

Using iPhone, iPad, or iPod with multiple computers

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Summary

You can manage your iPhone, iPad, or iPod with multiple computers^{1,2} as long as you have set the device to "Manually manage music."

Products Affected

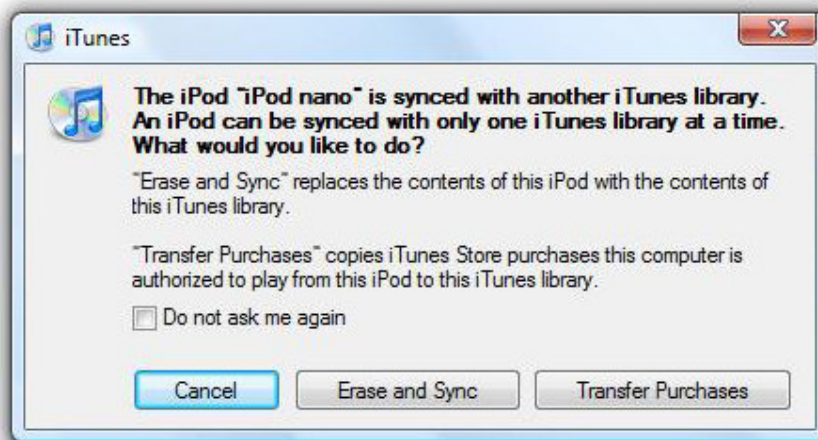
iPod, iPhone, iPad, iPod shuffle, iPod mini, iPod touch, iPod nano, iPod classic

Modes

By default, your device is set to "Automatically sync songs...", sometimes called automatic mode. To transfer music from multiple computers, your device must be set to "Manually manage music," sometimes referred to as manual mode.

Automatic Mode

When your device is set to automatic mode, iTunes automatically updates your device's music library whenever you connect it to your computer. iTunes transfers new songs you've added and erases songs you've removed. The first computer you connect your device to is its "home" computer. The music library from that computer is copied to your device. When you connect your device to a different computer, an alert box appears with this message:



If you want to delete the music library on your device and make the new computer its "home" computer, choose Erase and Sync. iTunes will delete all songs and playlists on your device, and then will copy the music library and playlists from the new home computer to your device.

If you want to move the iTunes Store purchases on your device to the new computer, choose "Transfer Purchases." The new computer must be set up with your iTunes Store account and authorized to play your iTunes Store purchases in order to transfer your iTunes Store purchases.

Manual Mode

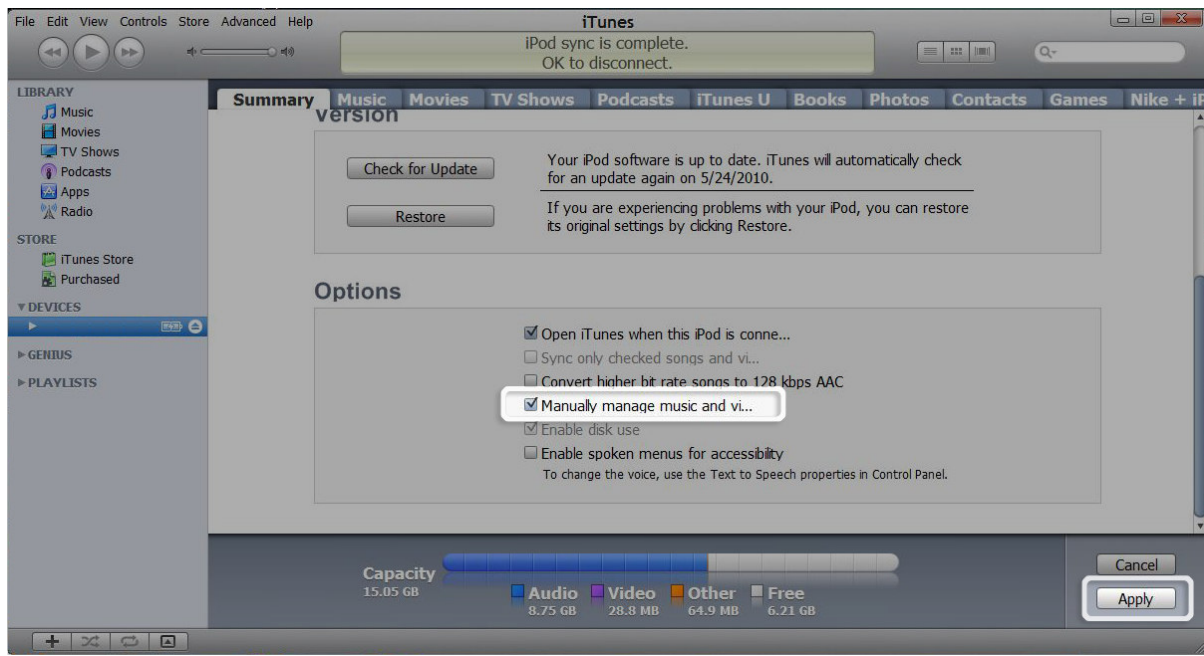
If you want to keep the music library on your device, but copy songs or playlists from the music library on the second computer, click Cancel when the dialog box appears, and then set your device to manual mode.

Change the device synchronization mode to manual mode in iTunes:

1. Open iTunes⁴, if necessary.
2. Select your device under Devices in the menu on the left-hand side of iTunes.



3. Click the Summary tab.
4. Click "Manually manage music and videos" to enable that option.



5. Click OK in the resulting dialog box.
6. Click Apply.

It is normal for your device to take a few seconds to change from automatic mode to manual mode.

When in manual mode, to add songs or playlists, drag them from iTunes to the device icon in the sidebar. To remove songs or playlists, select them on the device in iTunes and press the delete key. You can also create playlists directly on the device.

Notes:

- Synchronization generally occurs only in one direction, from your computer to your device. However, if you are legally allowed to transfer song files, you can use your iPod as a hard disk³. An exception is the transfer purchases feature, which allows you to restore purchased iTunes content to an authorized computer from your device.
- iPod shuffle and iPhone are intended for use with a single computer. You cannot load music from multiple computers or iTunes libraries onto iPod shuffle and iPhone like you can with other devices.

Additional Information

1. Using an iPod formatted for Macintosh on a Windows computer is not supported. Using an iPod formatted for Windows on a Macintosh computer is not supported. Learn how to determine your iPod's hard disk format. To change the iPod format, restore your iPod using iTunes. iOS devices (iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch) cannot have their disk format modified, but will work on both Windows and Macintosh computers. Find more information on managing content manually on iPhone, iPad, or iPod.
2. Issues may occur leading to data corruption or data loss if you regularly sync contacts, calendars, notes, or bookmarks between multiple computers using iTunes and your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch. Syncing once to move your data to a new computer should not cause these issues. See this article for more information.
3. iOS devices (iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch) cannot be used as a hard disk.

4. If you're not using iTunes 7 or later, see this article.



Still need help? Take the Express Lane to contact technical support

Use Express Lane to connect with an expert at Apple Support for personalized and convenient support.

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