

System Restore: Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ's

Here are answers to some common questions about System Restore.

How does System Restore work?

System Restore uses [restore points](#) to return your system files and settings to an earlier point in time without affecting personal files. Restore points are created automatically every week, and just before significant [system events](#), such as the installation of a program or device [driver](#). You can also create a restore point manually.

Can I undo the changes System Restore makes?

Yes. Every time you use System Restore, a restore point is created before proceeding, so you can undo the changes if they don't fix your problem. If you use System Restore when the computer is in [safe mode](#) or using the System Recovery Options, you cannot undo the restore operation. However, you can run System Restore again and choose a different restore point, if one exists.

What files are changed during a system restore?

System Restore affects Windows system files, programs, and [registry](#) settings. It can also make changes to scripts, batch files, and other types of [executable files](#) created under any user account on your computer. System Restore does not affect personal files, such as e-mail, documents, or photos, so it cannot help you restore a deleted file. If you have backups of your files, you can restore the files from a backup.

How do I choose a restore point?

System Restore automatically recommends the most recent restore point created before a significant change, such as installing a program. You can also choose from a list of restore points. Try using restore points created just before the date and time you started noticing problems. The descriptions of the restore points that are created automatically correspond with the name of an event, such as Windows Update installing an update. System Restore returns your computer to the state that it was in before the restore point that you chose.

How long are restore points saved?

Restore points are saved until the disk space System Restore reserves is filled up. As new restore points are created, old ones are deleted. If you turn off system protection (the feature that creates restore points) on a disk, all restore points are deleted from that disk. When you turn system protection back on, new restore points are created.

What if System Restore doesn't fix the problem?

If System Restore doesn't fix the problem, you can undo the restore operation or try choosing a different restore point. If System Restore doesn't display any restore points to choose from, make sure you have system protection turned on and that you have at least 300 MB of free space left on your hard disk if it is 500 MB or larger, or have at least 50 MB of free space if your hard disk is smaller than 300 MB. If System Restore doesn't fix the problem, you can also try an advanced recovery method.