

Is Your Password Strong Enough? ^[1]

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One of the main causes of data breaches is compromised password security. Cybercriminals try to access your information for multiple reasons but the most common one tends to be financial gain. Building strong secure passwords and keeping them private are crucial steps to secure your personal information and other information you might handle at work.

How cybercriminals might get your passwords

Cybercriminals have numerous ways to obtain your passwords. The most common include:

- Phishing scams: Emails, calls, or texts trying to trick the recipient into sharing their personal information.
- Guessing common passwords: With the use of software, cybercriminals can try thousands of common passwords in seconds to access a computer, network, account, or some other type of software in order to access personal information.
- Dictionary attacks: When criminals input common words or phrases to illegally access information.

Note: It is also important to remember that using the same password makes it easier for cybercriminals, if one account is compromised, they may be able to compromise all the other accounts with the same password, which is why we recommend using only unique passwords.

Check your password strength

If you do not know whether your password is strong enough to withstand an attempted compromise, a good way to check is with the help of a password strength checker. One to try is [Security.org](#) ^[3], simply type a password—similar to the ones you use—into the checker; the site will show you the length of time it might take for a criminal to crack it, such as a few seconds or more than a quadrillion years! It will also give you tips on how to strengthen your password. Remember, never enter your actual password for security reasons.

Do you use any of these passwords?

Using weak passwords makes things easier for cybercriminals. Just like you and me, they can use Google to stay on top of password trends to know what to guess first. According to [NordPass](#) ^[4], these were the top 15 most used passwords in 2020:

01 123456

02 123456789

03 picture1

04 password

05 12345678

06 111111

07 123123

08 12345

09 1234567890

10 senha

11 1234

12 qwert

13 abcde

14 Millio

15 0000

[5]

How to improve your password security

Consider these recommendations to increase your password security:

Do's

- Do consider using a password manager.
- Do use different passwords for different accounts.
- Do make sure passwords are at least 12 characters.
- Do use two-factor authentication whenever it's available.

Don'ts

- Do not share your password with any supervisor.
- Do not use the same password over and over.
- Do not use common words.
- Do not use personal data.

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