Gaming PC running slowly? Five checks to start with

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Free starter guide | Edition 1 | October 2026

Before you start

Save your work. Change one thing at a time and test the same game scene after each change. Record your original settings so you can undo them. These checks help narrow down a problem; they do not promise a particular FPS increase.

1. Identify the symptom

Low FPS means the game draws too few frames. Stuttering means uneven delivery, even when average FPS looks good. Online lag can involve the network or game server, so graphics changes may not fix it.

Write down the game, what happens, and when it started. Test another game: an issue in one title needs a different investigation from an issue across the whole PC.

2. Restart and reduce background load

Restart Windows, then test before opening extra apps. In Task Manager, inspect CPU, memory and disk use. Close recognised apps you do not need, such as a browser with many tabs or a download in progress. Leave unfamiliar system processes alone.

3. Check storage

Open Windows Settings and search for Storage. If space is low, review temporary files and unused apps. Check the items selected before deleting anything; Downloads may contain files you want. Back up personal files before removing them.

4. Test lighter game settings

Note your current settings. Try a lower graphics preset or resolution, then repeat the same test. A meaningful improvement suggests graphics workload is part of the issue. Restore settings if there is no benefit. A stable frame rate can feel better than a high average with frequent dips.

5. Review updates and recent changes

Check Windows Update and use your graphics-card manufacturer's official driver source. If the problem began immediately after an update, record that before installing anything else. Avoid third-party driver updater tools. Restart when requested and retest.

Your test record

Check	Original condition	What changed	Result
Game and symptom			
Restart/background apps			
Storage			
Graphics settings			
Updates/recent changes			

Still having trouble?

Collect your CPU, graphics card, RAM, Windows version, game name, exact error text and test results. That makes your next support request much easier to investigate. Do not share passwords, licence keys or personal information from screenshots.

Skip registry cleaners, unknown "FPS boost" scripts and advice to disable security protection. If you notice a burning smell or repeated sudden shutdowns, stop testing and seek hardware help.

Sources and scope

Written for Windows PC gamers. Menu names vary. Reference guidance reviewed on 4 October 2026:

- Microsoft: Tips to improve PC performance in Windows.

- NVIDIA: How to Get Rid of Lag. Some examples on this older page refer to legacy Windows versions; this guide uses only its general explanation of frame-rate performance.

Gamers Hideout is independent of Microsoft, NVIDIA and game publishers.