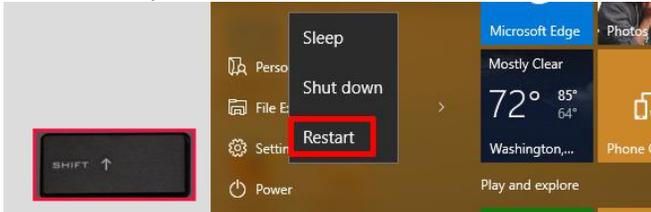


How to boot into Windows 10's Safe Mode

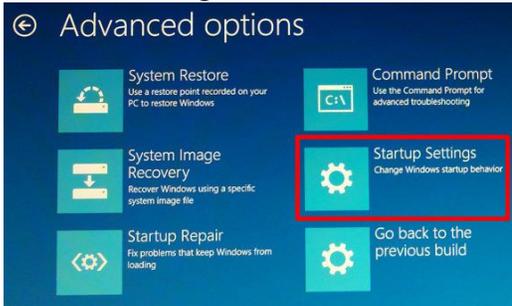
By Lincoln Spector, Contributing Editor, PCWorld | AUG 7, 2017 3:46 PM PT

Sometimes you have to boot into Windows' stripped-down Safe Mode. But with Windows 10, that gets complicated. When you're having issues with a Windows computer, one of the first steps to troubleshooting is to boot into Windows' Safe Mode. Safe Mode is a simple, stripped-down version of the operating system, loading only the most essential files and drivers. It's a way of eliminating as many variables as possible, and to ensure that the issue doesn't originate at this most basic level. This is a great place to scan for malware, for instance. But the old-fashioned way to get into Safe Mode—booting the PC and pressing **F8** at the exact right moment—seldom works on PCs running Windows 10. These techniques will:

1. Click or tap the Start button, and then the Power button. Hold down the Shift key when you select Restart.



2. In the resulting, full-screen menu, select Troubleshoot>Advanced options>Startup Settings.



3. In the Startup Settings screen, tap the *Restart* button. The PC will reboot, and bring you to a Startup Settings screen.

4. Use the arrow keys on your keyboard to select *Enable Safe Mode* or *Enable Safe Mode with Networking*.

But what if things are so bad that you can't successfully boot the operating system? Try booting anyway. If you can get to the login screen, you'll find a power icon in the lower-right corner. The instructions above work there.

But what if you can't get to the login screen? In that case, chances are that Windows is so messed up that it couldn't boot into Safe Mode anyway. But here's a trick that *might* work:

You'll need a [Windows 10 Recovery Drive](#), which hopefully you created while your PC was working. Boot the Recovery Drive and select your keyboard layout. Then select *Troubleshoot > Advanced options > Command Prompt*. At the command prompt, enter these three lines, making sure to hit **Enter** at the end of each one:

- c:
- bcdedit /set {default} bootmenupolicy legacy
- exit

```
Administrator: X:\windows\system32\cmd.exe
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.10240]

X:\windows\system32>c:
C:\>bcdedit /set {default} bootmenupolicy legacy
The operation completed successfully.
C:\>exit
```

Select *Turn off your PC*. Boot the computer and repeatedly press and release **F8** until the *Advanced Boot Options* menu pops up. Then you can select *Safe Mode* or *Safe Mode with Networking*.