

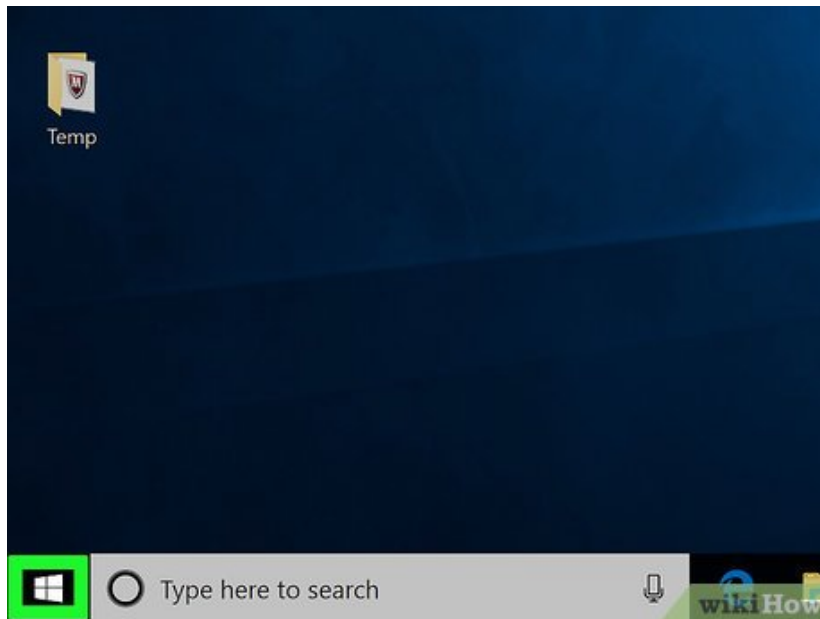
How to Clean a Computer of Malware

This wikiHow teaches you how to find and remove malware from your Windows or Mac computer. Typically speaking, an antivirus scan will be enough to remove most major threats to your computer. If you're having trouble with your malware...

Method 1 of 4:

Scanning for Malware on Windows

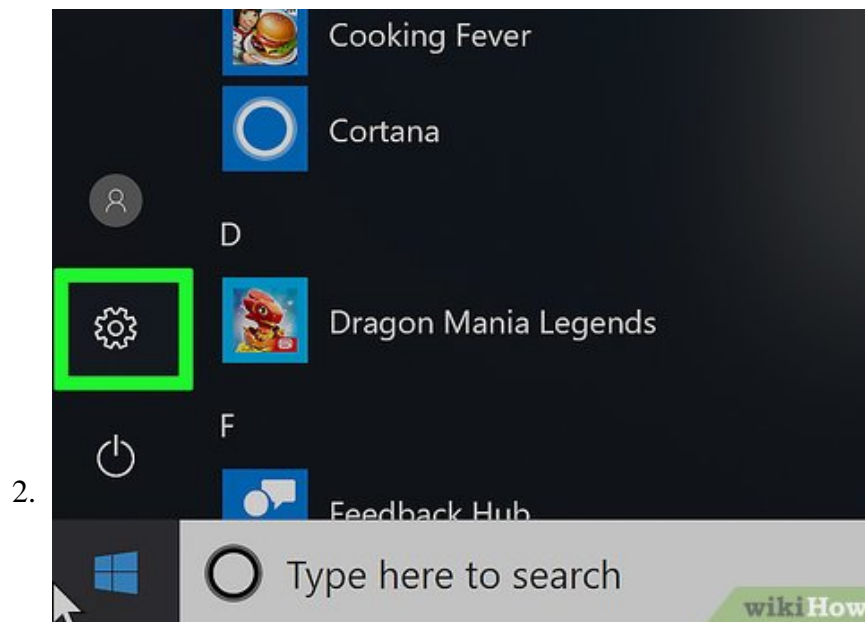
1.



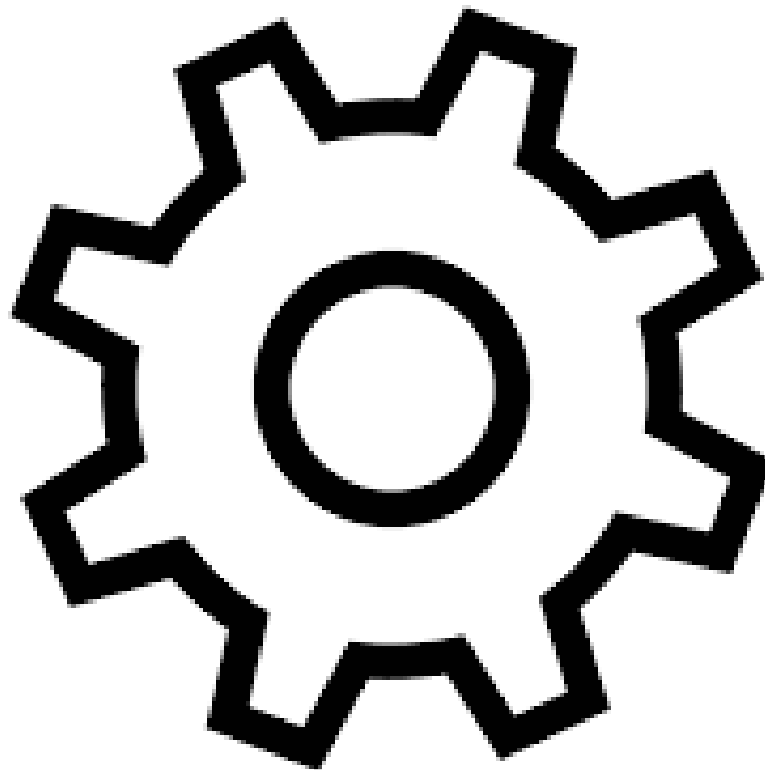
Open Start



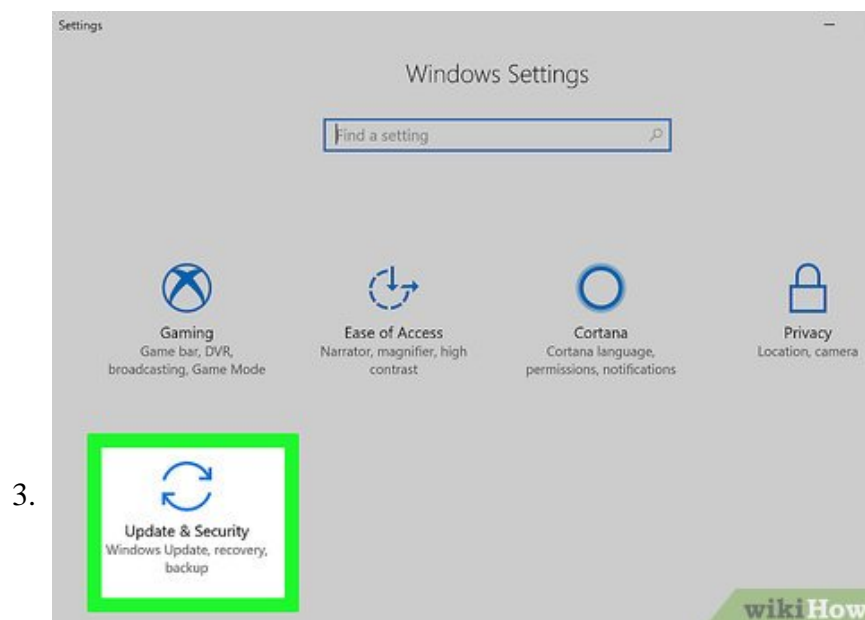
. Click the Windows logo in the bottom-left corner of the screen.



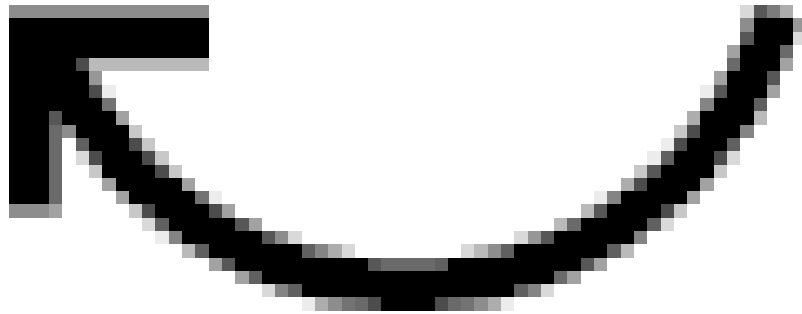
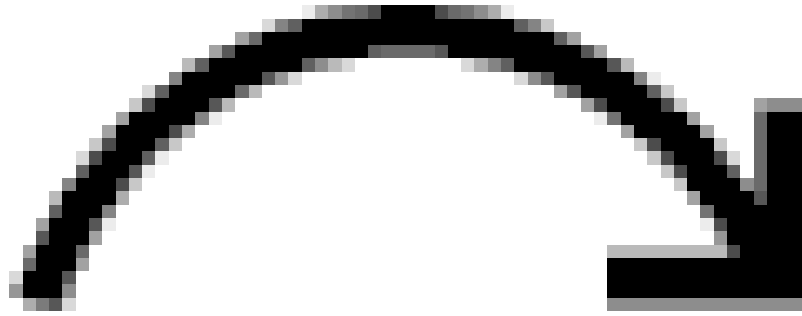
Open Settings



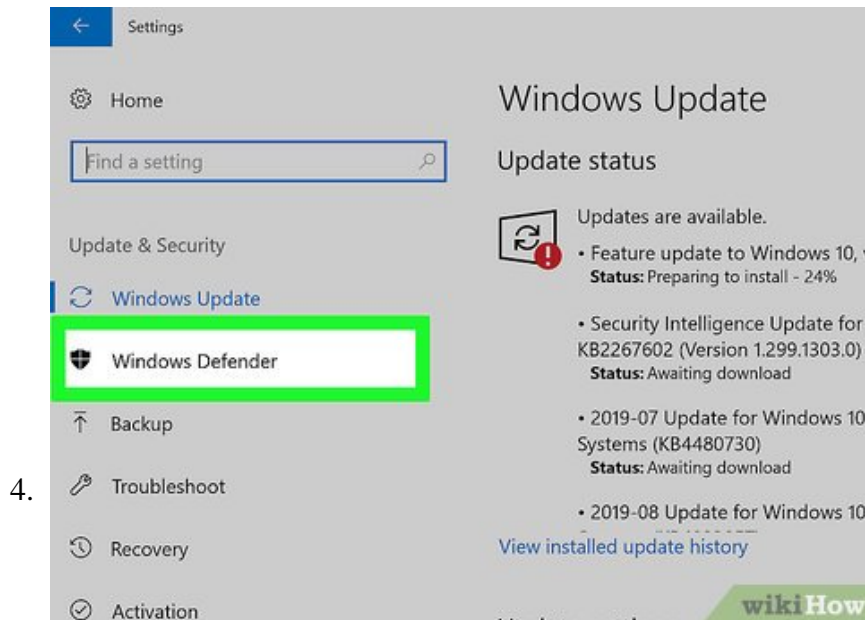
. Click the gear-shaped icon in the lower-left side of the Start window.



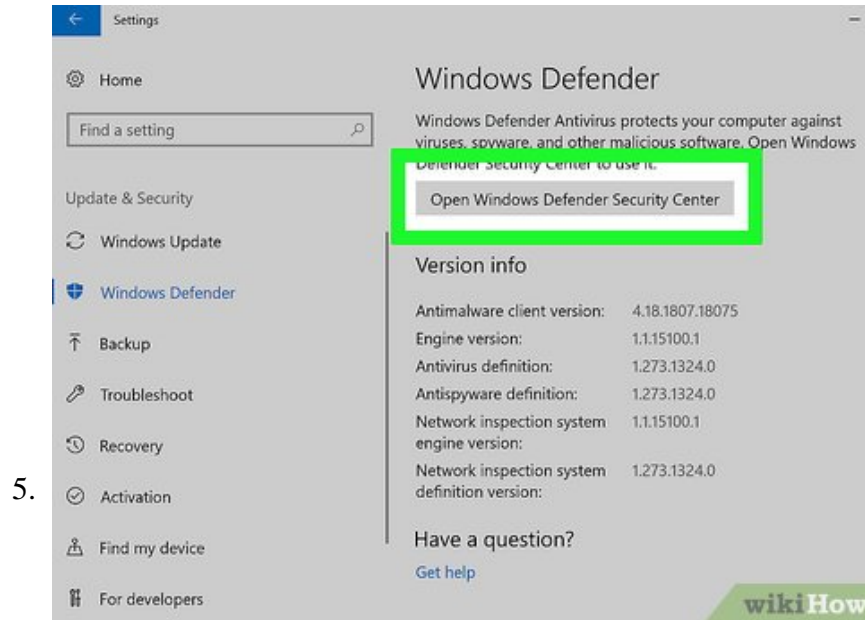
Click



Update & Security. This icon resembles a circle made of two arrows.

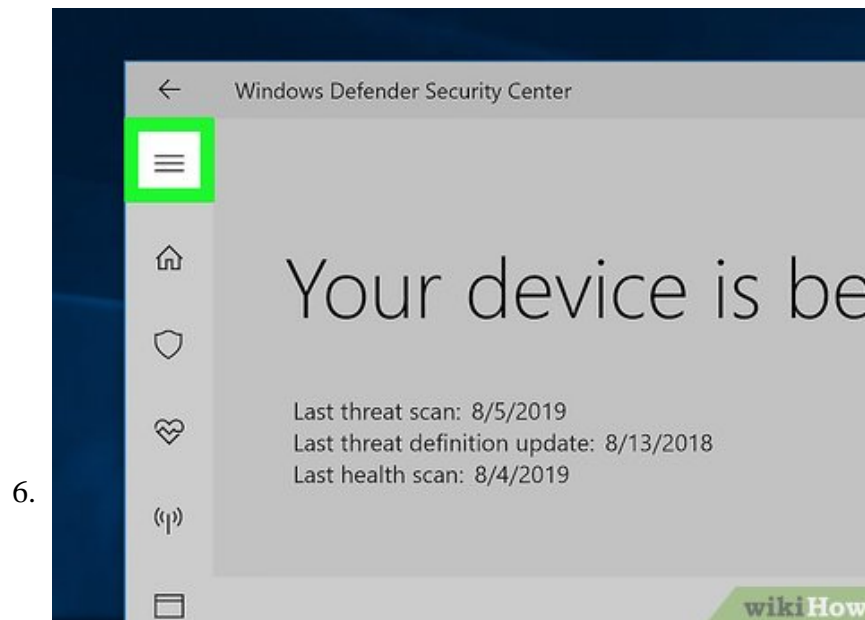


Click **Windows Defender**. It's a tab in the upper-left side of the window.



Click **Open Windows Defender Security Center**. This button is at the top of the window. Clicking it opens the Windows Defender program, which is the Windows built-in antivirus software.

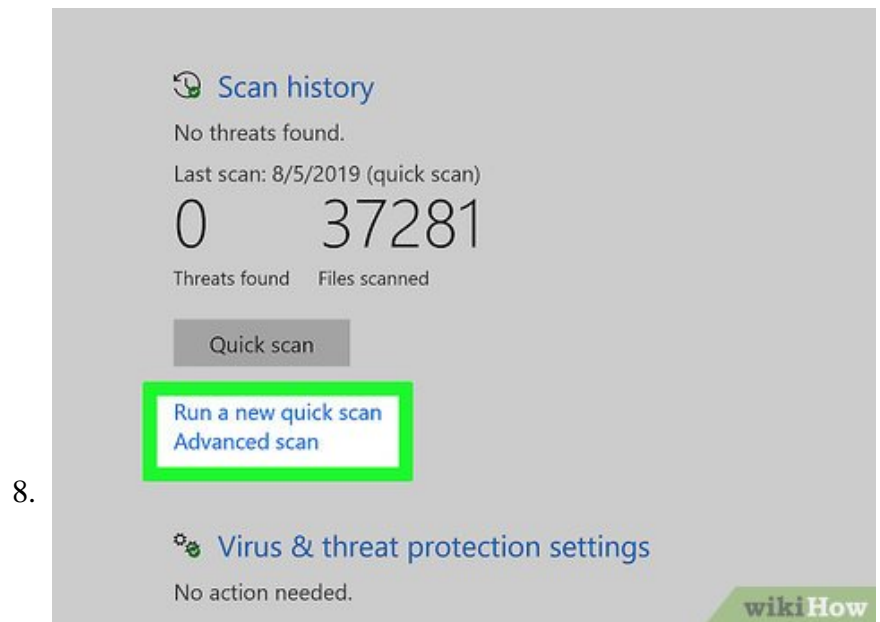
1. Windows Defender is the recommended antivirus software for Windows computers. Using any other software in conjunction with Defender may cause problems such as an inability to shut down.



Click **?**. It's in the top-left corner of the Windows Defender window. A pop-out menu will appear.

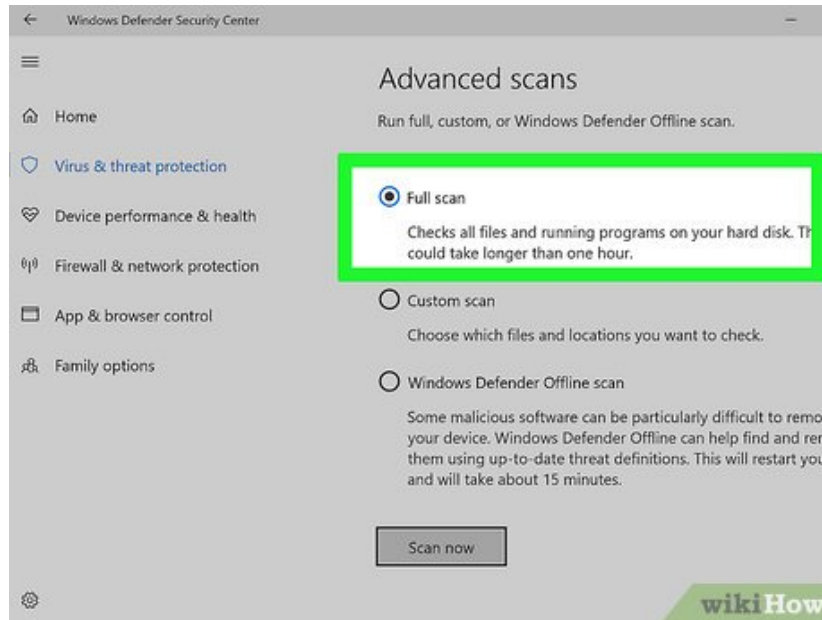


Click **Virus & threat protection**. You'll see this in the pop-out menu.



Click **Advanced scan**. It's a link just below the **Quick scan** button.

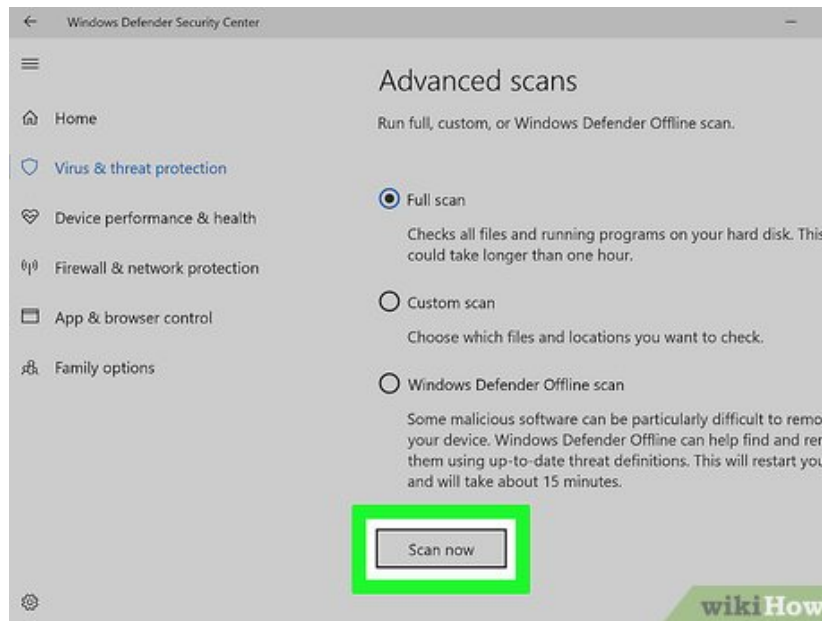
9.



Check the **Full scan** option. This is at the top of the window.

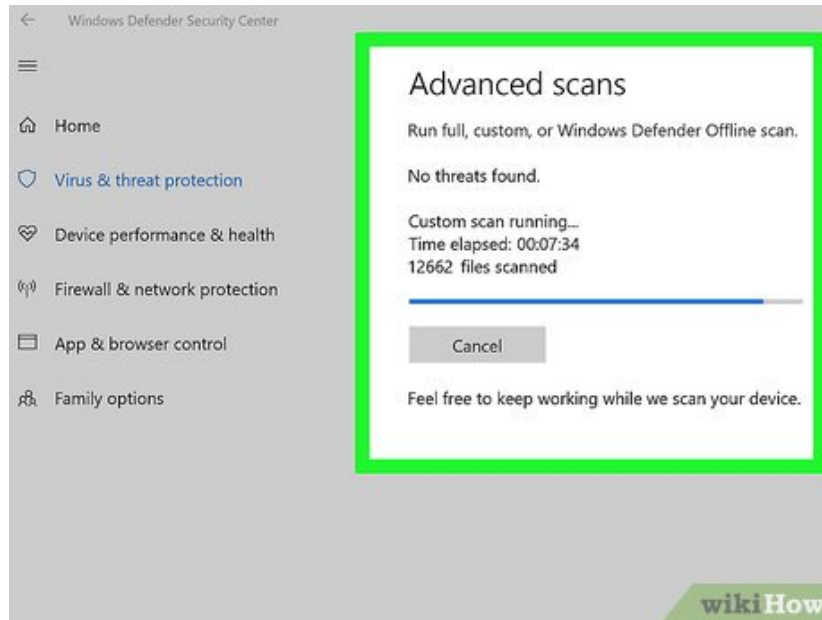
1. If you're encountering malware issues and this scan doesn't solve them, you can try using the **Offline scan** option on this page to perform a deeper, file-based scan.

10.



Click **Scan now**. It's in the middle of the page. Windows Defender will begin scanning your computer for infected files.

11.

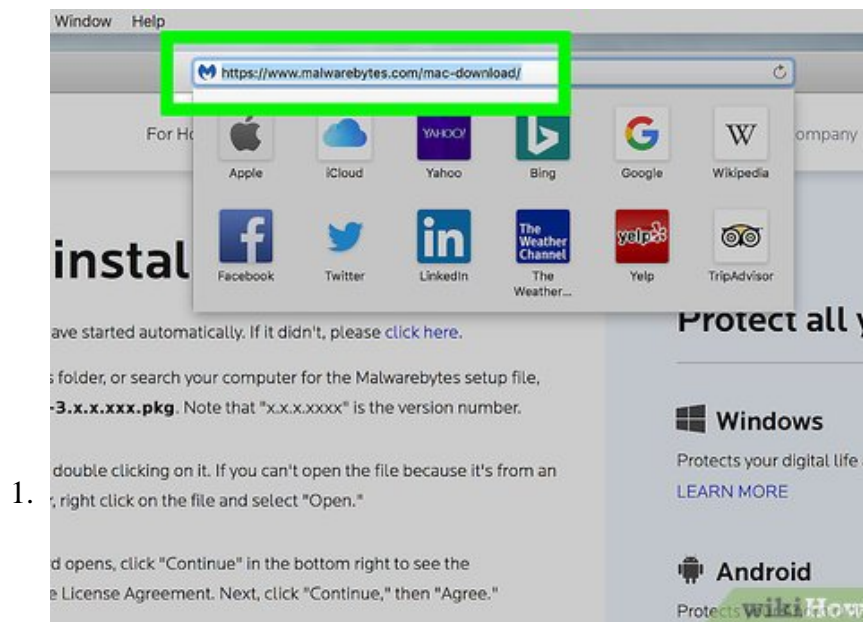


Wait for results. Windows Defender will alert you if it comes across viruses or other instances of Malware, at which point you'll be able to indicate that you want Defender to remove the malware in question.

1. A malware scan can take several hours to complete.

Method 2 of 4:

Scanning for Malware on Mac



1.

Download Malwarebytes. Go to <https://www.malwarebytes.com/mac-download/> in your browser to prompt Malwarebytes to begin downloading. Macs don't come with a built-in antivirus program, so Malwarebytes is your best bet.

1. Although Malwarebytes offers a paid premium version with real-time protection, you can use the free version to scan your computer and remove viruses or malware at anytime.

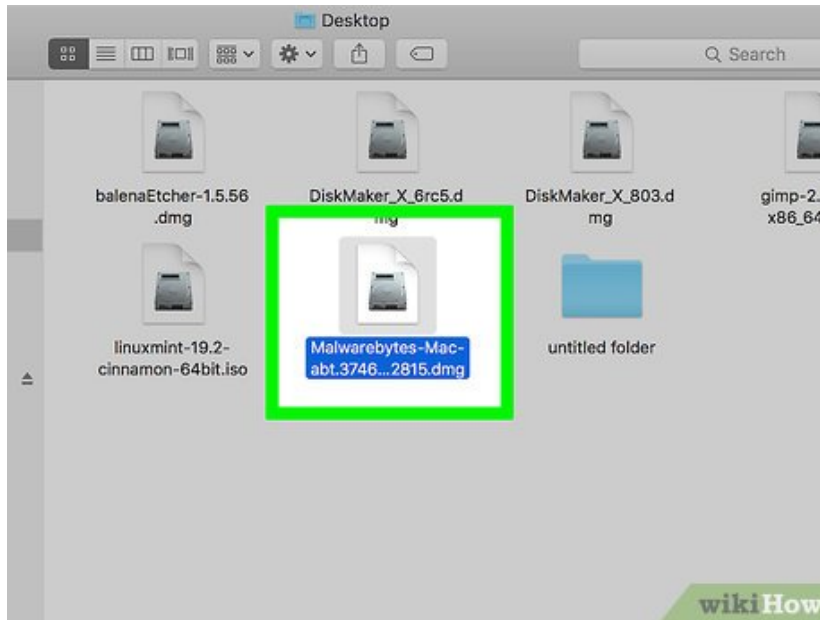
2.



Open Finder



- . If your Mac's Finder program isn't already open, click the blue, face-like app icon in the Dock to open it.

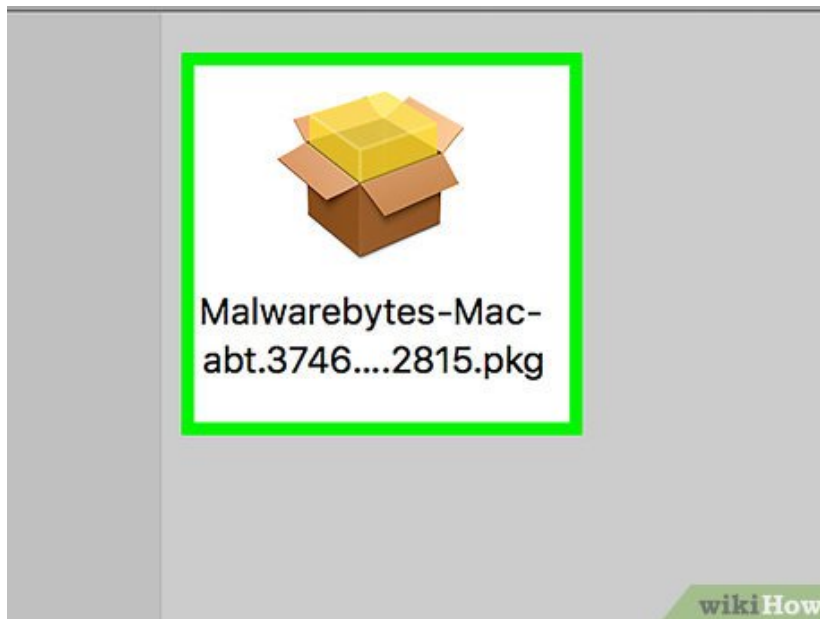


3.

Find and double-click the Malwarebytes DMG file. You'll most likely find it in the **Downloads** folder that's on the left side of the Finder window. The DMG file will either open or result in an error message.

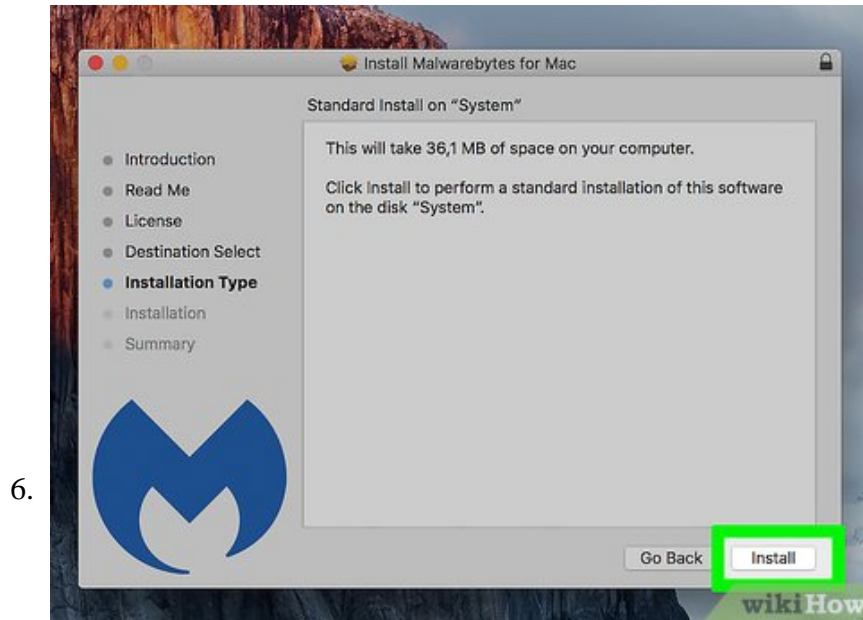
4. **Verify the software installation.** You'll need to do this if you receive an error message when attempting to open Malwarebytes.

1. If Malwarebytes is recognized as a signed developer on your Mac, you won't have this step.



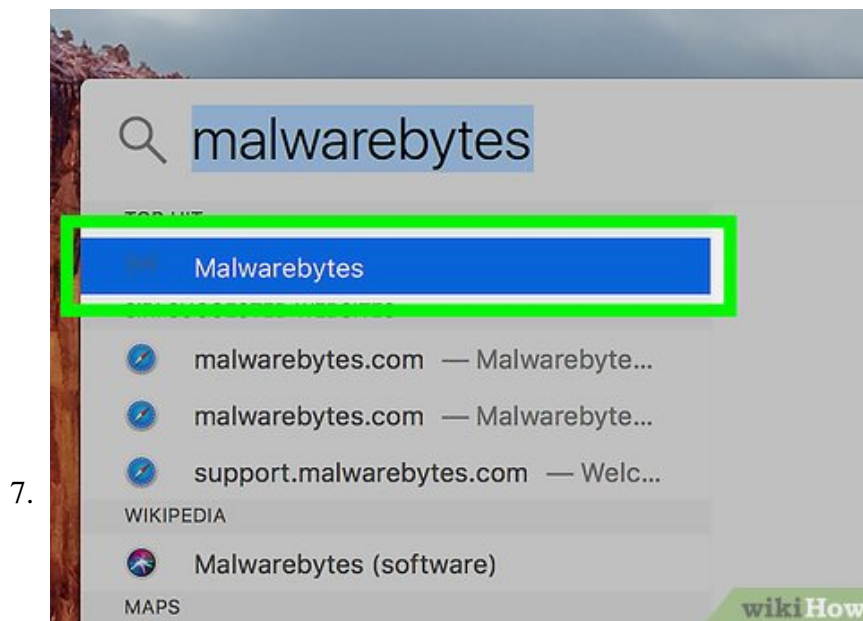
5.

Double-click the "Malwarebytes 3" file. This file resembles a white box with a dark-blue Malwarebytes logo on it. Doing so will open the setup window.



Set up Malware bytes. Navigate through the setup by doing the following:

1. Click **Continue**
2. Click **Agree**
3. Click **Install**
4. Enter your username and password.
5. Click **Install Software**
6. Click **Close** when prompted.

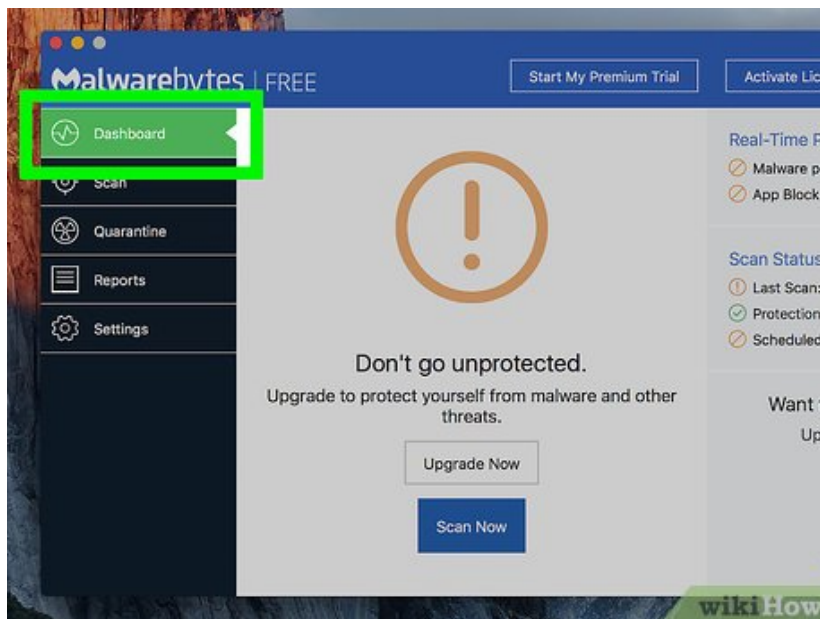


Open Malwarebytes. Click Spotlight



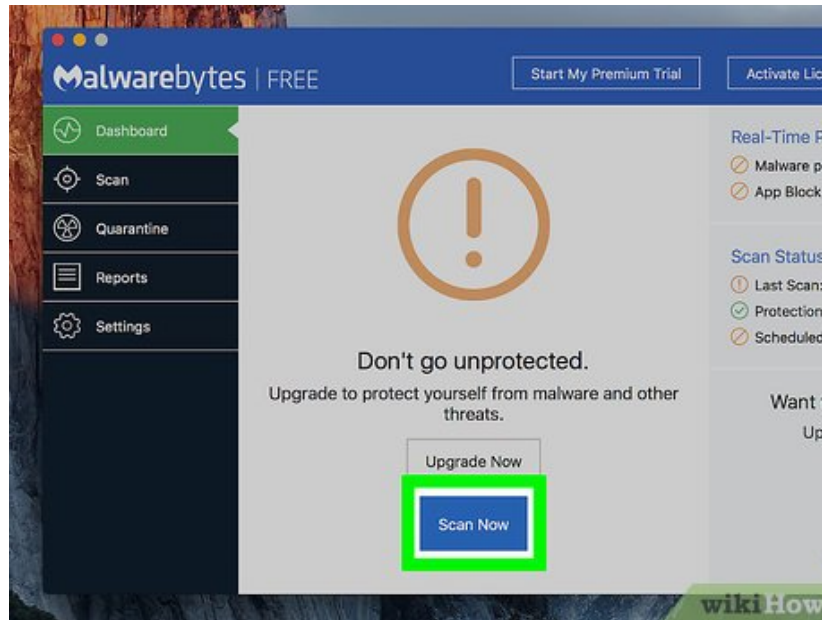
, type `malwarebytes` into Spotlight, and click the **Malwarebytes** result at the top of the search results.

8.



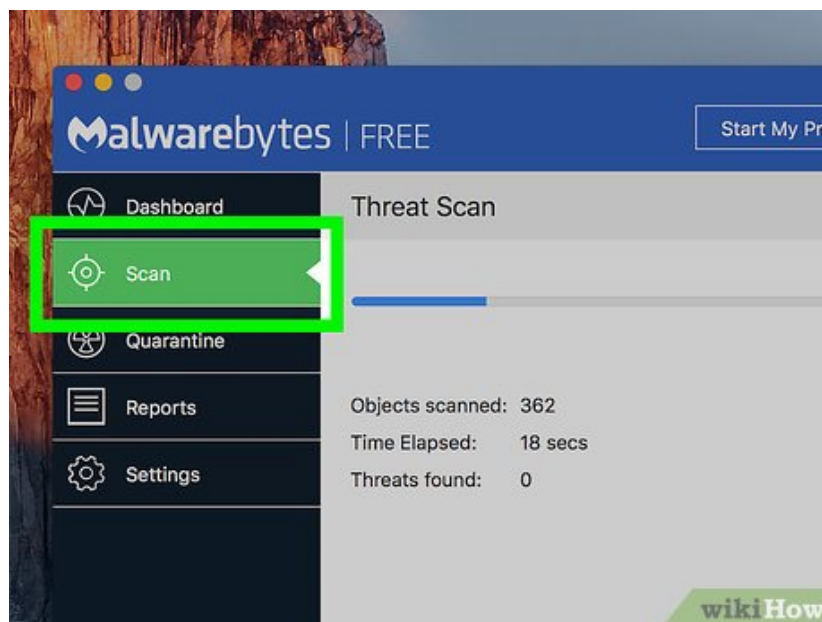
Click the **Dashboard** tab. It's in the upper-left corner of the Malwarebytes window.

9.



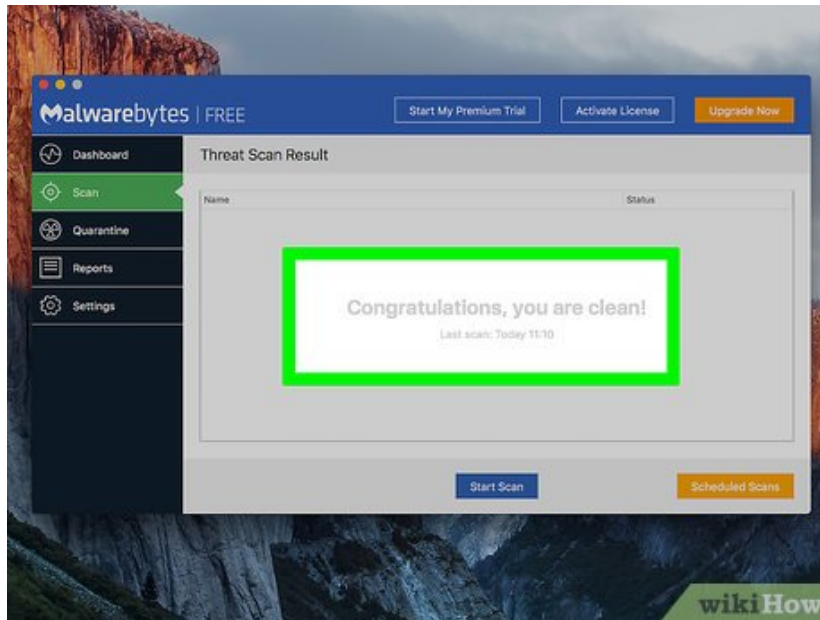
Click **Scan Now**. This button is at the bottom of the window. Doing so will prompt Malwarebytes to begin scanning your Mac for malicious software.

10.



Click the **Scan** tab. You'll find it on the left side of the window.

11.

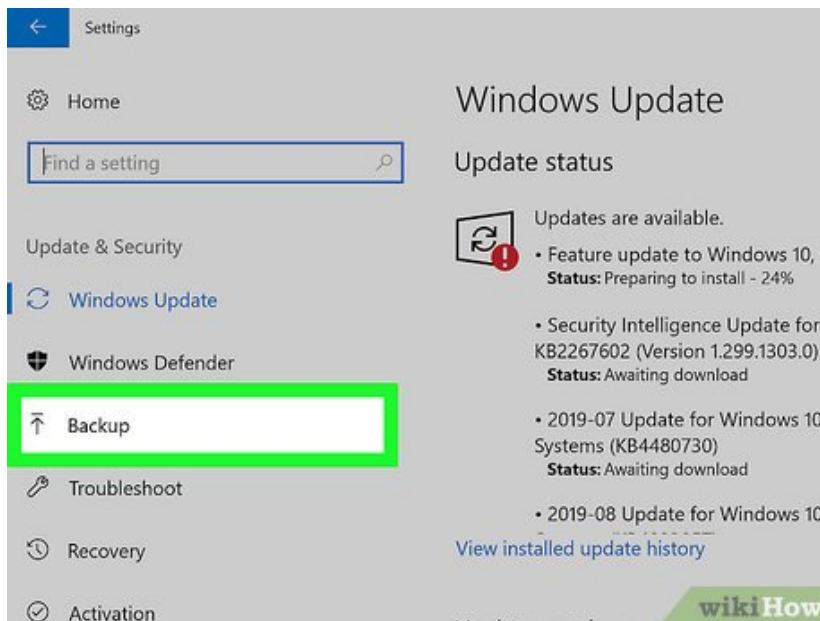


Click **Confirm** when prompted. It's at the bottom of the Malwarebytes window. If any malicious programs are found, Malwarebytes will immediately quarantine those files on your Mac so they will no longer harm your computer.

Method 3 of 4:

Reinstalling Windows

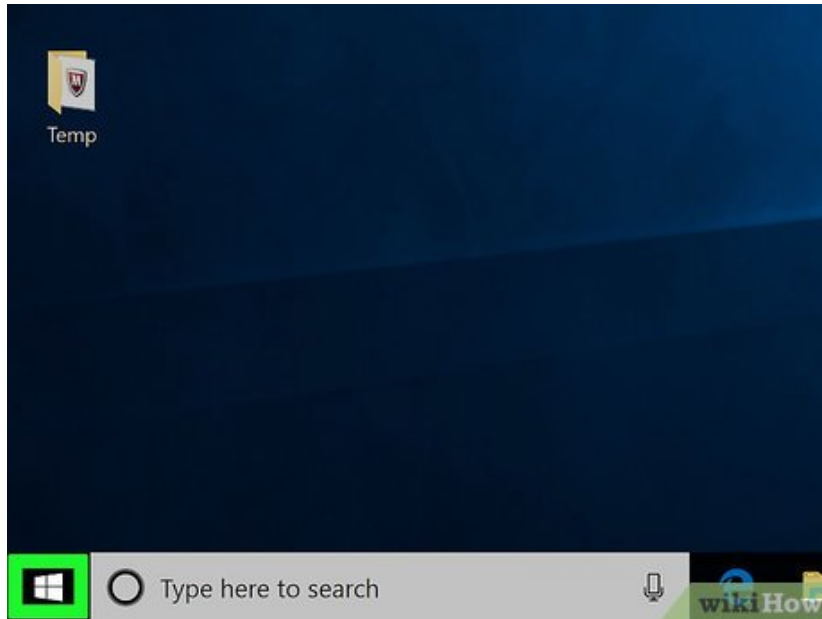
1.



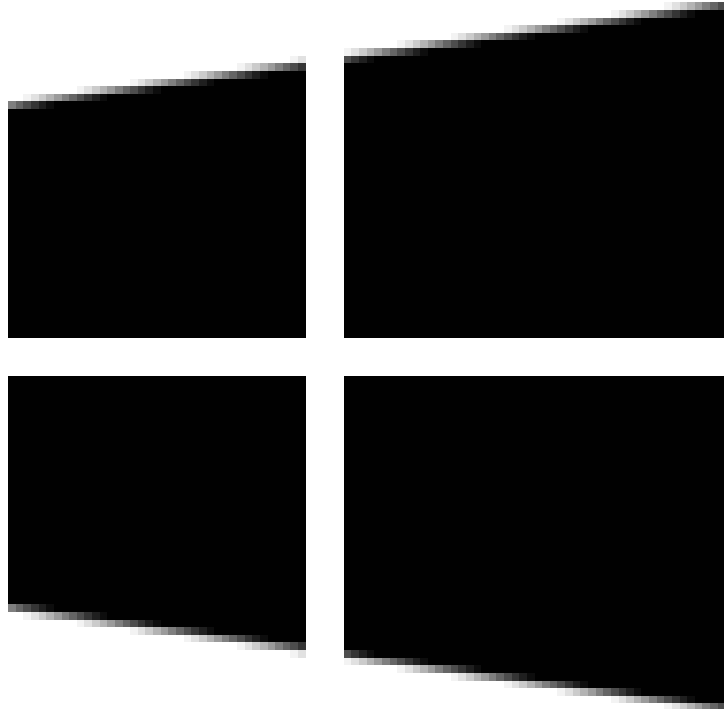
Back up any files that you want to save. Since you'll be erasing your computer's hard drive and then reinstalling Windows onto it, make sure that any files which you want to save are backed up onto an external hard drive (or cloud storage).

1. Keep in mind that malware often attaches itself to files or programs. If you suspect that a program that you downloaded is the reason for an infection, do not back that file up to your external hard drive.

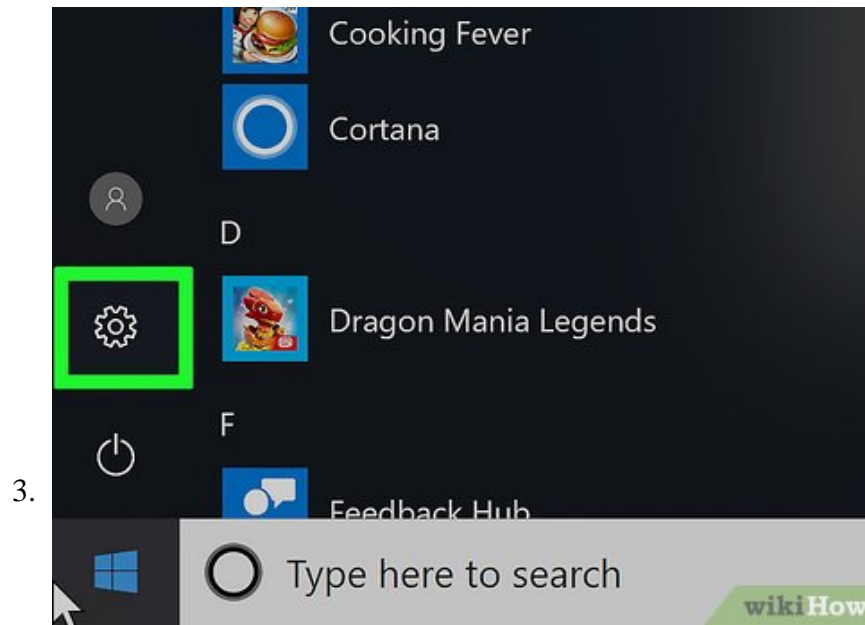
2.



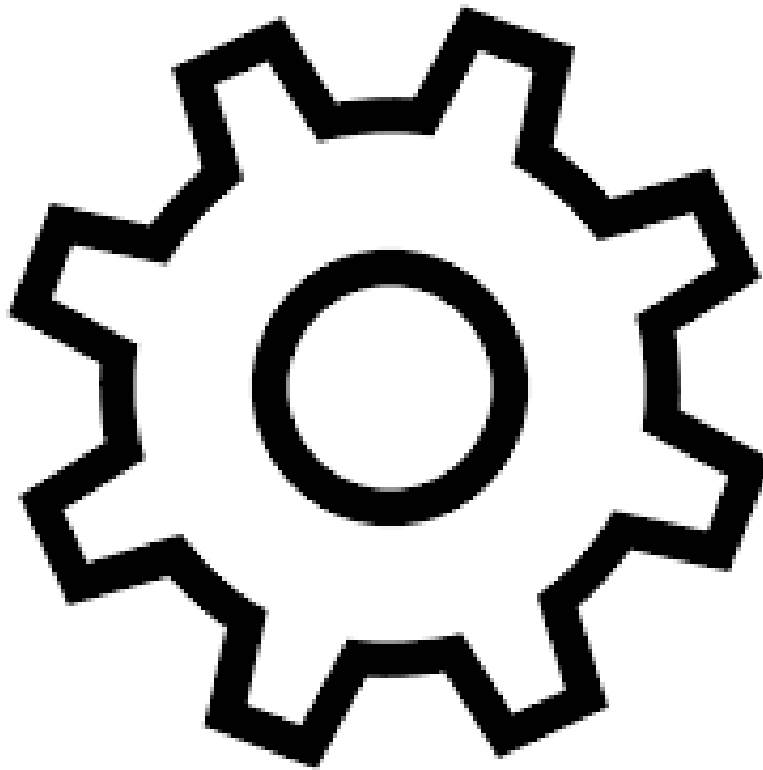
Open Start



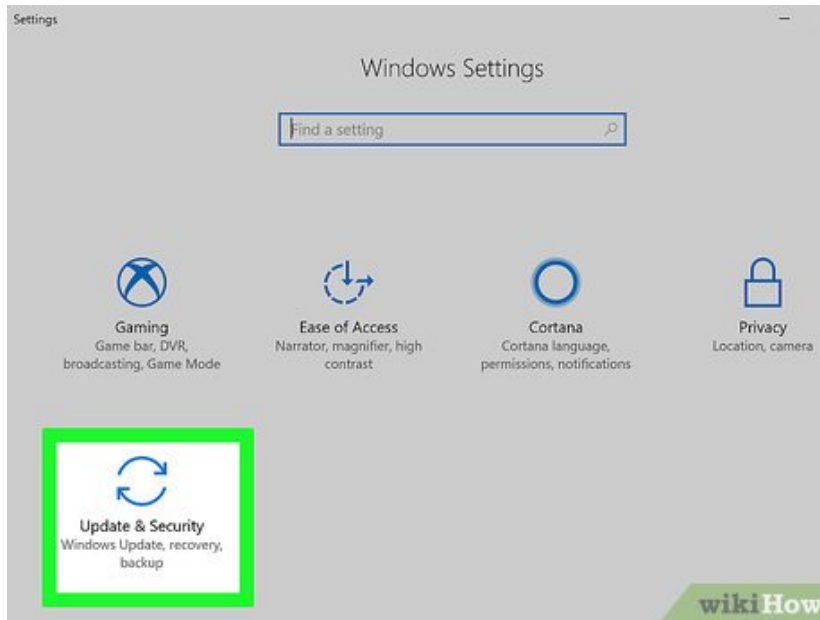
- . Click the Windows logo in the bottom-left corner of the screen.



Open Settings



- . Click the gear-shaped icon in the lower-left side of the window.



4.

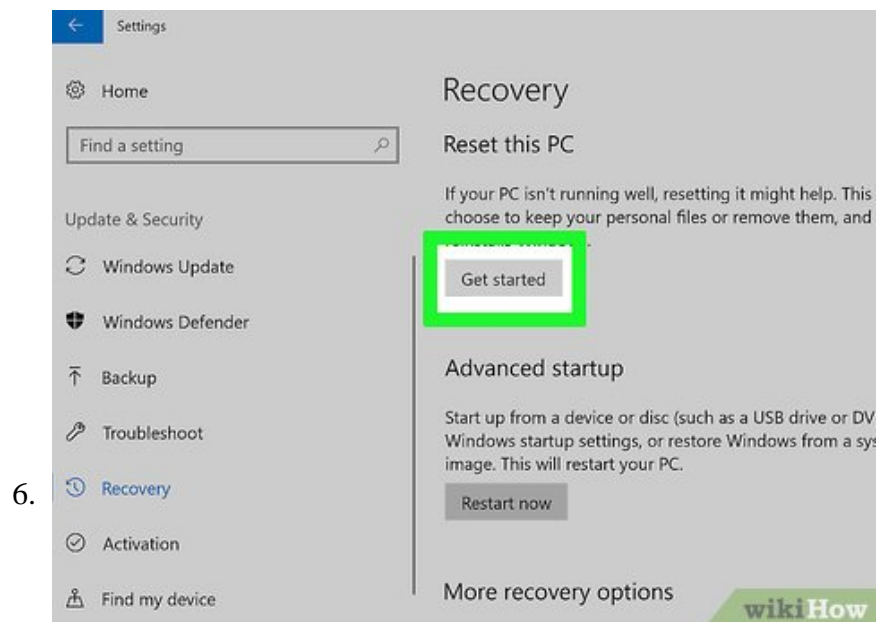
Click



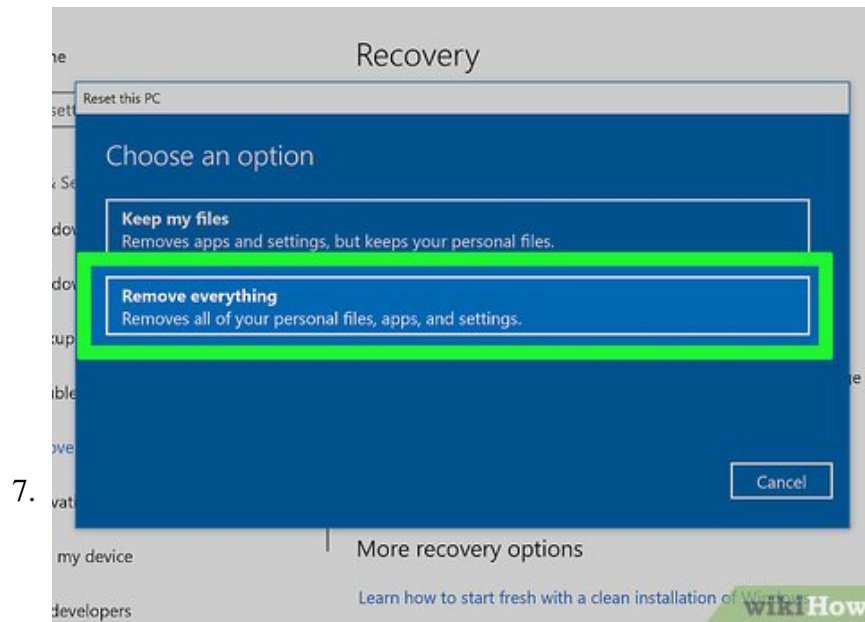
Update & Security. It's an icon that resembles a circle made up of arrows.



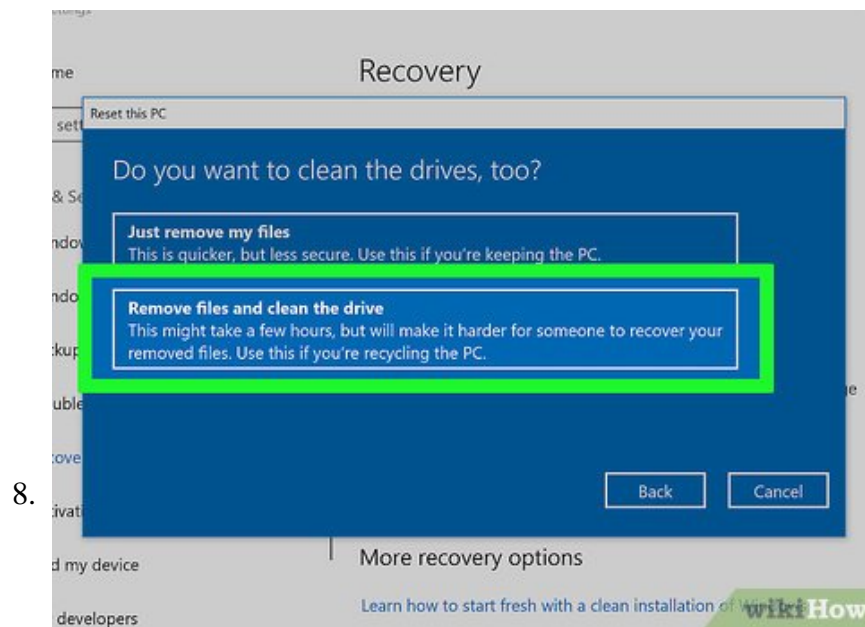
Click the **Recovery** tab. You'll find this tab on the left side of the window.



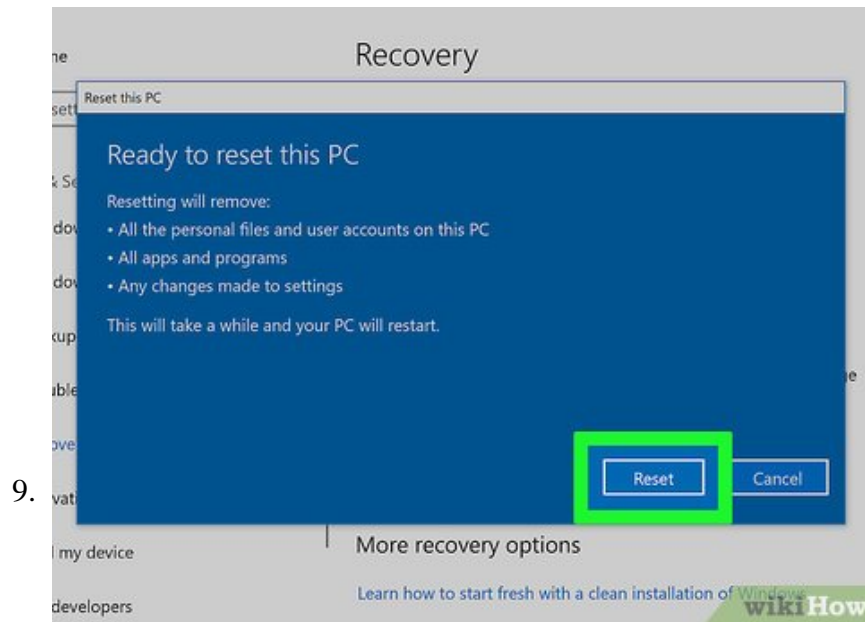
Click **Get started**. It's a button below the "Reset this PC" heading at the top of the page. A pop-up window will appear.



Click **Remove everything**. This option is at the bottom of the pop-up window.

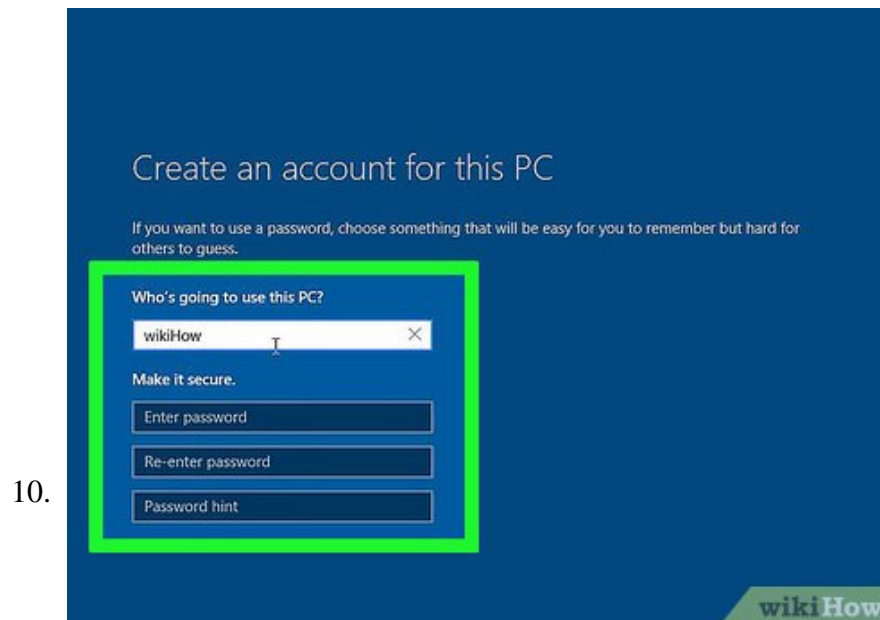


Click **Remove files and clean the drive**. It's at the bottom of the pop-up window.



Click **Reset** when prompted. Doing so will allow your computer to begin erasing and reinstalling Windows.

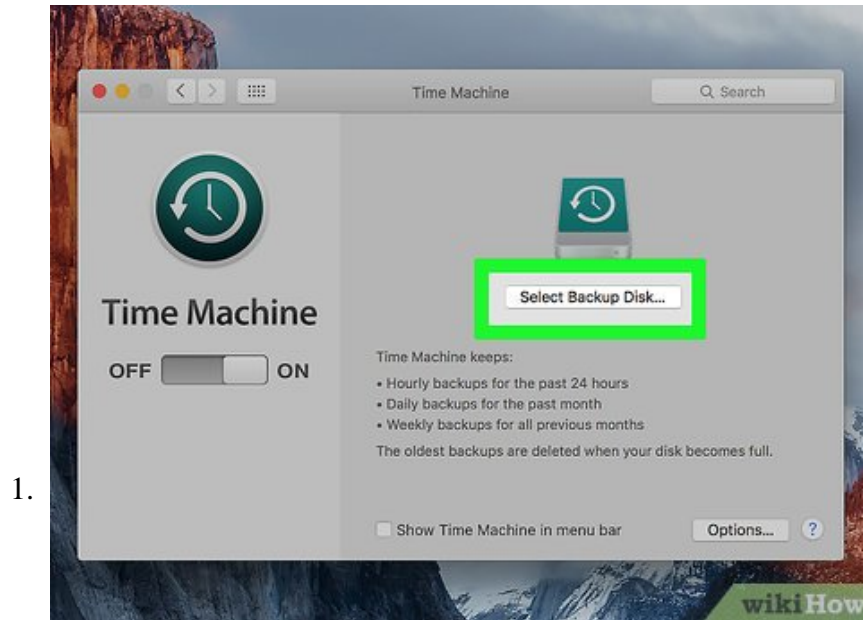
1. This process can take several hours, so make sure that your computer is plugged into a reliable power source.



Set up your computer. This will generally consist of selecting a region, a language, a timezone, and your Microsoft email address.

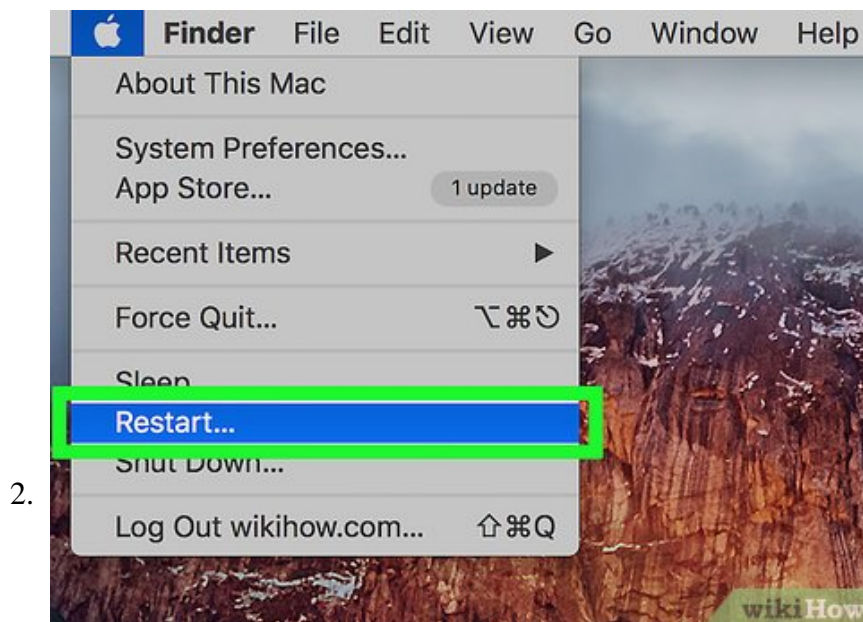
Method 4 of 4:

Reinstalling macOS



Back up any files that you want to save. Since you'll be erasing your computer's hard drive and then reinstalling macOS onto it, make sure that any files which you want to save are backed up onto an external hard drive (or cloud storage).

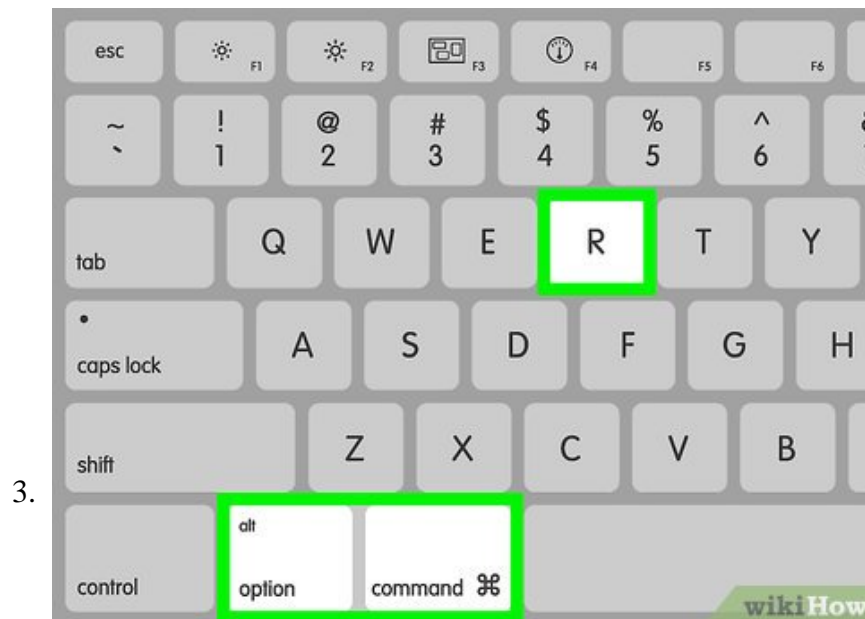
1. Keep in mind that malware often attaches itself to files or programs. If you suspect that a program that you downloaded is the reason for an infection, do not back that file up to your external hard drive.



Begin restarting your Mac. Click the **Apple menu**

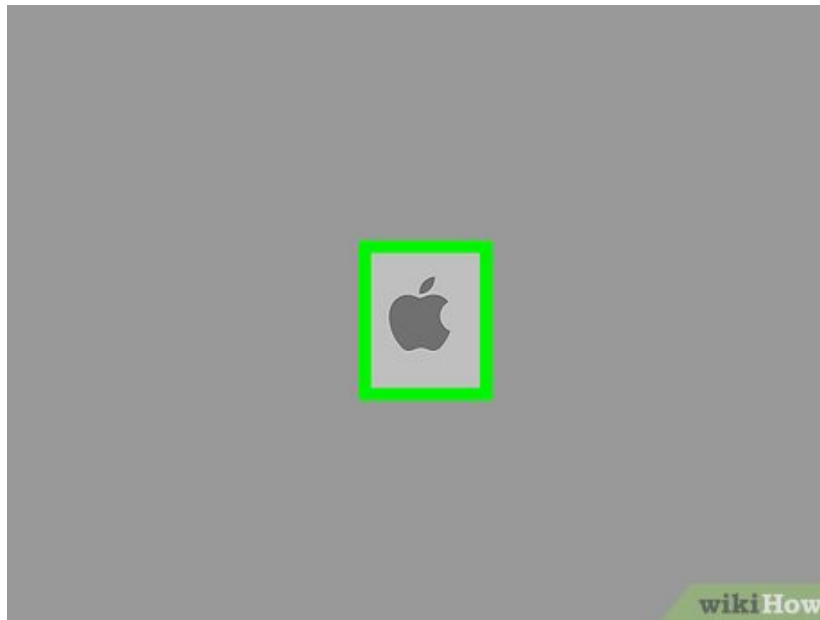


, click **Restart...** in the resulting drop-down menu, and click **Restart** when prompted.



Hold down ? Option +? Command + R. Do so immediately after clicking **Restart**, and don't stop holding down these keys until the Apple logo appears.

4.



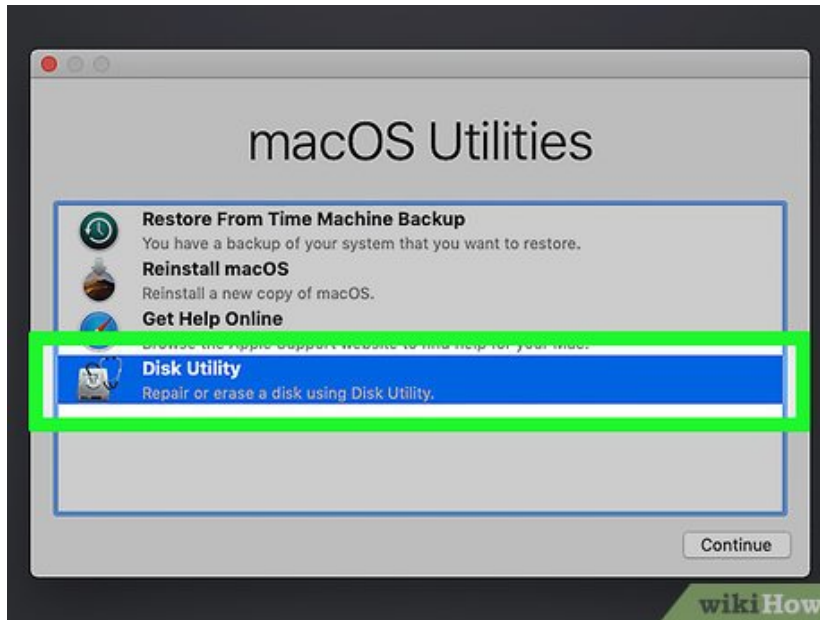
Wait for the Apple logo to appear. This may take between 10 and 20 seconds.

1. For some computers, you'll see a spinning globe appear instead.

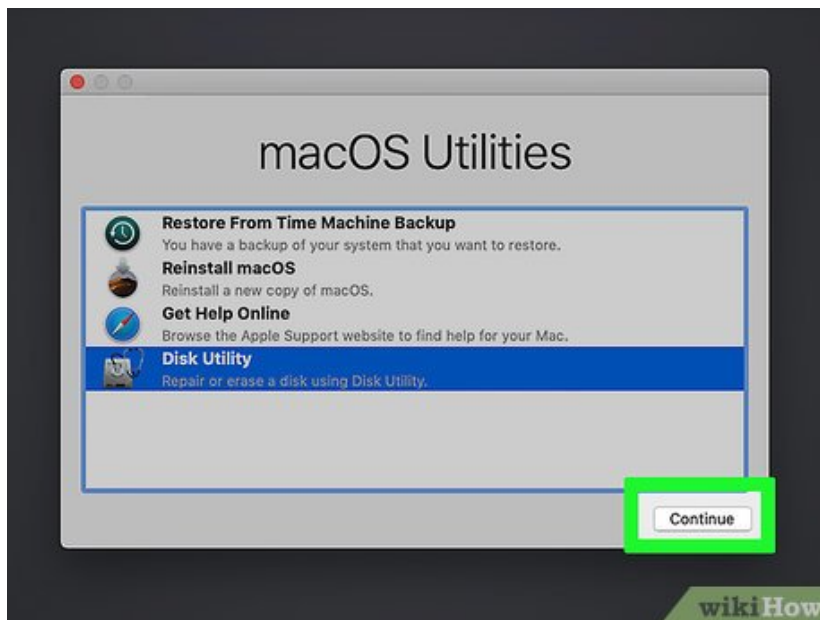
5.



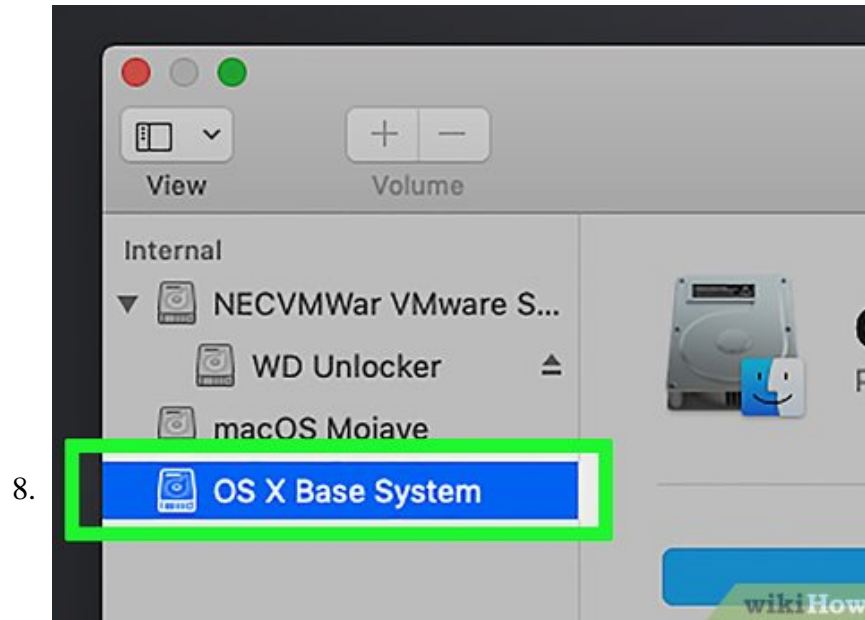
Release ? Option + ? Command + R. Once you see the Apple logo appear, you can release the keys. The setup window will appear after a few seconds.



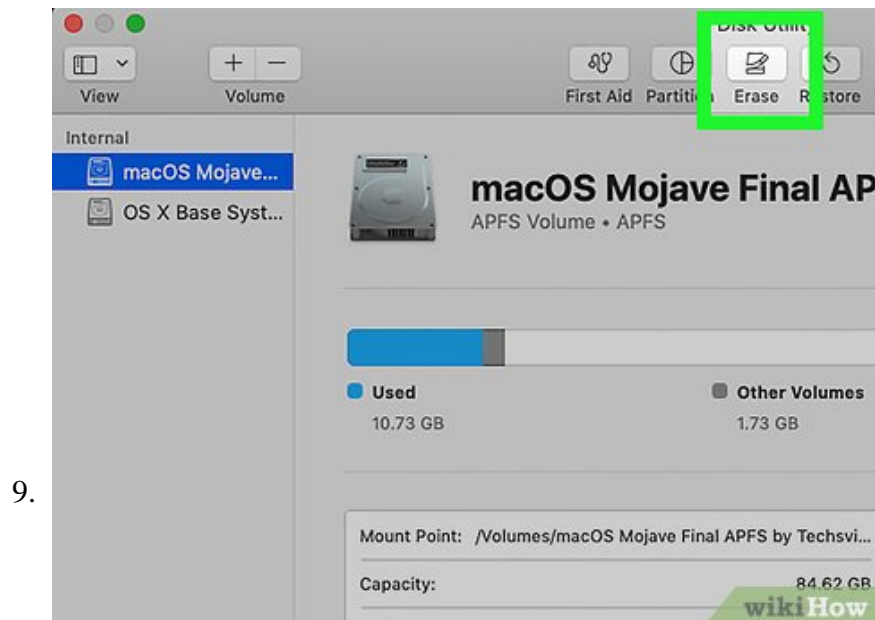
Click **Disk Utility**. It's in the setup window.



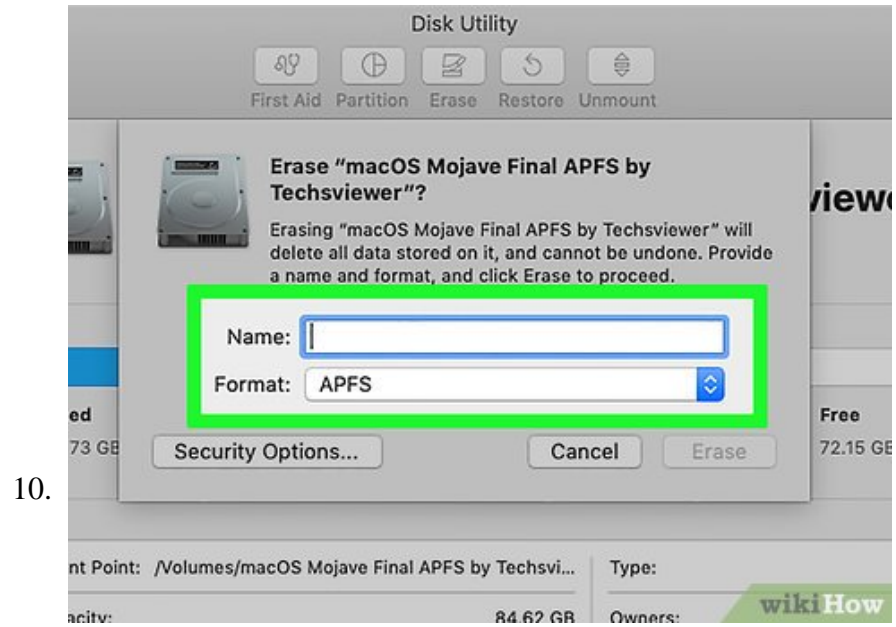
Click **Continue**. You'll see this button in the bottom-right corner of the setup window.



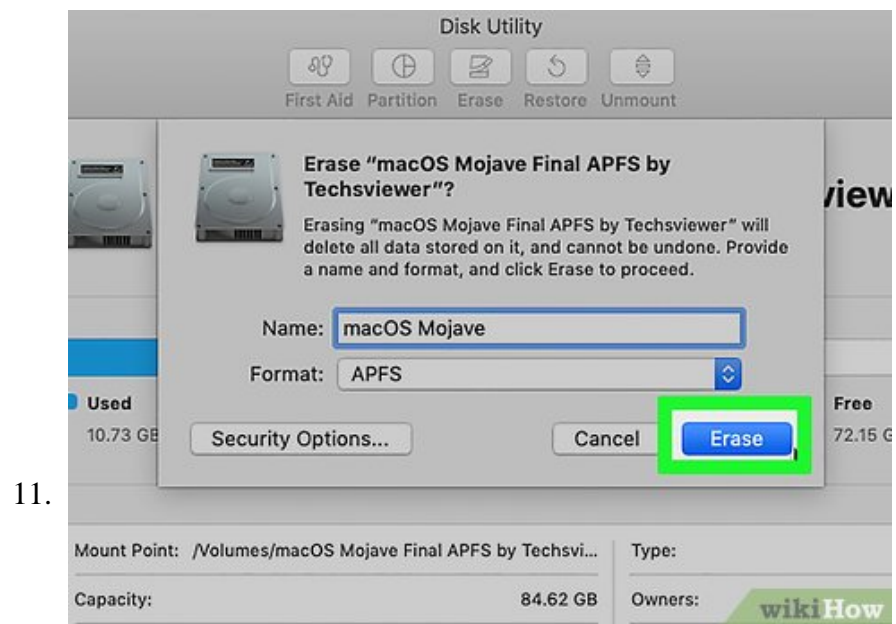
Select your Mac's hard drive. On the left side of the window, click the Mac's hard drive.



Click **Erase**. This tab is at the top of the Disk Utility window. A pop-up window will appear.

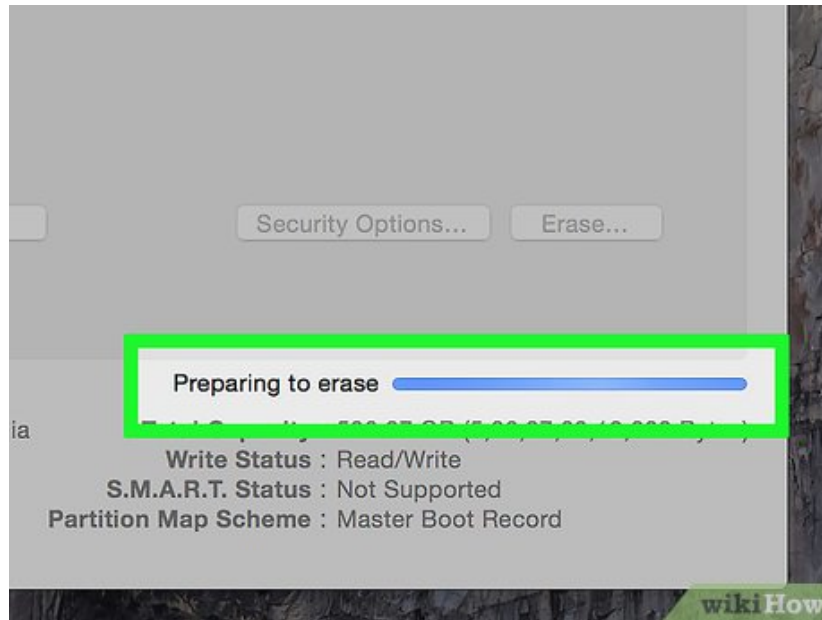


Select a format. Click the "Format" drop-down box, then click **Mac OS Extended (Journaled)** in the resulting drop-down menu.^[1]



Click **Erase**. It's at the bottom of the window. This will prompt your hard drive to begin erasing everything on it, including any leftover malware.

12.



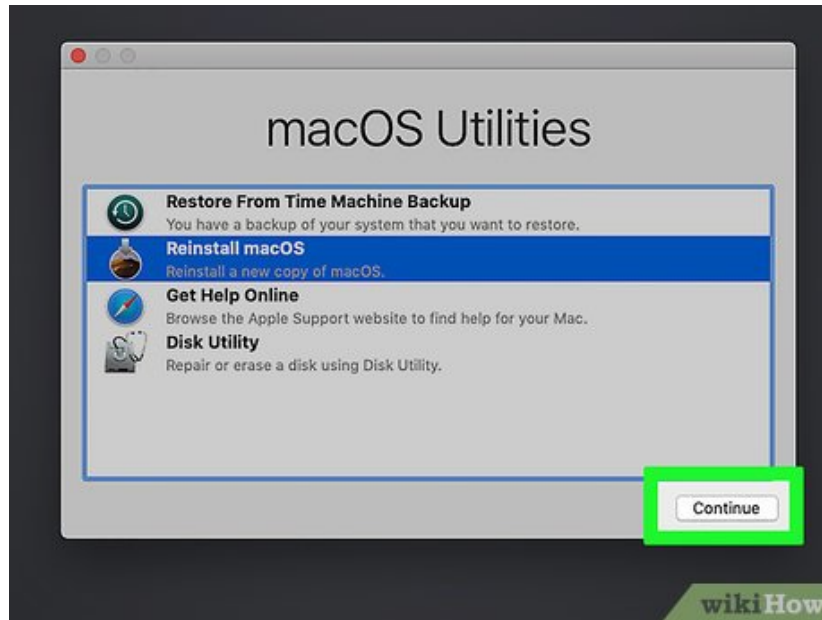
Wait for your hard drive to finish erasing. This can take several minutes to an hour or more, so just make sure that your Mac is connected to a reliable power source. Once the hard drive finishes erasing, you'll be taken back to the setup page.

13.



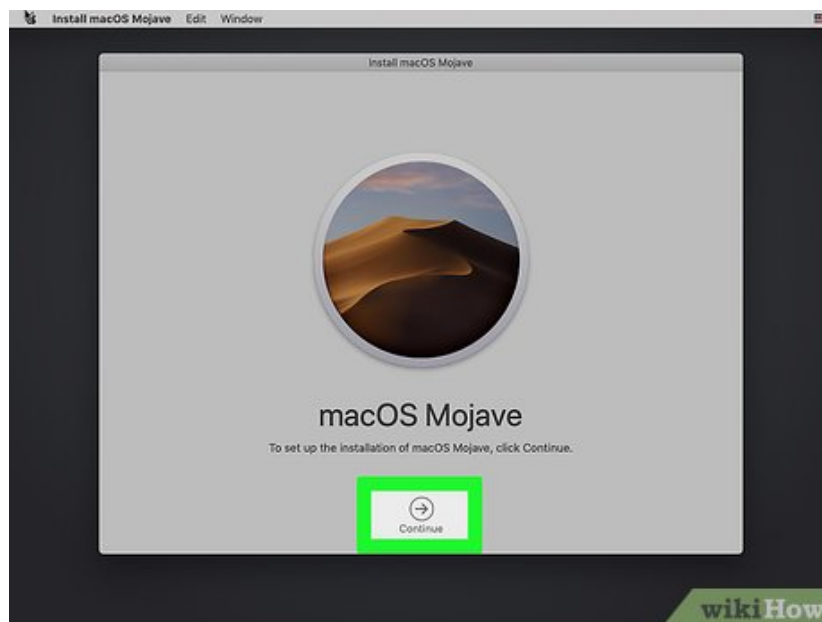
Click **Reinstall macOS**. It's in the middle of the setup window.

14.



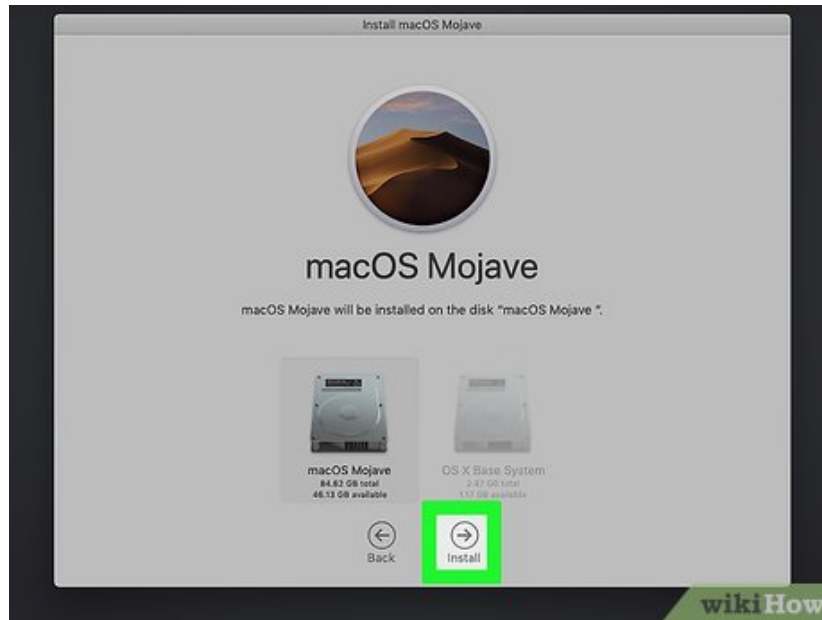
Click **Continue**. This is in the bottom-right corner of the window.

15.



Follow the setup prompts. You'll most likely be asked to enter your Apple ID and select a disk (e.g., your Mac's hard drive) for installation.

16.



Click **Install** when prompted. Doing so will allow your Mac to begin installing a fresh copy of the most recent version of macOS.

1. You'll have to set up your Mac's preferences once the installation is complete.

You finished reading the article "**How to Clean a Computer of Malware**" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.