Search

How to make Internet downloads faster

164.5K views | 8 min read

There are few things more frustrating than an internet connection that's very slow. Thankfully, there's a great deal you can do to troubleshoot the problem and speed up your connection. Here's how to do it.

Why is my download speed so slow?

Internet speed is measured by how much data per second can be downloaded and uploaded. It totally depends on your Internet use, but the processes like uploading large files and video conferencing require decent speed.

Tools for instant downloads

Get a set of superb Mac apps that help you download faster. Best utilities in one pack, give it a try!

Try free

So what is a fast download speed? Normally, anything that's above 100 Mbps is considered good Internet. This means, your Mac will handle multiple simultaneous online activities without major interruptions. Still, there's no limit to perfection. If you want to reach the optimal speed to make downloads faster, there are a couple of things you can try.

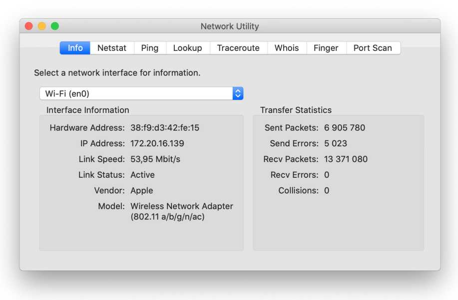
First, you need to find out whether the slow download speed is due to your broadband connection or your wireless network. Since your wireless network is the bit over which you have control, you should check that first. In any case, optimizing and fine tuning your home or office wifi will improve performance.

How to increase Internet speed

Firstly, look at where your router is situated. Ideally, it should be in the centre of your house, so that every room gets a good signal. It should be away from walls, the floor and the ceiling as much as possible. And keep it away from metal furniture, which will reflect radio waves rather than allow them to pass through. Modern routers support both 5GHz and 2.4GHz networks. The latter allows for faster speeds, but the former suffers from less interference from other devices like microwave ovens and cordless telephones. So connect to the 5GHz network on devices that support it. If you have devices that only support 2.4GHz, place your router away from appliances like a microwave or cordless phone.

Here are a few simple steps you can take to improve your Internet speed:

1. **Analyze your Internet speed**. For a quick check of current speed, find and access Network Utility via Spotlight. Select your WiFi connection under the Info tab, and check Link Speed. The tools like NetSpot ot WiFi Explorer will help you automate WiFi monitoring as well as track factors that impact Internet speed.

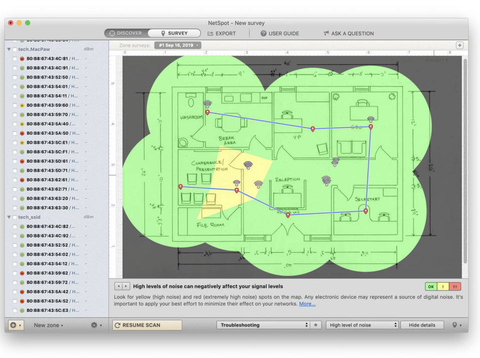


2. **Replace old cables**. Ensure all your cables are in good condition. Clean dusty cables, replace those that are too loose or damaged, and double check whether the cables you use fit your network environment.
3. **Optimize your router/ISP's settings**. Check the current setup of your router and tweak DNS settings if necessary. Unfortunately, ISPs don't always come with the DNS configs that perfectly match your environment.
4. **Scan your Mac for viruses**. Sometimes, malicious programs and files on your computer can be the reason of poor Internet speed. Open CleanMyMac X > Malware Removal and the app will automatically make your Mac clean.
5. **Regularly update software and firmware**. Access Software Update via the Apple menu and see whether you might have missed a macOS update. Outdated OS as well as installing the beta versions of the new macOS may hinder the quality of your Internet. If the operating system is fine, check for the new versions of your router's firmware.
6. **Eliminate on-system interference**. Make sure there are no "heavy" programs like virus scanners on your Mac – they may interfere with network performance.
7. **Check your filters.** Low-quality filters are another source of damage for your WiFi infrastructure, so you might need to replace them.
8. **Fix external interference**. The position of your router determines the Internet speed you get, especially if other devices located in your building rely on the same WiFi channel. We recommend to use NetSpot, an app for interference monitoring that shows you where to position a router.
9. **Use a cable**. We know, it feels like a tip from the '90s, but WiFi is actually always a bit slower than the Internet you get when you plug in directly to the modem.
10. **Get a new modem**. Very often, that's the only fix that can help. Check with your ISP or test other providers to see whether you can get some extra speed.
11. **And yes, don't do any of the above until you try a restart**. Power cycling – which is turning off and on your modem – is what you should begin with. Sometimes, there's no particular reason your Internet is slow. It's just your modem needing a fresh start.

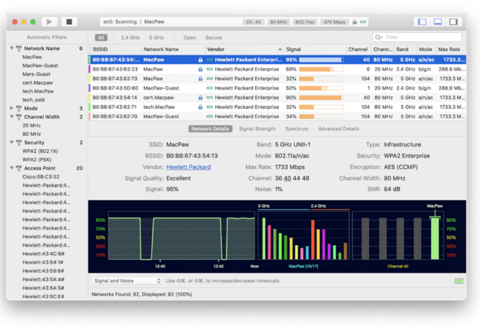
How to get better Internet speed

When you're satisfied with your router and it's in the best possible location, time to analyze your wireless network. The following solutions will not only help you run a speed test, but also understand how to improve Internet speed.

NetSpot will produce a full analysis of all the wifi networks within range of your home or office and highlight any problems. It produces a heat map of your home or office and highlights 'dead spots' where wifi signal strength is low or non-existent. It can also advise on the best placement for your wifi router, and really useful suggestions to troubleshoot your networks.



WiFi Explorer allows you to identify conflicts with other networks, identifies signal overlaps, and provides a graph of signal to noise ratio. By maximizing the signal v noise, you can improve signal performance and speed up downloads.

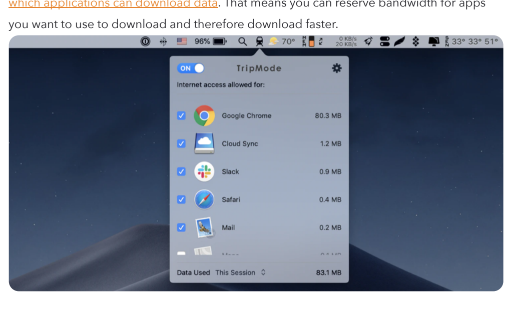


One possible cause of poor wifi performance is interference from other wifi networks in your street. WiFi Explorer and NetSpot analyze how fast Internet is by analyzing those networks and let you know if they are causing a problem.

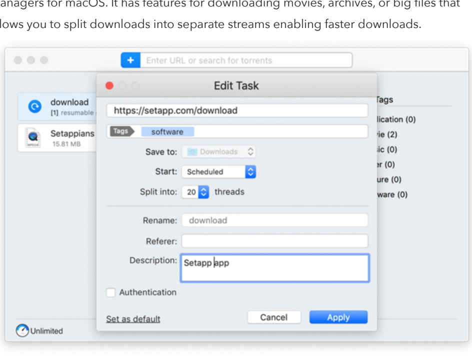
If there are lots of routers in your neighbourhood using the 40MHz spectrum, known as wide band, it can cause congestion – wide band occupies seven channels, compared with five used by 20MHz networks.In this case, switching to the 20MHz band may actually increase Internet speed by reducing interference. To do that you'll need to access your router's admin page in a web browser. You'll need to consult its manual, or look for a sticker on the bottom of the router, for an IP address, username and password.

How to increase download speed on a slow internet connection

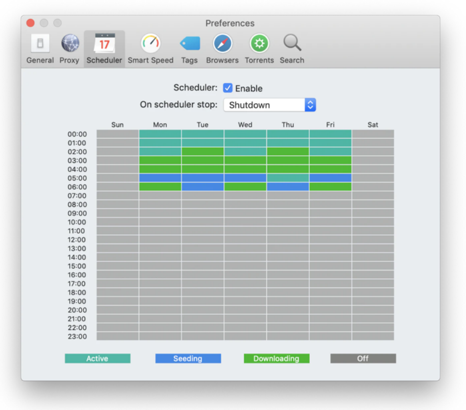
1. **Turn off bandwidth-hogging apps and plugins.**
If you haven't been able to improve the speed of your home broadband or wifi network, or if you're on mobile network, you can still download faster. TripMode allows you to control which applications can download data. That means you can reserve bandwidth for apps you want to use to download and therefore download faster.



2. **Split the downloads in threads to maximize download speed.**
To splitting the downloads in threads try to use Folx, one of the most popular download managers for macOS. It has features for downloading movies, archives, or big files that allows you to split downloads into separate streams enabling faster downloads.



3. **Schedule downloads.**
One way to speed up downloads is to schedule them for a time when your ISPs network is less busy. Peak times are usually early evening through to around midnight, so use Folx to schedule downloads for the early hours of the morning. Some ISPs also throttle bandwidth for some users during peak hours, so downloading when it's less busy is a very good idea.



How to download torrents faster

Despite the negative publicity BitTorrent has had in recent years, there's nothing illegal in using it or in downloading torrents. As long as the content you download isn't protected by copyright or, if it is, you have permission from the rights owner to take it, you'll be fine. What's more, it's totally safe to use selected third-party tools to increase upload speed on torrent.

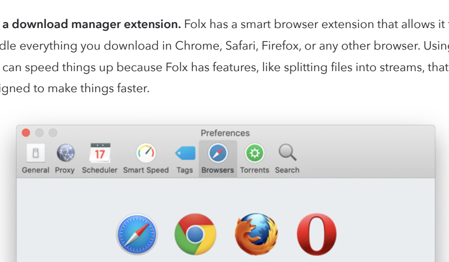
Additionally to Folx download manager it is also a torrent client. It has several features to make torrent download faster.

1. **Check seeds and peers.**
Folx has its own built-in torrent search engine, so you don't need to use a web browser. When you search for torrents in Folx, it will display the number of available seeds for each result. The more seeds, the faster the download is likely to be, so choose a torrent with lots of seeds.
2. **Limit upload speeds and speed up torrent downloads.**
Torrent clients upload files as well as download them and so the bandwidth available for a torrent client like Folx is used for both. If you limit upload speeds, you can make download speeds faster. You can also limit download speeds for browsers on your Mac, making more bandwidth available for torrents. To limit upload and download speeds, open Preferences in Folx and click on the Smart Speed tab. Of course, if you want to improve upload speed, you can limit download speeds instead.
3. **Check port number.**
Many torrent clients use port numbers 6881-6889. ISPs know this and some of them throttle bandwidth to those ports, which can make download speeds slow. In Folx Preferences, in the Torrents tab, check the port number and make sure its outside that range. If the port is showing as 'in use' click 'Randomize port' to choose another.
4. **Prioritize downloads.**
If there's one download you want more than the others that are downloading at the same time, right click on the other downloads and use the 'Limit Speed' option to cap their download bandwidth and increase torrent download speed for your file.

How to speed up Chrome downloads

There are a number of things you can do to boost up Google Chrome's speed:

1. **Limit Extensions.** Browser extensions can be very useful but they eat up memory and can be reason of getting slow download speed on browser.
2. **Don't have lots of tabs open.** Web pages in tabs use resources like memory and, if they auto-load, bandwidth too. Keeping tabs to a minimum will speed up your browser.
3. **Use a download manager extension.** Folx has a smart browser extension that allows it to handle everything you download in Chrome, Safari, Firefox, or any other browser. Using that can speed things up because Folx has features, like splitting files into streams, that are designed to make things faster.



4. **Avoid noname extensions that promise faster downloading**
There are lots of Chrome extensions that promise to make the browser download faster. However, many of them don't work and causes Chrome run more slowly, don't download the complete file, or, worse, are infected with malware. So, they are best avoided.

Downie does a similar job, even allowing you to down; pad 4K-resolution videos from streaming video and social media sites. Just copy and paste the URL for the video page into Downie or use its browser extension. Once you've downloaded the video, you can use Permute to convert it to any format you want.

If all else fails, check with your broadband provider

- Check whether your broadband provider has a fault
- Check whether wired instead of wireless can improve speed

Check that your broadband provider hasn't reported a fault in your area by calling its helpline number.

Once you've ruled that out you need to find out whether the problem is your wireless network or is caused by your router failing to connect to the broadband network. If you have a Mac that has an Ethernet port or you have a USB to Ethernet adapter, connect it directly to an Ethernet port on your router to try speed up your Internet. If your download speed is much faster when connected by Ethernet, your wireless network may be the culprit.

Fortunately, there are lots of things you can do to troubleshoot and improve the speed of your wifi network.

Tips & tricks | Productivity

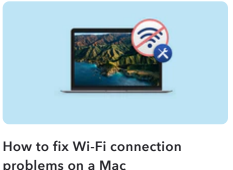
Misha Berveno
May 26, 2021

Get 230+ Mac apps for any job

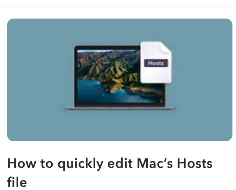
Sign up to Setapp and try them for free.

Get Setapp

More reads you might like



How to fix Wi-Fi connection problems on a Mac



How to quickly edit Mac's Hosts file

How to find the best WiFi channel for your home or office

DMCA PROTECTED

© 2022 Setapp Limited, 9 Tallow Street, Youghal, Co. Cork, P36YE14, Ireland. Reg. 584165. VAT ID: IE3425001BH

Terms of Use Privacy Policy

Setapp uses cookies to personalize your experience on our website. By continuing to use this site, you agree to our cookie policy.

Okay