

How to Format an External Drive

By Phil Davis

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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 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. Attach your Mac to the external drive.
2. Go to Applications > Utilities and open the Disk Utility.
3. Choose the external drive from the sidebar.
4. Select "Erase" from the menu.
5. Give the drive a name and choose the APFS format.
6. To start, click Erasing.

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.

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. This is necessary because some older drives may not be compatible with the APFS format initially. By formatting the drive twice, once with Mac OS Extended and then with APFS, you ensure compatibility and optimal performance.