



Tech4Me2 Action Guide

Why Is My Internet So Slow?

A simple, step-by-step guide to diagnosing and
fixing slow internet problems

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Introduction

When your internet feels slow, it can be frustrating. Websites take longer to load, videos buffer, and simple online tasks become difficult.

The good news is that, in many cases, the cause is something simple—and often something you can handle yourself. In fact, many slowdowns can be improved in just a few minutes.

This guide will help you identify what's causing the slowdown and take practical steps to improve your connection.

You won't need technical expertise. What you will need is a few minutes and a willingness to work through the steps in order.

How This Guide Is Organized

This guide is structured to help you move from quick wins to more targeted solutions:

- **Start Here: Quick Fixes**
Simple steps that often improve performance right away
- **Identify the Cause and Fix It**
Practical actions you can take based on what you're seeing
- **What You Can't Fix (and When to Upgrade)**
Guidance for situations where the issue may be due to hardware limits

Start with the quick fixes. One of these may resolve your problem. If not, continue through the guide step by step.

Section 1 – Is It Your Internet or Your Computer?

When something feels slow, it's not always obvious where the problem is. A slow-loading website, buffering video, or sluggish response could be caused by your internet connection—or by your computer itself.

Before trying to fix anything, take a minute to narrow down the cause.

Ask yourself:

- Are websites slow to load or not loading at all?
- Are videos buffering or stopping?
- Do programs feel slow even when you're offline?
- Is the problem happening on one device or all devices?

If multiple devices are slow, the issue is likely your internet. If only one device is slow, the issue is more likely that device.

Section 2 – Start Here: Quick Fixes

Restart Your Router (and Modem)

Restarting your router clears temporary glitches and refreshes your connection to your internet provider. Over time, small errors can build up, and a restart often clears them.

Follow these steps, in the order shown, and being sure to wait as indicated. The process is simple. It just requires a bit of patience.

1. Unplug your modem
2. Unplug your router
3. Wait 30 seconds
4. Plug the modem back in
5. Wait 1–2 minutes
6. Plug the router back in

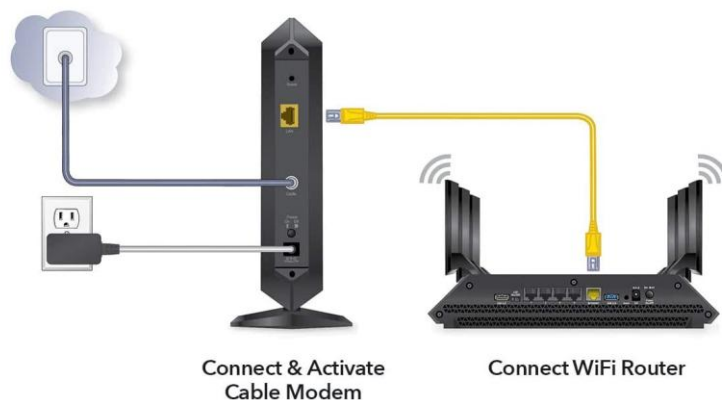


Photo credit: Amazon

Move Closer to Your Router

If you're using Wi-Fi, your signal strength varies depending on your distance from the router and any walls or doors in between. Move closer to your router if possible and see if performance improves.



Photo credit: HighSpeedInternet.com

Check Other Devices

If all devices are slow, the issue is likely your internet. If only one device is slow, the issue is likely that device.

Run a Speed Test

Use a site such as speedtest.net or fast.com to measure your speed and compare it to your plan.

Try a Wired Connection

Connect your computer directly to the modem using an Ethernet cable, bypassing the router (and Wi-Fi). If performance improves, Wi-Fi is likely the cause.



Unplug the Ethernet cable from the router and plug it directly into your PC.

Section 3 – Identify the Cause and Fix It

If none of the quick fixes resolved the issue, don't despair. A slow internet connection is usually caused by one of a small number of factors. What you want to do is:

- 👉 clearly identify what's happening
- 👉 apply the most appropriate fix

Weak Wi-Fi Signal

What's happening:

Wi-Fi signals weaken the farther you are from your router, or the more obstructions (doors, walls, etc.) separate you and the router.

Common signs include:

- slow page loading
- buffering video
- inconsistent connection

What to do:

Start by moving closer to your router and testing your connection again.

If performance improves, the issue is likely signal strength.

To improve your Wi-Fi signal more permanently:

- Move your router to a more central location

- Avoid placing it behind furniture, in enclosed spaces, or on the floor.

You can also improve your signal with inexpensive hardware:

- A Wi-Fi extender (repeater) to expand coverage
- A USB Wi-Fi antenna for desktops or laptops with weak internal adapters

👉 These are simple, low-cost ways to improve performance without replacing your entire setup.



Too Many Devices Sharing the Connection

What's happening:

Your internet connection is shared across all devices connected to your network.

These might include:

- phones
- tablets
- smart TVs
- streaming devices
- computers

When multiple devices are active at the same time—especially streaming video or downloading files—your available bandwidth is divided, which can slow everything down.

What to do:

Try temporarily disconnecting or pausing activity on devices you're not using.

For example:

- pause streaming on TVs
- stop large downloads
- disconnect idle devices

If performance improves, you've identified the issue.

👉 This doesn't necessarily mean you have a "bad connection"—just that it's being heavily used.

Router Limitations

What's happening:

Your router plays a central role in your internet performance. It receives the signal from your modem and relays it to your various devices.

Older or lower-quality routers may:

- struggle with multiple devices

- provide weaker Wi-Fi coverage
- become less stable over time

Even a good router can occasionally become overloaded or unstable.

What to do:

Start with a simple restart (as covered in Section 2).

If problems persist:

- check how old your router is
- consider whether it supports your current usage

If your router is several years old, replacing it with a newer model can often make a noticeable difference.

Background Activity**What's happening:**

Your internet connection may be used by background activity that you're not aware of.

This can include:

- software updates
- cloud backups
- file syncing services

- streaming or downloads running in the background

These processes can quietly consume bandwidth and slow down your connection.

What to do:

Pause or delay background activity when you need better performance.

For example:

- pause updates temporarily
- stop large downloads
- close applications or browser tabs you're not using

👉 This is especially helpful if your connection suddenly becomes slow without an obvious reason.

Network Congestion

What's happening:

Internet speeds can slow during peak usage times—typically evenings—when many people in your area are online at the same time.

This is sometimes referred to as “network congestion.”

What to do:

Test your connection at different times of day.

If speeds are consistently better:

- early morning
- mid-day

but slower in the evening, congestion is likely the cause.

👉 In this case, there may be little you can do directly, but understanding the cause helps set expectations.

If the quick fixes didn't resolve the issue, the sections below will help you identify the cause and apply the right fix.

Section 4 – What You Can't Fix (and When to Get Help)

If your internet connection is still slow after working through the steps in this guide, the issue may not be something you can fully resolve on your own.

The goal of this section is to help you recognize when you've reached that point—and what to do next.

Plan Limitations

What's happening:

Your internet speed is ultimately limited by the service plan you're paying for.

For example, if your plan provides "up to 100 Mbps," your actual speeds will never exceed that level—and may often be lower.

What to do:

Compare your speed test results to your plan. If your speeds are consistently close to your plan's limit, your connection may be performing as expected.

👉 In that case, improving performance may require upgrading your plan.

Provider-Side Issues

What's happening:

Sometimes the issue is with your internet service provider (ISP), not your home setup.

This can include:

- temporary outages
- maintenance
- local infrastructure problems

What to do:

Check your provider's website or app for outage information.

If problems persist, contact your provider for confirmation and updates.

When to Contact Your Provider

You may want to contact your provider if:

- Your speeds are consistently much lower than your plan
- Your connection drops frequently
- You've worked through the steps in this guide without improvement

Before contacting support, it can help to gather a bit of information:

- Run a speed test and note the results
- Test at different times of day
- If possible, test using a wired connection

👉 Many speed test tools allow you to email or save your results, which can be helpful when speaking with support.

When to Consider Equipment Changes

In some cases, the issue may be related to your equipment rather than your connection.

For example:

- an older router
- limited Wi-Fi coverage

- outdated hardware

What to do:

If you've identified weak Wi-Fi or inconsistent performance, upgrading your router or adding a Wi-Fi extender may improve your experience. Routers are cheaper than ever, and the small outlay can save you a lot of frustration.

Keep the Momentum Going

If you've worked through this guide, you've already taken an important step toward improving your internet performance.

You didn't just read—you tested your connection, identified possible causes, and applied practical fixes.

Most internet slowdowns are not caused by a single major problem. They're usually the result of small factors that affect performance over time—signal strength, device usage, equipment, or network conditions.

Now that you know what to look for, you'll be in a much better position to manage and improve your connection going forward.

Still Experiencing Slowness?

If your internet is still not performing as expected, there's one more possibility to consider:

👉 The issue may not be your connection—it may be your computer.

For that, you may find this guide helpful:

[Why Is My Computer So Slow?](#)

A simple, step-by-step guide to diagnosing and fixing common computer performance problems

Additional Tech4Me2 Resources

If you'd like to continue building your confidence with everyday technology, these resources may be helpful:

- [PCs Made Simple](#) – A no-jargon guide to buying, setting up, maintaining, and troubleshooting your computer
- [PCs Made Simple Course & Workbook](#) – Step-by-step video guidance with an implementation workbook

- [Routine Maintenance Action Guide](#) – Simple habits to keep your PC running smoothly over time
- [Emails Made Simple](#) – Practical systems for keeping your inbox organized and under control
- [Emails Made Simple](#) – Step-by-step video guidance with an implementation workbook

All Tech4Me2 resources are designed to be clear, practical, and easy to follow—without unnecessary jargon or complexity.

Questions or Suggestions?

If there's a topic you'd like to see covered, I'd be glad to hear from you.

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