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WordPress stuck in maintenance mode

Errors & Troubleshooting

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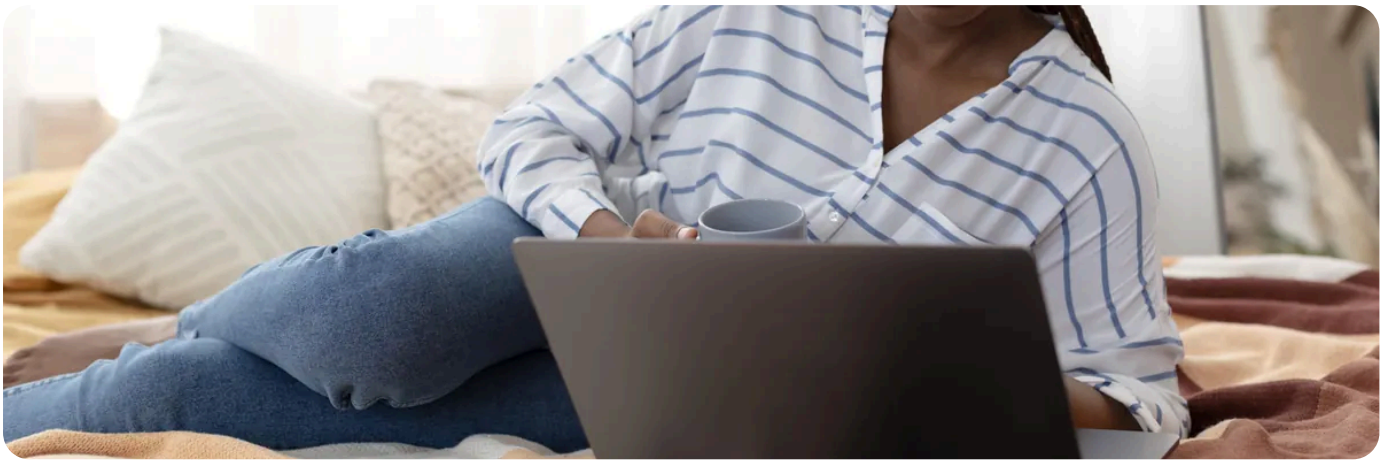
WordPress stuck in maintenance mode

Errors & Troubleshooting Created on **October 10, 2026** 2 min read



The site shows one dry sentence saying it is **“briefly unavailable for scheduled maintenance”**, and it will not go away. This happens when an update is interrupted halfway: WordPress put the site into maintenance and never took it out. Your content is untouched. The fix is deleting a single file.

How to take it out of maintenance mode

1. **Open File Manager**, in the **Files** section of cPanel, and go to the folder where WordPress is installed (the one holding `wp-config.php`).

2. **Show hidden files.** In File Manager’s settings, tick the option to show files that start with a dot. Without it you will not see what you are looking for.

3. **Delete the `.maintenance` file.** It is a small file that WordPress creates at the start of an update. It is what keeps the site in maintenance. Deleting it damages nothing.

4. **Reload the site**, preferably in a private window. It should open as before.

5. **Sign in to the dashboard and see what was left to update.** Go to Dashboard, Updates. Whatever was interrupted shows up again as pending, and you can redo it calmly, one item at a time.

If it stays the same

What you see	What to do
The same sentence, after deleting the file	Cache. Empty the plugin’s and the browser’s. See **cache rules for a WordPress site**.

What you see	What to do
A maintenance page in your own colours	Not WordPress: a maintenance plugin. Deactivate it from the dashboard or, if you cannot get in, by renaming its folder.
A critical error or a blank page	The interrupted update left files half-written. See **common WordPress errors**.
The dashboard asks you to update the database	Accept: it is the last step of a core update that was left unfinished.

If a plugin or theme was left halfway, do not leave it like that.
An interrupted update can leave files from two versions mixed together, and that produces strange errors. Reinstall the item from the dashboard, or replace its folder with a clean copy. And if it was WordPress core, launch the update again from the dashboard.

Why it happens, and how to avoid it

1. **You ran several updates at once.** Update one item at a time, especially when there are many plugins.
2. **You closed the tab or lost the connection** halfway. Let the update finish before you leave the screen.
3. **The server cut the process** for lack of memory or time. If it always happens with the same plugin, see **giving WordPress more memory**.

Take a backup before updating
, every time, and check that it exists. If luck turns, restoring takes minutes. See **updating themes and plugins without breaking anything** and **making and keeping your own backup**.

NEED A HAND?

Deleted the file and the site is still unavailable? Tell us the address and what you were updating when it stopped.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

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

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