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1

Getting Windows 11

This chapter explains how Windows 11 has evolved, identifies the new features, and shows what's needed to upgrade your existing computer. It also details how to create a Microsoft account.

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Windows 11

Windows 11 is the latest release of Microsoft Windows, the operating system for personal computers. There has been a long list of Windows releases, including:

- 1995 Windows 95
- 1998 Windows 98
- 2000 Windows Me
- 2001 Windows XP
- 2003 Windows XP MCE
- 2007 Windows Vista
- 2009 Windows 7
- 2012 Windows 8
- 2013 Windows 8.1
- 2015 Windows 10
- 2021 Windows 11



Within each Microsoft Windows release there are several editions catering for different types of users, such as Home, Pro and Enterprise.

When you buy a new computer, it is usually shipped with the latest available release of Windows. This takes advantage of the hardware features generally available at the time. Each year sees new and more powerful features being incorporated into the latest computers. In line with this, the requirements for Microsoft Windows have increased steadily. For example, the minimum and recommended amounts of system memory have increased from 4 megabytes (MB)-8MB in Windows 95, to 1 gigabyte (GB)-4GB in Windows 11. There's a similar progression in terms of the processor power, the video graphics facilities and the hard disk storage requirement.

This means that your computer may need upgrading or extending in order to use a later release of Windows, especially if you want to take advantage of new capabilities such as touch gestures. To take full advantage of new features, you may need a new computer; for example, a tablet PC.

Each release enhances existing features and adds new facilities. Thus, the latest Windows 11 is able to support all the functions of Windows 10 and prior releases, along with enhancements, plus its own unique new features. These allow you to carry out tasks that might not have been supported with previous releases of the operating system.

Which release is installed?

To check which release of Windows is currently installed on your system, you can look at the **System** panel, which is located in the **Settings** app. This can be accessed in different ways.

- Press the **WinKey** + **Pause** key in any version of Windows to display the **System** panel.
- Click on the **Settings** app on the Taskbar at the bottom of the screen and click on the **System** option in the left-hand panel and then the **About** option.
- Right-click on the **Start** button on the Taskbar and click on the **System** option.



WinKey is another name for the **Windows logo** key. The **Pause** key is labeled Pause/Break.

For all three methods, the operating system details will be shown (along with user, memory and processor information). This includes the version of Windows being used, listed under **Windows specifications** > **Version**.

The screenshot shows the Windows Settings application, specifically the 'System > About' page. The user profile is Nick Vandome. The page is divided into two main sections: 'Device specifications' and 'Windows specifications'. The 'Device specifications' section lists details for a laptop named 'Nicklaptop', including the processor (Intel(R) Pentium(R) CPU 2025M @ 2.40GHz), installed RAM (8.00 GB), and device ID. The 'Windows specifications' section shows the edition as 'Windows 11 Pro Insider Preview', version 22H2, installed on 6/1/2022, and OS build 22H2.1000. The page also includes a search bar, a list of settings categories on the left, and a 'Rename this PC' button.

Device specifications	
Device name	Nicklaptop
Processor	Intel(R) Pentium(R) CPU 2025M @ 2.40GHz / 2.40 GHz
Installed RAM	8.00 GB (7.82 GB usable)
Device ID	D1C549D36-8A4D-400A-B96F-198BFDDA3AF5
Product ID	00330-60000-00000-AA860
System type	64-bit operating system, x64-based processor
Pen and touch	No pen or touch input is available for this display

Windows specifications	
Edition	Windows 11 Pro Insider Preview
Version	22H2
Installed on	6/1/2022
OS build	22H2.1000
Experience	Windows Feature Experience Pack 1000.25125.2000.0





The next three pages cover some of the new features 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. The majority of the examples in the book use the **Light** option.

Features of Windows 11

Windows 11 includes a number of updates and bug fixes and offers various new features, including the following:

Redesigned interface

Windows 11 features a clean design with rounded corners and pastel shades, similar to the interface for Mac computers.



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.



For anyone who likes the **Start** button in its traditional location in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen, it can still be placed here – see page 31 for details.



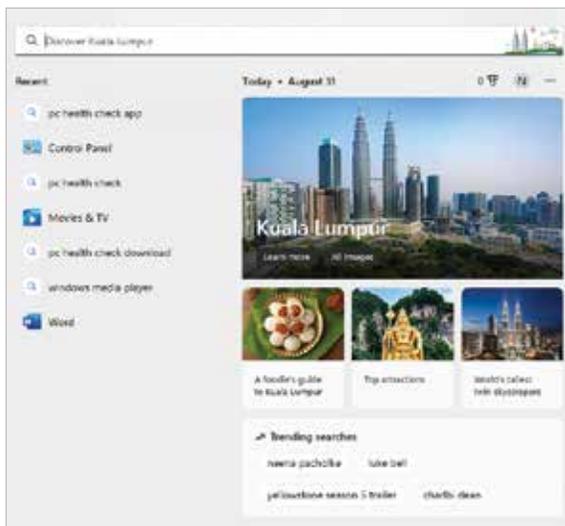
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Integrated Android apps

Android apps can be accessed via the Amazon Appstore, which is available from within the updated Microsoft Store.

Search

Search has moved from the Taskbar where it appeared in Windows 10, and is now found at the top of the **Start** menu panel. However, there is still a Search icon on the Taskbar.



Widgets

You can access widgets directly from the Taskbar and personalize them to see whatever you'd like.



If the Taskbar and the **Start** button are in the default centered position, the **Widgets** icon appears at the far left-hand side of the Taskbar.



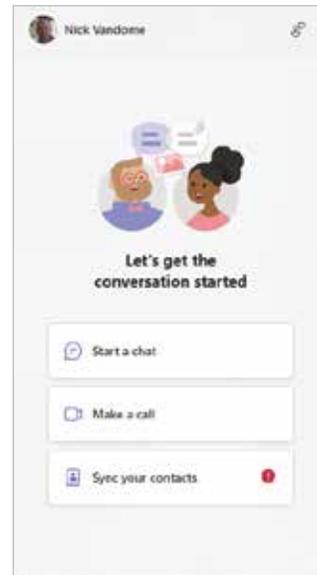
The **Chat** function is incorporated into the **Microsoft Teams** app, and it also appears as its own app, accessed from this icon on the Taskbar.



...cont'd

Microsoft Teams and the Chat app

The **Teams** option, and the independent **Chat** app, appears on the Windows 11 Taskbar, making it easier to access. This means you can now access Teams from Windows, Mac, Android or iOS.



Snap Layouts

Some previous versions of Windows, 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.



Xbox gaming

Windows 11 has features as found in Xbox consoles, like Auto HDR and DirectStorage, to improve gaming on your Windows PC.

Virtual desktop support

Windows 11 allows you to set up virtual desktops so that you can toggle between desktops for personal, work, school or gaming use. Each virtual desktop can have its own wallpaper.

What's needed

The minimum configuration recommended by Microsoft to install and run Windows 11 is as follows:

- **Processor** 64-bit, 1GHz or faster.
- **System memory** 4GB.
- **System firmware** Unified Extensible Firmware Interface (UEFI)- and Secure Boot-capable.
- **Security** Trusted Platform Module (TPM) 2.0 encryption device.
- **Graphics card** DirectX 12 devices or later with Windows Display Driver Model (WDDM) 2.0 driver.
- **Hard disk drive** 64GB (or larger).
- **Optical drive** DVD/CD (for installation purposes).
- **Display** High-definition (720p), 9" diagonal or greater, with 8 bits per color channel.

There may be additional requirements for some features; for example:

- Internet access for online services and features such as Windows Update.
- Five-point touch hardware for touch functions.
- A network and multiple PCs running Windows 11 for file and printer sharing.
- An optical drive with rewriter function for DVD/CD authoring and backup function.
- Audio output (headphones or speakers) for music and sound in the Media Player.

If you are not able to upgrade your existing PC to Windows 11 and are not ready to switch to a new device, Windows 10 will continue to be supported until October 14, 2025.



The terms "32-bit" and "64-bit" relate to the way the processor handles memory. You'll also see the terms "x86" and "x64" used for 32-bit and 64-bit respectively.



The product functions and the graphics capabilities may vary depending on the system configuration.

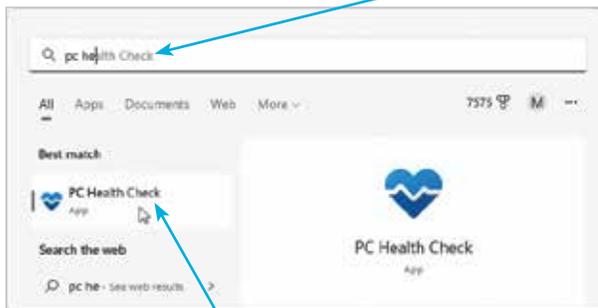


If you don't find the app on your system, you can go to <https://aka.ms/GetPCHealthCheckApp> to download and run the **PC Health Check** setup app to install the app.

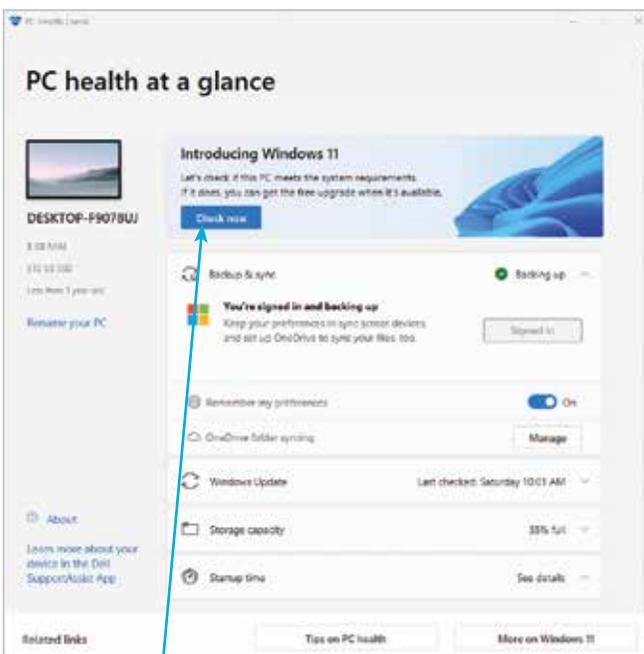
PC Health Check

If you have an older PC, you can check whether your device is capable of running Windows 11 using **PC Health Check**.

- 1 Click the **Start** button and type “pc health check”



- 2 Select the **PC Health Check** app when it appears



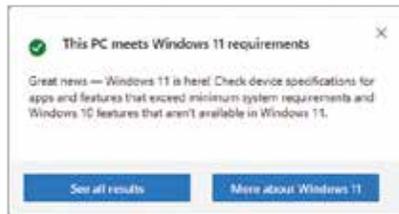
- 3 Click **Check now** to see if the PC meets the requirements for Windows 11



PC Health Check will display the memory, disk drive size and the PC age, and provides the facility to rename your PC.

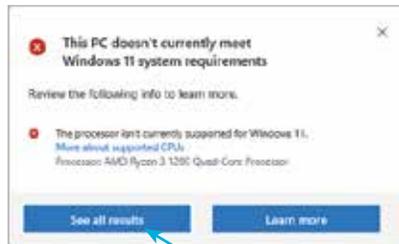
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If the system meets the requirements, you get a message confirming that the device supports Windows 11.

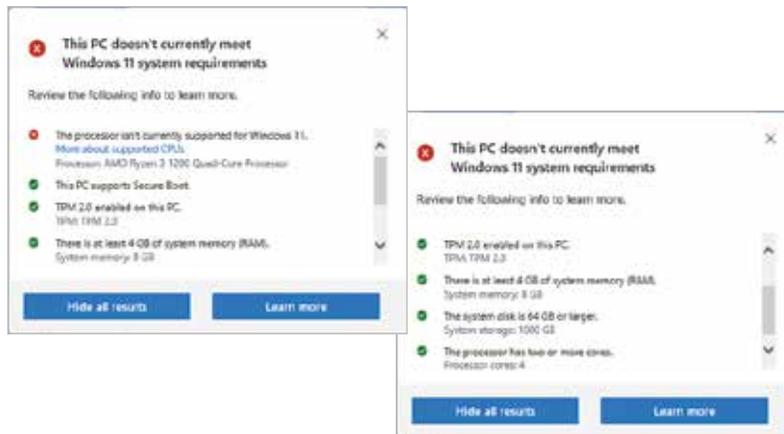


The requirements may be updated as Microsoft adds more processors to the list of those supported by Windows 11.

However, if your device doesn't meet the current requirements, you will be given a list of areas that gave rise to the problem.



In either case, you can click the **See all results** button, and then be able to scroll through the list of requirements.



Each requirement is shown along with the actual value for the device. For example, it says at least 4GB system memory is needed, while there is actually 8GB installed.

In this example, all the requirements are satisfied except for the installed processor, which isn't currently supported.



A Microsoft account is needed to synchronize settings and access the Microsoft Store to download apps and updates. You can create a Microsoft account from **Accounts** in the **Settings** app (see Chapter 4).



When there is already a PC associated with the Microsoft account, you can choose to copy Windows apps and settings from that PC, or set up your system as a new PC.

Installing Windows

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:

- **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.
- **Pre-installed** – Buy a new PC or laptop with Windows 11 already installed.
- Microsoft has now made a DVD available to install Windows 11 directly, rather than via additional updates.

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 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 Home folder.
- **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, or close Windows 11 from the desktop.
- **Ctrl + Shift + Esc** to access Task Manager.

You can change the image that is displayed on the Lock screen, and even provide your own image (see page 69 for details).



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

Using a Microsoft account

A Microsoft account is required to get the most out of Windows 11 and many of its functions. 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 the 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 65).

...cont'd

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

- 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

- 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



Microsoft account details can also be used as your sign-in for Windows 11.



If supported by your hardware, you are offered the option to put the PC to sleep. You'd use **Sleep** when you're going to be away from your PC for a while. It uses very little power, and when you return and touch the screen or move the mouse, the PC starts up quickly, and you're back to where you left off.

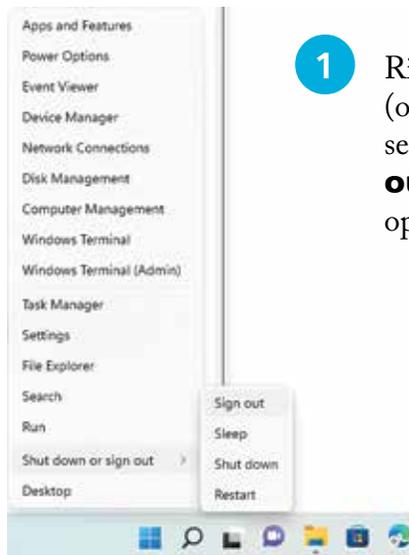


In Step 3, click the **Down** arrow to display all of the shut down/restart options.



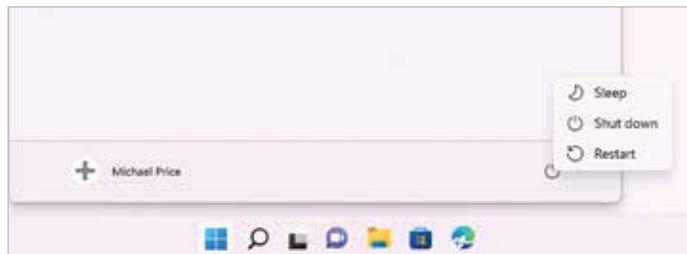
Closing Windows 11

When you finish working with Windows, you'll want to shut down or sign out. Here are three ways to do this:



- 1 Right-click the **Start** button (or press **WinKey + X**) and select **Shut down or sign out**, then choose the particular option that you require; e.g.
 - Sign out**
 - Sleep**
 - Shut down**
 - Restart**

- 2 On the Start menu, click the **Power** button to select **Sleep** (if offered), **Shut down** or **Restart**



- 3 From the desktop you can also press **Alt + F4** to display the **Shut down** option

