

# How to Format an External Drive

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It's generally recommended to erase and format a new external hard drive before using it with your Mac. This helps ensure the drive is properly initialized for use with MacOS and can prevent potential issues. I suggest doing this even if the drive claims to be pre-formatted for Mac.

To erase and format a new external drive using Disk Utility:

1. Connect the external drive to your Mac.
2. Open Disk Utility (located in Applications > Utilities).
3. In the sidebar, select the external drive.
4. Click "Erase" at the top.
5. Name the drive and select APFS as the format.
6. Click Erase to begin.

This will erase all data on the drive, so be sure to back up anything important first. Once complete, the external drive will be ready to use with your Mac.

Note: Some drives require repeating steps 4-6 a second time. The first time, select Mac OS Extended as the format. Then repeat the steps, choosing APFS as the format.

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By Phil Davis -- Updated 2023-10-09