windows 11 or Windows 10, the new installation of the operating system will reactivate automatically after installation. You do not need to enter a product key. If the device was never activated, you will have to activate Windows 11 Pro or Home during or after the setup. What are the hardware requirements? These are the new system requirements to install Windows 11: Processor: 1GHz or faster CPU or System on a Chip (SoC) with two or more cores. Memory: 4GB (8GB or even 16GB is recommended). Hard drive: 64GB or larger. System firmware: UEFI, Secure Boot capable. TPM: Trusted Platform Module (TPM) version 2.0. Graphics: Compatible with DirectX 12 or later with WDDM 2.0 driver. Display resolution: High definition (720p) display greater than 9" diagonally, 8 bits per color channel. Networking: Internet connection and a Microsoft account are required for Windows 11 Home and Pro. If the device was already running Windows 11, the chances are that the newest version will be compatible with your hardware configuration. However, you can always check the tech specs of your computer from the Settings app, System Information, or using Command Prompt and PowerShell. Windows 11 also requires the Trusted Platform Module (TPM) 2.0 in the Unified Extensible Firmware Interface (UEFI). If your computer was previously running a different version of the operating system, you may need to enable the TPM 2.0 feature. What type of USB flash drive do I need? A USB flash drive of at least 8GB is required to create bootable Windows 11 installation media. The drive should be a standard USB-A or USB-C drive, and it should be formatted as FAT32 or NTFS. If you're using a USB drive that's already formatted as FAT32, you may need to reformat it. However, reformatting a USB drive will erase all data on it, so make sure to back up any files on it before reformatting. It's also important to choose a reputable brand, as some cheap or counterfeit drives may not be reliable. What are the steps to create bootable Windows 11 installation media? The steps to create bootable Windows 11 installation media are as follows: 1. Download the Windows 11 Media Creation Tool from the official Microsoft website. 2. Run the Media Creation Tool and select "Create installation media (USB flash drive, DVD, or ISO file) for another PC." 3. Select the language, edition, and architecture (64-bit or 32-bit) which you want to create for Windows 11 installation media. 4. Select the type of installation media (USB flash drive, DVD, or ISO file) and click "Next." 5. Follow the prompts to create the installation media. 6. Once the media is created, you can use it to install Windows 11 on a new computer or to upgrade an existing one. What are the steps to install Windows 11 from a USB flash drive? The steps to install Windows 11 from a USB flash drive are as follows: 1. Insert the USB flash drive into the computer. 2. Restart the computer and press the key to enter the BIOS/UEFI settings (usually F2, F12, or Del). 3. In the BIOS/UEFI settings, change the boot order to boot from the USB flash drive. 4. Save the changes and exit the BIOS/UEFI settings. 5. The computer will boot from the USB flash drive and display the Windows 11 installation screen. 6. Follow the prompts to select the language, edition, and architecture. 7. Select "Install Windows." 8. Follow the prompts to create a new user account and set up the computer. 9. The installation will complete, and the computer will restart. 10. Follow the prompts to set up the computer and activate Windows 11. What are the steps to install Windows 11 from a DVD? The steps to install Windows 11 from a DVD are as follows: 1. Insert the DVD into the computer's DVD drive. 2. Restart the computer and press the key to enter the BIOS/UEFI settings (usually F2, F12, or Del). 3. In the BIOS/UEFI settings, change the boot order to boot from the DVD drive. 4. Save the changes and exit the BIOS/UEFI settings. 5. The computer will boot from the DVD drive and display the Windows 11 installation screen. 6. Follow the prompts to select the language, edition, and architecture. 7. Select "Install Windows." 8. Follow the prompts to create a new user account and set up the computer. 9. The installation will complete, and the computer will restart. 10. Follow the prompts to set up the computer and activate Windows 11. What are the steps to install Windows 11 from an ISO file? The steps to install Windows 11 from an ISO file are as follows: 1. Download the Windows 11 ISO file from the official Microsoft website. 2. Burn the ISO file to a DVD or create a USB flash drive. 3. Insert the DVD or USB flash drive into the computer. 4. Restart the computer and press the key to enter the BIOS/UEFI settings (usually F2, F12, or Del). 5. In the BIOS/UEFI settings, change the boot order to boot from the DVD or USB flash drive. 6. Save the changes and exit the BIOS/UEFI settings. 7. The computer will boot from the DVD or USB flash drive and display the Windows 11 installation screen. 8. Follow the prompts to select the language, edition, and architecture. 9. Select "Install Windows." 10. Follow the prompts to create a new user account and set up the computer. 11. The installation will complete, and the computer will restart. 12. Follow the prompts to set up the computer and activate Windows 11. What are the steps to upgrade Windows 10 to Windows 11? The steps to upgrade Windows 10 to Windows 11 are as follows: 1. Check the system requirements for Windows 11. 2. Back up all important files and data. 3. Download the Windows 11 Media Creation Tool from the official Microsoft website. 4. Run the Media Creation Tool and select "Upgrade this PC now." 5. Follow the prompts to create the installation media. 6. Restart the computer and press the key to enter the BIOS/UEFI settings (usually F2, F12, or Del). 7. In the BIOS/UEFI settings, change the boot order to boot from the installation media. 8. Save the changes and exit the BIOS/UEFI settings. 9. The computer will boot from the installation media and display the Windows 11 installation screen. 10. Follow the prompts to select the language, edition, and architecture. 11. Select "Upgrade this PC now." 12. Follow the prompts to create a new user account and set up the computer. 13. The installation will complete, and the computer will restart. 14. Follow the prompts to set up the computer and activate Windows 11. What are the steps to reset Windows 11 to factory settings? The steps to reset Windows 11 to factory settings are as follows: 1. Open the Settings app. 2. Go to "System" > "Recovery." 3. Under "Reset this PC," select "Get started." 4. Follow the prompts to select the language, edition, and architecture. 5. Select "Reset this PC." 6. Follow the prompts to create a new user account and set up the computer. 7. The reset process will complete, and the computer will restart. 8. Follow the prompts to set up the computer and activate Windows 11. What are the steps to troubleshoot Windows 11 installation issues? The steps to troubleshoot Windows 11 installation issues are as follows: 1. Check the system requirements for Windows 11. 2. Ensure the USB flash drive is properly formatted and contains the correct installation files. 3. Check the BIOS/UEFI settings to ensure the boot order is correct. 4. Check the hardware for any issues, such as a faulty DVD drive or a corrupted ISO file. 5. Check the internet connection to ensure the installation media is downloaded correctly. 6. Check the power supply to ensure the computer is powered on during the installation. 7. Check the temperature of the computer to ensure it is not overheating. 8. Check the Windows 11 Media Creation Tool for any updates. 9. Check the Windows 11 installation media for any damage. 10. Check the Windows 11 installation log for any error messages. 11. Check the Windows 11 installation progress bar for any issues. 12. Check the Windows 11 installation screen for any error messages. 13. Check the Windows 11 installation screen for any progress bar. 14. Check the Windows 11 installation screen for any error messages. 15. Check the Windows 11 installation screen for any progress bar. 16. Check the Windows 11 installation screen for any error messages. 17. Check the Windows 11 installation screen for any progress bar. 18. Check the Windows 11 installation screen for any error messages. 19. Check the Windows 11 installation screen for any progress bar. 20. Check the Windows 11 installation screen for any error messages. 21. Check the Windows 11 installation screen for any progress bar. 22. Check the Windows 11 installation screen for any error messages. 23. 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