

NAPLES COMPUTERS HOW-TO • MAC TIPS

Mac Update Stuck? What to Do

Mac update stuck? Maybe the progress bar under the Apple logo hasn't moved, Software Update says "Preparing" forever, or your Mac won't finish restarting. This guide shows what to do, step by step: give it time, check Software Update, power off and on only when it's truly frozen, free up storage, try safe mode, and reinstall macOS from macOS Recovery without erasing your files.

Mac update stuck? Step by step

1

Step 1: Apple logo and progress bar? Give it time

A macOS update can take a while. The bar can move slowly or pause for a long time, and the screen may go black and restart several times.

WHAT TO DO

Keep your Mac plugged into power. Apple suggests starting big updates in the evening so they can finish overnight.



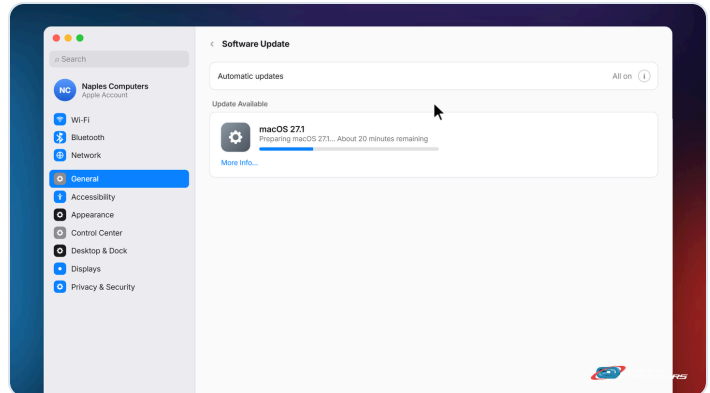
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Step 2: Still using your Mac? Check Software Update

Apple menu → System Settings → General → Software Update.

WHAT TO DO

Says Preparing or Downloading and the bar still moves, even slowly? Let it keep going. Check your internet connection.

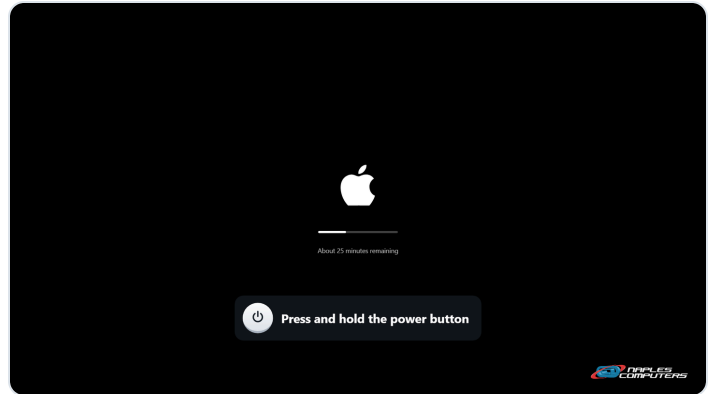


3 Step 3: Truly frozen? Hold the power button, then start up again

Nothing has changed for a couple of hours? Press and hold the power button (Touch ID on laptops) for up to 10 seconds, until the Mac turns off.

WHAT TO DO

Press it again to start up. The update often picks up where it left off. Still stuck? Unplug printers, drives and hubs, and try again.

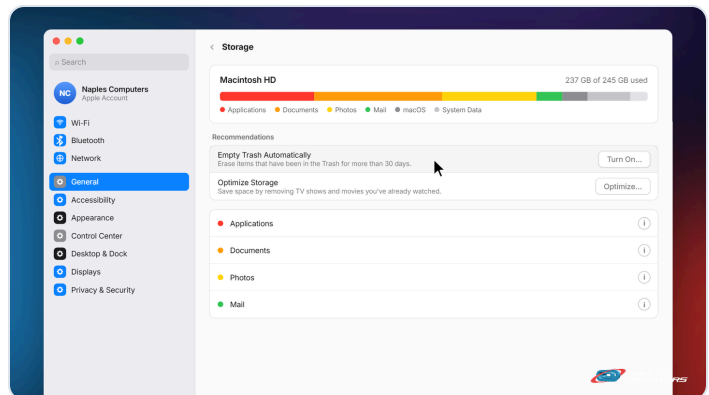


4 Step 4: Free up storage, restart, and try again

Updates need a lot of free space. Apple menu → System Settings → General → Storage.

WHAT TO DO

Nearly full? Empty the Trash and remove files and apps you don't need, or move them to an external drive. Then restart and update again.

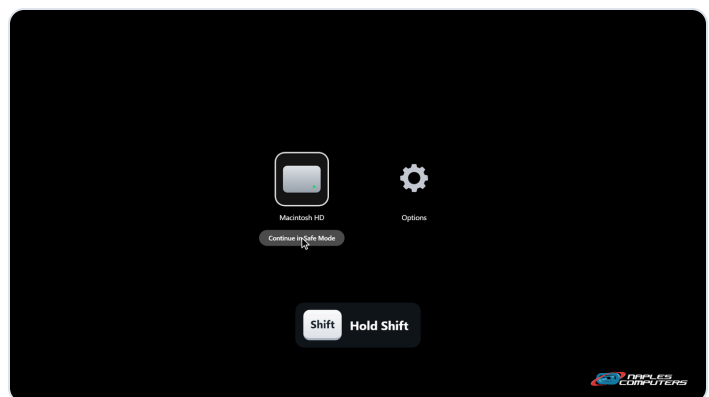


5 Step 5: Still won't install? Try safe mode

Apple silicon: shut down, press and hold the power button until Loading startup options. Select your disk, hold Shift, click Continue in Safe Mode.

WHAT TO DO

Intel-based Mac: press and hold Shift right after it starts, until the login window. You'll see Safe Boot in the menu bar. Then run Software Update.



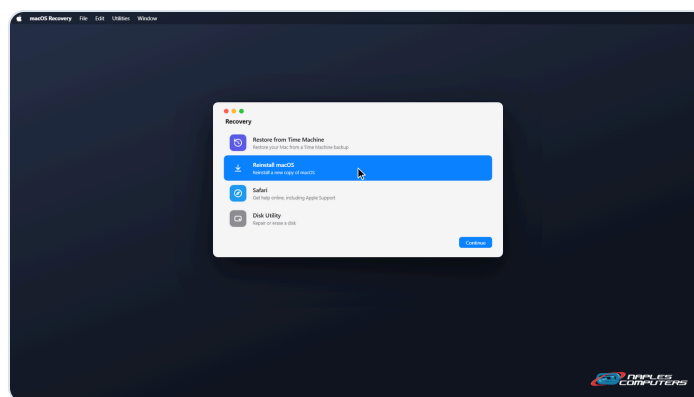
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Step 6: Still stuck? Reinstall macOS from macOS Recovery

Apple silicon: press and hold the power button until Loading startup options, click Options, then Continue. Intel: hold Command-R at startup.

WHAT TO DO

Choose Reinstall macOS and follow the steps. It doesn't erase your files, but back up with Time Machine first if you can.



Before you reinstall macOS

- ☐ Back up with Time Machine first
If your Mac can still start up
- ☐ Reinstalling keeps your files and apps
It replaces macOS itself
- ☐ Asked to pick a disk?
Choose Macintosh HD, not Macintosh HD - Data
- ☐ Asked to unlock the disk?
Enter the password you use to log in to your Mac
- ☐ Never choose Erase to fix an update
That deletes everything. Call us first

Mac update stuck? When to call us

- ☐ Your Mac won't start up at all
- ☐ It keeps going back to Recovery, or the update fails again and again
- ☐ It asks for a password you don't know
- ☐ You're not sure, or you don't have a backup
- ☐ Call 239-513-1960
Or click Join Remote Session at naplescomputers.com. Walk-ins: 2308 Immokalee Rd

Recap: Mac update stuck

- ☐ Give it time, keep it plugged in
- ☐ Check Software Update's progress
- ☐ Truly frozen? Hold power, start again
- ☐ Free up storage, restart, try again
- ☐ Try installing in safe mode
- ☐ Reinstall from macOS Recovery

Never erase your Mac's disk to fix a stuck update: that deletes everything. Reinstalling macOS from macOS Recovery keeps your files and apps, but back up with Time Machine first if you can. Not sure? Call Naples Computers first.



Mac update still stuck, or a Mac that won't start up?

Call 239-513-1960

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