

Use Windows' Own Troubleshooters to Fix a Problem

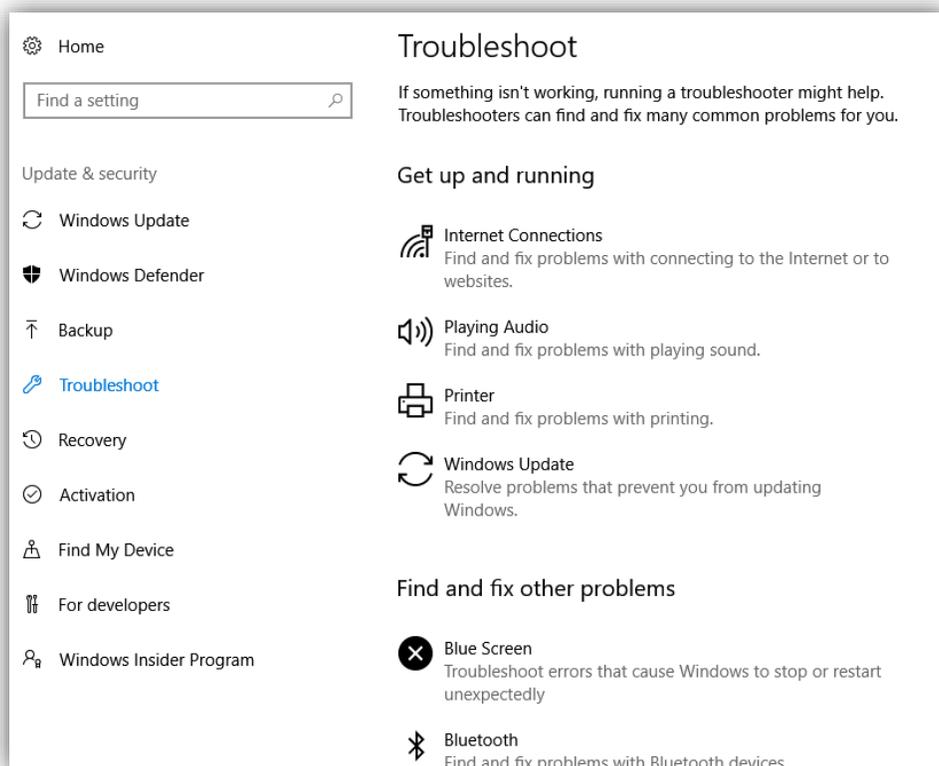
By Lance Whitney on May 9, 2017 in Windows Secrets

Yes, Windows offers its own built-in troubleshooters. Here's how to tap into them.

Oops, you're bumping into trouble with Windows. Maybe you can't connect to the Internet. Perhaps your audio has stopped working. Maybe your PC is blue screening. Or perhaps you're not sure of the cause of the problem but just know that your PC is acting funky. Where can you turn for help? You can turn to Windows itself. The OS offers its own built-in set of troubleshooting tools designed to scan for, analyze, and hopefully fix specific problems. The troubleshooters are available in Windows 10, 8.1, and 7. But whatever your flavor of Windows, the troubleshooters are usually a good first step when you're bothered by a persistent problem.

In some cases, a Windows troubleshooter will pop up automatically if you experience a glitch in Windows. For instance, if an application crashes or your screen display suddenly goes on the fritz, then the appropriate troubleshooter may appear to try to save the day. In other cases, you'll have to manually trigger the right troubleshooter depending on the nature of the problem. Or if you're not sure what's causing trouble, you can run through the entire array of troubleshooters to see if one of them can nail it down.

The way you access the troubleshooters differs between the Windows 10 Creators Update and past versions of Windows. In the Windows 10 Creators Update, simply open your Settings screen and then click on the setting for Update & security. From there, click on the option for Troubleshoot, and the troubleshooting team appears in the right pane.



In Windows 10 pre-Creators Update, Windows 8.1, and Windows 7, open Control Panel in Icon view and click on the icon for **Troubleshooting**. From the Troubleshooting window, you can view the different categories or click on **View all** to peek at all the troubleshooters. The Control Panel Troubleshooting feature remains alive in the Win 10 Creators Update, so you can still go this route if you wish.

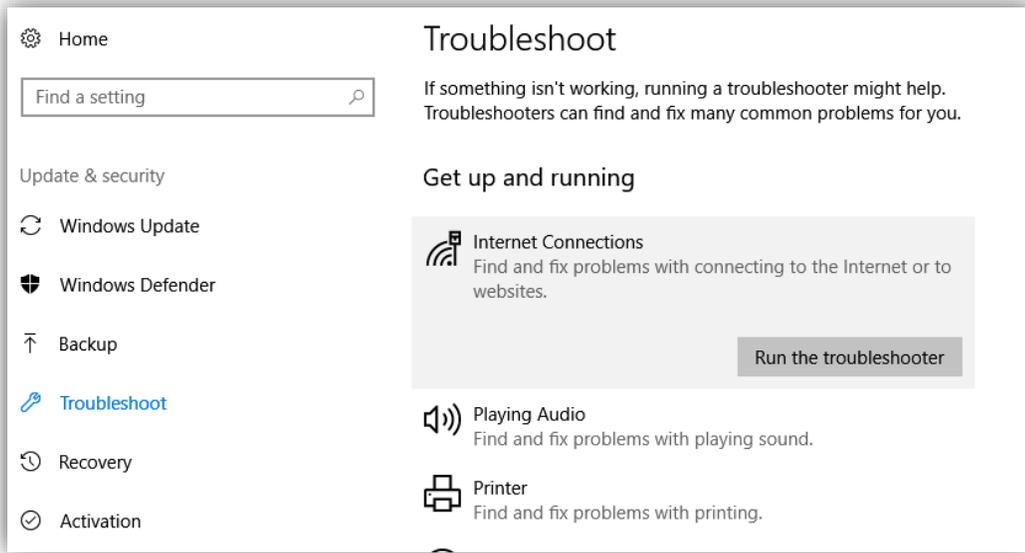
Let's look at the Windows 10 Creators Update Troubleshooter first. The Troubleshoot screen under Settings divides its offerings into two general categories: **Get up and running** and **Find and fix other problems**.

Under **Get up and running** are four troubleshooters for the following issues: 1) Internet Connections, 2) Play Audio, 3) Printer, 4) and Windows Update.

Under the **Find and fix other problems** section are 15 troubleshooters waiting to address the following issues: 1) Blue Screen, 2) Bluetooth, 3) Hardware and Devices, 4) Homegroup, 5) Incoming Connections, 6) Keyboard, 7) Network

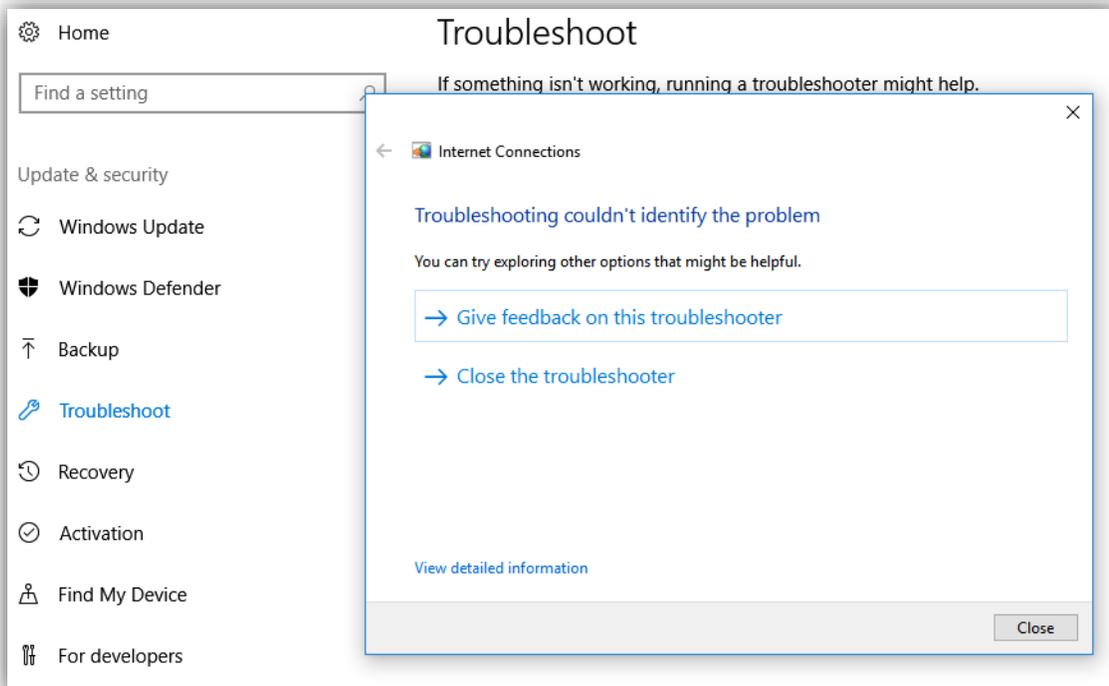
Adapter, 8) Power, 9) Program Compatibility Troubleshooter, 10) Recording Audio, 11) Search and Indexing, 12) Shared Folders, 13) Speech, 14) Video Playback, and 15) Windows Store Apps.

Windows briefly explains what each troubleshooter is designed to fix. If one of these troubleshooters sounds like it may resolve your particular dilemma, click on the appropriate one and then click on the button to **Run the troubleshooter**.

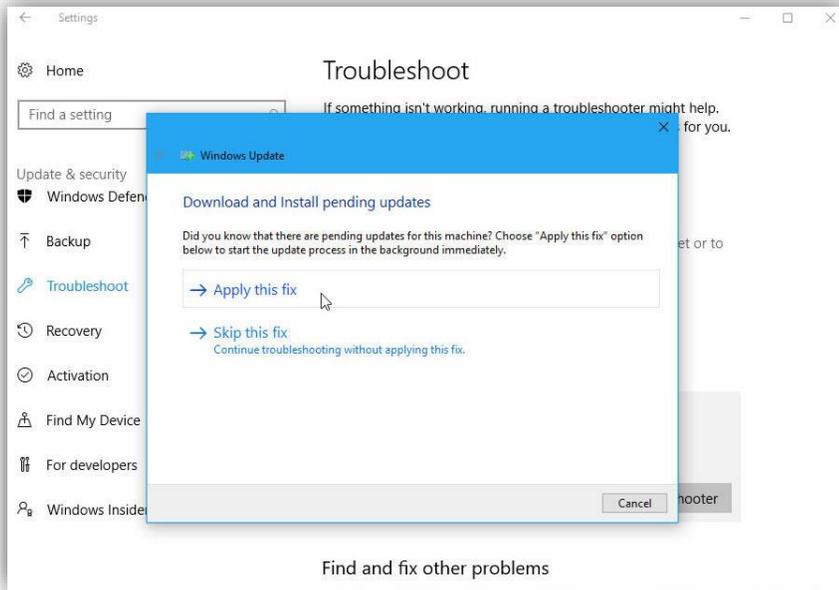


The troubleshooter may ask a question to request more information to narrow down the problem. The Internet connection troubleshooter will ask if you're having trouble connecting to the Internet in general or only a specific website. The Audio troubleshooter may ask which audio device is giving you problems, e.g., internal speakers, external speakers, or headphones. And the Printer troubleshooter will ask which printer is proving problematic, assuming you have more than one.

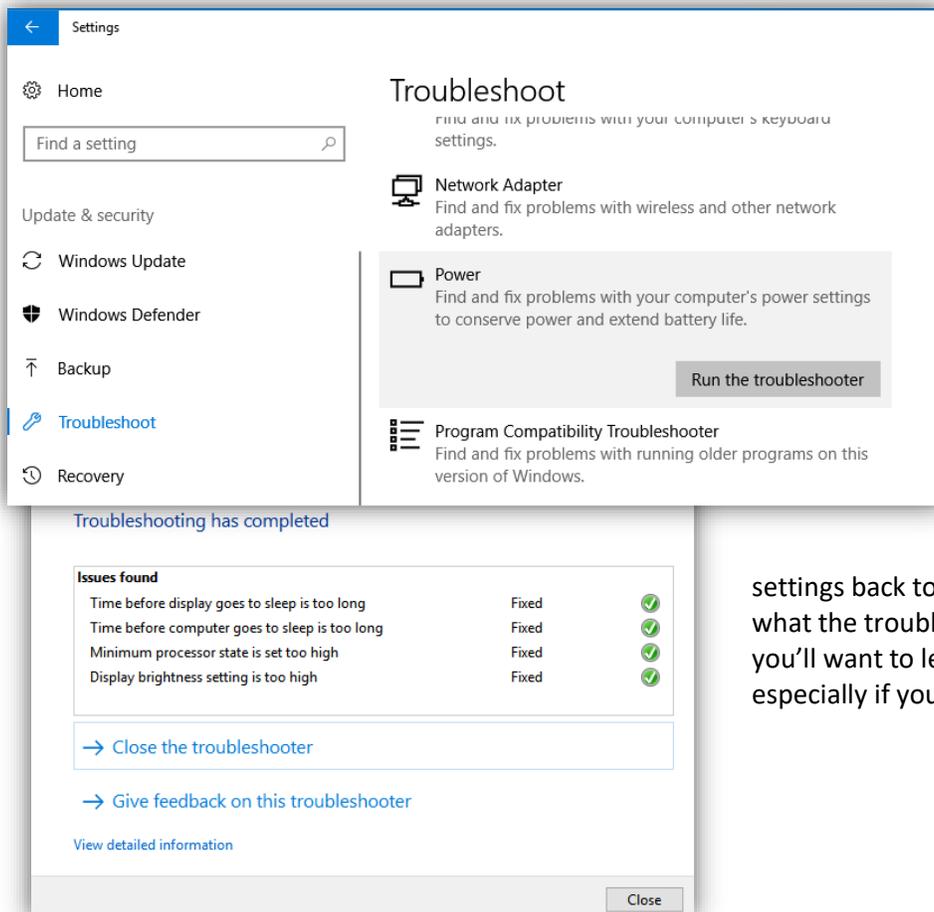
After you respond, the troubleshooter scans for trouble. If it comes up empty, it tells you that it couldn't identify the problem with the device or feature in question. You can then give feedback on the troubleshooter to Microsoft, close the troubleshooter, or click on the link to "View detailed information." The detailed information may or may not be of help in determining why no issue was found.



If the troubleshooter zeros in on a problem, it tells you that it found an issue and typically asks if you want to apply a certain fix. In certain instances, the fix may be specific to the issue, for example, enabling a particular setting. In other instances, the fix may be more general, for example, applying the latest batch of Windows updates.



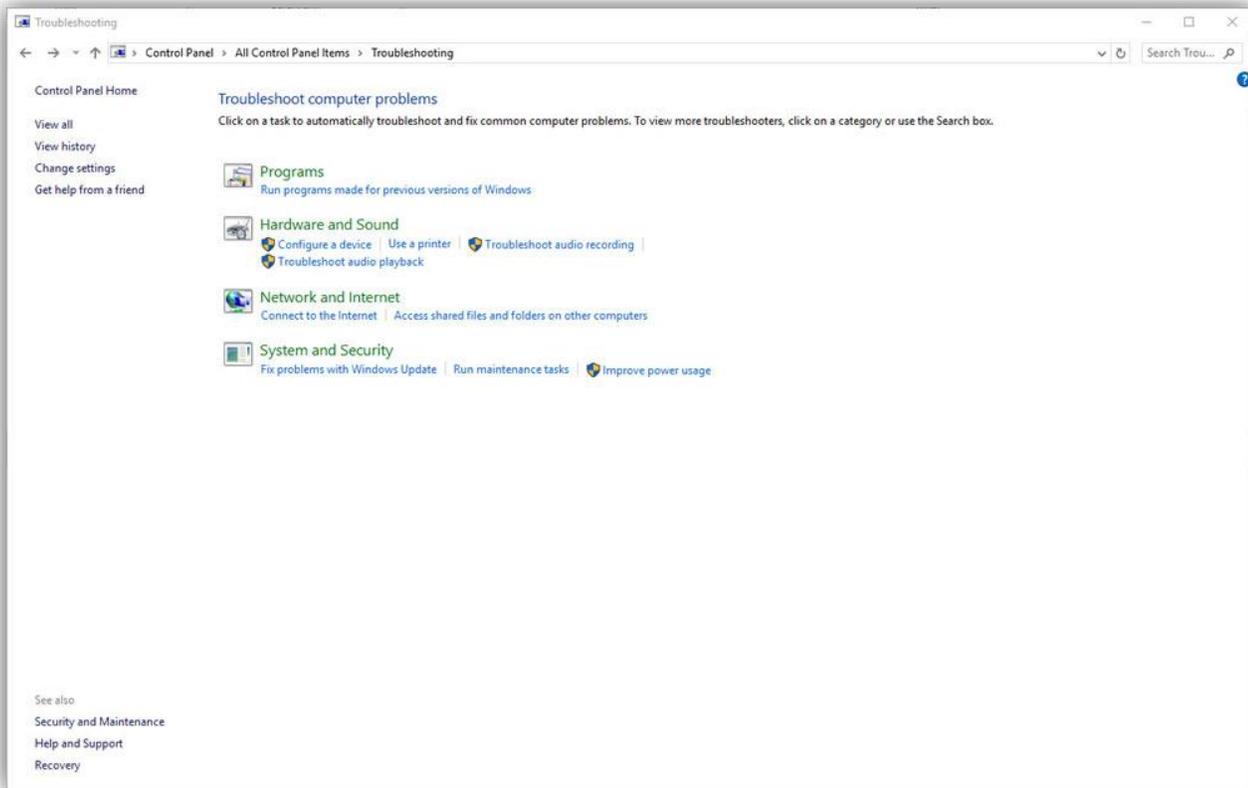
A “successful” troubleshooting attempt may also serve up a link to “View detailed information” so you can find out the nature of the problem, what the troubleshooter did, and what specific fix was applied.



Sometimes, it’s difficult to determine if you should let the troubleshooter automatically fix a problem without knowing the nature of the fix. The troubleshooter may apply a fix you don’t necessarily want. For example, the troubleshooter for Power specifically attempts to preserve your laptop’s battery charge by decreasing the time before the display dims and your computer goes to sleep. Well, you may not want to decrease those times. So, in this case, you’d have to manually change the

settings back to the way they were if you don’t like what the troubleshooter did. In most cases, however, you’ll want to let the troubleshooter do its thing, especially if you can’t resolve the problem yourself.

Let's take a quick look at the Control Panel Troubleshooting feature for those of you running Windows 10 pre-Creators Update, Windows 8.1, or Windows 7. Open the **Troubleshooting** icon from Control Panel. The troubleshooting screen divides its offerings into four categories: 1) Programs, 2) Hardware and Sound, 3) Network and Internet, and 4) System and Security.



The core troubleshooters are the same as those in the Windows 10 Creators Update, though you'll find some extra ones here. One troubleshooter can fix problems with background downloads, another will delete unused files and perform other system maintenance, one will address Windows Media Player DVD issues (keep in mind that the Windows 10 Media Player doesn't support DVD playback), one for the Windows Media Player library, and one for Windows Media Player settings.

The process works the same whether you use the Troubleshooter under Settings or the Control Panel Troubleshooter. Select the troubleshooter you think stands the best chance of resolving your issue. Let it do its stuff, and then see if the problem is corrected.

Windows' built-in troubleshooters may not be able to detect or resolve every technical issue you encounter. But they can often prove helpful if you can't otherwise resolve a vexing problem.