UC San Diego Health Information Services

Knowledge Base: Seven Simple Productivity Tips – Windows 10

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Block the Distractions
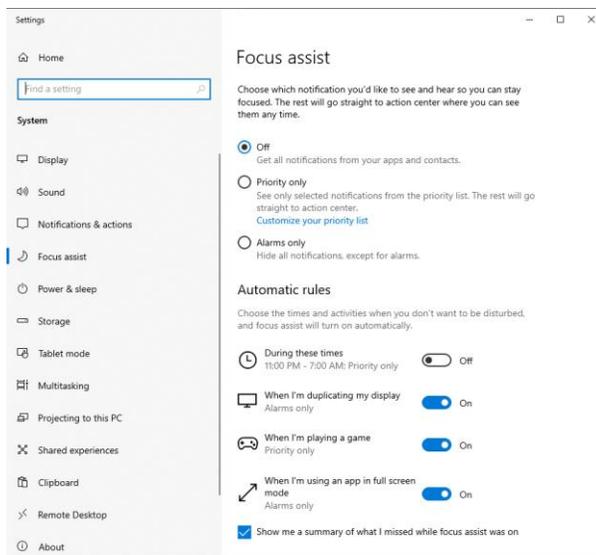
Do Not Disturb isn't just a mode for your smartphone, because Windows comes with something very similar called Focus Assist. It quietens down notifications and postpones other interruptions so you can get on with some serious work, and the mode can be enabled manually or automatically.

Open Windows Settings via the cog icon on the Start menu, then choose System and Focus assist. Set the times when you want the mode to turn on automatically, or enable it using the check boxes at the top (you can still allow alerts from apps you give priority too, if you want). Focus Assist can also be switched on from the Action Center (click the notification button to the far right of the taskbar).

Focus assist (also called quiet hours in earlier versions of Windows 10) allows you to avoid distracting notifications when you need to stay focused, and is set by default to activate automatically under certain conditions. Here's how to turn focus assist on or off:

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1. Select the **action center** icon on the taskbar.

2. Select **Focus assist** to cycle through the available settings: either **Priority Only**, **Alarms Only**, or **Off**. (If you don't see the **Focus assist** tile, you may need to select **Expand** first.)
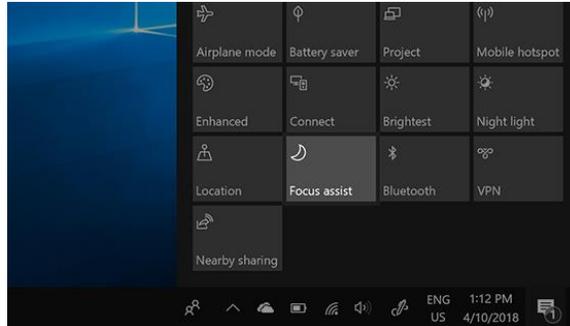
3. Focus assist settings can also be edited by selecting **Start** > **Settings** > **System** > **Focus assist**, or type **Focus assist** into the search box on the taskbar, and then select **Focus assist settings** from the list of results.

Pin Websites and apps to the taskbar
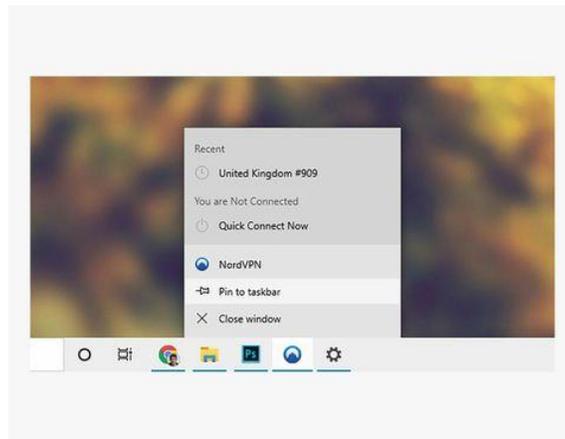
Open applications appear on the taskbar but you can make it easier to get to the programs and the websites you use most often by pinning your favorite shortcuts to the taskbar permanently. Right-click on a program then choose Pin to taskbar to do exactly that.

To pin websites to the taskbar, fire up the Microsoft Edge browser that comes as part of Windows itself. When you've got the website you want to pin open on screen, click the three dots in the top right corner of the Edge interface, and choose Pin this page to the taskbar.

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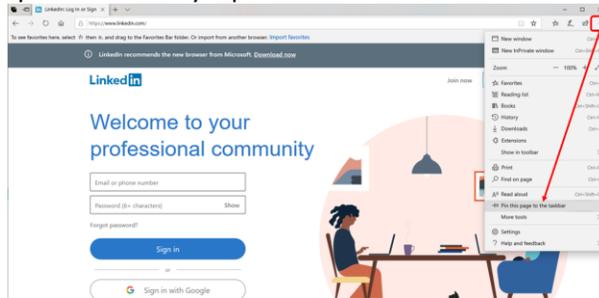
Keep more on the clipboard
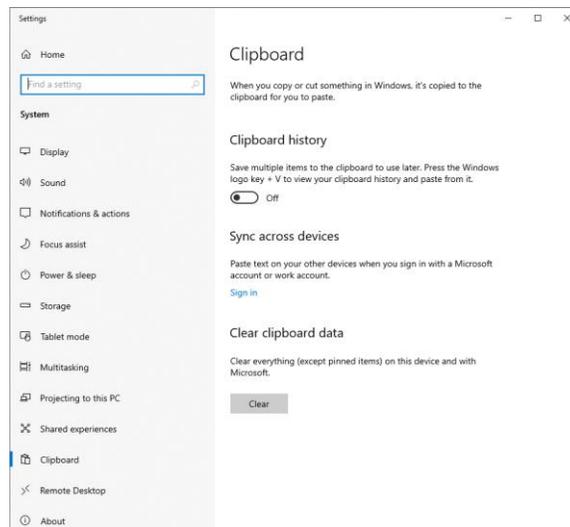
The Windows clipboard now goes beyond the basics to help you juggle multiple images, text and website addresses at the same time. From the Windows Start menu, click the cog icon then choose System and Clipboard to set up the various available features.

Turn on Clipboard history to save multiple items to it, and by enabling Sync across devices you can access the same clipboard items from any device that you're signed into using your Microsoft account. To see the contents of the clipboard, hit Win+V.

Copy images and text from one PC to another with a cloud-based clipboard. Not only can you can paste from your clipboard history, but you can also pin the items you find yourself using all the time.

1. To get to your clipboard history at any time, press **Windows logo key** + **V**. You can also **paste** and **pin** frequently used items by choosing an individual item from your clipboard menu.

2. To share your clipboard items across your Windows 10 devices, select **Start** > **Settings** > **System** > **Clipboard**. Choose **Automatically sync text that I**

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        copy under **Sync across devices**. The sync feature is tied to your Microsoft account, or your work
        account, so remember to use the same login information on all your devices.

Talk it out
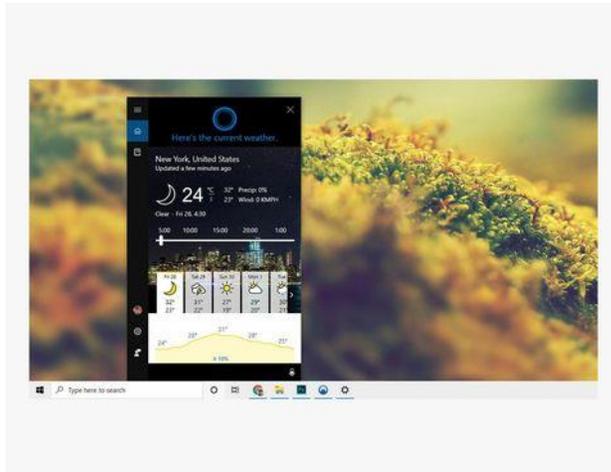
Windows now comes with a very simple dictation tool for inputting text via your voice wherever text
input is accepted: Just press Win+H to start talking. To configure the feature, open Windows Settings via
the cog icon on the Start menu, then select Ease of Access and Speech.

Cortana is around too, enabling you to run web searches, set reminders, check your schedule and much
more. To turn on the "hey Cortana" voice shortcut, open up Windows Settings (the cog icon on the Start
menu), then choose Cortana and Talk to Cortana, and turn the top toggle switch on. Alternatively, click
the Cortana button by the taskbar search box and start talking.

Use dictation to convert spoken words into text anywhere on your PC with Windows 10. Dictation uses
speech recognition, which is built into Windows 10, so there's nothing you need to download and install
to use it.

To start dictating, select a text field and press the **Windows logo key + H** to open the dictation toolbar.
Then say whatever's on your mind. To stop dictating at any time while you're dictating, say "Stop
dictation."
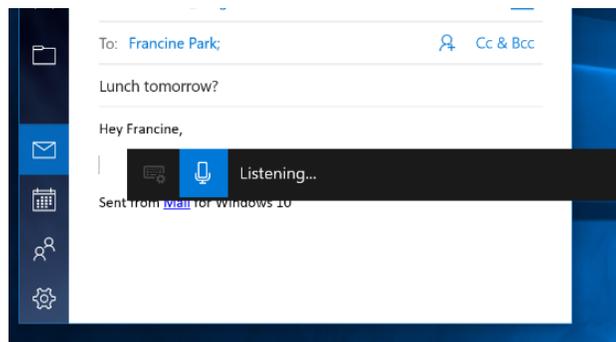
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If you're using a tablet or a touchscreen, tap the **microphone** button on the touch keyboard to start dictating. Tap it again to stop dictation, or say "Stop dictation."

To find out more about speech recognition, read Use voice recognition in Windows 10. To learn how to set up your microphone, read How to set up and test microphones in Windows 10.

Snap your windows in place
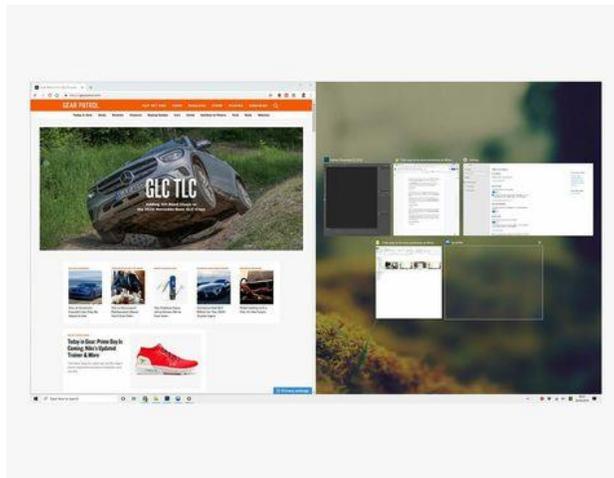
Keep your desktop windows organized and your desktop less cluttered by snapping open app windows into place: Try dragging the title bar of a window to the left or right of the display, and watch it snap to half the screen space (or use Win+Left arrow or Win+Right arrow to do the same trick).

It means it's easier to compare documents or websites side by side, and saves you a lot of clicking between open windows. You can also snap windows into a corner of the display (add the Up arrow or Down arrow to the shortcuts we just mentioned to do this via the keyboard), and fit up to four on screen at once. Click in the very bottom right-hand corner to see the desktop again.

Snap with a mouse

Select the title bar of the window you want to snap, and drag it to the edge of your screen. An outline indicates where the window will snap to once you drop it. Drag it to the left or right side of your screen depending on where you want to snap it to.

Snap with a keyboard

Select the window you want to snap and press the **Windows Logo Key** + **Left Arrow** or the **Windows Logo Key** + **Right Arrow** to snap the window to the side of the screen where you want it to be. You can also move it to a corner after snapping it. With the window selected, press the **Windows Logo Key** + **Up Arrow** or the **Windows Logo**

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Key + **Down Arrow** to get it into the desired corner. The window is then in its smallest possible state, which is a quarter of the screen. Then you can use the **Windows Logo Key** + **Arrow Keys** to move it wherever you want.

Snap with Snap Assist

Snap Assist appears after you've snapped a window but have a lot of available space on your screen. Any other open windows are displayed in that space as thumbnails.

To use Snap Assist, click the thumbnail of the window you want to open in the empty space on your screen. If you have two windows displayed side-by-side, you can resize both windows simultaneously by selecting and dragging the dividing line. Resize the window on one side to the size you want it to be, and then release the mouse button. The other window will resize itself to fit alongside the first one, so you won't have any empty screen space.

Expand your desktop space
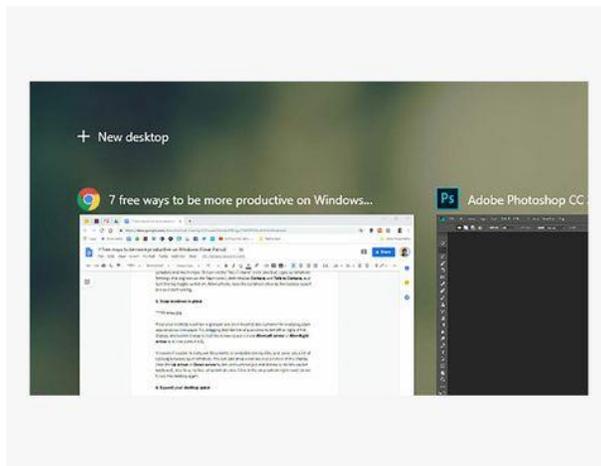
Maybe you need a bit more room than one Windows desktop affords. You could plug in an external monitor, but you can also create extra desktops with Windows' own multiple desktops tool: Click the Task view button (just to the right of the search box on the taskbar) or press Win+Tab, then New desktop at the top.

Open application windows can be dragged between desktops—just pick them up and drag them from the Task view screen—while the taskbar and desktop wallpaper gets shared across all your desktops. It's a great way of getting more room for the jobs you've got to do, or separating out different programs for different projects.

Multiple desktops are great for keeping unrelated, ongoing projects organized, or for quickly switching desktops before a meeting. To create multiple desktops:

1. On the taskbar, select **Task view** > **New desktop** .

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2. Open the apps you want to use on that desktop.

3. To switch between desktops, select **Task view** again.

VIDEO: https://www.youtube.com/embed/vwdtTdhgC1g

Work faster with AutoHotKey

Free productivity utilities for Windows don't come much better than AutoHotkey, which essentially enables you to program your own keyboard shortcuts and macros—launching particular actions using a few well-chosen key presses.

The program can take some getting used to, and requires a little basic coding, but the tutorial and Script Showcase are good places to start. You can launch programs or open folders with mouse gestures, type out your full address just by entering "myad", log the time you spend in certain apps, and so much more besides.