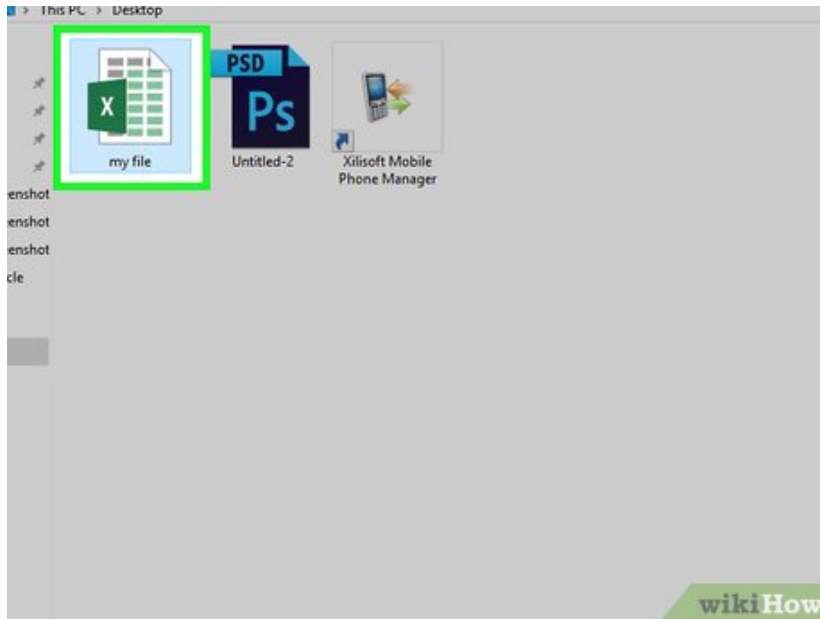


How to Open a Password Protected Excel File

This wikiHow teaches you how to remove the password from a protected Excel spreadsheet, as well as how to attempt to find out the password for an encrypted Excel file. Keep in mind that, while removing the password from an editing-locked...

Method 1 of 2:

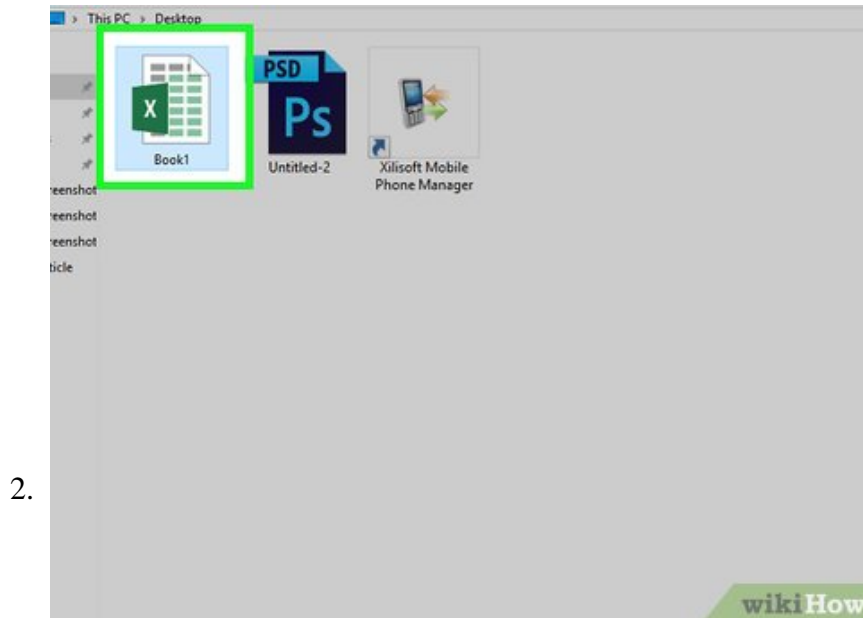
Removing Password Protection from a Sheet



1.

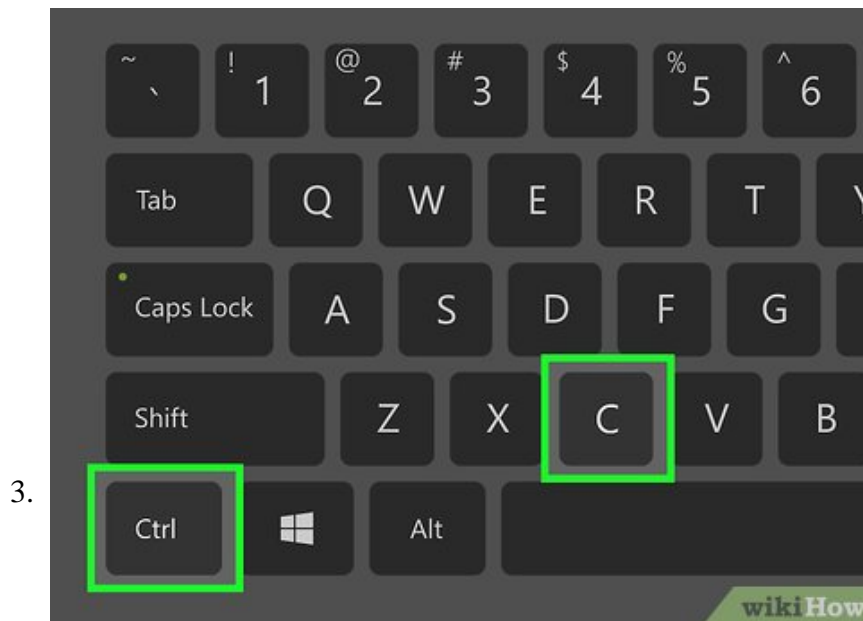
Understand the conditions under which you can do this. If only the Excel sheet is protected—that is, if you can open the Excel file and view its contents but not edit it—then you can use this method to remove the password protection on both Windows and Mac computers.

1. If the Excel file itself is encrypted, you cannot use this method to remove the password.



Check to see if the Excel file is encrypted. The easiest way to do this is by double-clicking the Excel file; if the file opens like usual when you double-click it, the sheet is protected but the file is not.

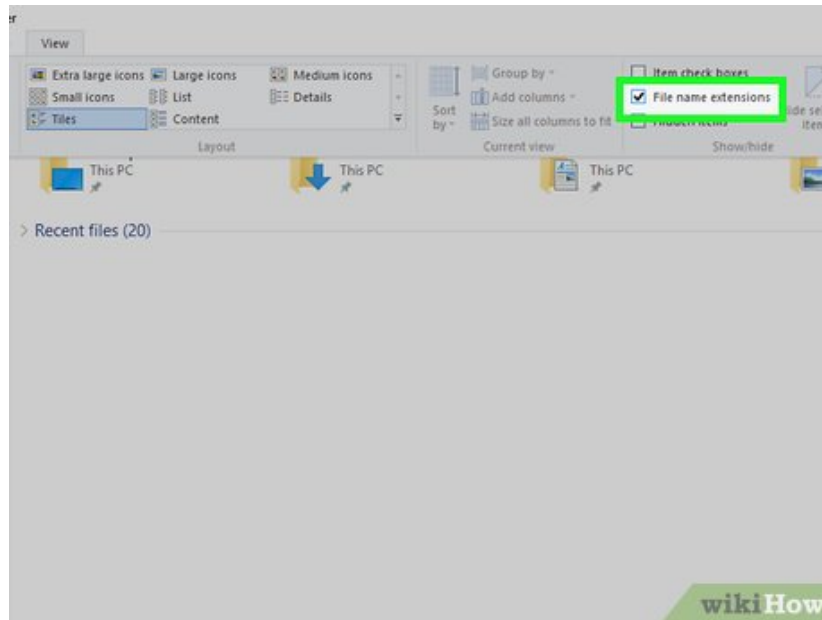
1. You should see a pop-up warning appear if you attempt to edit the Excel sheet.
2. If you're immediately prompted for a password upon double-clicking the file, the file is encrypted and you cannot use this method to open it—try the next method.



Make a copy of the protected sheet. Click the Excel file that contains the sheet you want to unprotect, then press Ctrl + C (Windows) or Command + C (Mac) and paste it elsewhere by pressing Ctrl + V (Windows) or Command + V (Mac).

1. This is necessary in case you accidentally corrupt the original version of the file in the process.

4.

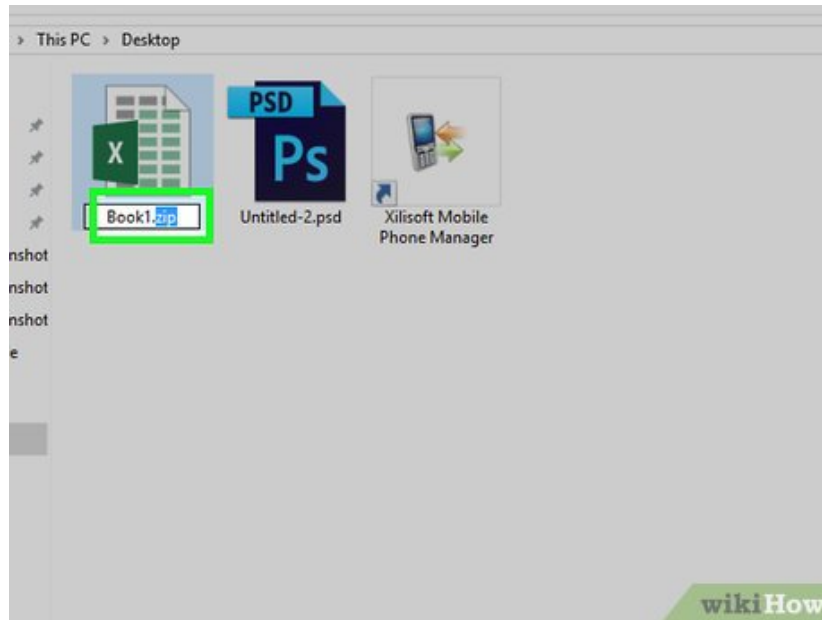


Enable file extensions. Skip this step on a Mac. If you're using a Windows computer, you'll need to make sure you can view and change file extension names by doing the following:

1. Open



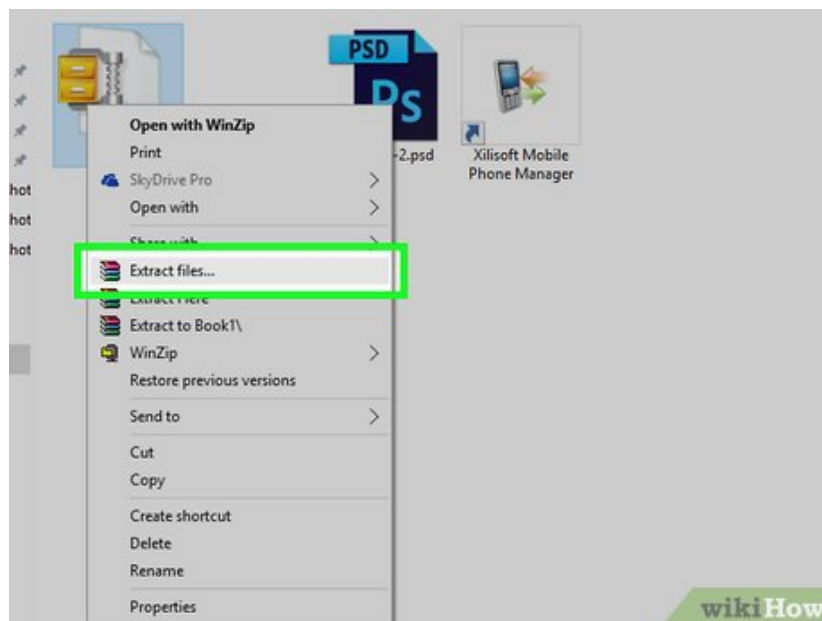
2. Click **File Explorer** (or press ? Win + E).
3. Click **View**
3. Check the "File name extensions" box.



5.

Change the Excel file into a ZIP folder. To do so:

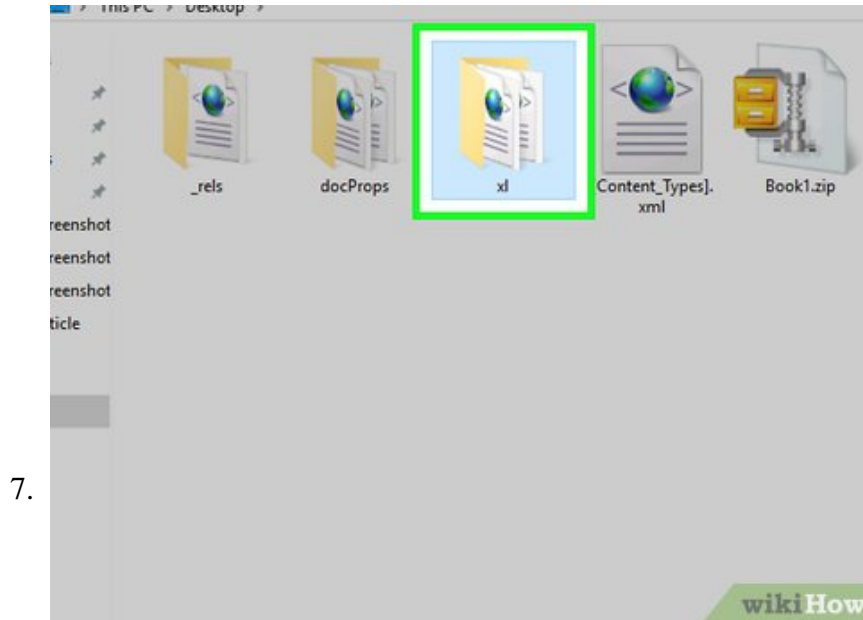
1. *Windows* — Right-click the Excel file, click **Rename**, delete the ".xlsx" text at the end of the file's name, and type in `zip`. Make sure that you keep the period between the file's name and "zip". Press `Enter`, then click **Yes** when prompted.
2. *Mac* — Click the Excel file, click **File**, click **Get Info**, delete the ".xlsx" text at the end of the file's name, and type in `zip`. Make sure that you keep the period between the file's name and "zip". Press `Return`, then click **Use .zip** when prompted.



6.

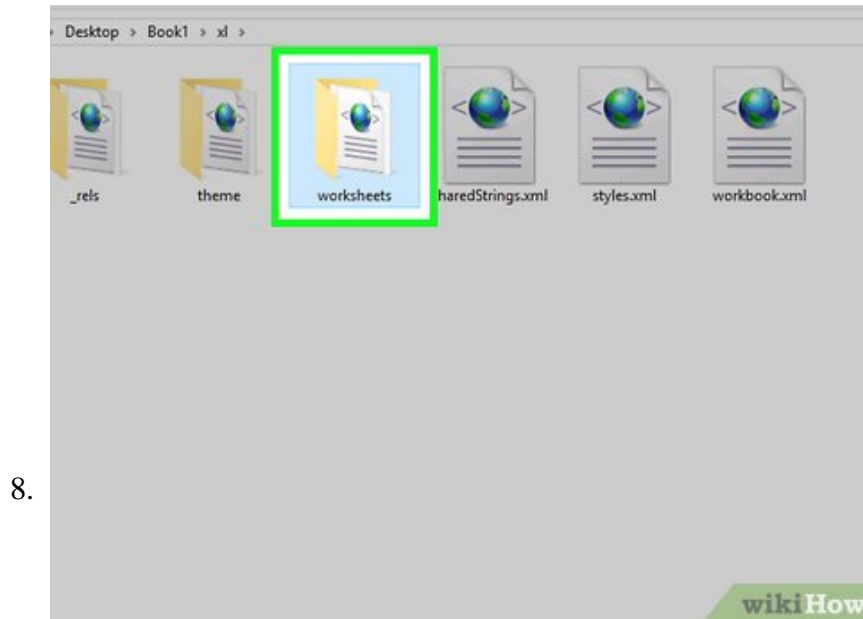
Extract the ZIP folder. This process will vary depending on your computer's operating system:

1. *Windows* — Right-click the ZIP folder, click **Extract All...** in the drop-down menu, and click **Extract** when prompted. The extracted folder should open.
2. *Mac* — Double-click the ZIP folder, then wait for the extracted folder to open.

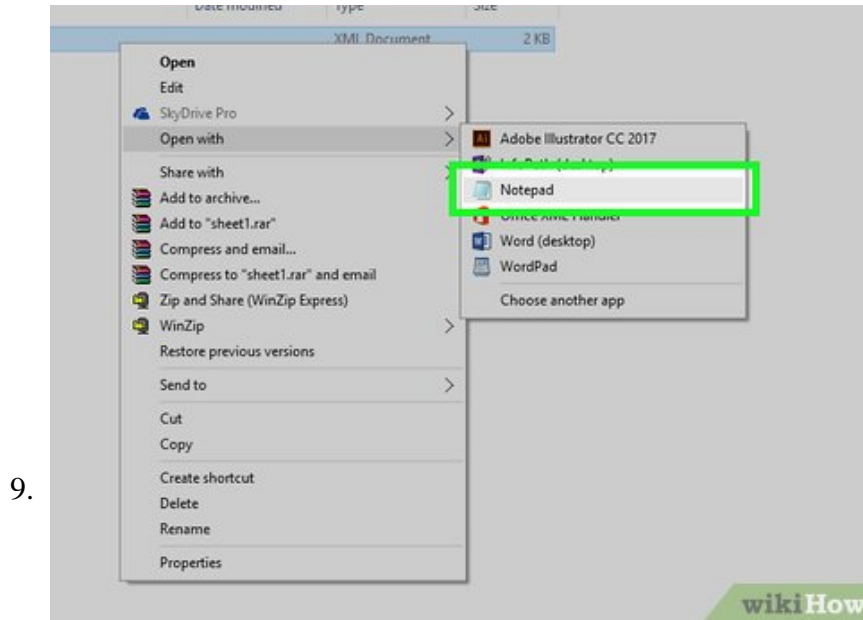


Open the "xl" folder. Double-click this folder in the extracted folder to do so.

1. If the extracted folder didn't open for some reason, first double-click the regular folder with the same name as your ZIP folder.

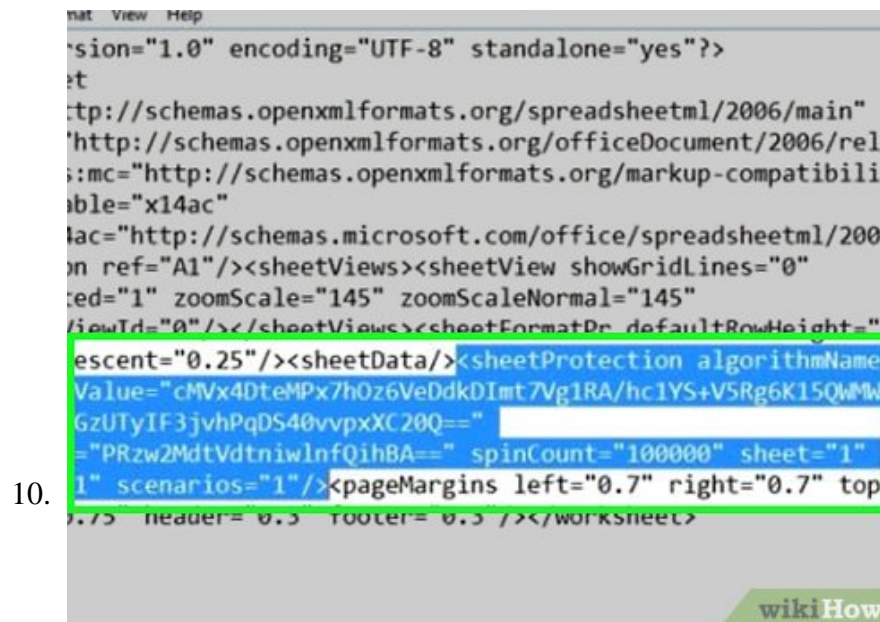


Open the "worksheets" folder. It's near the top of the "xl" folder.



Open the sheet in a text editor. Depending on your computer's operating system, do one of the following:

1. *Windows* — Right-click the sheet you want to unlock (e.g., "Sheet1"), select **Open with** in the drop-down menu, and click **Notepad** in the resulting pop-out menu.
2. *Mac* — Click the sheet you want to unlock (e.g., "Sheet1"), click **File**, select **Open With**, and click **TextEdit**.



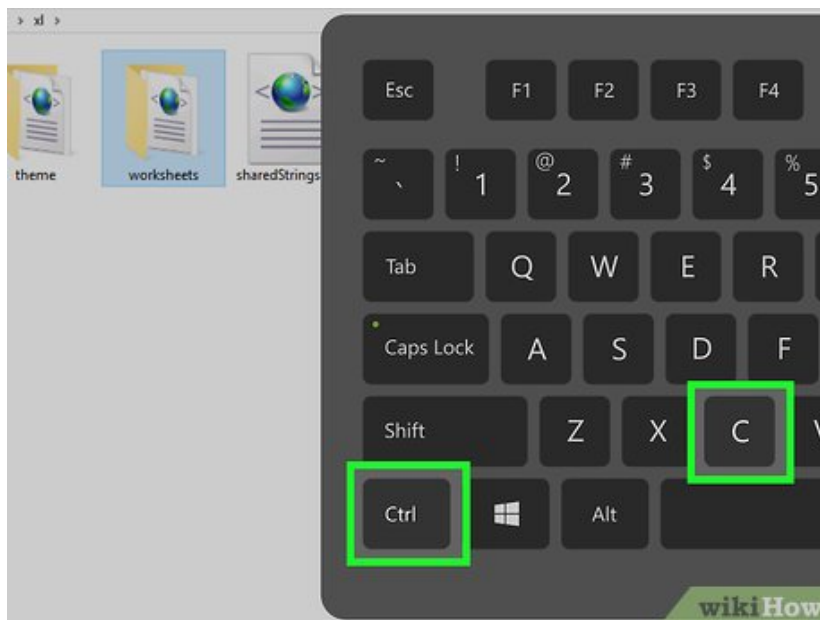
Remove the password protection code. Find the "sheetProtection" section that's inside the ">" brackets, then delete everything from "" on the other side of the sheet protection algorithm.

11.



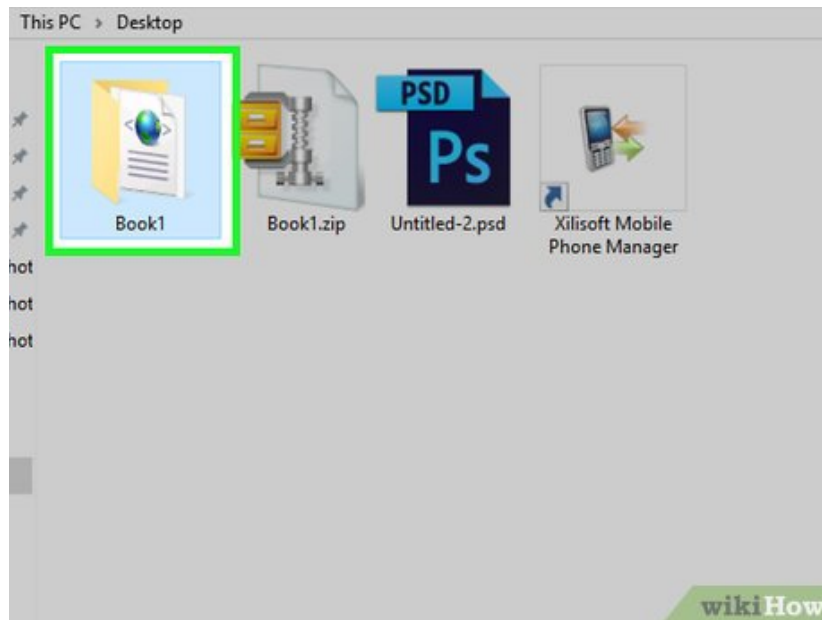
Save your changes and close the text editor. Press either `Ctrl + S` (Windows) or `Command + S` (Mac), then click the **X** (or red circle on a Mac) in the corner of the text editor.

12.



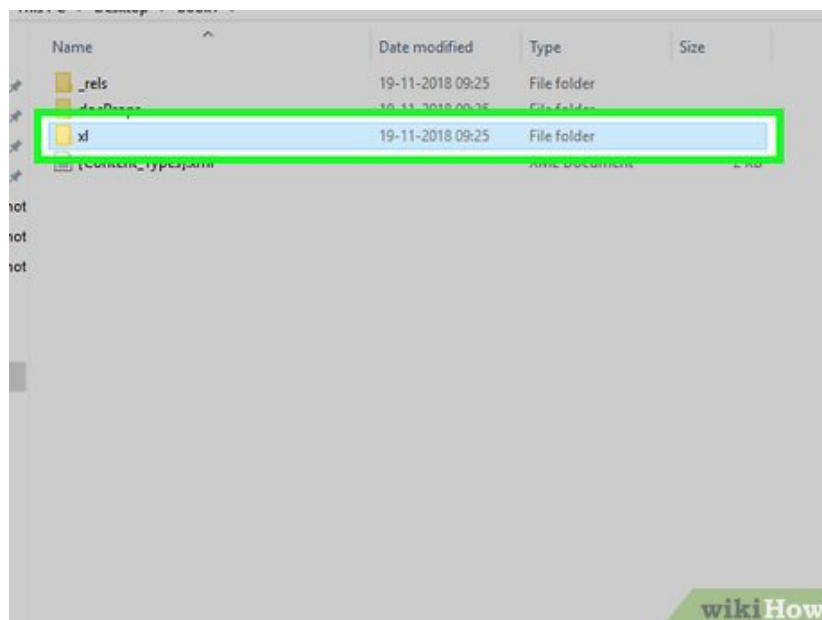
Copy the "worksheets" folder. Click the "Back" button to go back to the "xl" folder, then click the "worksheets" folder and press either `Ctrl + C` (Windows) or `Command + C` (Mac).

13.



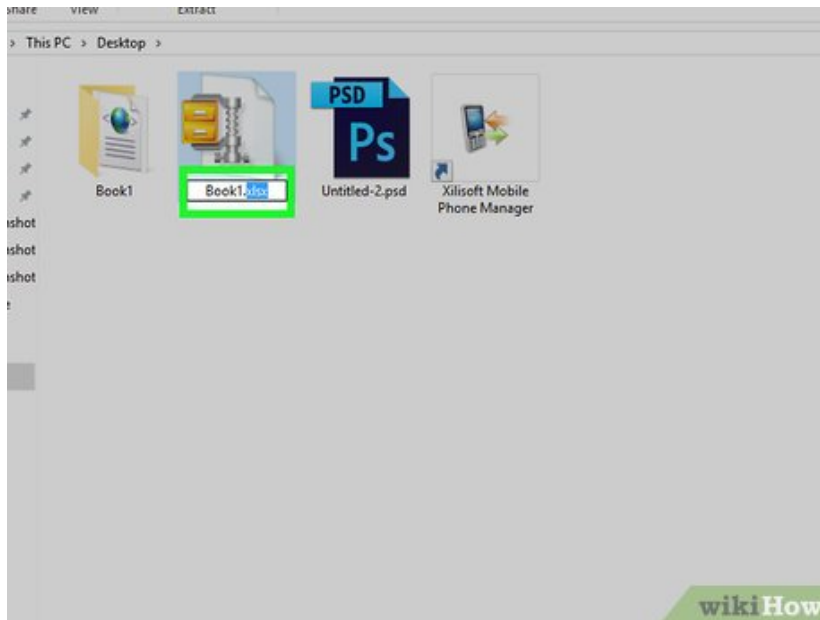
Open the ZIP folder. Double-click the ZIP folder that you created earlier.

14.



Replace the ZIP folder's "worksheets" folder with your copied one. Navigate to the ZIP folder's "worksheets" location by double-clicking the "xl" folder, then delete the "worksheets" folder, click a blank space in the current folder, and press either Ctrl + V (Windows) or ⌘ + V (Mac). This will paste the copied "worksheets" folder into the ZIP folder.

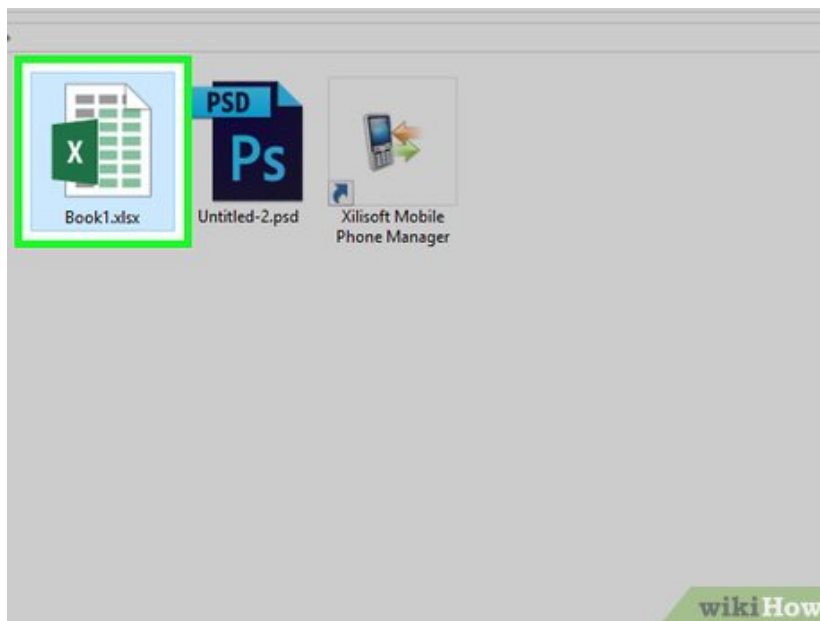
15.



Change the ZIP folder back into an Excel file. Close the ZIP folder, then do one of the following:

1. *Windows* — Right-click the ZIP folder, click **Rename**, replace the "zip" text with "xlsx", and press **Enter**. Click **Yes** when prompted.
2. *Mac* — Click the ZIP folder, click **File**, click **Get Info**, replace the "zip" text in the title with "xlsx", and press **Return**. Click **Use .xlsx** when prompted.

16.

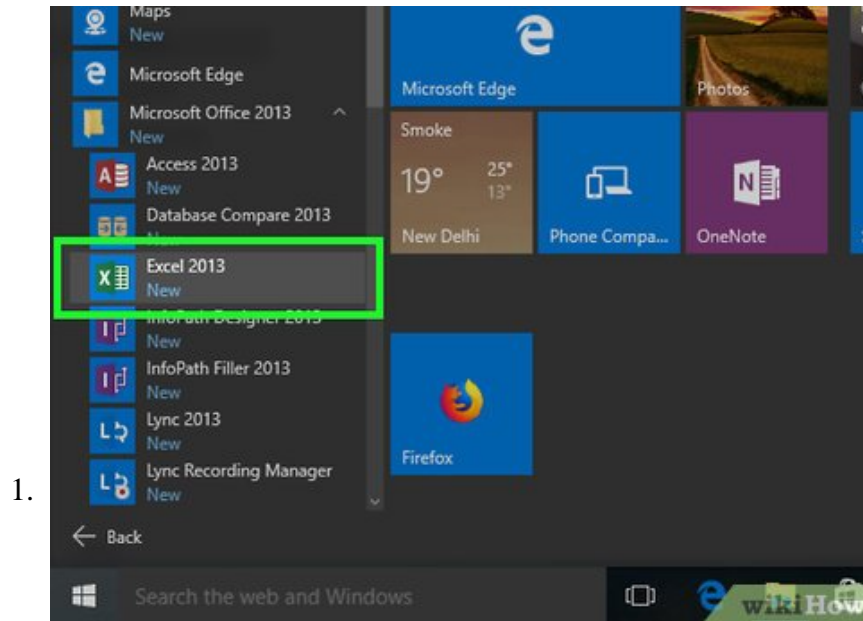


Open your Excel sheet. Double-click the Excel sheet, then edit it as needed.

1. If you receive an error that the Excel sheet is damaged, you probably removed extra code when you were attempting to remove the password protection algorithm. Repeat the above steps, making sure to *only* remove the text between the brackets () and the brackets themselves.

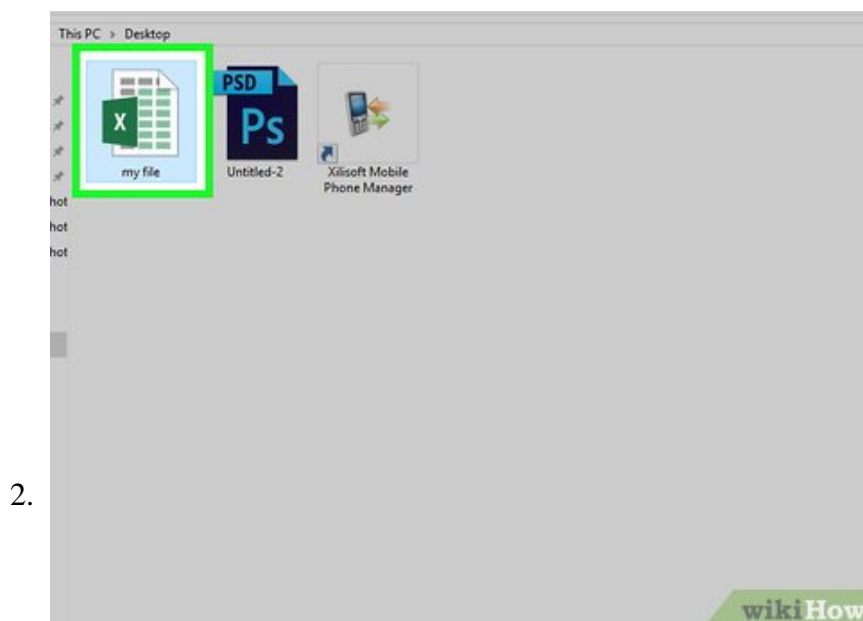
Method 2 of 2:

Cracking an Excel File Password



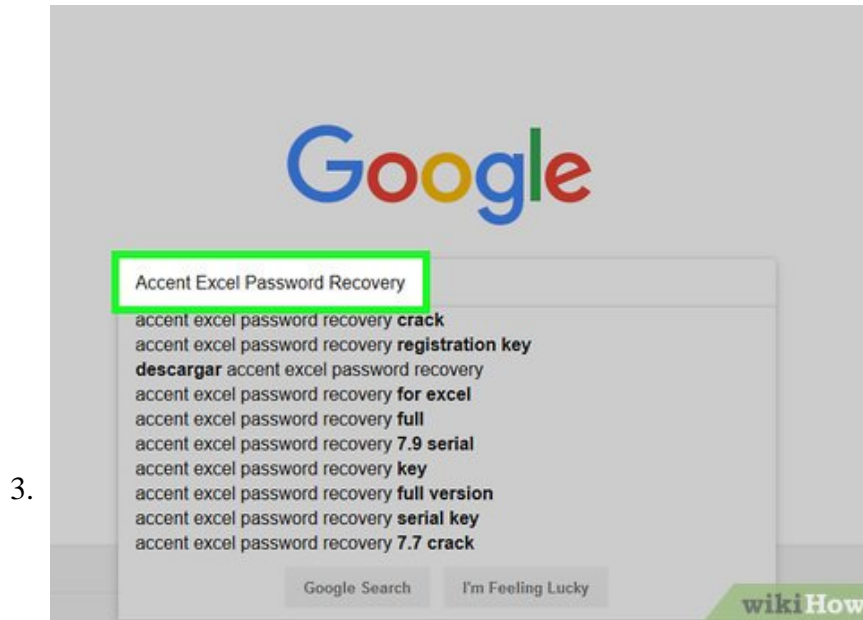
Understand that it may be impossible to crack the password. Modern versions of Excel, such as Excel 2013 and 2016, use advanced encryption techniques which make brute-force methods used by most password crackers virtually useless due to how long the password can take to crack (anywhere from weeks to years depending on the password strength).

1. It is impossible to crack an Excel file without purchasing a password cracker, as free versions of reputable password crackers usually only cover up to Excel 2010.



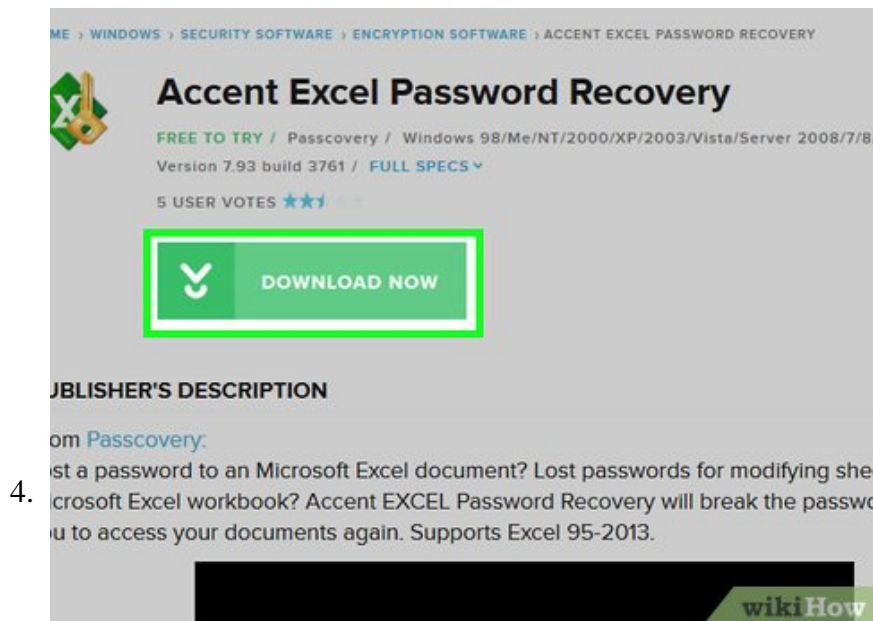
Make sure your Excel file is protected. If your Excel file truly is encrypted, double-clicking the Excel file will prompt you for a password before you can view the file's contents.

1. If double-clicking the Excel file opens the Excel worksheet, your Excel file may be protected from editing instead. If so, you can use the previous method to unlock it.

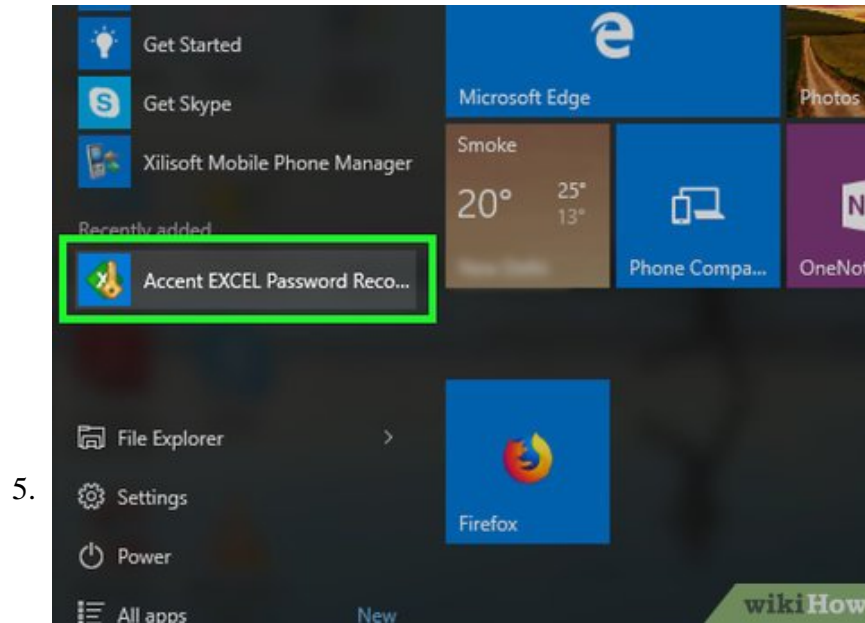


Purchase an Excel password cracker. Since the password can't be removed from the Excel file, you'll need to use a paid program to find the password so that you can enter it.

1. Passware Excel Key is the only reputable password cracker that covers Excel versions up to 2016.
2. Accent Excel Password Recovery and Rixler Excel Password Recovery Master are other options, though they only cover Excel versions up to 2013.

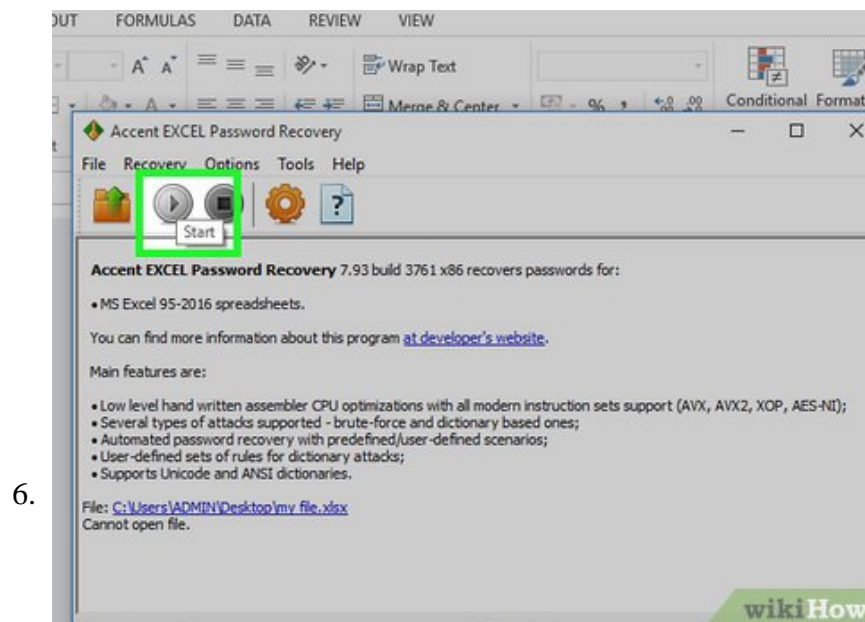


Install and open the password cracker. This process will depend on both the program and your computer's operating system, though in most cases you'll download a setup file, double-click it, follow the on-screen instructions, and then open the program once it finishes installing.



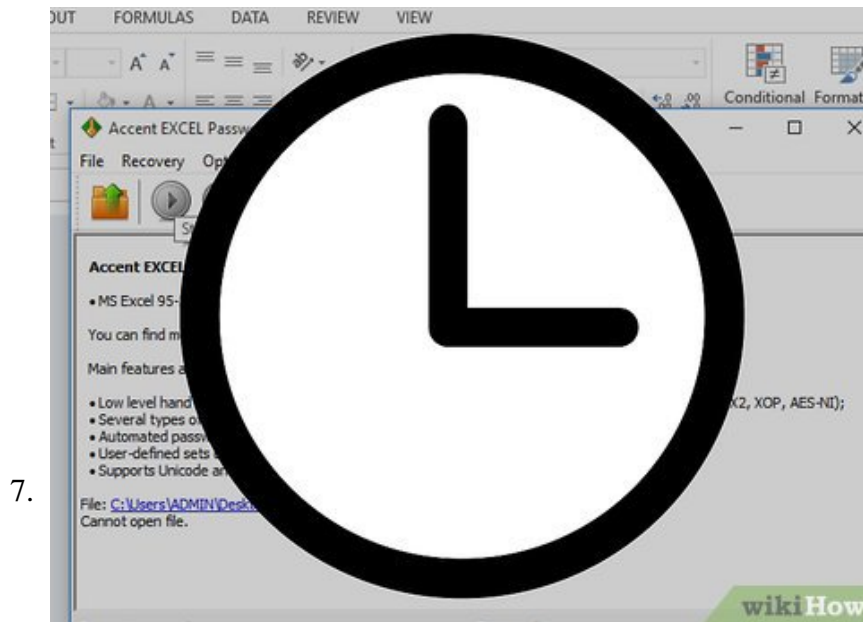
Select your Excel file. Using the password cracker's interface, find your Excel file, click it to select it, and click **Open** or **Choose**.

1. Again, this step will vary depending on your chosen password cracker. For example, if you're using Passware Excel Key, you'll first have to click **Remove a password** before you can select a file.



Run the password cracker. If necessary, click the **Start** or **Run** button in the password cracker window to begin cracking your Excel file's password.

1. You may have the option of selecting a specific type of attack (e.g., brute-force) here.



Wait for results. Unfortunately, brute-force attacks can take anywhere from a few hours to a few months to crack your Excel file's password. Depending on the contents of the Excel file, it might be necessary to abandon your efforts if you haven't found the password within a day or so.

1. If the password cracker does find the correct password, it will display the password in a pop-up window. You can then enter the password in the prompt that appears when you open the Excel file.

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