

NAPLES COMPUTERS HOW-TO • PC & MAC BASICS

How to Restart Your Computer Properly

Restarting is the simplest fix in I.T. This guide shows the right way to restart on Windows 11 (version 25H2) and on a Mac (macOS 27 Golden Gate; the steps are the same on recent versions), why Restart is better than Shut down for fixing problems, and when a hard power-off is okay.

Why restart?

It's the simplest fix in I.T., and it works more often than you'd think.

Clears out glitches

Frozen apps, slow performance and odd behavior often disappear.

Finishes updates

Many security updates only finish installing when you restart.

A fresh start

Memory is cleared, and Windows or macOS loads again from scratch.

Step by step

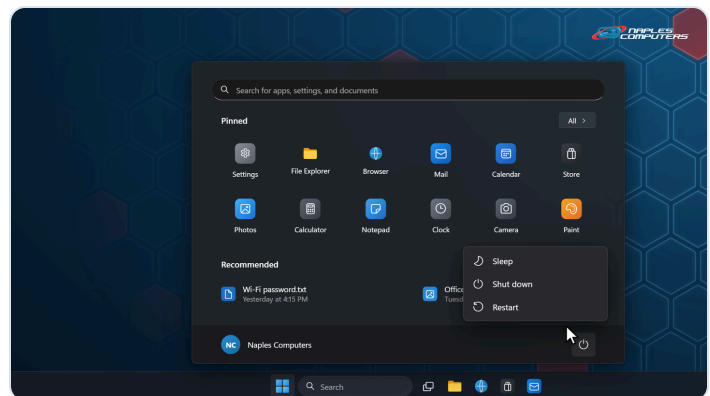
WINDOWS 11

1 Windows 11: Start → Power → Restart

Click Start, then the power button at the bottom-right of the Start menu.

WHAT TO DO

Choose Restart. Windows closes your apps, restarts, and returns to the sign-in screen.



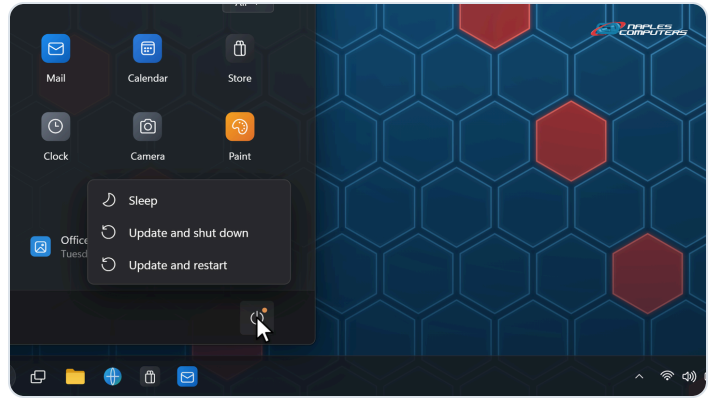
WINDOWS 11

2 Updates waiting? Choose Update and restart

A small orange dot on the power button means updates are ready to install.

WHAT TO DO

Choose Update and restart, and don't turn off your PC while it says "Working on updates".



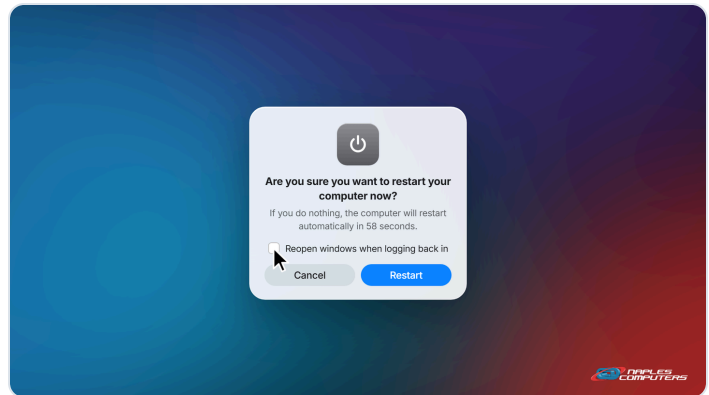
MAC

3 Mac: Apple menu → Restart

Click the Apple menu at the top-left and choose Restart. For a truly clean start, uncheck "Reopen windows when logging back in".

WHAT TO DO

Click Restart. Your Mac shuts down and starts up again.



Frozen solid? Last resort only

- ☐ First, try Ctrl+Alt+Delete
Then click the power icon at the bottom-right and choose Restart. On a Mac, press Option-Command-Esc to quit a stuck app.
- ☐ No response for several minutes?
Press and hold the power button for about 10 seconds until it turns off. Wait a moment, then turn it back on.
- ☐ Never during "Working on updates"
Cutting the power in the middle of an update can damage Windows. Give it time.
- ☐ Unsaved work will be lost
A hard power-off is like pulling the plug. Use it only when nothing else works.

Good restart habits

- ☐ Restart at least once a week
It keeps things running smoothly and lets updates finish
- ☐ Save your work first
Restarting closes all of your apps and documents
- ☐ Closing the lid isn't a restart
It only puts your laptop to sleep

Recap: restart the right way

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Windows: Start → Power → Restart | ☐ Mac: Apple menu → Restart |
| ☐ Updates waiting? Choose Update and restart | ☐ Hard power-off only as a last resort |

Restart at least once a week. If the same problem keeps coming back after a restart, it's time to have it looked at: we can check for failing hardware, malware and stuck updates.



Computer still acting up after a restart?

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