

## Customize Your Windows

You can do a great deal to change the appearance and functionality of your Windows setup. There are hundreds of settings but here are a few of the most commonly used ones. As you begin to modify your settings you will see far more options.

### Appearance

*Text size.* There are several ways to change text size in Windows. The first is to right click the desktop and select Display Settings. Here you can go to “Scale and Layout” and select a size from 100% to 175% which will increase the size of everything in Windows including text and icons.

If you just want to make text bigger you can open Settings and then “Ease of access”. Here, in “Display”, you can adjust the size of text or control the size of everything.

If you only want to change the size of text in a particular program, Word for example, do so from the program’s View or Settings menu.

*Home Screen Appearance.* Your screen background (the picture on your desktop) can be changed by right clicking the desktop and selecting “Personalize”. In “Background” choose from *Picture, Solid Color or Slide Show*. Next, below that, select the picture, color or slideshow folder that you want. If you choose a picture, you can determine how it is to display. If the picture isn’t shaped the same as your screen you may want to choose something other than fill as the way it displays. Other options include *Fit, Stretch, Tile, Center and Span*.

Another way of changing your background is to first open your favorite picture, then right click on the picture and choose Set as Desktop Background.

*Lock screen.* Change the appearance of the Lock screen (the picture that appears when you login). In the same dialog box choose “Lock Screen”. In Background you can choose what you want to appear when the screen is locked, either Windows Spotlight, Picture or Slideshow.

*Screen timeout and screen saver.* To change the timing of the screen timeout, in the “Lock Screen” dialog box click on “Screen timeout settings”. Depending on whether you have a desktop or a laptop, you can change the screen timeout and the system sleep time. If you have a laptop, you can have different settings for on battery or plugged in. Pick a length of time that you find convenient. If you are running a laptop on battery, you will want the times to be fairly short in order to conserve the drain on the battery.

You can also determine how you want the screen saver and lock screen to appear and whether to require a password when you return. In the “Lock Screen” dialog box. click on “Screen Saver settings”. Here you can choose what type of screen saver you want and how soon it should start. If you don’t want to have to login after resuming you should uncheck the box “On resume, display logon screen”.

*Desktop shortcuts.* If you want to add a program shortcut to your desktop, find the program on the Start Menu and click and drag it to your desktop. Once on the desktop you can click and drag it to wherever you want it.

To remove a shortcut from the desktop you can either drag it to the Recycle bin or right click it and select delete. You may be prompted to make sure you want to do this. Removing a shortcut doesn’t remove the program, only the link to it.

### Taskbar

The taskbar has many items that you can change.

*Taskbar Layout.* First, what programs are displayed on it. To remove a program from the taskbar right click the icon and select Unpin from Taskbar.

To add a program to the taskbar, click on Start and find the program, either in the list of programs or on the start menu. Right click it and select “More”, then “Pin to taskbar”. Pinned items will appear at the end of the list.

Once you have all the programs you want on the taskbar you can rearrange them by clicking and dragging any icon to a desired location along the taskbar.

*Cortana, Search and Task View.* You can decide whether you want Cortana, Search and Task View next to your Start button, and how they should look.

To add or remove “Task View” (which shows all your running programs, along with a history), right click an empty space on the taskbar and click or unclick “Show Task View”.

To add or remove the “Cortana” button, right click an empty space on your taskbar and from the menu click to either “Show Cortana” button or disable it.

To show, hide or alter the appearance of the search box, right click an empty space on the taskbar and click on “Search” and then select “Hidden”, “Show Search Icon” or “Show Search Box”.

To determine which icons should appear at the right end of the taskbar in what is called the system tray, click the up arrow on the left of the displayed icons and either drag an icon onto the taskbar or drag it off the taskbar.

*Taskbar location.* You can move the taskbar to any edge of Windows. To move the location of the taskbar, click and drag it to the side of Windows where you want it. You can lock the taskbar to prevent it being moved once it is positioned where you want it by right clicking an empty spot on the taskbar and selecting “Lock the taskbar”. Having the taskbar locked only controls its position. It doesn’t prevent you from modifying it. You may want to turn on “Lock the taskbar” to prevent accidentally dragging it to another side.

*Hide the Taskbar.* You can expand your screen real estate by hiding the taskbar when not needed. Right click an empty space on the taskbar and select “Taskbar Settings”. Turn on or off the “Automatically hide taskbar in desktop mode”. If you choose to hide it, you can get it when needed by moving your mouse pointer to the bottom of the screen.

*Show/Hide Desktop.* This is the thin vertical bar at the far right of the taskbar. Clicking on it will minimize all open programs and show your desktop. Clicking it again will restore all open programs.

### **Other options**

*Mouse size and pointer.* To change the appearance or behavior of your mouse open Settings (click the Start button and then click the “cog”) and go to “Devices”. Click on “Mouse”. Here you can change how your wheel acts if you have an actual mouse. On the right side click on “Adjust mouse and cursor size”. Here you can change the size and shape of your mouse cursor as well as it’s color.

*Login method.* If your account was originally set up with a password Microsoft gives you several ways to login to your computer. To control how you login open Settings and click on “Accounts”. Click on “Sign-in options”. Depending on your device you will have several options. You can choose from “Windows Hello face”, “Windows Hello fingerprint”, “Windows Hello pin”, “Security key”, “Password” and “Picture”. Which choices you are offered will depend on your hardware. If you don’t have a camera or a fingerprint reader those choices will not be available. Tap on the method you prefer. It may be necessary to do some setup the first time such as creating a pin or fingerprint.

*Set default programs.* You may have several programs on your computer that can do the same thing. You probably have more than one browser (you should). Microsoft wants you to use their browser, Edge, so they set it so that any program which makes a web request will automatically open Edge to handle it. Your preference may be for Brave, Chrome or Firefox to handle all web requests. To choose what programs handle certain things open Settings and click on “Apps”. Click on “Default Apps”. From the list below choose the type of program to change such as Web Browser. In this case you would click on Edge (the current default) and a list will appear with other choices. Select the one you want and that will become the default program. This is useful for changing your word processor, music player, video player and more.

*Arrange “Quick access” in File Explorer.* If you use the File Explorer to access your files you may find it useful to add folders to the “Quick Access”, which appears at the top left when you open File Explorer. To add a folder find it on the right side and right click it. Near the top of the menu that appears select “Pin to Quick access”. It will now appear in the list of Quick access locations. Alternatively, you can select a folder and click the “Pin to Quick access” icon on the “Home” menu.

To remove a folder from “Quick Access” right click the folder in the “Quick Access” list and select “Unpin from Quick access”. This will remove it from the list.

To rearrange the order of folders in “Quick access” click and drag the folder up or down until it is where you want it and then release. It is now in the new position. Be sure you see a bar before you release, or you will make a copy of the folder in the folder you drop it on.