

THE TASKBAR: A TOOL FOR UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF WINDOWS 10

Part 1 of 2

The Taskbar, the information-rich bar that typically appears at the bottom of most desktops, can become a launchpad to virtually every place you will want to go as you master Windows 10. This presentation will provide a host of step-by-step strategies for unlocking the operating system's secrets.

1. Customize the Taskbar's Location and Appearance

Just as in older versions of Windows, you can customize the taskbar in Windows 10 in the following ways:

- Lock the taskbar so that other users can't change it.
- Set the taskbar to auto-hide.
- Set the taskbar to use small buttons.
- Change the taskbar's location on the screen from the bottom to the top, or to the left or right of the screen.
- Set how taskbar buttons appear (either always combined with the labels hidden, or combined only when the taskbar is full, or never combined).
- Set whether to use the Peek feature to preview the desktop when you move your mouse to the Show Desktop button at the extreme right end of the taskbar.

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.

An alternative approach:

Go to Settings (Windows + I) > Personalization.> Taskbar.

2. Disable the Task View to Reduce Clutter

There is a **Task View** button that provides an overview of all your open windows and virtual desktop features. When it is enabled, the Task View button will always appear to the immediate right of the search bar/icon.

This feature is enabled by default. If you'd like to disable it, just right-click on a blank area of the taskbar and deselect the *Show Task View button*.

An old-fashion way to accomplish seeing all your open windows is to press the Alt key together with the Tab key.

3. 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.

4. 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 immediately to the right of the Start button, 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.

5. Activate the Jump List.

Jump lists were first introduced in Windows 7 and they allowed you to see recent documents or to access certain features from apps that are pinned to your taskbar or to your Start Menu. For example, if you have Microsoft Word pinned to your taskbar you can see recent files simply by right clicking its icon on the taskbar.

To activate the Jump List:

1. Go to Settings (Windows + I).
2. Click on Personalization.
3. From the left column, click on Start.
4. Turn ON Show recently opened items in the Jump List....

6. 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 item 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.

7. 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.)

8. 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.

9. 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**".

10. 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**".