

Stay connected

AOL 9.0 dial-up version

A step by step troubleshooting manual



Introduction

Our aim is to make your connection to AOL as simple as possible. This troubleshooting manual is designed to help if you hit a problem.

Print this step-by-step manual and keep it by your computer for reference, then reach for it first if you have any problems connecting to AOL and the Internet. With any luck, you won't need it, and your AOL 9.0 dial-up experience will be smooth and uninterrupted.

Who Should Use This Guide?

This guide is designed for AOL UK members who are...

- ...using a dial-up modem to connect to AOL (i.e. not Broadband or TCP/IP)
- ...using the AOL 9.0 software.

If you're not using AOL 9.0, you can use this guide anyway, but please skip over any sections which say "AOL 9.0 only".

How to Use This Guide

If you do experience a problem, open the document and...

1. From the list of problems on page 2, pick the problem which most closely describes what you are experiencing.
2. Try the recommended solutions (pages 3-9) one at a time - after each one, try signing on to AOL again until the problem is resolved.
3. If all else fails, read Additional Help on page 10 for more ways to get further technical support from AOL.

Problems

| Description of problem | Recommended solution(s) |
|--|-------------------------|
| "Modem cannot detect a dial tone"..... | 2 3 4 5 6 |
| "Invalid Password"..... | 16 |
| Connection process stops at "Step 2: Dialling"..... | 1 2 6 10 14 15 |
| "Access via this number is not available"..... | 13 |
| Repeatedly getting disconnected from AOL..... | 1 2 6 9 10 11 12 15 |
| Error: "AOL was unable to establish a connection".. | 1 14 6 12 15 |
| Error: "Access number engaged or busy"..... | 8 13 3 14 15 |
| AOL could not initialise the modem..... | 7 5 10 6 15 |
| Error: "Communications port is invalid or busy"..... | 5 4 3 14 15 |
| Error: "Modem dialling timed out"..... | 2 4 6 10 14 15 |

Solutions

1 Check that your PC meets the minimum requirements for AOL (AOL 9.0 only)

The minimum PC specifications required to run AOL 9.0 are as follows:

- **Operating System:** Windows 98, 98SE, Millennium Edition, 2000 or XP
- **Memory:** At least 128MB RAM
- **Processor:**
 - o Windows 98, 98SE, ME or 2000: Pentium-class processor, 166MHz or faster
 - o Windows XP: Pentium-class processor, 233MHz or faster
- **Hard Drive Space:** At least 128MB free space
- **Display Settings:** At least 800 x 600 screen resolution with 256 colours

If your PC does not meet these requirements, contact your local PC retailer for further advice or assistance.

2 Check your modem connection

1. Make sure that your modem is connected directly to the wall socket, with no cable splitters on the line.
2. Make sure the telephone cable is connected to the correct socket on the modem. If there are two sockets, it should be connected to the one marked Line.
3. Make sure nothing else is plugged into the same phone line (e.g. fax machine, digital TV set-top box, etc).

3 Check your phone line using a telephone handset

1. Plug a telephone handset into the line you are using.
2. If you hear a "stuttering" dial tone, this indicates a waiting voicemail. Listen to your voicemail in order to clear this dial tone.
3. Dial the AOL access number. If you hear a busy tone or an operator message, please contact your telecom provider.

4 Restart your PC and modem

1. Shut down your PC as normal - for example, by clicking **Start**, then **Turn Off Computer** or **Shut Down**.
2. If you have a broadband modem or an external dial-up modem, switch it off (or unplug it from the electrical mains), wait 30 seconds, then plug it back in and switch it on again.
3. Switch your PC back on.

Solutions

5 Close other programs running on your PC

Windows XP and Windows 2000:

1. Right-click any blank part of the Windows Task Bar (across the bottom of your screen) and click **Task Manager**.
2. Click the **Applications** tab. This displays a list of all programs currently running on your computer.
3. From that list of programs, it is only necessary to keep AOL 9.0 running. End all other programs by clicking one at a time, then click **End Task** after each one. (Click **Yes** if an "Are you sure?" prompt appears.)
4. Repeat step 3 to close each unnecessary program until only AOL 9.0 is running.

Windows 98 and Windows Millennium Edition:

1. Hold down the **Ctrl** and **Alt** keys on your keyboard, then press the **Delete** key at the same time.
2. This will open the **Close Program** screen, which will list all the programs running on the computer.
3. From that list of programs, it is only necessary to keep the following running:
 - EXPLORER
 - SYSTRAY
 - RUNDLL
 - CFOSDEM or CFOSDW (only if you are using an ISDN (Home highway) line)
 - DSLAGENT (only if you use AOL Broadband).
4. Click once on a program that isn't listed above, then and click **End Task**. This will return you to the desktop.
5. After doing this, another window may appear, saying: 'This program is not responding'. If it does, click **End Task**.
6. Repeat steps 1-5 to close each unnecessary program until only the items on the above list are remaining.

6 Repair AOL Connectivity Services (AOL 9.0 only)

1. Click **Start**, then **Settings** and **Control Panel**, then double-click **Add/Remove Programs** (Windows XP users: Click **Start** and **Control Panel**, then **Change/Remove Programs**).
2. From the list, click **AOL Connectivity Services**, then click **Change/Remove**.
3. Select **Repair AOL Connectivity Services**, then click **OK** to start the repair process.
4. Once complete, close all windows, start AOL 9.0 and click **Sign On**.
5. Enter a location name (for example, "Home") and click **Next** to continue. AOL will now auto-detect your connection device.
6. Confirm the connection device by clicking **Next** and then click **Sign on to AOL Now**.

Solutions

7 Check that your modem is responding

1. Follow the instructions for your version of Windows:
 - Windows XP: Click **Start**, then **Control Panel**, then **Switch to classic view** if visible. Double-click **Phone and Modem Options**, then select the **Modem** tab and click **Properties**.
 - Windows 2000: Click **Start**, **Settings** then **Control Panel**. Double-click **Phone and Modem Options**, then select the **Modem** tab and click **Properties**.
 - Windows 98 or ME: Click **Start**, **Settings** then **Control Panel**. Then double-click **Modems**.
2. Select the **Diagnostics** tab and click **More Info** or **Query Modem** to test the modem.
3. If the modem does not respond correctly, please contact your PC vendor with details of the error message.

8 Check your PC's date and time settings

1. Double-click on your PC's **clock**, usually located at the bottom right-hand corner of the screen.
2. Check that the date and time are set correctly.
3. Click the **Time Zone** tab and select the correct time zone - usually **(GMT) Greenwich Mean Time**.
4. Click **OK**.



9 Use the 'Automatic reconnection' option (AOL 9.0 only)

1. From the AOL Sign-On Screen, click **Sign On Options**, and then click **Expert Setup**.
2. Highlight an access number and click **Edit**.
3. Tick **Automatically reconnect me and ignore interruptions when using this connection**.
4. Click **OK**.
5. If prompted, click **Yes** to use this setting for all numbers in this location.

10 Clear your AOL modem setup (AOL 9.0 only)

1. Start the AOL software.
2. On the AOL Sign-On Screen, click **Sign On Options** and then click **Expert Setup**.
3. Click on the **Devices** tab, choose your modem from the list and click **Delete**.
4. Exit the AOL software and restart it again. AOL will attempt to auto-detect your modem.
5. Then try to connect to AOL again.



Solutions

11 Configure your firewall for AOL usage

If you use firewall software, you should make sure it is configured to allow access to the AOL software, in order to avoid any interference with your AOL connection to do this, choose your type of firewall from the selection below.

Windows Firewall:

1. Click on **Start** and select **Control Panel**.
2. Click **Switch to Classic View** if this option is visible.
3. Double-click **Windows Firewall**.
4. Click the **Exceptions** tab and click **Add Program**.
5. Select **AOL** and click **OK**.
6. Click **Add Program** again and select **AOL System Information**, click **OK**.

Note: If you are using **Windows XP Service Pack 2**, Windows Firewall is activated by default. You should ensure that only one firewall is running at any one time.

McAfee® Firewall:

1. Right-click on the **McAfee® Firewall** icon, located in the "system tray" at the bottom right-hand corner of your screen (near your PC's clock).
2. Select **Options** and select **Internet Applications**.
3. Select the AOL programs in the list, and click **Allow Full Access**.

Norton Firewall:

1. From the **Start** menu, open **Norton Internet Security / Personal Firewall**.
2. Click on **Personal Firewall**, click **Configure** and click on the **Programs** tab.
3. Select the AOL program files, set them to **Permit All** and click **OK**.

Zone Alarm:

1. From the **Start** menu, open **Zone Alarm Control Centre**.
2. Click **Program Control** and then **Programs**.
3. Locate the AOL program files and allow access by clicking the corresponding **X** and then clicking **Allow**.

Other Firewalls:

The AOL programs you must permit (or allow) are as follows:

- waol.exe
- aoltpspd.exe
- AOLacsd.exe
- AOLDial.exe

For more detailed instructions on how to do this, please consult the documentation for your firewall software.

Solutions

12 Run AOL Spyware Protection (AOL 9.0 only)

1. From your desktop or Windows **Start** menu, double-click **AOL Spyware Protection**.
2. Click **Get Updates** to check for updates.
3. When finished, click **Scan Now**. The scan will last for approximately 10 minutes.
4. When complete, click **View Details** to see the list of spyware found on your PC (if any).
5. You can either click **Block All** to block all found items, or select each item in turn and click **Block** Item if you want to block some items but allow others.
6. Click **Close** when finished.

13 Ensure that you are using the best AOL access number (AOL 9.0 only)

The most suitable choice of AOL access numbers depends on your AOL price plan, your telephone provider and which telephone exchange you are dialling from.

For example, most AOL Broadband packages cannot access 0800 (freephone) access numbers - they must use 0845 (local rate) numbers for dial-up access instead.

To ensure that you are using the most suitable AOL access numbers, create a new dial-up location as follows:

1. Click **Sign On Options** on the AOL 9.0 Sign-On Screen.
2. Click **Add Location**.
3. Follow all on-screen prompts. Our automatic setup process will aid you in choosing the best AOL access numbers.



14 Run a HyperTerminal test

1. Click on **Start** and select **Run**.
2. Type **hypertrm** and click **OK**.
3. When prompted for a name, type **test** then click **OK**.
4. Type an AOL access number you wish to dial and click **Dial**.
5. If the test was successful, the word "**Login:**" should appear.
If this does not happen, please contact your PC vendor for technical support.

Solutions

15 Delete and reinstall the AOL software

To uninstall AOL:

1. Close the AOL software.
2. Windows 98 / ME / 2000: On the Windows Start menu, click **Settings**, then **Control Panel**
Windows XP: Click **Start**, then **Control Panel**, then click **Switch to Classic View** if visible.
3. Double-click **Add/Remove Programs**.
4. In the **Add/Remove Programs** dialog box, select **AOL UK**, then click **Add/Remove** or **Change/Remove**.
5. In the version list, select the version or copy of the AOL software you want to remove, then click **Next** and follow the on-screen prompts.

Note: If you have downloaded files or saved email in your Personal Filing Cabinet (or the Saved on My PC folder on AOL 9.0) that you wish to keep, make sure the **Downloaded Files** and **Personal Filing Cabinet** checkboxes are ticked. If ticked, these files will be copied to your desktop.

To reinstall AOL:

1. Insert an AOL CD into your CD-ROM drive. The installer should automatically launch after a few seconds. If it does not: Click the Windows **Start** menu, click **Run**, type **d:setup** (or **e:setup** depending on the drive letter of your CD-ROM drive), then press **Enter**.
2. Follow the on-screen instructions. When prompted, choose the **Current Members** option, then choose **Adding your existing AOL account to this computer** and click **Next**.
3. Take note of the folder the new version of AOL is being installed into and follow all remaining on-screen prompts.



To restore your backed-up AOL files:

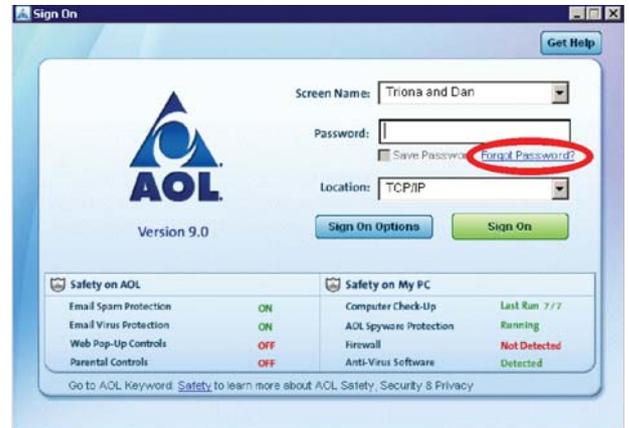
1. Double-click the **AOL Saved PFC** folder on your desktop.
2. Double-click the **AOL folder** corresponding to the version of AOL you uninstalled (if in doubt, choose the most recently created folder).
3. Open the **Organize** folder.
4. Click **Edit**, then **Select All**.
5. Click **Edit**, then **Copy** to copy the entire contents of the folder.
6. Find the folder containing your newly installed version of AOL (the folder name you made note of when reinstalling AOL, above). This will be called something like **C:/Program Files/AOL 9.0a**. So, for example, double-click **My Computer**, then double-click your **C drive**, then double-click **Program Files**, then double-click the appropriate folder. (e.g. **AOL 9.0a**), double-click the **Organize** folder and finally choose **Edit** then **Paste** to move your copied backup files into this folder.
7. When prompted whether you want to replace files, click **Yes**. Now you can double-click the **AOL icon** on your desktop and sign on as normal.

Solutions

16 Reset your password (AOL 9.0 only)

1. From the AOL 9.0 Sign-On Screen, select the Screen Name you are trying to use, then click **Forgot Password?**
2. You will be connected to the AOL password reset process, which will ask you for certain information about your AOL account in order to verify your identity.
3. If you answer successfully, you will be able to choose a new password for your selected AOL Screen Name.

Tip: Be sure to pick a password that is easy for you to remember but hard for others to guess.



Please note: The above password reset process is not available to all members - for example, it is not accessible via a TCP/IP or LAN connection. If you encounter any problems with Steps 1-3 above, please try the following alternatives instead:

- If you have a different Screen Name, use that to sign on to AOL and go to **AOL Keyword: Live Help** to chat to a technical support representative who can assist you.
- Or you can call AOL Member Services using the phone number on page 10 of this document.

Additional Help

If none of the above solutions fixed your problem, help is available in other ways:

Offline:

If you can't sign on to AOL, from the AOL 9.0 Sign-On Screen, you can click **Get Help** to access AOL 9.0's built-in help file.

Or, if you have alternative Internet access, go to www.aol.co.uk/help for additional help and troubleshooting information.



Online:

If you can sign on using AOL, go to **AOL Keyword: Help** to visit the comprehensive AOL Help channel, containing up-to-date troubleshooting and customer service information.

You can also go to **AOL Keyword: Live Help** to chat online to an AOL technical support representative.



Remember: To use any AOL Keyword, simply type the word or phrase into the white address bar at the top of your AOL window, then press the **Enter** key.

Telephone:

If you are still having problems, call AOL Member Services for technical support from 8am to midnight, seven days a week on **0870 320 2020**. BT landline calls cost max 7.51p/min; calls from mobiles/other network providers may cost more.

For more information go to **AOL Keyword: Support Me**