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Oct. 1, 2020

It's possible to remove malware from a Mac or PC by running a scanner and taking steps to fix your web browser. Here's our step-by-step guide to removing malware from your computer.

How to remove malware from a Mac

Step 1: Disconnect from the internet

Disconnecting from the internet will prevent more of your data from being sent to a malware server or the malware from spreading further. So stay offline as much as possible if you suspect that your computer has been infected. If you need to download a removal tool, disconnect after the download is complete and don't connect again until you are sure that the malware has been removed.

Step 2: Enter safe mode

Safe mode, often referred to as safe boot, is a way to start your computer so that it performs checks and allows only the minimum required software and programs to load. If malware is set to load automatically, this will prevent the malware from doing so, making it easier to remove. To enter safe mode:

1. Start (or restart) your Mac, then immediately press and hold the Shift key. The Apple logo will appear on your display.
2. Release the Shift key when you see the login window (if you are asked to log in twice, learn more about what to do here).

Disclaimer: Avoid logging into accounts during malware removal

Be careful to not expose passwords through a copy-paste function or by clicking a 'show password' box if you suspect your computer has been infected. Keylogger viruses are a common component of malware, which run invisibly and are designed to capture your keystrokes. To avoid sharing your personally identifiable information, refrain from logging into sensitive accounts while your device is infected.

Step 3: Check your activity monitor for malicious applications

If you know that you've installed a suspicious update or application, close the application if it's running. You can do so by using your activity monitor. This shows the processes that are running on your computer, so you can manage them and see how they affect your computer's activity and performance.

Malware can take up resources on your computer, so check the CPU tab to see which applications are working the hardest. If you are able to find the suspicious application, you can close out of it through your activity monitor and then delete the application from the Finder menu. To check your activity monitor:

In Finder, click → Applications → Utilities → Activity Monitor → Select Application → Quit

Step 4: Run a malware scanner

Fortunately, malware scanners can remove most standard infections. It's important to keep in mind that if you already have an antivirus program active on your computer, you should use a different scanner for this malware check since your current antivirus software may not detect the malware initially. If you believe your computer is infected, we recommend downloading an on-demand scanner from a reliable source and then installing and running security software which provides protection against existing and emerging malware, including ransomware and viruses.

Step 5: Verify your browser's homepage

It's common for malware to modify your web browser's homepage to re-infect your Mac. Check your homepage and connection settings using the steps below for common browsers. Note that you will need to connect your computer to the internet to complete the following steps.

To verify your homepage on Chrome:

1. In the top right corner of your Chrome browser, click More → Settings.
2. Select the dropdown menu in the "Search engine" section.
3. Verify your default homepage.

To verify your homepage on Safari:

1. In the top left corner of your screen, select Safari → Preferences → General.
2. Next to "New windows open with" and "New tabs open with," select Homepage.
3. Next to "Homepage," you will verify your default homepage.

Step 6: Clear your cache

After you've verified your homepage setting, you should clear your browser's cache. This is a temporary storage location on your computer where data is saved so your browser doesn't need to download it each time. Follow these steps below to learn how to clear your cache for Chrome and Safari.

To clear your cache on Chrome:

Select Chrome → History → Clear Browsing Data → Time Range → All Time → Clear Data.

To clear your cache on Safari:

Select Safari → Preferences → Privacy → Manage Website Data → Remove All.

How to remove malware from a PC

Step 1: Disconnect from the internet

Disconnecting from the internet will prevent more of your data from being sent to a malware server or the malware from spreading further.

Step 2: Enter safe mode

If malware is set to load automatically, this will prevent the malware from loading, making it easier to remove. To enter safe mode:

1. Restart your PC.
2. When you see the sign-in screen, hold down the Shift key and select Power → Restart.
3. After your PC restarts, to the "Choose an option" screen, select: Troubleshoot → Advanced Options → Startup Settings.
4. On the next window, click the Restart button and wait for the next screen to appear.
5. A menu will appear with numbered startup options. Select number 4 or F4 to start your PC in Safe Mode.

Disclaimer: Avoid logging into accounts during malware removal

To avoid sharing your personally identifiable information, do not log into sensitive accounts while your device is infected.

Step 3: Check your activity monitor for malicious applications

If you know that you've installed a suspicious update or application, close the application if it's running. Your activity monitor shows the processes that are running on your computer, so you can see how they affect your computer's activity and performance.

In Type to search type → Resource Monitor → Find End Task → Right Click → End Process

Step 4: Run a malware scanner

Luckily, malware scanners can remove many standard infections. But remember that if you already have an antivirus program active on your computer, you should use a different scanner for this malware check since your current antivirus software may not detect the malware initially.

Step 5: Fix your web browser

Malware is likely to modify your web browser's homepage to re-infect your PC. Check your homepage and connection settings using the steps below for common browsers.

To verify your homepage on Chrome:

4. In the top right corner of your Chrome browser, click More → Settings.
5. Select the dropdown menu in the "Search engine" section.
6. Verify your default homepage.

To verify your homepage on Internet Explorer:

1. Select the Tools icon.
2. Click Internet options.
3. In the General tab, find the "Search" section and click Settings.
4. Verify your default homepage.

Step 6: Clear your cache

After you've verified your homepage setting, it's imperative to clear your browser's cache. Follow these steps below to learn how to clear your cache for Chrome and Internet Explorer.

To clear your cache on Chrome:

History → Clear Browsing Data → Time Range → All Time → Clear Data.

To clear your cache on Internet Explorer:

Tools → Safety → Delete browsing history.

What if malware removal is unsuccessful?

If malware removal is unsuccessful, sometimes the only way to be sure your computer is free of malware is to entirely reinstall the operating system and your applications or programs from scratch. Before wiping your hard drive, backup all your files to an external drive and consult Apple support or Microsoft support before beginning the process. Learn how to erase your startup disk prior to reinstalling MacOS in the steps below:

To reinstall MacOS:

Restart the Mac and hold down Command-R after the startup chime sounds → Select Disk Utility → Erase.

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To reinstall Windows:

Follow the factory restore options. Windows gives you the option to keep your files or remove everything.

Select the Start button → Settings → Type Recovery Options → Reset this PC → Get started → Remove everything

How to tell if your device has been infected with malware

Some of the tell-tale signs of your device being infected with malware include:

- Changes in your device behavior: for example, unusual ads or pop-up windows may begin to appear, even when you're not surfing the web.
- Your device may begin to run more slowly.
- Your device may suddenly lack storage space.
- Your browser behavior or homepage appearance may change.
- Ads may pop up featuring inappropriate content and flashing colors. They may also block whatever content you're trying to view.

How to help protect your devices from malware


Malware or viruses get on your computer in a handful of ways, so it's a good idea for computer owners to develop good online habits to avoid an infection. Use our best practices below to help protect your computer:

- **Avoid suspicious emails, links, and websites.** Sometimes malware or viruses are disguised as an image file, word processing document, or PDF that you open. Additionally, if you find a strange new file on your desktop, do not open it.
- **Clear your downloads and empty your trash often.** If you've deleted downloads or moved suspicious files to the trash, empty the trash immediately after.
- **Create strong passwords.** Once you're sure the computer virus infection has been cleaned up, change all your passwords, using unique combinations of letters, numbers, and symbols. Don't use words found in the dictionary since they can be cracked via a dictionary attack. To help create, manage, and securely store all your passwords, consider using a password manager.

STATUS
SCAN
QUARANTINE
LOGS
STARTUP ITEMS
ACTIVATE

Scan Progress

Please wait while we are scanning your Mac



Current Status:

- ✓ Checking for Updates
- ✓ Pre-Scan Operations
- ✓ Scanning Memory
- ✓ Scanning Startup Files
- ⌛ Scanning File System

Scanning for infections... (Deep Scan)

Currently Scanning: /library/application...es/thumbnail.png

Items Scanned: 1,500

Time Elapsed: 00:00:01

Infections Found: 12

Tip: You can view and manage all startup items in Startup Items tab

Stop Scan

Malware is a dangerous threat to the data that computer owners store on their PCs and Macs. New types of malware are being discovered frequently, and the profitable nature of some types of malware can make it especially attractive to cybercriminals around the globe. It's important to exercise good online habits and understand the signs of a malware infection.

If you suspect your computer is infected, act as soon as possible to prevent the spread of malware and protect your personal information.

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Short on Time?

Before digging deep into what Mac malware is and how to clean it, here's a tip for you: Download Systweak Anti-Malware. It is a trusted app offered by Systweak. Using this best security software for Mac, you can perform a deep and quick scan, remove malicious startup and login items, schedule scans, and do a lot more. This best antimalware tool for Mac is powerful and light on system resources. To get rid of malware from Mac, try the tool today, and continue reading to check more solutions below.

Read More:Review: Systweak Anti-Malware For Mac

There's no denying 2020 will go down as a virus year, but this doesn't mean your systems are spared. According to a recent security report, they are still at risk; Mac's have outpaced Windows PCs in the number of threats. This means Mac machines are at a greater risk now. So, if your Mac is running slow or you see unwanted advertisements within your browser, chances of your system being infected are there. Don't panic; there are things that you can do to clean an infected Mac.

What is Mac Malware?

First thing first, Mac malware and virus are not the same. Malware is a code or software written to do nasty things like deleting files, encrypting data, or infecting a system with ransomware, among other things like adware, spyware, etc. It is more complicated and dangerous than the virus.

Common types of malware you can encounter on Mac are:

Spyware and keyloggers – steal the user's personal information.

Backdoor infections – remotely take control of your computer.

Botnet – alters Mac into a shadow bot.

PUP –potentially unwanted program source of adware

Ransomware – locks the system asking the user to pay the ransom.

Rootkit – penetrates admin privileges.

So, how to know if your Mac is infected and how to remove malware from Mac? Answers to these questions can be found below.

Signs of Mac Being Infected

When the following signs are witnesses on your Mac, there's a high probability of your system being infected:

- Performance of your mac slows down suddenly
- You see advertisement pop-ups now and then
- Unknown app icon appears on the desktop
- Default search engine, the home page is being replaced
- Redirections to a fake page
- Warning pop-ups and unwanted app downloads
- Mac restarts without any warning and takes time to boot

How Does The Mac Get Infect?

There are 5 typical gateways responsible for infecting Mac with malware. They are as follows:

1. Fake Flash player update
2. Torrent download
3. .Doc attachment
4. Camera access request
5. "Your Mac is Infected scam."

How To Remove Malware From Mac?

There are different ways to clean malware from Mac. First, we will remove malware from login items, followed by uninstalling unwanted apps and learning about the best and automatic way to clean malware.

1. Deleting Mac Malware from Login Items

Most malware or adware sneaks into the system through the startup process. Therefore, it is essential to prevent this from happening.

1. Click the Apple icon > System Preferences
2. Hit the Users & Groups section.
3. Select your username > click Login Items tab.
4. Check the list of login items. If you find any suspicious app, select and click “—.”
5. Reboot Mac to save the changes.

Since Mac malware can hide behind a legitimate file, there’s a possibility that you won’t find any suspicious app. Therefore, to make sure they don’t sit in our Mac, we will need to check the web browsers.

Note: Most Mac malware like adware, scareware, spyware, and others insert in web browsers.

2. Clearing Mac malware from web browsers

1. Press Q + Command to quit the web browser
2. Launch Finder > Downloads > check all the downloaded installation files > if you find a suspicious app > select right-click > Move to Trash.
3. Besides this, if you know which app is infected, half the battle is already won. To get rid of it, open
4. Check all the listed apps. If any app looks suspicious > select it > click the X icon and Force Quit.
5. Afterward, open the Applications folder.
6. Find the problematic app > select it > right-click > Move to Trash.

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7. Next, Empty Trash

This simple method will help get rid of malware from Mac. But it’s still incomplete as there might be some leftovers present on your Mac. To remove these traces, you can use an antimalware app like Systweak Anti-Malware or can follow the manual steps explained below:

1. Quit any unwanted app
2. Launch Finder > Go > Go to Folder > type users/shared/
3. Delete Slimi files and folders.

Uninstall malicious extensions on Safari, Chrome, and Firefox

Browser extensions again are the most used carrier for adware, spyware, etc. Therefore, it is important to check all the extensions and uninstall the malicious ones. To do so, follow the steps below:

Safari:

1. Launch Safari > Preferences > General
2. Check the Homepage and ensure it is the one that you want to open
3. Next, head to Security and checkmark Block pop-up windows
4. Afterward, head to go to Extensions > look for unknown extensions and uninstall them

Chrome:

1. Launch Chrome > Preferences > Advanced
2. Scroll down > Reset settings
3. Restore settings to defaults > confirm RESET SETTINGS
4. Head back to Advance > Privacy and security > content settings

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5. Find Popups and Ads > Block.

Firefox:

1. Launch Firefox > type about: support in the address bar
2. Click Refresh Firefox
3. Next, run Firefox in Safe Mode and restart with Add-ons Disabled.
4. Firefox > Preferences > Privacy & Security.
5. Navigate to Security and checkmark the three options (Block dangerous and deceptive content/Block dangerous download/Warn you about unwanted and uncommon software)

How to Automatically Clear Malware from Mac Using Systweak Anti-Malware

Getting rid of something that you are not aware of is not easy. Luckily using Systweak Anti-Malware, you can scan your Mac for vulnerabilities and remove suspicious files. Offered by Systweak with a company with a reputation of 19+ years, Systweak Anti-Malware is the best security tool for Mac and a one-stop solution to fix malware infections. The tool helps remove adware, virus, spyware, ransomware, and other threats. Moreover, the app’s database is regularly updated, and it even scans login items for infections.

Here’s how to use Systweak Anti-Malware and clean malware from Mac.

1. Download, install and launch Systweak Anti-Malware
2. Click the Scan tab and select Deep Scan > click Deep Scan to perform scanning
3. Wait for the scan to finish. Once done, click Fix Now
4. This will help quarantine all the infected files and remove malware from Mac.

In addition to this, if you want to schedule scanning, click the Preferences tab > Schedule > set the time and day > Apply. Now Systweak Anti-Malware will run at the specified time, and you will be protected from malware on Mac. This robust security tool works flawlessly and keeps your Mac guarded against the latest and old threats. To stay protected, we suggest using it once every month. However, if you are not comfortable using a third-party tool, you can use the manual steps explained above to clean malware. Do let us know which steps you picked and why in the comments section. We’d love to hear from you.