

How to fix 'The Original File Could Not Be Found' error in iTunes?

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The cause of the error 'the Original File Could Not Be Found'

An exclamation mark appears next to the song when iTunes doesn't know where to find the MP3 or AAC file for the song. This happens because the iTunes program does not actually store music. Instead, it is like a large library that knows exactly where each music file is stored on the hard drive. When you double-click to play a song, iTunes will move to the hard drive, where it will find the file.

However, if the music file is not where iTunes expects, the program cannot play the song and will report an error.

The most common cause of this error is when moving files from the original location to the iTunes Music folder, deleting files or moving the entire library. These problems can also arise because other programs move files without notifying the user.

How to fix this error with one or two songs

Now that you know the cause of the error, how do you fix this? Follow these steps to fix it quickly if the error only appears on one or two songs:

1. Double-click the song name with an exclamation mark next to it
2. iTunes displays an error " **the original file could not be found** ". In that pop-up window, click **Locate** .
3. **Browse the** computer's hard drive until you find the song position.
4. Double-click the song (or click the **Open** button).
5. Another window will pop up, suggesting users to find other missing files. Click **Find Files** .
6. iTunes will find additional files or notice that it cannot find any more files. Click the continue button.
7. Try playing the song again. If the song is played, the exclamation mark will disappear.

This technique does not move the location of the music file but only updates the location of the music file.

How to fix this error with many songs

If the exclamation mark appears next to multiple songs, updating the location for each individual song will take a lot of time. In this case, the problem is usually solved by merging the iTunes library.

This feature of iTunes scans the hard drive for music files and then automatically moves them to the correct location in the iTunes Music folder.

To use this function, follow these instructions:

1. Open iTunes
2. Click the **File** menu
3. Click **Library**
4. Click **Organize Library**
5. In the popup window, click **Consolidate files**
6. Click **OK** .

iTunes then scans the entire hard drive for missing files, creates copies of them and moves those copies to the correct location in the iTunes Music folder. However, copying files on iTunes will cause each song to have two copies and, of course, double the amount of memory. For some people this is okay. If you don't like having 2 copies for the same file, just delete the original file.

What if your iTunes library is on an external hard drive?

If the entire iTunes library is run from an external hard drive, links between songs and iTunes may be lost over time, especially after the hard drive is unplugged. In that case, you will get an exclamation error for the same reason (iTunes does not know the location of the files), but the fix for this error will be a bit different.

To reset the link between iTunes and your library:

1. Click the **iTunes** menu on the Mac or **Edit** menu on the PC
2. Click **Preferences**
3. Click the **Advanced** tab
4. Click the **Change** button in the **iTunes Media folder location section**
5. Browse your computer and locate your external hard drive
6. Browse to determine your iTunes Media folder and select it
7. Double click on it or click **Open** .
8. Click **OK** in the **Preferences** window.

When done, the iTunes program will know where to find music files and you can listen to music as usual.

How to prevent the error 'The Original File Could Not Be Found Error' in the future?

Do you want to prevent this problem from happening? You can do this by changing a setting in iTunes. Here are the steps:

1. Open iTunes
2. Click the **iTunes** menu on the Mac or **Edit** menu on the PC.
3. Click **Preferences**
4. In the pop-up window, click the **Advanced** tab
5. Select **Keep iTunes Media folder organized**
6. Click **OK**.

By enabling this setting, each time you add new songs to iTunes, the song will automatically be added to the correct location in your iTunes Music folder, regardless of where the file was located before.

This will not fix any songs with errors 'the original file could not be found', but will prevent this error from happening in the future.

See more:

1. Fix PC error not receiving iPhone in iTunes
2. How to fix iPhone music sync problems with iTunes when updating iOS 11
3. Does iTunes not work on Windows 10? This is how to fix it

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