

# FOURTEEN WAYS TO MASTER THE TASKBAR

## 1. Customize the Taskbar's Location and Appearance

Just as in older versions of Windows, you can customize the taskbar in Windows 10 in six different ways.

To customize the taskbar format, follow these steps:

1. Right-click on the Taskbar.
2. Click on Taskbar Settings.
3. Set how you want the taskbar to behave by checkmarking the available settings.
4. Close the Taskbar dialogue screen.

## 2. Take Advantage of the New Timeline Feature

The **new Timeline feature** keeps track of every file you open and every web page you visit (while in Edge browser only). You still manage your current tasks and desktops as before, but now you can also access previous tasks up to 30 days later.

The Timeline should be enabled by default. However, if it is not, Open Settings (Windows + I) > *Privacy* > *Activity History* on the left side of the window. Then, look at the middle column of the *Activity History* window. To be able to use the *Timeline* feature and everything it has to offer, you have to check the box that says “***Let Windows collect my activities from this PC.***” Also, you have to select at least one user account to use with the *Timeline*. The *Timeline* will then record and show the activities that you performed while connected to that user account.

Although the Timeline feature is associated with Task View, it is not necessary to have the Task View on the Taskbar. Use the new keyboard shortcut **Windows key + Tab** to activate the feature.

## 3. Don't have the Search Box add to the Clutter

To change the Search tool from the wide search box to the smaller circle, right-click on the Search box that is showing, move up to Cortana, then over to *Show Cortana icon*.

If neither the search box nor search icon is showing, right-click on the Taskbar area, move up to Cortana, and select Show Cortana icon.

If Cortana is enabled (which is the default), both the search box and the small circle will state: *Ask me anything*. The small circle icon is replaced by a small magnifying glass icon when Cortana is disabled.

If Cortana is disabled, both the search box and the magnifying glass will state: *Search Windows*. Internet searches will be handled by your favorite browser and search engine.

#### **4. Pin Important Apps to the Taskbar**

Most of us like to make sure that anything we use frequently is easily accessible. That's why people place telephone numbers on speed dial.

Desktop or Taskbar shortcuts in Windows are like these real-life shortcuts because they are excellent timesavers. By placing shortcuts to your frequently used files, folders, and applications on your Desktop or Taskbar, you avoid having to hunt around for them in the vast recesses of your computer.

You can find the target app listed after clicking the **Start** button. All the applications stored on your computer will be listed here in alphabetical order. Once you find the target application (it may be hidden in a file folder), right-click on it, then click on **More**, then **Pin to Taskbar**. This action will place a shortcut icon on your Taskbar.

#### **5. Access 21 Special Controls from the Taskbar**

Previously, when you right-clicked on an object on the Desktop, a vertical context menu would appear which gave you a choice of actions to take. In Windows 10, right-clicking the Start button produces an expanded and specialized set of 21 menu items. (To access the same set of specialized options, press Windows + X.)

#### **6. Choose which Special File Folders Appear on the Start Menu**

The extreme left column of the Start menu (press Windows key) features the options that are available to you by default. Each can be turned on or off, depending upon which options you wish to use. To control the options, use **Windows key + I**, then **Personalization**, then **Start**. Generally, you will want to make sure that six of the options listed are turned off. You will want to keep *Show*

*app list in Start menu* turned on. Now click on *choose which folders appear on start* and select from the 10 folders listed.

## 7. Add the Control Panel to the Taskbar

Do you find yourself accessing the Control Panel periodically to reset some of your computer's 50 settings? If so, why not place it on your Taskbar for easy access?

1. From the Search bar, type *Control Panel*.
2. Right-click on the Control Panel icon that appears at the top of the column.
3. Select *Pin to Taskbar*.
4. The Control Panel icon will appear on the Taskbar as a light blue rectangle.
5. Now you can access the control panel whenever you want without all the mouse manipulation.
6. If you ever want to get rid of it, just **right-click** and select “**Unpin from taskbar**”.

## 8. Pin File Explorer to the Taskbar

File Explorer is one of the most important locations within Windows 10. It is there that you will locate all your drives, folders, and files. It is there that you will determine where your folders and files are stored.

1. From the Search bar, type *file explorer*.
2. Right-click on the file explorer icon that appears at the top of the column.
3. Select *Pin to Taskbar*.
4. The file explorer icon will appear on the Taskbar as a manila folder.
5. Now you can access the File Explorer whenever you want without having to remember the Windows + E shortcut!
6. If you ever want to get rid of it, just **right-click** and select “**Unpin from taskbar**”.

## 9. Pin Internet Explorer to the Taskbar

1. From the Search bar, type *Internet Explorer*.
2. Right-click on the Internet Explorer icon that appears at the top of the column.
3. Select *Pin to Taskbar*.
4. The Internet Explorer icon will appear on the Taskbar as the familiar E with the gold band.

5. Now you can access the Internet Explorer whenever you want without having to search for it from within the menu list.
6. If you ever want to get rid of it, just **right-click** and select “**Unpin from taskbar**”.
7. You may wish to reposition the Internet Explorer icon so that it is in close proximity to the Edge browser. (Any Taskbar icon can be dragged and dropped to another position on the Taskbar.)

## **10. Add a Favorite Website to the Taskbar**

Follow these steps to place a favorite website on the Taskbar:

1. Open your Edge browser.
2. In the *Search the Web* box, type the address of the target website.
3. Once you have accessed the website from within the Edge browser, click on the menu tab (3 horizontal dots) in the upper right corner of the browser window.
4. Click on *Pin this page to the taskbar*.
5. Your favorite website will now appear on the taskbar.

## **11. Add a Favorite Website to Your Apps Menu**

Follow these steps to place a favorite website on the Apps list:

1. Open your Edge browser.
2. In the *Search the Web* box, type the address of the target website.
3. Once you have accessed the website from within the Edge browser, click on the menu tab (3 horizontal dots) in the upper right corner of the browser window.
4. Click on *Open with Internet Explorer*.
5. After the Website automatically arrives in Internet Explorer, click on the cog wheel in the upper right corner of the Internet Explorer browser window.
6. Click on *Add site to Apps*.
7. The website will appear in the Apps menu (tap the Windows key to verify)

## **12. Show Important Application Icons (anti-virus and anti-malware programs) on the Taskbar**

You can easily tweak which application icons appear in the Taskbar’s systray.

1. Right-click any open area on the Taskbar and click “Taskbar Settings.”
2. On the taskbar settings page, scroll down toward the bottom and click the *Select which icons appear on the taskbar* link.

3. You'll see a list of application icons. Toggle each one on or off to suit your needs. As you toggle them, the representative icons will either appear or disappear from the system tray.

### **13. Show Important System Icons (clock, volume, network, etc.) on the Taskbar**

You can easily tweak which system icons appear in the Taskbar's systray.

1. Right-click any open area on the Taskbar and then click "Taskbar Settings."
2. On the taskbar settings page, scroll down toward the bottom and click the *Turn system icons on or off* link.
3. You'll see a list of system icons. Toggle each one on or off to suit your needs. As you toggle them, the representative icons will either appear or disappear from the system tray.

### **14. Determine which Quick Actions you want to have access to via the Action Center (Windows + A).**

The Action Center (located in the far right corner of the Taskbar) gives access to frequently used settings called Quick Actions (of which there are 14). You can easily collapse the settings tiles down to one row of four tiles using the Collapse caret. To change which four Quick Actions appear when you do this, you can go to Settings (Windows + I) > System > Notifications & actions.

You can sort through the 14 options and turn off the functions to don't think you will need. You can then rearrange the ones you want to retain by dragging and dropping the four most important ones to the top of the row. This strategy will cause the top row to be prominently displayed in the Action Center (Win + A).