THE ESSENTIALS OF SETTING UP YOUR WINDOWS 11 COMPUTER

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MANEUVERING AROUND WINDOWS 11 USING KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

The following shortcuts will help you get around your system:

a. The Windows key by itself will get you to the Start menu and its App List and Start Screen.
b. The Windows key plus the D key will take you to your Desktop.
c. The Windows key plus the A key will take you to the Notification Area on the far right side of the Taskbar.
d. The Windows key plus the E key will take you to Windows Explorer.
e. The Windows key plus the I key will take you to Settings.
f. The Windows key plus the W key will take you to the Widget Board.
g. The Ctrl + Alt + Delete pressed simultaneously will shut down the computer.

CUSTOMIZE THE TASKBAR

Windows 11 taskbar behaves differently from the previous versions. Its right-click menu is different, its settings have been completely overhauled, and even pinning icons to the taskbar works differently.

There are a bunch of new icons all moved to the middle while Cortana seems to be demoted from the front desk job. These upfront changes are just the tip of the iceberg.

To customize the taskbar, follow these steps:

a) Right-click on a blank area of the Taskbar.
b) Click on **Taskbar settings**, then *Taskbar Behaviors* near the bottom of the center column.
c) Set how you want the taskbar to behave by checking the available settings in *Taskbar Alignment*.

d) Note that you can *hide the taskbar, show badges on the taskbar and show seconds in the system tray clock*. In <u>Windows 11</u>, taskbar icons can include tiny red notification badges that show the number of unread messages in an app.

d) Close the Taskbar dialogue screen.

Modify the Search Icon on the Taskbar.

The oblong icon that appears by default on the left side of the Taskbar consumes a large amount of territory, thus limiting the amount of room for important icons that you have selected for instant access from the Taskbar.

Follow these steps to change the search icon on the Taskbar.

a) Right-click on the Taskbar.

b) Select Taskbar Settings.

c) At Search, choose search icon and label.

Disable the Task View: to reduce the clutter on the Taskbar.

There is a Task View button that provides an overview of all your open windows and virtual desktop features. When it is enabled, the Task View button will always appear to the immediate right of the search bar/icon. This feature is disabled by default. If you'd like to enable it:

Go to Settings (Windows + I), then Personalization, where you will find Task View as an on/off option.

Note: If you wish to have multiple desktops, you will want to have Task View turned on.

Remove the default icons.

There is only one icon (the Start menu) on the taskbar that can't be removed from the start menu. There are four icons (Search, copilot, task view, and widgets) that can be removed using the taskbar settings.

a) Right-click on the taskbar and then click on the Taskbar settings.

b) Open taskbar items.

c) Here at the top, you'll see the four taskbar default items with a toggle button next to them. Just toggle off the items you don't want to see on the taskbar, and they will be removed. (Note that the search icon provides four choices.)
d) All other taskbar icons can be removed by using the right click/unpin function.

Move taskbar icons to the left. (personal preference)

Go to the taskbar settings as above. Scroll down and open the Taskbar behaviors section near the bottom of the column. Afterward, select Left in the Taskbar alignment option.

Pin app icons to the taskbar

The easiest method is to search for the app using Windows Search, right-click on it and select Pin to taskbar.

To do it from the Start menu, you have to first right-click the app icon and select the Show more options, and then you'll see the Pin to taskbar option.

Enable taskbar auto-hide

Windows 11 retains the auto-hide function like in the previous versions, and it can be found in the taskbar settings. Scroll down in the taskbar settings and open the Taskbar behaviors section. Here check the checkbox next to the Automatically hide the taskbar option. Now, unless you hover the mouse cursor over the taskbar area, the taskbar will stay hidden.

Make the taskbar translucent.

You can also make the taskbar change its color according to the background and make it look translucent. Here's how:

a) Right-click on the Taskbar, then on Taskbar settings.
b) Select Personalization in the left panel and then click on Colors.
c) Enable the Transparency effects option, and it will make the taskbar translucent.

Show Important System Icons (Clock, Volume, Network, Battery) On the Taskbar's Corner Icons (formerly called the systray)

Windows 11 shows two types of icons on the taskbar. They are the system icons and app icons.

    a. Right click on the Taskbar.
    b. Select **Taskbar Settings**.
    c. Under **system tray icons:** you will probably want to turn all three **off**.
    d. Under **taskbar items**: Turn on the icons you want to appear on the taskbar.
    e. Under **other system tray icons**: You probably will want all the icons in this section turned on.
    e. Close the Settings app.
    f. With that, the icons you selected will appear on the taskbar's corner.

Disable the Show Desktop button on the taskbar

The Show Desktop button on the taskbar is much smaller in Windows 11 and doesn't show the desktop when you hover the mouse pointer on it. However, if you are still not interested in using this feature and feel like it's taking unrequired space on the taskbar, you can disable it.

Right-click on the Taskbar, click on the taskbar settings and open up the *Taskbar behaviors* section. Here uncheck the option *Select the far corner of the taskbar to show the desktop*, and the button will be removed.

Change the taskbar color.

You can use custom colors for the taskbar that won't be influenced by the color of your theme. Here's how to do it:

    a) Press Windows key + I, click on Personalization in the left panel and then select the Colors option.
    b) Select Custom in the Choose your mode section and Dark in the Choose your default Windows mode section.
    c) Now scroll down and turn **on** the option Show accent color on Start and taskbar.

d) Afterward, set the Accent color option to Manual and *choose any color you like* below to select as your taskbar color. Note that when you choose your color, your taskbar background color will change..

e) Return to the top of the page and confirm that **transparency effects** is turned on.

Warning! Can't Move the taskbar to the side or top

The previous versions of Windows allowed you to drag the taskbar to the top, left, or right side, but Windows 11 has forced it to stay at the bottom.

Pin the Control Panel to the Taskbar

Do you find yourself accessing the Control Panel periodically to reset some of your computer's 37 settings? If so, why not place it on your Taskbar for easy access?

To pin the Control Panel icon to the Taskbar:

a) From the Search bar, type *Control.*
b) Right-click on the Control Panel icon that appears at the top of the column.
c) Select *Pin to Taskbar.*
d) The Control Panel icon will appear on the Taskbar.
e) Now you can access the control panel whenever you want without all the mouse manipulation.
f) If you ever want to get rid of it, just **right-click** and select "**Unpin this program from taskbar**".

Pin the Settings button to the Taskbar as an alternative to pressing the Windows + I.

a) Click on the **Windows icon** on your keyboard.
b) In the Start menu that appears, right-click on **the Settings icon** (the cog wheel).
c) Right-click on the **Settings** app and select **Pin to taskbar**.

THE NEW START MENU (press the Windows key)

The Start menu offers three rows of six icons (total 18) that you can have pinned, with the ability to scroll through "pages" if you have more apps that you need to pin.

There's also a full apps list that shows you all your installed apps that can be accessed via the **"all apps"** button located just above your pinned apps.

Along the top of the Start menu is a **search bar**, which really only acts as a shortcut to the dedicated Search function you can access via the search icon on your Taskbar.

Below your pinned apps is a new "Recommended" area that acts as a "recents" menu for things like documents and installed apps. Whenever you install a new app or open an Office document, it will appear directly in this Recommended area for quick access. (To clear this list, one-at-a-time, right-click on the target item and *remove from this list.*

Choose which folders appear on the Start Menu.

A horizontal bar at the bottom of the Start menu (press Windows key) features the options that are available to you by default. Each can be turned on or off, depending upon which options you wish to use.

To control the options:

a) Use **Windows key + I** to go to **Settings.**
b) Then **Personalization.**
c) Then **Start**.
d) Click the **Folders**
e) The ones you select will now appear as small icons in the bottom column of the Start menu.

Reposition your favorite apps to the Start Screen, the Taskbar, or the Desktop.

When you open the Start menu (blue cube on the Taskbar) and then click on All Apps, you'll see a small tile for every program on the computer, and you can *pin to start* or *pin to taskbar* any of them with a right-click option. The *pin to taskbar* option is partially hidden under the *More* option, however.

You can also pin any application to the Desktop where it will become a shortcut icon. It's as easy as a *left drag and drop* from its home location to the Desktop on the right.

This would be a good time to place "System" on your Taskbar. That way you would have one-click access to one of Windows 11's most important screens, usually found by using the *windows key + I* shortcut.

To improve your computer's speed as well as system security, uninstall apps that you don't use.

To uninstall an application:

a) Right-click on the Start button.
b) From the top of the list, click on All Apps.
c) Find the list of installed programs and uninstall those that you don't use and don't need. This can help speed up your PC, as those programs might include background processes, autostart entries, system services, context menu entries, and other things that can slow down your PC. It'll also save room on your hard drive and improve system security.
d) Click on the target app and select uninstall.
e) If the uninstall feature is not present, the app cannot be uninstalled by conventional means. (which means that Microsoft doesn't want you to uninstall it!)

Pin a favorite website to the All apps menu.

a) Open Edge (large blue-green oval) from the Taskbar.
b) Access the target website (type it's address in the "Search the Web" box.
d) Click on the three horizontal dots in the upper right corner of the open web page.
e) Click on Apps.
f) Click on Install this site as an app.
g) Give the site a new name, if desired.
h) Select Pin to Taskbar if you wish.
i) Click on Start button (lower left corner of Taskbar) and go to All Apps.
j) The target website is now listed in alphabetical order on the All apps list.

Disable programs that run at startup.

Most of us are aware that Microsoft and third-party software companies try to install their products so that they will run at Startup. As long as your computer has only one or two of these applications starting when you boot up, the boot time is indiscernible. However, over time, more and more of these programs are added to Startup without your knowledge, thus creating a noticeable slowdown at bootup. When this happens, we have learned to access Startup and then disable most of the listed programs.

a) Right-click a blank area of the Taskbar and select **Taskbar Settings**.
b) Click on **Apps** in the left column, then **Startup** in the middle column.
c) Windows will helpfully tell you which applications slow down your startup process the most. Turn off those that you don't want to start when you turn on your computer.

Place a shortcut for shutdown on your desktop

To create a shortcut icon for Shutdown:

a) Right-click on an open area of the Desktop.
b) Go to New, then Shortcut.
c) Enter shutdown /p as the location of the item and press Next. (Note the space between shutdown and /p.)
d) Now name the shortcut Shutdown and press Finish.
e) Right-click the shortcut that now appears on your Desktop and navigate to Properties.
f) Click on the shortcut tab, then Change Icon. Then OK to exit the warning box.
g) Choose (click) an icon of your choice from the list.
h) Finally, click OK.

Back Up Your Windows Registry with System Restore

The Windows Registry is at the heart of the Windows operating system. The Registry is a group of system files formed into a database that contains system-level and application-level parameters on both a machine and a user basis. If the Registry were to become corrupted it could render your system unusable, so it's important to take regular backups of it so you can restore a good copy of the Registry if necessary.

The best way to protect yourself is to take a backup of the complete Registry. This can be done by creating a restore point, since the Registry is included in restore points.

To create a restore point, follow these steps:

a. From the Search box, type *restore*.
b. Click *Create a restore point* from the list that appears in the column above.
c. Click on the *Create a Restore Point* button.
d. Select the Local Disk (under the Protection Settings group) and click the *Create* button. You will then be prompted to enter a description for the Restore Point. The date and time of the restore point you create will be inserted automatically.
e. At a later date, if you need to revert back to a restore point, follow steps a and b above and click on the *System Restore* button.

How to Enable Windows Defender's Limited Periodic Scanning.

(This is necessary only if you have installed another antivirus program)

This option is named "limited periodic scanning," to be activated after you have installed a third-party antivirus product. Enable it and Windows Defender will occasionally perform a scan to check for any malware that your primary antivirus product may have missed. However, it's not enabled by default. You will want to enable it. To access it:

a. Go to Settings (Windows key + I).
b. Click on Privacy & Security, then Windows Security.
c. Click on Open Windows Security.
d. This action will take you to the Security Center where your computer's protection is being monitored. You will be able to view the eight functions of Windows Security.

You can only enable this feature if you're using another antivirus program. If you haven't installed another antivirus program, Windows Defender is already enabled and helping protect your computer with both real-time and scheduled system scans. Windows Defender will automatically be updated with the latest antivirus applications through regular Windows Update.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR MICROSOFT ACCOUNT?

How to Remove Your Microsoft Account

When you set up Windows 11 for the first time, you were forced to establish a Microsoft account. It's not a big deal, except that you must enter your computer each time with a password or a four-digit pin. Simply put, this will slow down your access to your computer.

Follow these steps to remove your Microsoft account and create a local account instead:

a. Go to Settings (Windows + I)> Accounts > Your Info
b. Click *Sign in with a local account instead*.
c. Follow the steps to set up a local account. Sign out to reboot.
d. At reboot, you will be logged in with your local account, go back to Settings (Windows +I) > Accounts > Email and app accounts.
e. In the Accounts used by other apps section, click on your Microsoft account (it will be labeled as such), Click on Remove.

Create A Microsoft Account

Creating a new Microsoft account in Windows 11 isn't difficult, but like many Windows 11 features, it's tucked away in a spot that's not easy to find at first.

To create a new Microsoft account in Windows 11:

a. Press Windows + I to access Settings.
b. then select Accounts from the left column.
c. From the middle screen, click on Your Info.
d. Follow by clicking on account settings.
e. From there, you can click on *sign in with a Microsoft account instead*.
f. You will need to establish a username and password for your new account, plus create a four digit pin.
g. When you close your computer and reboot, it will open with your Microsoft account, requiring a username and password (or a pin).