

# 10 Windows Settings You Should Never Leave as Default

Windows doesn't come with security set up by default, which means there are some default settings you need to change.

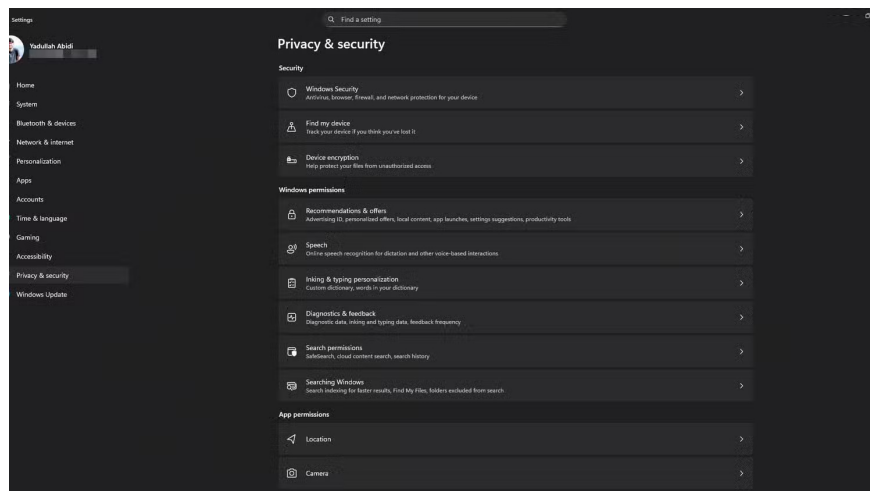
Windows has a lot of settings hidden between layers of menus that you touch all the time. However, Windows isn't set up to be secure by default, which means there are some default settings you'll need to change.

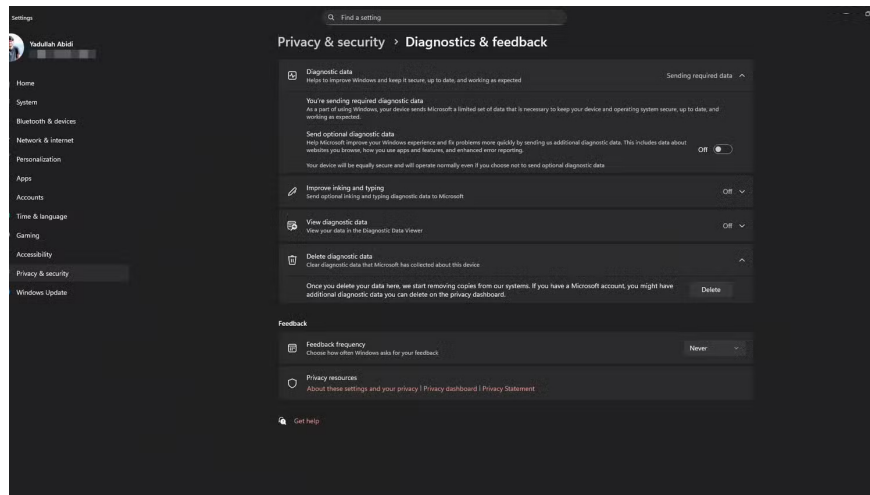
## 10. Telemetry

Windows Telemetry is how Microsoft collects data about how you use your system. They claim to do this to improve the overall user experience, but it's not a good idea to have your computer constantly sending data about your app usage, system performance, and hardware configuration to Microsoft.

Luckily, turning this feature off is pretty simple. Just follow these steps:

1. Go to Windows Settings and click the **Privacy & security** tab . Then, click **Diagnostics & feedback** .
2. **Turn off the Send optional diagnostic data** setting .
3. As an extra precaution, click the **Delete** button under **Delete diagnostic data** to delete any data stored on Microsoft servers.



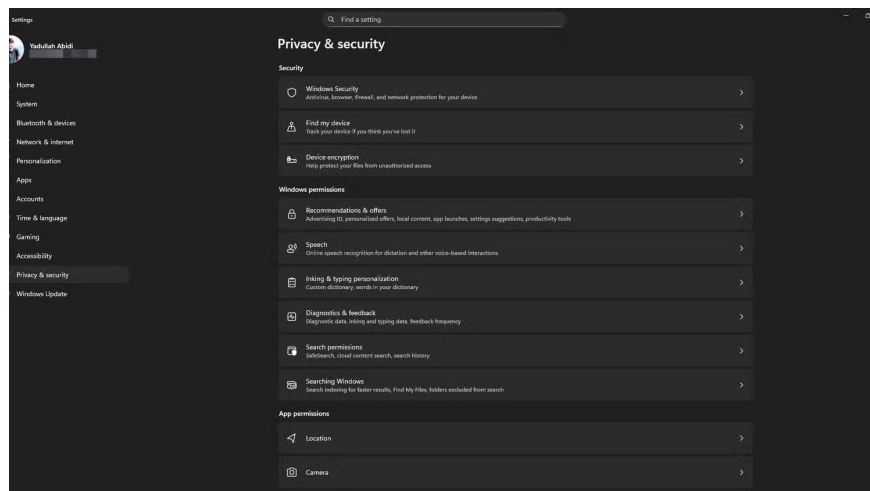


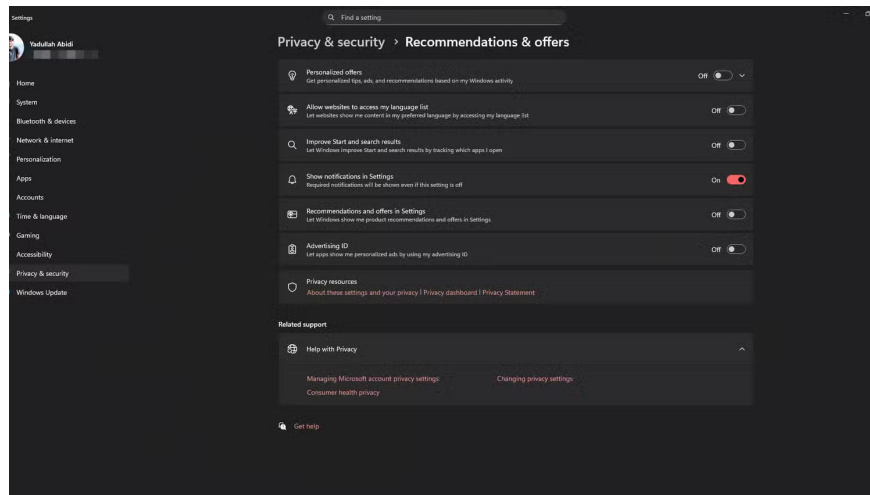
## 9. Advertising ID

Windows creates a unique advertising ID for each user, which app developers and ad networks use to track you across apps. This works much like a browser cookie, allowing advertisers to serve you personalized ads based on your browsing history or app usage.

Follow these steps to turn off this feature:

1. Go to Windows Settings and click the **Privacy & security** tab. Then, click **Recommendations & offers**.
2. **Turn off the Advertising ID** slider.
3. As an extra precaution, turn off all settings in this section except **Show notifications in settings**.



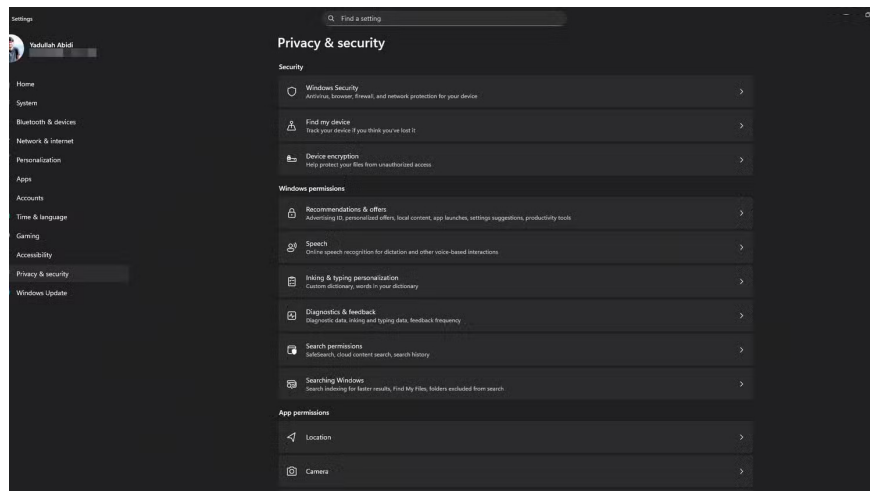


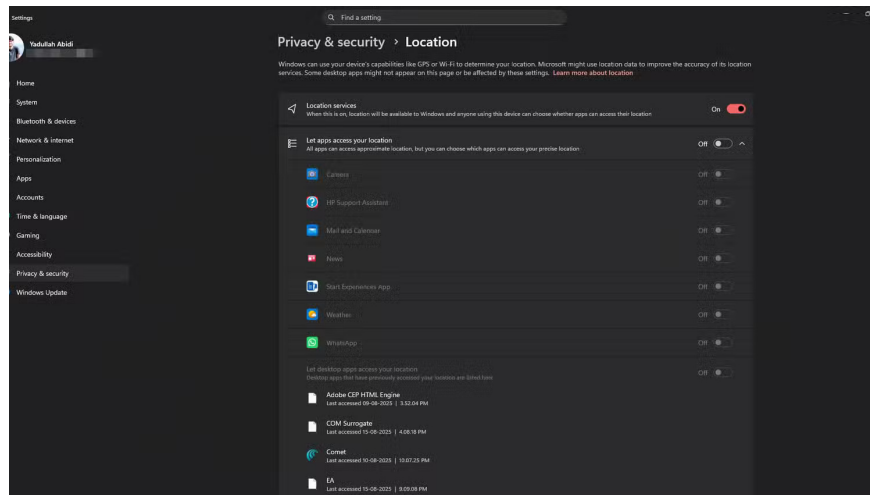
## 8. Location Services

Location services on your computer aren't as accurate as those on your phone, but they serve the same purpose. This setting is turned on by default and can reveal sensitive information about your daily habits and activities.

Here's how to turn off location services on Windows:

1. Go to Windows Settings and click the **Privacy & security** tab . Then, click **Location** .
2. Turn off **the Location services** slider .



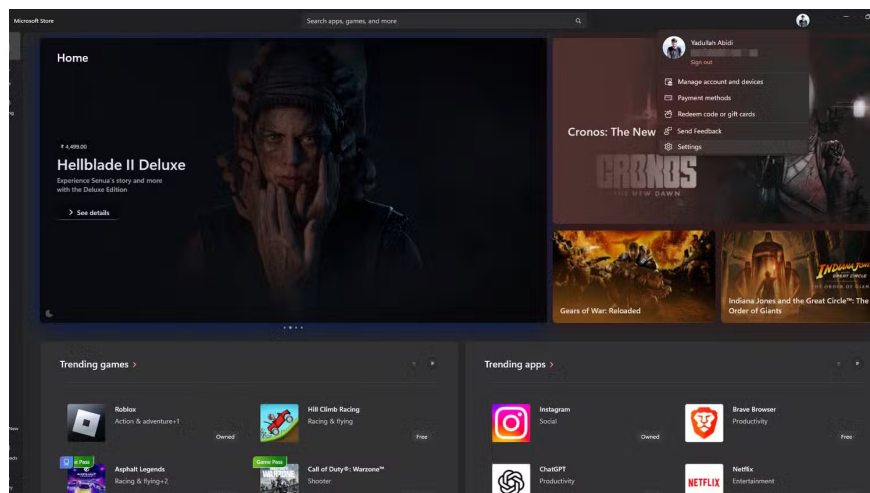


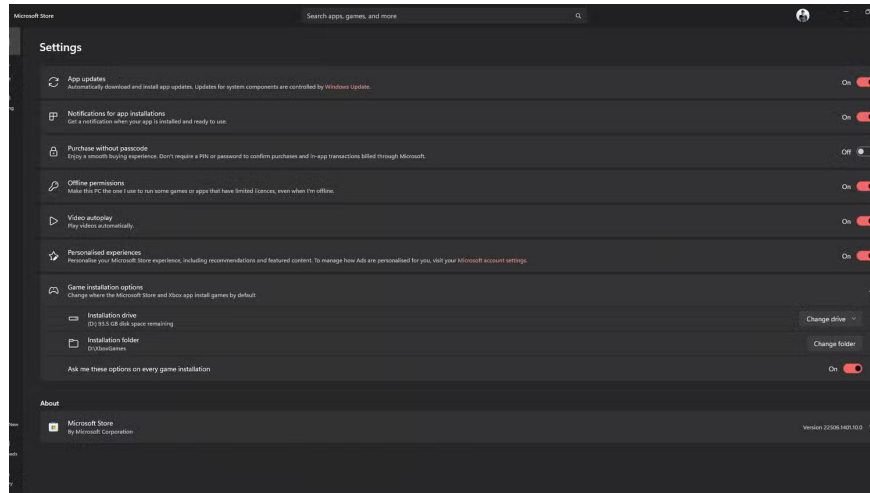
Remember that location services are not the same as GPS. Even the NSA recommends turning it off on your device to limit the risk of location exposure.

## 7. Automatic app updates in Microsoft Store

Microsoft has permanently disabled automatic updates for apps and Windows. Now, you can only pause them for up to 5 weeks. Here's how you can take back control:

1. Open Microsoft Store, click your profile icon in the upper right corner. Click **Settings** from the pop-up menu.
2. Turn off **the App updates** slider .



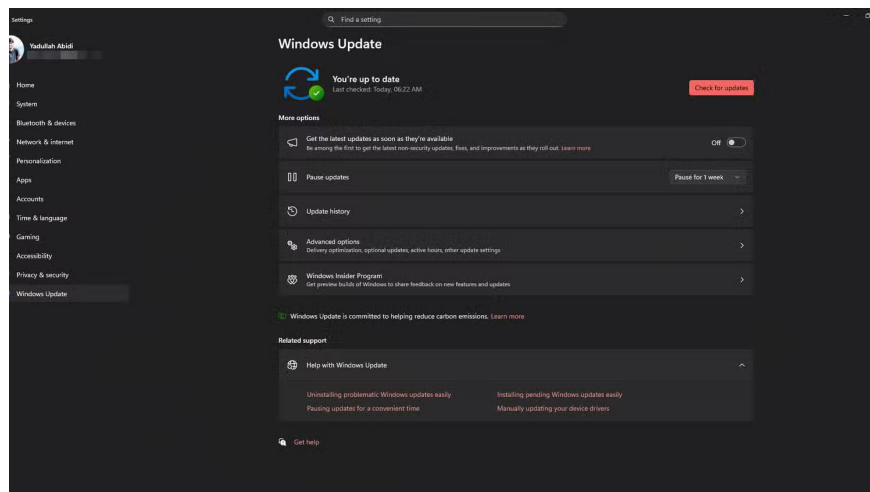


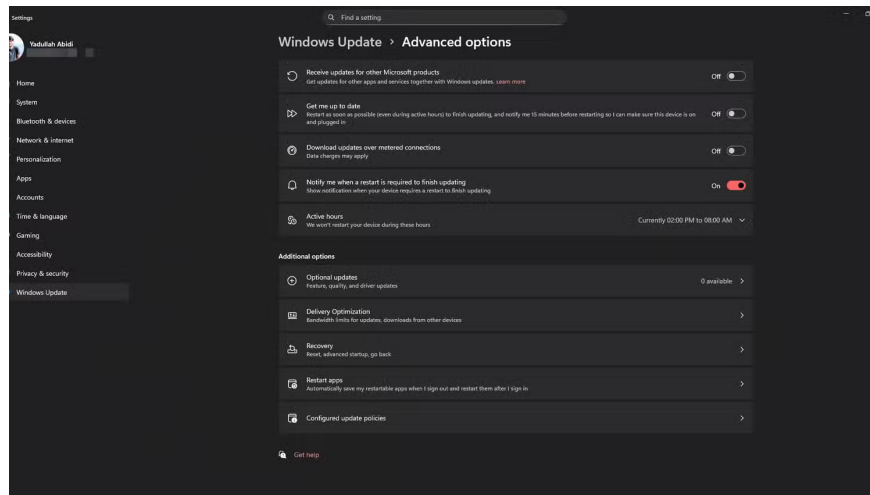
## 6. Windows Update Active Hours and Restart options

There's nothing more frustrating than Windows deciding to reboot to install an update in the middle of your workday. The default active hours are 8am to 5pm, which doesn't really fit with many people's actual usage habits.

How to change:

1. Go to Windows Settings and click on **Windows Update** . Once there, click on **Advanced options** .
2. **Change Active hours** settings to suit your usage habits.

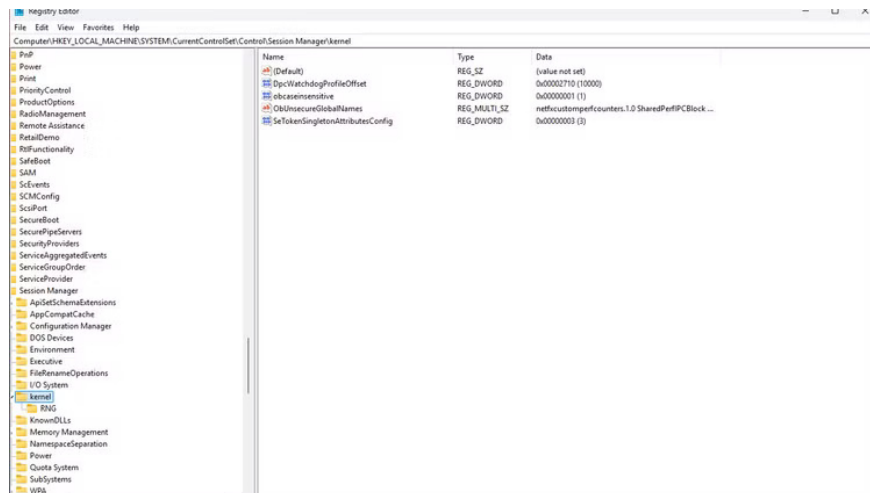


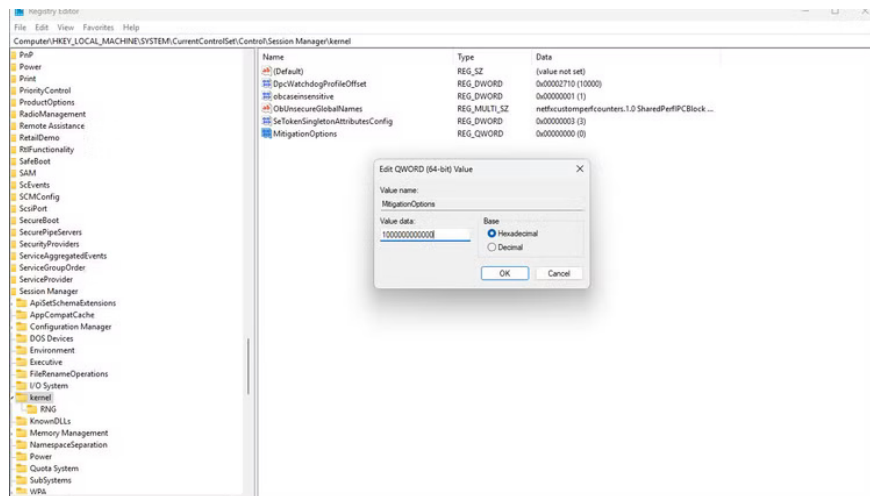
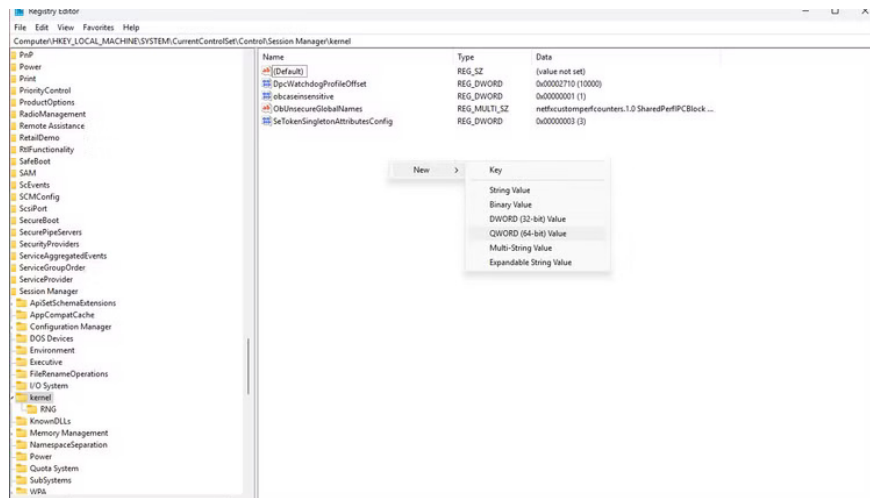


## 5. Untrusted font installation

Unfortunately, changing this setting requires the Group Policy editor. If you are not using Windows Pro or Enterprise, you can modify the registry to change this setting.

1. Open Registry Editor and access registry subkey **HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Control\Session Manager\Kernel**
2. You should see a key named **MitigationOptions** . If not, right click on the blank space on the right and create a new QWORD (64-bit) and give it the same name.
3. Update the **Value** data of the **MitigationOptions** key by double-clicking the key. Use **100000000000** to enable or **200000000000** to disable the feature.



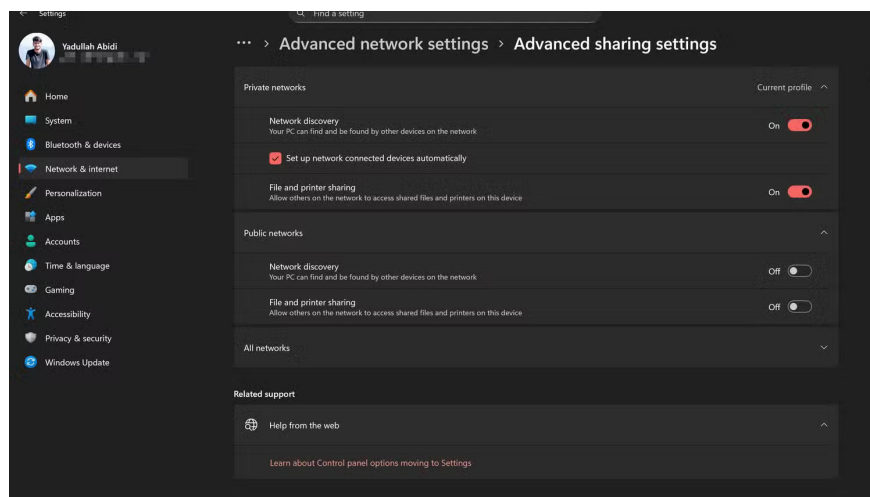
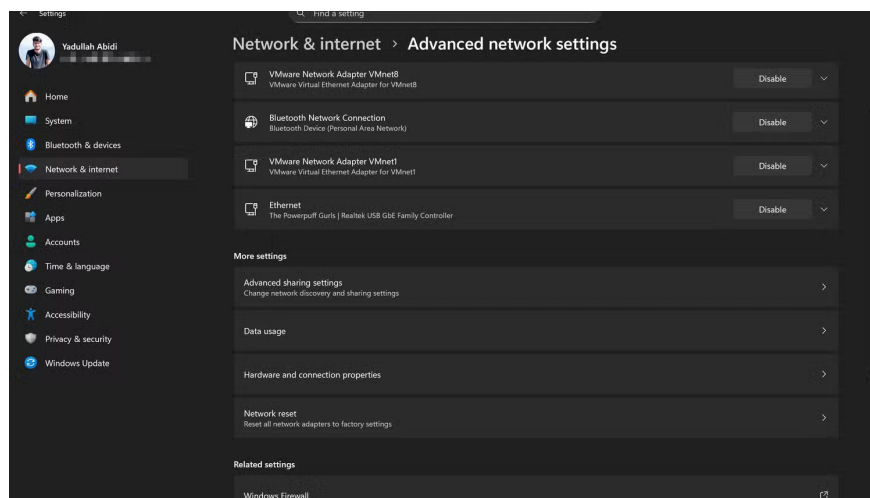
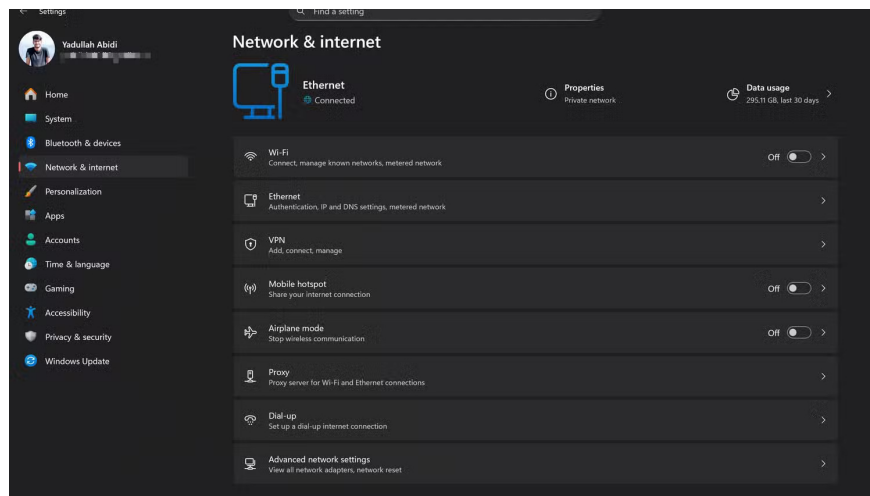


## 4. Share files and printers over a public network

Unless you know how network sharing works on Windows and have it enabled by default, you should never enable file and printer sharing on a public network.

Here's how to turn off file and printer sharing over a public network:

1. Open Windows Settings and go to **Network & internet** . Then, click **Advanced network settings** .
2. Click **Advanced sharing settings** .
3. Expand the **Public network** section and make sure that **Network discovery** and **File and printer sharing** are turned off.

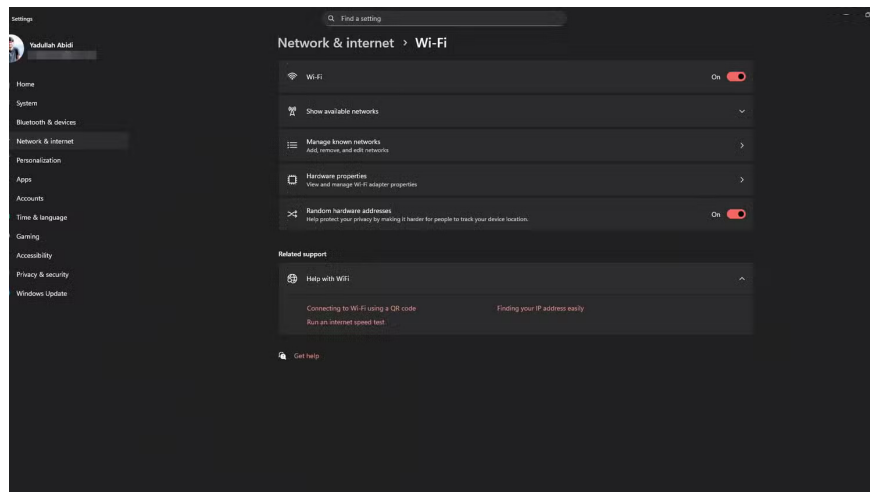
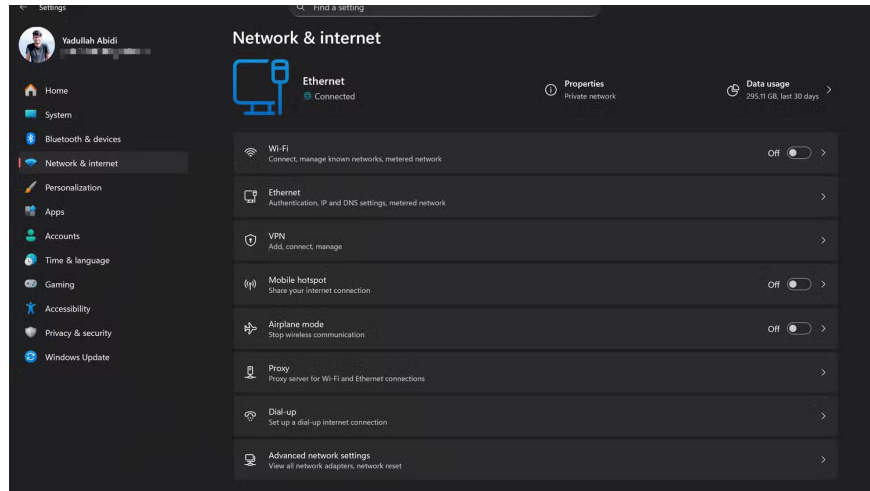


### 3. Automatically connect to suggested open hotspots

Even though Wi-Fi Sense has been discontinued in Windows 11, it can still occasionally connect to random open Wi-Fi networks. You can't completely prevent this without modifying the registry, but you can protect your device by using random hardware addresses. Here's how:

1. Open Windows Settings and go to **Network & internet**. Then, click **Wi-Fi**.

## 2. Turn on the Random hardware addresses slider .

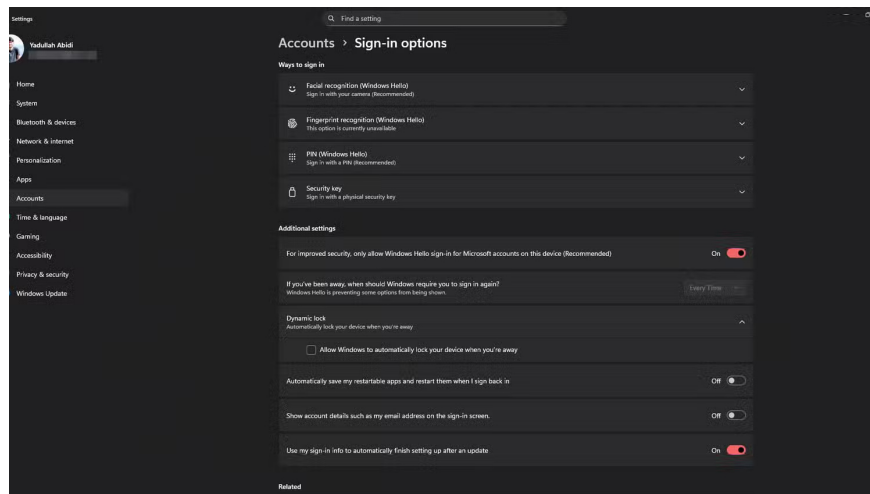
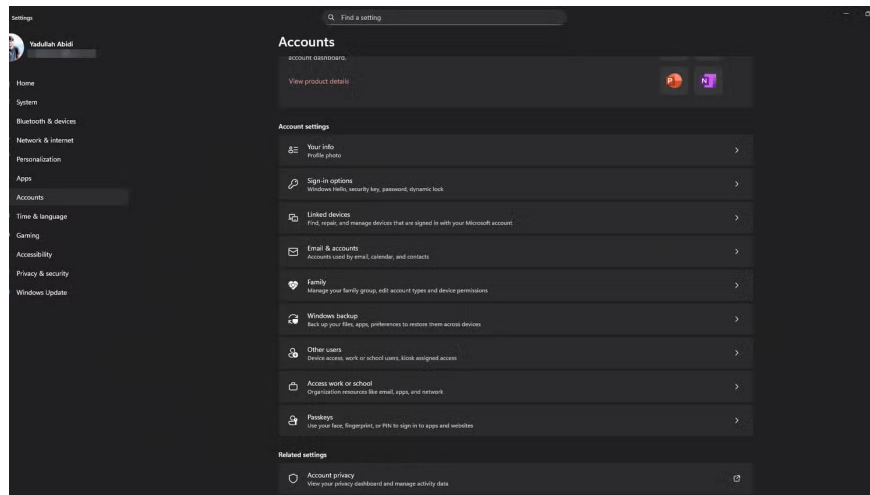


## 2. Dynamic Lock

Dynamic Lock uses Bluetooth to detect when your paired phone moves away and automatically locks your computer. It's great, but only if you have reliable Bluetooth—a feature that, in my experience, is only available on high-end Windows laptops.

How to turn this feature off:

1. Open Windows Settings and go to **Accounts** . Once there, click on **Sign-in options** .
2. Scroll down and expand the **Dynamic Lock** section. **Uncheck the Allow Windows to automatically lock your device when you're away** option .

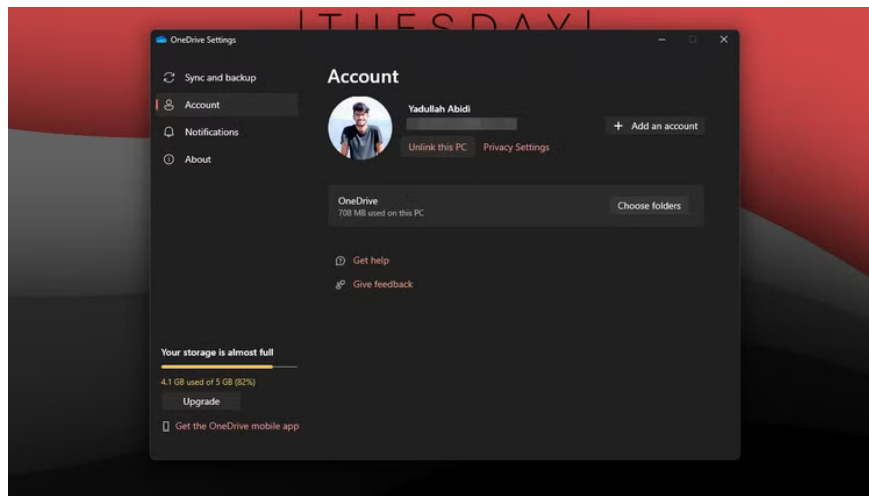
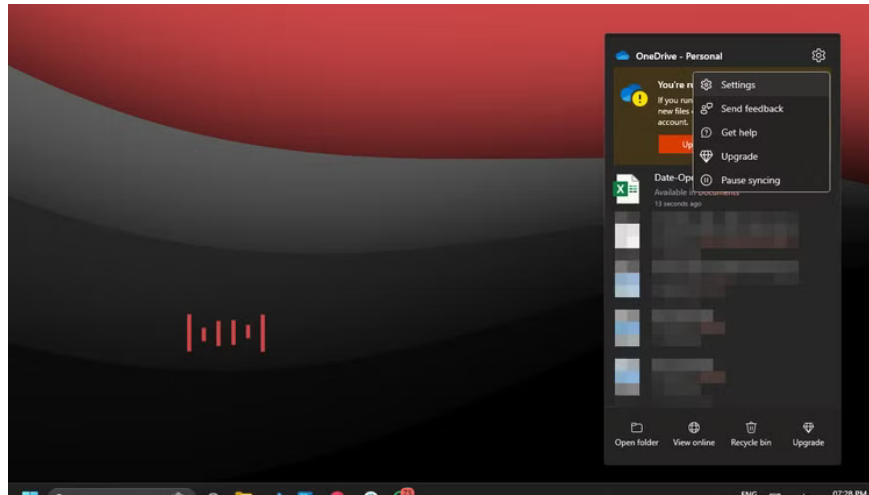


# 1. OneDrive Backup

Windows automatically turns on cloud backup to your OneDrive account during setup. This means your Desktop, Documents, Pictures, Music, and Videos folders are automatically backed up to OneDrive. However, you only get 5GB of free space—and it runs out faster than you think.

Turning this feature off is simple, just unlink OneDrive on your computer. Here's how:

1. Click the OneDrive icon in the system tray, then the settings gear icon.
2. Go to **Account** section and click **Unlink this PC** under your account.



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