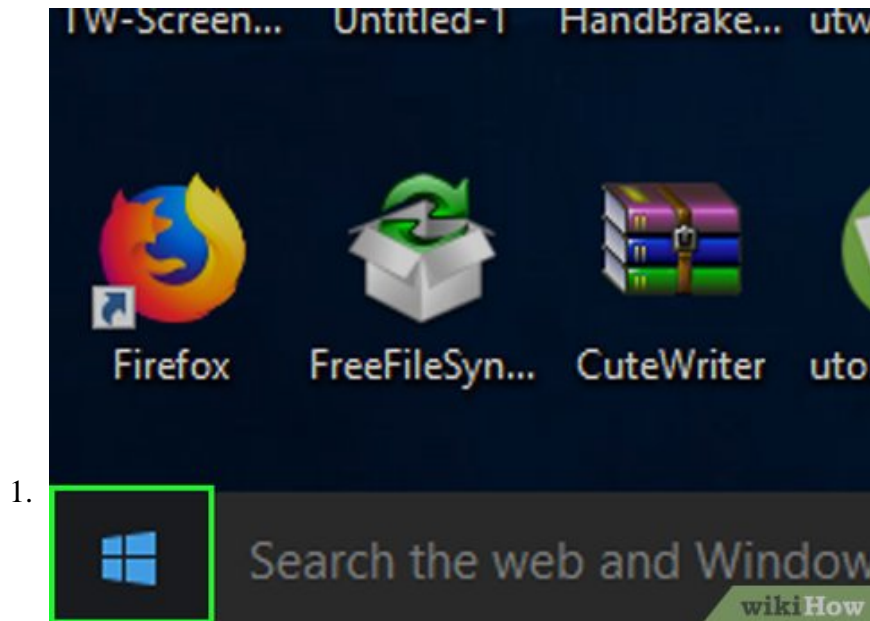


How to Delete a Locked File

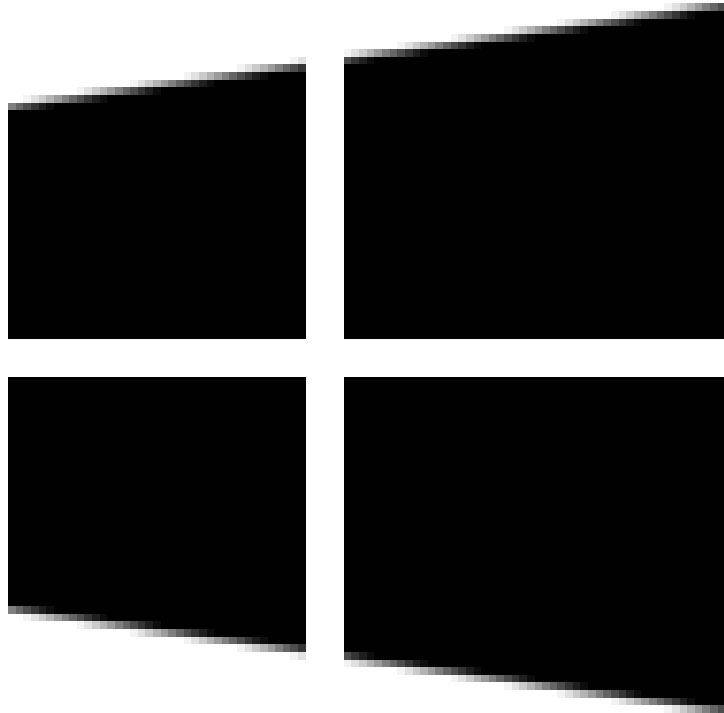
This wikiHow teaches you how to delete a locked or otherwise restricted file on your Windows or Mac computer. You can use Safe Mode or an app called Process Explorer on Windows, while Mac users can either use the Get Info window to unlock...

Method 1 of 4:

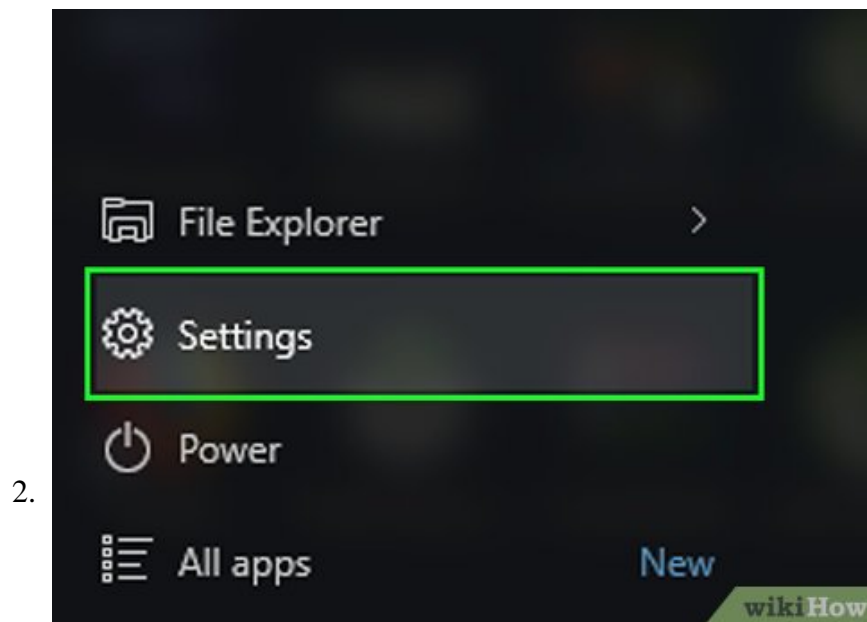
Using Safe Mode on Windows



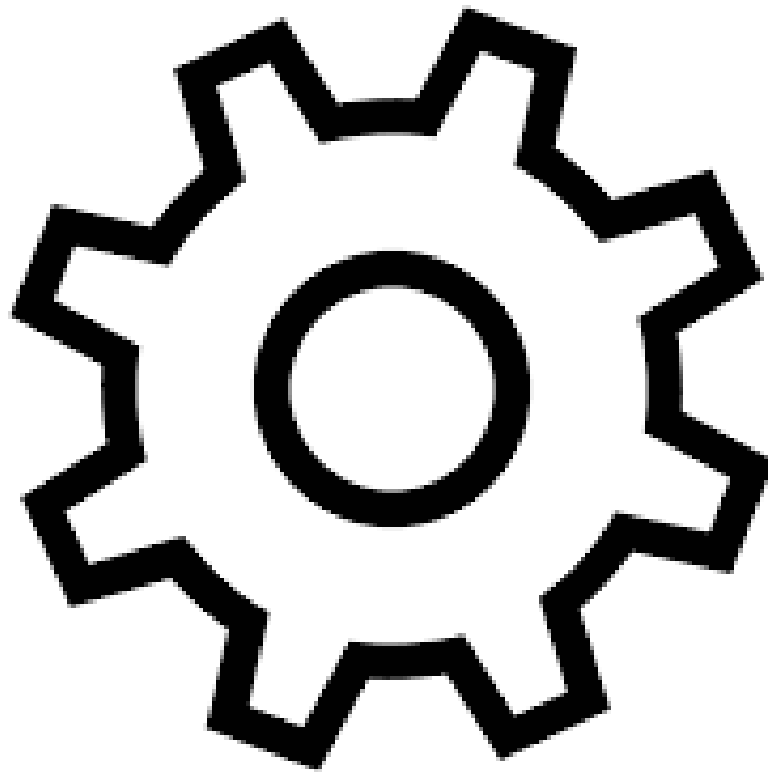
Open Start



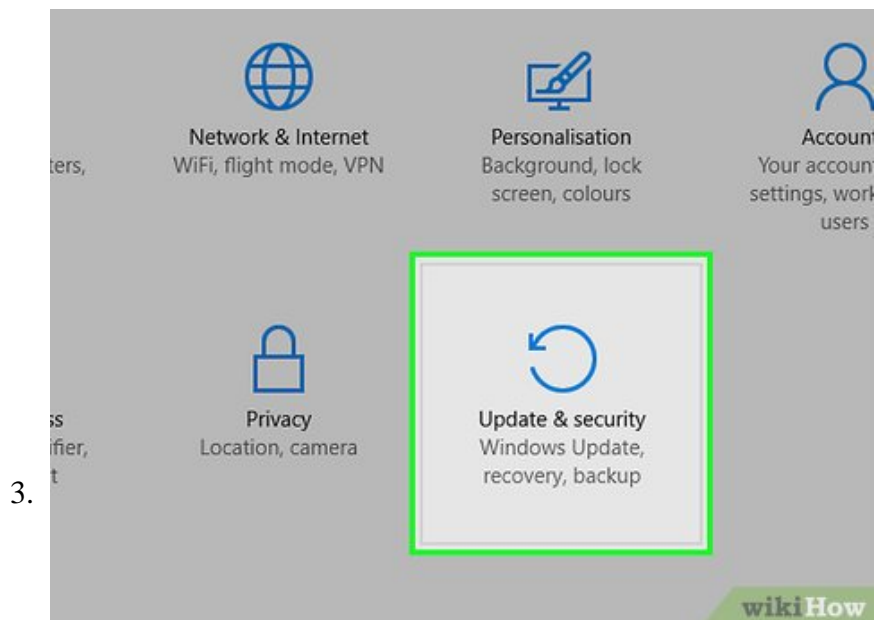
. Click the Windows logo in the bottom-left corner of the screen.



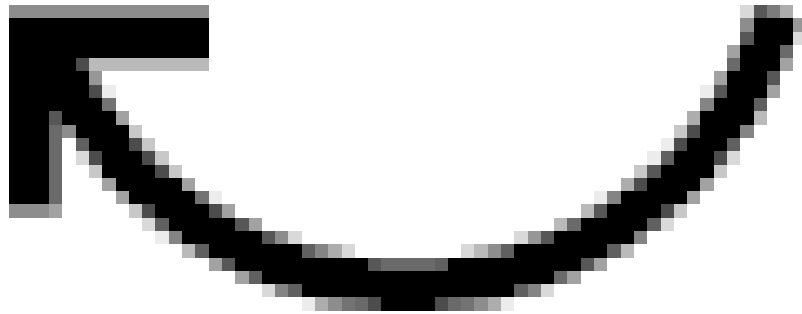
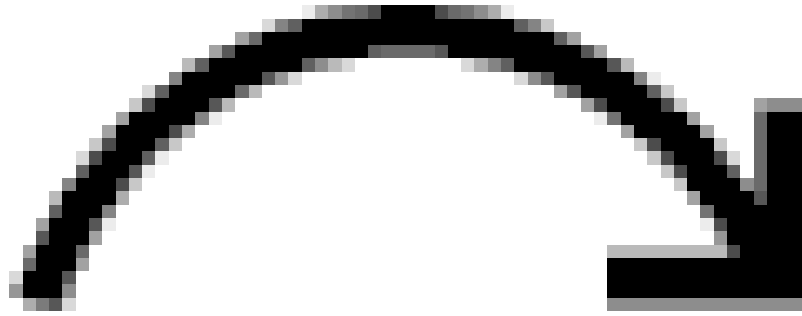
Open Settings



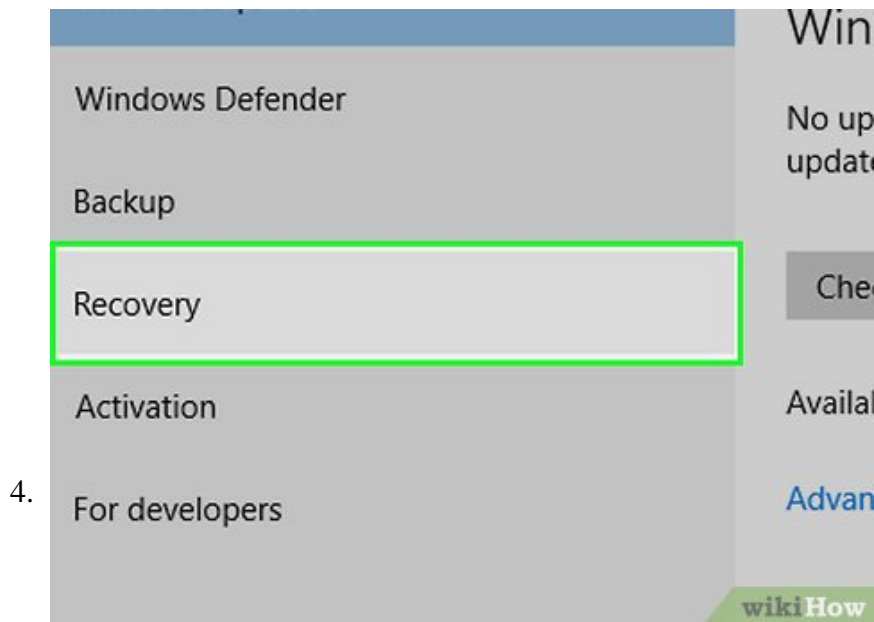
. Click the gear-shaped icon in the lower-left side of the window.



Click



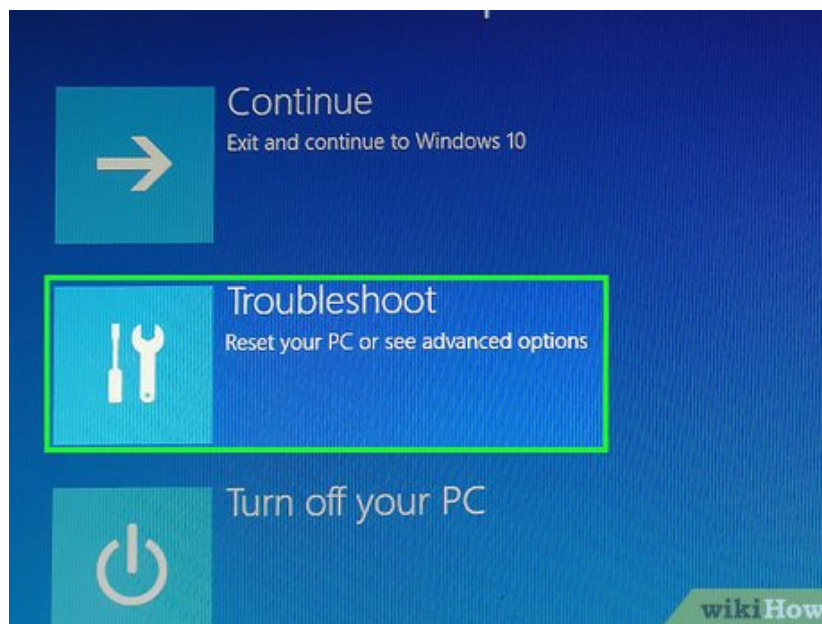
Update & Security. It's near the bottom of the Settings window.



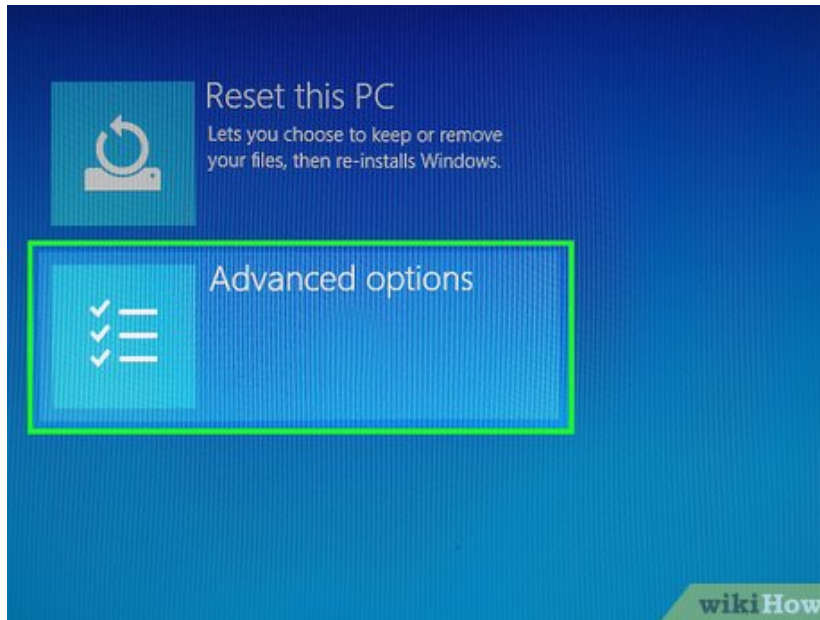
Click the **Recovery** tab. You'll find it on the left side of the window.



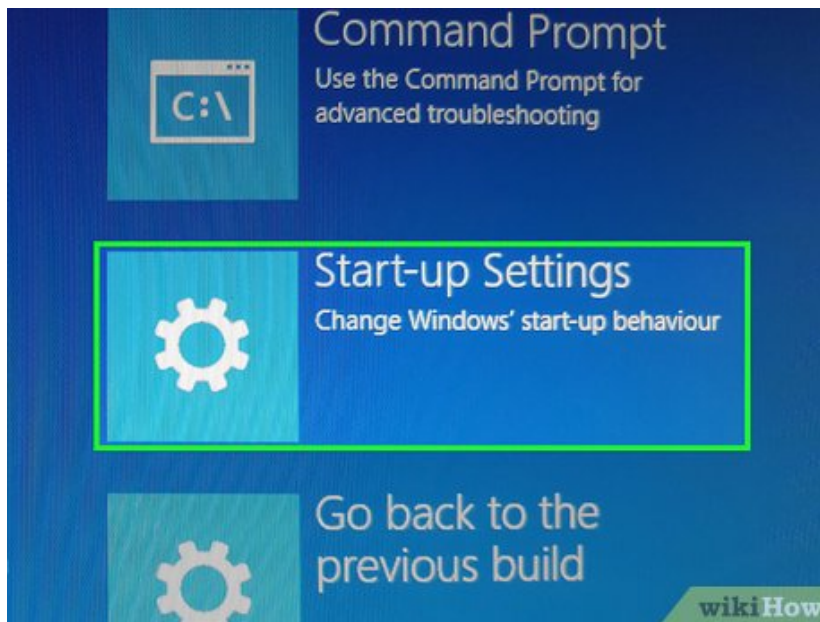
Click **Restart now**. It's near the middle of the page. Doing so will restart your computer into the Advanced Options menu.



Click **Troubleshoot**. This option is near the top of the screen.

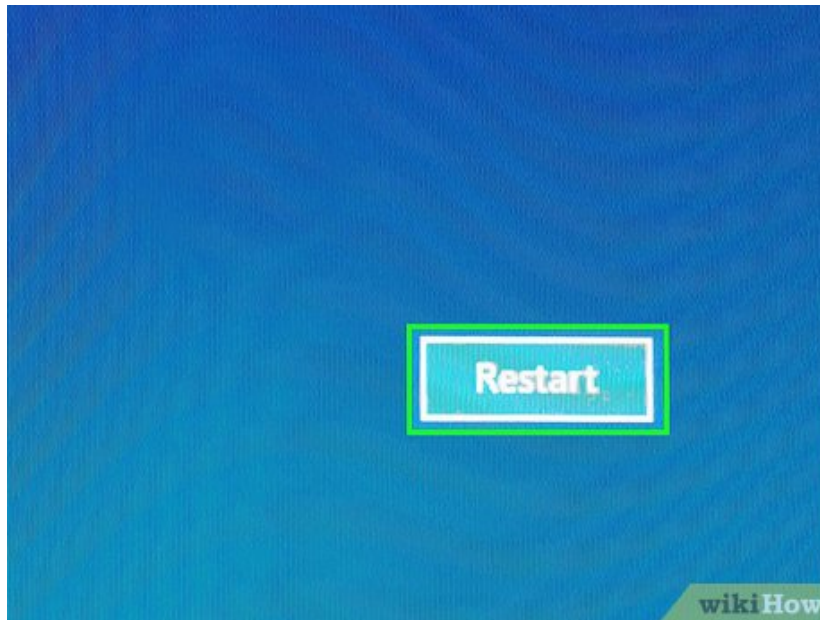


Click **Advanced options** . You'll find this in the middle of the screen.



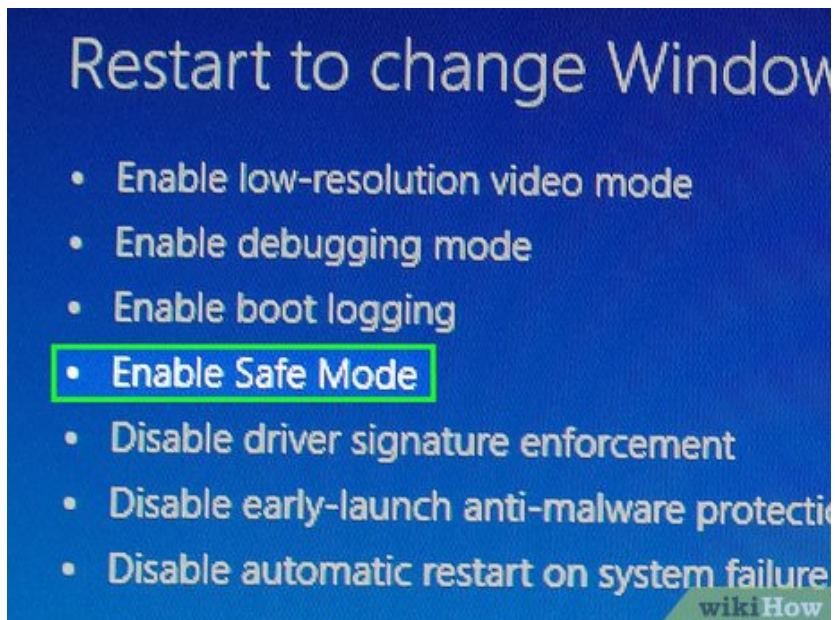
Click **Startup settings** . It's on the right side of the screen.

9.



Click . This button is near the bottom of the screen.

10.



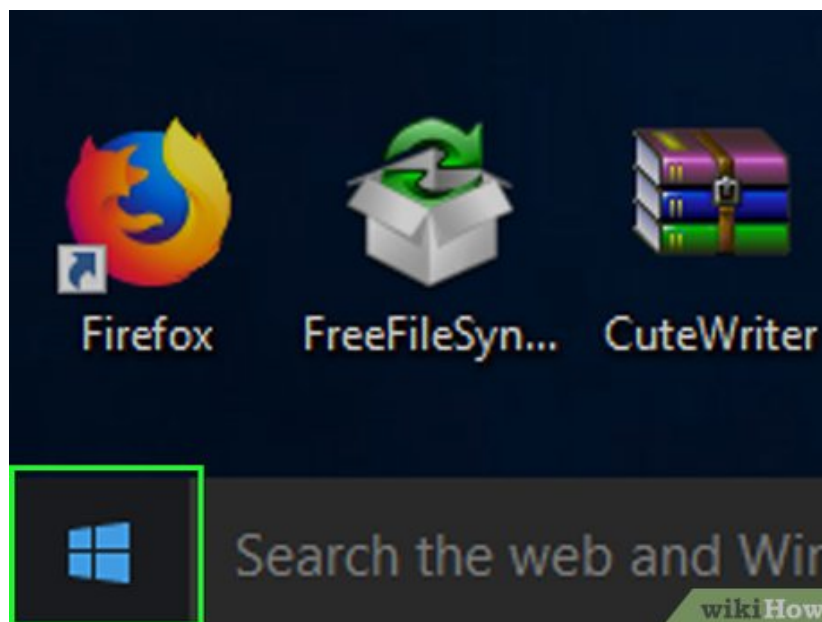
Select the "Enable Safe Mode" option. Press or on the "Startup Settings" window.

11.

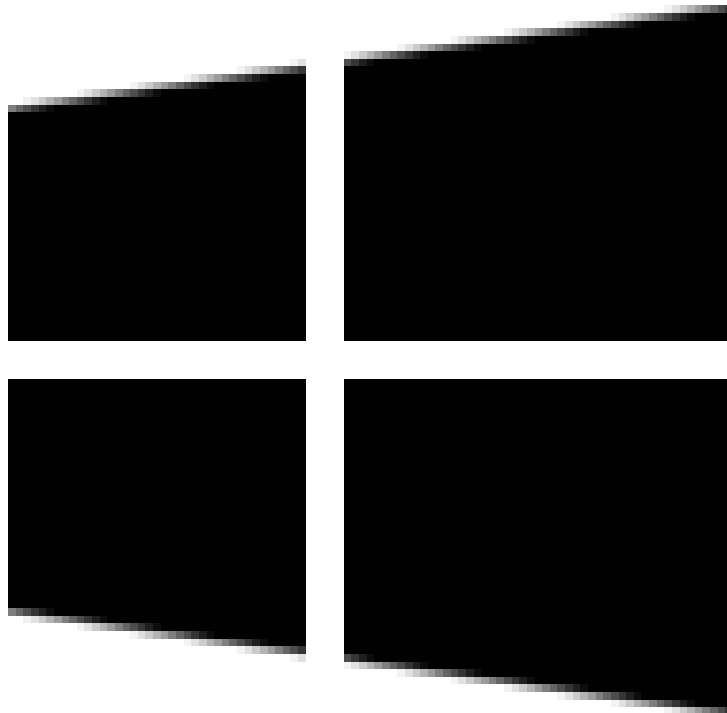


Wait for Windows to finish restarting. If you use a password on your account, you'll need to select your account and enter the password before proceeding.

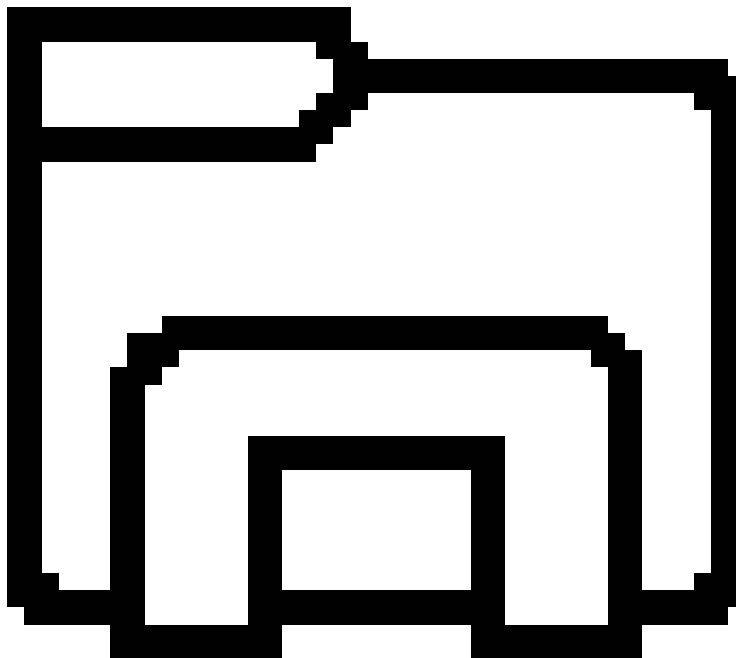
12.



Find your file. Open **Start**

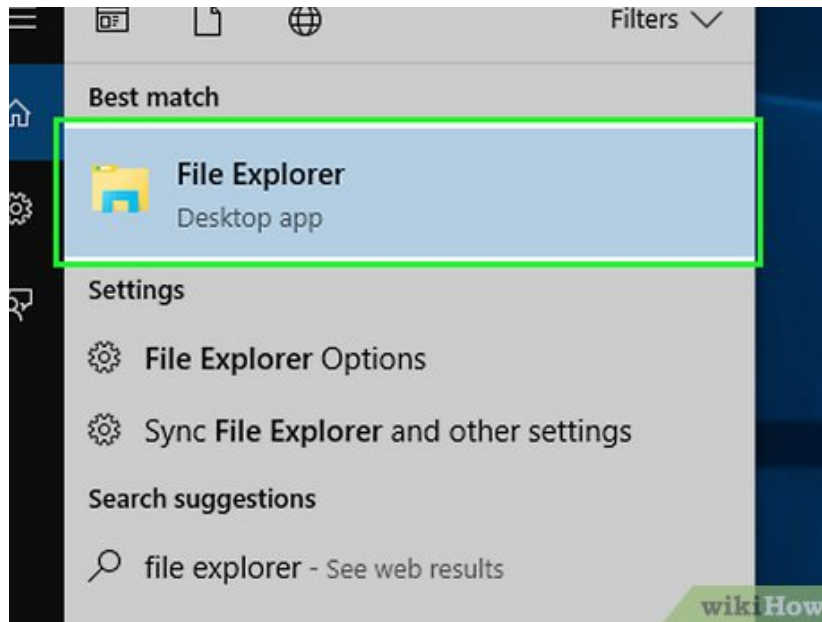


, open **File Explorer**



, and locate the previously locked file.

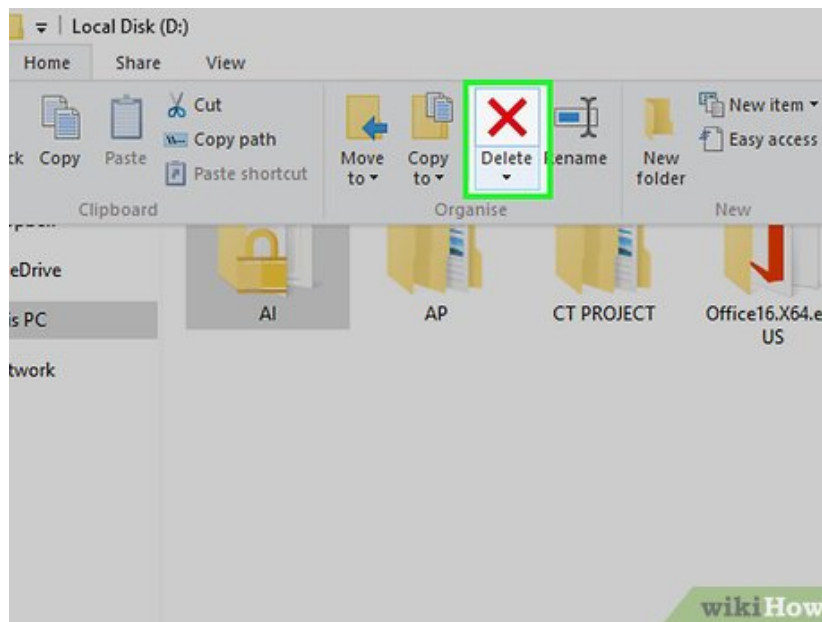
13.



Delete the file. Click the previously locked file, click the **Home** tab, and click **Delete** in the toolbar that appears.

1. Alternatively, you can click the file to select it and then press the `Delete` key.

14.

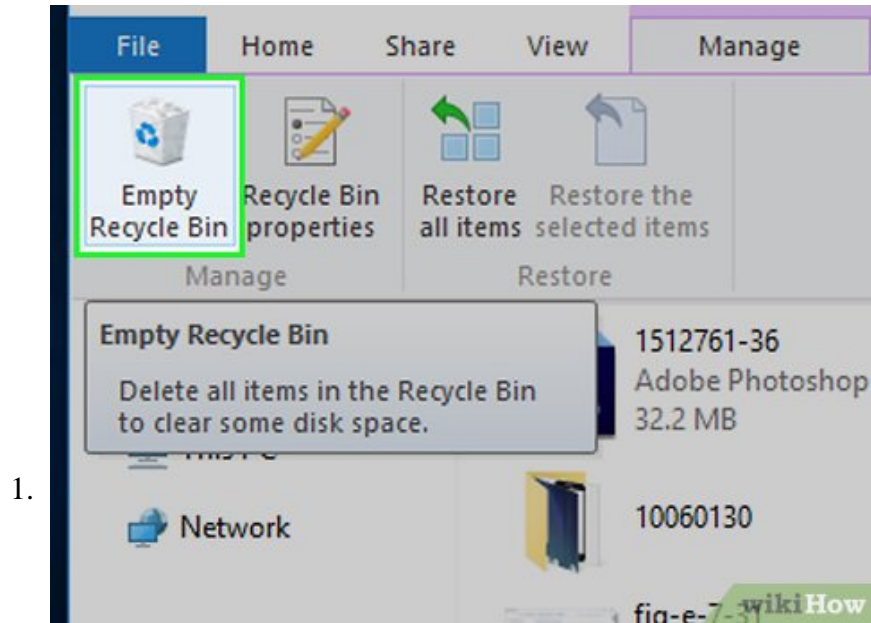


Empty the Recycle Bin. Double-click the Recycle Bin icon on your desktop, then click the **Manage** tab and click **Empty Recycle Bin** in the toolbar. Your file should be deleted.

1. Once you've deleted your file, you can restart your computer to exit Safe Mode.

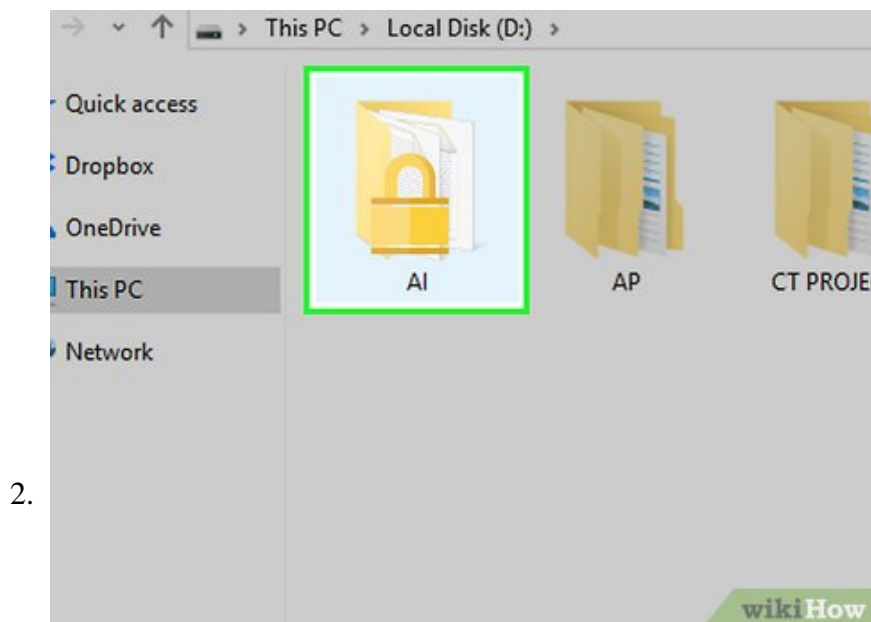
Method 2 of 4:

Using Process Explorer on Windows



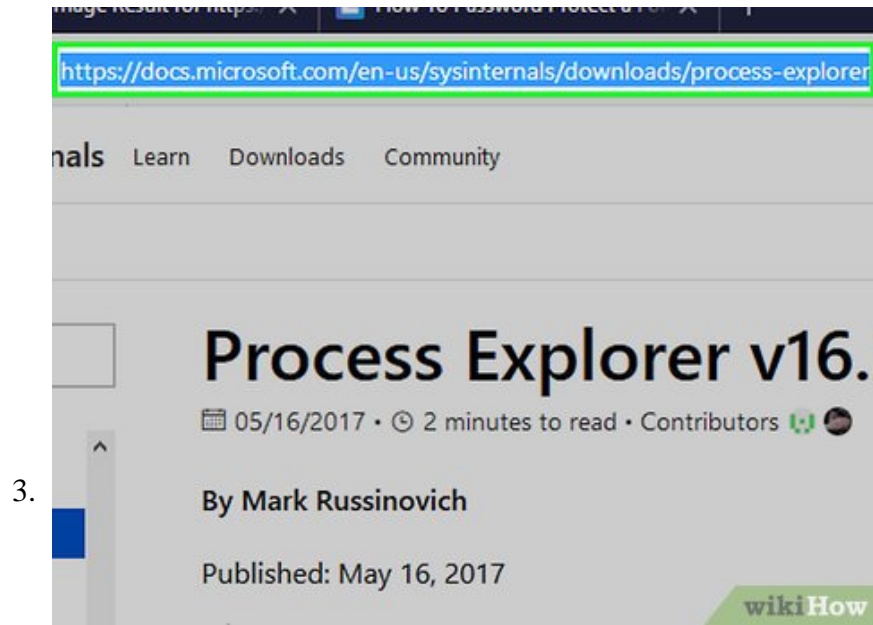
Open the locked file. In order for the file to show up in Process Explorer later, you'll need to have the locked file open.

1. Simply double-clicking the file will be enough to place it in the "Running" category of your computer's Task Manager.

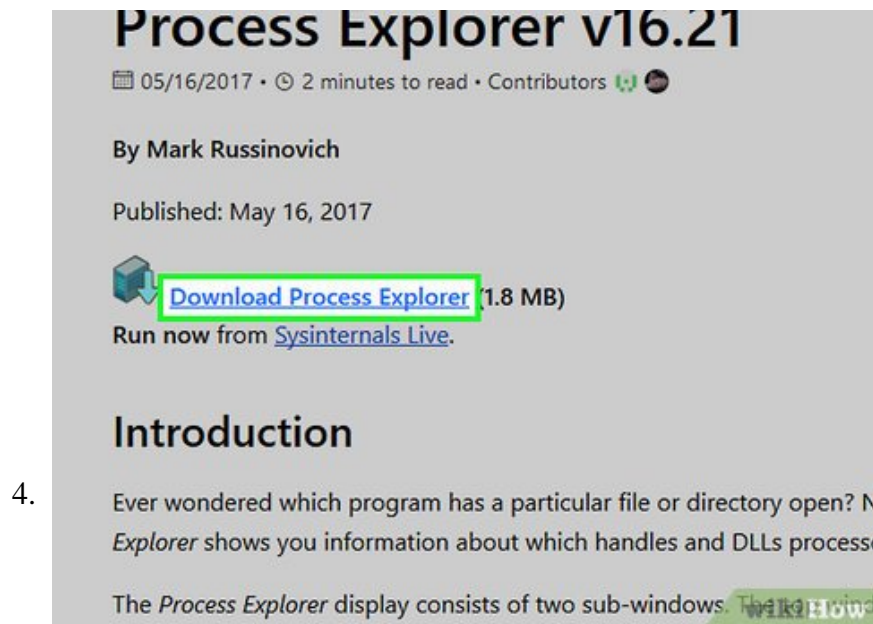


Open the Process Explorer page. Go to <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/downloads/process-explorer/> in your browser.^[1]

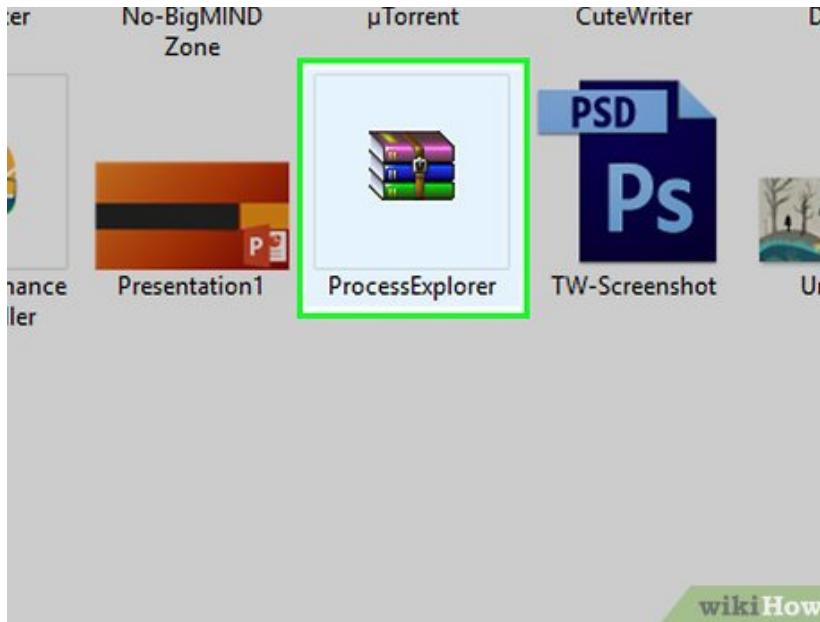
1. Process Explorer is an official Microsoft app.



Click [Download Process Explorer](#). This link is near the top of the page. Doing so will prompt the Process Explorer ZIP folder to download onto your computer.

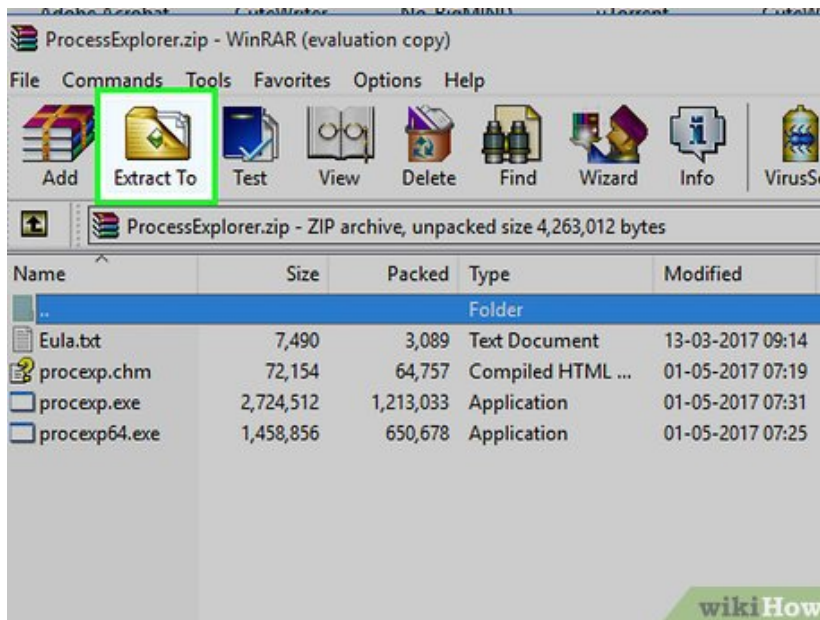


Open the ZIP folder. In your computer's download folder (e.g., the desktop or the **Downloads** folder), double-click the "ProcessExplorer.zip" folder to open it.



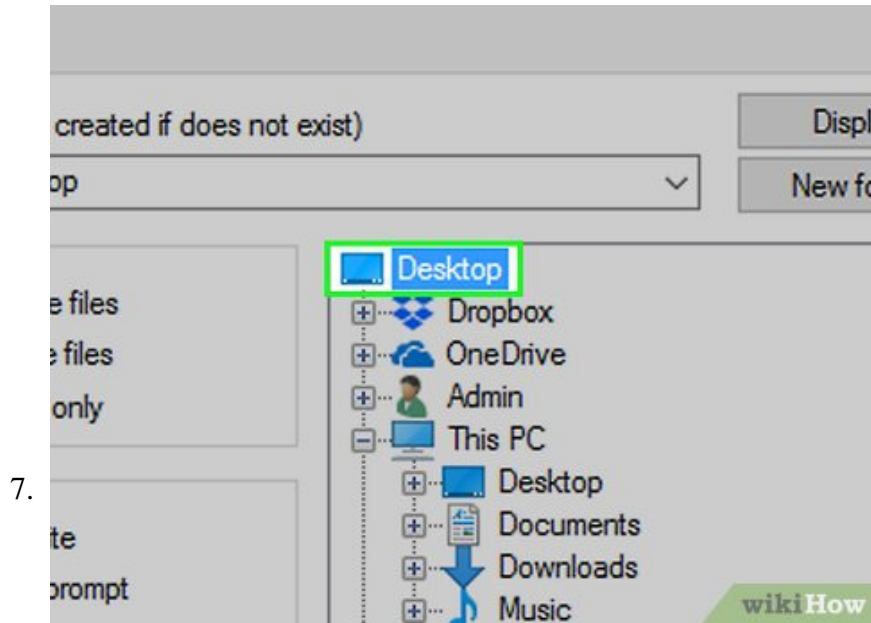
5.

Click the **Extract** tab. It's at the top of the window. A toolbar will appear at the top of the window.



6.

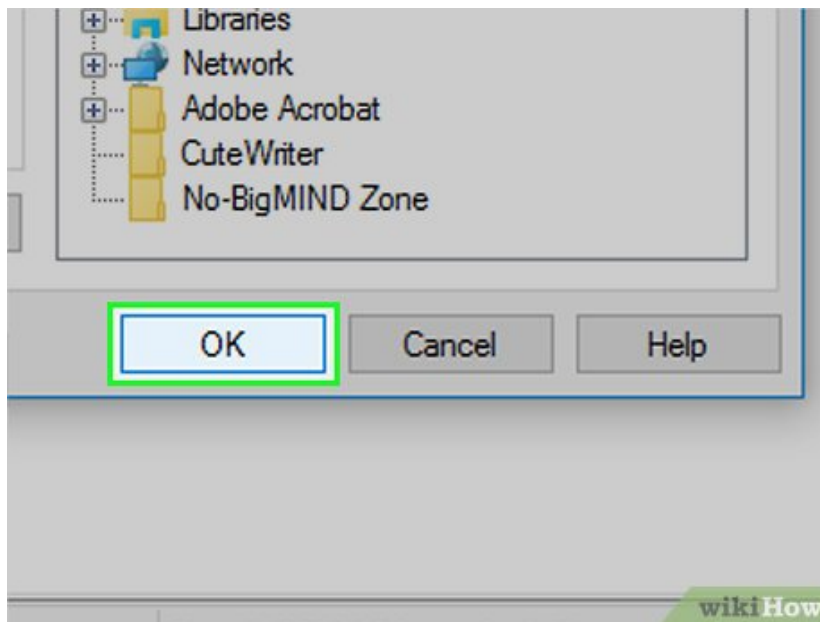
Click **Extract all**. You'll find this option in the **Extract** toolbar. Clicking it prompts a new window to open.



7.

Click **Extract**. It's in the bottom-right corner of the window. This will install the Process Explorer app and open its installation folder.

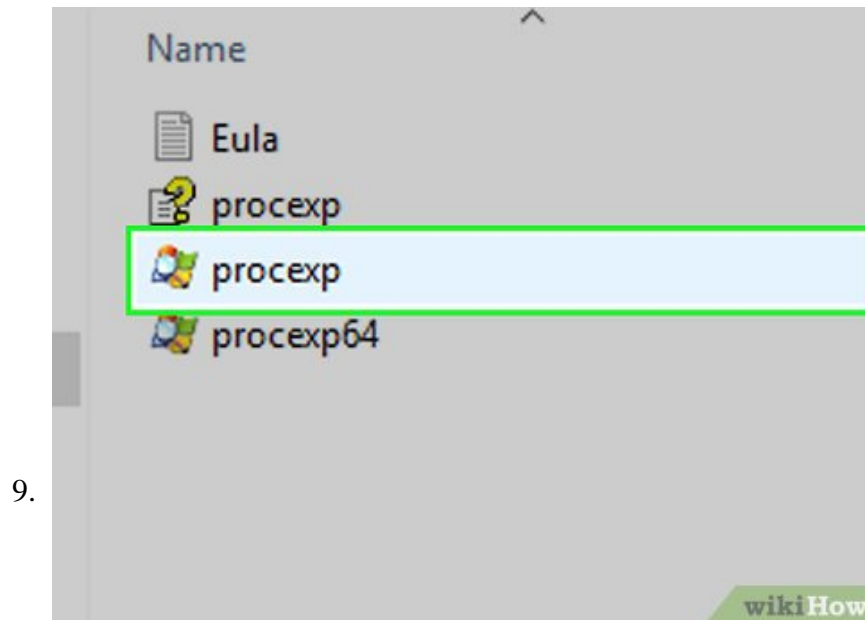
1. By default, this will install the Process Explorer in its current download location.
2. If you want to change the installation location, first click **Browse...** and select a new folder.



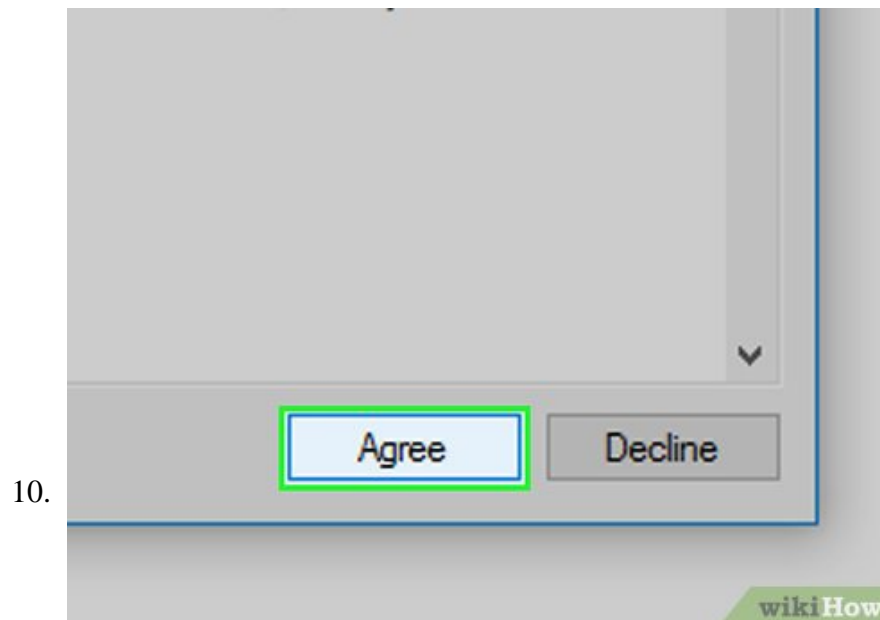
8.

Open Process Explorer. Double-click the **procexp64** item in the folder if your computer uses a 64-bit processor.

1. If your computer uses a 32-bit processor, you'll double-click **procexp** here instead.

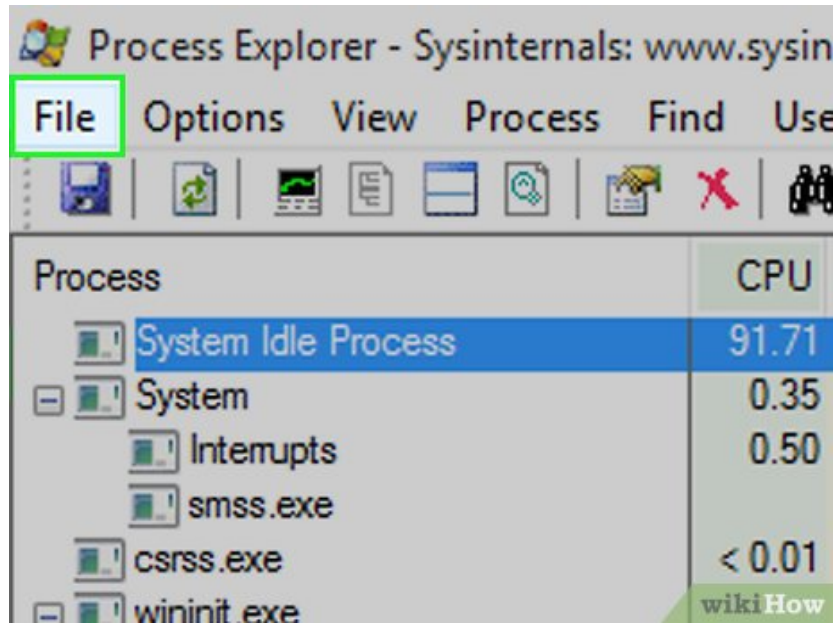


Click **Agree** when prompted. This will open the Process Explorer main window.



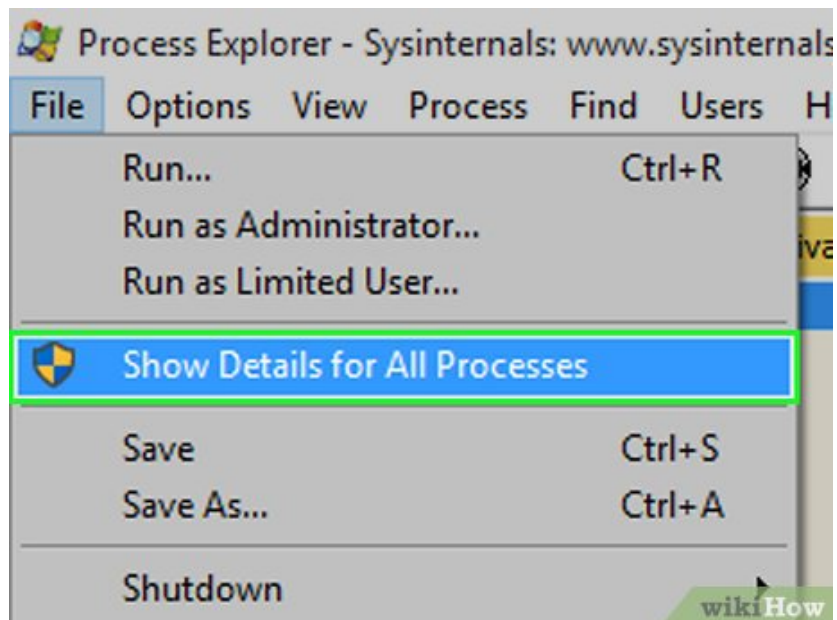
Click **File**. It's in the top-left corner of the window. A drop-down menu will appear.

11.



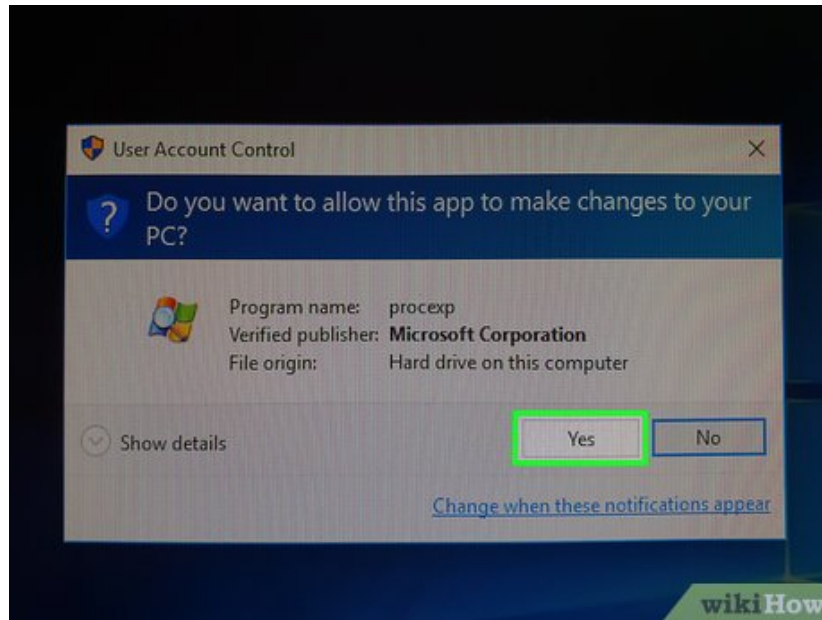
Click . This option is in the middle of the **File** drop-down menu.

12.



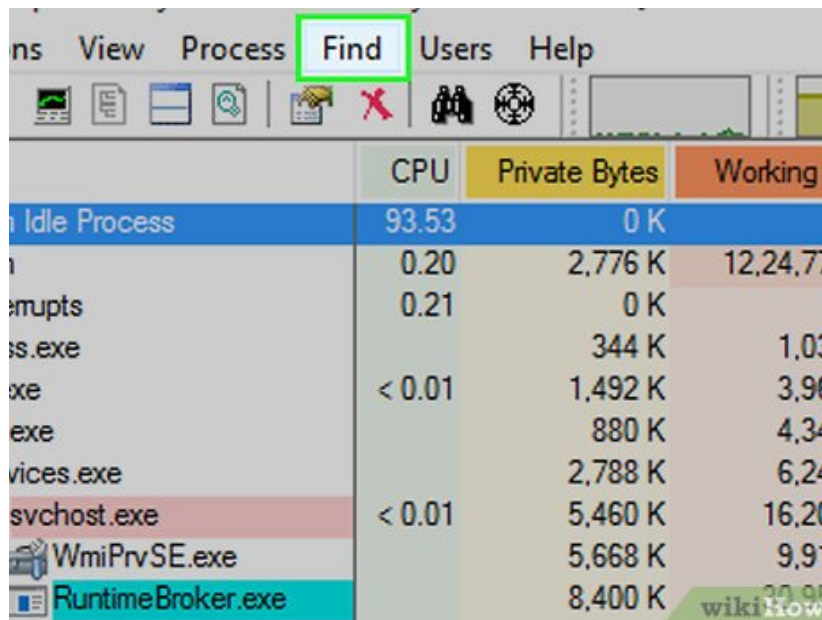
Click when prompted. The Process Explorer window will close and re-open.

13.

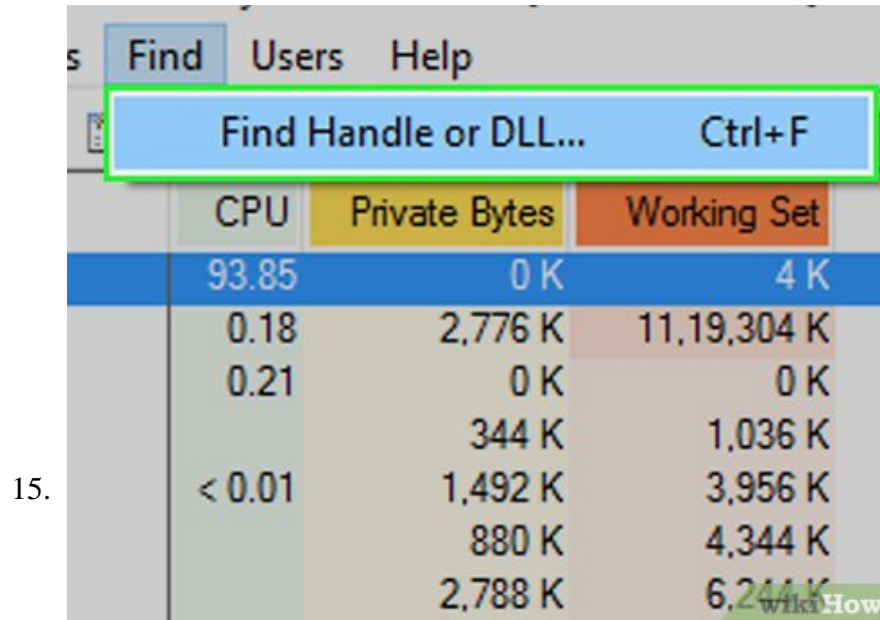


Click **Find**. It's a tab at the top of the window.

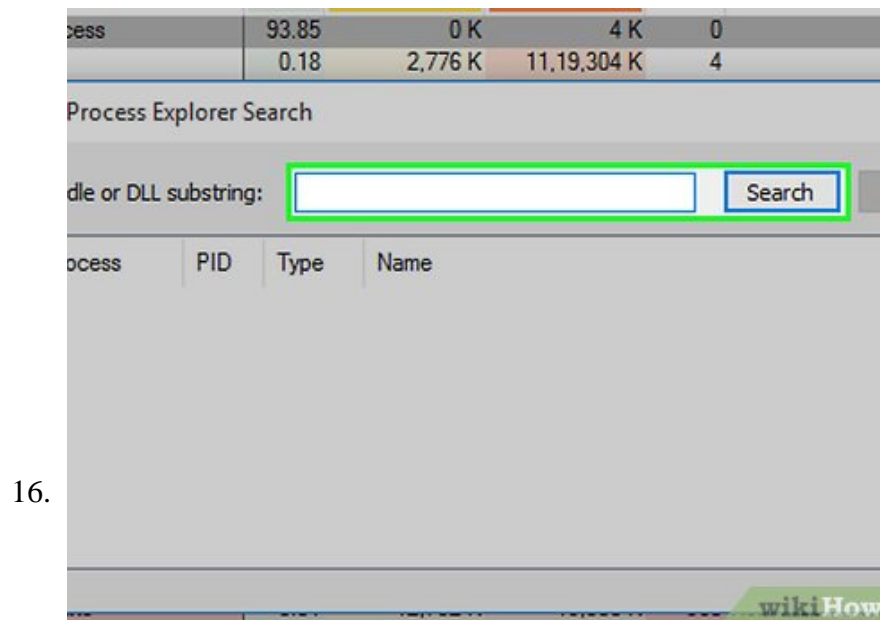
14.



Click **Find Handle or DLL...**. You'll find this option in the **Find** drop-down menu. A search box will pop up.



Enter the locked file's name. Type the name of the locked file into the text box, then click **Search** to the right of the text box.



Select the locked file. Click the name of the locked file in the search window.

17.

Process	PID	Type	Name
System	4	Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\ControlS
System	4	File	C:\\$Extend\SRmMetadata
System	4	File	D:\\$Extend\SRmMetadata
System	4	File	D:\\$Extend\SRmMetadata
System	4	File	C:\\$Extend\SRmMetadata
System	4	File	\Device\Harddisk Volume 1
System	4	File	\Device\Harddisk Volume 1

624 matching items.

host.exe < 0.01 2,648 K

Find the highlighted file name in Process Explorer. In the Process Explorer window (not the search window), you should see the file's name highlighted near the bottom of the window.

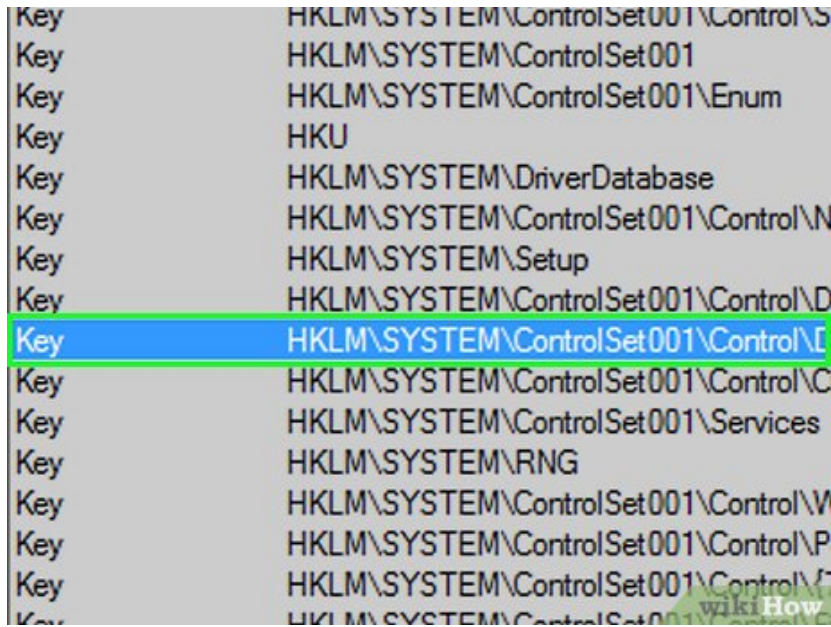
18.

Type	Name
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\ControlSet001\Control\SESS
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\ControlSet001
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\ControlSet001\Enum
Key	HKU
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\DriverDatabase
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\ControlSet001\Control\Notific
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\Setup
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\ControlSet001\Control\Devic
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\ControlSet001\Control\Devic
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\ControlSet001\Control\Class
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\ControlSet001\Services
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\ RNG
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\ControlSet001\Control\WMI\
Key	HKLM\SYSTEM\ControlSet001\Control\WMI\

Right-click the file name. A pop-up menu will appear.

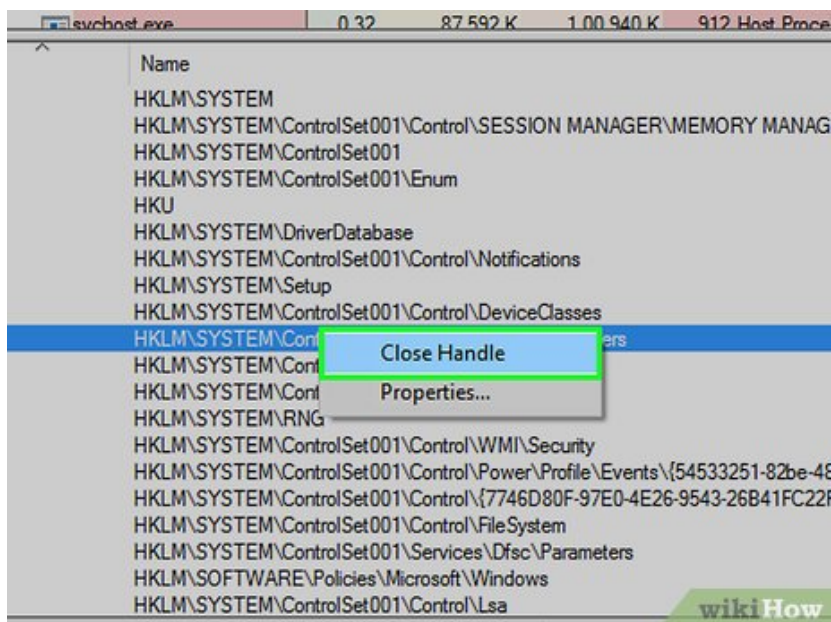
1. If your mouse doesn't have a right-click button, click the right side of the mouse, or use two fingers to click the mouse.
2. If your computer uses a trackpad instead of a mouse, use two fingers to tap the trackpad or press the right side of the trackpad's mouse.

19.

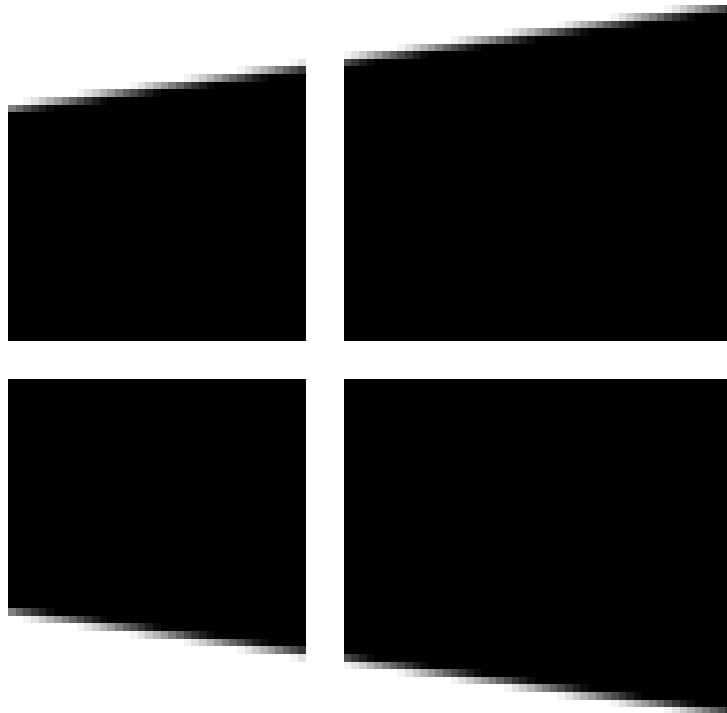


Click **Close Handle**. It's in the right-click pop-up menu. Doing so unlocks the file, making it possible to delete the file.

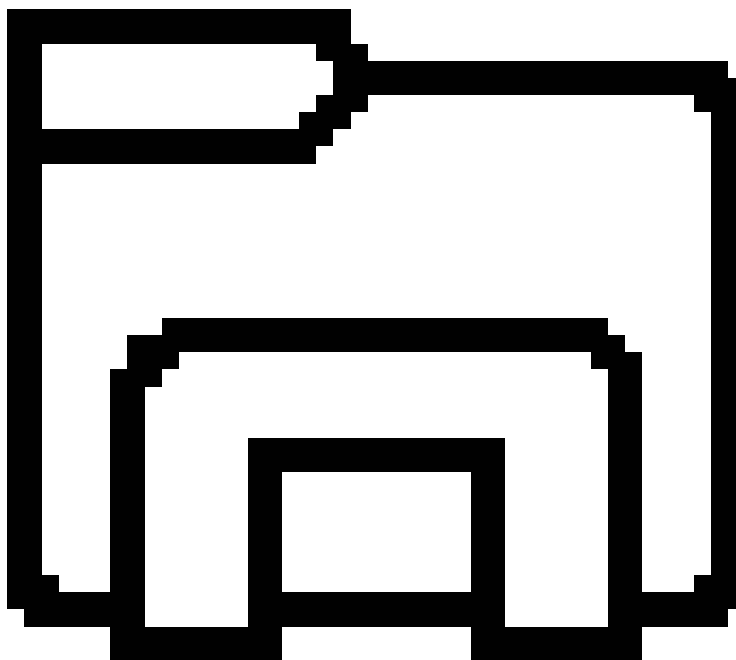
20.



Find your file. Open Start

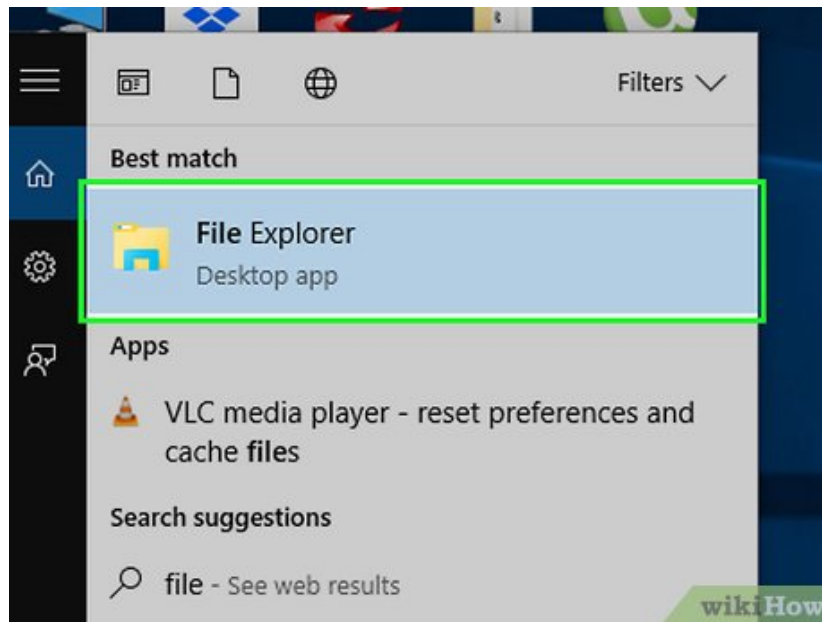


, open **File Explorer**



, and locate the previously locked file.

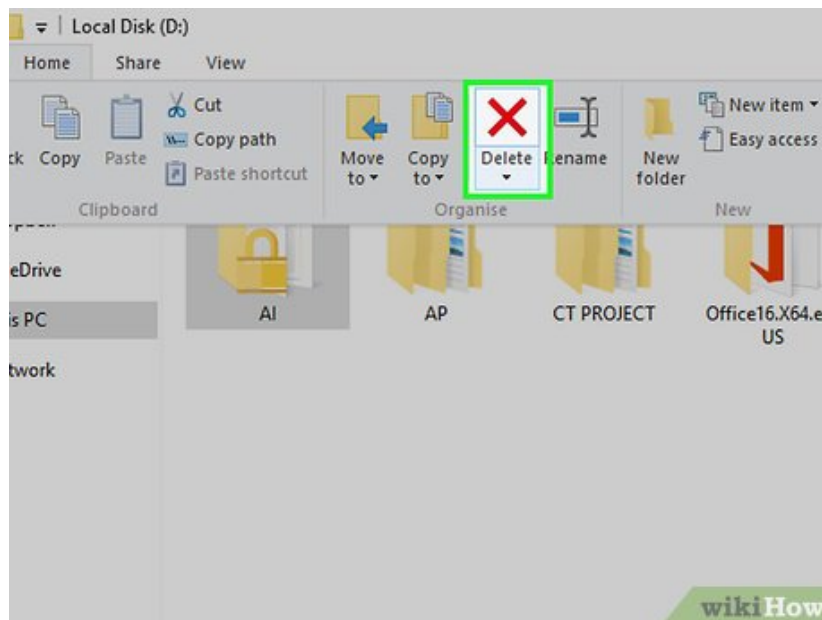
21.



Delete the file. Click the previously locked file, click the **Home** tab, and click **Delete** in the toolbar that appears.

1. Alternatively, you can click the file to select it and then press the `Delete` key.

22.



Empty the Recycle Bin. Double-click the Recycle Bin icon on your desktop, then click the **Manage** tab and click **Empty Recycle Bin** in the toolbar. Your file should be deleted.

Method 3 of 4:

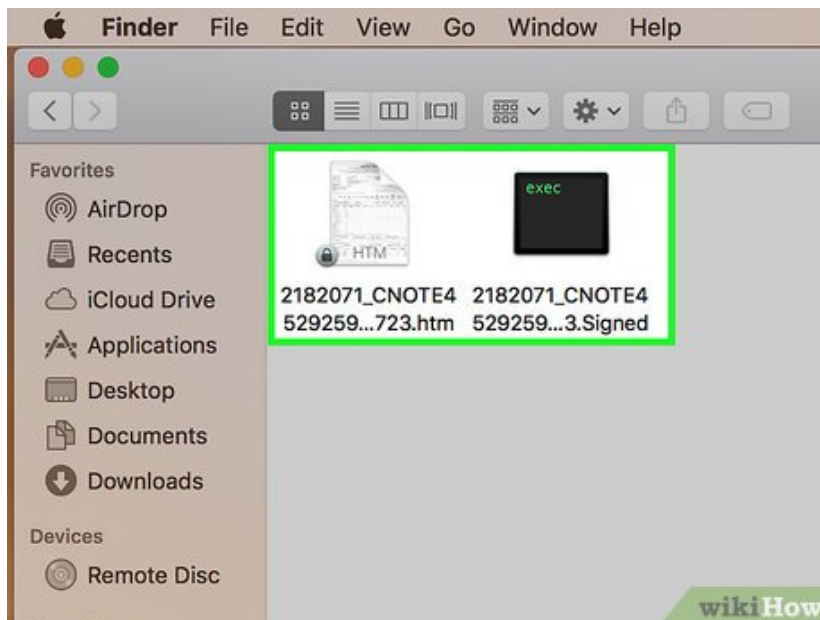
Using the Info Menu on Mac

1.

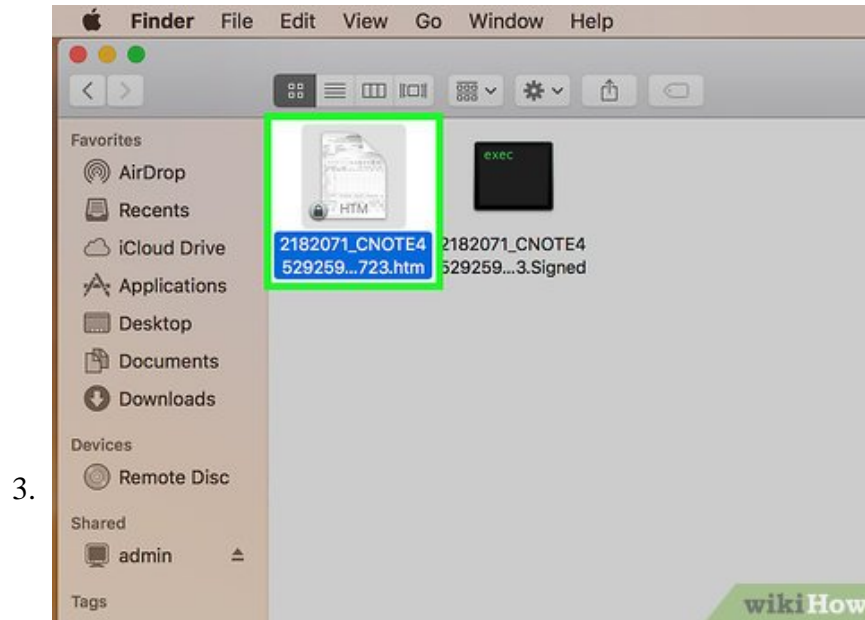


Open Finder. It's the blue, face-like app icon in your Mac's Dock.

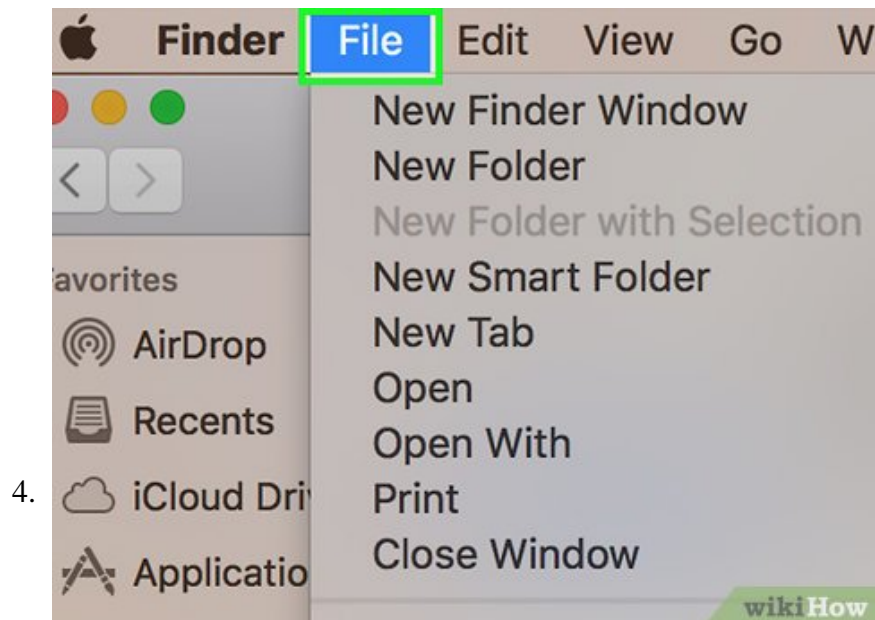
2.



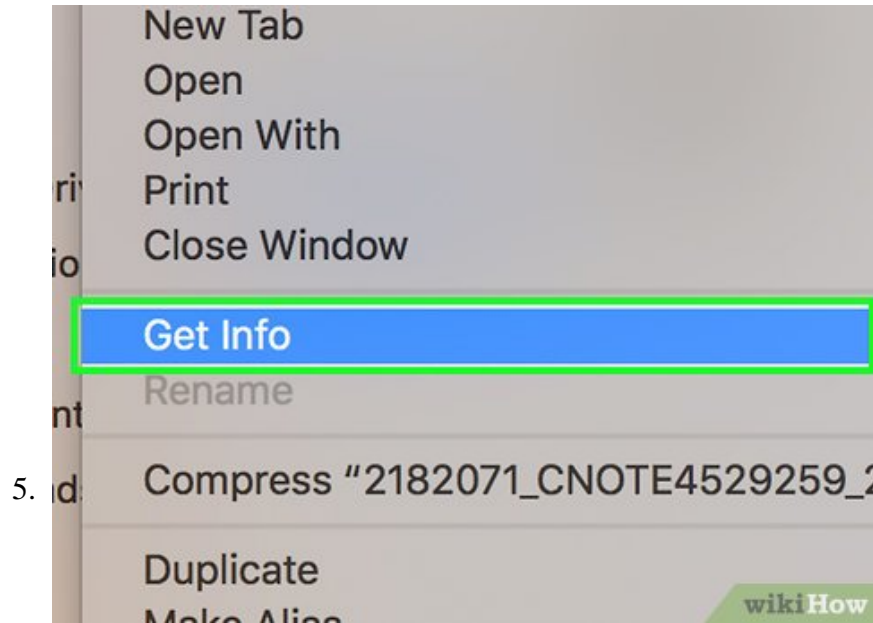
Find the file that you want to delete. On the left side of the Finder window, click the folder in which your locked file is stored.



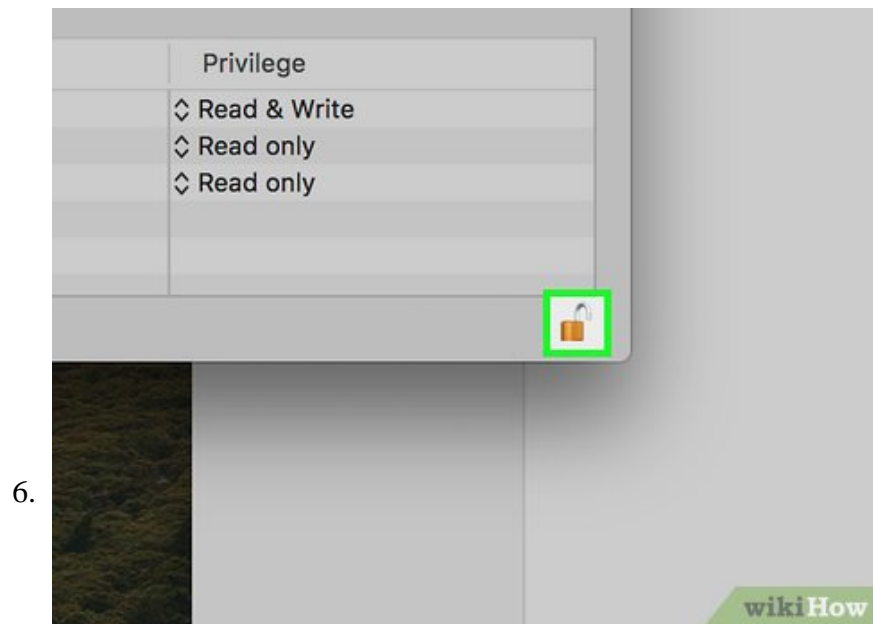
Select the file. Click the file that you want to delete.



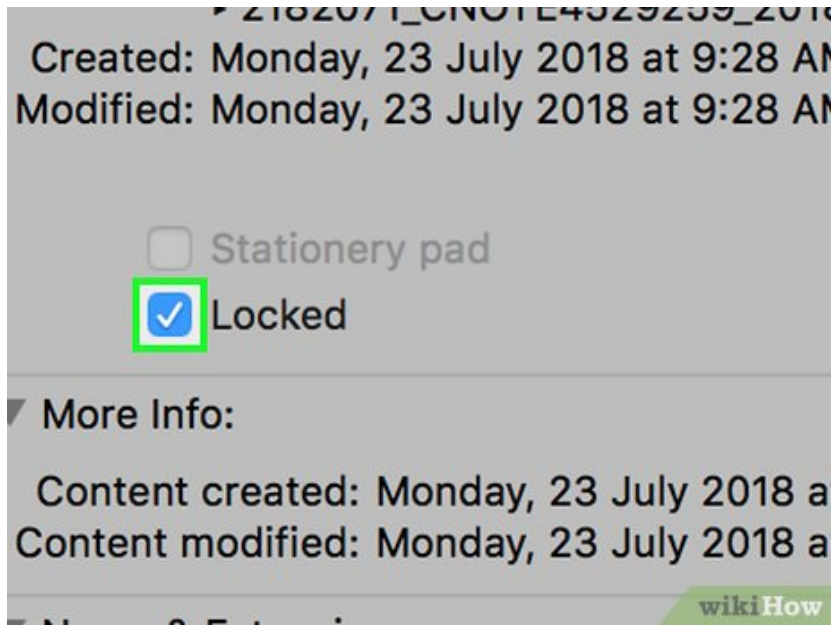
Click **File**. It's a menu item in the upper-left side of the screen. A drop-down menu will appear.



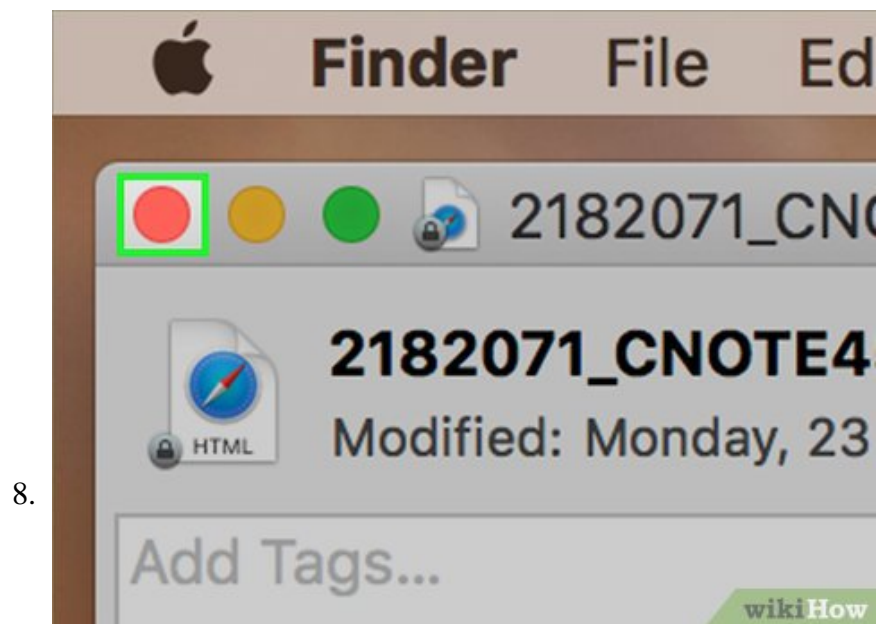
5. Click **Get Info**. This option is in the **File** drop-down menu. Doing so opens a window with the locked file's information.



6. **Unlock the Get Info menu.** If the lock icon in the bottom-right corner of the window is closed, click it, then enter your administrator password.

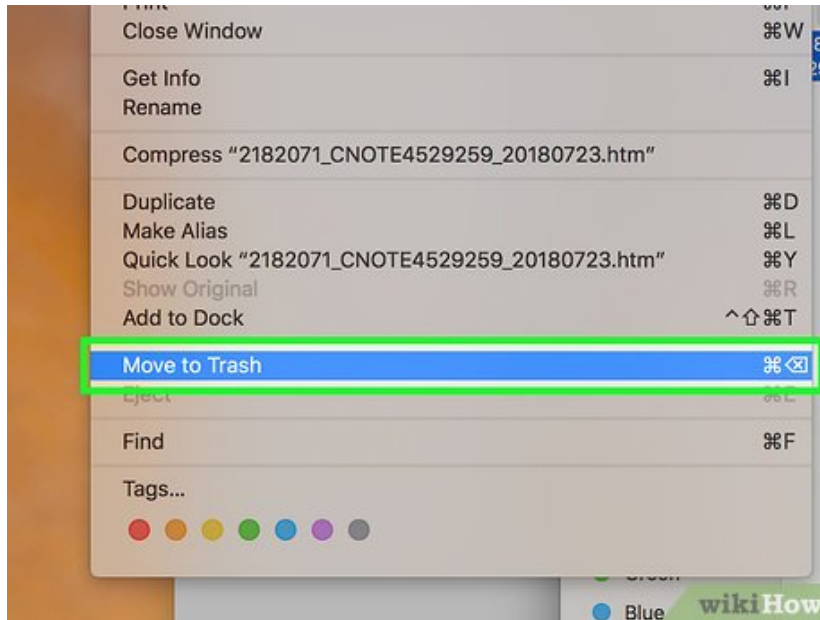


Uncheck the "Locked" box. In the middle of the "Get Info" window, there will be a checkbox with the word "Locked" next to it; uncheck this box to unlock the file.



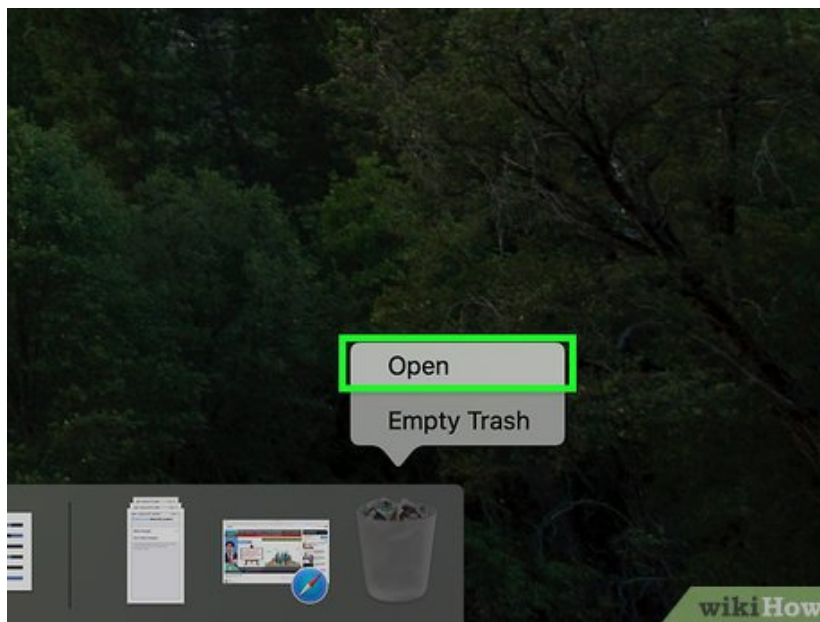
Close the "Get Info" window. Click the red circle in the upper-left corner of the window.

9.



Move the file to the Trash. Select the file, click the **Edit** menu item at the top of the screen, and click **Move to Trash**. The locked file will be sent to the Trash.

10.

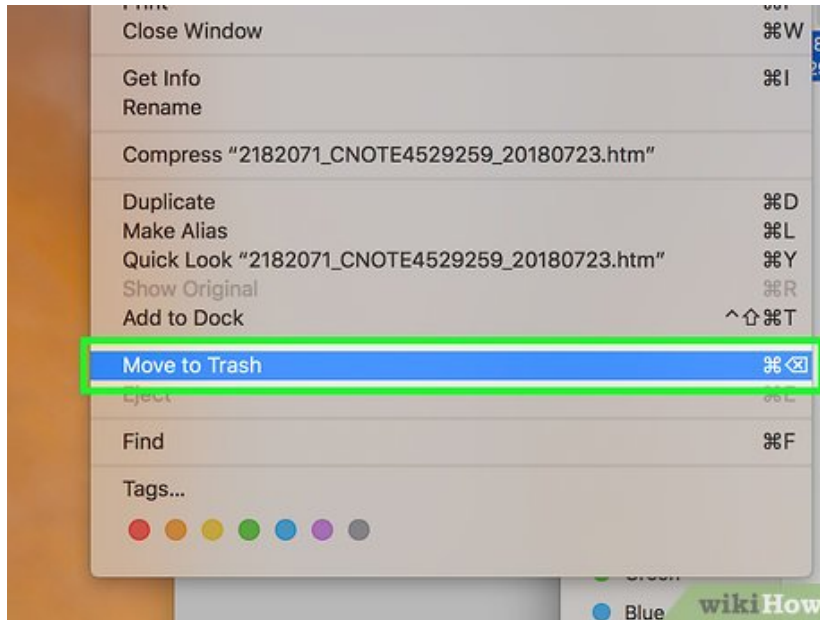


Empty the Trash. Click and hold the Trash icon in your Mac's Dock, then click **Empty Trash** when prompted. Doing so will delete anything in the Trash, including your locked file.

Method 4 of 4:

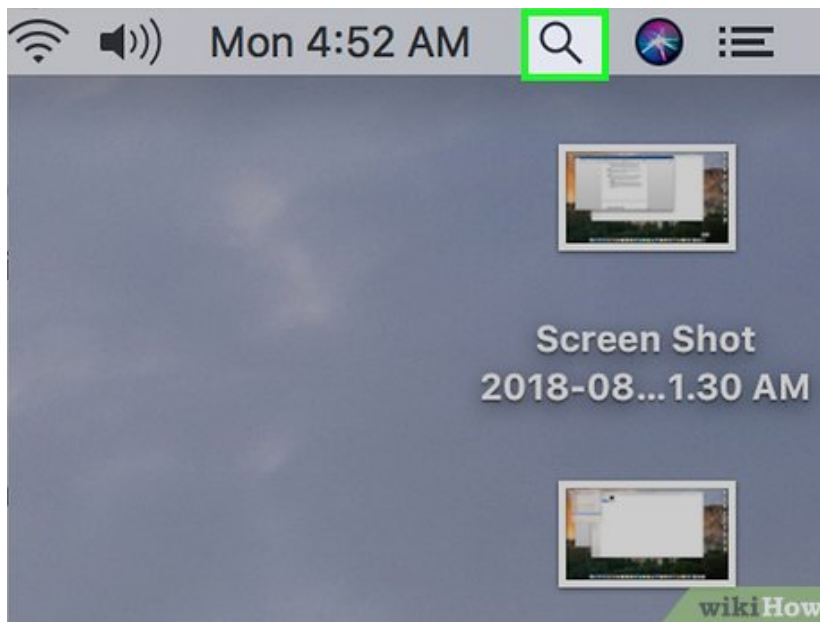
Using Terminal on Mac

1.



Move the locked file to the Trash. Click the locked file to select it, then click the **Edit** menu item at the top of the screen and click **Move to Trash** in the resulting drop-down menu.

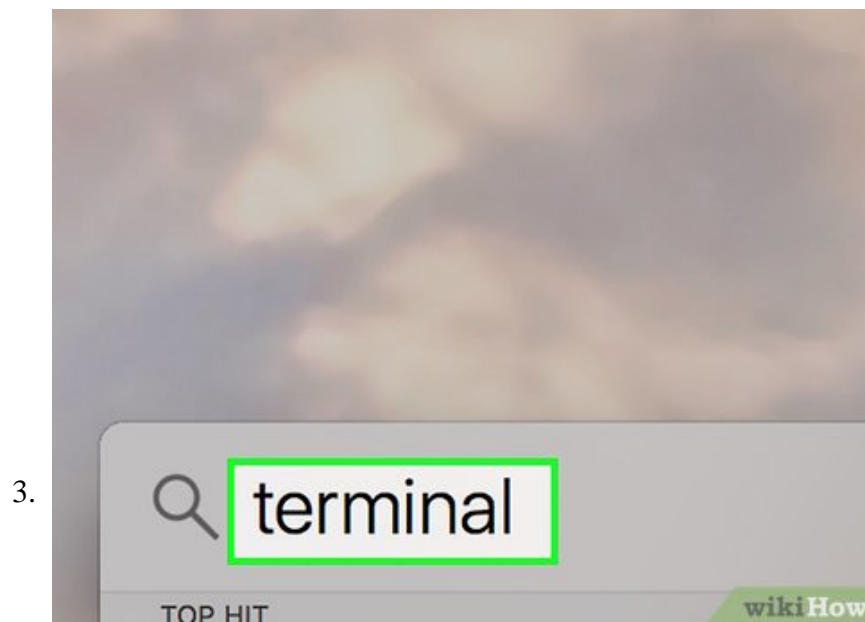
2.



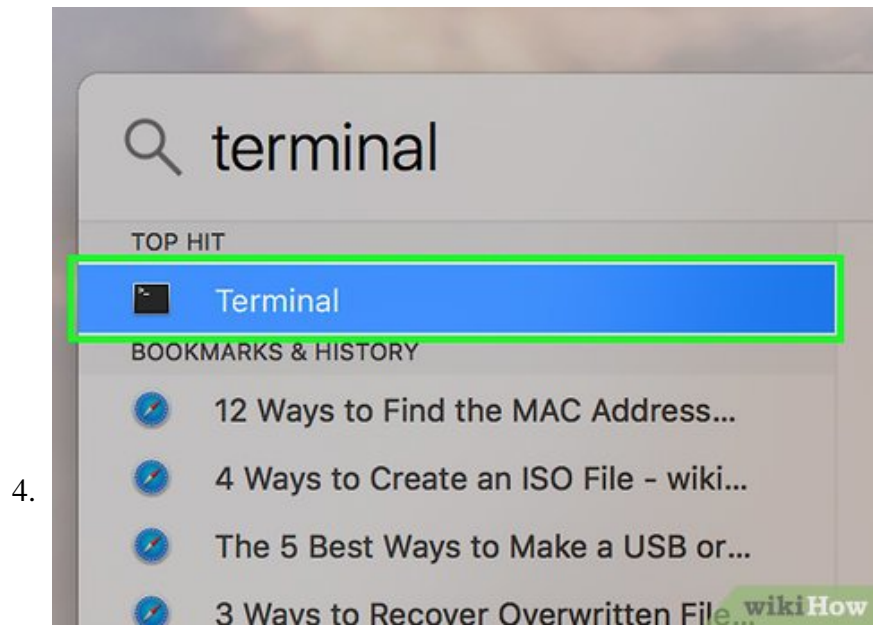
Open Spotlight



. Click the magnifying glass icon in the top-right corner of the screen. A text box will appear.



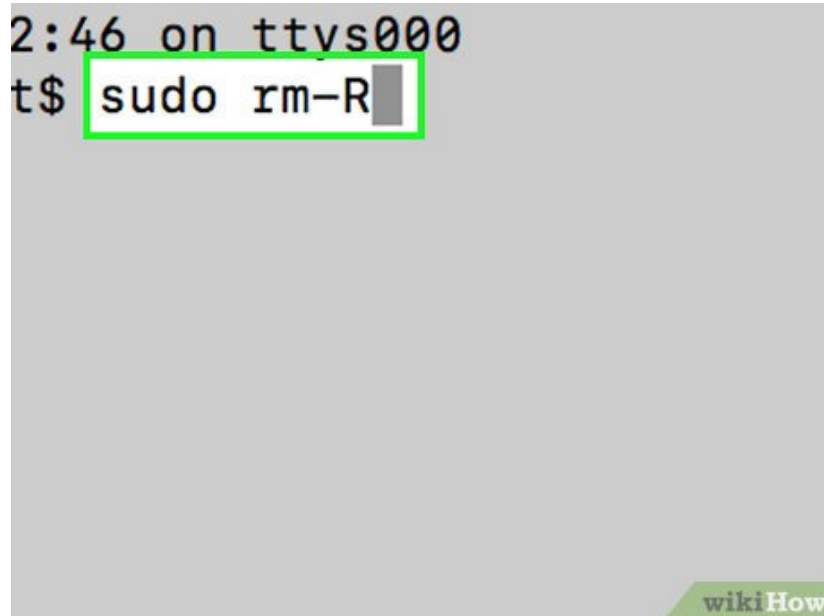
Type in `terminal` . This will search your computer for the Terminal app.



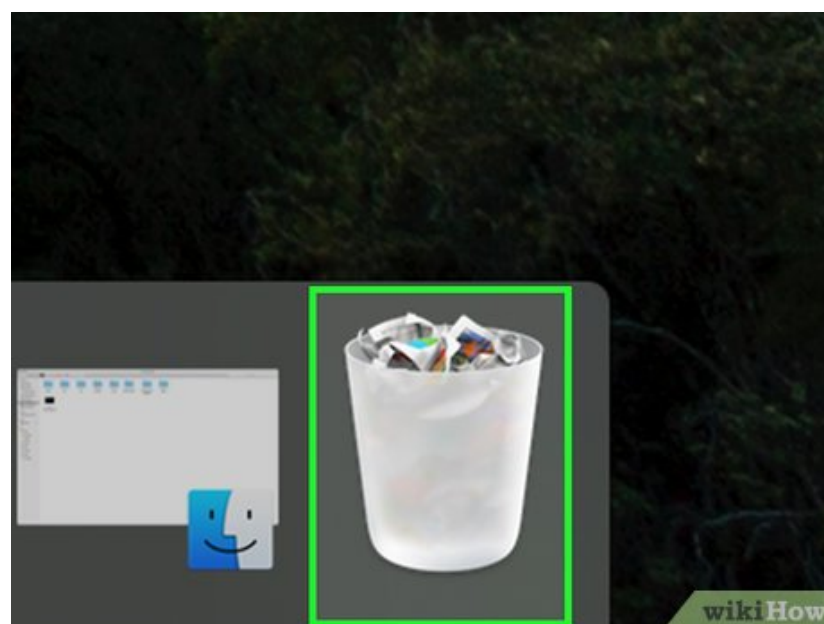
Click



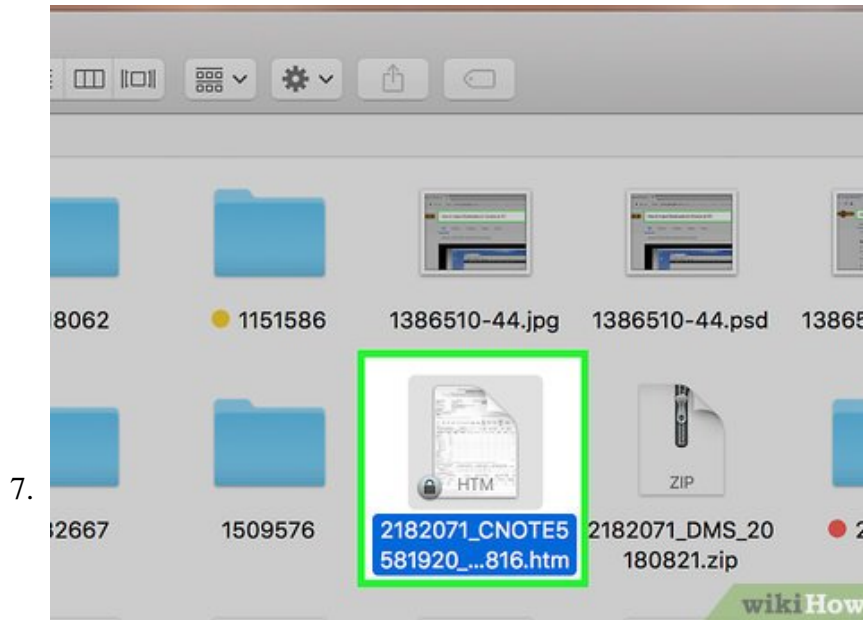
Terminal. It's a black box with a white ">_" icon on it. The Terminal app will open.



Type in the force-empty command. Type `sudo rm -R` into Terminal, making sure to place a space after "R". Don't hit `Return` just yet.^[2]

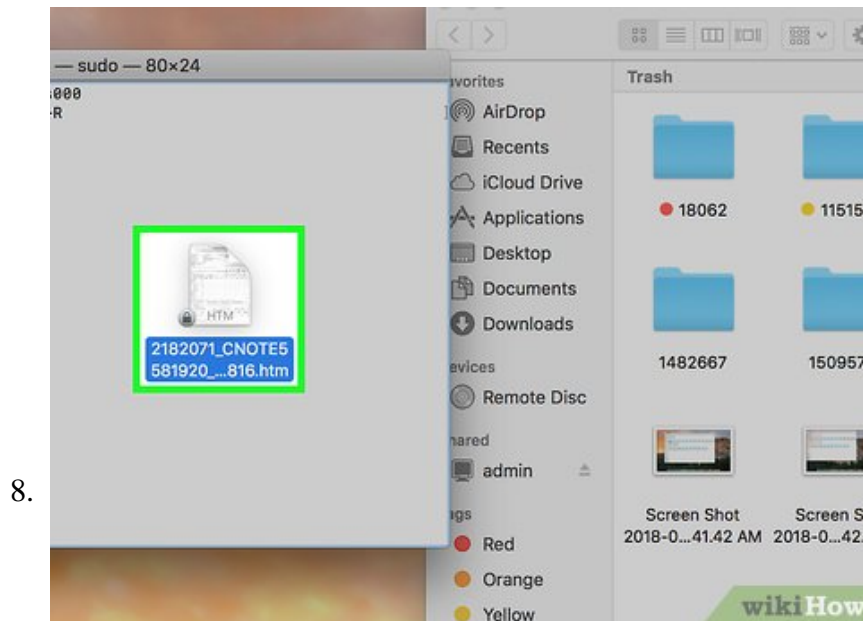


Open the Trash. Hold down `Ctrl` while clicking the Trash icon to do so.



Find the locked file. If there are multiple files in the Trash, find the locked one that you just deleted.

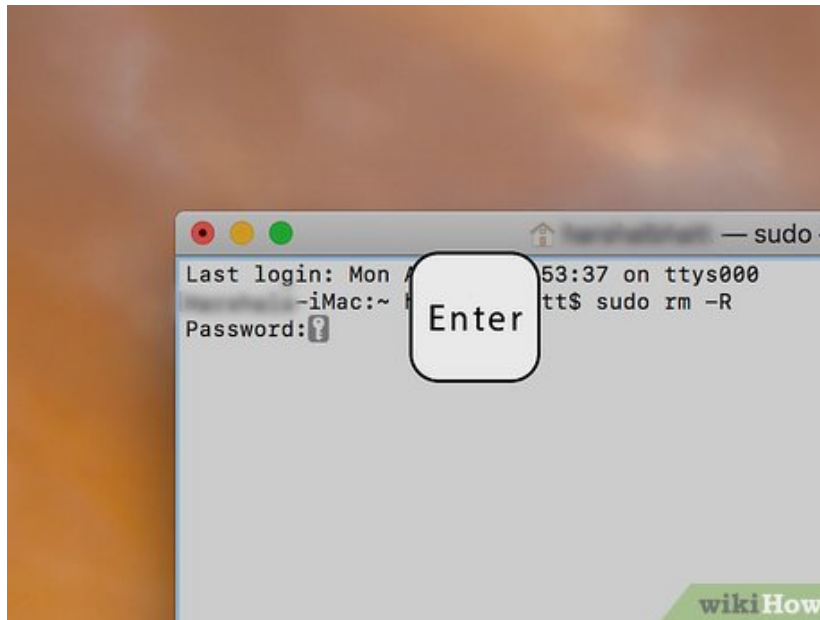
1. In instances where your Trash won't empty even though you've unlocked the files, select all files in the Trash by clicking one file and then pressing `? Command + A` instead.



Copy the file into the Terminal window. Click and drag the locked file onto the Terminal window, then release the mouse.

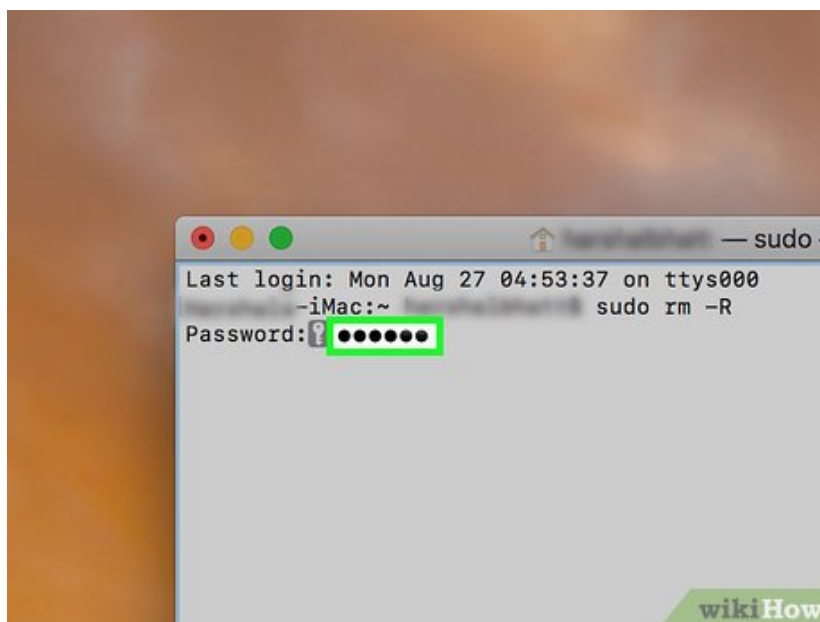
1. If you selected all of the files in the Trash, clicking and dragging one file into Terminal will prompt all of the files to copy into Terminal.

9.



Press ? Return. Once the files have copied into Terminal, pressing ? Return will request permission to run your force-delete command.

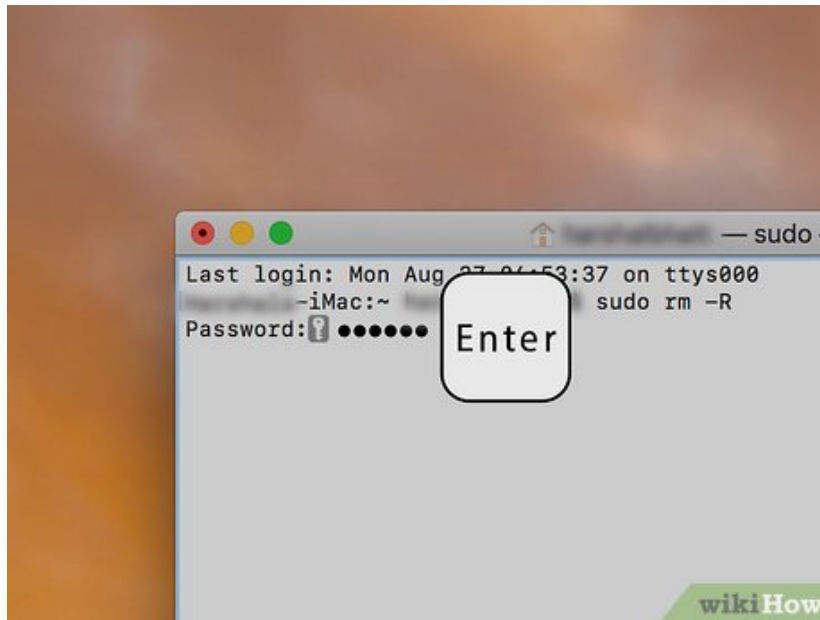
10.



Type in your Administrator password. This is the password that you use to log into your Mac.

1. You won't see letters or characters appear as you type your password in Terminal.

11.



Press ? Return again. Doing so runs the force-delete command and empties the Trash. You should no longer have any locked or persistent files in the Trash.

You finished reading the article "**How to Delete a Locked File**" 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.