

Your back-to-basics guide to keeping safe online



**Whether you're new to the internet
or a digital native**



www.getsafeonline.org



Your back-to-basics list of easy-to-follow steps to go online with increased safety and confidence. Whether you're new to the internet or a digital native.

These days, most of us use the internet more than ever, in fact there doesn't seem to be much that we can't do online.

But because of the scams, disrespectful behaviour and inappropriate content that have unfortunately become so commonplace, it's essential that we all look after ourselves, our families, finances, devices and workplace.



Protect your passwords

Use a different password for each account and make them strong by combining random words with numbers and symbols. A password manager can help keep them safe and memorable.

Keep your devices secure

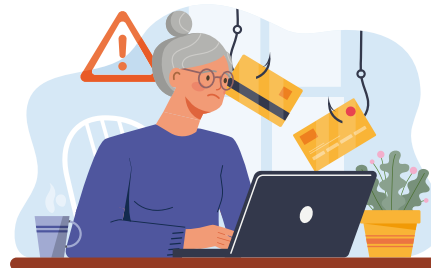
Install reliable internet security software (often called anti-virus) on your computers, tablets, and smartphones – and keep it switched on and updated. Protect your devices with a unique password or passcode.

Update regularly

Operating system, app and software updates often include essential security protection. Installing them when prompted helps keep your devices safe. Better still, set them to update automatically.

Pause and check who you're dealing with

Online messages, emails or phone calls aren't always from who they appear to be. AI can make fake messages seem even more convincing, so take a moment to confirm identities before sharing information, by contacting the person or organisation they claim to come from on the number you know to be correct.



Think before you click

Clicking on links and attachments in unexpected emails, texts or posts can lead to fraud, identity theft or other harms. If something feels unusual, take time to check it first.

Stay smart when using public Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi in cafés, hotels, and public spaces isn't always secure, or could even be fraudulent. For private activities such as banking or shopping, use your mobile data, a broadband dongle, or a VPN.

Choose safe ways to pay

Use secure payment methods such as credit cards or trusted services when shopping online. These give you stronger protection than a direct bank transfer, where you may lose your money in the event of fraud.

Report it!

If you come across fraud, scams, or abuse, report it to the appropriate authorities. If you've been defrauded, tell your bank. Acting quickly can protect you and others.

Take care what you share

Be careful with the personal details you post online, such as your address or financial or other confidential information. Once shared, it can be hard to control who sees it.

Check information and news

Not all online information is trustworthy. Misinformation, disinformation, and AI-generated fake news can look very real. Verify with reliable sources before believing, sharing or acting on it.

Be kind and responsible

Online communities are at their best when we treat each other with respect. Communicate thoughtfully, just as you would face-to-face.



If you suspect a text, message or email of being fraudulent, run it past Ask Silver, the AI-driven fraud detection tool at www.getsafeonline.org/asksilver

To check whether a website is likely to be legitimate or fraudulent, enter its address into Check a Website at www.getsafeonline.org/checkawebsite.

Get Safe Online

Get Safe Online is the UK's leading source of information and advice on online safety and security, for the public and small businesses. It is a not-for-profit, public/private sector partnership backed by law enforcement agencies and leading organisations in internet security, banking and retail.

For more information and expert, easy-to-follow, impartial advice on safeguarding yourself, your family, finances, devices and workplace, visit www.getsafeonline.org

If you think you have been a victim of fraud, report it to **Action Fraud** at actionfraud.police.uk or by calling **0300 123 2040**. If you are in Scotland, contact **Police Scotland** on **101**.



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