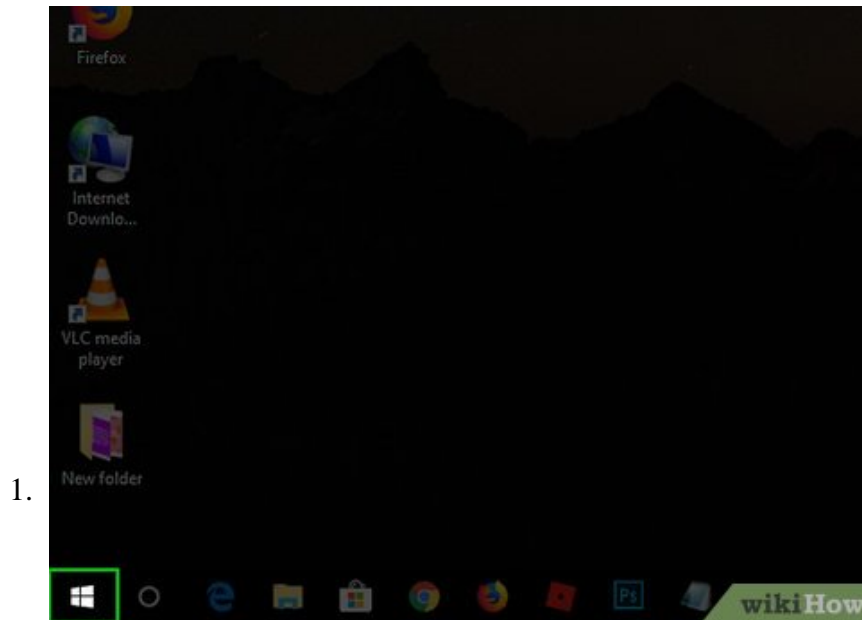


How to Change or Create Desktop Icons for Windows

This wikiHow teaches you how to change a desktop icon's appearance on Windows, both by changing the icon to a different system icon and by downloading or creating your own icon. You can also add your own custom shortcuts to the desktop,...

Method 1 of 6:

Changing System Desktop Icons

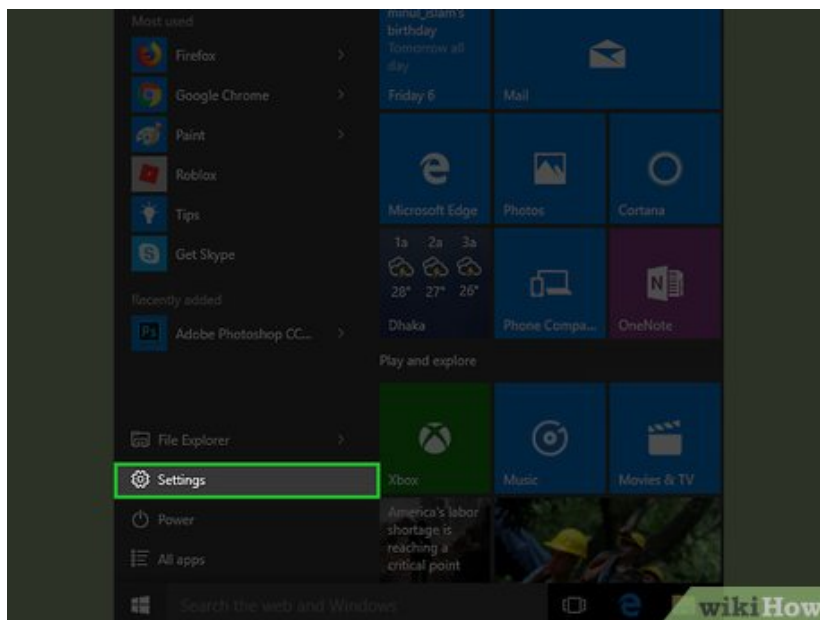


Open Start

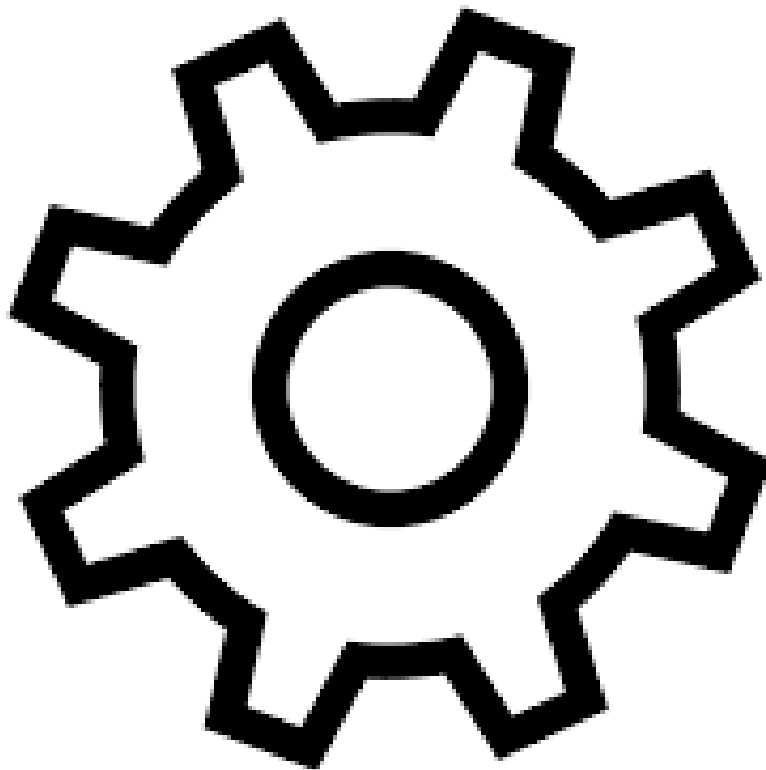


. Click the Windows logo in the bottom-left corner of the screen, or press the **Win** key.

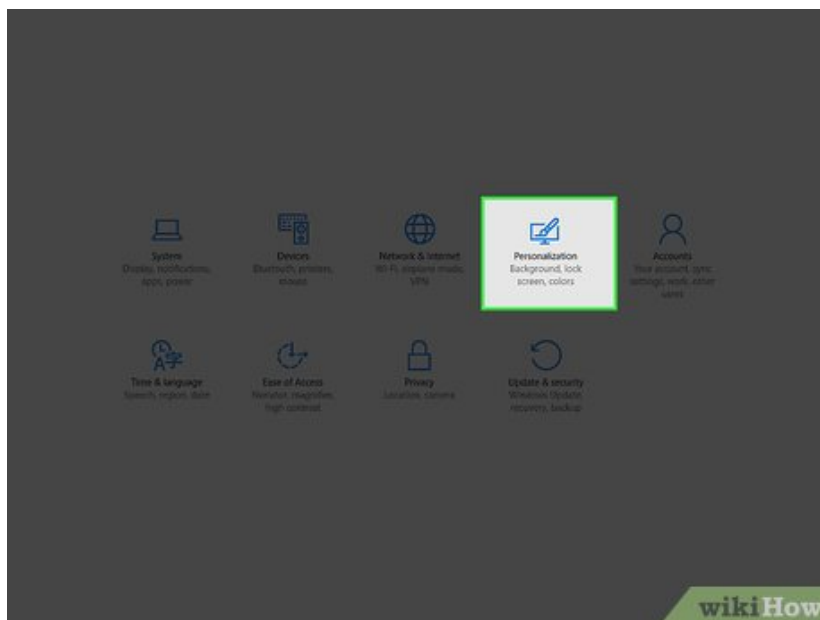
2.



Click Settings



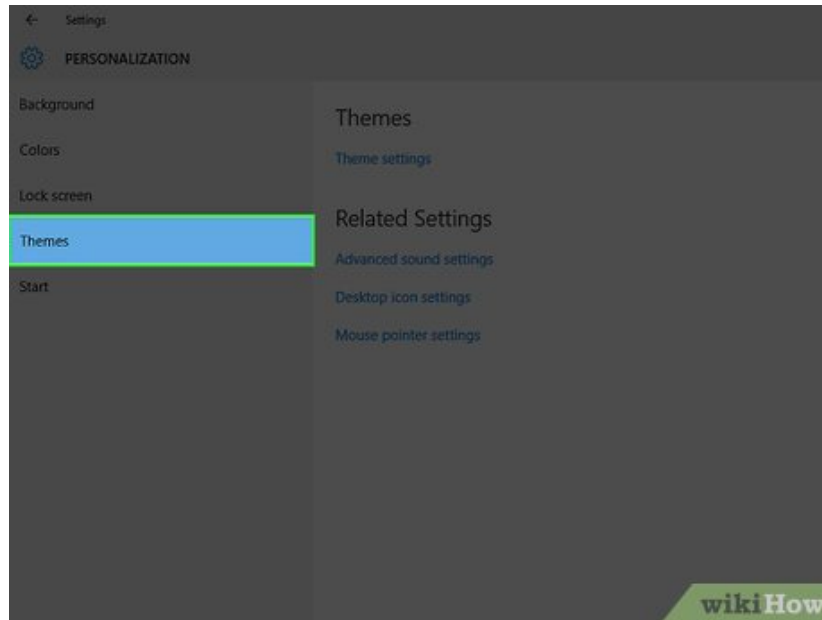
. It's in the lower-left side of the Start window.



Click **Personalization**. This is the monitor-shaped icon on the Windows Settings page.

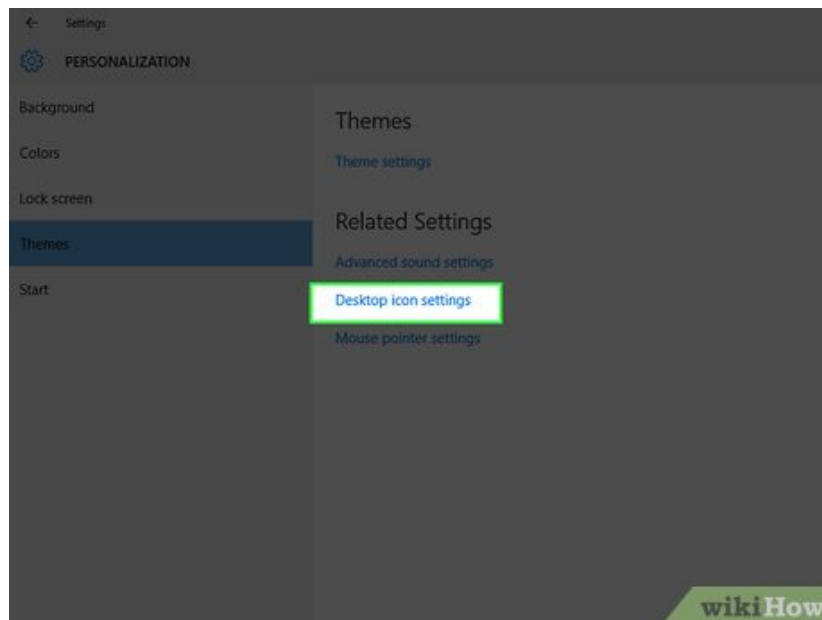
1. You can also access this page by right-clicking a blank space on the desktop and then clicking **Personalization** in the drop-down menu.

4.



Click **Themes**. It's a tab on the left side of the Personalization window.

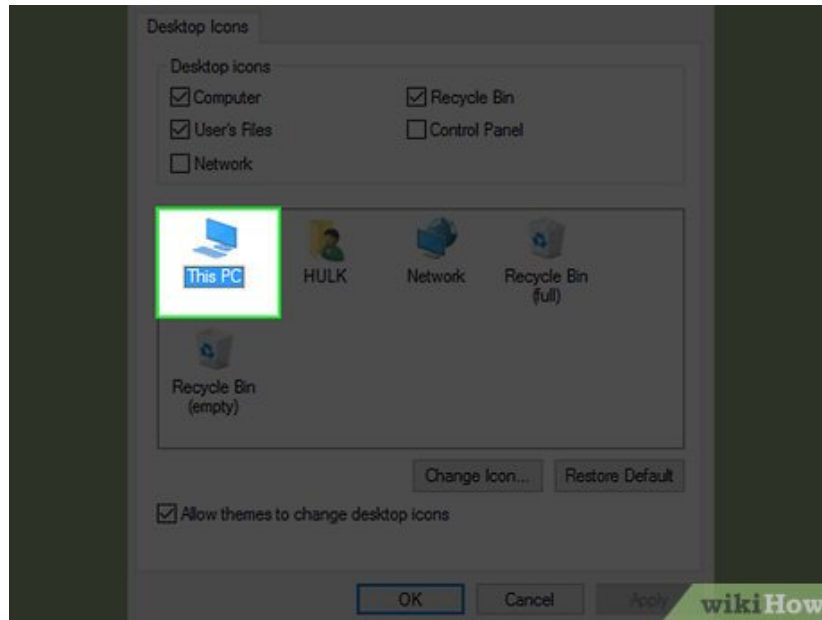
5.



Click **Desktop icon settings**. This link is in the upper-right side of the Themes page. Clicking it opens the Desktop Icon Settings window.

1. If you haven't edited your theme at all, this link will be in the middle of the page beneath the "Related Settings" heading.
2. You can also click **Get more themes in the Store** below the "Apply a theme" heading to browse desktop themes. Some themes will change your desktop icons' appearances.

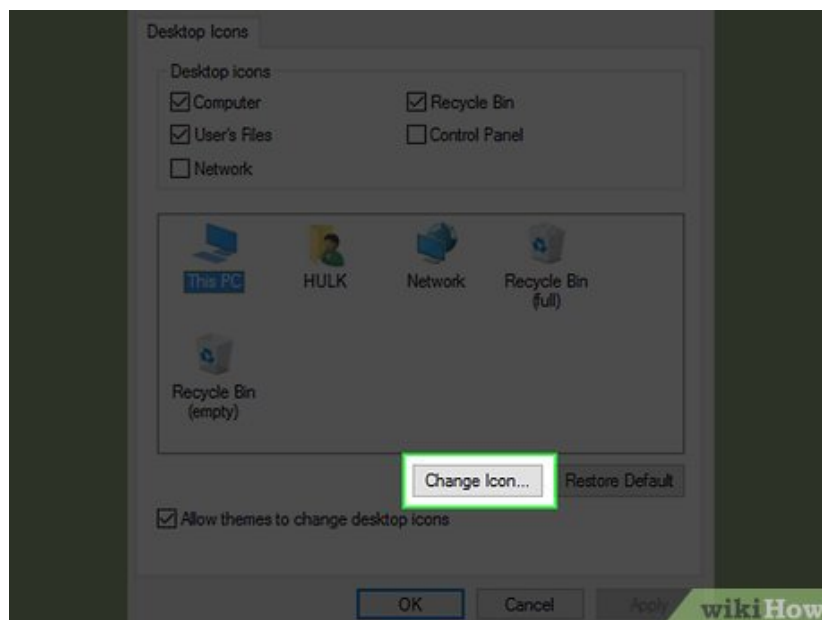
6.



Click an icon you want to change. This will select the icon.

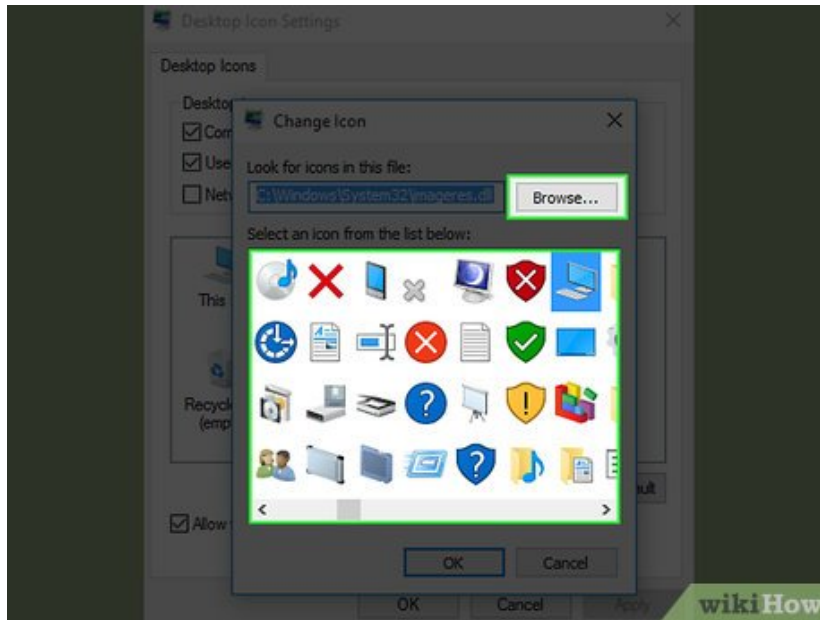
1. For example, you might click **This PC** or **Recycle Bin**.
2. You can also check the box next to a desktop icon's name at the top of the window to make it appear on your desktop, or uncheck the box to remove it from the desktop.
3. Check the "Allow themes to change desktop icons" box on this window to enable theme-related icon changes.

7.



Click **Change Icon** . It's near the bottom of the window.

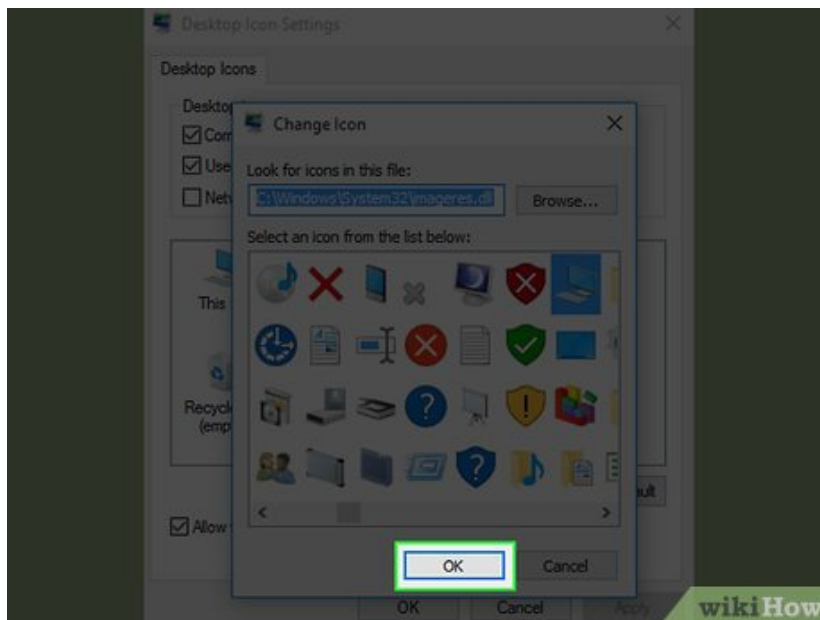
8.



Select an icon. You can select two different types of icons:

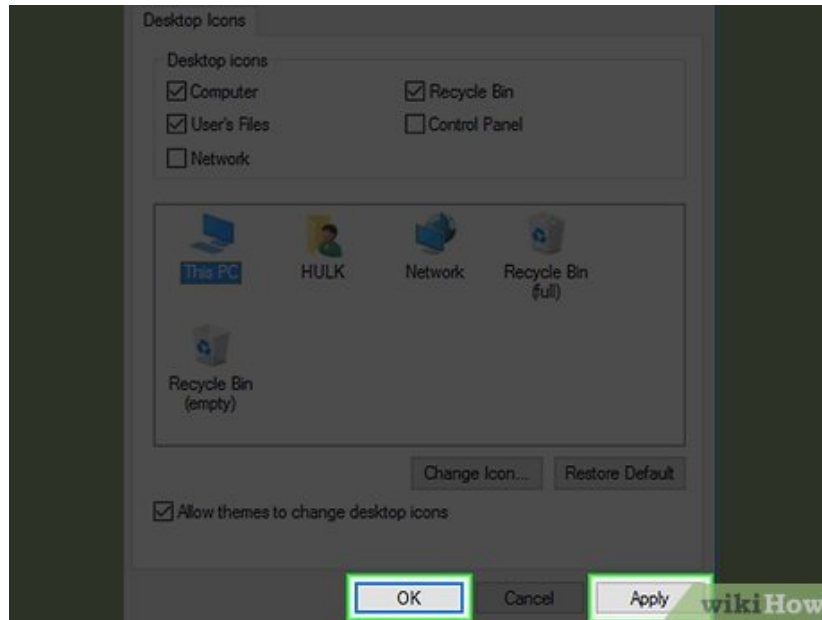
1. **System icon** - Click an icon in the window.
2. **Custom icon** - Click **Browse**, then click the folder that your custom icons are in on the left side of the window. Select the icon you want to use, then click **Open**.

9.



Click **OK**. This will assign your selected icon to the desktop program.

10.

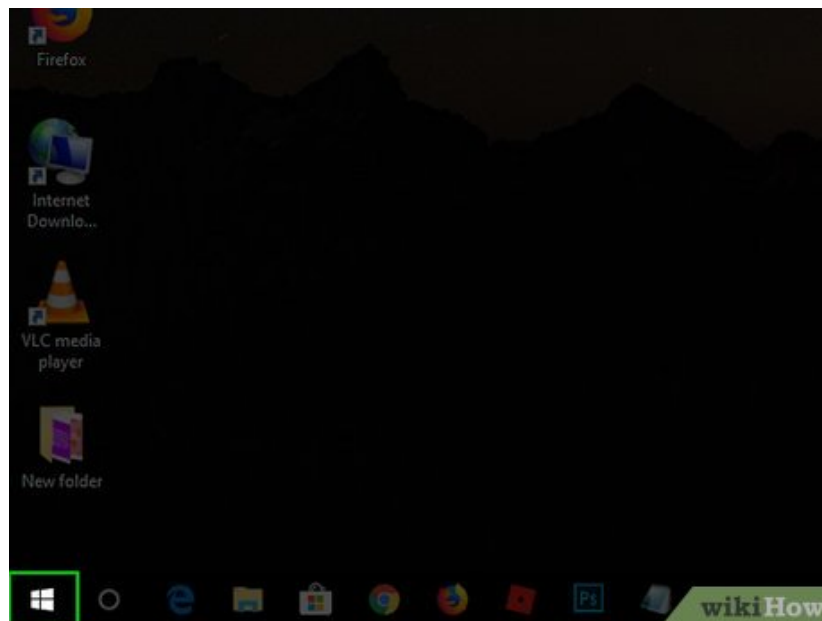


Click **Apply**, then click **OK**. Doing so confirms your decision and changes the desktop program's icon to your selected icon.

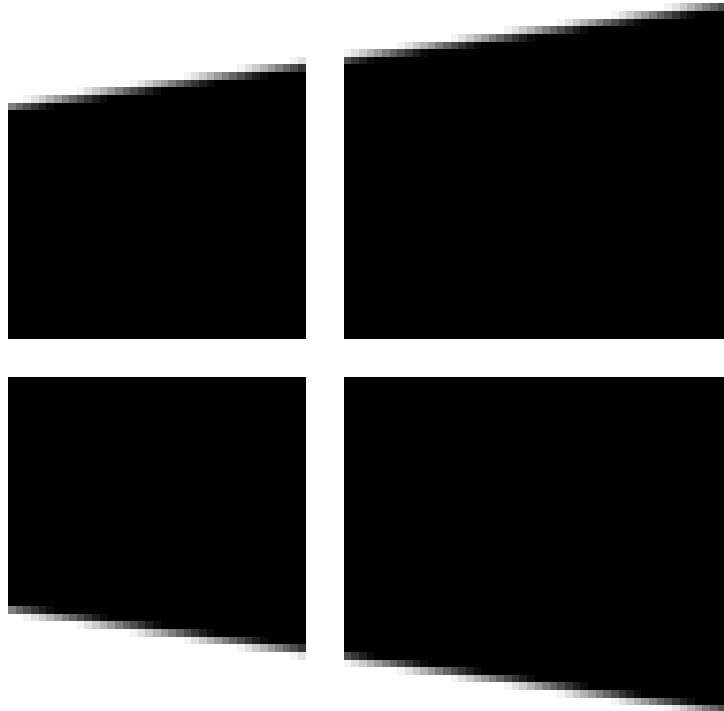
Method 2 of 6:

Changing Shortcut and Folder Icons

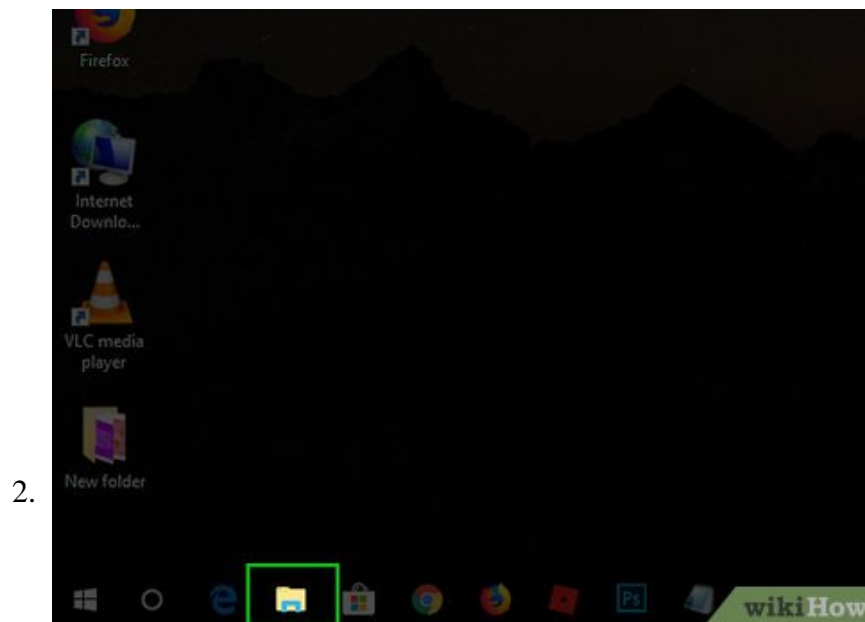
1.



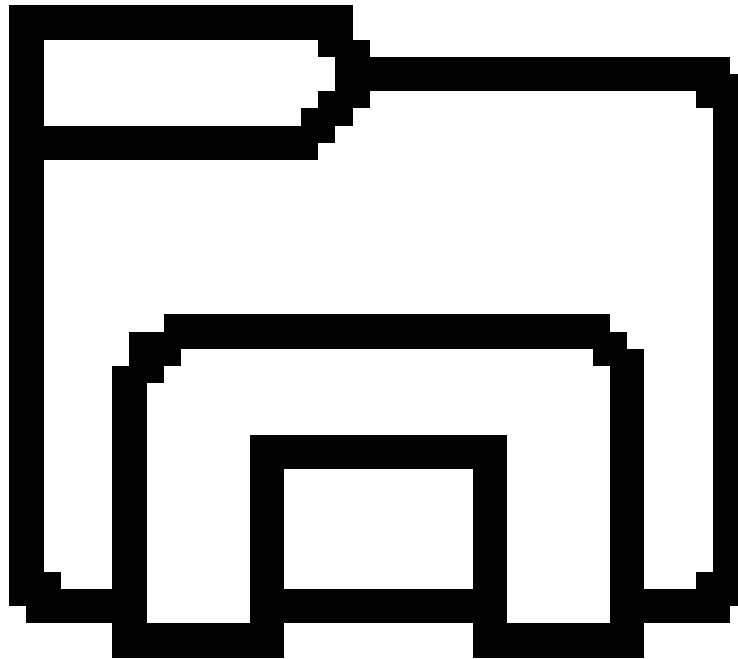
Open Start



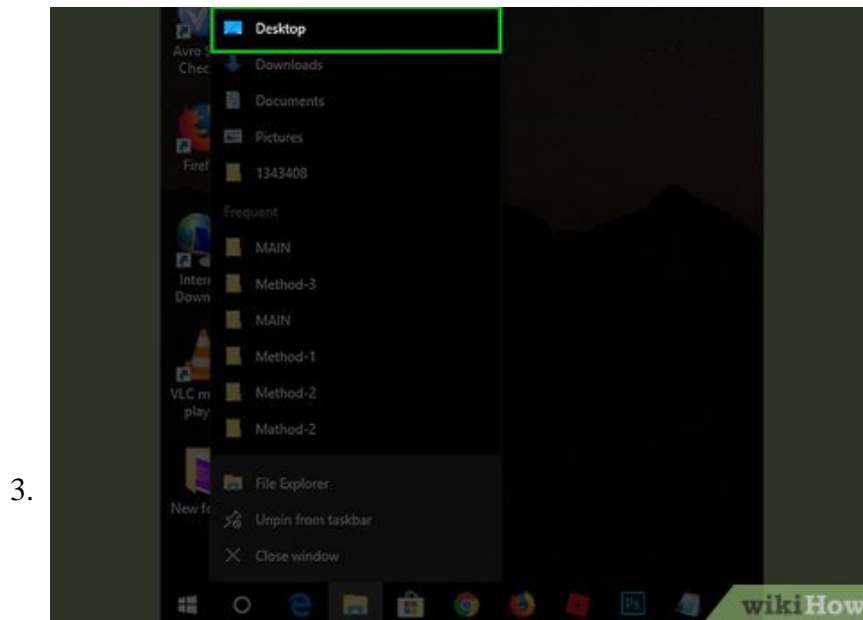
. Click the Windows logo in the bottom-left corner of the screen, or press ? Win.



Click the File Explorer

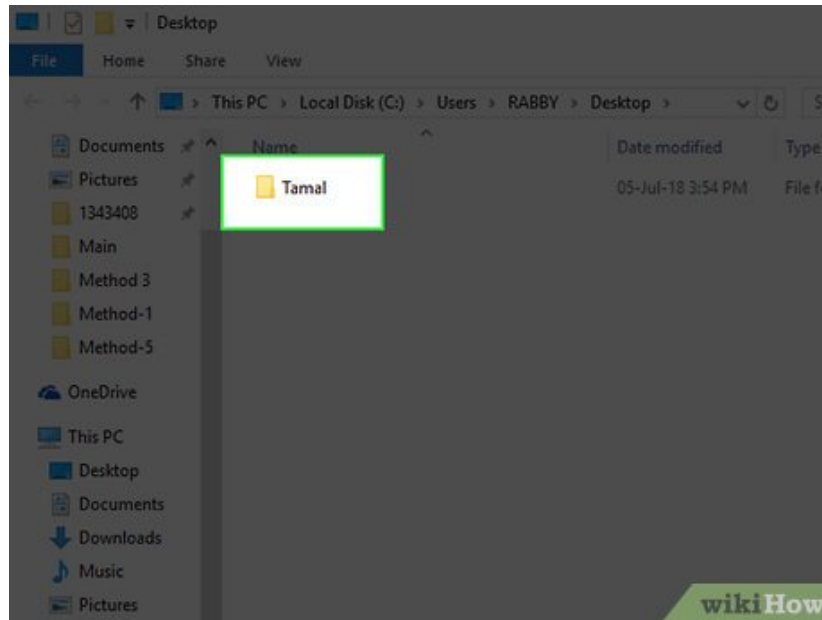


. You'll find this icon on the far-left side of the Start window.



Click **Desktop**. It's a folder in the left-hand column of options in the File Explorer window.

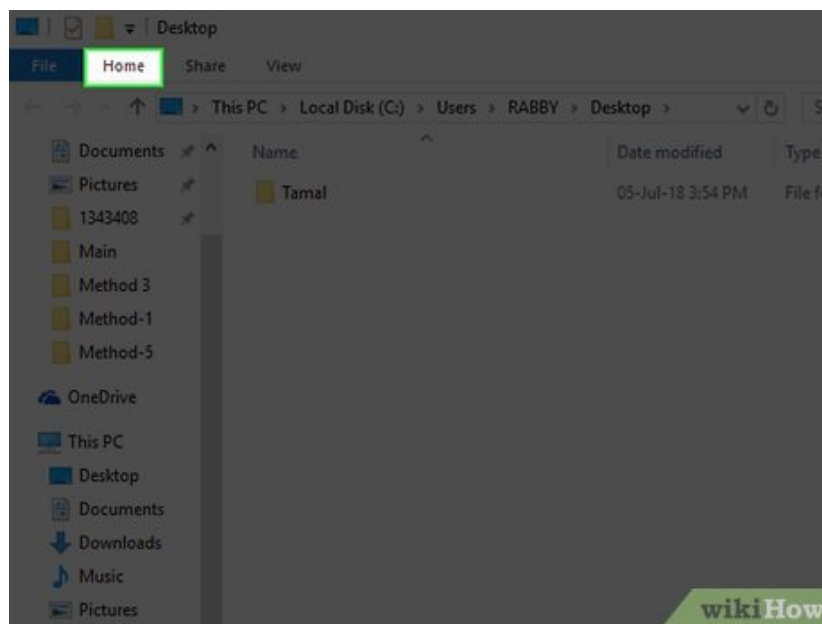
4.



Click a shortcut or folder icon. Shortcut icons have a white box with an arrow in their lower-left corners.

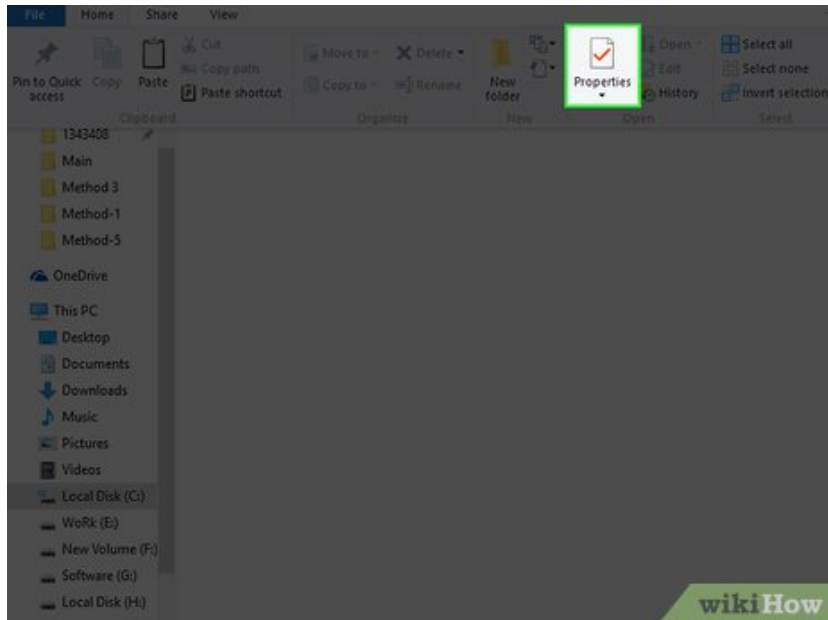
1. You cannot change the icons of specific files (e.g., Notepad files or .exe files) using this method.

5.



Click the **Home tab.** It's in the upper-left corner of the File Explorer window. Doing so will open a toolbar at the top of the window.

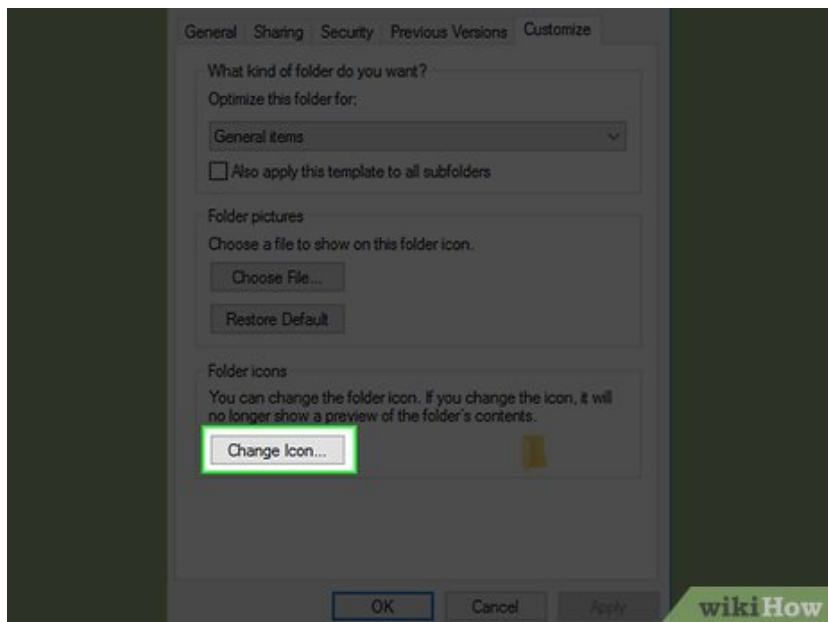
6.



Click **Properties**. This is a white box with a red checkmark in the "Open" section of the toolbar.

1. You can also right-click on the icon on your desktop and then click **Properties** to get to this menu.

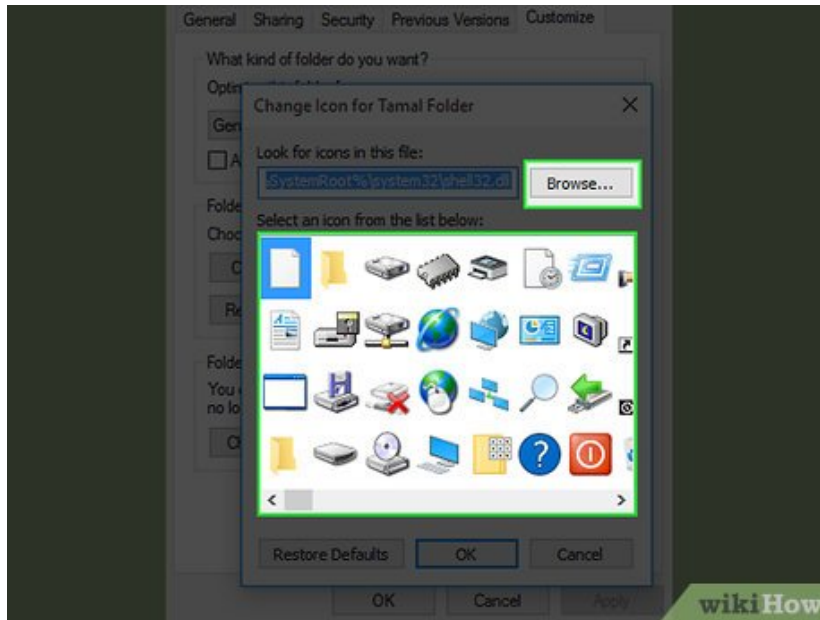
7.



Open the icon's "Change Icon" window. This process will vary depending on the type of icon you're editing:

1. **Shortcut** - Click the **Shortcut** tab at the top of the Properties window, then click **Change Icon** near the bottom of the window.
2. **Folder** - Click the **Customize** tab at the top of the Properties window, then click **Change Icon** near the bottom of the window.

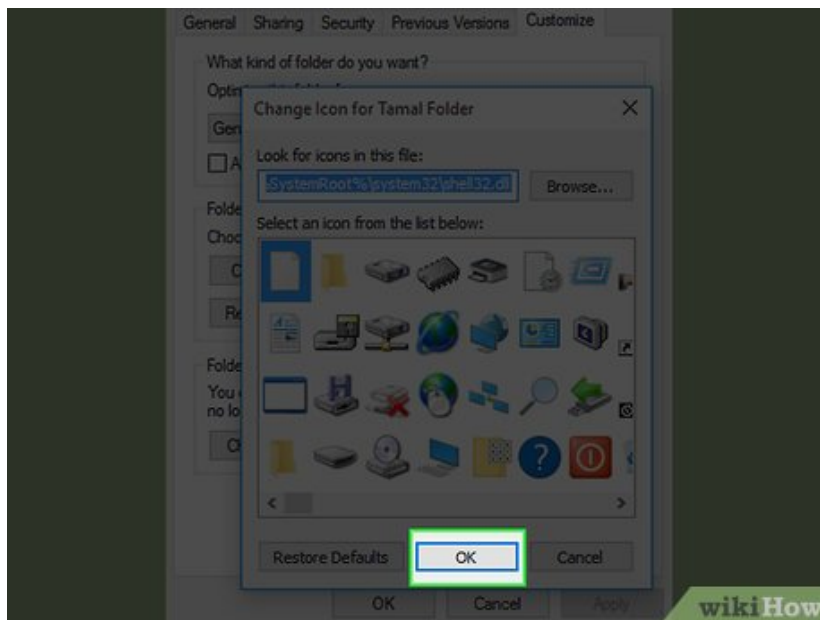
8.



Select an icon. You can select two different types of icons:

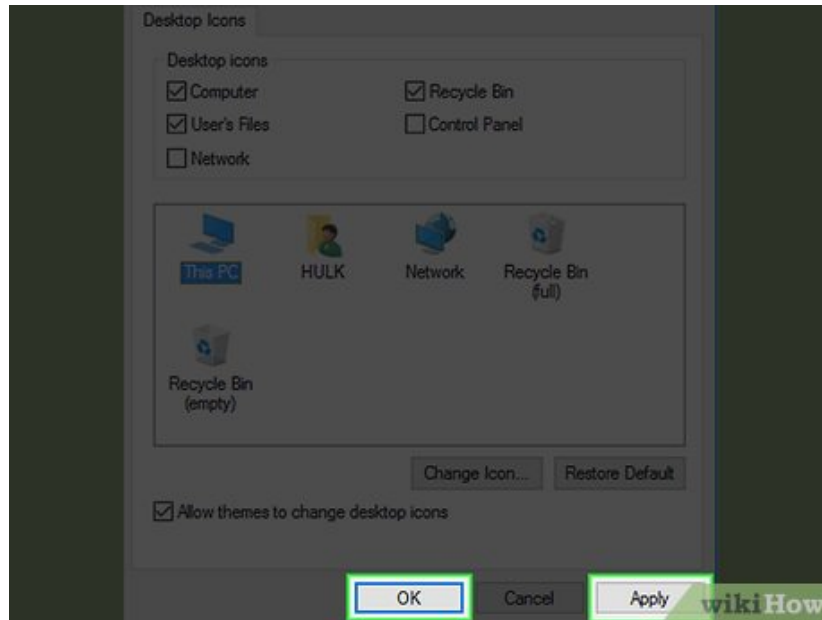
1. **System icon** - Click an icon in the window.
2. **Custom icon** - Click **Browse**, then click the folder that your custom icons are in on the left side of the window. Select the icon you want to use, then click **Open**.

9.



Click **OK**. This will assign your selected icon.

10.

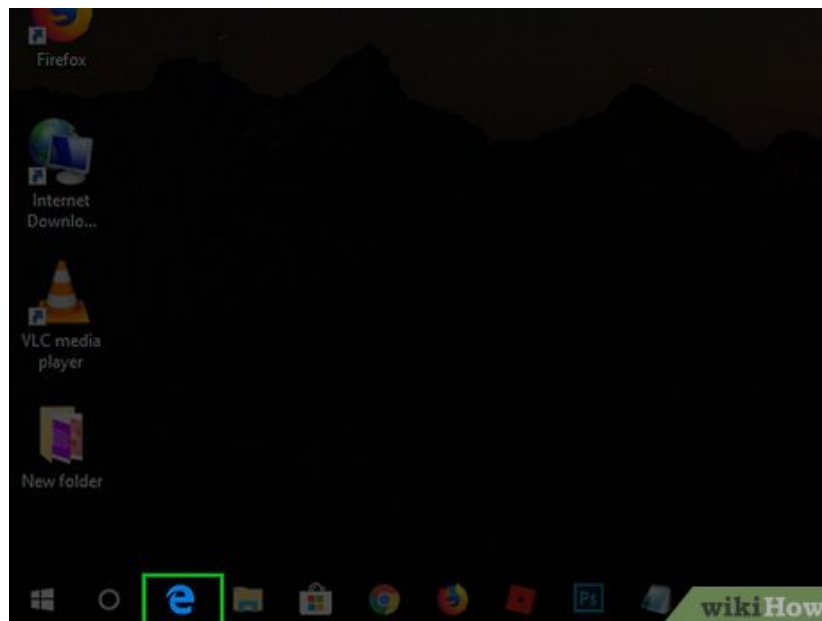


Click **Apply**, then click **OK**. Doing so confirms your decision and changes the original icon to your selected icon.

Method 3 of 6:

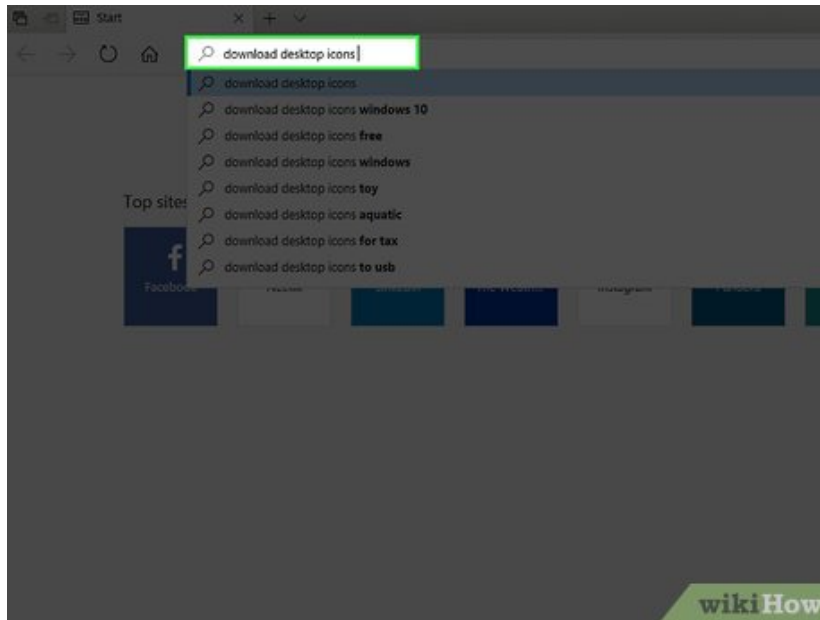
Downloading Icons

1.



Open a web browser. Microsoft Edge is the official Windows 10 browser, though you can use Google Chrome, Firefox, Opera, or Internet Explorer as well.

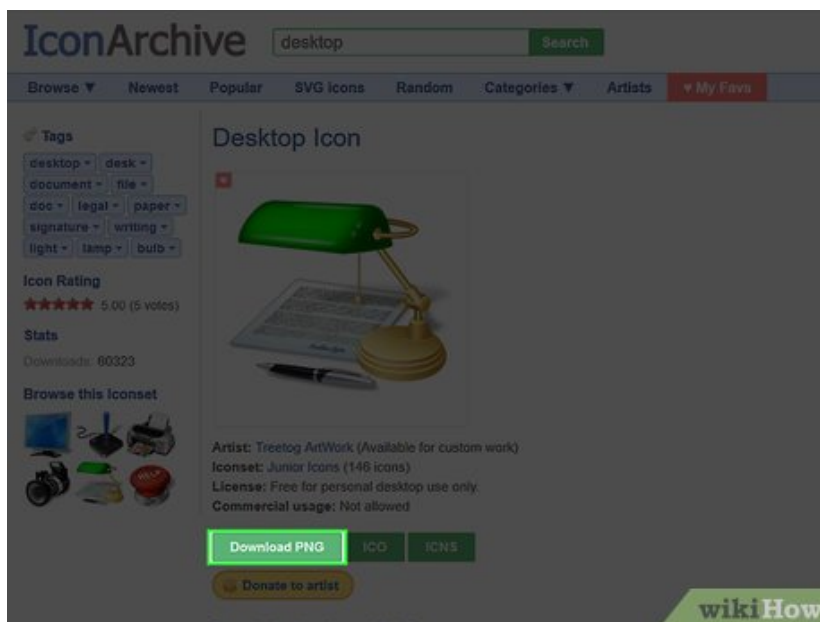
2.



Search for Windows icons. Type `download windows desktop icons` into your browser's address bar and pressing `?Enter`.

1. You can narrow your search by entering the program's name (e.g., `windows my computer icon`) or by using the icon file type (e.g., `ICO`).

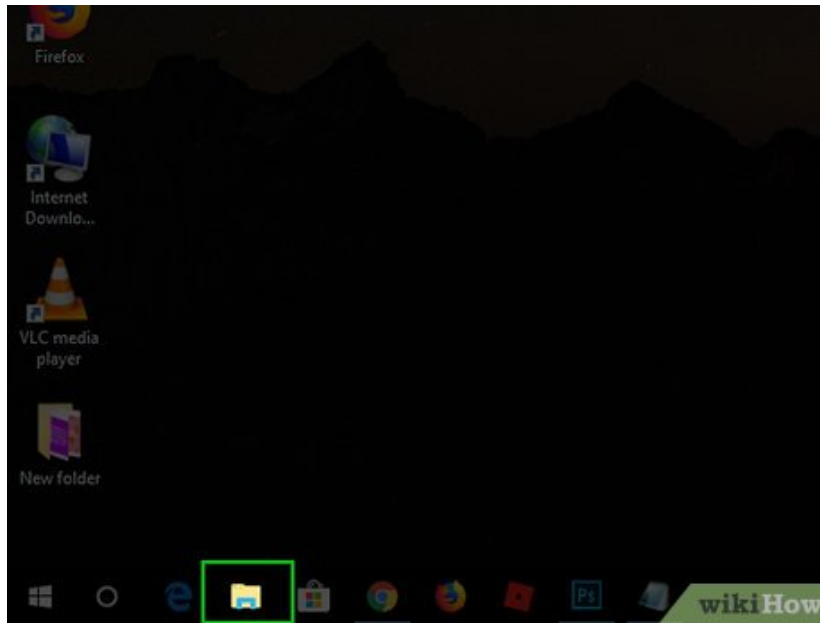
3.



Download the icons you want. You can do this by opening a site that has your icons and clicking the **Download** button. Doing so will save the icons to your computer.

1. If you download multiple icons at once, you may have to extract the icons to a regular folder before continuing.

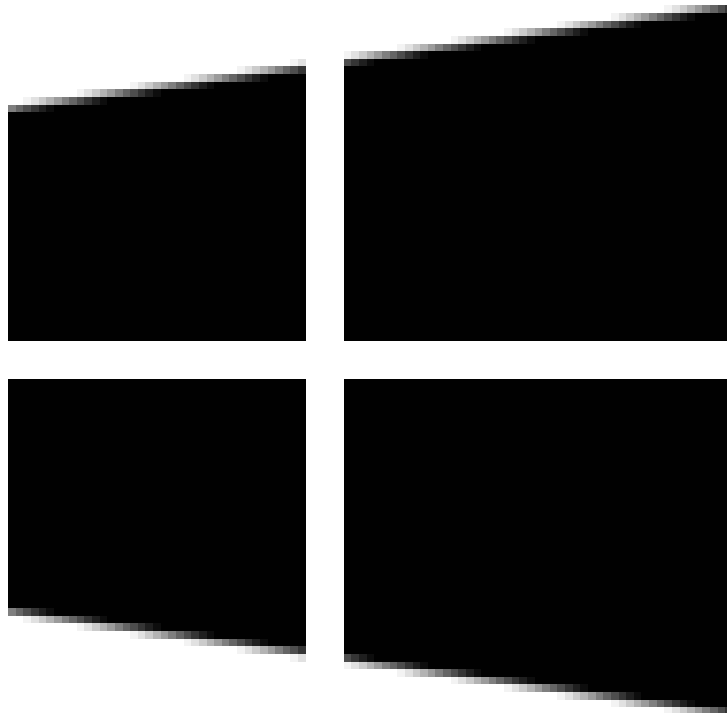
4.



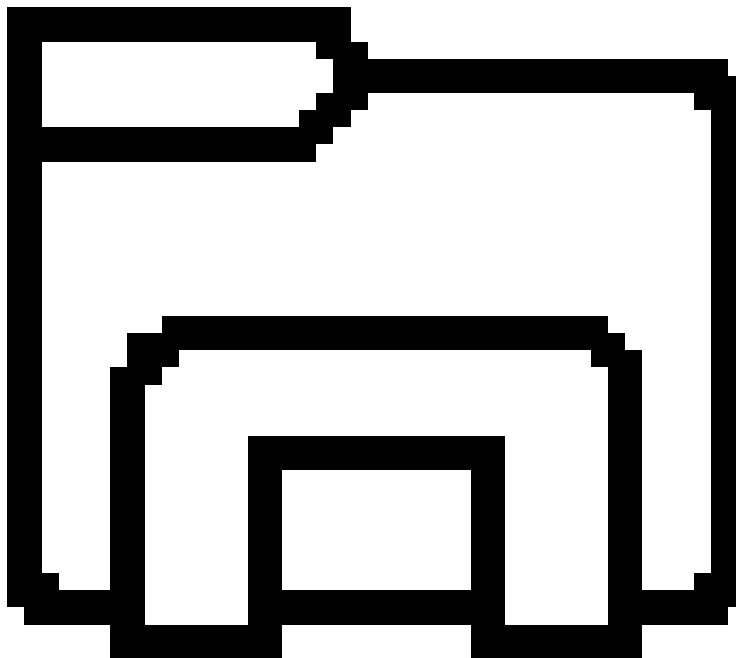
Open File Explorer



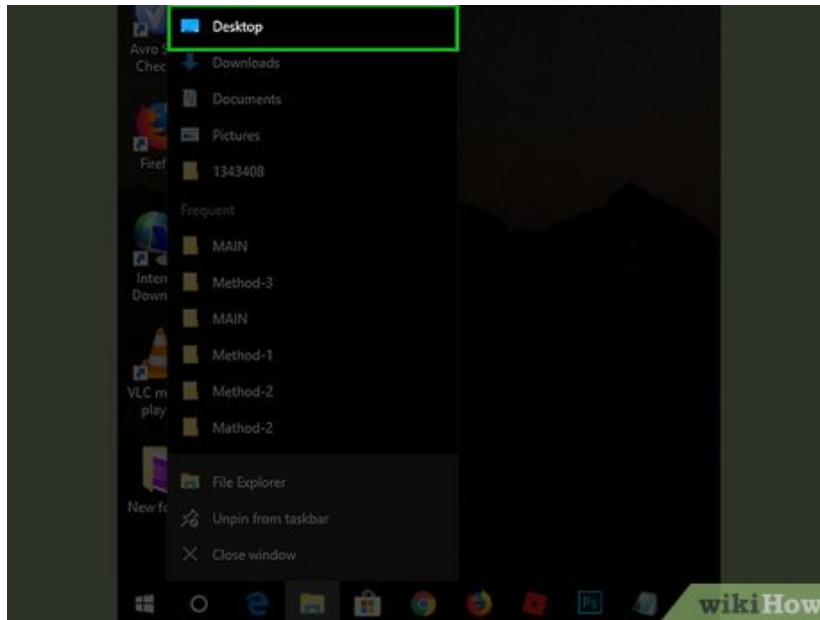
. You can do this by opening Start



and clicking

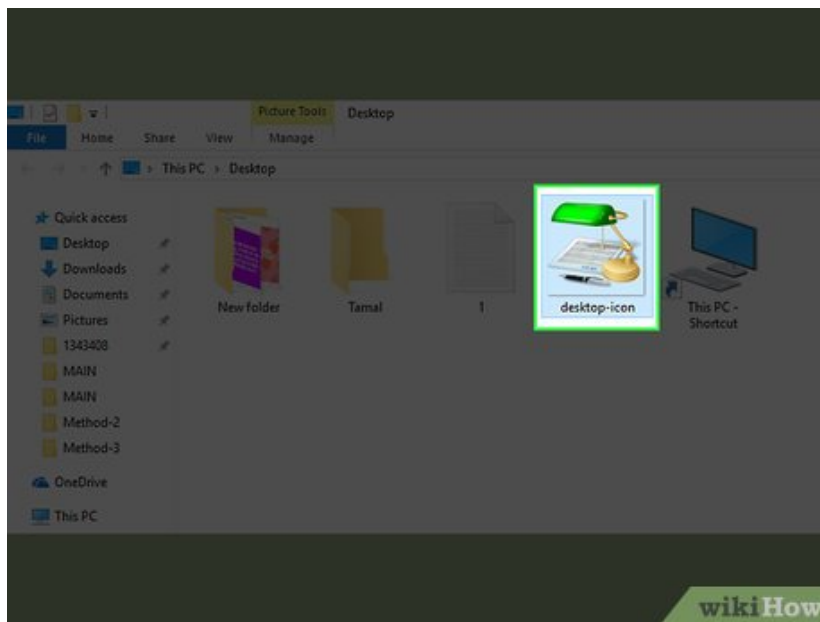


5.



Click **Desktop**. This folder is on the left side of File Explorer.

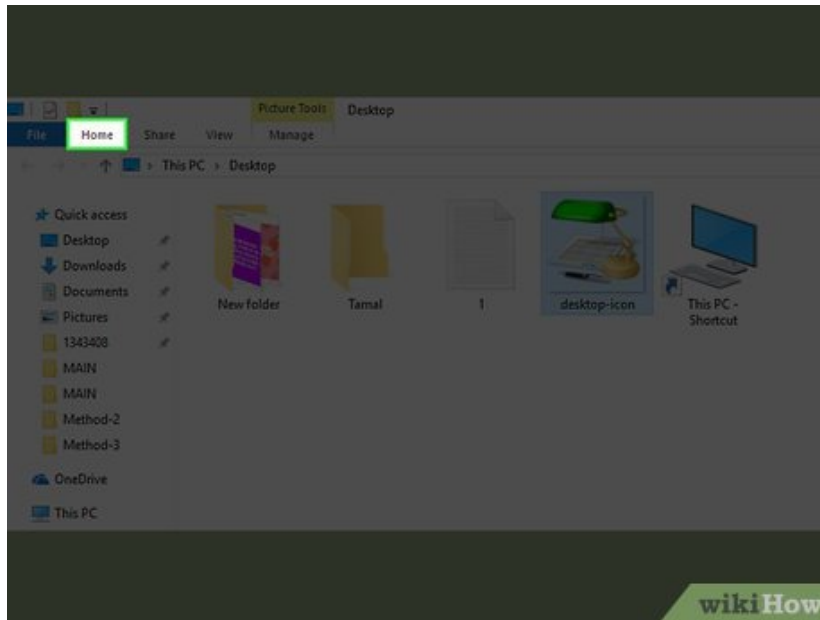
6.



Click your icons folder. Doing so selects it.

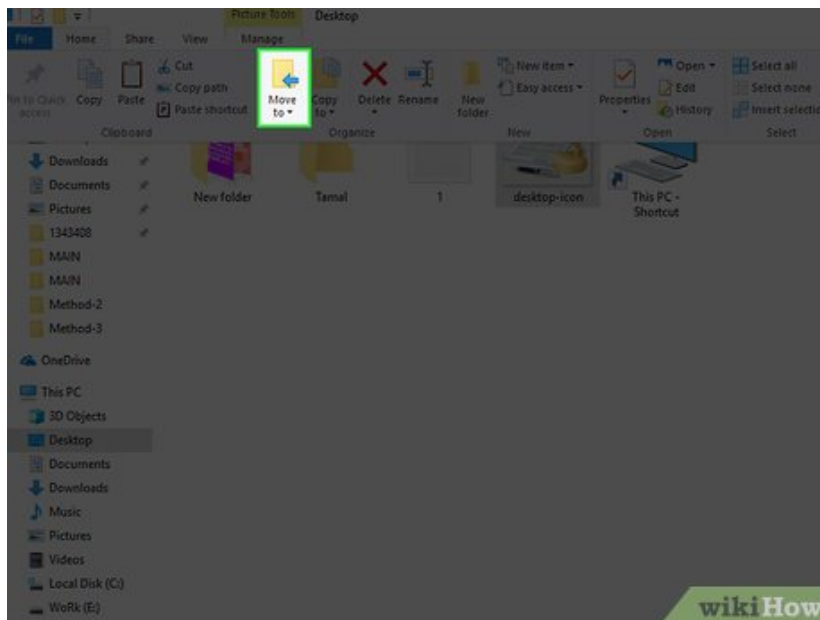
1. If you just downloaded one icon, select the icon instead.

7.



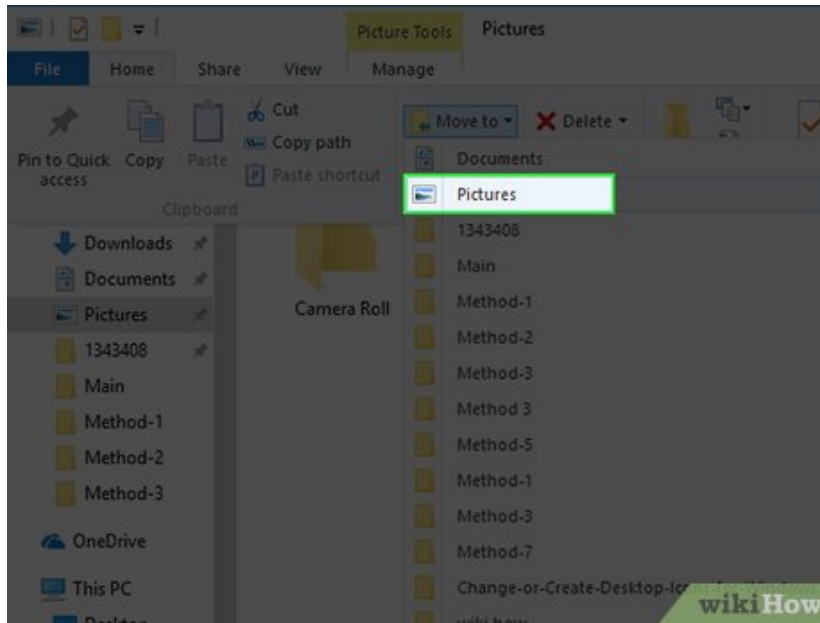
Click **Home**. This tab is in the upper-left corner of the File Explorer window.

8.



Click **Move to**. It's in the "Organize" section of the toolbar at the top of the File Explorer window.

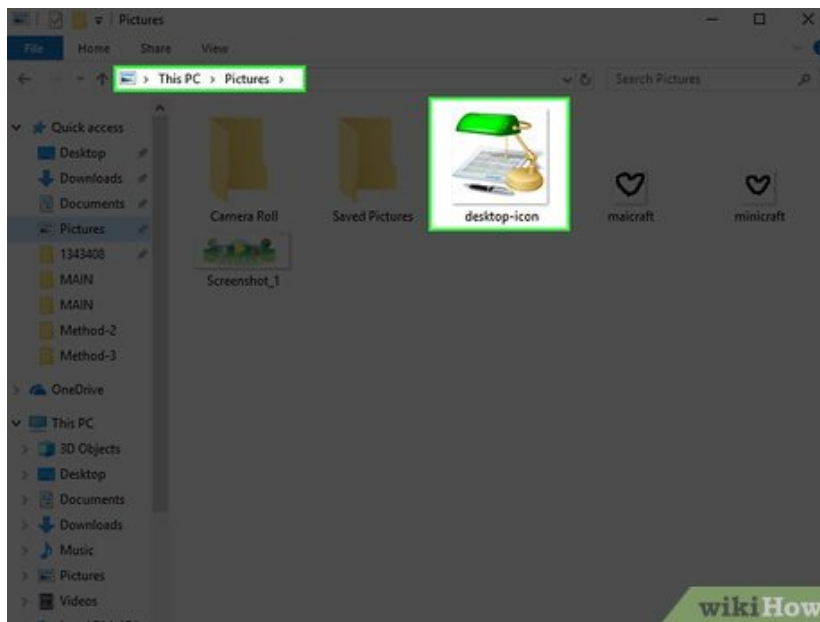
9.



Click **Pictures**. This folder is near the middle of the pop-up window.

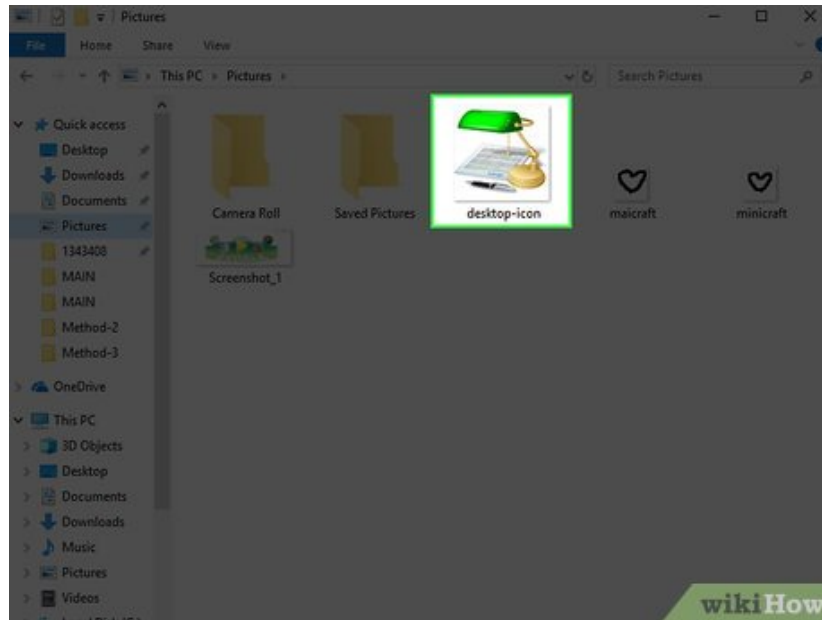
1. You can select any folder on your computer if you don't want to place your icons in **Pictures**.

10.



Click **Move**. This will send your icons to a folder where you won't move or delete them.

11.

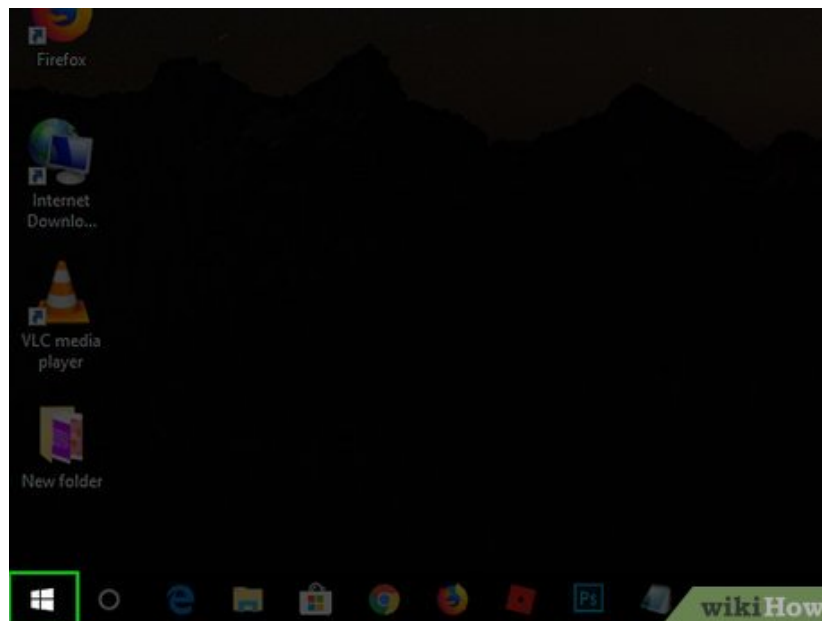


Change a program's icon using your downloaded icon. You'll use the **Browse** method and then select an icon from within the **Pictures** folder to do this.

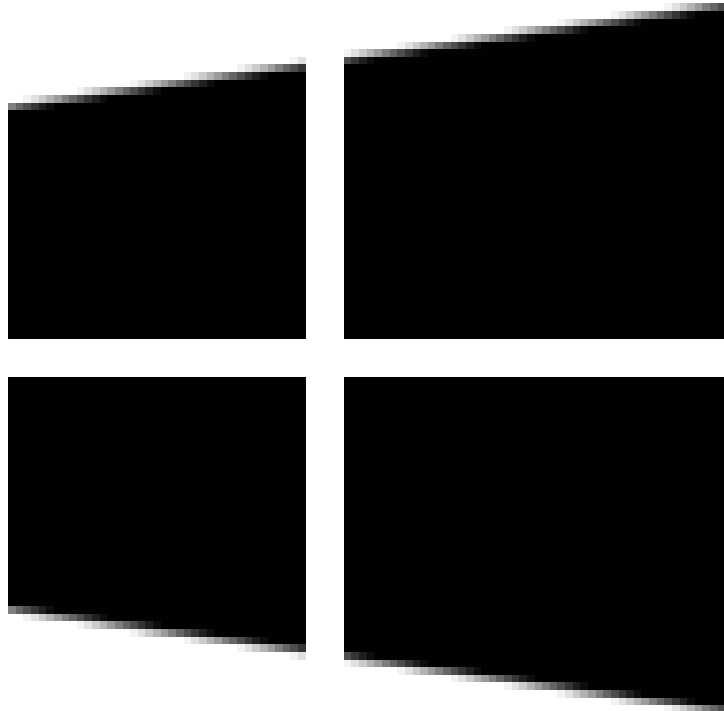
Method 4 of 6:

Creating Icons

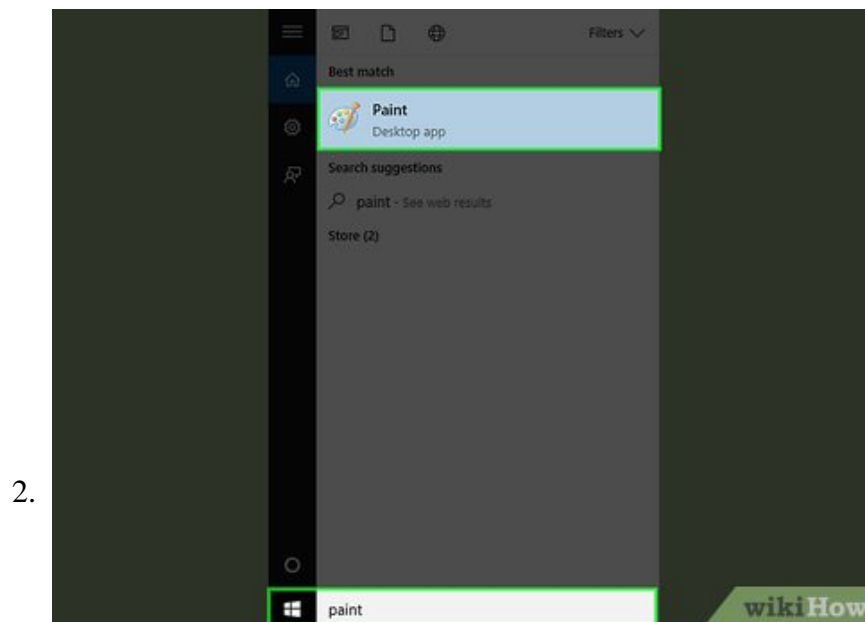
1.



Open Start

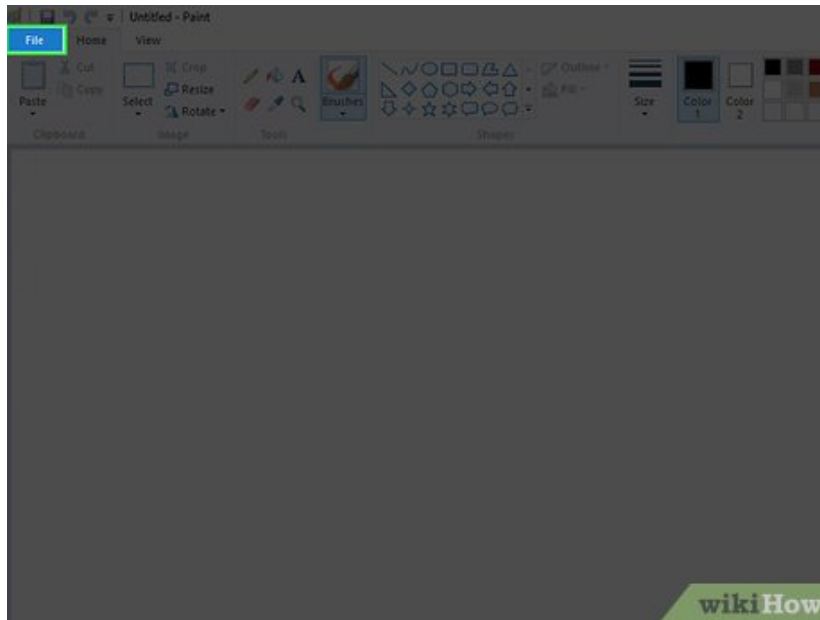


. Click the Windows logo in the bottom-left corner of the screen, or press ? Win .



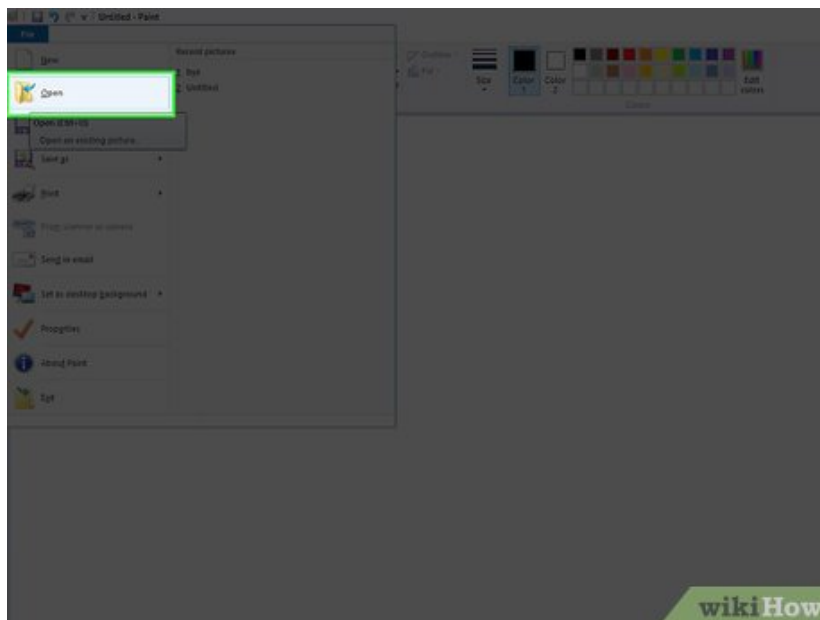
Type **paint** into Start, then press ? Enter . Make sure you don't press ? Enter until the Paint icon, which resembles a paint palette, appears at the top of the Start window.

3.



Click **File**. It's a blue button in the upper-left corner of the Paint window.

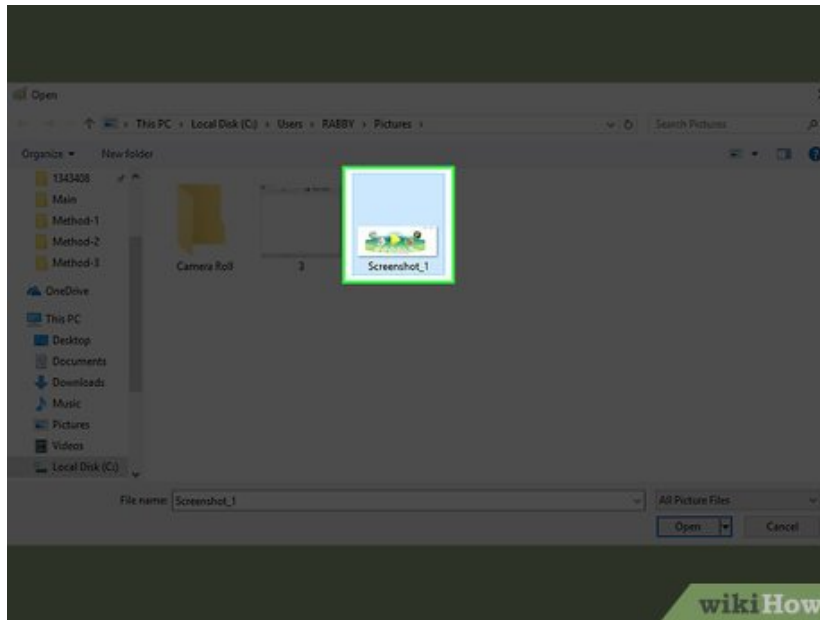
4.



Click **Open**. This option is in the **File** menu. Doing so opens a window where you can open a file location.

1. If you'd rather create your own icon by drawing in Paint, skip this step and instead create your drawing.

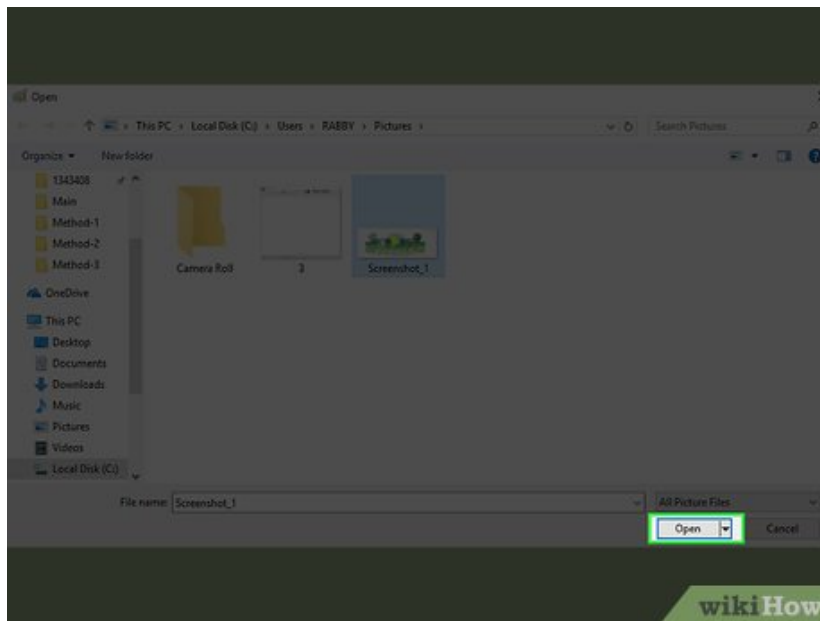
5.



Select a picture. You may have to click a location on the left side of the Open window (e.g., **Pictures**) to find the picture you want to open.

1. Skip this step if you're drawing your own icon.

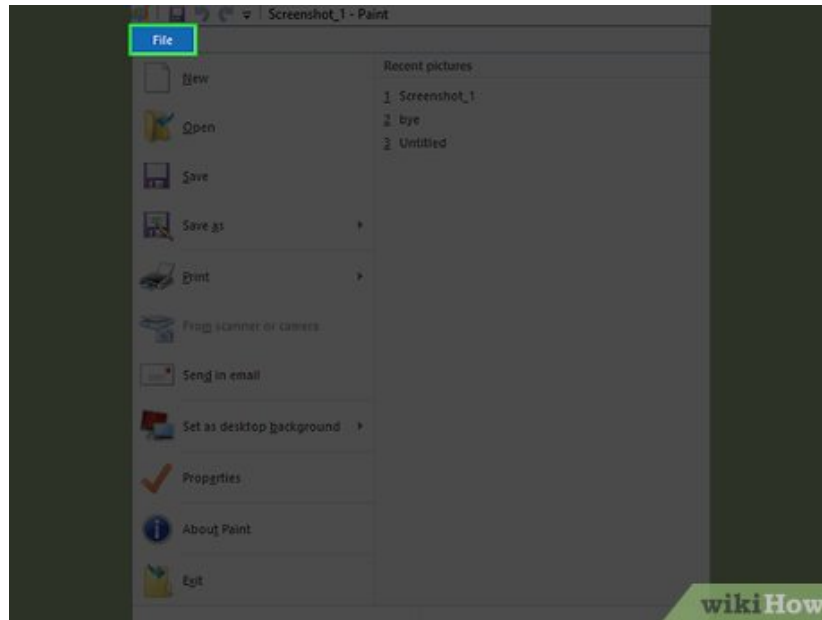
6.



Click **Open**. This will open your image in the Paint window.

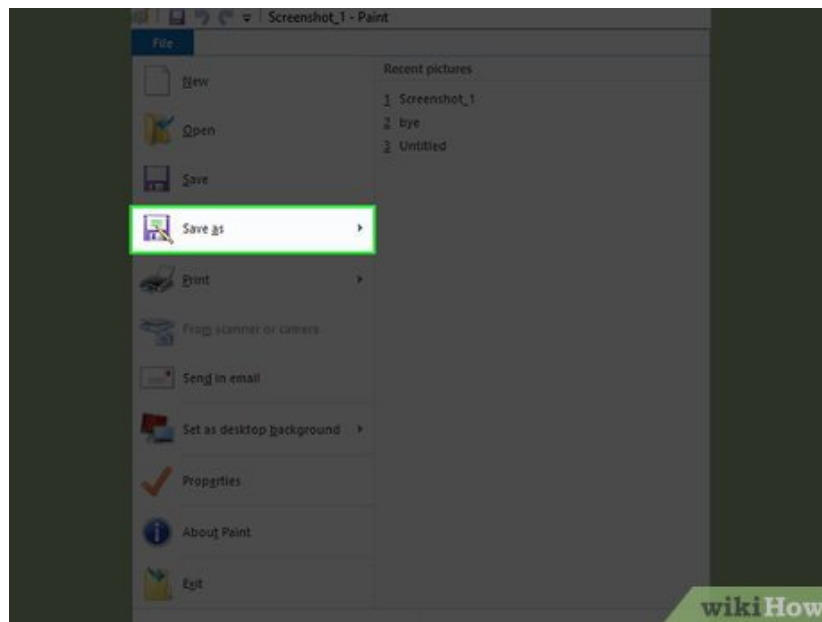
1. Skip this step if you're drawing your own icon.

7.



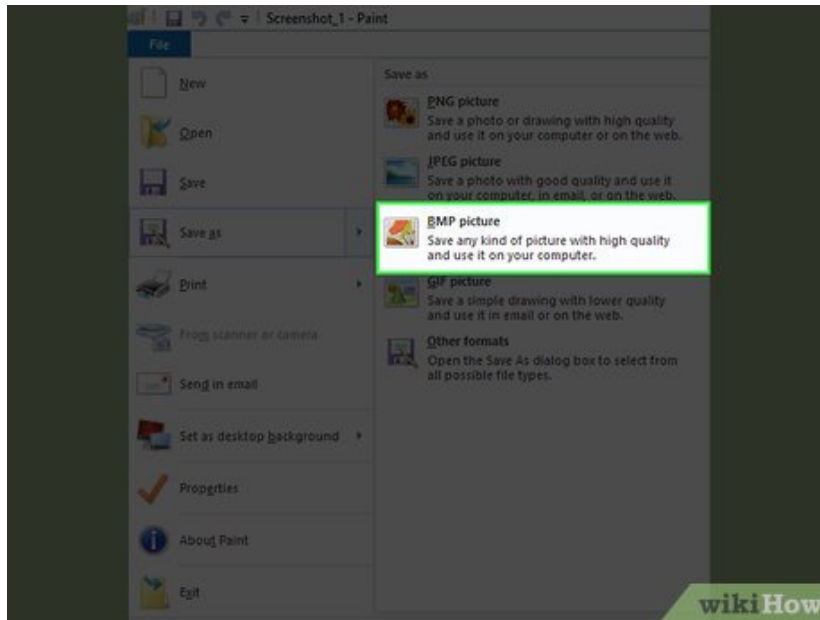
Click **File** again. It's in the top-left corner of Paint.

8.



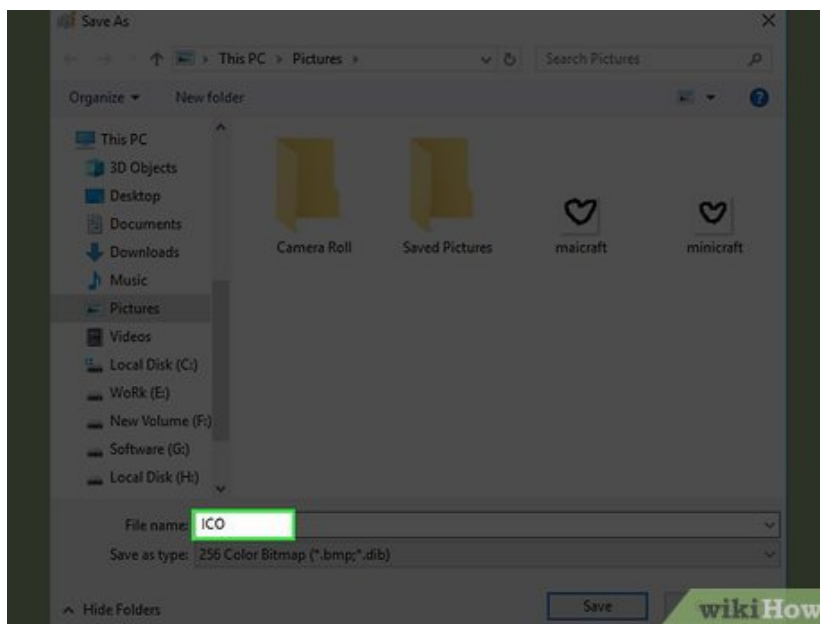
Select **Save as**. This option is near the top of the **File** menu.

9.



Click **BMP picture**. It's an option to the right of the **Save as** button. Doing so opens a Save As window where you can name your file.

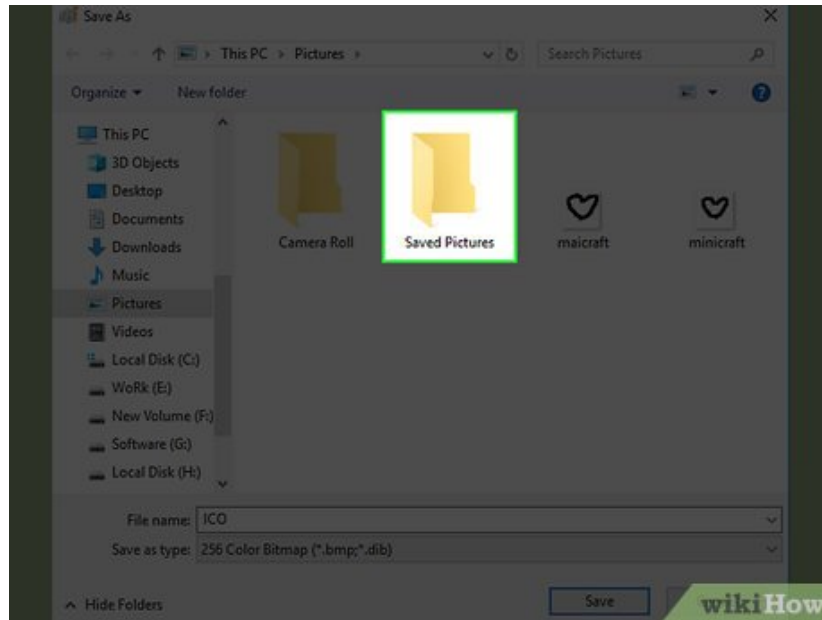
10.



Type in your file's name followed by .ico. This will ensure that your file is saved as an icon file.

1. For example, you might name your file "shortcut.ico".

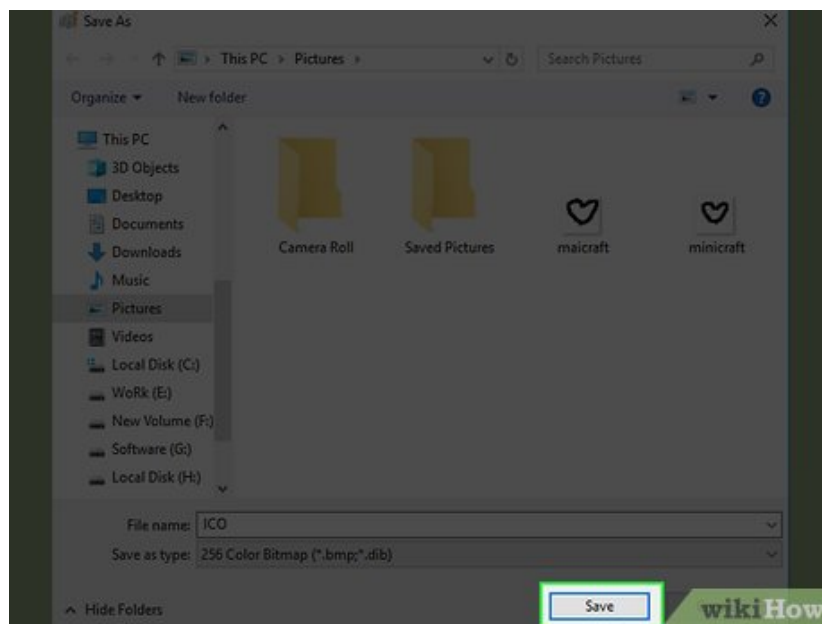
11.



Click a folder to save your file in. Do so in the left-hand pane of the Save As window.

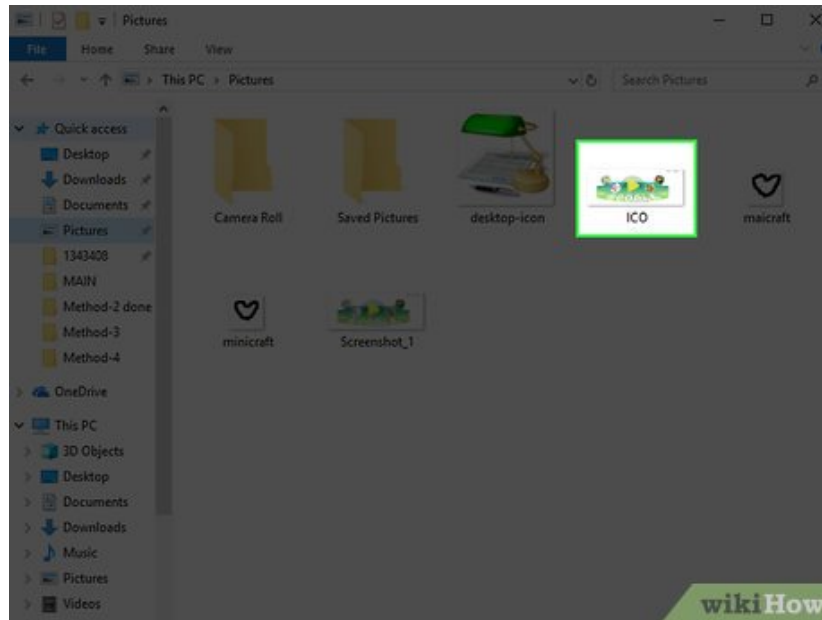
1. The **Pictures** folder is a safe place to save your shortcut file.

12.



Click Save. It's at the bottom of the window. Doing so will save your icon in your selected folder.

13.

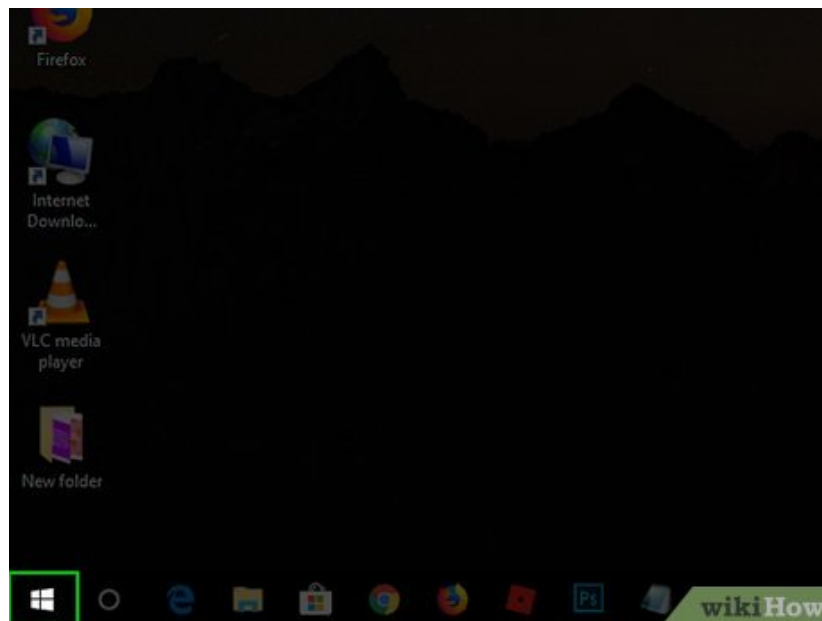


Change a program's icon using your created icon. You'll use the **Browse** method and select your custom icon from the folder where you saved it.

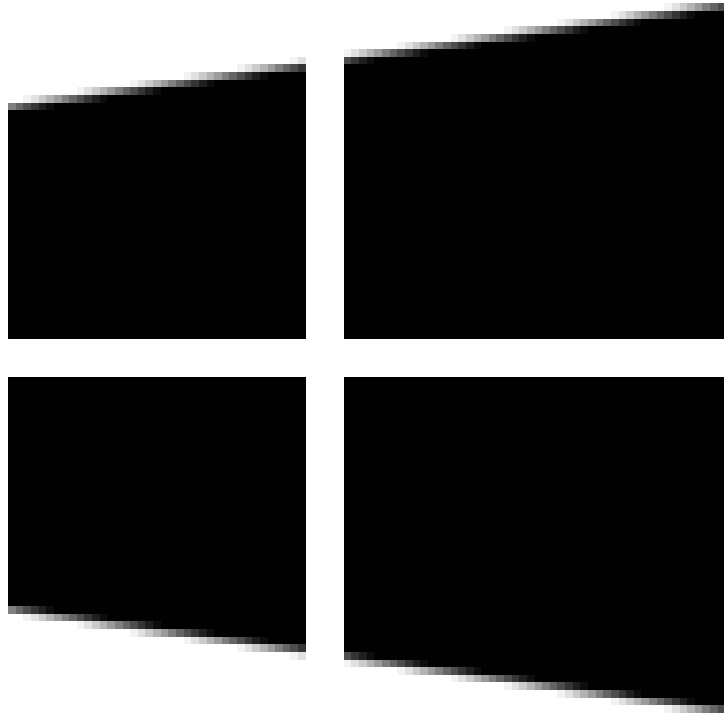
Method 5 of 6:

Adding Shortcuts to the Desktop

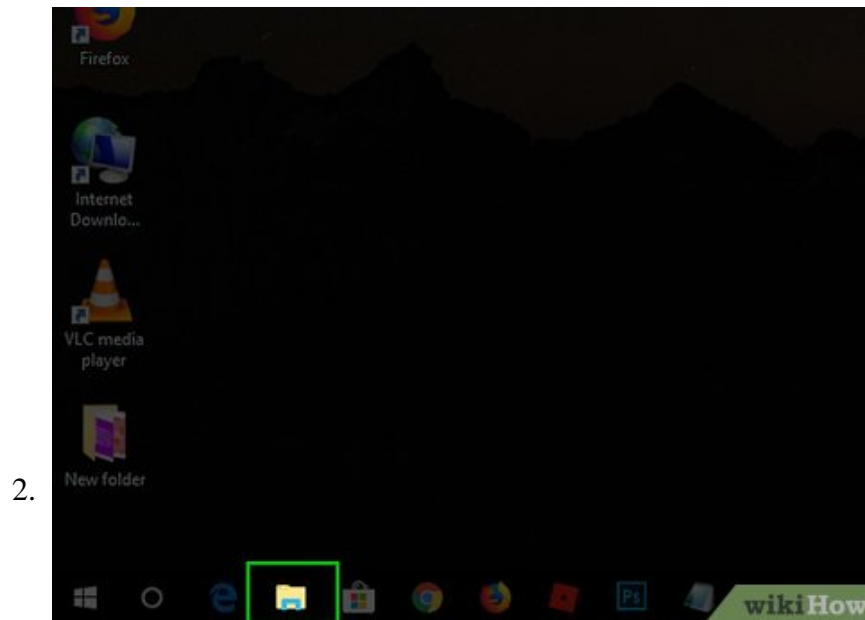
1.



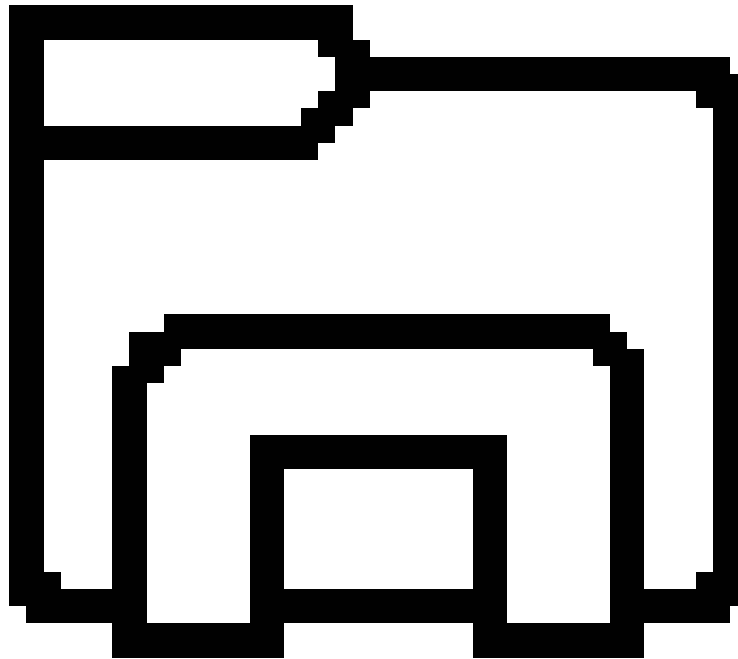
Open Start



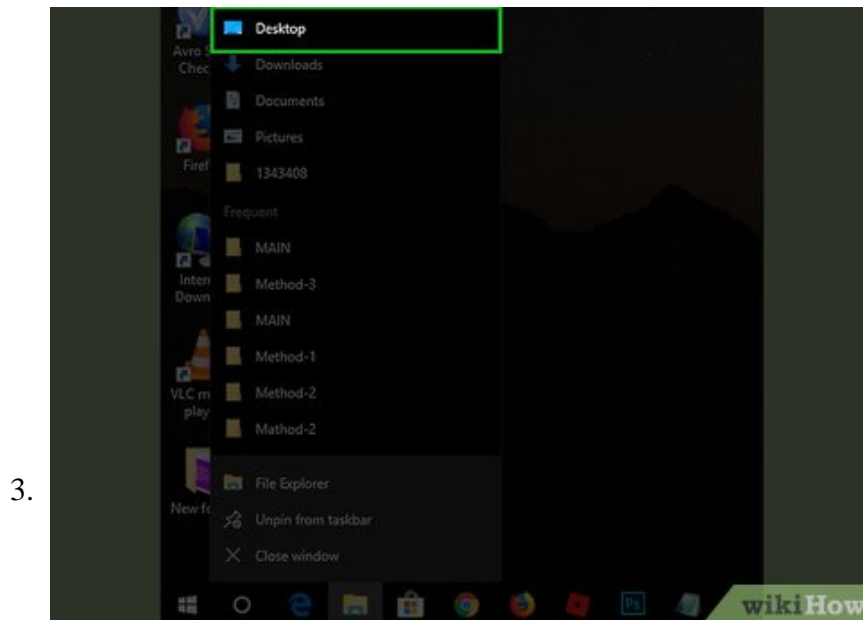
. Click the Windows logo in the bottom-left corner of the screen, or press `Win` on your keyboard.



Click File Explorer

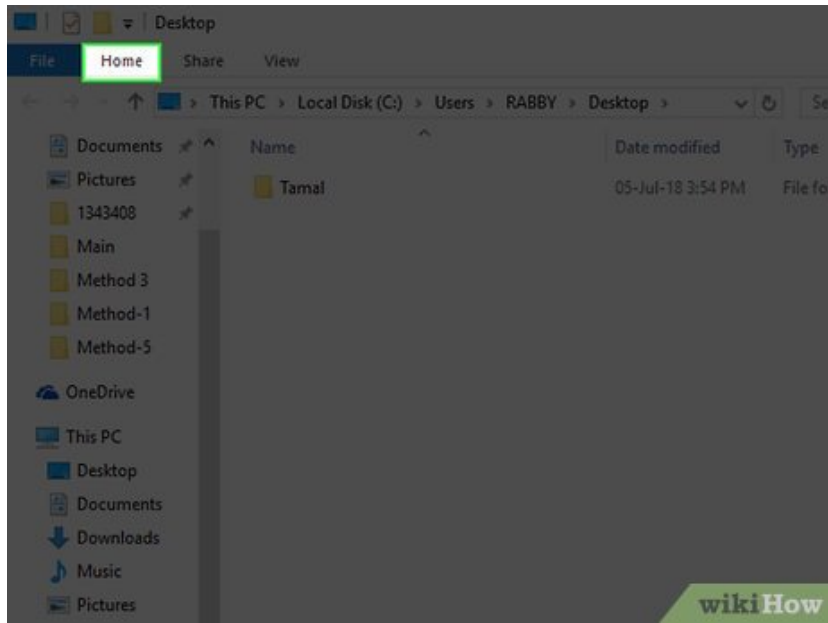


. It's in the lower-left side of the Start window.



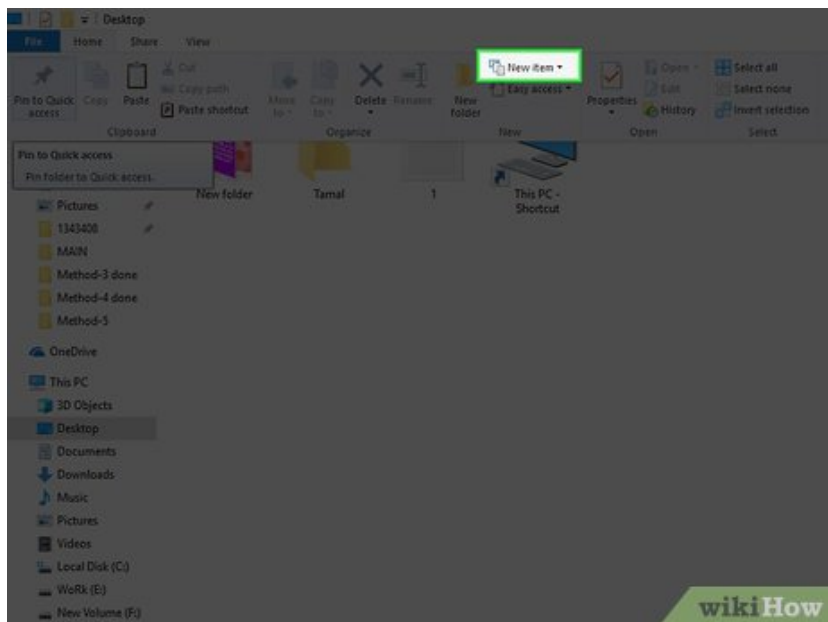
Click the **Desktop** folder. It's on the left side of the File Explorer window.

4.



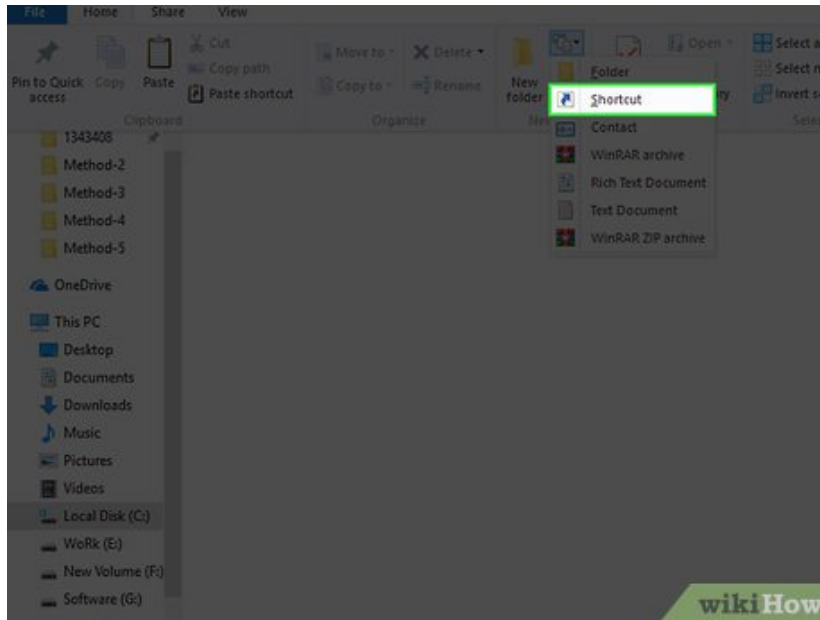
Click the **Home** tab. You'll find this tab in the upper-left side of the File Explorer window.

5.



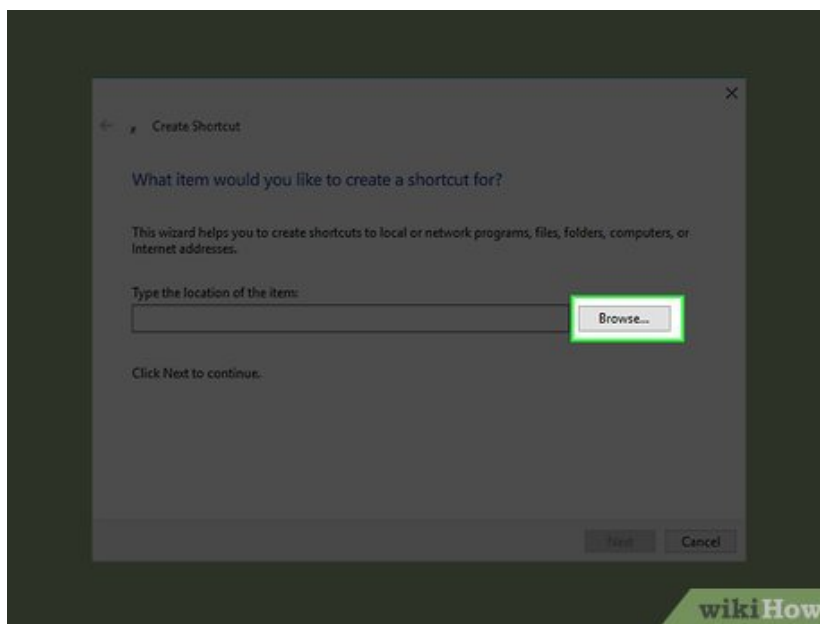
Click **New item**. It's in the "New" section of the tool bar at the top of the window.

6.



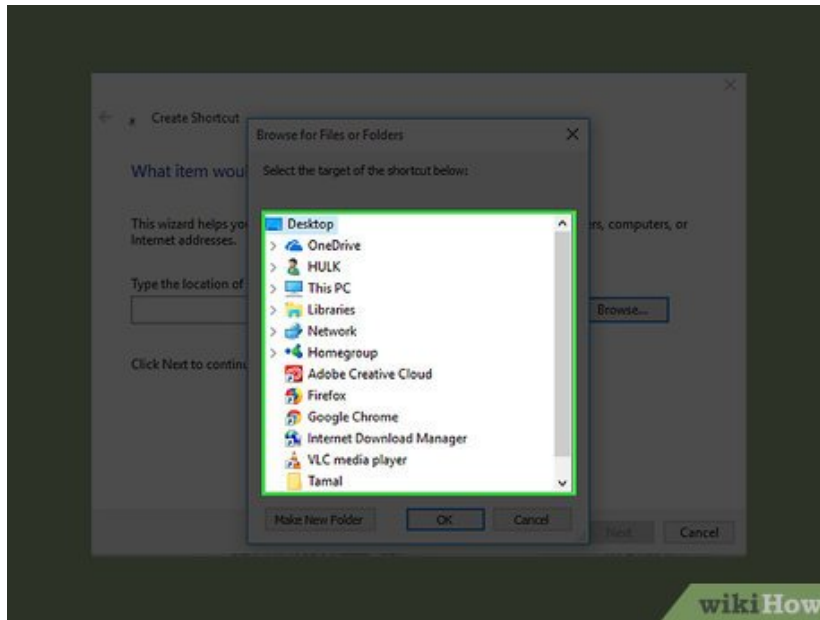
Click **Shortcut**. This option is in the **New item** drop-down menu. A window with options for your new shortcut will appear.

7.



Click **Browse**. It's in the middle of the page. Doing so opens a pop-up window.

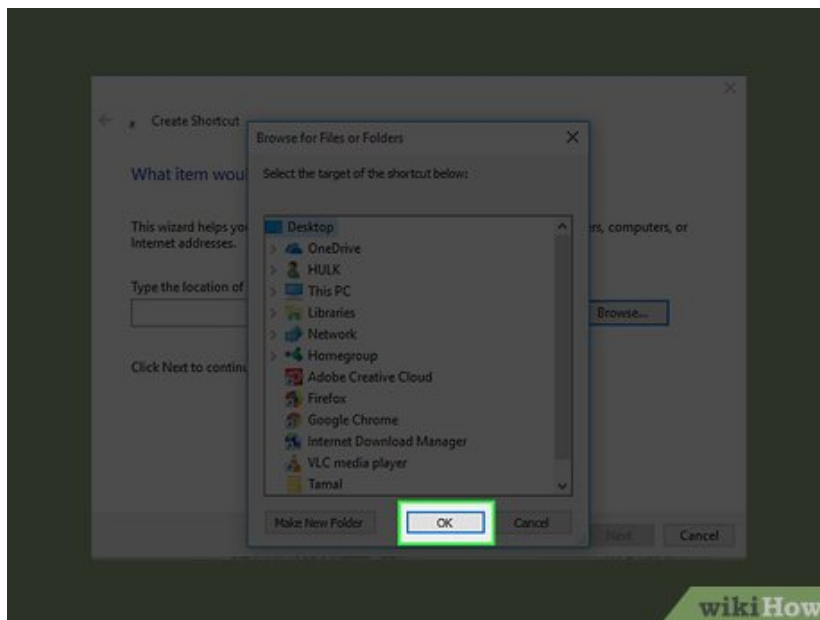
8.



Scroll down and click the program's or file's folder. For example, if the program or file is in the Documents folder, you'd click **My Documents**.

1. You may have to click through several different folders to find the program or file for which you want to create a shortcut.

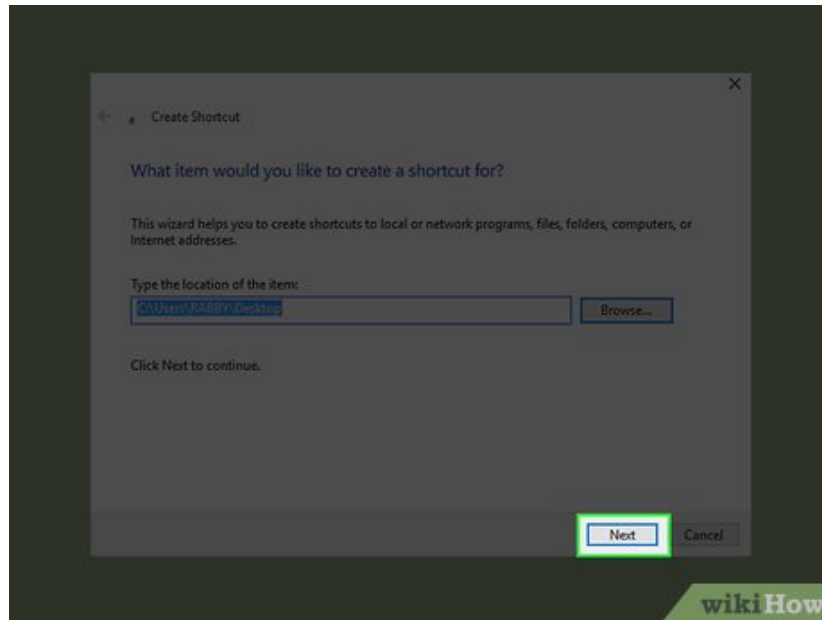
9.



Click . Doing so sets the desktop shortcut's target as your selected item.

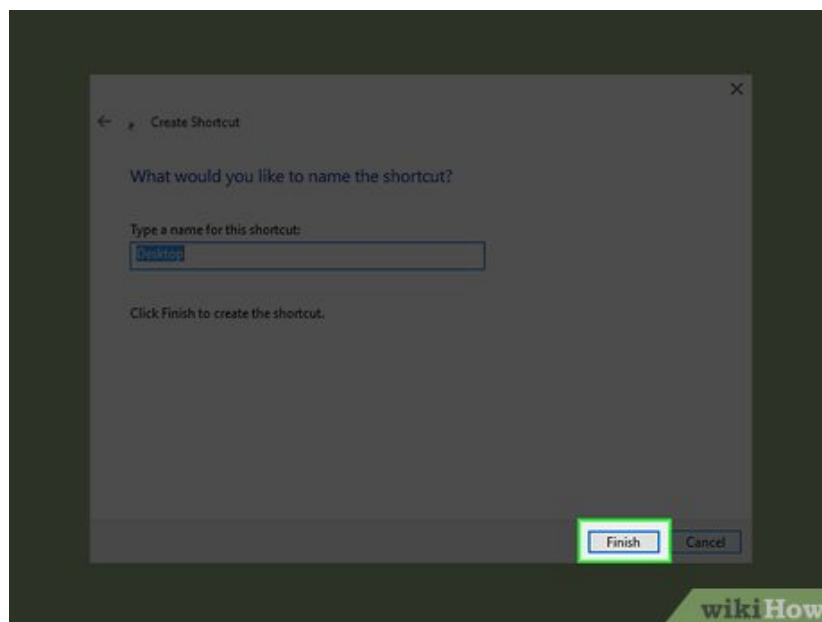
1. If you rename the desktop icon or move it to a new folder, your shortcut will no longer work.

10.



Click **Next**, then enter a name. The default name for the shortcut is the same name as the program itself.

11.

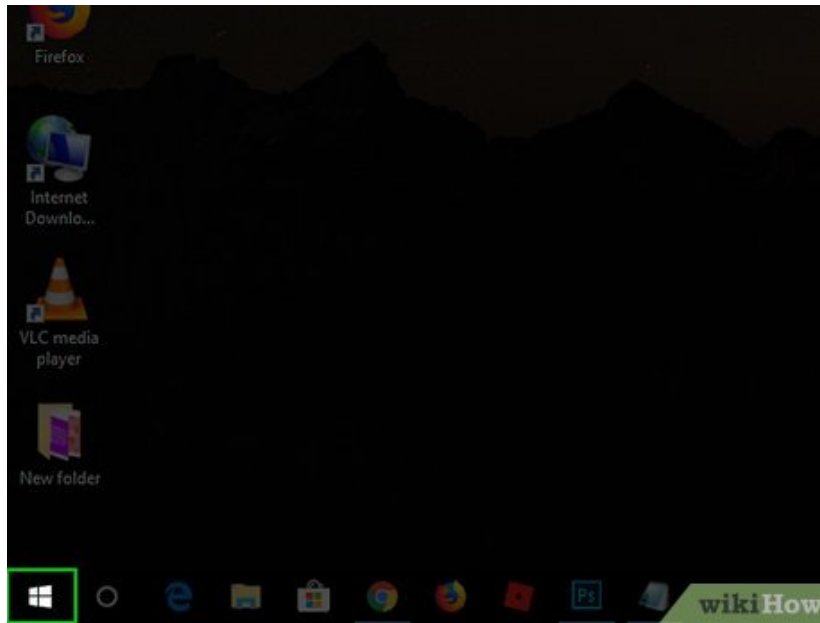


Click **Finish**. It's in the bottom-right corner of the window. This will create your shortcut in the folder you selected.

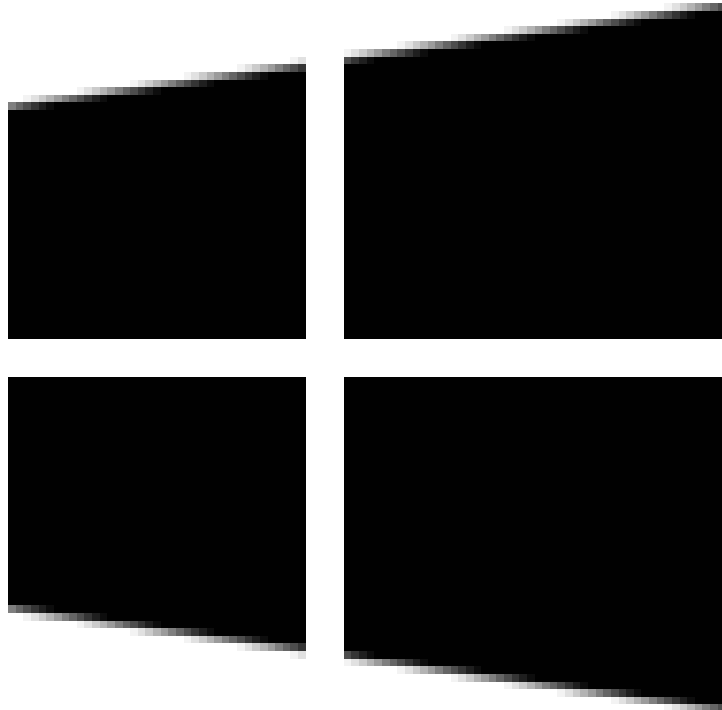
Method 6 of 6:

Removing Arrows from Shortcut Icons

1.

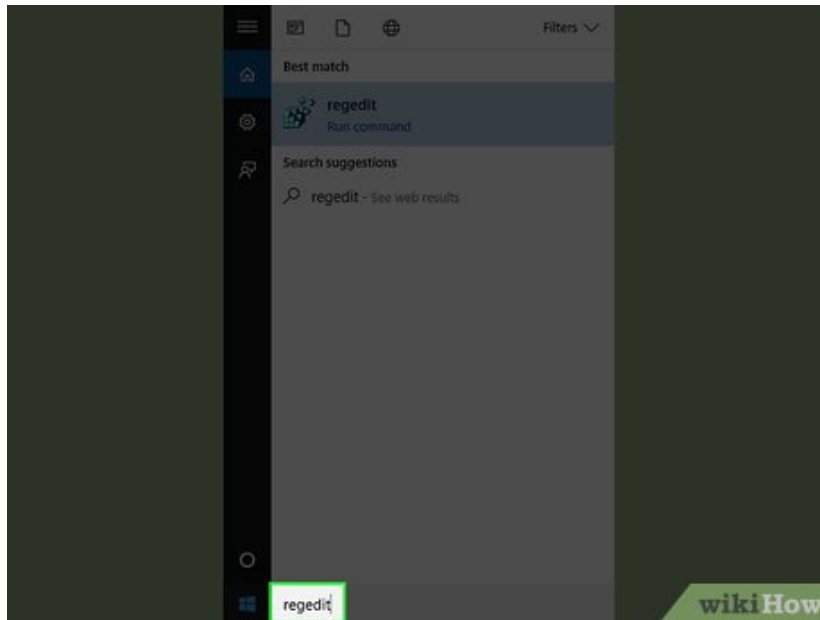


Open Start



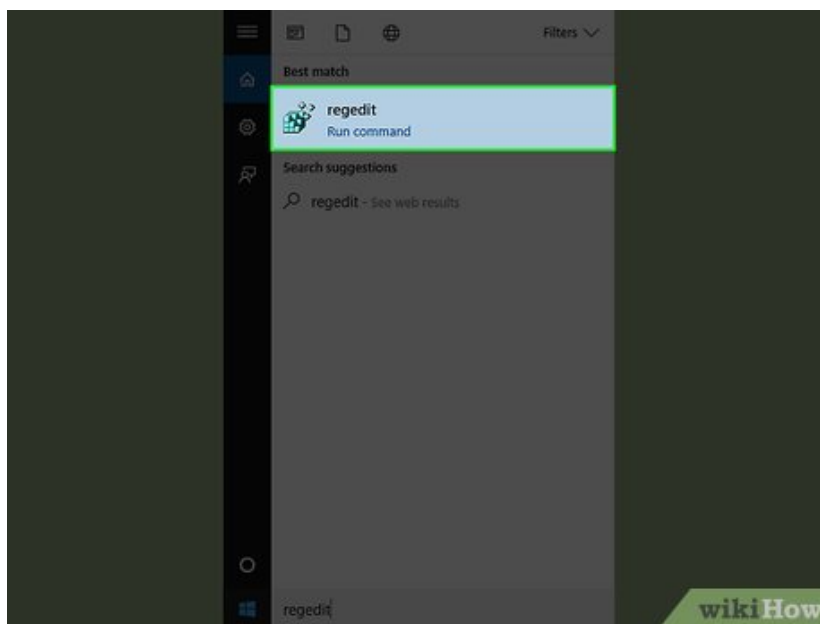
. Click the Windows logo in the bottom-left corner of the screen, or press `Win`.

2.

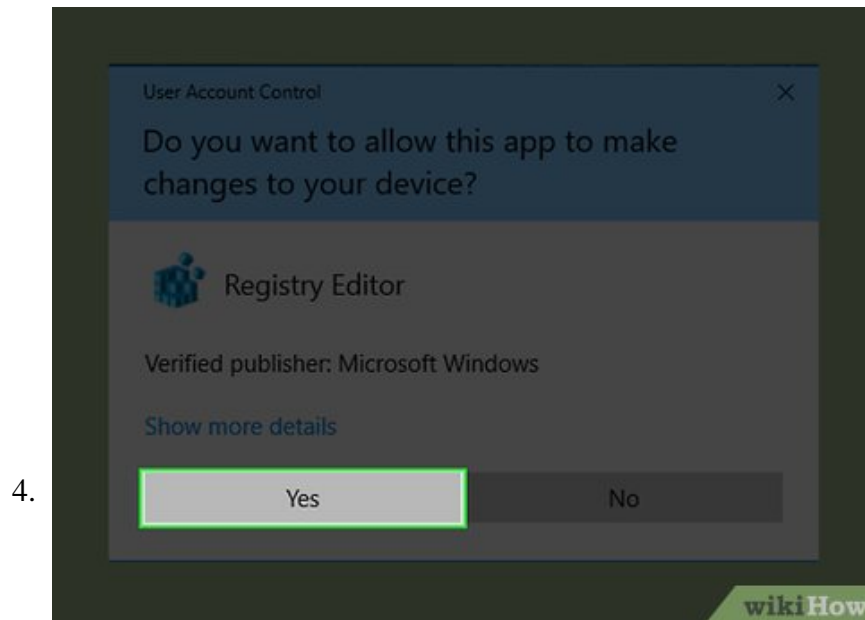


Type **regedit** into the Start window. This will bring up the "regedit" program at the top of the window.

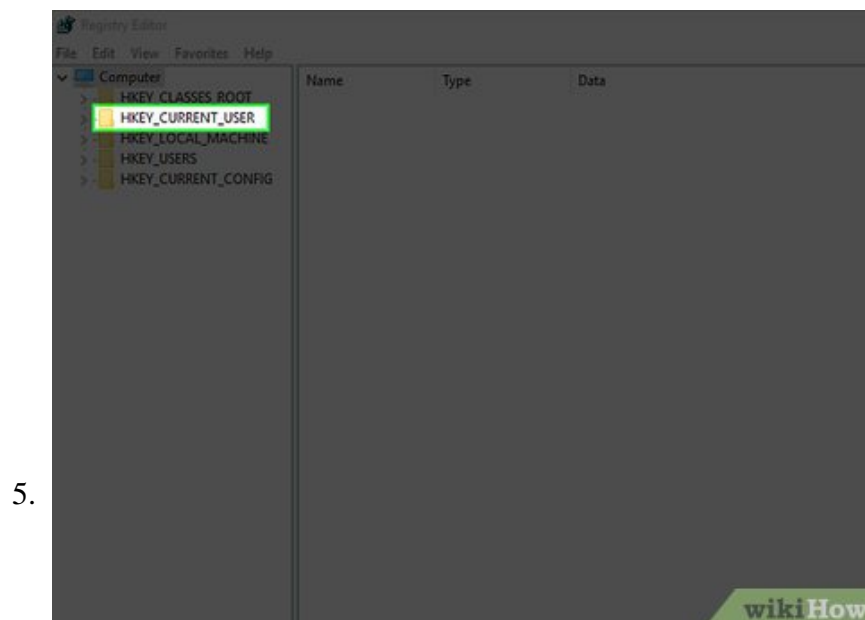
3.



Click **regedit**. It's a blue group of blocks at the top of the window.



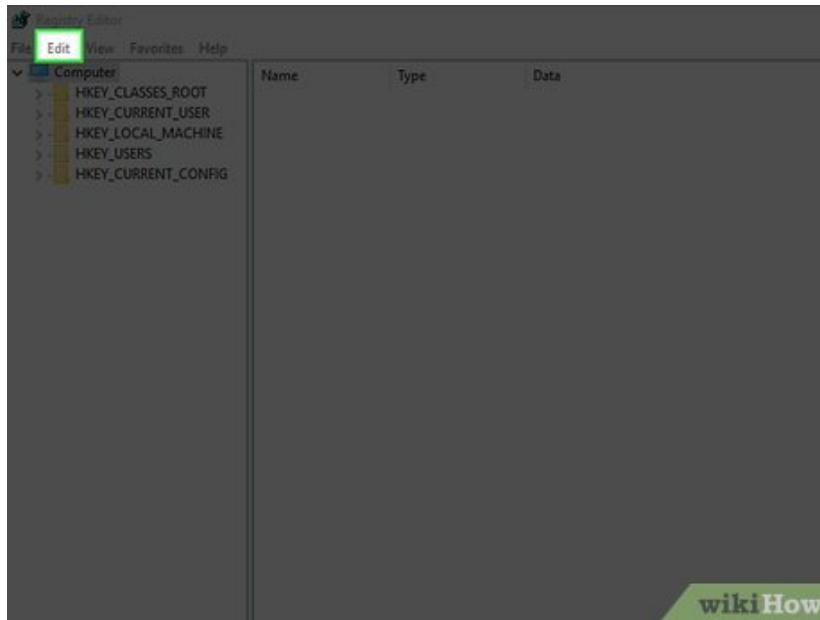
Click when prompted. This will open the Registry Editor.



Navigate to the Explorer folder. To do so:

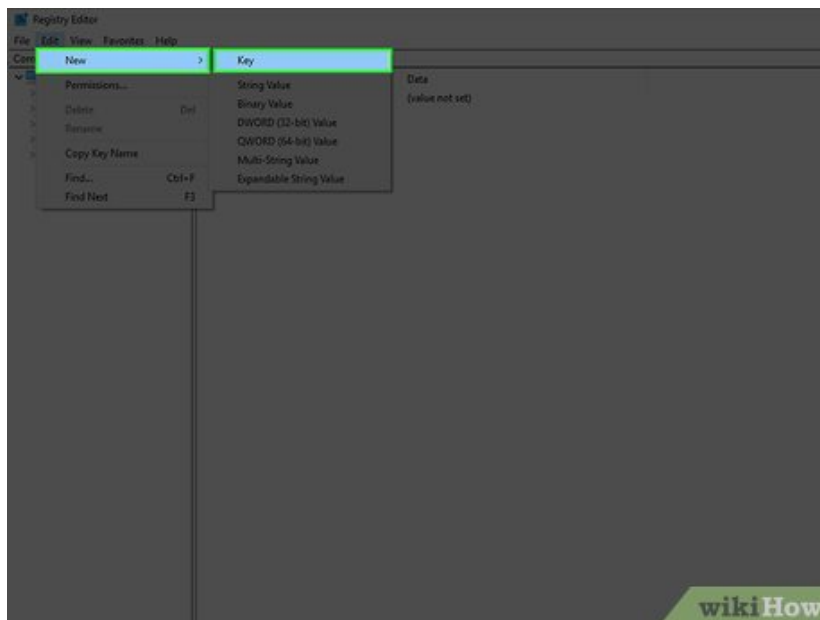
1. Expand **HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE** by clicking **V** left of it. This folder is in the top-left side of the Registry Editor window.
2. Expand **SOFTWARE**.
3. Expand **Microsoft**.
4. Expand **Windows**.
5. Expand **CurrentVersion**.
6. Click **Explorer**.

6.



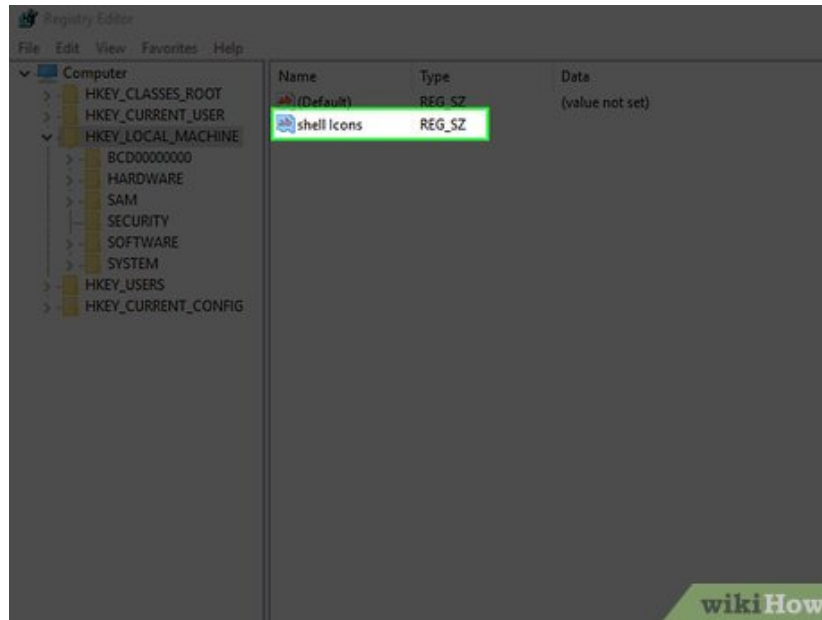
Click **Edit**. It's in the top-left corner of the Registry Editor window.

7.



Select **New**, then click **Key**. Doing so creates a new "key", which resembles a folder, in the column of folders below the Explorer folder.

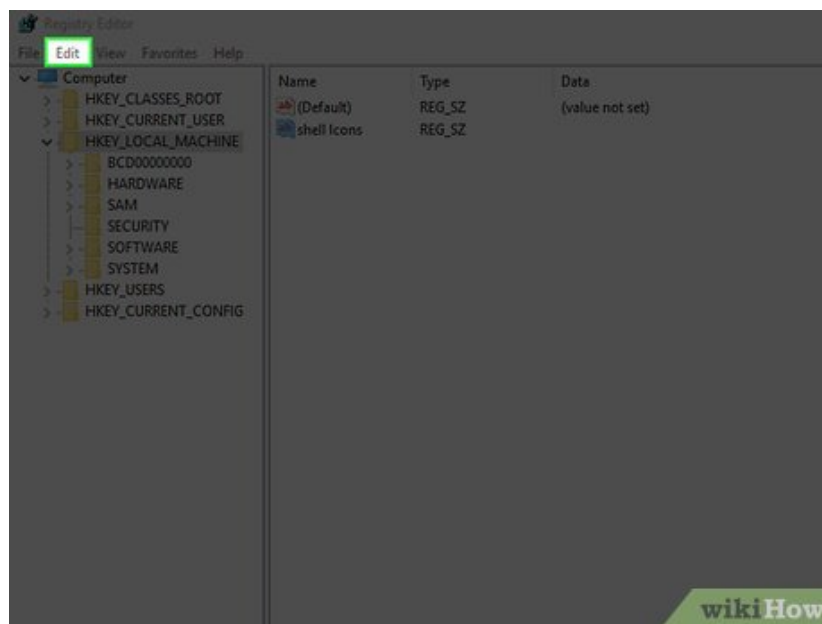
8.



Type **Shell Icons** into the key's name, then press **Enter**. Doing so renames the key.

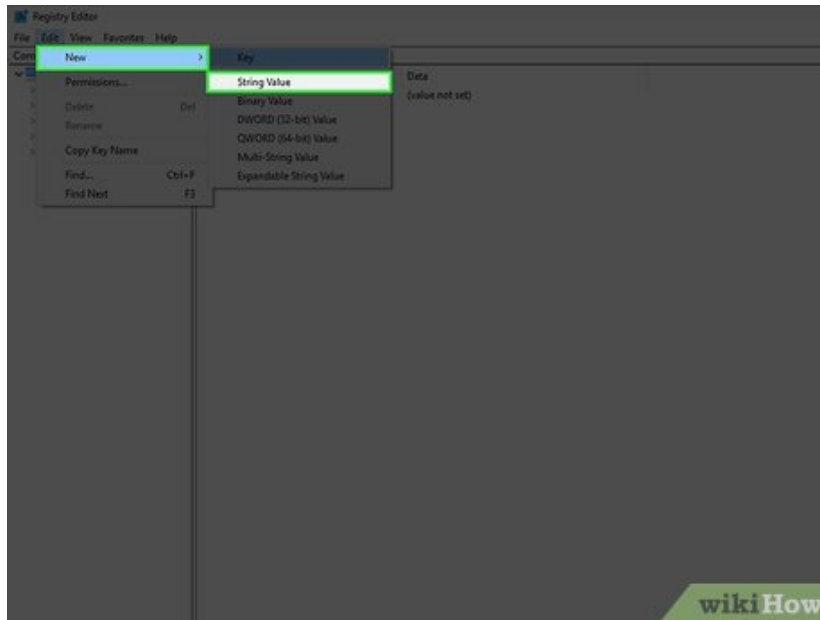
1. Make sure you type this name exactly as it appears here.

9.



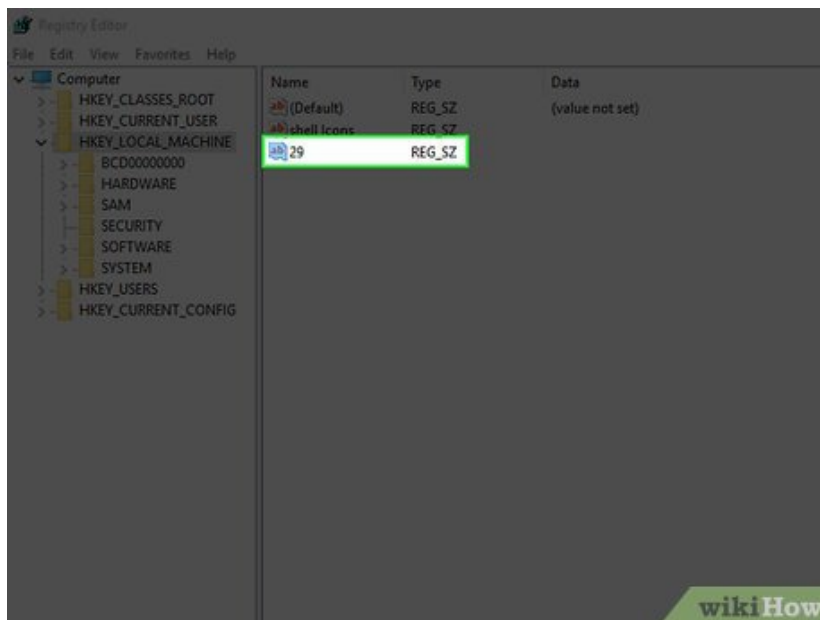
Click the **Edit** tab. It's in the upper-left corner of the window.

10.



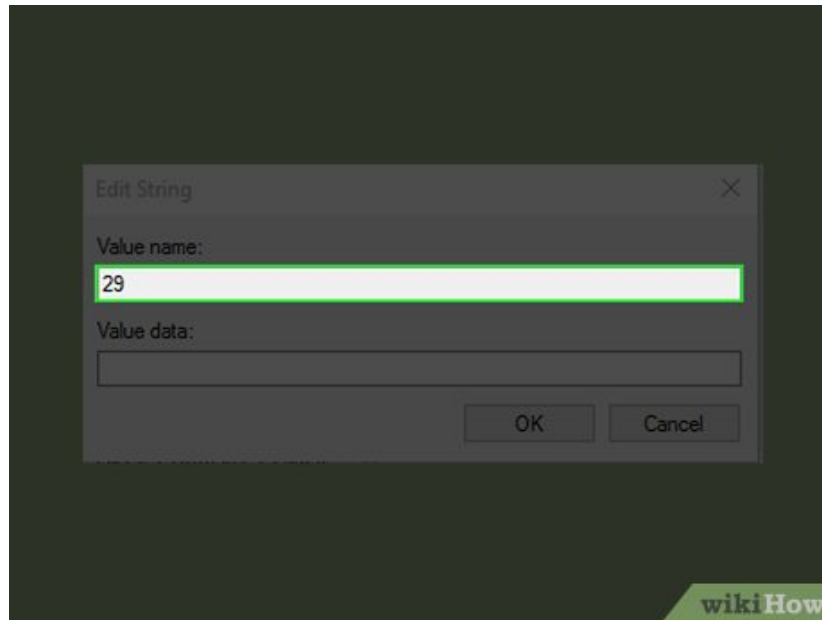
Select **New**, then click **String Value**. This creates a new code item in the Shell Icons key.

11.



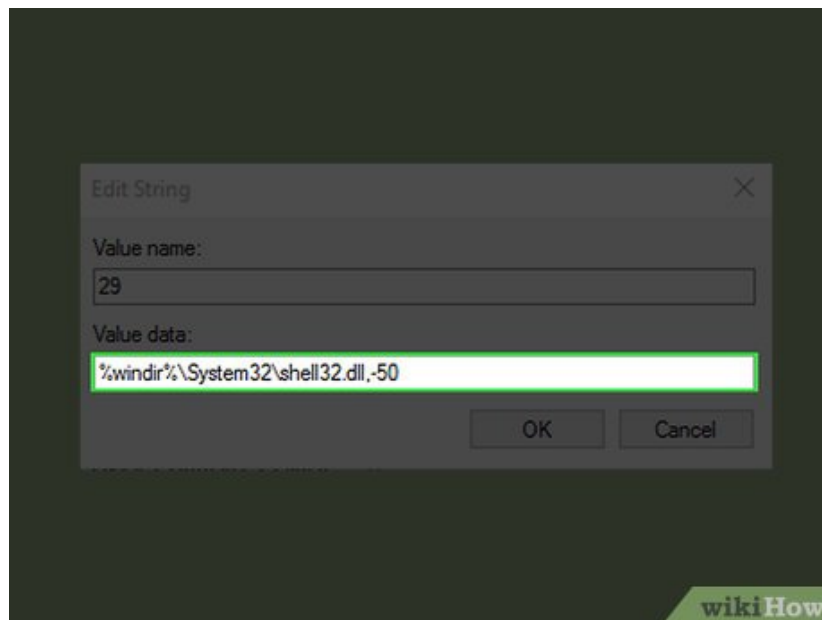
Type in **29**, then press **Enter**. Doing so renames your string value.

12.



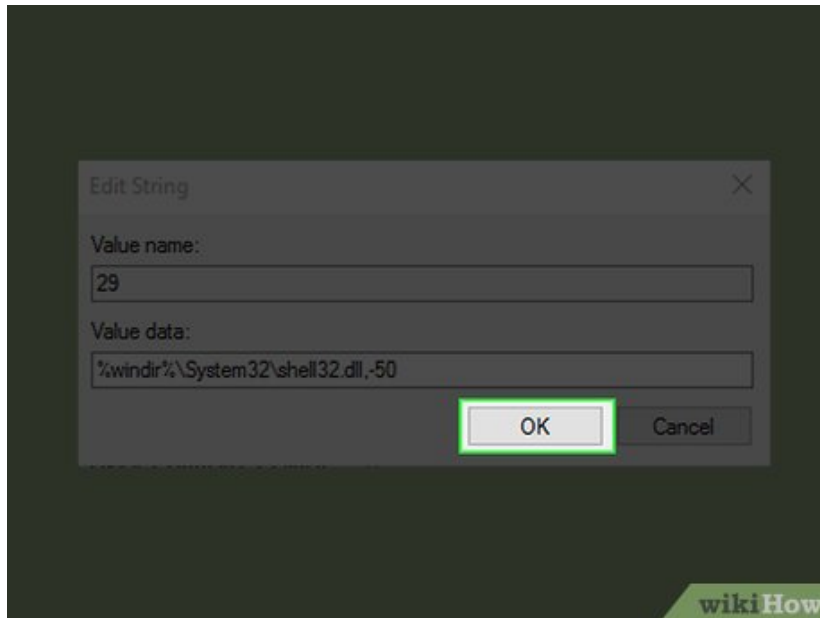
Double-click the 29 string value. This opens the Edit String window.

13.



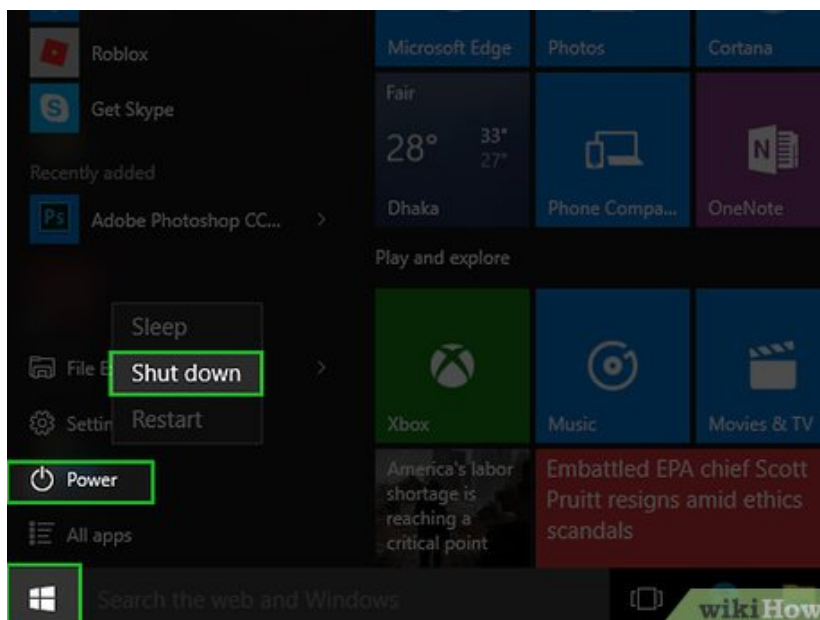
Type %windir%\System32\shell32.dll,-50 into the Value data field. This field is at the bottom of the "Edit String" window.

14.



Click . Doing so saves your edit to the registry.

15.



Restart your computer. Once your computer reboots, you should no longer see the icon arrow in the bottom-left corner of your desktop.

You finished reading the article "[How to Change or Create Desktop Icons for Windows](#)" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.