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Autodiscover and autoconfig: how Outlook and your phone find the mailbox settings

Outlook, Phones & Apps

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Autodiscover and autoconfig: how Outlook and your phone find the mailbox settings

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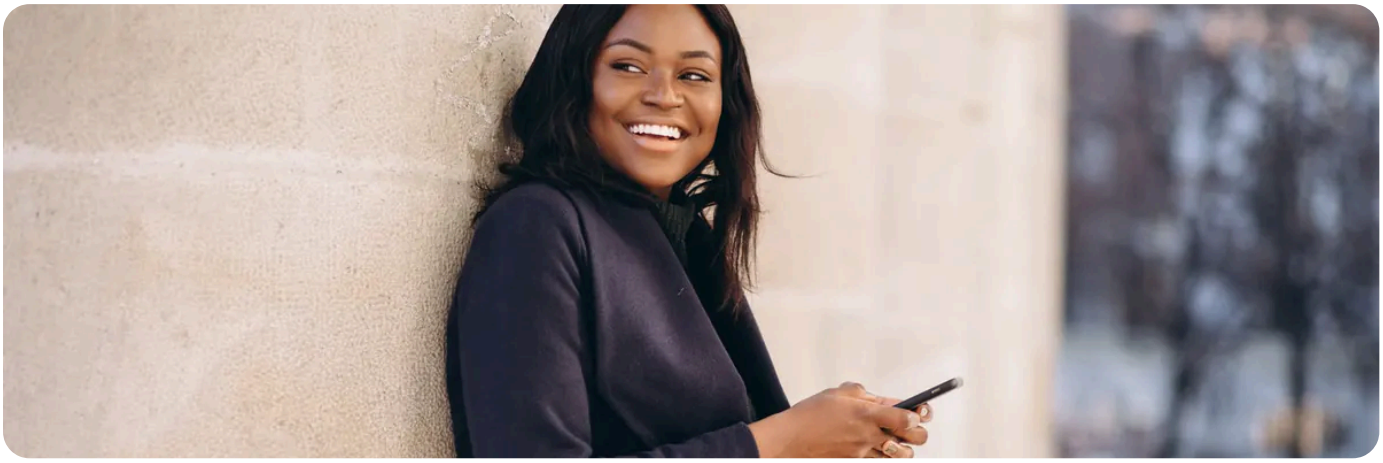

The short answer: when you type just the e-mail address and password, Outlook, Thunderbird and phones **look up the server settings by themselves**. They do it by consulting some special addresses and records of your domain (**autodiscover** and **autoconfig**). If those do not exist, the program asks for the details by hand. That is what lies behind “I could not find the settings”.

What the site needs

What	What to do
Autodiscover (Outlook)	Outlook queries an address like autodiscover.your-domain.com or an SRV record of the domain where the mail server is.
Autoconfig (Thunderbird and others)	They look for a settings file at **autoconfig.your-domain.com**.
Who creates them	Usually the hosting panel adds these records to the domain’s DNS. If the domain’s DNS is elsewhere, they may be missing.
E-mail on another service	With Google Workspace or Microsoft 365, the records must point to that service, not to us: **Google Workspace or Microsoft 365**.
Without them	Nothing breaks: manual setup always works, with the server, port and security.

Getting started

1. **See whether the records exist:** in a DNS lookup, look for your domain’s autodiscover and autoconfig addresses and the SRV record: **Checking DNS**.

2 **If the DNS is ours,** open the domain's Zone Editor in the panel and check they are there.

3 **If the DNS is elsewhere,** copy over the same records you see in the panel's Zone Editor: **SRV records**.

4 **Wait for propagation: How long DNS takes**.

5 **If it still fails,** set it up by hand: **Setting up e-mail in Outlook**, **in Thunderbird**, **on Android** or **on iPhone**.

! **Do not point them at a server that is not your e-mail's.**
If you moved your e-mail to another service and left the old records, Outlook looks for the settings in the wrong place and fails to sign in. Check the MX too: **DNS records**.

The repeated-password or "cannot connect" error in Outlook has other causes: **Common Outlook errors**.

NEED A HAND?

Outlook cannot find your domain's settings? Open a ticket with the domain and where the DNS is.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **DNS records explained: A, CNAME, MX, TXT and TTL** →
- **SRV records: what they are for, and how to create one** →
- **Checking DNS from the command line: dig and nslookup, and how to read the answer** →
- **Common Outlook errors: 0x800CCC0E, password prompts and more** →
- **Google Workspace or Microsoft 365 on your own domain: MX records, and keeping your website with us** →

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