

# Shared 11 tricks on window 10

Whether you've been using Windows 10 for years or have only recently upgraded, there are plenty of new and old tips, tricks and hidden features to learn that will make using your laptop every day faster and smoother.

Learning to be quicker and more productive on your laptop may be especially appealing now that more of us are working from home due to the coronavirus pandemic, or spending more time on our laptops in general. Finding the secret Start menu and saving battery power with a simple trick are great ways to get more out of your machine.

Microsoft doesn't typically publicize its hidden features the way Apple does, which can make it more difficult to know how to get the most out of the machine you use day in and day out.



Even learning how to upgrade to Windows 10 for free can be tricky. You'll want to do this ASAP, by the way, since support for Windows 7 ended in January. So no matter which Microsoft, Dell, HP or other Windows 10 rig you have, these clever tips will help you stay organized and get more done. Plus, here's everything you need to know about the latest Windows 10 May 2020 update.

## 1. Use background scrolling

With Windows 10, you can scroll up and down on any window -- even if it's not the one you're directly working in. This is a useful tool when you have a lot of windows open that you want to look through at the same time -- for example, if you want to open new sub-menu options in new windows to save you time clicking back and forward on the same page.

Try opening two programs -- say, an internet browser page and a notepad or Word document. Arrange both on the screen so you can see at least some of the text on each. While you are in one window, hover your mouse or use the touchpad to move to the second window, and scroll. Even though you aren't active in that window, it should allow you to move up and down the page.

The feature should be on by default, but if it isn't, go to **Settings > Devices > Mouse**, and toggle **Scroll inactive windows when I hover over them** to **On**. Then you can place your mouse over a window that's in the background and use the scroll wheel to scroll.

## 2. Figure out how much space apps are taking up

Computers start running slower as they grow short on space. One quick way to speed them up may be to get rid of apps that take up more space than they should, especially if you don't regularly use them.

To see how much space an app uses, navigate to **Settings > System > Storage**. Click on the drive you want to search (likely the local storage, "This PC"), and click **Apps & games** to see a list of apps installed on your machine and how much space they are taking up. You probably won't get rid of your browser, but you might find that a game you haven't played in years is some good dead weight to drop.

## 3. Open the 'secret' Start menu

You know that to get to the Start menu, you hit the Windows icon at the bottom left of the screen or on your keyboard. But Windows 10 includes a lesser-known second Start menu that makes accessing important features like the Command Prompt, the Control Panel and the Task Manager much easier. You can access it two different ways, either by pressing the **Windows key + X**, or right click the Windows icon/Start button.

## 4. Create an event without opening the Calendar app

Windows 10's latest update lets you quickly add events to your Microsoft calendar directly from your Taskbar -- without actually having to open the calendar at all. Here's how to do it:

**Step 1.** On your Taskbar, click the box with the time and date in it in the right corner.

**Step 2.** Click the date when you want to schedule an event.

**Step 3.** Enter the event name, time and location. (If you have multiple calendars, click the down arrow next to the event name field to choose the one you want to add it to.)

**Step 4.** Click save. The event should appear in your Calendar app across your devices.

## 5. Minimize all windows except the active one

If your desktop screen has gotten too crowded with open windows, you can quickly minimize them all except the one you are currently working in.

Just click the title bar of the window you want to remain open to select it. Then, hold the mouse down and move the window back and forth quickly -- shaking it, essentially. After a couple of quick shakes, all other open windows will minimize, leaving only the one you've shaken open. Neat, huh?

## 6. Take a screenshot

I know, it's a basic one -- but it's amazing how easy it is to forget how to take a screenshot on your laptop or desktop when you don't do it often.

There are at least eight different ways you can take a screenshot with Windows 10. If you want to capture and save a picture of your entire screen, the easiest way is to hit the **Windows key + Print Screen key**, and that picture will be saved to the Pictures > Screenshots folder.

To capture just one part of your screen, hit the **Windows key + Shift + S** to open a tool called Snip & Sketch, which allows you to click and drag to create a screenshot, which is saved to your Clipboard.

## 7. Open items on your Taskbar with keyboard shortcuts

If you've pinned programs to your Taskbar at the bottom of your screen to create a shortcut, you don't have to click the icons to open them. Instead, use the keyboard shortcut **Windows key + [Number key]**, with the number key corresponding to the position of the program on the Taskbar. For example, Windows key + 2 will open the second item on the Taskbar.

This is especially useful if you're typing furiously and don't want to lift your fingers from the keyboard. It may feel more natural to reach for the Windows key.

## 8. Cut down on distractions with Focus assist

It's frustrating to try and get work done when you keep getting interrupted with notifications. You can determine how many you get with Focus assist, a tool Windows 10 added in the April 2018 update.

Set it up by going to **Settings > System > Focus assist**. Choose from three options: **Off** (get all notifications from your apps and contacts), **Priority** (see only selected notifications from a priority list that you customize, and send the rest to your action center), and **Alarms only** (hide all notifications, except for alarms).

You can also choose to automatically turn this feature on during certain hours, or when you're playing a game.

## 9. Get rid of ads in your Start menu

When you run Windows 10 with default settings, you may sometimes see apps on the right side of your Start menu. Microsoft calls them "suggestions," but they are actually ads for Windows Store apps you can buy.

To get rid of the ads in your Windows 10 Start menu, go to **Settings > Personalization > Start**. Toggle the setting called **Show suggestions occasionally in Start** to the off position.

## 10. Shut down background apps

Apps that run in the background can receive info, send notifications, and stay updated, even when you aren't using them -- which can be useful, but can also suck your battery and your data, if you're connecting via a mobile hotspot.

To control which apps are running in the background and save some battery power and data, go to **Settings > Privacy > Background apps**. To stop all apps from running in the background, toggle **Let apps run in the background** to **Off**. Or, you can choose which apps to run in the background individually by going down the list on the same page.

## 11. Show file extensions in File Explorer

Microsoft hides file extensions by default, which makes life difficult for people who need to look for specific types of files, like JPEGs and JPGs. To see file extensions in File Explorer, do the following:

**Step 1.** Go to the **Search bar** at the bottom of the screen, and type in **File Explorer Options**, and click it. (There are a number of other ways to get here too, but that one seems fastest.)

**Step 2.** In the window that pops up, click the **View tab**.

**Step 3.** Uncheck the box that says **Hide extensions for known file types**. Click **Apply**, and **OK**. You should now see file extensions for all files in the File Explorer.

You can also use the File Explorer Options menu to choose to show empty drives, hidden files and folders, and more.

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