

5 main notes when using multiple screens with a laptop

Do you find yourself switching between windows too often or cramming multiple windows on your laptop screen? It's time to get a second monitor!

Multiple monitors can greatly improve productivity because you have more screen space to work with. But if you're considering using a second screen with your laptop, there are a few additional things to consider.

1. Build setup

The first thing you need to prepare is the actual setup, including display output options, as that will determine the display you can buy.

If you have an older laptop, you may have both HDMI and Mini DisplayPort available. This means you can connect two displays without worrying about splitters or adapters. On newer laptops, you may only see an HDMI port or a DisplayPort-capable USB-C port.



Look up your laptop's manual to check its port specifications. For example, you need DisplayPort or HDMI 1.3 (or higher) if you want to use a 1080p display at 144Hz. Being aware of your laptop's capabilities can save you from making expensive purchases that you may not be using to its full potential.

Next is the cable. Buy a high-quality HDMI cable compatible with your monitor's resolution. While standard HDMI cables can work on most displays, it's important to test the speed to ensure high display quality. Although most HDMI cables are similar, some variations of HDMI cables can be confusing. This also applies to USB Type-C cables. Not all USB Type-C cables are constructed the same, and using the wrong cable can cause trouble.

The actual connection part is very simple and TipsMake.com.com has covered how to connect multiple monitors to your laptop.

Just remember that there's no point in buying a top-of-the-line gaming monitor and then finding out later that your laptop doesn't have the screen output capabilities to take advantage of the high refresh rates and any other features the monitor doesn't have. Your image may have .

2. Organize your desk

Plugging an external monitor into your monitor almost certainly means you'll have to place it in an appropriate spot on your desk so you can use your laptop screen as a secondary display. At this stage, if you still want to use your laptop keyboard, things can get a little tricky.



Remember that as soon as you decide to add an external monitor to your laptop, you'll be transitioning to a workstation-style desk. While you can increase productivity by placing the monitor next to your laptop and plugging in the necessary cables, that doesn't provide the best experience.

You should use an external keyboard, mouse, and stand to keep your laptop running. It will give you a more desktop feel and ensure you can place everything in the most convenient location possible.

At this point, you'll start to see another problem: A messy pile of cables on the table. You can hide them, but properly managing these cables will be extremely helpful when making changes, moving, or when you have to unplug your laptop to use it away from your desk.

If you have a small desk or if you find a monitor stand takes up too much space, you should get a monitor stand. It will greatly improve the look of your setup while also giving you more flexibility in positioning your monitors.

3. Decide on the optimal number of screens

How many screens you need depends on what you'll be doing most of the time with your laptop. For most people, a secondary screen is enough. So if you're looking to build a curved, triple-monitor workstation, save your money and buy a good widescreen monitor with a high refresh rate, low response time, and good color accuracy.



In fact, studies have also verified this fact. For example, Microsoft's large-screen user experience was found to use a dual-monitor setup that can increase productivity anywhere from 9 to 50%.

However, there are use cases where adding three or more displays would be beneficial. If you trade, work with spreadsheets, are building a multi-monitor setup for emulation-based games, or need screen space, don't be afraid to use multiple monitors.

Doing so will increase the cost and complexity of the setup. To control this, invest in a good home screen and save some money for the others.

4. Performance issues

Since we are talking about laptops, performance is a big question. Unlike a desktop, where you can just plug the display directly into the GPU, a laptop's display output may or may not be mapped to the discrete GPU, and that can be a problem.

If the laptop's display output connects to the integrated GPU, that means the external display will also be powered by the integrated GPU. So, when you are running performance-intensive programs or games that require a dedicated GPU, communication between the two GPUs can cause performance issues when using an external display.



These problems may not be easy to see. Either way, it's best to make sure your graphics card can handle dual monitors. Most modern laptops with a dedicated GPU have a display output that connects directly to the

dedicated GPU, so chances are yours does too.

Both Nvidia and AMD provide control panel utilities that allow you to modify these settings, meaning you can change the type of GPU your laptop uses to run the external display. If you care about performance, using a dedicated GPU is a better choice, otherwise your integrated GPU can handle the rest. However, keep in mind that depending on your laptop hardware, you may or may not have these options. Additionally, MUX switches can help improve performance by sending graphics data directly to the display without having to go through the CPU first.

5. Is there a dock attached?

If your laptop has Thunderbolt 4 ports, docking stations look promising. You can connect all your displays, peripherals, network cables, etc. and charge your laptop via a single USB-C cable.



However, getting the right dock is important here. You will have to make sure that the dock's display ports support the display so you can get the required resolution and refresh rate. Last but not least, make sure the dock supports USB-C Power Delivery; otherwise, you will need another cable to charge your laptop if it supports USB-C charging.

Using multiple monitors can dramatically increase productivity and help you get more done with less effort. Deciding on a monitor and setting the whole thing up can be a hassle, but it's worth it in the end.

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