

# What to Do When Windows System Restore Fails

By Chris Hoffman

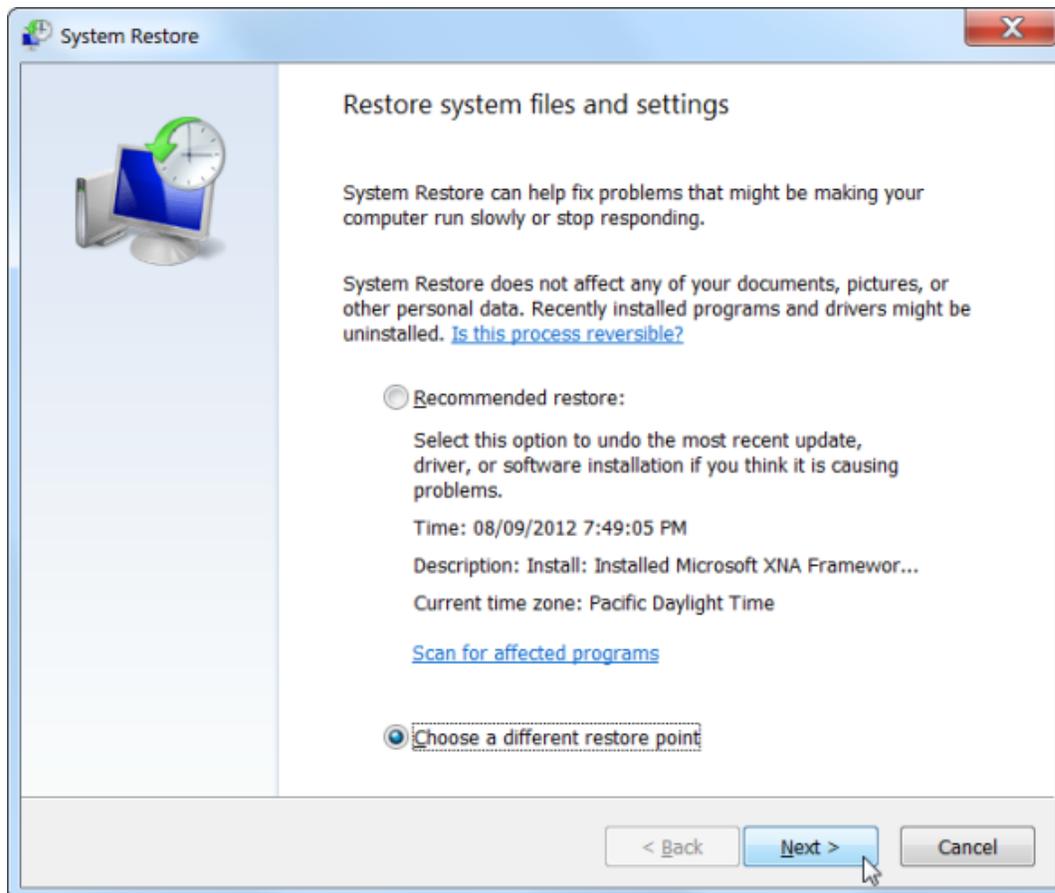
If you're experiencing a problem with your Windows computer, you can try using System Restore, which rolls back system files, program files, and registry information (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/reinstall-windows-7-changing-personal-settings-installed-programs-drivers/>) to a previous state. If these files have been corrupted or damaged, System Restore will replace them with good ones, solving your problem. However, in some cases, System Restore may not work properly – you may see an error message or the restore may not fix anything.

There are a few quick things to try that may fix System Restore for you, including running System Restore in Safe Mode, where other applications can't interfere with it.

## Try Another Restore Point

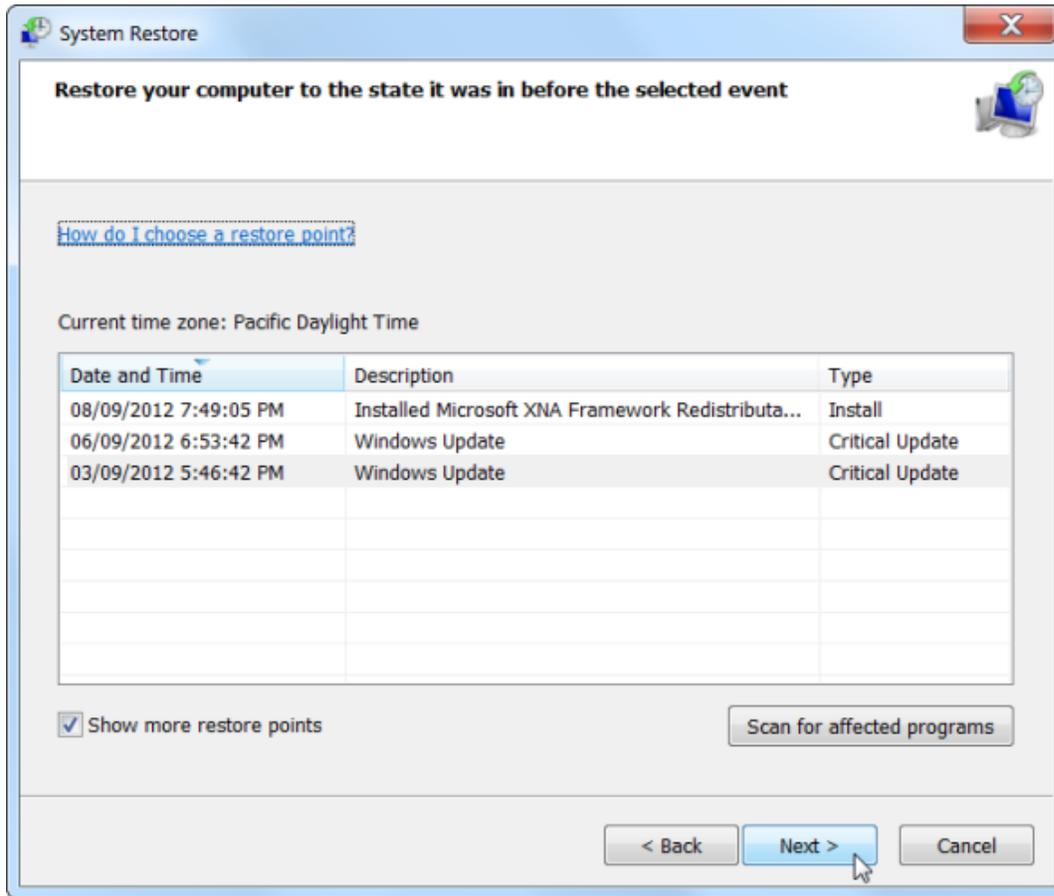
First, try using another restore point (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/recover-deleted-files-windows-7s-restore-previous-versions-tool/>). This applies whether you're seeing an error message while trying to use system restore, or whether you've used system restore successfully and it hasn't solved your problem.

From the System Restore window (click *Start*, type *System Restore*, and press *Enter* to open it), select *Choose a different restore point* and click *Next*.



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Try to select a system restore point created before you started experiencing problems. More recent system restore points may have been created after the problems with your computer began, so they may not help. To view all available restore points, select the *Show more restore points* check box in this window.



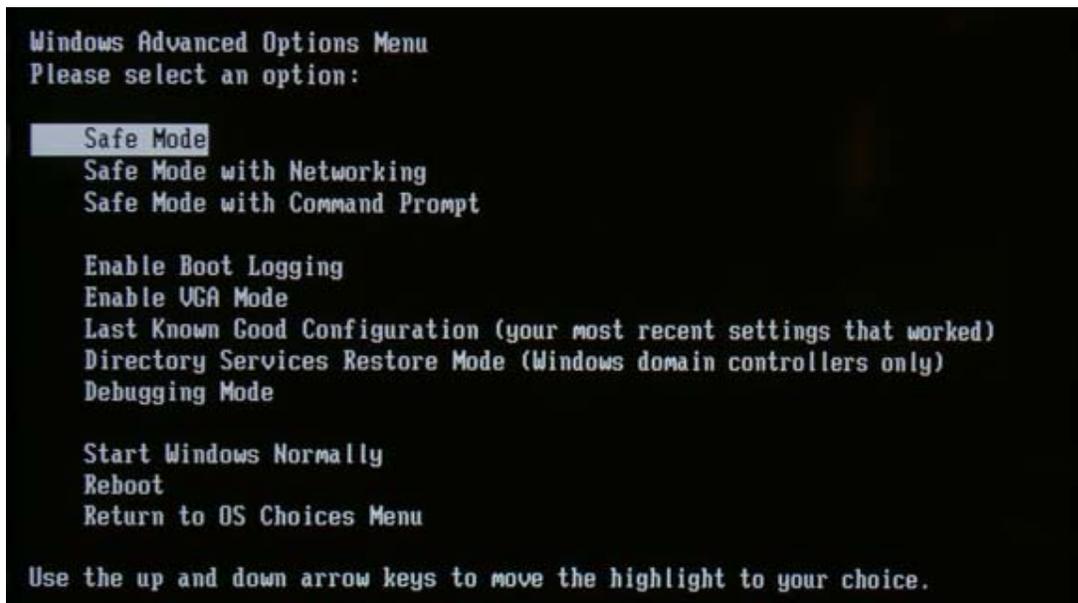
Ideally, this will solve your problem. However, if you see an error message – or if System Restore performs a restore operation that doesn't solve your problem – continue reading the next section.

### Use Safe Mode

System Restore works by replacing the system files on your computer with the system files from a restore point. However, some applications – particularly antivirus applications (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/ten-best-antivirus-programs/>) and other types of services running in the background – may interfere with this. Antivirus applications try to protect your system files, so they may prevent System Restore from replacing them. Other types of applications – perhaps even a virus or other type of malware (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/difference-worm-trojan-virus-makeuseof-explains/>) – may also prevent System Restore from working.

To bypass these background services, you can start Windows in Safe Mode (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/start-windows-safe-mode/>) and run System Restore from there. In Safe Mode, Windows doesn't load start-up applications and third-party drivers, so they can't prevent System Restore from working.

To boot Windows in Safe Mode, restart your computer, then press and hold the F8 key while your computer boots. Select Safe Mode in the boot menu that appears and press Enter. (If you don't see the boot menu, restart your computer and try again.)



Launch System Restore and use it in Safe Mode. After you're done, restart your computer – it will boot Windows in normal mode.

### Reinstall Windows

If System Restore doesn't even work for you in Safe Mode (remember to try other restore points), its files may have become corrupted. Or, if System Restore works for you but doesn't fix your problem, you may not have any restore points created before the problem occurred.

Either way, System Restore isn't going to fix your problem. If you have a problem with your computer that needs to be fixed, you'll need to restore your computer's operating system from its restore partition or reinstall Windows (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/reinstall-windows-7-changing-personal-settings-installed-programs-drivers/>) – don't worry, this isn't quite as daunting as it may seem.

First, be sure to back up your personal data (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/download-stuff-backup-restore-guide/>) – the reinstall process will generally wipe the files and programs on your hard drive. After you're sure you have your important files safely backed up, it's time to perform a restore. There are three possible ways to do this:

- Most laptops and other computers come with recovery partitions, which you can activate by pressing a special key while booting your computer – consult your computer's manual for the exact key and instructions.
- If your computer came with restore discs instead of a restore partition, insert the first restore disc into your computer's disc drive and restart your computer to get started.
- If you installed Windows yourself (perhaps you built your own computer or installed a different version of Windows on it), insert the Windows installer disc into your computer and restart the computer.

Follow the instructions that appear on your screen to complete the recovery or reinstall after you start it.

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