

Four Rules to a Great Password-----

- #1. A good password is **at least** eight characters long.
- #2. You should use a mix of **at least** three of these four things: small letters (a, b, c), capital letters (A, B, C), numbers (1, 2, 3), and symbols (!, @, #).
- #3. Don't use easy-to-guess or easy-to-crack passwords.
 - What's an easy-to-guess password? Your name, your significant other's name, your pet's name, your kids' names, your car, your home address, your employer, your favorite singer, and so on.
 - What's an easy-to-crack passwords? There is software available called "password crackers" that basically try to guess and guess and guess passwords until they get the right answer. That software makes mincemeat of passwords that are all numbers, so never use that, but it also easily cracks passwords that are based on dictionary words, even if they're words from other languages.
- #4. Good passwords are easy to remember and hard to guess.
 - Easy to remember, Easy to guess: "password", "QWERTY", "123456"

So how do we come up with a good password that (a) has at least eight characters in it, (b) uses a mix of small and capital letters, numbers, and symbols, (c) isn't easy-to-guess or easy-to-crack, and (d) is easy to remember?

Here's how.

Everyone has a favorite song or poem. For instance, let's say that your favorite song is Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven". The first line of that song is "There's a lady who's sure all that glitters is gold." Take the first letter of each word, and you get "Talwsatgig". That's a good start for a password! It's ten characters long, and it's easy to remember, as long as you know the first line of the song. However, it only uses small and capital letters, so let's add more.

When you were a kid, you may have played around with a simple code, in which a=1 and b=2, all the way to z=26. Here's another one that a lot of people sometimes used: a=@, b=6, e=3, i=1 (or !), l=1 (or l=!), o=0, s=5 (or s=\$), t=+, and so on. Basically, you match the letters to a number or symbol that they sort of resemble. You can do this however you'd like, using whatever makes the most sense to you. If we do that, and then apply these substitutions to the password we've been developing, we get this: "Ta1w5atg1g". Now that is a great password!

Is that too hard? Then keep the mix of upper and lowercase letters, and tack a year on the end. Better yet, reverse the digits of the year. So your password might now be "Talwsatgig86", which is still very good. The important thing is, try to get a mix.

I know you may be thinking, "There is no way that I will be able to remember that!" But really, it's not hard. You know the song, and you'll be able to remember the simple letter/number substitution, or the year. Just sing it to yourself (not out loud!), and type. After you do it a couple of times, it will just fly off your fingers, I guarantee.