

Windows XP Quick Fixes

Problem: Windows has become cranky. Sometimes applications don't launch, sometimes programs don't close, and sometimes they just don't work at all.

Possible Solution: Roll back Windows XP to the last time your PC worked by launching in Safe Mode. Restart your PC and press F8 to bring up the Windows ADVANCED OPTIONS. Select LAST KNOWN GOOD CONFIGURATION (your most recent settings that worked) and press Enter.

If that doesn't do the trick, you can restore even earlier settings in Windows XP and ME by using SYSTEM RESTORE. Click Start, ALL PROGRAMS (Programs in Me), ACCESSORIES, SYSTEM TOOLS, SYSTEM RESTORE and choose RESTORE MY COMPUTER TO AN EARLIER TIME. Click Next, select a recent date checkpoint, then proceed through the rest of the System Restore wizard.

Problem: Your printer is comatose - you click PRINT and nothing happens. You've already checked that the printer is on and that both ends of the cable linking it to the PC are securely connected.

Possible Solution: Perform a printer self-test using the diagnostic utility, built into the printer. Refer to your printer's manual for instructions; typically you hold down a button on the printer while it's starting. If the test runs successfully, you know the trouble is with the connection or software.

If the printer is OK: Clear your print queue; a previous print job may be hanging up the system. In Windows XP and 2000, open CONTROL PANEL and click or double-click PRINTERS AND FAXES, Click or double-click the icon for your printer to open the print-queue window. Clear any pending print jobs by selecting PRINTER, CANCEL ALL DOCUMENTS.

Problem: Audio CDs won't play from your PC's optical drive.

Possible Solution: If your drive has a headphone jack on its face - usually just below the tray - plug in headphones, adjust the volume control next to the jack to a midrange setting, and play an audio CD. If you hear music, the drive is working.

Check the volume controls on your system's speakers, on the drive itself in Windows' Volume Control, and in the media player software. Double-click the speaker icon in your SYSTEM TRAY, or click START, PROGRAMS, ACCESORIES, ENTERTAINMENT, VOLUME CONTROL, and make sure that the Mute option in each category is unchecked.

Problem: The text on your LCD monitor looks coarse and indistinct.

Possible Solution: In Windows XP, enable ClearType fonts. Right-click the desktop and then choose **PROPERTIES, APPEARANCE, EFFECTS**. Check “Use the following method to smooth edges of screen fonts” and select ClearType in the drop-down menu below it.