

# How to Reset a Windows XP or Vista Password

This wikiHow teaches you how to reset a forgotten Windows XP or Vista password. You can do this by using the default, hidden administrator account, or you can use a password reset or installation disc on Vista if you have one. Restart your...

Part 1 of 3:

## Opening the Admin Account



**Restart your computer.** Open **Start**, click the



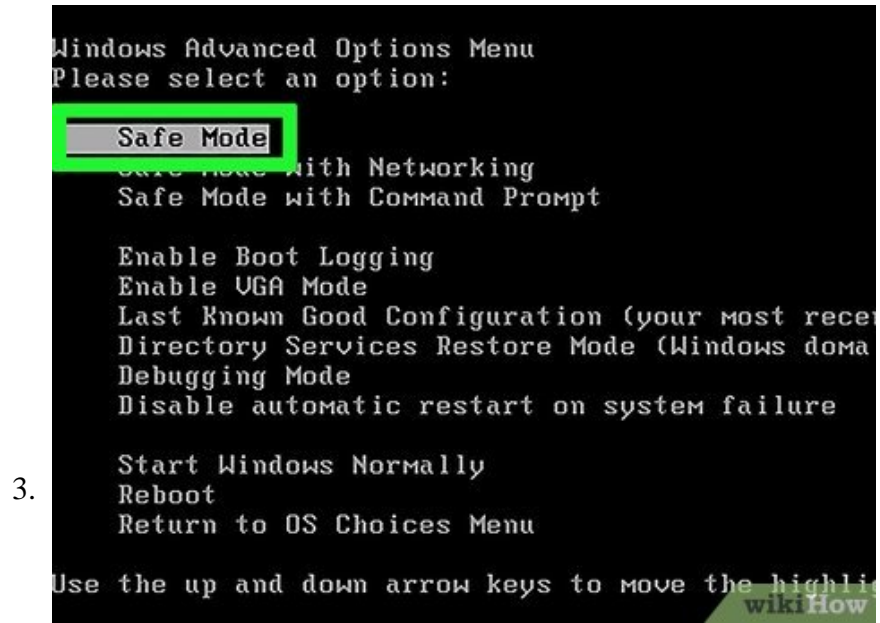
**Power** icon, and then click **Restart**.



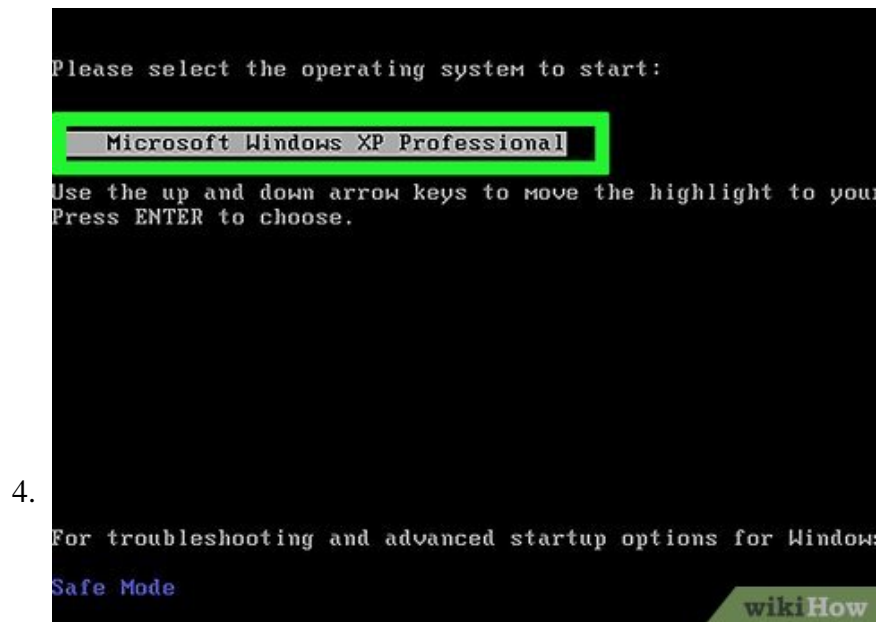
2.

**Press the "advanced options" key.** This is typically the F8 key, though your computer's key may vary. Pressing this key when prompted during the restart period will open the advanced options menu.

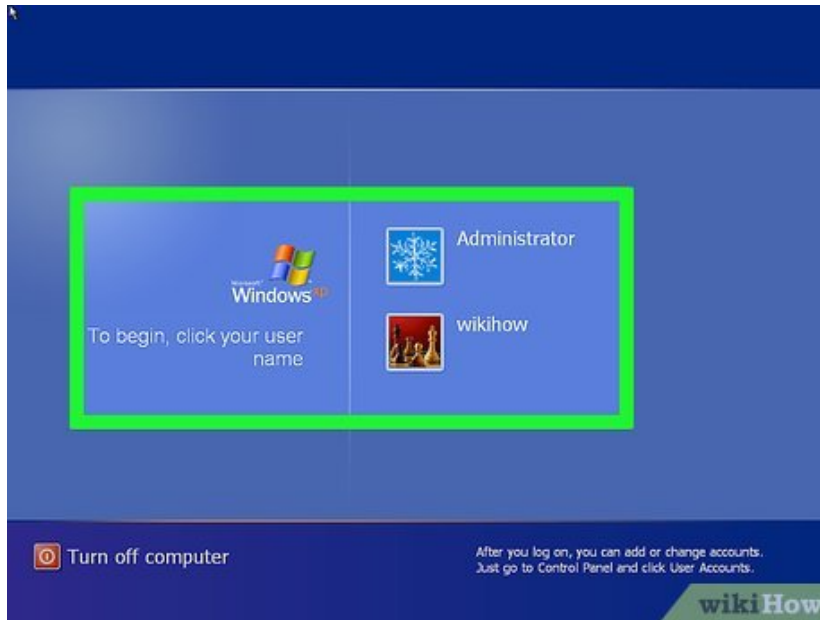
1. You'll see the option to open "advanced options" or "boot options" (or even "advanced settings") at the bottom of the screen when your computer is restarting.



Select **Safe Mode** and press Enter. This will prompt your computer to restart in Safe Mode.

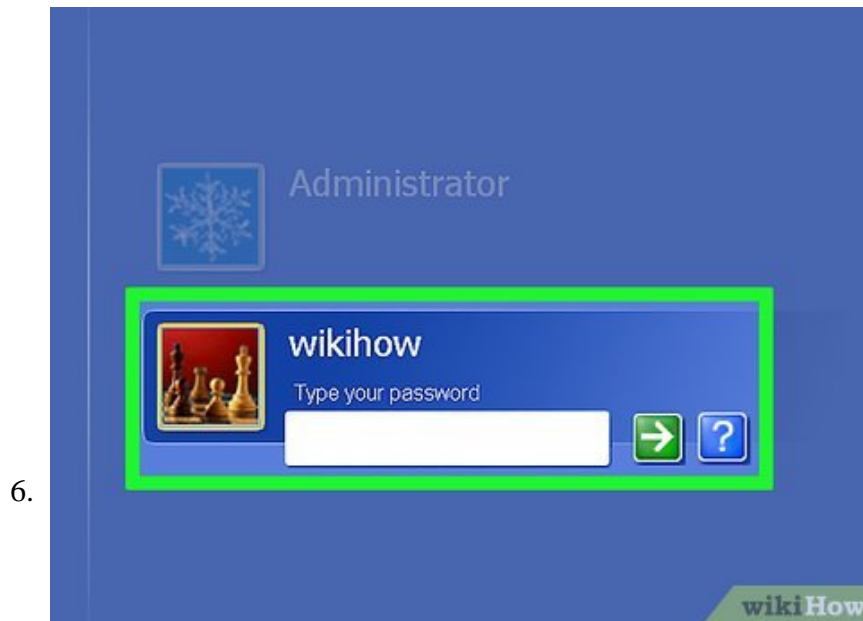


Select your operating system if prompted. On Windows XP, you may be prompted to select your operating system; if so, just press Enter.



**Wait for the accounts page to load.** You should see at least two accounts here: your usual account, and the Administrator account.

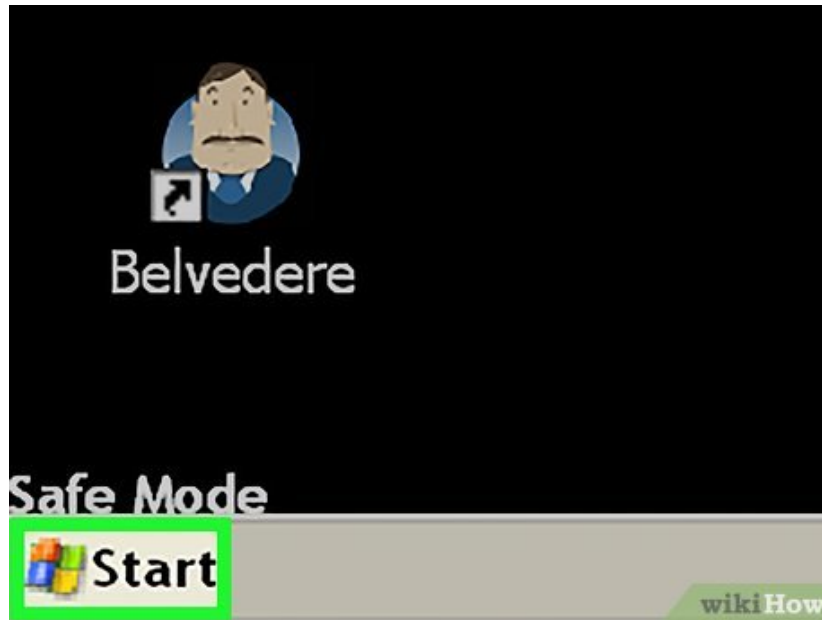
1. The Admin account usually has an image of a chess piece on it.



Click **Admin** or **Administrator**. This will log you into the account. You should now be at the desktop.

Part 2 of 3:

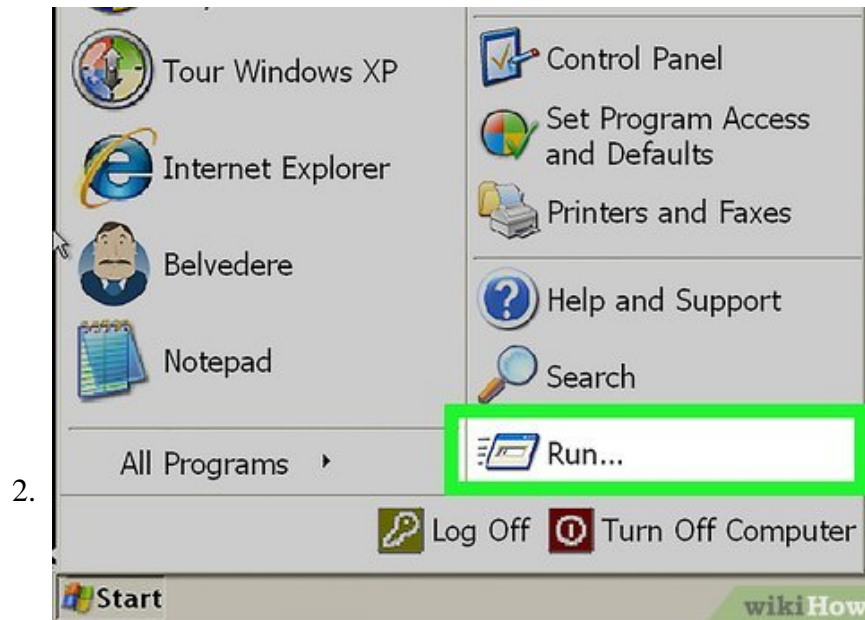
## Resetting the Password



Open Start

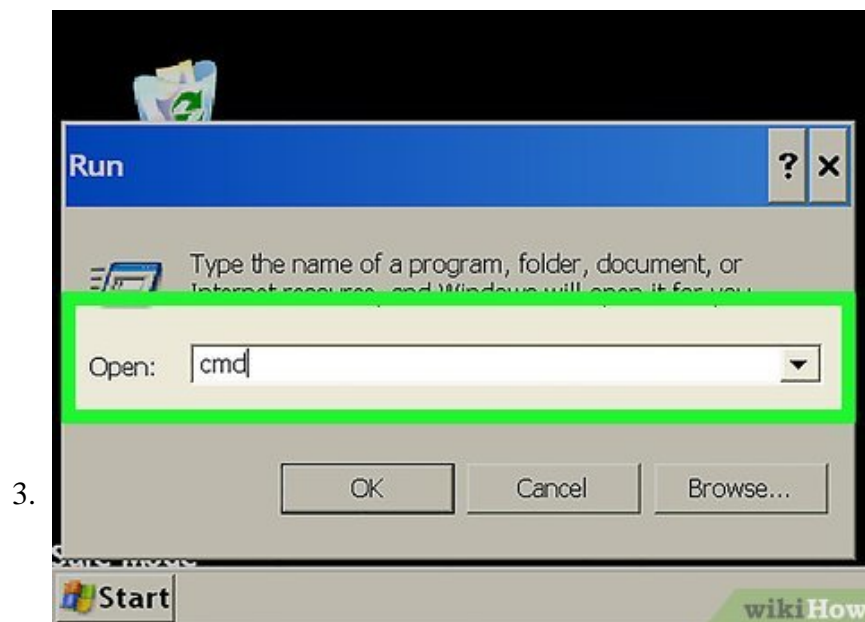


. Click the Windows logo (or **Start** on Windows XP) in the bottom-left corner of the screen.

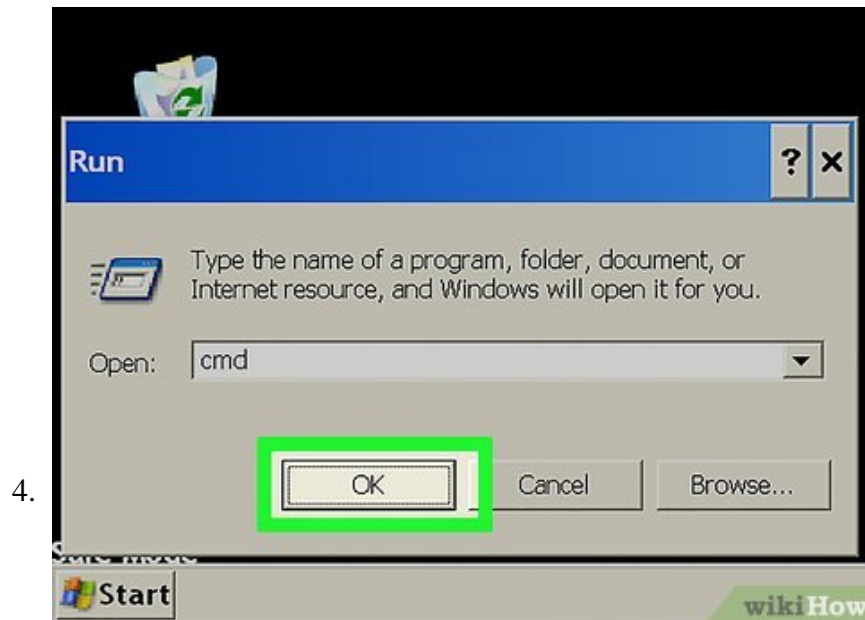


Click **Run...**. It's an envelope icon on the right side of the Start window. A small window will open.

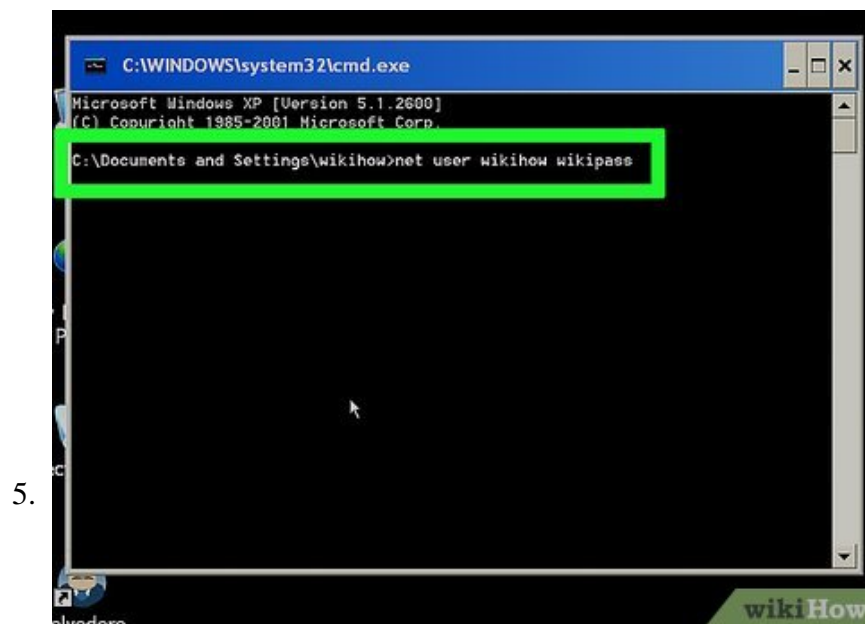
1. On Windows Vista, you can type in `run` if you don't see **Run** in the Start menu.



Type in `cmd`. This is the command to open Command Prompt.

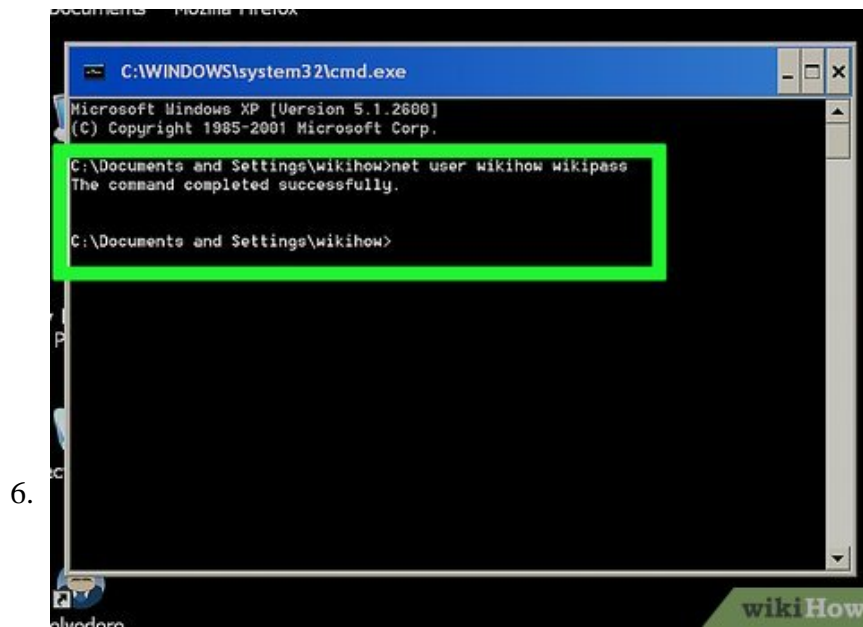


Click . It's at the bottom of the Run window. Doing so will open Command Prompt.

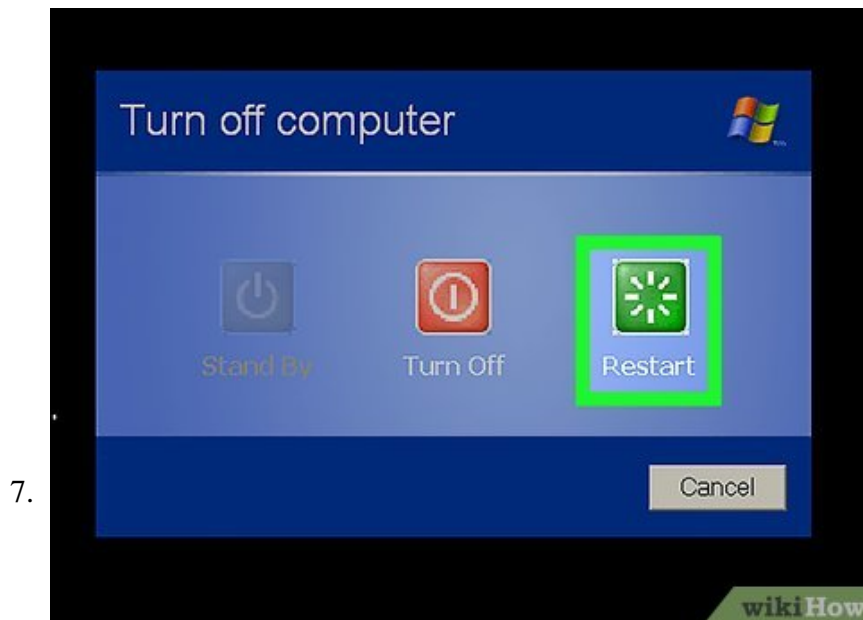


**Enter the password reset command.** Type in `net user username new_password`, where "username" is the username for the account whose password you forgot and "new\_password" is the new password that you want to assign.

1. For example: to change the password to "pupper123" for an account named "hugsky", you would enter `net user hugsky pupper123` here.



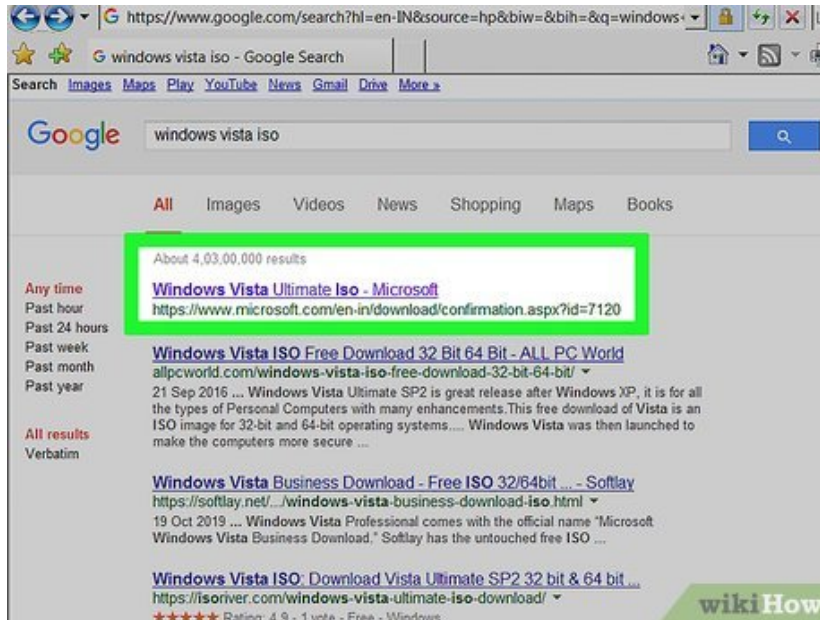
Press **Enter**. This will immediately change the password for the selected account.



**Restart your computer again.** Once your computer has restarted back to the login screen, you should be able to select your account and input your new password.

Part 3 of 3:

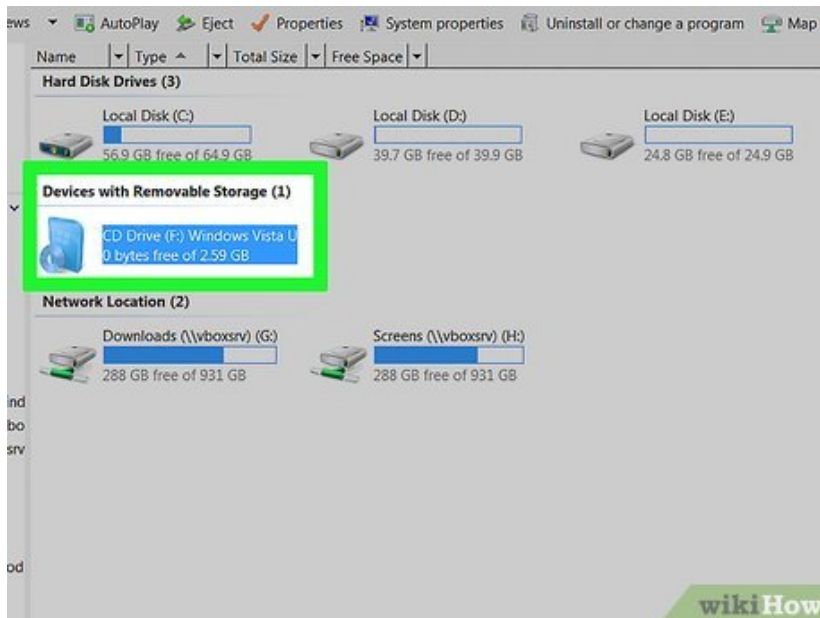
## Using a Recovery Disc on Vista



1.

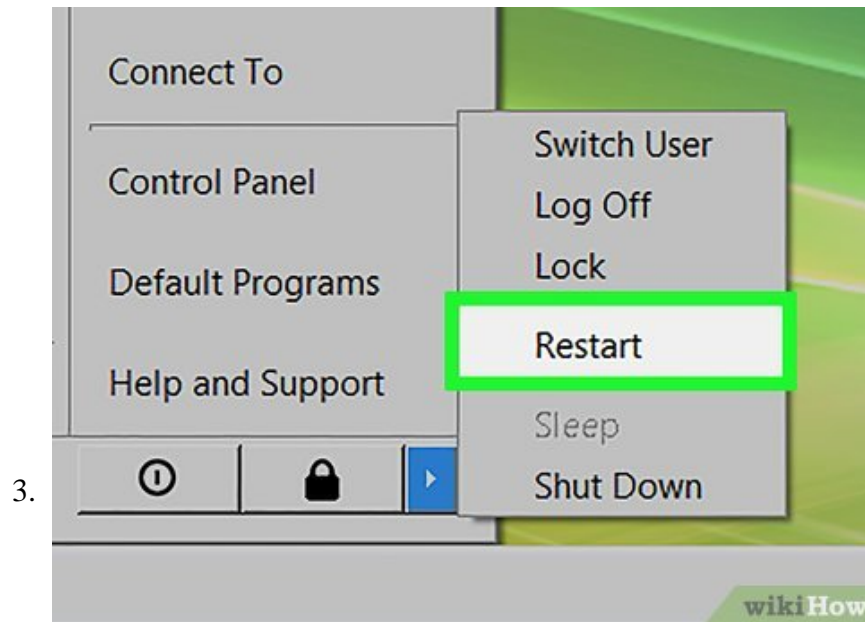
**Find a Windows Vista installation or recovery disc.** In order to perform this method, you will need to enter the Recovery Console, which can only be accessed with a Windows Vista installation or recovery disc.

1. You can download a Windows Vista ISO file and burn it to a DVD.
2. The installation disc doesn't need to be the one you use to install your operating system, but it does need to be for the same version of Windows.



2.

**Insert the installation disc into your computer.** The disc must go label-side-up in your computer's CD tray.



**Restart your computer.** Click the upward-facing arrow next to the



Power icon, then click **Restart** in the pop-up menu.



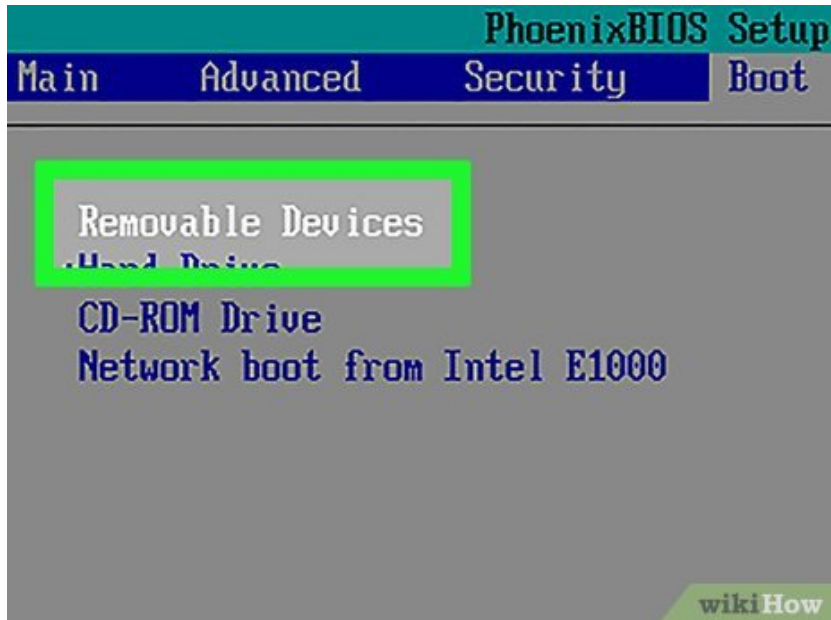
**Press your computer's BIOS key.** As soon as your computer begins restarting, start pressing the BIOS key. This key will be listed at the bottom of the screen.

1. If you can't find the BIOS key, consult your computer's manual or look up the BIOS key for your computer's model online.



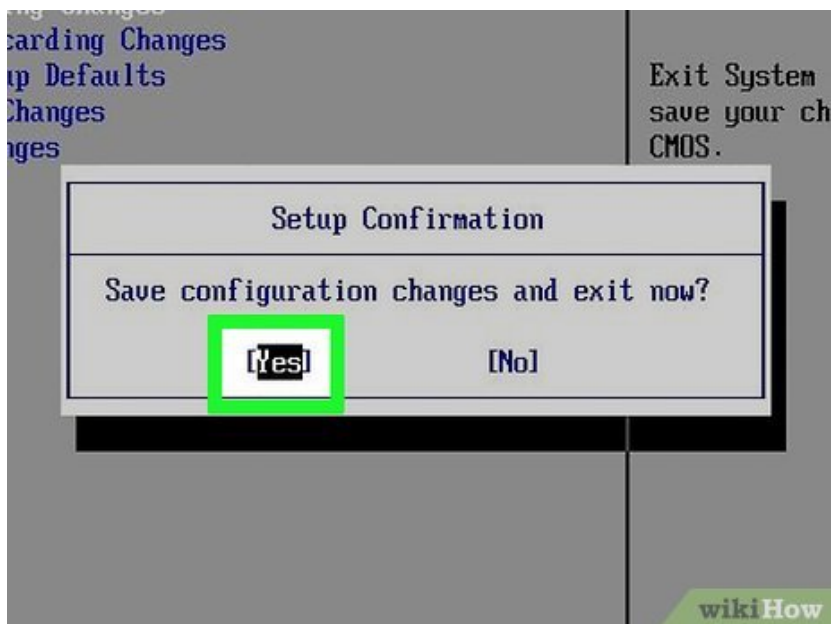
**Select the "Boot" tab.** Use the arrow keys to move over to the "Boot" or "Startup" tab.

1. Skip this step if you don't see a **Boot** tab.



6.

**Change the boot order.** Select the **Disc, Disc Drive**, or similar option, then press the **+** key until the selected option is at the top.



7.

**Save your settings and exit the BIOS.** There's usually a key that you can press to do so; look for the "Save and Exit" key on the right side of the screen.

1. You may have to confirm this decision by pressing **Enter** when prompted.

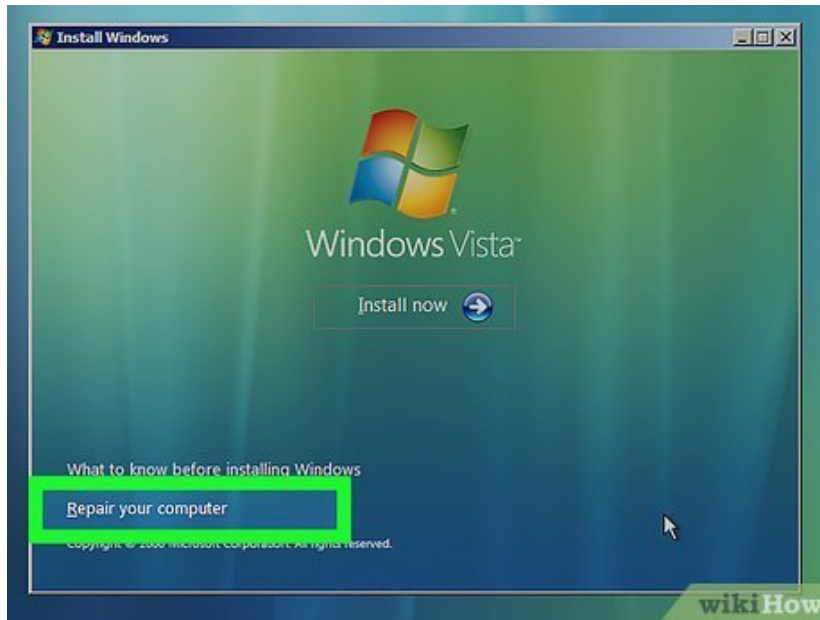


**Press any key when prompted.** Doing so will launch the Windows Recovery window.



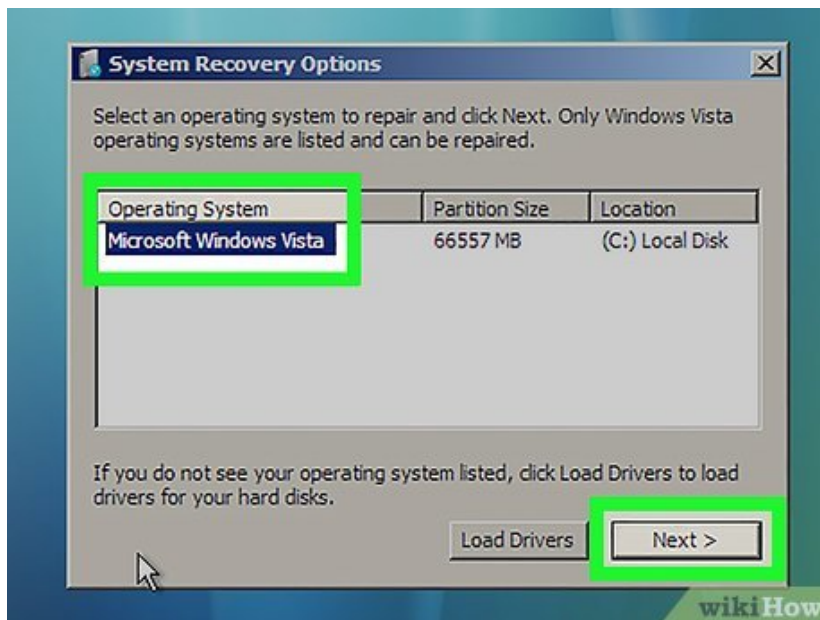
**Click **Next****. This option is in the bottom-right corner of the window.

10.



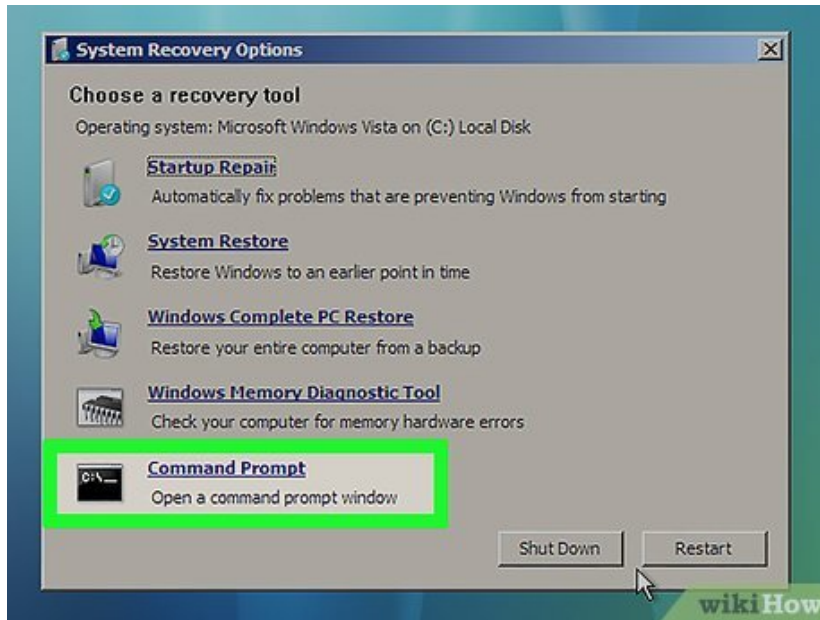
Click **Repair your computer**. It's in the bottom-left corner of the window.

11.



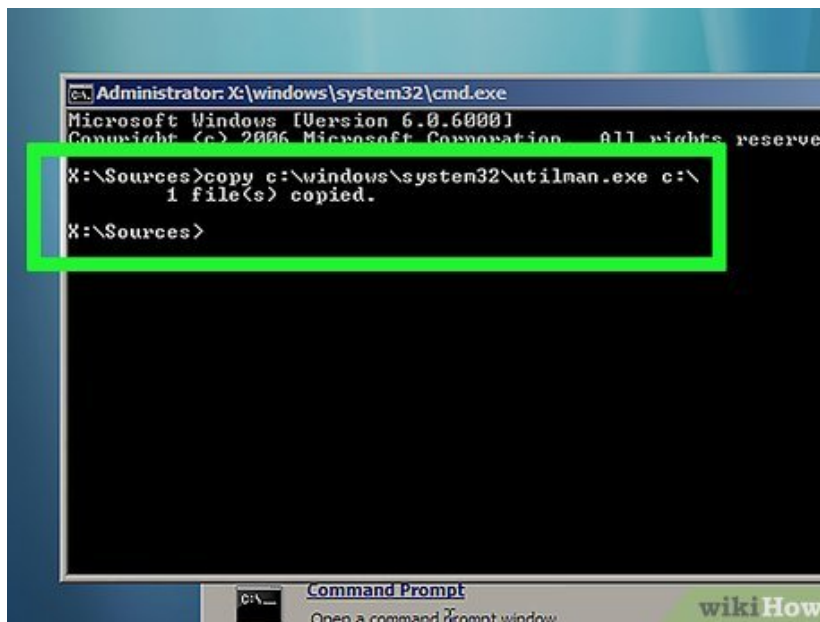
Select **Windows Vista**, then click **Next**. You'll find this in the middle of the window.

12.



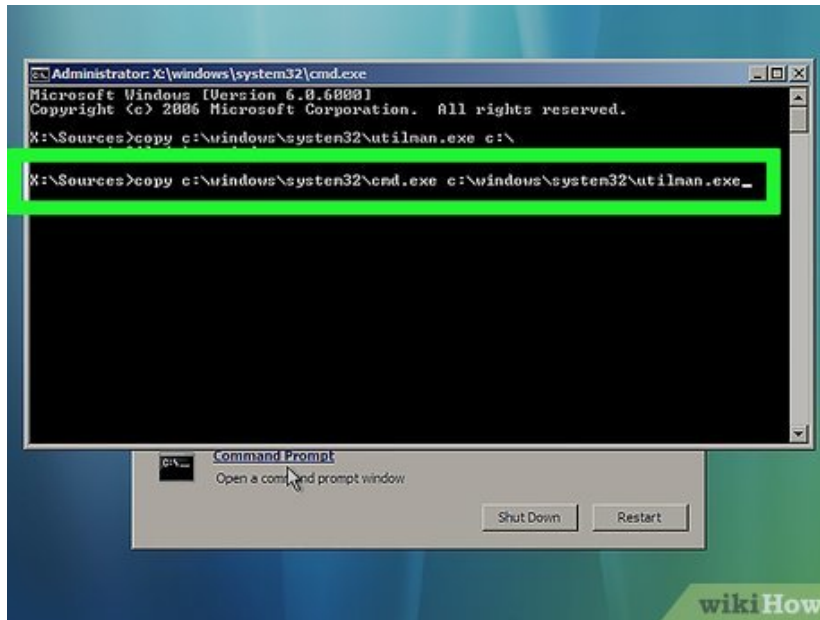
Click **Command Prompt**. It's in the middle of the screen. Doing so will open the Command Prompt app.

13.



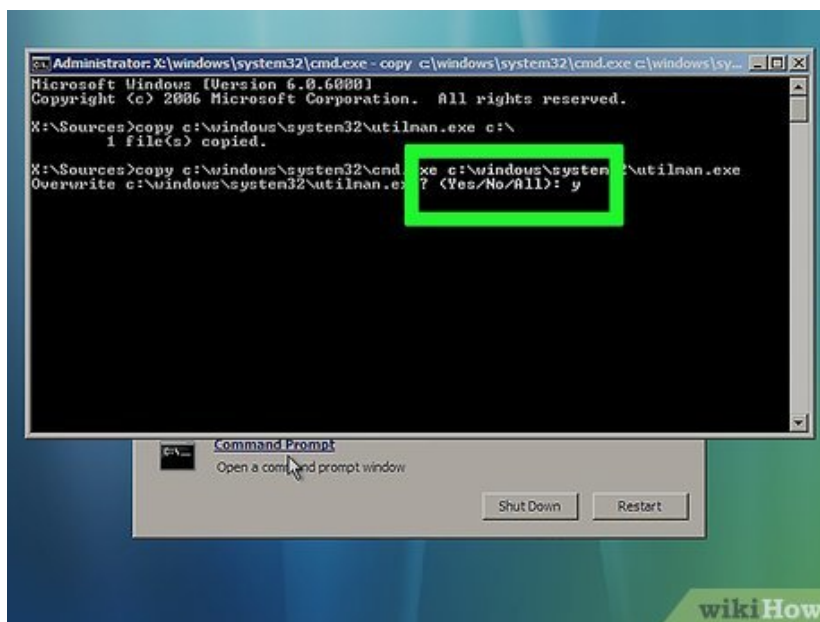
**Enter the "utilman" command.** Type in `c:\windowssystem32utilman.exe c:` and press `? Enter`.

1. If your operating system is installed on the "D:" drive, type in `d:\windowssystem32utilman.exe d:` instead.



14.

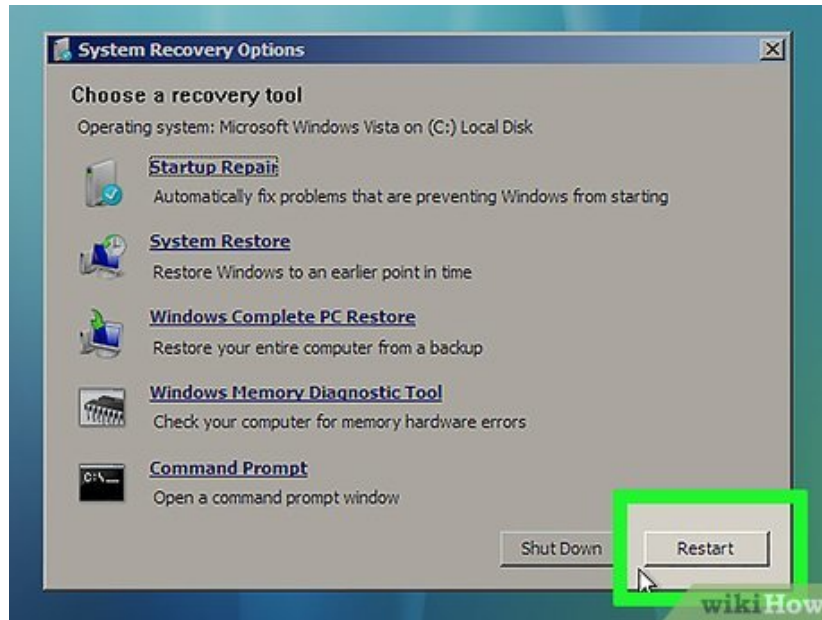
**Enter the next command.** Type in `copy c:\windows\system32\cmd.exe c:\windows\system32\utilman.exe` and press `Enter`.



15.

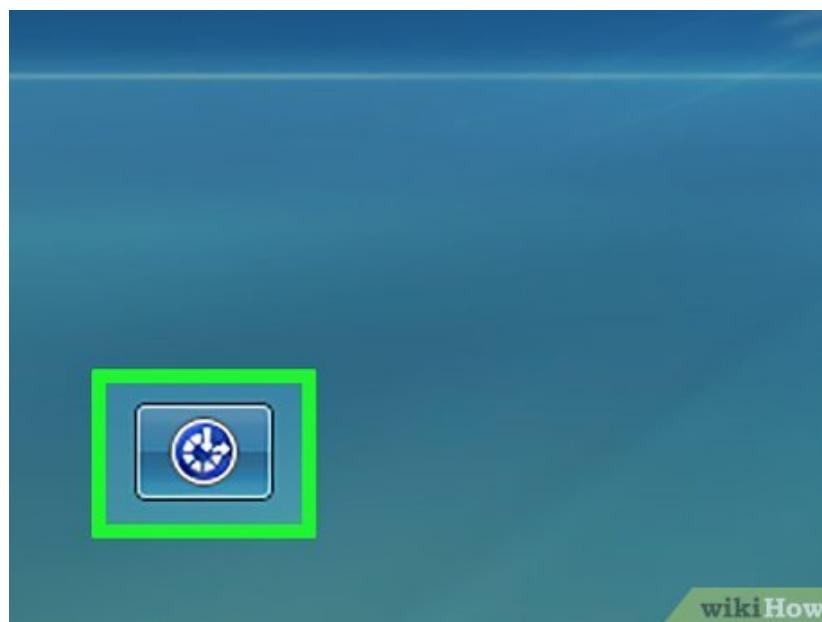
**Enter the final command.** Type in `y` and press `Enter`. This will indicate a "Yes" response, which enables Command Prompt on the Windows login screen.

16.



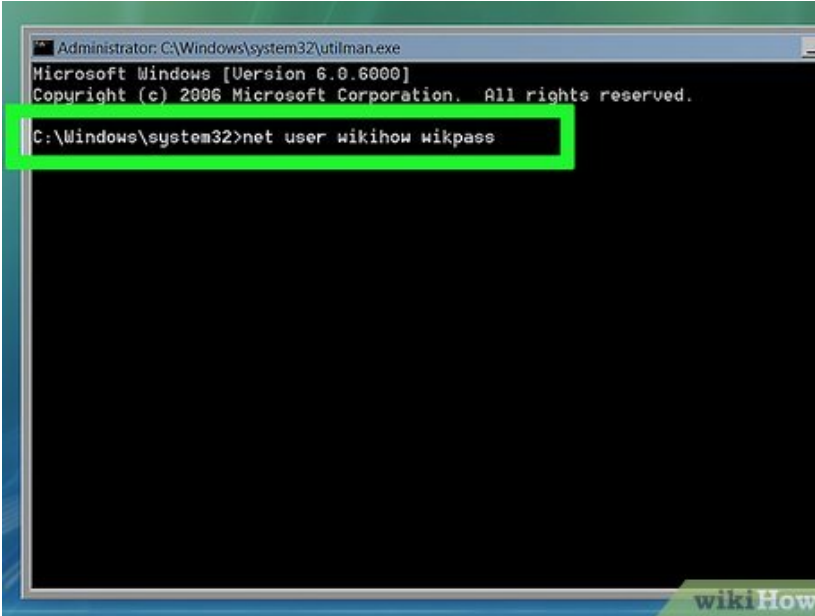
**Remove the installation or recovery disc, then reboot your computer.** Once the computer finishes rebooting, you should be back at the login screen.

17.



**Click the "Accessibility" button.** It's the blue, dial-shaped option in the bottom-left or bottom-right corner of the screen. Doing so will open the Command Prompt app.

18.



```
Administrator: C:\Windows\system32\utilman.exe
Microsoft Windows [Version 6.0.6000]
Copyright (c) 2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Windows\system32>net user wikihow wikpass
```

The screenshot shows a Windows command prompt window with a black background and white text. The title bar reads "Administrator: C:\Windows\system32\utilman.exe". The text in the window includes the Windows version and copyright information, followed by the command prompt "C:\Windows\system32>". The command "net user wikihow wikpass" is entered and highlighted with a green rectangular box. A "wikiHow" logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the window.

**Enter the password reset command.** Type in `net user username new_password`, where "username" is the username for the account whose password you forgot and "new\_password" is the new password that you want to assign.

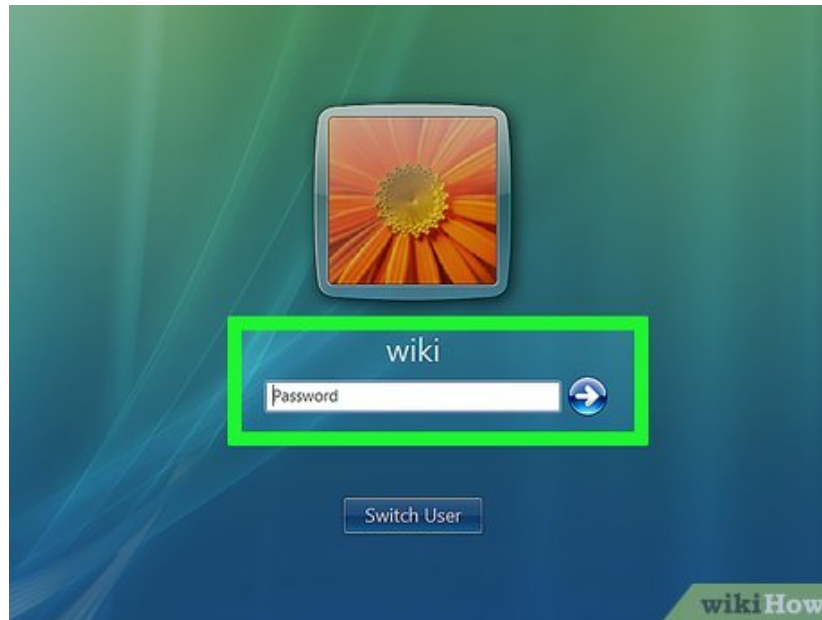
1. For example: to change the password to "ilikelemons" for an account named "citruslover", you would enter `net user citruslover ilikelemons here`.

19.



**Press Enter.** This will immediately change the password for the selected account.

20.



**Log in with your new password.** Select your user account and enter the new password that you just set. You should be able to access the account now.

1. As soon as you run the command, your new password will be ready to go—you don't need to restart your computer.

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