Fix Bluetooth problems in Windows 11

Windows 11 · https://cleversupport.ca/docs/windows-11/fix-bluetooth-problems-in-windows-11/

If you run into problems trying to connect to a Bluetooth device, here are some troubleshooting steps to try.

Note: For general info about how to connect a Bluetooth device to your PC, see Pair a Bluetooth device in Windows.

Before you start

Check these things before you start troubleshooting Bluetooth on your device:

Check your product information

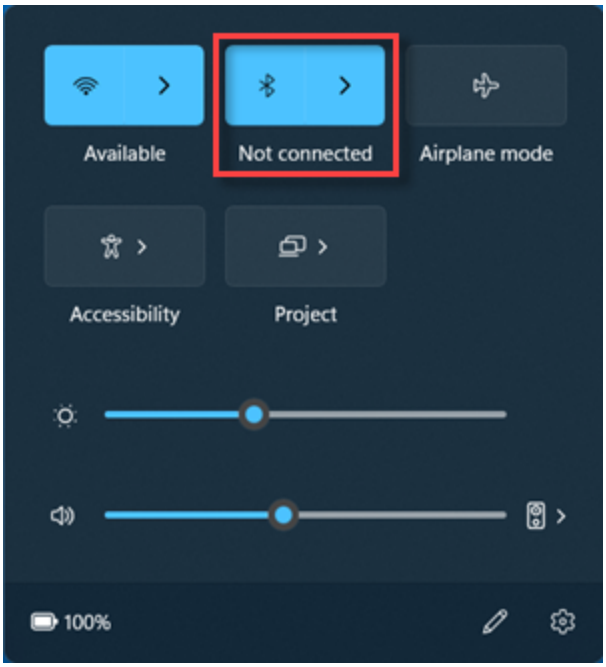
If you're setting up a new device and Bluetooth is missing, check the product specifications to make sure it has Bluetooth capabilities. Some devices don't have Bluetooth.

Make sure Bluetooth is turned on

If you're using a laptop with a physical Bluetooth switch on the body, make sure it's switched on.

In Windows 11, there are two ways to check if Bluetooth is turned on. Here's how:

- **Check in quick settings:** Select the **Network**, **Sound**, or **Battery** icons ( ) on the right side of the taskbar, look for the **Bluetooth** quick setting, then select **Bluetooth** to turn it on. You'll see "Not connected" if your Windows 11 device isn't connected to any Bluetooth accessories.



- **Check in Settings:** Select **Start** > **Settings** > **Bluetooth & devices** . Make sure **Bluetooth** is turned on.

Notes:

- When you turn Bluetooth on in Settings, the following message appears immediately:
- "Discoverable as <*computer_name*>"

Check your Bluetooth device

Make sure your Bluetooth device is turned on, is charged or has fresh batteries, and is in range of your PC. Then, try the following:

- Turn off your Bluetooth device, wait a few seconds, then turn it back on.
- Make sure your Bluetooth device is in range. If your Bluetooth device is unresponsive or sluggish, check to make sure it’s not too close to any other USB device that’s plugged into a USB 3.0 port. Unshielded USB devices can sometimes interfere with Bluetooth connections.

Change the Bluetooth devices discovery setting

If you don't see your Bluetooth device displayed in the list of devices, you may need to set your Bluetooth devices discovery setting to Advanced.

1. Select **Start** > **Settings** > **Bluetooth & devices** > **Devices** .
2. Under **Device settings** > **Bluetooth devices discovery**, choose one of the following from the drop-down list:
   - **Default**—displays common Bluetooth devices
   - **Advanced**—displays all types of Bluetooth devices
3. If you still don't see your Bluetooth device displayed after choosing the **Advanced** setting, try the solutions listed below.

Check your PC

On the PC you want to pair to:

- **Make sure airplane mode is off:** Select the **Network**, **Sound**, or **Battery** icons ( ) on the right side of the taskbar, then make sure the **Airplane mode** quick setting is turned off.
- **Turn Bluetooth on and off:** Select **Start** > **Settings** > **Bluetooth & devices** . Turn off **Bluetooth** , wait a few seconds, then turn it back on.
- **Remove the Bluetooth device, then add it again:** Select **Start** > **Settings** > **Bluetooth & devices** > **Devices** . In **Devices**, select **More options** for the Bluetooth device you're having problems connecting to, and then select **Remove device** > **Yes**. To learn more about pairing your Bluetooth device again, see Pair a Bluetooth device.

When Bluetooth doesn't work or the Bluetooth icon is missing

Try these steps if your Bluetooth isn't working. Here are some other common problems:

- The Bluetooth icon is missing, or Bluetooth can't be turned on or off.
- Bluetooth doesn't work after a Windows update is installed.
- Bluetooth doesn't work after you upgrade to Windows 11 from Windows 10.
- Bluetooth doesn't appear in Device Manager, and there are no unknown devices listed.

To get started, select a heading to see more info.

Run the Bluetooth troubleshooter

Select **Start** > **Settings** > **System** > **Troubleshoot** > **Other troubleshooters** . Next to **Bluetooth** , select **Run** and follow the instructions.

Open Troubleshoot settings

Make sure you have the latest drivers

If you recently upgraded to Windows 11 or installed Windows 11 updates, the current driver may have been designed for an earlier version of Windows. To automatically check for driver updates:

1. Select **Search** on the taskbar, type for **device manager**, and then select **Device Manager** from the list of results.
2. In Device Manager, select **Bluetooth**, and then select the Bluetooth adapter name, which may include the word “radio.”
3. Press and hold (or right-click) the Bluetooth adapter, and then select **Update driver** > **Search automatically for updated driver software**. Follow the steps, then select **Close**.
4. After installing the updated driver, select **Start** > **Power** > **Restart** if you're prompted to restart, and then check whether that fixes the connection issue.

If Windows can’t find a new Bluetooth driver, visit the PC manufacturer’s website and download the latest Bluetooth driver from there.

Important: An outdated or incompatible driver is one of the most common causes of Bluetooth connection problems.

To manually install the Bluetooth driver:

Go to your PC manufacturer's website and download the latest driver. Then do one of the following:

- If you downloaded an executable (.exe) file, just double-click the file to run it and install the drivers. That should be all you need to do.
- If you downloaded individual files, and at least one file has an .inf file name extension and another has a .sys extension, do the following:
  a. Select **Search** on the taskbar, type **device manager**, and then select **Device Manager** from the list of results.

b. In Device Manager, select **Bluetooth** > the Bluetooth adapter name. (If it’s not listed there, check in **Other devices**.)
c. Press and hold (or right-click) the network adapter, and then select **Update driver** > **Browse my computer for drivers**.
d. Select **Browse**, select the location where the driver files are stored, and then select **OK**.
e. Select **Next**, and follow the steps to install the driver. When the installation is finished, select **Close**.
f. After you've updated the driver, select **Start** > **Power** > **Restart** if you're prompted to restart, and check whether that fixes the connection issue.

Uninstall the Bluetooth adapter in Device Manager

If you don't see the Bluetooth icon, but Bluetooth does appear in Device Manager, try to uninstall the Bluetooth adapter, and then trigger an automatic reinstall. Here's how:

1. Select **Search** on the taskbar, enter **device manager**, then select **Device Manager** from the results.
2. In Device Manager, select **Bluetooth**. Press and hold (or right-click) the Bluetooth adapter name (which may include the word “radio”), and select **Uninstall device** > **Uninstall**.
3. Select **Start** , then select **Power** > **Shut down** .
4. After your device shuts down, wait a few seconds, and then turn it back on. Windows will try to reinstall the driver.
5. If Windows doesn't reinstall the driver automatically, open Device Manager and select **Action** > **Scan for hardware changes**.

Note: You may need to contact your PC or other hardware manufacturer to get the latest drivers for your Bluetooth adapter.

Troubleshoot problems with Bluetooth accessories

If you can turn on Bluetooth but having problems pairing or using a Bluetooth accessory, try the following steps to try to fix common problems with Bluetooth accessories.

You should also check your Bluetooth device manufacturer's website—especially if you have other Bluetooth devices that are working. The device manufacturer will probably have more detailed, product-specific information and troubleshooting steps.

To get started, select a heading to see more info.

Keyboard, mouse, or pen

If you're prompted to enter a PIN to use your device, but you don't know the PIN:

- Check the device's documentation for a pin, or look for one on the device itself.
- Try **0000** or **1234**.

If you're prompted to enter a PIN, but you don't see a place to enter one on your PC's screen, type **0000** on your Bluetooth keyboard and press Enter.

Try to remove the device, then pair it again. Your device might be paired, but not connected—Bluetooth keyboards, mice, and pens connect only when necessary.
To remove a Bluetooth device, select **Start** > **Settings** > **Bluetooth & devices** > **Devices** . In **Devices**, select **More options** for the Bluetooth device that's paired but not working, then select **Remove device** > **Yes**. After that, pair the device again. For more info on pairing devices, see Pair a Bluetooth device.

Audio

If you're having problems connecting a Bluetooth audio device or hearing sound:

- Make sure the audio device is within range of your PC.
- Make sure the audio is playing through the Bluetooth device. Select **Start** > **Settings** > **System** > **Sound** . Select **Choose where to play sound** then select the Bluetooth device.
- If your Bluetooth device displays as **Paired** in **Settings** > **Bluetooth & devices** > **Devices** , but you can't hear audio, make sure it's connected. In **Devices**, select **More options** next to the device, and then select **Connect**.
- Try to remove the Bluetooth device, then pair it again. To remove a Bluetooth device, select **Start** > **Settings** > **Bluetooth & devices** > **Devices** . In **Devices**, select **More options** for the Bluetooth device that's paired but not working, then select **Remove device** > **Yes**. After that, pair the device again. For more info on pairing devices, see Pair a Bluetooth device.

If your device is connected, but the audio quality is poor:

- Make sure the audio is playing through the Bluetooth device. Select **Start** > **Settings** > **System** > **Sound** . In **Choose where to play sound**, select the Bluetooth audio device.
- Pause other things that might be using Bluetooth, such as file-sharing over Bluetooth. For more info, see Fix sound or audio problems in Windows.
- Verify that stereo is selected for the Bluetooth device to ensure the best quality audio. To do this:
  a. On the right side of the taskbar, click **Volume** , and then select **Manage audio devices** to choose a playback device.
  b. Select the Bluetooth device, and make sure the **Stereo** option is selected. (The lower-audio quality option is **Hands-Free**.)
  c. If stereo is not available as an option, remove the device in **Settings** > **Bluetooth & devices** > **Devices** , and then add the device again. Then, check the **Volume** panel again to make sure that stereo is selected.

Other devices

File sharing

If you're having problems sharing files over Bluetooth:

- Try using nearby sharing. Learn more about nearby sharing
- Make sure Bluetooth is turned on for both the sending and receiving device. For more info, see Send files over Bluetooth.

Note: Nearby sharing is available on Windows 10 (version 1803 and later) and on Windows 11.

Phones

The PIN should appear on your phone screen or computer screen. Confirm that you're seeing the correct PIN on both devices.

Motion controllers

For help troubleshooting problems with Bluetooth-connected motion controllers, see Controllers in Windows Mixed Reality.

Fitness trackers

For help troubleshooting problems with Bluetooth-connected fitness trackers, see your device manufacturer’s instructions.