

Windows 11 How-To

A simple guide to the everyday features you are most likely to use.

TIP: Your computer may look a little different depending on the manufacturer and Windows updates. The basic steps are the same.

1. Know the main parts of the screen

Desktop: The main screen you see after signing in. Your files and shortcuts may appear here.

Start button: The Windows logo near the bottom centre of the screen. Use it to find apps, settings and power options.

Taskbar: The bar along the bottom. It shows pinned apps and programs that are open.

Search: Open Start and type what you are looking for, such as Settings, Photos or Calculator.

Clock and system icons: Usually at the bottom-right. This area shows the time, internet, sound and battery information.

Mouse or touchpad basics

- Single-click: select an item or press a button.
- Double-click: open a file, folder or desktop shortcut.
- Right-click: show more choices for an item.
- Scroll: use the mouse wheel, or slide two fingers on a touchpad.

TIP: If you are unsure, single-click first. Double-click only when one click does not open the item.

2. Settings, Wi-Fi and quick controls

Open Settings

- Click Start.
- Click Settings. If you do not see it, type Settings in Search.
- Use the search box inside Settings if you are not sure where something is located.

Open Quick Settings

Click the group of network, sound and battery icons at the bottom-right of the taskbar. You can also press Windows key + A.

Quick Settings gives fast access to Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, airplane mode, accessibility, brightness and volume.

Connect to Wi-Fi

- Open Quick Settings.
- Click the arrow beside Wi-Fi.
- Choose your Wi-Fi network and click Connect.
- Enter the Wi-Fi password if asked.

TIP: Avoid joining unknown public Wi-Fi networks when banking, shopping or entering private information.

Change volume or brightness

Open Quick Settings and move the sound or brightness slider left or right.

See notifications

Click the date and time area at the bottom-right. Notifications may include email, calendar, security and app messages.

3. Opening, closing and switching programs

Open a program

- Click Start and choose the program, or type its name in Search.
- You can also click a pinned program on the taskbar.

Understand the window buttons

Minimize (-): Hides the window but keeps the program open.

Maximize (square): Makes the window fill the screen.

Close (X): Closes the current window.

Switch between open programs

Click the program you want on the taskbar, or hold Alt and tap Tab to move between open programs.

If a program freezes

- Wait a few seconds. The computer may be busy.
- Try closing the program with the X.
- If needed, press Ctrl + Shift + Esc to open Task Manager, select the frozen program, then choose End task.

IMPORTANT: Only use End task on the program that is frozen. Unsaved work in that program may be lost.

Lock the computer when you step away

Press Windows key + L. This protects your files and information from someone else using the computer.

4. Files, folders, internet and printing

Find your files

Open File Explorer by clicking the yellow folder icon on the taskbar or pressing Windows key + E.

- Documents: a common place for letters and saved files.
- Pictures: a common place for photos and images.
- Downloads: files you downloaded from websites or email.
- Recycle Bin: deleted files stay here until the bin is emptied.

Open the internet

Open Microsoft Edge, Chrome or another web browser. Click the address bar at the top, type a website address or search words, then press Enter.

Copy and paste

- Copy: select the text or file and press Ctrl + C.
- Paste: click where you want it and press Ctrl + V.

Print a document or web page

- Press Ctrl + P.
- Choose the correct printer.
- Check the number of copies and pages.
- Click Print.

TIP: Before printing, look at the preview so you do not accidentally print too many pages.

5. Make Windows easier to see and use

Make text larger

- Open Settings.
- Choose Accessibility.
- Choose Text size.
- Move the slider to the right, then choose Apply.

Use Magnifier

Press Windows key + Plus (+) to zoom in. Press Windows key + Esc to close Magnifier.

Use Narrator

Narrator reads items on the screen aloud. Press Ctrl + Windows key + Enter to turn it on or off.

Install Windows updates

- Open Settings.
- Choose Windows Update.
- Choose Check for updates.

Install important security updates and restart when Windows asks you to.

Install an app

The safest place for most apps is the Microsoft Store. Open Start, search for Microsoft Store, search for the app, and choose Install or Get.

IMPORTANT: Do not install a program because a pop-up or unexpected caller tells you to. Ask someone you trust first.

6. Troubleshooting and staying safe

Try these steps first

Computer acting strangely: Restart it. Click Start > Power > Restart.

No internet: Check that Wi-Fi is on and that you are connected to your normal network.

No sound: Check the speaker icon and volume slider in Quick Settings.

Printer not working: Make sure it is powered on, has paper, and that you selected the correct printer.

Website looks frozen: Close the browser and reopen it, or restart the computer.

Safety reminders

- Do not give passwords, banking codes or verification codes to someone who contacts you unexpectedly.
- Do not allow remote access to your computer unless you contacted a trusted support person yourself.
- Be suspicious of messages that say you must act immediately, pay money, buy gift cards or move money.
- If a warning appears in a web browser saying your computer is infected, close the browser. Do not phone the number shown in the pop-up.
- Keep Windows and your web browser up to date.

TIP: When in doubt, stop before clicking, paying or sharing information and ask someone you trust.

7. Keyboard Shortcut Reference

Press and hold the first key(s), then tap the last key. Some shortcuts work only in certain apps.

Windows key shortcuts

Windows key: Opens the Start menu.

Windows + A: Opens Action Center and quick actions.

Windows + D: Shows or hides the desktop.

Windows + E: Opens File Explorer.

Windows + I: Opens Settings.

Windows + L: Locks the computer.

Windows + P: Changes screen and multi-screen / projection options.

Windows + R: Opens the Run box.

Windows + S: Opens Windows Search.

Windows + Shift + S: Opens the screenshot / Snipping Tool controls.

Windows + V: Opens Clipboard history (you may be asked to turn it on).

Windows + Tab: Opens Task View to see open windows and desktops.

Windows + Left / Right Arrow: Snaps the active window to the left or right side.

Windows + Up / Down Arrow: Maximizes, restores or minimizes the active window.

Keyboard shortcuts

Ctrl + A: Selects all text or items.

Ctrl + C: Copies the selected text or item.

Ctrl + V: Pastes what you copied or cut.

Ctrl + X: Cuts / moves the selected text or item.

Ctrl + Z: Undoes the last action.

Ctrl + Y: Redoes an action that was undone.

Ctrl + S: Saves the current document or file.

Ctrl + P: Opens Print.

Ctrl + F: Finds a word or phrase on the page or in a document.

Ctrl + Shift + Esc: Opens Task Manager.

Alt + F4: Closes the active program or window.

Browser shortcuts

Ctrl + T: Opens a new browser tab.

Ctrl + W: Closes the current browser tab or document.

Ctrl + Shift + T: Reopens the most recently closed browser tab.

Ctrl + L: Selects the web browser address bar.

Alt + Tab: Switches between open programs.

Ctrl + + (plus): Zooms in in most web browsers and many apps.

Ctrl + - (minus): Zooms out in most web browsers and many apps.

Ctrl + 0 (zero): Returns browser zoom to the normal size.