

THE TASKBAR:

A TOOL FOR UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF WINDOWS 10

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 (actually 21) step-by-step strategies for unlocking many of the operating system's secrets.

1. Add a Splash of Color to the Taskbar

By default, the Start Menu is set to ignore the color you chose when you set up your Windows 10 user account, so the first priority is to amend that option.

1. To do so, navigate to **Settings** (Windows + I) > **Personalization** > **Colors**.
2. First, turn off (uncheck the box) the *Automatically pick an accent color from my background*.
3. Scroll down to the toggle switch marked *Show color on the following surfaces: on Start, taskbar and action center or title bar and window borders*. Make sure that your choice is set to On. You'll then be able to select from a variety of different swatches.

You can also opt to make Start, taskbar and action center transparent (transparency effects) with the appropriate toggle switch. These options cater to form, rather than function, so feel free to mix and match as you please until you find a setup that works for you.

2. 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. (no longer available in Windows 11)
- 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.

3. 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.

4. Take Advantage of the Timeline Feature

The **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:

1. Open Settings (Windows + I)
 - *Privacy*
 - *Activity History* on the left side of the window.
2. Then, look at the middle column of the *Activity History* window.
3. 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 keyboard shortcut **Windows key + Tab** to activate the feature.

5. 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.

6. 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....

7. 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.

8. 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.)

9. 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.

10. 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**".

11. 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. You may wish to reposition the File 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.)
7. If you ever want to get rid of it, just **right-click** and select "**Unpin from taskbar**".

12. Add an Internet Address Bar (Search) to the Taskbar

Windows 10 provides you with a quick tool to open websites directly from your taskbar. For this, you need to pin the address bar to the taskbar and the default browser is automatically launched whenever you fill the URL of a website and hit Enter key. It can also be used as a search bar.

To place the Address Bar on the Taskbar:

1. Right-click on the Taskbar.
2. Click on Toolbars, then Address.

13. Add a Favorite Website to the Taskbar

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

1. Open your Edge browser.
2. Click on the plus + sign at the top of the site.
3. In the *Search the Web* box, type the target website.

4. 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.
5. Move down to and click on *More Tools*.
6. Click on *Pin to the taskbar*.
7. Your favorite website will now appear on the taskbar.

14. Add a Favorite Website to Your App List on the Start 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 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 *Apps*.
5. Click on *install this site as an app*.
6. The website will appear in the Apps menu (tap the Windows key to verify)

15. 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 then 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.

16. 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.

17. 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 12).

1. You can easily collapse the settings tiles down to one row of four tiles using the Collapse caret.
2. To change which four Quick Actions appear when you do this, you can go to Settings (Windows + I) >. System > Notifications & actions> *edit your quick actions*.
3. You can “drag” the Quick Actions into the desired locations that you prefer.

18. Show the Touch Keyboard Button on the Systray (for computers with touch screens)

1. To place the Touch Keyboard Button on the Taskbar’s Systray:
2. Right-click on a blank area of the Taskbar.
3. Click on Show Touch Keyboard Button.

19. Some Additional issues that may be of interest

To show Cortana	right-click on Taskbar, then click on Show Cortana button
To show People	right-click on Taskbar, then click Show people...
To show News and Interest	right-click on Taskbar, then News and Interest