Microsoft announces official Windows 11 gaming PC configurations for 2026.

Microsoft shared the hardware requirements and recommendations for gaming on Windows 11, from CPUs, GPUs, and RAM to monitors and NVMe SSDs.

Microsoft has officially listed the minimum and recommended CPU and GPU configurations for gaming PCs running Windows 11, similar to how many game companies announce system requirements before releasing their products. In addition, the Redmond company also provides recommendations on RAM capacity, and mentions the roles of storage and motherboard.

CPU and GPU: The foundation of gaming performance.

First, there's the processor and the graphics card. Microsoft briefly explains the role of each component: the CPU handles tasks such as physics processing in games, logic, drawing calls, etc., while the GPU is primarily responsible for graphics processing. In addition, the GPU supports GPU-based physics calculations, such as PhysX.

Below are **the official minimum and recommended CPU and GPU configurations for gaming on Windows 11 in 2026** , according to Microsoft:

Casual gaming (1080p, medium settings)

1. **CPU:** At least a modern quad-core CPU, such as the AMD Ryzen 5 5600 or Intel Core i5-12400.
2. **GPU:** NVIDIA GTX 1660 Super or AMD Radeon RX 6600

Mid-range gaming (1440p, high settings)

1. **CPU:** 6 cores or more, for example AMD Ryzen 5 7600 or Intel Core i5-13600K
2. **GPU:** NVIDIA RTX 3060 Ti / RTX 4060 Ti or AMD Radeon RX 6700 XT

High-end gaming / 4K

1. **CPU:** 8 cores or more, such as AMD Ryzen 7 7800X3D or Intel Core i7-13700K
2. **GPU:** NVIDIA RTX 4080 or AMD Radeon RX 7900 XTX

While Microsoft's list is quite helpful – especially the GPU recommendations – the CPU advice is still somewhat inaccurate. This is because at higher resolutions, the processing burden falls more heavily on the GPU, leaving the CPU with 'more free time' to keep up with the graphics card.

Conversely, at lower resolutions, the GPU is under less pressure, meaning the CPU has to process more data and is more likely to become a performance bottleneck. This is why the CPU is more important when gaming at low resolutions. Users can refer to in-depth analyses to better understand this mechanism.

Game Mode on Windows 11 and practical tips.

Microsoft also emphasized the importance of **Game Mode on Windows 11** , stating that this mode will 'automatically prioritize gaming tasks', 'reduce background activity, allocate more CPU and GPU resources to games', and help maintain stable frame rates.

The guide also offers some practical advice: users shouldn't overspend on CPUs or GPUs capable of running at 240 fps if the monitor only supports 144 Hz, as the extra frames won't provide a noticeable benefit. Another tip is to keep cables neatly organized inside the case, which improves airflow and heat dissipation.

Choose the right gaming monitor.

Regarding monitors, Microsoft provides a guide to choosing based on factors such as refresh rate, response time, and panel type:

1. **Refresh rate (Hz):** The number of times the screen refreshes per second.
    1. 144 Hz is a good base for smooth gaming.
    2. 165 Hz – 240 Hz is suitable for competitive shooters or fast-paced action games.
2. **Response time (ms):** The time it takes for a pixel to change color.
    1. 1ms – 3ms is ideal for gaming, helping to reduce ghosting and motion blur.
3. **Panel type:**
    1. **IPS:** Accurate colors, wide viewing angles – a comprehensive choice.
    2. **VA:** Higher contrast, deeper blacks, but slower response time than IPS.
    3. **OLED:** Excellent contrast, near-instantaneous response, vibrant colors, but high price.

Although not mentioned by Microsoft, adaptive sync (FreeSync/G-Sync) is also a very important factor in ensuring a smooth gaming experience.

RAM, storage, and DirectStorage

Regarding memory, Microsoft claims that **16GB of RAM is "sufficient for most games** ," while **32GB of RAM is suitable for hardcore gamers** who often play demanding titles or use many mods. However, with current RAM prices, 32GB may exceed the budget of many users. Additionally, 16GB of RAM is currently the basic requirement for Copilot+ AI PCs.

Regarding storage, Microsoft recommends a **1TB** SSD if users want to install many games. In fact, with game sizes constantly increasing, 1TB has almost become the minimum requirement for a modern gaming PC.

Microsoft also highlighted the advantages of **NVMe SSDs** , enabling the use of **DirectStorage** technology in supported games. According to the company, DirectStorage allows the GPU to read game data directly from the NVMe SSD instead of through the CPU, significantly **shortening** loading times and providing a more seamless experience in large, detailed game worlds.