

Organize and Protect Your Passwords

So many websites require passwords these days! You know that you shouldn't use the same password everywhere. It would be almost impossible anyway. Many sites have specific requirements: uppercase vs. lowercase letters, numbers, punctuation, symbols, and my favorite: you can't use any letter more than twice 😊

BASIC HINTS:

- Establish a consistent location for passwords. You can write them in a book, type them into a spreadsheet, or use an online password protector. There are pluses and minuses to each. But, you shouldn't write them on sticky notes and post them on your monitor. Above all else, DON'T USE YOUR MEMORY! Deciding between paper & electronic password storage? Here are some thoughts:
 - *Paper only.* Literally a piece of paper or notebook. An inexpensive address book works too. There are commercial password books available including the *Internet Password Organizer* mentioned below. Cautions: you have to take it with you when you'll need a password & it can be lost.
 - *Printed electronic spreadsheet.* Cautions: it is easy to write new passwords on the paper & not change the electronic document. This can create an unreadable mess. You have to name the document so you can find it.
 - *Electronic only.* Free & paid online password & data managers. Cautions: you need to identify what features are most important to you. If you're going to install on more than one device, make sure relevant apps are available.
- Create strong passwords. Using a sentence as a password is very effective. For instance: **My cat meows loudly!** By using correct uppercase vs. lowercase letters, spacing, & punctuation, it is harder to crack. If the site doesn't allow spaces or punctuation or requires a number, then it could be: **MyCatMeowsLoudly2.**
- Change passwords on a regular basis. Some sites require you to change passwords at certain intervals; many do not. I'm not very good at modifying passwords unless I'm prompted. The good news is that my online password manager lets me know when a password is weak or a duplicate so I can alter it.

RESOURCES

- [1Password](#). Online password manager.
- [Dashlane](#). Online password manager.
- [Internet Password Organizer](#). Book in which to write passwords & related data such as wireless setting, license numbers, & ISP information.
- [LastPass](#). Online password manager.

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