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UPDATED

ESET Home Security Premium Review: Excellent protection, but there are bugs

ESET's latest efforts offer powerful tools and filtering, but are hamstrung by installation issues and some bugs.

By Chris Barylick
Contributor, Macworld | DEC 19, 2025 2:04 PM PST

Image: Foundry

At a glance

Expert's Rating

★★★★☆

Pros

- Excellent antiviral and malware protection, that caught everything
- Spam/phishing protection that caught 100% of the questionable websites during testing
- Simple, reliable VPN client

Cons

- Installation and setup issue
- The Settings pane feels buried
- Assorted bugs, including the Scheduler function failing during testing

Our Verdict

ESET Home Security Premium offers genuinely excellent core protection features that caught nearly everything that was thrown at it, along with the most impressive spam and phishing filters we've seen to date on macOS, which is also accompanied by a reliable VPN client.

Price When Reviewed

Essential: $49.99 a year for one device; Premium: $79.99 a year for one device

Best Prices Today: Eset Home Security

RETAILER	PRICE	
ESET (first year, 1 device)	$49.99	View Deal

Price comparison from over 24,000 stores worldwide

There's intent, and there's execution, and sometimes the two don't always mesh perfectly, but still yield an impressive result. This is the case with ESET Home Security Premium, the latest offering from Slovakian security firm ESET.

ESET, which is continuing its foray into the Mac marketplace, has subtly updated its offerings for 2025. The new version, which retails for $39.99/£27.99 and up for one device for one year at an introductory price point, requires macOS 10.12 (Sierra) or later to install and run, and a free 30-day trial period is in place that doesn't require a credit or debit card to be entered, albeit you'll have to set up an ESET account.

The software is centered on its antiviral/anti-malware core and also features a VPN client that's designed to get you up and running quickly without battling with the settings VPN users sometimes find themselves tied up with.

If there's a poignant obstacle to ESET Home Security Premium, it came early, and while it was easy enough to download the software from the ESET website, installation turned into a struggle. (And it was confusing that the software name switched to ESET Cyber Security).

The software installs a number of extensions, proxies, and modules into macOS, which have to be granted permission, making the setup a bit more manual than might be expected, as opposed to a typical software installation. Once permission was granted for everything involved, the software hit a strange bug in installing its SSL certificate, which required troubleshooting, a Terminal command workaround, and reinstallation to allow the certificate to pass through and for normal web traffic to resume.

This took some finagling, and perhaps it's a unique case or something more widespread; it's something for the developers to take a look at should it surface again.

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Where its core elements are concerned, ESET Home Security Premium knocks it out of the park. The antiviral/anti-malware function offers a typical scan mode, a custom scan mode, and allows you to submit viral samples to ESET to help identify viruses and offer updates to protect against them. [Find out how ESET compares to the best Mac Antivirus apps in our group test].

Scanning the computer

Image: Foundry

The scanning module is capable of multiple simultaneous scans (such as a typical scan and a custom scan on a specific folder or external volume), and the feature offers both .zip and .dmg file format scan support, but has to be configured within a deeper scan.

As for the scan results themselves, these are impressive, and next to nothing out of an extensive sample library was in a position to get through outside of a few instances where you'd have to go through multiple warning screens and bypass macOS-level system protections to execute virus and malware samples.

The software itself meshes well with the macOS' Gatekeeper and Xprotect functions, pinning down just about everything before it has a chance to install itself and upend your system functionality.

EXPLORE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Can ESET Home Security Premium detect and remove fileless malware?
- What are the benefits of using a password manager in antivirus software?
- How does ESET Home Security Premium's customization options benefit advanced users?
- Can antivirus software be used on multiple devices with a single subscription?
- Can malware protection be ensured without slowing down device performance?

Ask your own question... A.I. Search

In addition to this, the scan essentially nukes the vast majority of the sample malware after it was decompressed, offering little to work with in the way of potential viral and malware infections, which proved impressive.

Image: Foundry

ESET seems to have heard the clarion call where its Protections module was concerned, and amidst the multitude of extensions the software installs, the software offers Computer, Network Access, and Web and Email protections, which, for the first time I've ever seen, were able to bat 1,000 on spam and phishing emails from my Gmail's Spam folder.

Here, the software provided adequate warnings as to links from questionable spam and phishing websites, but still allowed you to travel to the site if you wanted to. The sites offering free power tools that I'd won? There was a warning about this. The sites telling me I had a $17,000 Cash App payment that I didn't know about? There was a warning. Websites offering questionable medical and casino access? The warning was there, and this proved genuinely impressive.

ESET's VPN client may be somewhat bare-bones compared to a dedicated client, but it excels in terms of reliability and ease of use. The proxy settings are useful; there's an overall internet kill switch if needed, as well as easy geolocation options to choose the country and region you're logging in from. This may not appease the hardcore VPN user who needs more extensive options, but it's impressive for everyday use.

VPN function

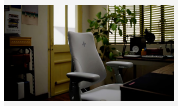
Image: Foundry

ESET's settings feel a bit tucked away, but what's there is actually remarkably impressive and gives you a huge amount of control over the modules, their performance, how strict the blocking and filters are, firewall settings, what kind of exception/whitelist can be built, and how external volumes are recognized and handled on your Mac.

The settings are well-categorized, and there's a remarkable amount of control to be had here should you decide to take a few minutes and play with things. This is coupled with a readily accessible Help and Support module, which adds quick access to ESET's help page, technical support, and Knowledgebase, and acts as a useful jumping-off point to get to the section of the ESET website that you need.

Outside of the installation foibles and the issue of sorting out the SSL certificate, ESET Home Security Premium installed easily and performed well, albeit there are a few things that could use some attention. The .dmg and .zip scanning and removal feel a little strange, as the scan located these, but seemed to vary in how it handled them, which can arguably be adjusted in the settings.

The settings themselves are a powerful chunk of the program, but feel buried, and a quick introduction/tutorial could readily point them out and encourage the user to adjust them as needed. A Scheduler function buried within the settings supposedly allows for scans and other functions to be programmed in and executed, but failed to activate after two tests, which raises an eyebrow and could stand some debugging.



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If there's a motif with ESET Home Security Premium, it's that this is a powerful set of tools, but without quite the polish that it requires to be a must-buy utility.

The settings felt buried under layers with little drawing attention to them and what they were capable of, the installer offered a semi-battle royale to get the SSL certificate up and running, the application's Scheduler feature felt tucked away and didn't execute during testing, and despite an incredibly powerful element of protection where viruses, malware, spam, and phishing efforts were concerned, the application needs some debugging while ESET itself needs to decide which tools to present to the user instead of opting for minimal simplicity in its home screen interface.

In the end, ESET Home Security Premium is impressive and worth trying out, and some of its features are as impressive as I've ever seen, but it needs some debugging and polishing to get it over the final hurdle. Still, with a free 30-day trial in place and no credit or debit card needing to be entered, this may be worth trying out to see how it fits into your everyday Mac lifestyle.

Should you buy ESET Home Security Premium

Some bugs and rough edges aside, ESET Home Security Premium offers an impressive value via its raw protection features. Elements such as antivirus and malware detection, email filtering, and commendable integration with macOS' own security frameworks offer excellent performance, and the simple but powerful VPN client offers what's needed for day-to-day users. This, combined with a 30-day trial, allows for a good evaluation period without having to surrender payment information.

Best Prices Today: Eset Home Security

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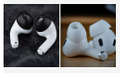

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Chris Barylick is a D.C.-based technology journalist, loves writing about emerging technologies, video games, DIY projects, hardware, utilities, politics, and upgrades, and has written for Macworld since 2007. He is the owner of East Bay Mac Menders, SnarkFish T-Shirts, the Mistakes Were Made Dinocast, and has masters degrees in both Business Administration (George Washington University '05) and Journalism (The University of Maryland '23), and inadvertently wound up in the Guinness Book of World Records for being the "4 AM Guy" at the first Apple Store opening in 2001. He has accidentally set two hard drives on fire to date.

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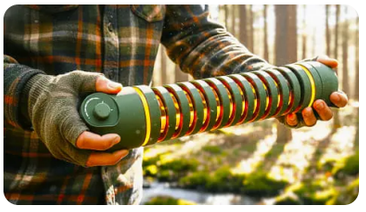

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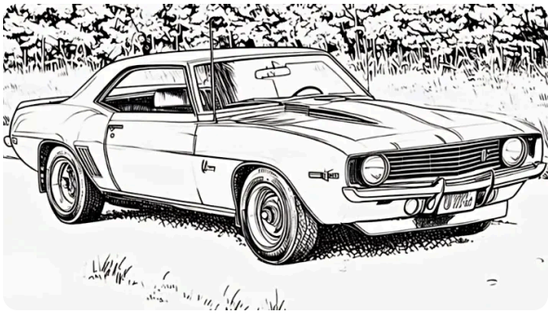

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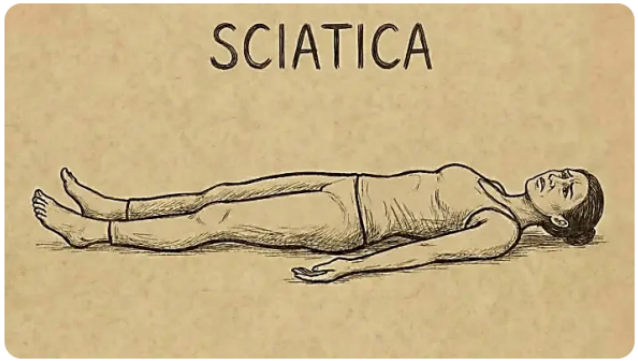

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