

Why is virtual hard drive a favorite hidden feature on Windows 11?

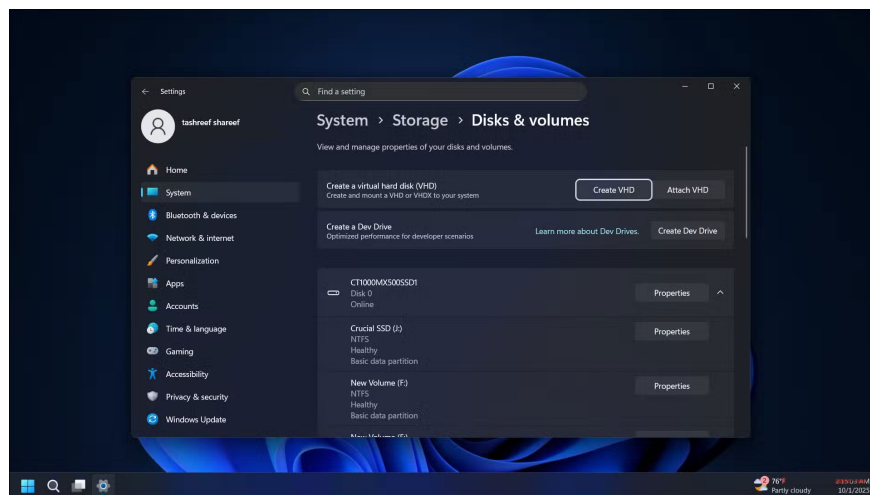
Virtual hard drives are typically associated with virtual machines and used to store the guest operating system and all of its data. But VHDs work just as well outside of virtual machines.

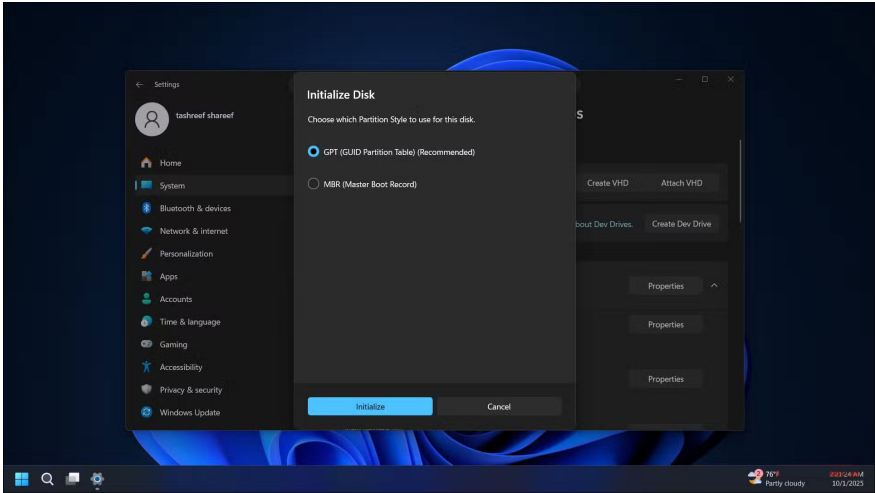
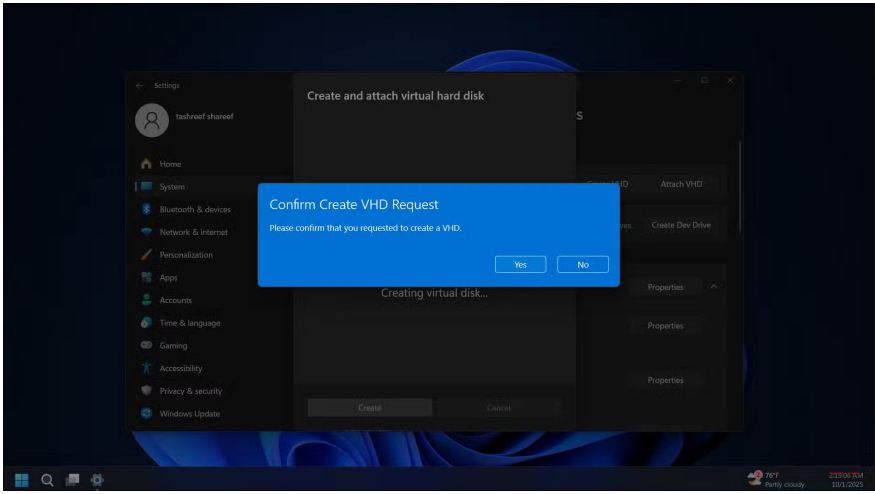
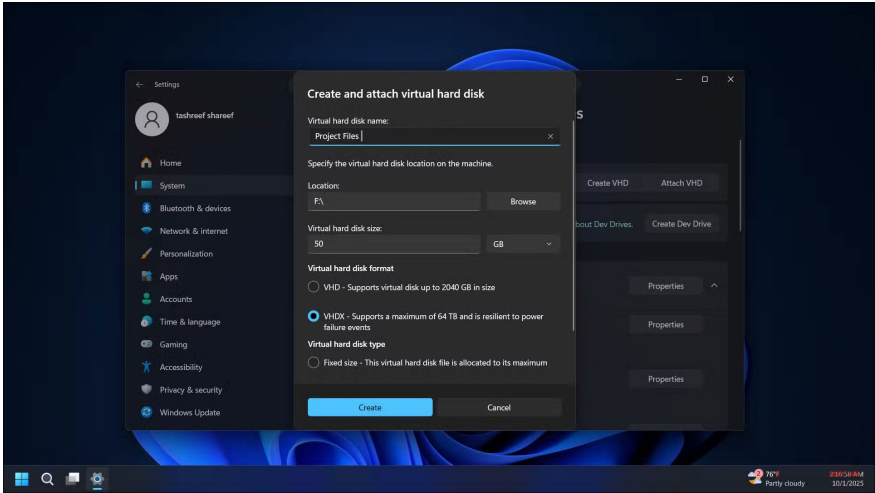
While browsing the r/Windows10 subreddit, someone asked if virtual hard drives (VHDs) provide free, additional storage. This is a ridiculous question (if only it worked that way!), but honestly, a lot of people don't know about this feature. People either don't know that VHDs exist or think that they just naturally provide additional storage.

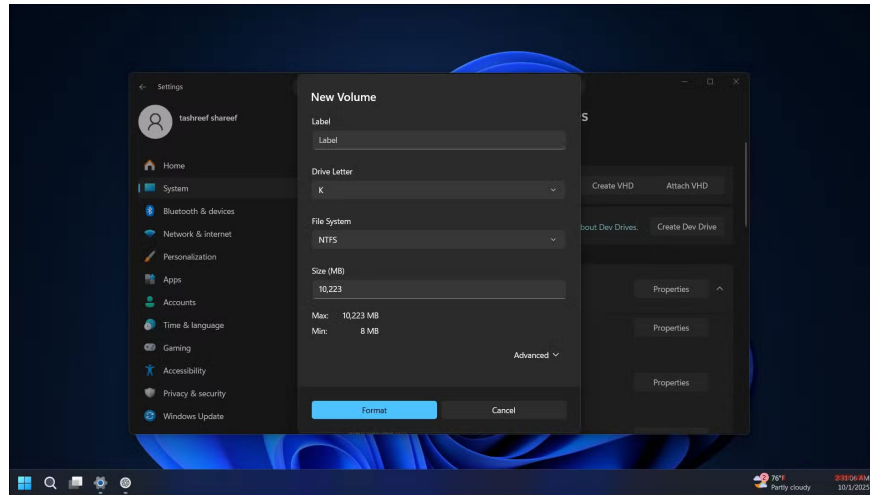
Virtual hard drives are often associated with virtual machines and used to store the guest operating system and all of its data. But VHDs also work great outside of virtual machines. They're ideal for creating dedicated space for projects, safely testing operating systems, and adding partitions without fear of resizing existing partitions.

Creating VHD is super easy

Create VHD from Settings app







Microsoft has made creating a virtual hard drive easy with Windows 11 23H2. Windows 11 now integrates VHD creation into the Settings app, making it as simple as creating a new folder.

To create a virtual hard drive, go to **Settings -> System -> Storage -> Advanced storage settings -> Disks & volumes** , then click **Create VHD** .

In the setup wizard, enter basic information, such as where to save the VHD file, its size, and whether you want it to be fixed or dynamic. Dynamic VHDs start small and grow as you add data, while fixed VHDs immediately retain all the space you allocate. Click **Create** , then click **Yes** to confirm.

Before you can use your new VHD, you need to choose a partition style (MBR or GPT) and initialize it. Once you do, Windows will treat the new VHD like any other drive. It will show up with its own drive letter in File Explorer, ready for you to format and use.

Install or test the operating system without interfering with the main Windows setup

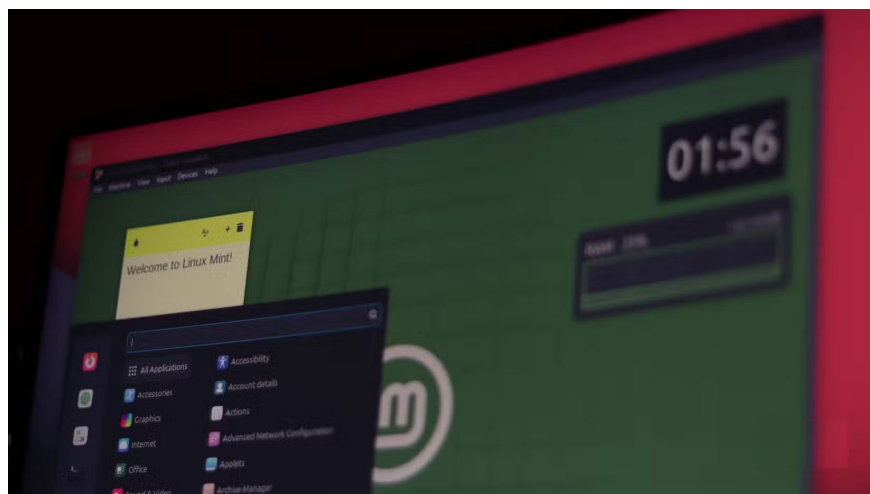
Native boot allows you to run Windows from VHD



VHDX supports native booting, which means you can dual-boot Windows 11 with another version of Windows without partitioning your drive or using a virtual machine. This setup is ideal for testing Windows 11 Insider builds or experimenting with different configurations without affecting your stable installation.

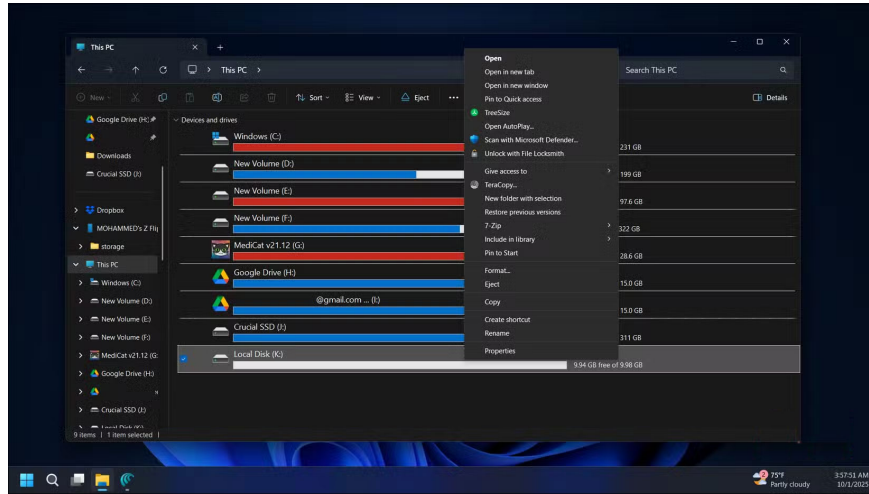
All you need to do is create a large enough VHDX file (about 60GB), mount it, point Windows Setup to that virtual drive, and add a boot entry. After installation, Windows will add that file to your boot menu. Now, when you boot, you can choose between regular Windows and the VHD test system.

Since everything runs inside the VHD, your main Windows installation is completely separate. If something goes wrong, you can delete the VHD file and the boot folder and your computer will be back to normal.



VHD files can be copied to another computer or drive.

Portable environment always with you



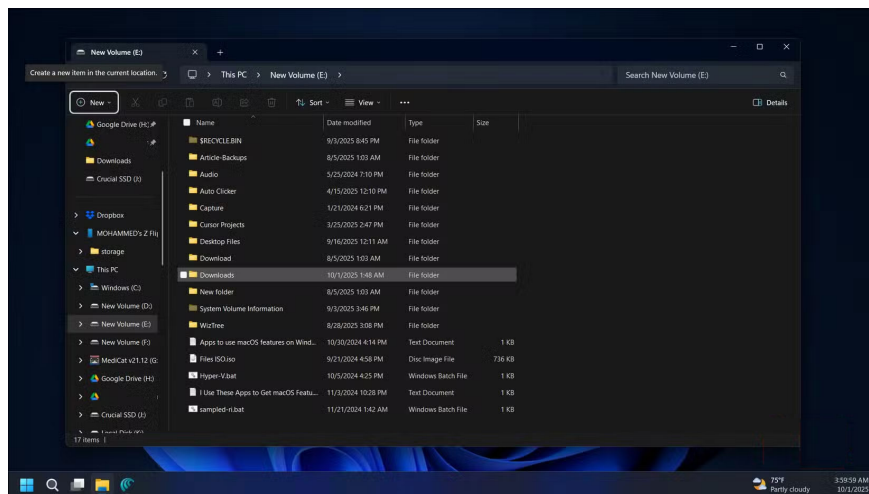
Unlike physical partitions that are stuck on a drive, VHD files are just regular files, so you can copy them anywhere.

For example, if you set up a development VHD with all your tools and configurations and need that exact environment on another computer, you can copy the VHD file over. Then, mount that file on any Windows computer and everything, including your tools, settings, and project files, will be restored.

This portability is also useful for backups. Instead of creating an image of the entire drive, you can copy the VHD file, copy it back, and mount it when you need to restore the backup.

Better file organization for different projects without partitioning your drive

Keep projects separated and organized



The traditional folder organization works fine, but VHDs offer something better. Each VHD becomes its own standalone environment, completely isolated from everything else.

For example, maintain separate VHDs for different types of projects: One web development VHD for all your coding tools and project files, and a separate video editing VHD. This separation is useful to avoid cross-project interference. You can also apply different security or encryption settings to each VHD to protect important or sensitive information.

You finished reading the article "**Why is virtual hard drive a favorite hidden feature on Windows 11?**" 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.