

How to Force Quit an Application on Windows: Full Steps

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Quick answer

Nothing is more frustrating than an application freezing while you're working on something important. A stuck program can slow down your entire workflow, making it essential to know how to force quit the unresponsive application and regain control of your system.

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Windows provides several ways to close frozen applications, whether through keyboard shortcuts, Task Manager, Command Prompt, or other built-in tools. In this article, we will check the most effective methods to force quit an unresponsive application on Windows, ensuring a smooth computing experience.

Method 1: Using Keyboard Shortcut (Alt + F4)

This is the quickest method to close an unresponsive application using your keyboard.

Steps:

1. Click on the application window that is frozen to make it active.
2. Press Alt + F4 on your keyboard.
3. If the application responds, it will close immediately.
4. If nothing happens, try the next method.

Quote: Note: Ensure that the application is selected before pressing Alt + F4, as this shortcut may shut down the entire computer if no active window is selected.

Method 2: Using Task Manager

Task Manager is a powerful tool that allows you to monitor and manage running applications, background processes, and system performance.

Steps:

1. Press Ctrl + Shift + Esc to open Task Manager directly.
2. Locate the unresponsive application under the Processes tab.
3. Click on the application name to highlight it.
4. Click the End Task button at the bottom right corner.

Quote: Alternative Way: If the shortcut doesn't work, press Ctrl + Alt + Delete, then select Task Manager from the options.

Method 3: Using Command Prompt (CMD)

For advanced users, Command Prompt offers a powerful way to terminate a frozen application manually.

Steps:

1. Press Windows + R to open the Run dialog box.
2. Type 'cmd' and press Enter to open the Command Prompt.
3. Type 'tasklist' and press Enter to view a list of running applications.
4. Identify the program's name or Process ID (PID) from the list.
5. Type the following command and press Enter: 'taskkill /F /IM program_name.exe' (Replace 'program_name.exe' with the actual application name, e.g., 'chrome.exe' for Google Chrome.)
6. You should see a confirmation message that the process was terminated.

Quote: Tip: If the app doesn't close using the name, try using its PID instead by running:

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taskkill /F /PID process_id
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Method 4: Using Windows Settings (For UWP Apps)

If you're dealing with a Windows Store app (UWP app) that won't close, you can force quit it via Windows Settings.

Steps:

1. Click on the Start button and select Settings .
2. Navigate to Apps > Installed apps .
3. Scroll down and locate the problematic app.
4. Click on the app's name to expand options.
5. Select Advanced options .
6. Click Terminate to force close the app.

Method 5: Using Windows PowerShell

Similar to Command Prompt, PowerShell allows you to force quit applications with advanced control.

Steps:

1. Press Windows + X and select Windows Terminal (Admin) or PowerShell (Admin) .
2. Type 'Get-Process' and press Enter to list all running applications.
3. Identify the application you want to close.
4. Type the following command and press Enter: 'Stop-Process -Name "program_name" -Force' (Replace 'program_name' with the actual application name.)

Last Resort: Restart Your Computer

If none of the above methods work and your system remains unresponsive, restarting your computer is the ultimate solution.

Steps to Restart:

1. Press and hold the Power button until your computer shuts down completely.
2. Wait a few seconds, then press the Power button again to restart.

3. After rebooting, your system should be back to normal.

Quote: Tip: Regularly updating Windows and drivers can help prevent applications from freezing frequently.

Conclusion

Freezing applications can be an annoyance, but Windows provides multiple ways to force quit them effectively. Whether you prefer a quick keyboard shortcut, the Task Manager, or command-line methods, you can regain control of your PC in no time.

For a seamless experience, keep your operating system updated and avoid running too many applications at once. If problems persist, consider troubleshooting or reinstalling the problematic software.