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Introducing Windows 11

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1

Introducing Windows 11

This chapter shows how to get up and running with Windows 11, including its new features and its interface, keyboard shortcuts, and creating and using a Microsoft Account.

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The New icon pictured above indicates a new or enhanced feature introduced with Windows 11.

About Windows

Windows is an operating system made by Microsoft, for PCs (personal computers), laptops and tablets. The operating system is the software that organizes and controls all of the components (hardware and software) in your computer.

The first operating system from Microsoft was known as MS-DOS (Microsoft Disk Operating System). This was a non-graphical, line-oriented, command-driven operating system, able to run only one application at a time. The original Windows system was an interface manager that ran on top of the MS-DOS system, providing a graphical user interface (GUI) and using clever processor and memory management to allow it to run more than one application or function at a time.

The basic element of Windows was its “windowing” capability. A window (with a lowercase w) is a rectangular area used to display information or to run a program or app. Several windows can be opened at the same time so that you can work with multiple applications. This provided a dramatic increase in productivity, in comparison with the original MS-DOS.

Between 1985 and 2015 Microsoft released numerous versions of the operating system, each with its own intermediate versions to add updates and security fixes to the operating system. These versions of Windows included Windows 95, Windows XP, Windows 8 and Windows 10 (there was no Windows 9).

Windows 10 has been in operation since 2015; there has been no numerical update to the operating system. Instead of releasing Windows 11, 12, etc., each new version has been given a Windows 10 title – e.g. the Windows 10 Anniversary Update; the Windows 10 Creators Update.

For several years, Microsoft stated that there would not be a full naming update to Windows 10; instead, it would continue with incremental updates, usually on an annual basis. However, nothing stays still in the world of technology and Windows 11 was released in October 2021, recognizing the fact that the operating system required a major update to keep it at the forefront of the evolution of PCs and laptops, and also mobile devices such as the Surface tablet. Windows 11 is a full redesign of the operating system, in terms of its overall appearance, and Microsoft has also taken the opportunity to add a range of new features and functions.

New Features in Windows 11

Windows 11 is a significant update to its predecessor in terms of look and feel and also has a range of new functionality. However, it retains the features that will be familiar to Windows users, ensuring that Windows 11 is a sleek, efficient, modern operating system for Windows users.

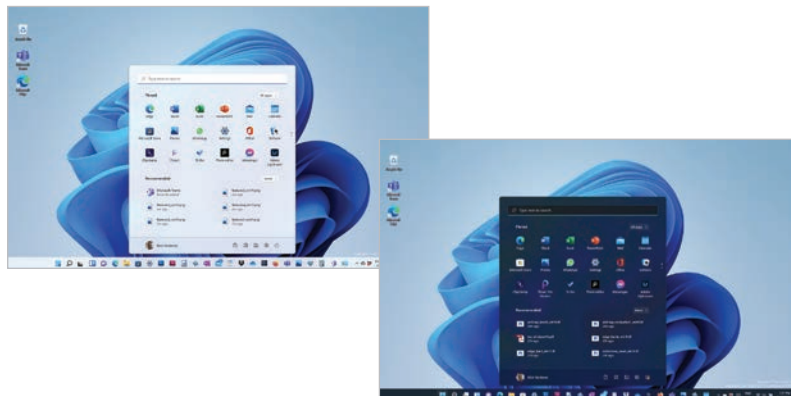
Redesigned interface

The first obvious change with Windows 11 is a cleaner, brighter user interface, starting with the Desktop.



Updated Start button and Start menu

Two of the most important elements of Windows have been redesigned in Windows 11: the Start button, which has always been in the bottom left-hand corner, now takes up a more central position, with the Taskbar centered on the screen rather than stretching all the way across it; and the Start menu has been completely redesigned to make it easier to find apps and files.



These features are new or updated in Windows 11.



The color of the Start menu and the Taskbar below it can be set to Light or Dark. To do this, select **Settings** > **Personalization** > **Colors** and select **Light** or **Dark** in the **Choose your mode** section. The color of the Start menu and the Taskbar are a matter of personal taste (although the Dark option can make items clearer). The majority of the examples in the book use the **Dark** option.

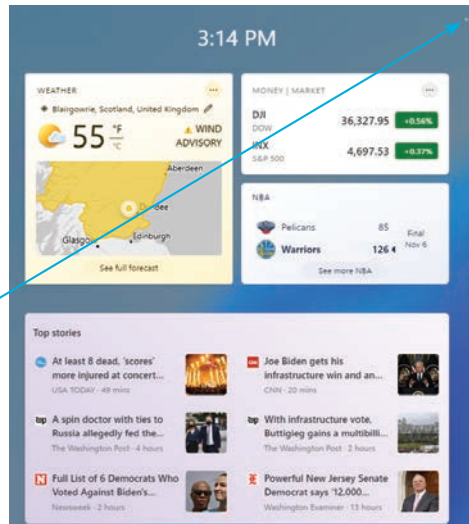


There are no specific settings for the Widgets app, but there is a **Manage interests** option for determining what appears within the app. This can be accessed from the **Menu** button in the top right-hand corner of the Widgets panel.

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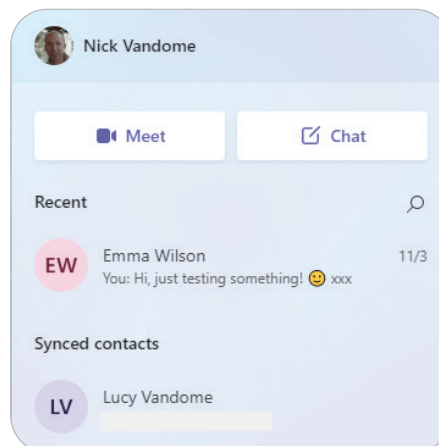
Widgets

The Widgets app is a customizable panel that can be used to display a range of real-time information, such as newsfeeds and weather forecasts.



Microsoft Teams Chat

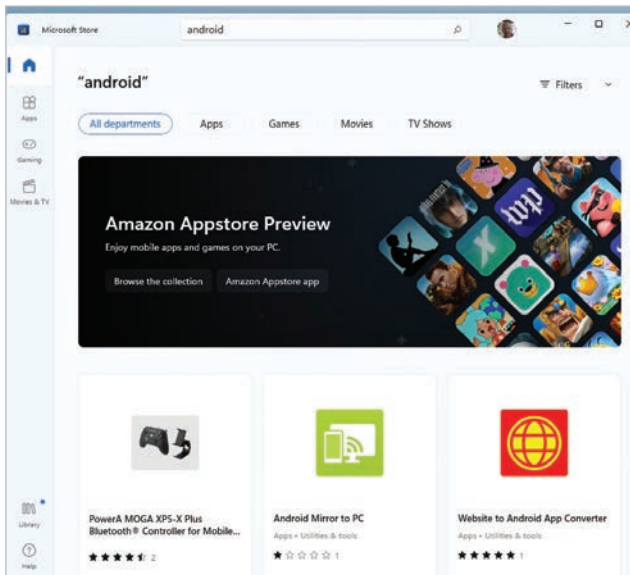
Microsoft Teams is a collaboration and communication app. The full version is included with Windows 11, pinned to the Taskbar, and there is also a pop-out Teams **Chat** app that can be used independently of the full version, for text, video and audio chats.



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Android apps

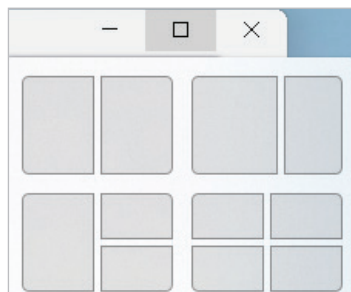
Through the Microsoft Store, Android apps can now be used with Windows 11, which means that users of Android smartphones can access some of the same apps as they use on their smartphones. This is done by downloading the apps from the Amazon Appstore, which is also accessed from within the Microsoft Store.



The Android apps feature did not have its full functionality with the initial Windows 11 release, although this will be enhanced with subsequent updates.

Snap Layouts

Some previous versions, including Windows 10, had options for displaying and managing multiple apps within a single screen, known as Snap Layouts. This has been refined in Windows 11 so that the layouts can be accessed from the control buttons at the top of each app, based on pre-designed templates.



Obtaining Windows 11

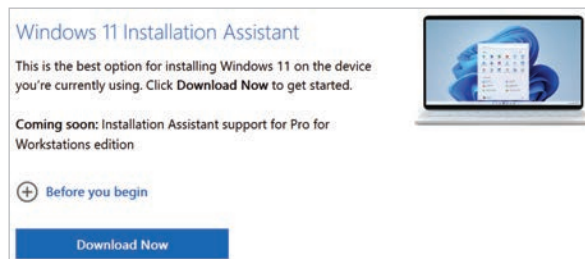
Windows 11 is an online service, rather than just a stand-alone operating system. This means that by default, Windows 11 is obtained and downloaded online, with subsequent updates and upgrades also provided online on a regular basis.

The main ways of installing Windows 11 are:

- **Use Windows Update** – Replace an older version of Windows, retaining the installed applications and settings. This can be done through the **Settings** app (select **Windows Update** and click on the **Check for updates** button).
- **Microsoft website** – Visit the software download page on the Microsoft website (microsoft.com/en-us/software-download/windows11) to use the **Windows 11 Installation Assistant** to download Windows 11.



For more information about the Settings app, see pages 42-57.



- **Pre-installed** – Buy a new PC or laptop with Windows 11 already installed.

Some of the steps that the installation will go through are:

- **Personalize.** These are settings that will be applied to your version of Windows 11. These settings can also be selected within the Settings app once Windows 11 has been installed.
- **Settings.** You can choose to have express settings applied or customize them.
- **Microsoft Account.** You can set up a Microsoft Account during installation, or once you have started Windows 11.
- **Privacy.** Certain privacy settings can be applied during the setup process for Windows 11.

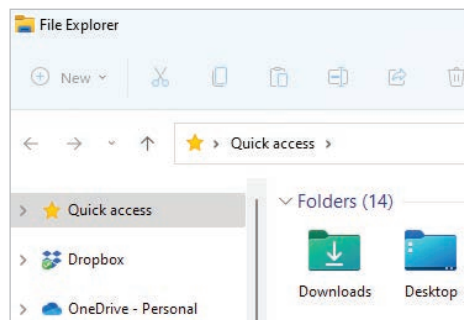
Keyboard Shortcuts

As you become more confident using Windows 11, you may want to access certain items more quickly. There are a range of keyboard shortcuts that can be used to access some of the items you use most frequently.

The majority of the shortcuts are accessed together with the WinKey (Windows key) on the keyboard. To use the keyboard shortcuts, press:



- **WinKey** to access the Start menu at any time.
- **WinKey + L** to lock the computer and display the Lock screen.
- **WinKey + I** to access the Settings app.
- **WinKey + K** to connect new devices.
- **WinKey + Q** to access the Search window.
- **WinKey + D** to access the Desktop.
- **WinKey + M** to access the Desktop with the active window minimized.
- **WinKey + E** to access File Explorer, displaying the Quick access section.
- **WinKey + T** to display thumbnails on the Desktop Taskbar.
- **WinKey + U** to access the Accessibility options in the Settings app.
- **WinKey + X** to access the Power User menu, which gives you quick access to items including the Desktop and File Explorer.
- **Alt + F4** to close a Windows 11 app.
- **Ctrl + Shift + Esc** to access Task Manager.



The options on the Power User menu are also known as the administration tools.



Aside from the gestures used on a touchscreen device, much of the operation of Windows 11 has been consolidated between computers with a mouse and keyboard, and mobile devices.

Windows 11 for Touch

One of the aims of Windows 11 is to make the operating system familiar to users with a keyboard and mouse. For touchscreen devices such as tablets and laptops with precision touchpads, the same overall operation of Windows 11 has been maintained so that users can feel comfortable with the operating system regardless of the device on which they are using it.

Continuum

Continuum refers to the function of Windows 11 where you can start something on one Windows 11 device and then continue working on it on another. For instance, you could start a letter in Word on a desktop computer, save it, and then pick up where you left off on the Microsoft tablet, Surface. Continuum works between desktop computers, laptops and tablets.

Using touch

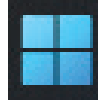
Touchscreen devices and those with precision touchpads can be used with Windows 11 to navigate through a number of gestures, swipes and taps on the screen or touchpad. Some of the gestures that can be used with touchscreen or touchpad devices using Windows 11 are:

- Swipe inward from the right-hand edge to access the Notifications area.
- Swipe inward from the left-hand edge to access Task View for currently open apps, and the Timeline.
- In an open Windows 11 app, swipe downward from the top of the screen to access the app's toolbar.
- In an open Windows 11 app, use a long swipe downward from the top of the screen to close the app.
- Swipe upward from the bottom of the screen to access the Taskbar (when an app is at full screen).
- Tap with three fingers on a touchpad to bring up the personal digital assistant, Cortana.

Control Panel and Categories

In previous versions of Windows, the Control Panel played an important role in applying settings for a number of different functions. Because of this, it could be accessed in several different ways. However, in Windows 11, more of the Control Panel functionality has been moved to the Settings app, and there are less obvious methods for accessing the Control Panel. Despite this, it can still be used to access a variety of settings.

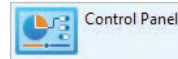
1 Click on the **Start** button to bring up the **Start** menu for accessing apps



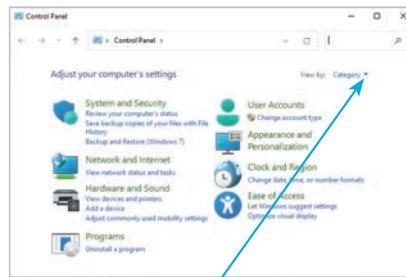
2 Click **All apps** and then click on the **Windows Tools** button



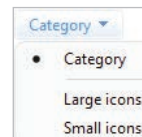
3 Click on the **Control Panel** button



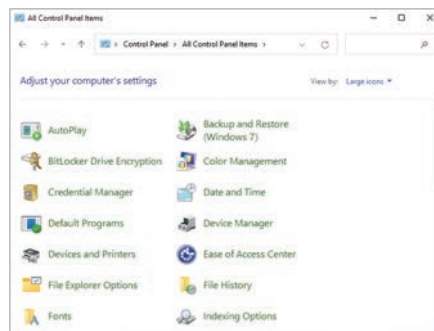
4 Click on the **Control Panel** categories to view the content within them



5 Click here to access options for viewing the Control Panel layout



6 The icons views display a wider range of options from within the Control Panel than Category view



For more information about the Start menu and the Start button, see pages 22-29.



More functions from the Control Panel are being migrated to the Settings app with each new version of Windows 11. However, some remain in the Control Panel and will be opened here, even if the link to it is physically located in the Settings app.



If you still use the Control Panel regularly, pin it to either the Start menu or the Taskbar, or both. For details about pinning items, see pages 77-78.



Without a Microsoft Account you will not be able to access the full functionality of the apps listed here.

Using a Microsoft Account

We live in a world of ever-increasing computer connectivity, where users expect to be able to access their content wherever they are and share it with their friends and family in a variety of ways, whether it is by email, messaging or photo sharing. This is known as cloud computing, with content being stored on online servers, from where it can be accessed by authorized users.

In Windows 11, this type of connectivity is achieved with a Microsoft Account. This is a registration system (which can be set up with most email addresses and a password) that provides access to a number of services via the Windows 11 apps. These include:

- **Mail.** This is the Windows 11 email app that can be used to access and manage your different email accounts.
- **Teams.** This is the collaboration and communication app.
- **People.** This is the address book app, accessed from the Mail app (above).
- **Calendar.** This is the calendar and organizer app.
- **Microsoft Store.** This is the online store for previewing and downloading additional apps.
- **OneDrive.** This is the online backup and sharing service.

Creating a Microsoft Account

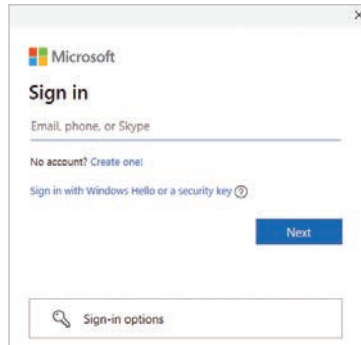
It is free to create a Microsoft Account. This can be done with an email address and, together with a password, provides a unique identifier for logging in to your Microsoft Account and related apps. There are several ways in which you can create and set up a Microsoft Account:

- During the initial setup process when you install Windows 11. You will be asked if you want to create a Microsoft Account at this point. If you do not, you can always do so at a later time.
- When you first open an app that requires access to a Microsoft Account. When you do this, you will be prompted to create a new account.
- From the **Accounts** section of the **Settings** app (see page 49).

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Whichever way you use to create a Microsoft Account, the process is similar.

- 1 When you are first prompted to sign in with a Microsoft Account you can enter your account details, if you have one; or

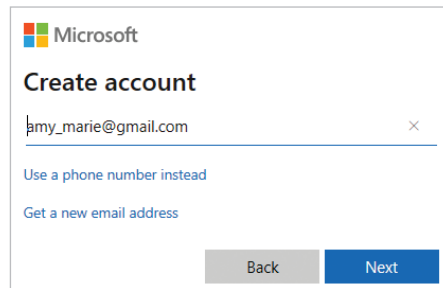


A screenshot of the Microsoft 'Sign in' window. It features the Microsoft logo at the top left. Below it, the text 'Sign in' is displayed. There is a text input field labeled 'Email, phone, or Skype'. Below the input field, there are two links: 'No account? Create one!' and 'Sign in with Windows Hello or a security key'. A blue 'Next' button is positioned to the right of the input field. At the bottom, there is a 'Sign-in options' section with a magnifying glass icon.

- 2 Click on the **No account? Create one!** link

No account? [Create one!](#)

- 3 Enter your name, an email address and a password (on the next screen) for your Microsoft Account

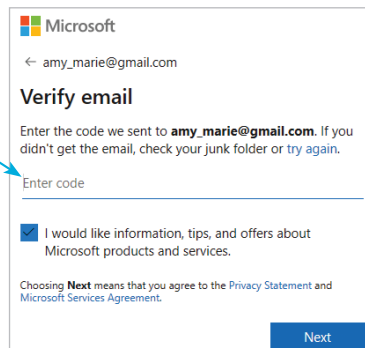


A screenshot of the Microsoft 'Create account' window. It features the Microsoft logo at the top left. Below it, the text 'Create account' is displayed. There is a text input field containing 'amy_marie@gmail.com'. Below the input field, there are two links: 'Use a phone number instead' and 'Get a new email address'. At the bottom, there are two buttons: a grey 'Back' button and a blue 'Next' button.

- 4 Click on the **Next** button to move through the registration process

Next

- 5 A verification code is required to finish setting up the Microsoft Account. This will be sent to the email address entered in Step 3. Click on the **Next** button to complete the Microsoft Account setup



A screenshot of the Microsoft 'Verify email' window. It features the Microsoft logo at the top left. Below it, the text 'Verify email' is displayed. There is a text input field labeled 'Enter code'. Below the input field, there is a checkbox with the text 'I would like information, tips, and offers about Microsoft products and services.' Below the checkbox, there is a link: 'Choosing Next means that you agree to the Privacy Statement and Microsoft Services Agreement.' At the bottom, there is a blue 'Next' button.



Microsoft Account details can also be used as your sign-in for Windows 11 (see pages 19-20).



For details about personalizing the Lock screen, see page 47.



You can lock your PC at any time by pressing **WinKey + L**.



You will get an error message if you enter the wrong password or if you simply mis-key and cause an incorrect character to be added.

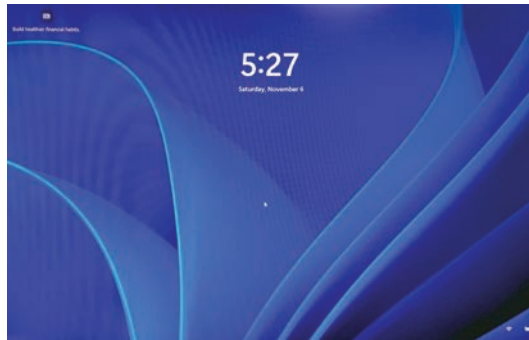


If you forget your PIN for your Microsoft Account, click on the **I forgot my PIN** link on the sign-in screen to reset it.

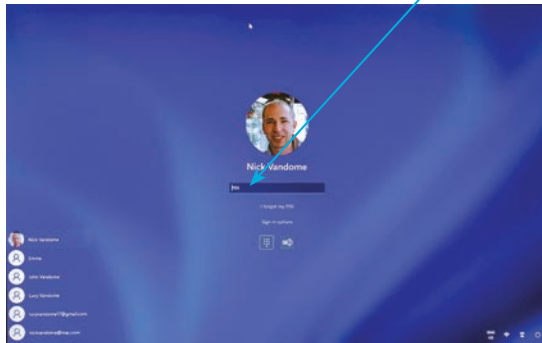
Sign-in Options

Each time you start up your computer using Windows 11 with a Microsoft Account, you will need to sign in. This is a security feature so that no-one can gain unauthorized access to your account on your computer. The sign-in process starts with the Lock screen and then you have to enter your sign-in details.

- 1 When you start your computer, the Lock screen will be showing. This is linked to the sign-in screen



- 2 Click on the **Lock screen** or press any key to move to the sign-in screen. Enter your sign-in details and press **Enter** on your keyboard



- 3 On the sign-in screen, click on this button to select **Accessibility** options

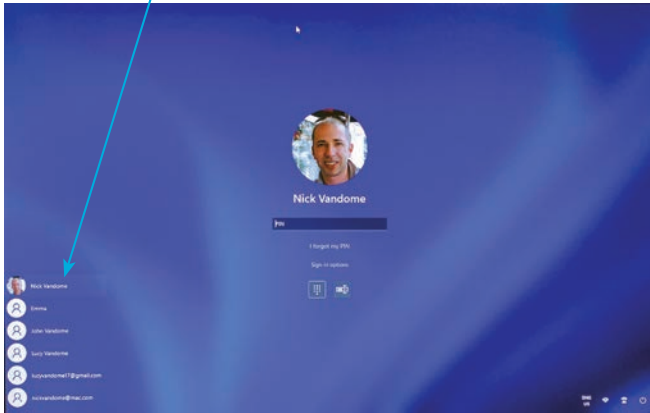


- 4 On the sign-in screen, click on this button to select **Power off** options including **Shut down**, **Sleep** and **Restart**



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- 5 If there are other users with an account on the same computer, their names will be displayed here

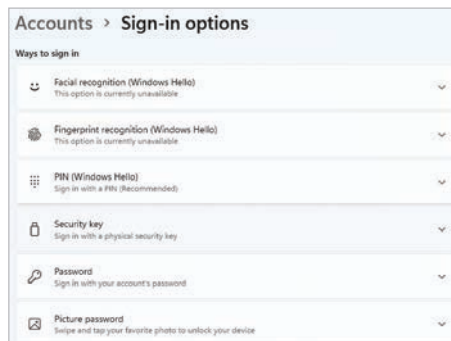
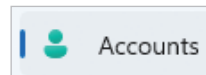


- 6 Click on another user to access their own sign-in screen

Sign-in settings

Settings for how you sign in can be accessed from the Accounts section in the Settings app.

- 1 Access the **Settings** app and click on the **Accounts** button
- 2 Under **Sign-in options**, select options for how you sign in from the Lock screen



You can sign in with a Local account or a Microsoft Account. If you sign in with the latter, you will have access to related services, such as Mail and People. Also, you will be able to sync your settings and use them on another computer when you log in with your account.



For details about using the Settings app, see pages 42-57.



Facial recognition and **Fingerprint recognition** are functions that use biometric authentication for signing in to Windows 11. This is either done by scanning your face or with a fingerprint reader. However, specialist hardware is required for this to operate.



If you want to create a picture password for signing in, you must have a touchscreen device. Select a picture and draw a pattern to use as your sign-in.

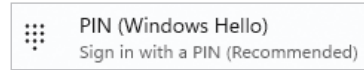
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Using a PIN to sign in

Using a PIN to sign in to your Windows 11 computer can be a more convenient option than remembering a long password each time (although a password still has to be used when an account is created). To use a PIN to sign in:

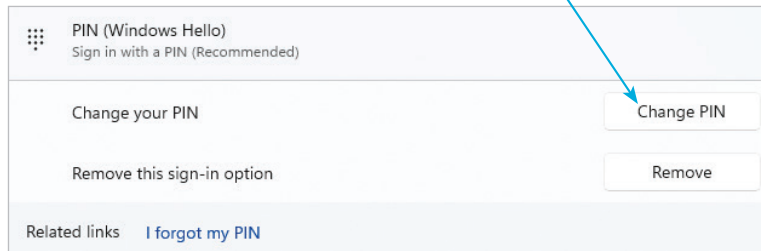
1

Access the **Sign-in options** section of the Settings app, as shown on page 19, and click on the **PIN (Windows Hello)** option



2

Click on the **Change PIN** button to change an existing PIN (or **Add** to create a new one)



3

Enter the new PIN and enter it again to confirm it. Click on the **OK** button to finish setting up the PIN

