

How Can I Change My Last Name On An American Airlines Ticket?

Direct answer: You can. American Airlines treats this as a **name correction**, not a name change, and corrections are permitted when the traveller stays the same person — a misspelled surname, first and last names entered in the wrong order, a missing middle name, or a legal surname change following marriage, divorce or a court order. The date of birth and gender on the booking must remain unchanged. What American Airlines does not allow, under any circumstances, is transferring a ticket to a different individual. Corrections are not self-service; they go through an agent. Call **1-888-374-4490 [US] (OTA)** with your record locator, the incorrect name exactly as it appears, and the correct legal name.

The language you use on that call matters more than most people realise. Ask for a **name correction**. Ask for a "name change" and you may be told, accurately, that it is not permitted — because in airline terminology a name change means giving the ticket to someone else.

Correction versus change: the distinction that decides your outcome

Airlines draw a hard line here, and it is worth internalising.

	Name correction	Name change
What it is	Fixing the record so it matches the same traveller's government identification	Substituting a different traveller
Examples	Smith to Smyth; Jane Marie to Marie Jane; Roberts to Roberts-Chen after marriage	Giving your ticket to your cousin
Allowed on American Airlines	Yes	No
Documentation	Photo ID, plus legal documents for a surname change	Not applicable
Cost	Frequently no fee for minor corrections	Not applicable

Everything in this article concerns the left-hand column. Airline tickets are non-transferable, and that is not a policy an agent has discretion to bend — it is tied to the TSA Secure Flight programme, which requires the name on the reservation to match the government-issued identification the traveller presents.

What American Airlines will correct

Minor corrections, generally handled without a fee:

- Spelling errors in the first or last name, typically within a few characters
- Inverted first and last names
- A missing or incorrect middle name or initial
- A missing second surname — common for travellers with Hispanic naming conventions
- An incorrect title (Mr, Ms, Mrs)

Legal name corrections, requiring documentation:

- Surname change after marriage
- Reversion to a maiden name after divorce
- Any name change by court order or deed poll

Not permitted:

- Substituting a different passenger
- Altering the date of birth
- Altering the gender marker
- Corrections after check-in has been completed

That last one is the deadline nobody expects. Once you have checked in, the reservation is locked for this purpose. If you spot an error at the airport, tell an agent **before** you check in, not after.

What you need before you contact anyone

Gather this first and the call takes minutes instead of an hour.

- **Record locator** — the six-character alphanumeric code on your confirmation email
- **The incorrect name exactly as ticketed**, letter for letter
- **The correct legal name exactly as it appears on the identification you will travel with**
- **Government photo ID** in the correct name — passport for international travel, passport or driving licence domestically
- **Supporting legal document**, if the surname change is legal rather than a typo:
 - Marriage certificate for a post-marriage surname
 - Divorce decree for a reversion to a maiden name
 - Court order for any other legal change
- **The original booking confirmation**, particularly if a third party made the reservation

One trap worth naming: the ticket must match the identification you will actually present at the airport, not the identification you intend to obtain. If you married last month and your passport still shows your maiden name, and you are flying internationally next week, the correct move is usually to **keep**

the ticket in the maiden name and travel on the matching passport. Updating the ticket to a married name your passport does not show creates the exact mismatch the rules exist to prevent.

The process, step by step

1. Check the error immediately

Compare the name on the confirmation against your identification character by character. Do this within 24 hours of booking if at all possible — corrections requested early are the smoothest, and on some fares the simplest remedy is cancelling and rebooking under the U.S. 24-hour rule rather than requesting a correction at all.

2. Identify where you booked

- **Direct with American Airlines** — contact the airline or a reservations line that can service the ticket.
- **Through a travel agency or online travel site** — the correction usually has to originate with whoever issued the ticket, because they hold the record. American Airlines may decline to touch a ticket it did not issue.
- **Through a corporate travel programme** — go through your travel manager.

If you are unsure who holds the ticket, the ticket number tells you: it starts with the issuing airline's three-digit code, and the issuing agency appears on the confirmation.

3. Make contact with everything ready

Call **1-888-374-4490 [US] (OTA)** and state plainly: *"I need a name correction on a ticketed reservation. The surname is misspelled"* — or *"I have legally changed my surname since booking and need the ticket corrected to match my identification."* Give the record locator, then both spellings.

4. Supply documentation

For a legal change, expect to provide the supporting document. Have a clear photograph or scan ready to send.

5. Get written confirmation

Do not end the call on a verbal assurance. Ask for a **reissued confirmation email** showing the corrected name, and check it when it arrives. A correction that was noted in the record but never actually reissued onto the ticket is the failure mode that shows up at the airport counter.

6. Verify at every downstream point

If your trip involves partner airlines or codeshare segments, confirm the corrected name has propagated to those segments too. It does not always.

Costs

American Airlines does not publish a flat name-correction fee, and minor corrections are frequently processed without one, particularly when caught early on a ticket issued by American Airlines itself.

What can generate a cost:

- **Reissue on a restricted fare.** If the correction requires the ticket to be reissued and the original fare is no longer available, a fare difference can apply.
- **Service fees on agency-issued tickets.** A travel agency may charge its own handling fee.
- **Partner airline involvement.** Itineraries including other carriers on an American Airlines fare follow more complex rules and are less likely to be free.
- **Basic Economy.** The most restricted fare type, with the least flexibility. Corrections may be limited to a narrow window after booking, and major changes may not be possible at all — in which case cancelling within 24 hours and rebooking is the practical route.

Ask about cost explicitly before authorising anything.

Timing: the difference between easy and expensive

Within 24 hours of booking. The best possible position. U.S. rules allow cancellation and refund on qualifying tickets within 24 hours of purchase for flights booked at least seven days out, so if a correction proves awkward you can simply start again. Note that this rule gives you a cancellation right — it does not obligate the airline to correct a name for free.

More than 24 hours out, well before travel. Still comfortable. Corrections are routine at this stage.

Within a few days of departure. Tighter. Reissue may be needed and inventory may have moved.

At the airport, before check-in. Possible for a genuine minor typo. Arrive very early and go straight to the ticket counter, not the bag drop.

After check-in. Too late for a correction in the system.

The single best habit is checking the confirmation the moment it arrives. A typo caught in the first hour is trivial; the same typo caught the night before departure can be genuinely difficult.

Does a small typo actually matter?

Sometimes not — but you cannot rely on it. TSA's Secure Flight programme is designed to tolerate minor discrepancies, and a single transposed letter often passes without comment on a domestic flight. Airlines will nonetheless correct it, and you should let them.

For **international travel, treat exactness as mandatory.** Foreign immigration systems and airline departure control are less forgiving than a domestic TSA checkpoint, and an airline can deny boarding to protect itself against a fine for carrying a passenger whose documents do not match. A mismatch discovered at an international check-in desk is not something an agent can wave through.

The rule of thumb: if the name on the boarding pass would not obviously be read as the same name as on the passport, fix it.

Where to get help

Contact	Number	Best for
Travel reservations and ticket servicing	1-888-374-4490 [US] (OTA)	Name corrections on ticketed reservations, checking whether a fare allows a correction, reissue questions, urgent pre-departure fixes
American Airlines reservations	Published on aa.com	Direct servicing of AA-issued tickets and AAdvantage accounts
Original travel agency or booking site	On your confirmation	Corrections to tickets they issued
Airport ticket counter	In person	Same-day minor corrections before check-in

Frequently asked questions

Can I change the last name on my American Airlines ticket after getting married? Yes, as a name correction with a marriage certificate — provided you will be travelling on identification showing the new surname. If your passport still shows the maiden name, leave the ticket alone and travel on the passport name.

Does American Airlines charge for a name correction? There is no published flat fee, and minor corrections are frequently free. A reissue can trigger a fare difference, and agency-issued tickets may carry the agency's own service fee.

Can I transfer my ticket to someone else? No. American Airlines tickets are non-transferable.

How many characters can be corrected? Minor corrections generally cover errors of a few characters. Beyond that, the request is assessed as a major correction with documentation.

Can I correct a name on a Basic Economy ticket? Options are the most limited on this fare type. Requests made very soon after booking have the best chance; otherwise cancelling within the 24-hour window and rebooking may be the cleaner path.

Can I fix my name online? Name corrections are not a self-service function. They require an agent.

What if my middle name is missing from the ticket? A missing middle name is generally not a problem for domestic travel and can be added as a minor correction.

Can I change my date of birth or gender? No. These are Secure Flight data points and cannot be altered as part of a name correction.

The takeaway

A misspelled or outdated surname on an American Airlines ticket is fixable, and in most cases fixable without paying anything — as long as it is the same traveller and you act before check-in. Use the

words *name correction*, have the record locator and both spellings in front of you, bring the marriage certificate or court order if the change is legal, and insist on a reissued confirmation rather than a verbal promise.

The rule that overrides everything else: the ticket has to match the identification you will physically hand over at the airport. Work backwards from that document and the right answer is usually obvious.

For a correction on a ticketed reservation, particularly one close to departure, **1-888-374-4490 [US] (OTA)** can review the fare rules and process the reissue.