Understanding Back Button Navigation Behavior

Troubleshooting · https://wpfactory.com/docs/back-button-navigation-behavior/

The button from Back Button Anywhere Widget for WordPress replicates the browser's back action. Knowing exactly what that means explains most "it does nothing" or "it went to the wrong page" reports.

Common symptoms

- Clicking Back does nothing, because there is no previous page in history.
- The browser returns to the homepage instead of the last internal page.
- A dropdown menu on the previous page reopens by itself after going back.

Why this happens

- The button runs the browser's `history.back()` (or `history.go(-1)`). Both rely on the browser's own history.
- If the visitor arrived by typing the URL, following an external link, or opening the page in a new tab, there is no previous entry to return to.
- Some themes rebuild or expand menus with JavaScript on page load, so returning to a page re-runs that script and the menu re-opens.

What to do

1. **Set the right expectation:** the button is a "go back one step" control, not a "go to a specific page" link. It behaves exactly like the browser back button.
2. **Need a fixed destination instead?** use a normal link, for example `<a href="/products/">Back to products</a>`. For a menu, Pro's Replace URL feature and the `[ALG_BACK_BUTTON]` token still use browser history; a plain Custom Link is better when you want a fixed target.

3. **Menu auto-expands after going back:** this is theme behavior, not the plugin. Collapse the menu by default on load with theme settings or a small CSS/JS tweak.
4. **Tell your visitors:** if a page is often opened directly (from search or a shared link), consider a fixed link so "Back" always has somewhere to go.

Related



BACK BUTTON ANYWHERE WIDGET FOR WORDPRESS

See every feature and the pricing on the Back Button Anywhere Widget for WordPress plugin page.

View plugin →

If the button is missing entirely rather than just not navigating, see Back button not showing or working.

Need a hand?

Our team answers every ticket on the Back Button Widget support forum.

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