



# How to Upgrade the Firmware of a 2009 Mac Pro 4,1

The 4,1 Mac Pro can be upgraded to be identical to the 5,1 model from 2010-2012

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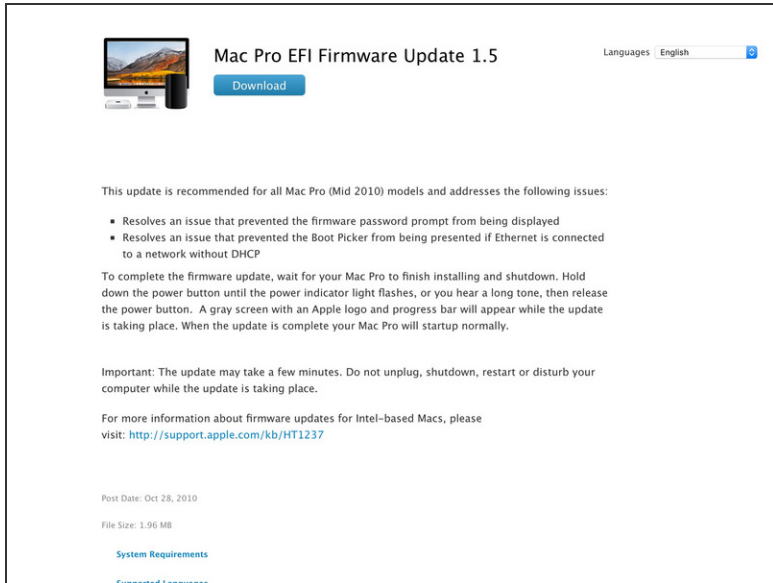


## INTRODUCTION

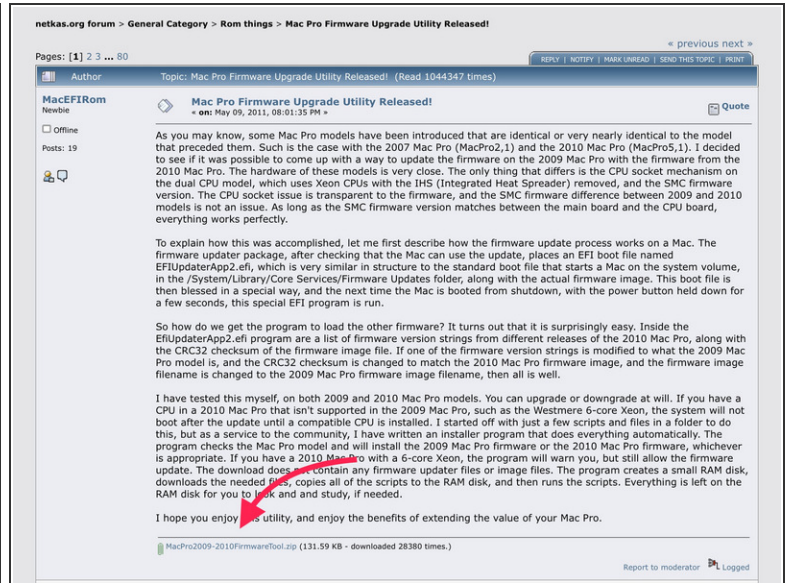
The 2009 Mac Pro shares an identical motherboard with the 2010 model. With a firmware update, you can use newer CPUs and upgrade to macOS 10.12 and 10.13.

It is important to note that you will need an official Apple GPU installed while performing the flash, so go ahead and dig out that old GT120 that came with the system when you purchased it if you've upgraded to a non-official GPU in the meantime.

## Step 1 — Download the Tools



The screenshot shows the Apple Support page for the Mac Pro EFI Firmware Update 1.5. It features a 'Download' button, a list of issues resolved by the update, and instructions for installation. The update is recommended for all Mac Pro (Mid 2010) models. It resolves issues with the firmware password prompt and the Boot Picker. Instructions include waiting for the update to complete, holding the power button until the power indicator light flashes, and then releasing it. A gray screen with the Apple logo and progress bar will appear. The update is complete when the Mac Pro starts up normally. Important notes state that the update may take a few minutes and that users should not unplug, shutdown, restart, or disturb their computer during the process. For more information, users are directed to a support page. The post date is Oct 28, 2010, and the file size is 1.96 MB. A link to 'System Requirements' is also provided.



The screenshot shows a forum post from netkas.org. The post is titled 'Mac Pro Firmware Upgrade Utility Released!' and was posted by 'MacEFIrom' on May 09, 2011. The post discusses the release of a utility to update the firmware of 2009 Mac Pro models. It explains that some Mac Pro models have identical or very similar hardware to 2007 and 2010 models. The utility allows users to update the firmware of 2009 Mac Pro models to the firmware of 2010 Mac Pro models. The utility is a small program that checks the hardware and firmware version, and then updates the firmware. The utility is available for download at the bottom of the post. A red arrow points to the download link.

- First thing's first: you will need to download two different packages.
  - [Mac Pro EFI Update](#)
  - [Firmware Update Tool](#) (hosted at Netkas in the bottom of the first post)

## Step 2 — Disable SIP



- You'll need to disable System Integrity Protection (SIP) in order to flash the new firmware.
- Restart your Mac Pro and hold **cmd+r** to boot into the recovery partition on your boot drive.
  - Once in Recovery Mode, go to the Utilities menu at the top of the screen and click **Terminal**
  - Enter the following command:
    - **csrutil disable**
  - Hit return and restart your Mac Pro as normal.

### Step 3 — Run the Firmware Tool



- While the tool was originally designed to pull the firmware directly from Apple's website, a change in the file location and name on Apple's part has made it necessary to download & mount the .dmg prior to running the tool.
  - Double click the firmware file you downloaded in step one to mount the disk image to your desktop.
- Right click and select "Open" on the firmware update tool. Since it is not signed with the proper certificate, macOS will likely refuse to open it just by double clicking the file. Right click the file and open from the menu to fix this.
- You should have two options in the window - upgrade to 2010 firmware and downgrade to 2009 firmware. Only one option will be available at any given time, dependent on which firmware you have installed.
  - There is really no reason to ever downgrade to 2009 firmware, as none of those machines are still under any warranty from Apple and the system discs are not as important now that all OS versions are given as software downloads.
  - You are not required to upgrade your CPUs if you update to the 2010 firmware- your original system configuration will continue to operate as it always has.
- Be sure to read any and all information that the utility may pop up.

## Step 4 — Shut Down & Flash



- After the tool has finished its work, it will tell you to shut down your computer. Just perform a normal shut down procedure.
- After your Mac Pro is powered off, hold the power button down until you see the power LED blink quickly or you hear an audible tone. The blinking LED will precede the tone.
- Your computer should now begin to update the firmware on its own. You should see a gray screen with a progress bar at the bottom of the screen.
  - This is a different bar than you would normally see with macOS- the firmware updating bar will be a hollow rounded rectangle that slowly fills up, rather than just a bar that slowly gets longer as you would typically see.
- Your computer may restart on its own again following the flash.

## Step 5 — Check to make sure it worked!



- Once your machine has rebooted to the desktop, it's time for the moment of truth.
- Open **About this Mac** and click on **System Report**
  - It is worth noting that **About this Mac** will still report this as a Mac Pro (2009), even after a successful flash.
  - In **System Report** you should see a line in the first window labeled *Model Identifier* - if the firmware flash was successful, you should see **Mac Pro5,1**

## Step 6 — Re-enable SIP



- Unless you have a compelling reason otherwise, you'll want to reenable SIP. Once again, you'll have to go into Recovery Mode just like you did before and open the Terminal.
  - Enter the following command
    - **csrutil enable**
  - Reboot the machine and let it load to the desktop. Open a new terminal window and enter the following command to check the status of SIP
    - **csrutil status**
    - If all was successful, you should get a line back that reads:
      - *System Integrity Protection status: enabled.*

## Step 7 — That's it!



- And that's all there is! Now you should be able to upgrade the processors to a much wider swath of options.



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