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Disabling plugins, including when you cannot get in

Site Builder & AI

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Disabling plugins, including when you cannot get in

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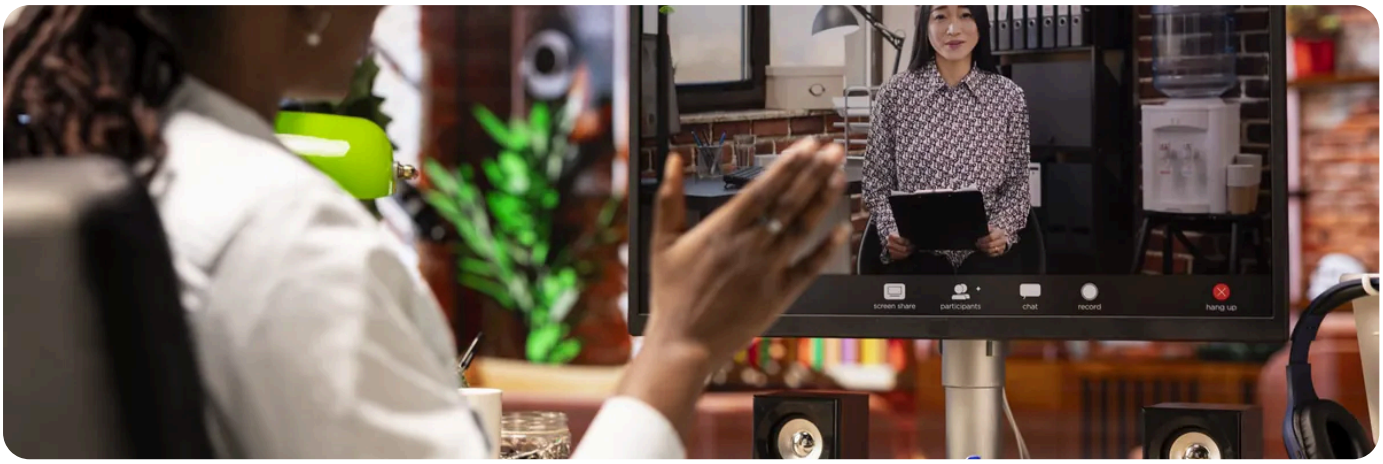

Disabling plugins is the first thing to try when a WordPress site breaks after an update, after a new install, or for no visible reason at all. A plugin is to blame in a great many cases, and there is a way to disable them even when the dashboard no longer opens.

From the dashboard, while you can still get in

1. Open **Plugins** in the WordPress dashboard. The list shows which ones are active.
2. For a single plugin, click **Deactivate** under its name.
3. For several at once, tick the boxes, choose **Deactivate** from the bulk actions list and apply.
4. If you are hunting for the culprit, deactivate **all** of them and check the site comes back. Then activate one at a time, testing in between. The one that breaks it again is yours.

Deactivating does not erase a plugin's settings.
Activate it again and everything is as it was. Deleting is what usually takes the settings with it, and it does not always warn you.

When the dashboard will not open

WordPress has one behaviour that saves the day: **if a plugin's folder disappears, it deactivates the plugin by itself** and carries on. That is what the next method rests on, and it is done entirely in cPanel, with no WordPress involved.

1. Sign in to **My Interweb** and open cPanel for your plan.

2. In the **Files** section, open **File Manager**.

3. Navigate to the site folder and then into `wp-content`.

4. **To disable everything at once:** rename the `plugins` folder to `plugins-off`. If the site comes back, a plugin is your problem.

5. Rename it back to `plugins`. All the plugins reappear, now deactivated, and you can switch them on one by one from the dashboard.

6. **To disable only one:** go into `plugins` and rename that plugin's folder, adding anything you like to the end.

> **Renaming the `plugins` folder really does disable all of them.**
> That includes the caching plugin, the security one and the shop. The site will look wrong while it is like that, and that is expected. Do it quickly and rename it back straight away.

If you would rather work over FTP than in File Manager, it is exactly the same job: **FTP accounts and FileZilla**.

From the hosting panel, without touching files

The WordPress tool in cPanel, in the **Domains** section, lists each installation's plugins and lets you deactivate them from there, without entering the site and without renaming anything. Where it is available, it is the cleanest road.

Through the database, as a last resort

The list of active plugins is stored in one row of the database. You can empty it in phpMyAdmin, but it is the method with the most ways to go wrong: the value is in a format that breaks easily, and the table prefix differs from site to site. Before trying, read **databases and phpMyAdmin**, and export the database first. If in doubt, ask us before you touch it.

When the site stays down with every plugin off, the problem is somewhere else: **common WordPress errors** and **cannot get into the dashboard**.

NEED A HAND?

Would rather not rename folders? Give us the domain and we will switch the plugins off from the server side.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **WordPress hosting**
- **Support Policy**
- **Frequently asked questions**

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TAX ID (NIF)	500 260 5724
COMMERCIAL REGISTRATION NO.	26464-25/250724
REGISTERED OFFICE	Rua Direita do Patriota, Bairro Dangereux Belas, Luanda, Angola
CONTACT	info@interweb.ao · +244 942 011 191 · www.interweb.ao
OPENING HOURS	Monday to Friday - 08 AM to 04 PM Saturday & Sunday - Closed

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