

Conversation Clean-up in Outlook

The Clean Up feature in Outlook can reduce the number of messages in your mail folders. Redundant messages throughout a Conversation are moved to the Deleted folder.

What is a conversation?

A Conversation is also known as **an email trail or an email thread** and is the complete set of email messages from the first message and all resulting responses. By nature, the messages of a Conversation have the same subject.

For example, when you send a message to someone and they reply, that becomes a Conversation. In lots of Conversations, there might be many replies back and forth or multiple people might reply to different messages in the Conversation.

What does Conversation Clean Up do?

Clean Up evaluates the contents of each message in each Conversation. If a message is completely included within one of the replies, the previous message is deleted.

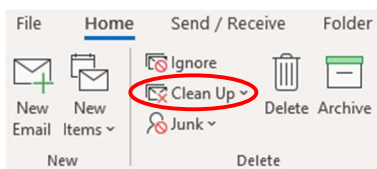
For example:

You send a message to Maria and Tom. Maria replies to both you and Tom and in her Outlook message body, your complete original message is included. Tom sees Maria's message and replies to both you and Maria. Tom's reply includes all of the previous messages in the Conversation. Therefore, Conversation Clean Up can delete all of the messages except the last one from Tom because within that message is a copy of all of the previous messages.

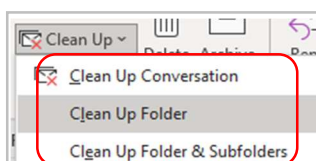
Conversation Clean Up is most useful on Conversations with many responses back and forth, especially with many recipients.

Remove redundant messages

1. On the Home tab of Outlook, in the Delete group click 'Clean Up'.



2. Click one of the following:



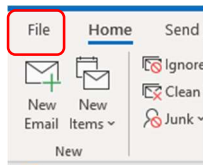
- Clean Up Conversation - the current Conversation is reviewed and redundant messages are deleted.
- Clean Up Folder - all Conversations in the selected folder are reviewed and redundant messages are deleted.
- Clean Up Folder & Subfolders - all Conversations in the selected folder and any folder that it contains are reviewed, and redundant messages are deleted.

[Outlook - clean up your inbox video](#)

Change Conversation Clean Up options

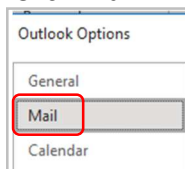
You can specify which messages are exempt from Clean Up and to where messages are moved when they are deleted.

1. Click the File tab.

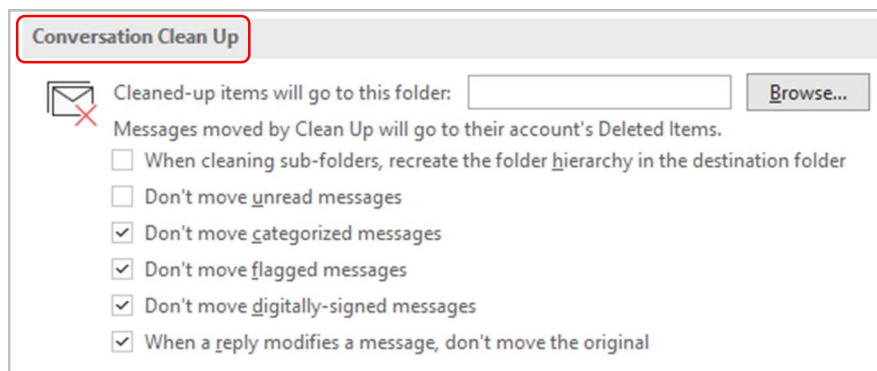


2. Click Options at bottom left.

3. Click Mail



4. Scroll down the options box to Conversation Clean Up section.



5. Do any of the following:

- To change where items are moved, you need the 'Cleaned-up items will go to this folder,' Browse button. Click it and then select an Outlook folder. By default, messages are moved to the **Deleted** Items folder.
- If you use the Clean Up Folders & Subfolders command, to replicate the folder structure of the items that Clean Up deletes, tick the 'When cleaning sub-folders, recreate the folder hierarchy in the destination folder' box.
 - *Note: This option is not available if the destination is the Deleted folder.*
- To always keep any message that you haven't yet read, tick the 'Don't move unread messages' box.
 - *However, it is recommended that you don't select this option. The remaining Conversation messages will contain any messages that are deleted, such as those that you might not have read.*
- To always keep any message that is categorised, tick the 'Don't move categorised messages' box.
 - *By default, this should be already ticked and it is recommended that you select this option. As categories apply to specific messages, deleting a categorised message would result in the loss of that categorised message.*
- To always keep any message that is flagged, tick the 'Don't move flagged messages' box.
 - *By default, this should be already ticked and it is recommended that you select this option. As flags apply to specific messages, deleting a flagged message would result in the loss of that flagged message.*
- To always keep any message that is digitally signed, tick the 'Don't move digitally-signed messages' box.
 - *By default, this should be already ticked and it is recommended that you select this option.*
- To always keep the original message if someone alters the message when it is included in replies, tick the 'When a reply modifies a message, don't move the original' box.
 - *By default, this should be already ticked and it is recommended that you select this option. This makes sure that you have a complete record of all content in the Conversation in the event someone alters a message that is contained inside a reply.*