

# If you break your Nintendo Switch like I did, here's how to fix it

The Nintendo Switch had become a grimy mess. Smudged, dust-caked screen. Oily Joy-Cons. My kids have been playing Animal Crossing

New Horizons for days, jostling it out of the dock in the mornings while we've been stuck at home. I told them to be careful -- then I saw the crack on the back.



It wasn't a big crack. But it was there. Of course, I freaked out.

I have issues with things breaking. And I'm not a repair-oriented person. I don't have fix-it in my blood. My backyard is a mess. Disorder terrifies me, and yet it happens. And sooner or later, electronics get damaged.

The Nintendo Switch has some known problems: Joy-Cons occasionally breaking, and Switch cases cracking along the vents or along the corners on the back. I googled my problem and saw a lot of others had similar cracks in well-used systems, too.



So maybe it wasn't my youngest kid, who I blamed. I took a breath. I looked up how to fix it. Because, right now, Nintendo Switch systems aren't easy to buy, Nintendo has paused official repairs, and we're not going out anywhere anytime soon.

I've seen others posting pictures of their Switches with new colorful cases they put on, and Joy-Con kits they carefully assembled, or even Joy-Con fixes. A cracked plastic back? Come on, Scott. You can do this.

iFixit immediately came up in my search with a great step-by-step guide. You should use it. I'm here to tell you how I did following that guide, and what I ordered.

Also, be aware that self-repairs like this could void your warranty, if you still have one. And to be safe, just make sure you've backed up cloud saves for your games.



## Going shopping

I went to Amazon to get some spare parts: a rear case and front cover that seemed very well-reviewed, so I bought it (\$9.99). I looked for Switch repair tools, and went with a set that had a bunch of big, separate (vs. interchangeable head) screwdrivers (currently \$21, but I paid \$18.89). Total: \$30.79.

They took a week to arrive -- not as long as some orders right now, maybe because they're for repairs. I let them sit a few days because of coronavirus (just to be sure), and wiped them down with Clorox wipes.

Then, I started.



## First: The unscrewing

The next steps involved taking the original rear case off. Some advice before proceeding:

**Lay the Switch face-down on a soft cloth.** You don't want to scratch it up.

**Pull off the kickstand.** You'll need that off before removing the rear cover. It's easy to take off, and Nintendo has a guide. Push in a bit on one side. Attaching later is similar but in reverse.

**Be very careful with the screws.** The tri-wing specialized screws, and some Phillips-head screws, are incredibly small. Some are also very short. I unscrewed them all in the order iFixit recommended, four corners first.



Those were OK, but some felt stuck with grime. I was extremely worried about stripping the tri-wing screws. I kept the screwdriver still and turned firmly but gently at the same time.

Thank goodness the screwdrivers are magnetized, keeping the screws attached a bit after removing. I placed them in little dishes, to remind myself what step they were from. I dared not drop one by accident.

1. Next came the Micro SD card slot screw, which wasn't as tightly attached.
2. Then came two Phillips head screws on the bottom, on either side of the USB-C port.
3. Then, a Phillips head screw just to the side of the top vent.
4. Then, the middlemost screw on the side rails where the Joy-Cons normally slide in, one on each side.

I pulled the plastic off gently; it got stuck a bit. I noticed how much dust there was, and some of the plastic tabs had already broken off.



## **There are more steps than you think**

At this point, iFixit said to reverse the steps. But I realized there were still some missing parts to my Switch rear cover:

1. The cartridge slot cover was on the original cover, but not on my new one.
2. A little bracket near the Micro SD card slot wasn't on my new cover, either.
3. Nor were the little vent grille covers on the bottom of the cover, or little foam squares on the corners.

I went into a panic now, but decided to just move the parts over. I gently unscrewed the SD card and cartridge parts and reinstalled them on the corresponding areas of the new cover.

The vent covers, those weren't as easy. I saw people online had gently peeled off and glued on. They're little strips of plastic. I pulled them off, and found they had just enough stickiness left to stick on again like a sticker, and kind of move on from there. The foam corner squares I didn't worry about.