

How to Eliminate Most of Your Windows 10 Vulnerabilities

Background:

A report from security experts highlights hundreds of critical vulnerabilities discovered in Microsoft Windows. Any of them could allow a hacker to take full control of an unpatched PC. But one simple trick can create a roadblock to neutralize more than 94% of these threats.

All you have to do is log into Windows as a “standard” user, with limited privileges to add and remove components, change system settings, and so on. If you can’t make drastic changes to the system, neither can any malware that may find its way past your defenses.

Most of the critical vulnerabilities require administrator privileges to exploit them. All of the critical vulnerabilities in Edge can only be exploited by malware with administrator privileges. Obviously, you should be using a standard user account except in circumstances when higher privileges are necessary.

But if you’re a typical home user, you probably have administrator privileges and all the vulnerabilities that come with that powerful status. When Windows is installed, the first user account created is an administrator account. Most home users just use it routinely, and don’t bother to create standard user accounts.

Every system needs an administrator account occasionally. But you should create and routinely use standard user accounts that have lower privileges.

Creating a new standard user account:

Microsoft desperately wants you to create a Microsoft account so it can track you all over the Web. Finding the option to create a new standard user account on a PC without creating a matching Microsoft account is a challenge. But let’s do it:

1. Enter “Settings” in the search box to open that app. (or use Windows +I)
2. Click on **Accounts**.
3. Click on **“Family & Other Users.”**
4. Click on **“Add someone else to this PC.”**
5. Click on **“I don’t have this person’s sign-in information.”**
6. Click on **“Add a user without a Microsoft account.”**
7. You can create a standard user account by giving it a unique name.
8. DO NOT assign a password to the account. Click Next.

Occasionally, a standard user may need administrator privileges to run an app. If you get an error message saying administrator privileges are required, right-click on the app's shortcut and select "run as administrator" from the drop-down menu.

By using a standard user account mitigates 93-94% of critical vulnerabilities. But that doesn't mean you can dispense with anti-malware protection, download software from sketchy sites, and click every link that appears in your inbox.