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Fixing “Allowed memory size exhausted”

PHP Errors & Logs

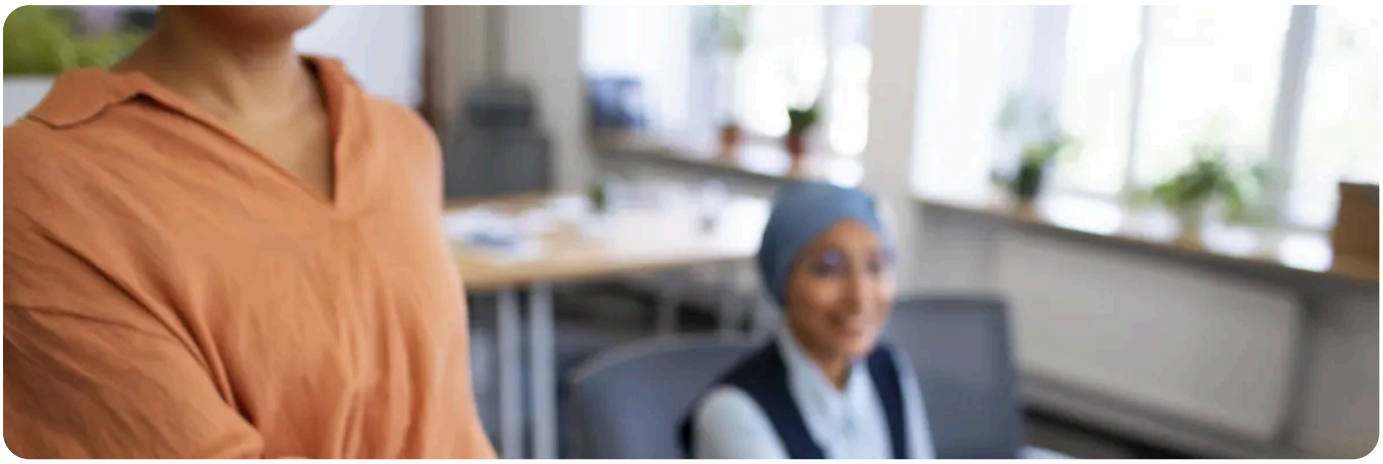
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Fixing “Allowed memory size exhausted”

PHP Errors & Logs · Created on **October 10, 2026** · 3 min read



The full message reads “Allowed memory size of … bytes exhausted (tried to allocate … bytes)”. It means **a single request** tried to use more memory than PHP’s `memory_limit` allows. The quick fix is to raise that value; the real fix is to find **who** used it.

Finding who used it

At the end of the message there is a path and a line number. That path answers the question faster than any guess.

The path points to…	It means	What to do
wp-content/plugins/name	A plugin is using too much, usually on a heavy task (backups, imports, reports).	Raise the limit so the task can finish, then look for a newer version or a lighter alternative.
wp-content/themes/name	The theme or a page builder loading a lot.	Raise the limit. If it keeps running short, the theme is heavy for the plan.
Image files (gd, imagick)	A huge photograph being processed.	Shrink the image before you upload it. The cost grows with the dimensions, not the file weight.
Your own code, always in the same place	A loop that never ends, or a whole list loaded at once.	Here, raising the limit only delays the error. Fix the code.

Raising the limit

1. In cPanel open `Select PHP Version`, pick the version the site uses and open the **Options** tab.
2. Find `memory_limit` and choose a value above the current one, **one step at a time**.

3. If only one application needs it, put a `.user.ini` in its folder instead, with a line such as `memory_limit = 256M` (an example). See **where to set each value**.

4. WordPress also has a limit of its own, changed in `wp-config.php`. See **giving WordPress more memory**.

5. Repeat the action that caused the error. If it goes through, stop here.

To confirm the new value is in force, open a file containing `<?php phpinfo();` in the site folder and look for `memory_limit`: the **Local Value** column is the one that counts. If the number did not move, it was saved in the wrong place, or the site runs on another PHP version. And before you raise the limit by much, try **deactivating plugins one by one** and repeating the action: if the error disappears with one of them off, the limit was never the problem.

memory_limit is not your account’s memory.
It is the ceiling per request. The account has its own memory and process limits, and when a request hits those the result is a 500 or 508 error, not a higher limit. See **the limits nobody advertises** and **website errors explained**.

If the message only appears on a heavy task
(importing, exporting, building backups), consider running that task from the command line or from cron, where there is no web request. See **running a PHP script from a cron job**.

NEED A HAND?

Raised the limit and the message is back? Send us the whole message, with the path and the line.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **PHP limits: memory, time, upload size and the one that fails silently** →
- **php.ini and .user.ini: where to set a value** →
- **Giving WordPress more memory** →
- **The limits nobody advertises** →

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