

Windows 11 Disk Cleanup Checklist

Nine steps in a safe order. Read before you delete, and stop when you have enough free space.

Before you start

- ☐ Back up the files you cannot lose, or at least make sure they exist somewhere else.
- ☐ Make sure a restore point can be created (Control Panel > System > System Protection).

The checklist

- ☐ 1. Check Storage settings: Settings > System > Storage, and note which category is largest.
- ☐ 2. Review large files (File Explorer search: size:>1GB).
- ☐ 3. Check the Downloads folder: it is yours, and Windows never empties it.
- ☐ 4. Review Temporary files in Storage settings. Read each entry before ticking it.
- ☐ 5. Review Windows.old (previous Windows installation): remove it only when you will not roll back.
- ☐ 6. Run Disk Cleanup > Clean up system files.
- ☐ 7. Check Windows Update Cleanup (never delete WinSxS by hand).
- ☐ 8. Review apps by size: Settings > Apps > Installed apps.
- ☐ 9. Empty the Recycle Bin last, after you are sure.

What not to do

- ☐ Do not delete files from the Windows, System32 or WinSxS folders by hand.
- ☐ Do not delete hiberfil.sys, pagefile.sys or swapfile.sys from File Explorer.
- ☐ You do not need a registry cleaner to free disk space.

Free resource. Longer guide: <https://raincleaner.eu/guides/windows-11-disk-cleanup-checklist> . Made by the Rain Cleaner team (raincleaner.eu); everything above works with Windows alone.