

Windows 10: Fast Access to Documents, Pictures and More

When you want to open one of your personal folders (Documents, Pictures, Music, Downloads or Videos) in Windows 10, it's a two-step process. First you have to open File Explorer and then you have to find and double-click the folder.

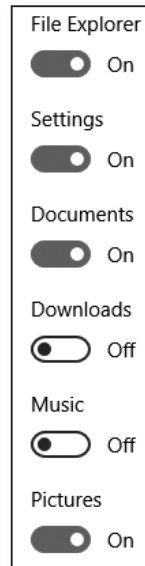
No, that's not particularly difficult and it shouldn't leave you panting for breath, but you might visit these folders often enough that a quicker method would be welcome.

If so, here it is. You can add icons for these folders to the thin vertical strip at the far-left of the Start menu. Then, whenever you need to visit one, you just open the Start menu and click it. Here's how to add those icons:

1. Right-click a blank space on the desktop and choose **Personalise**.
2. This opens the Settings app to its 'Personalisation' section. At the left of the window, click on **Start**.
3. Below the little collection of On/Off switches, click the link that reads **Choose which folders appear on Start**.
4. Now you'll see another collection of On/Off switches (pictured to the right), each relating to one of your personal folders. Unless you've changed these already, you'll find that **File Explorer** and **Settings** are both 'On' and the rest are 'Off'. To add other folders to the Start menu, just click their switches to **On**.

Opening your personal folders can be slow in Windows 10

Make them instantly available on the Start menu



'Switch on' the folders you want on your Start menu

Now see the result



You can make changes whenever you like

5. Now click the **Start** button (or press the **Win** key) to open the Start menu and see the result. You'll find that the extra icons you've just chosen have been added immediately below your own Windows-account icon. A single click on one of these will immediately open the corresponding folder.

The added buttons always appear in alphabetical order (Documents, Downloads, Music, Pictures, Videos), and their icons should make it clear which is which: in the screenshot on the right, I've added the first four of those. If you do happen to forget, click the **Expand** button (three horizontal lines) at the top-left of the menu and the name of each of these items will appear beside it.



6. If you're happy with the result – for now, at least – close the Settings window that opened in step 2 and you've finished. Needless to say, you can repeat these steps whenever you want to add a folder you didn't include this time, or if you want to remove one of these folders from the menu (by setting its switch to **Off** again).

Switch to New Browser Tabs Automatically

Smart surfing: open links in new tabs

When you're looking for information online, or even just idly surfing, a useful trick is to open a link in a new tab in your web browser. By doing that, you don't lose track of the page you were looking at: you can read the new page and even follow links in it, and your original page is still waiting for you in the first tab.

Hold **Ctrl** when clicking a link

It's easy to do: you either hold down the **Ctrl** key when you click the link, or right-click the link and choose **Open**

in **new tab** (or something very similar – the wording varies slightly in the different browsers).

The trouble is, although your browser creates the new tab and opens the new web page in it, it doesn't switch to that tab. You're still looking at the original page, and you have to send the mouse pointer up to the top of the window and click that tab.

Luckily, in three of the four most popular browsers, there's a way around this: you can force them to switch to new tabs automatically. Here's what to do:

- **Mozilla Firefox:** click the 'Open Application Menu' (three horizontal lines) button at the far-right of the toolbar and choose **Settings**. Below the 'Tabs' heading, tick the box beside **When you open a link, image or media in a new tab, switch to it immediately**.
- **Internet Explorer:** click the 'Tools' (cog) button at the right of the toolbar and choose **Internet options**. In the dialog that opens, click the **Tabs** button. This opens another dialog: here, tick the box beside **Always switch to new tabs when they are created**, then click **OK**.
- **Google Chrome:** although there's no built-in way to do this in Chrome, there's a handy free extension named Tab Activate that does it for you. Start Chrome, visit www.tinyurl.com/49azk47p (which takes you to the correct page in the 'Chrome Web Store') and click the **Add To Chrome** button.

The fourth most popular browser, Microsoft Edge doesn't offer any such option, but there's a trick you can use to achieve the same result. Rather than holding just the **Ctrl** key when you click a link, hold **Ctrl** and **Shift**: holding these two keys tells Edge not only to open the link in a new tab but also to switch to that tab straight away.

But your browser doesn't switch to the new tab

Fix this in Firefox, Internet Explorer and Chrome

*Use **Ctrl+Shift** in Microsoft Edge*

Bonus Photos Tip: Draw on a Picture

You can read more about Windows 11's excellent Photos app in article P373 in this update, but here's a quick bonus tip you may like: you can also draw on one of your photos.

Choose a photo to draw on

Start by clicking a photo in the Photos app to display it, then click the **Mark-up** button on the toolbar. You'll then see a little drawing toolbar below your photo.

Choose a pen, colour and line thickness

The first three buttons on this toolbar let you choose a tool to draw with – a choice of two pens (which you can set up with different colours and thicknesses) and a highlighter. After clicking a tool, clicking it a second time then lets you choose a colour and size (line thickness). Now simply draw freehand on the photo as you like, changing pens and/or colours as you like.



Erase a line you've drawn

If you go wrong, click the fourth button, the eraser, and click the mouse on any stroke of a pen to remove it.

Discard the result or save a new copy of this photo

If you decide you don't want to keep this newly-decorated photo, click arrow in the top-left corner of the window followed by **OK** when asked if you want to leave without saving. If you would like to keep the result, click the **Save a copy** button at the top-right of the window: in the Save As dialog that appears, choose a slightly different name for the file (and/or a different folder to save it in) and click the **Save** button.