

## **Task Bar and Start Menu**

The Windows 8.1 desktop

Most of the elements that make up the desktop in Windows 8.1 should be familiar to anyone who has used Windows in the past decade. The taskbar and notification area work very much like their Windows 7 counterparts. Desktop programs work just as they did in Windows 7. Control Panel and File Explorer look a little different but essentially work the same as their predecessors. The techniques for moving, arranging, and managing program windows on the desktop are the same.

The desktop

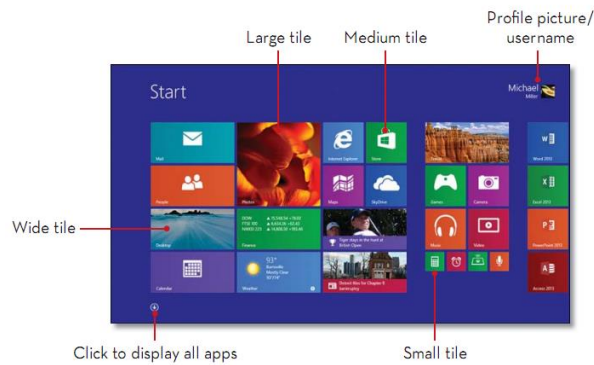
that fills your screen is part of Windows, as is the taskbar at the bottom of the screen and the big menu that pops up when you click the Start button.

If you've used a version of Windows prior to Windows 8, or seen someone else using Windows in the past, you might think that this new version of Windows looks a lot different—and you'd be right. Windows 8 introduced a completely different user interface to the operating system, and Windows 8.1 builds on that. The Windows 8/8.1 user interface is called the Modern interface, and it differs from the traditional Windows desktop.

Although this new element occupies the same spot as the Start button in Windows 7, it doesn't lead to a Start menu. Instead, it leads to the Start screen and Apps view. In Windows 8.1, as in Windows 8, there is no direct equivalent to the Start menu found in Windows 7 and previous versions.

In Windows 8.1, everything starts on the Start screen (the home screen full of tiles for different apps) and goes from there.

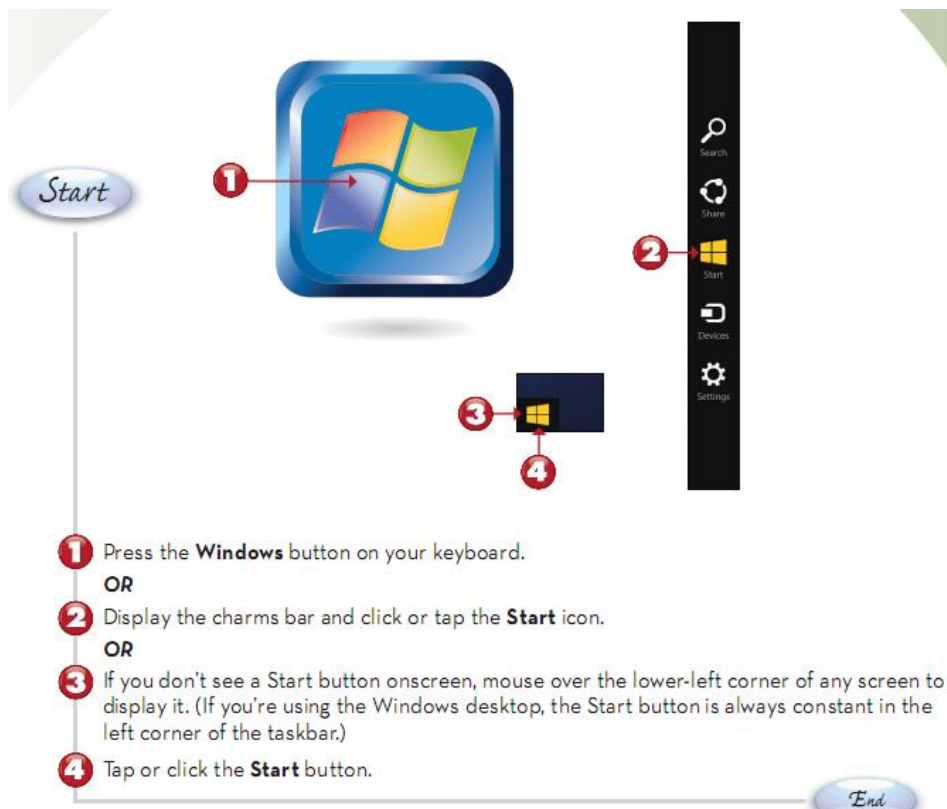
## EXPLORING THE START SCREEN



## DISPLAYING THE START SCREEN

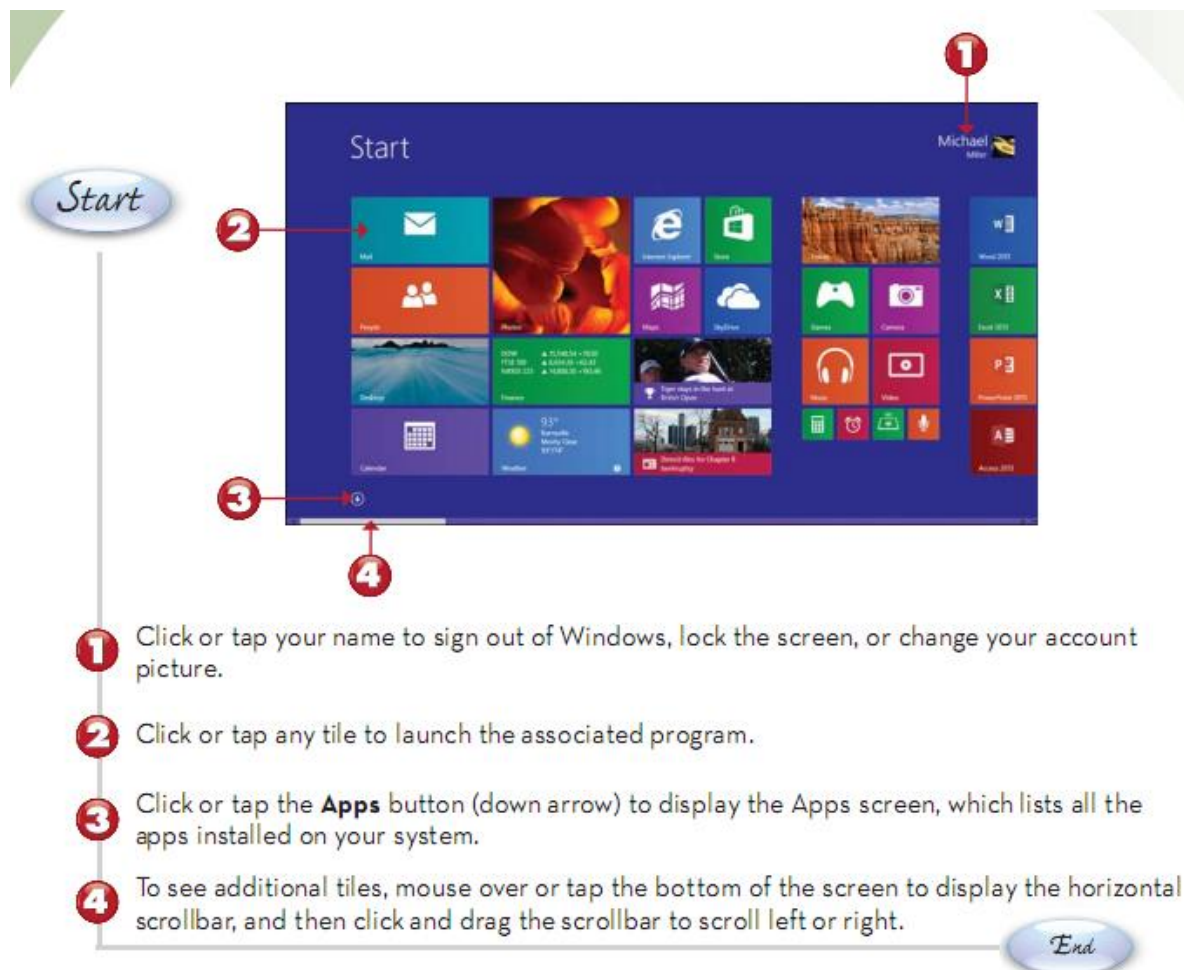
You can easily return to the Start screen from any other screen in Windows, even the desktop, using either the keyboard or the mouse. For many users, clicking the Start button (which appears at the lower-left corner of every screen) is the quickest way to display the Start screen.

The Start screen is where you start out and where you launch new apps and software programs.



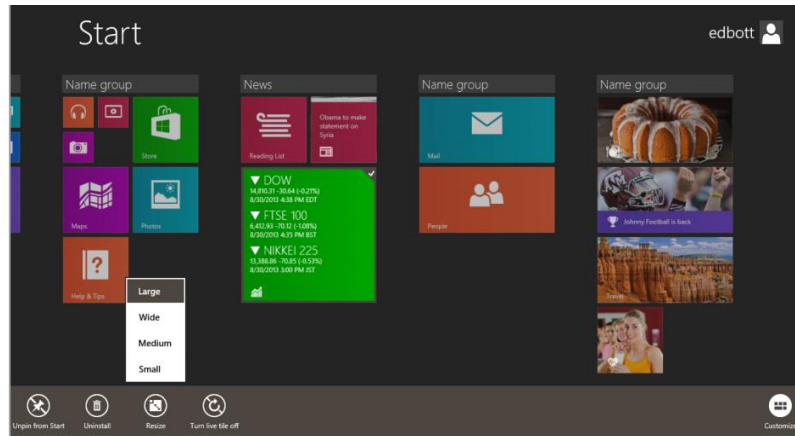
New to Windows 8.1 The Start button was not present in Windows 8. The ability to return to the Start screen by clicking the Start button is new to Windows 8.1.

**Start Menu The Windows 8.1 Start button** does not function like the Start button in older versions of Windows. Prior to Windows 8, clicking the Start button brought up a Start menu of all the apps installed on your system. The new Windows 8.1 Start button takes you to the Start screen, instead; there is no Start menu in Windows 8 or 8.1.



## Customizing the Start screen

To switch into customization mode, go to the Start screen or Apps view, swipe up from the bottom (or right-click), and then click **Customize** on the command bar. Even simpler, right-click a tile on the Start screen or an app in Apps view, or on a touchscreen press and hold a tile or app. That action selects the tile or app and switches into customization mode, where you can continue selecting apps and tiles. Figure 2-8 shows the Start screen in customization mode.



Windows 8.1 allows you to perform most of the following actions on multiple selections, provided that the action you want to take applies:

- **Move tiles** In Windows 8.1, you can select multiple tiles and drag them to a new location on the Start screen.

- **Arrange tiles into groups, with or without names** Windows 8.1 uses the same basic procedure as Windows 8 for grouping tiles on the Start screen, with two improvements. First, you can select multiple tiles and move them at once, and second, you can name a group from the basic customization screen instead of having to zoom out.

- **Pin and unpin tiles for Windows apps** Any entry on the list of Windows 8 apps and desktop programs in Apps view can be pinned to the Start screen. To unpin one or more tiles, make a selection and then click **Unpin From Start** on the app bar at the bottom of the display.

- **Pin and unpin tiles for Internet Explorer shortcuts and File Explorer shortcuts** You can pin any website to Start from Internet Explorer.

- **Change the size of tiles on the Start screen** Windows 8.1 supports a total of four tile sizes. The Medium and Wide sizes were introduced in Windows 8 and remain unchanged. Windows 8.1 adds a new Small size, which allows eight Small tiles to fit in the same space as one Wide tile. The new Large tile, which is twice the height of a Wide tile, is available only for apps that are written to support it.

- **Turn live tiles on and off** For Windows apps that support the feature, you can click **Turn Live Tile Off** to disable automatic updates on the Start screen. Click **Turn Live Tile On** to re-enable the feature.

- **Uninstall Windows Store apps** You can uninstall most Microsoft-authored apps

that are included with a default installation of Windows 8.1. A handful of items can't be uninstalled and must remain in Apps view, although they can be unpinned from Start; PC Settings, SkyDrive, Desktop, and Store are all in this group. Note that Windows desktop apps can be uninstalled only by using a desktop uninstaller, typically reached through the Programs And Features option in the desktop Control Panel.

## LEARNING THE NEW START SCREEN

### Arrange your apps

If you've upgraded from Windows 8, the apps you already had are still there, but at first you might have a hard time finding them. The new Apps screen is a swipe (or click) away and you can arrange apps in any of the four ways, making it easier to organize and find apps.

### Search for apps

Of course, you can still easily search for an app using the Search Charm.

## LEARNING TO PERSONALIZE THE START SCREEN

**Resize a tile :** There are new tile sizes, giving you a choice of Small, Medium, Large and Wide icons for displaying your programs.

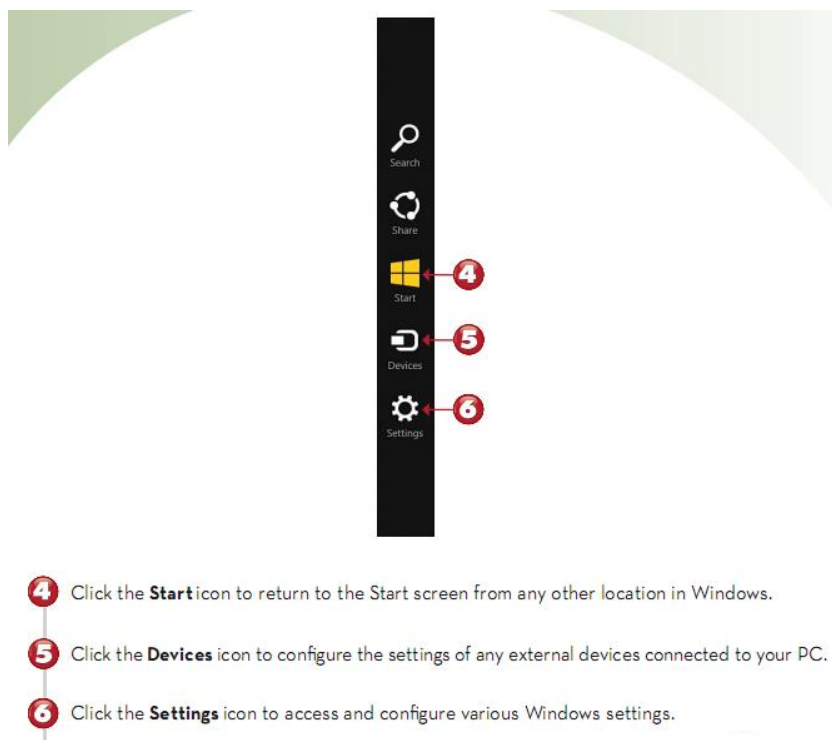
**Choose your background:** You can choose from over one-hundred different color combinations and pre-installed Start Screen Patterns.



Windows 8.1 introduces a host of new personalization options with over one-hundred different color combinations and pre-installed Start Screen Patterns.

## USING THE CHARMS BAR

Windows 8 has more functions up its sleeve, although they're not obvious during normal use. These are a series of system functions, called charms, which are accessed from a charms bar that appears on the right side of the screen.



## GETTING HELP IN WINDOWS

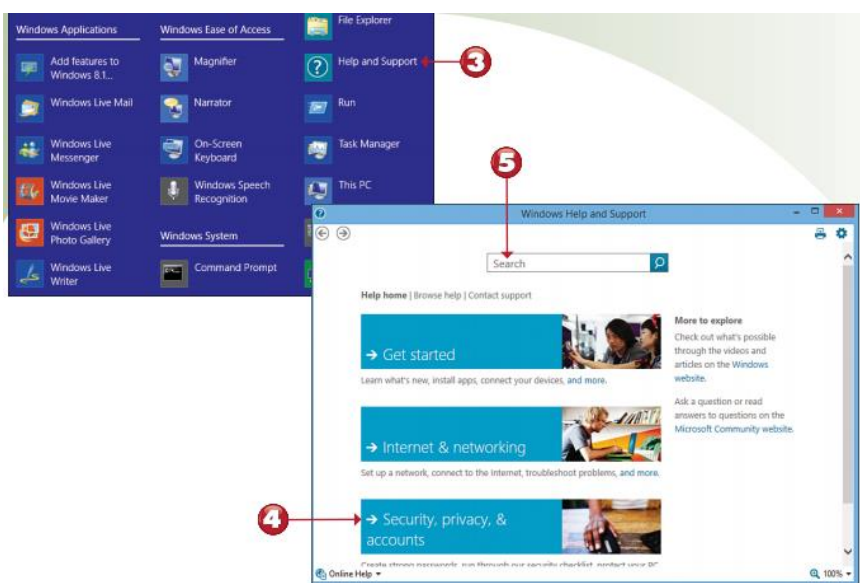
When you can't figure out how to perform a particular task, ask for help. In Windows 8, you can ask for help through the Windows Help and Support Center .





1 Press the **Windows** key or click the Start button to display the Start screen.

2 Click the **Apps** (down arrow) button to display the Apps screen.



3 Scroll to the Windows System section and tap or click **Help and Support**. This opens a Help and Support window on the Windows desktop.

4 Click one of the suggested help topics on the main screen.

OR

5 Enter a description of your issue into the Search box, and then press **Enter**.

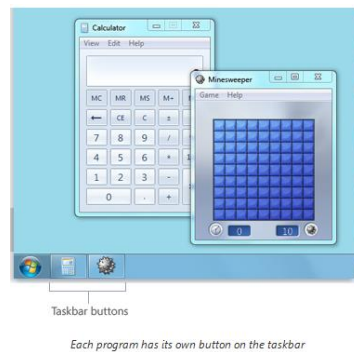
## Task Bar

The taskbar is the long horizontal bar at the bottom of your screen. Unlike the desktop, which can get obscured by open windows, the taskbar is almost always visible.

Taskbar has three main sections:

- The Start button, which opens the Start menu.
- The middle section, which shows you which programs and files you have open and allows you to quickly switch between them.
- The notification area, which includes a clock and icons (small pictures) that communicate the status of certain programs and computer settings.

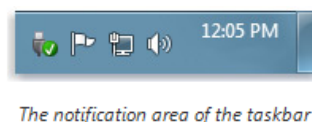
Whenever you open a program, folder, or file, Windows creates a corresponding button on the middle section of the taskbar, the button shows an icon that represents the open program. In the picture below, two programs are open (Calculator and Minesweeper game) and each has its own button on the taskbar.





If a taskbar button is **highlight**, this indicates that it is the active window, meaning that it's in front of any other open windows and is ready for you to interact with. To switch to another window, click its taskbar button.

When a window is active (its taskbar button is highlighted), clicking its taskbar button minimizes the window. That means that the window disappears from the desktop. Minimizing a window doesn't close it or delete its contents because it has a button on the taskbar, it temporarily removes it from the desktop.

The notification area, on the far right side of the taskbar, includes a clock and a group of icons.



These icons communicate the status of something on your computer or provide access to certain settings. The set of icons you see depends on which programs or services you have installed and how your computer manufacturer set up your computer.

When you move your pointer to a particular icon, you will see that icon's name or the status of a setting. For example, pointing to the volume icon  shows the current volume level of your computer. Pointing to the network icon  displays information about whether you are connected to a network, the connection speed, and the signal strength.

Clicking an icon in the notification area usually opens the program or setting associated with it. For example, double-clicking the volume icon opens the volume controls. Clicking the network icon opens Network and Sharing Center. An icon in the notification area will display a small pop-up window



(called a *notification*) to notify you about something. For example, after adding a new hardware device to your computer, you might see this.



*The notification area displays a message after new hardware is installed*

To reduce clutter, Windows hides icons in the notification area when you haven't used them in a while. If icons become hidden, click the Show hidden icons button to temporarily display the hidden icons.



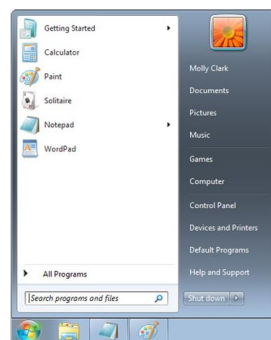
*Click to show hidden icons*

*Click the Show hidden icons button to display all icons in the notification area*

You can hide (then show), lock, or resize the taskbar, and add a toolbar to the taskbar.

## Start Menu



The Start menu is the main gateway to your computer's programs, folders, and settings. It's called a menu because it provides a list of choices, just as a restaurant menu does. And as "start" implies, it's often the place that you'll go to start or open things.



*Start menu*

***Use the Start menu to do these common activities:***

- Start programs
- Open commonly used folders
- Search for files, folders, and programs
- Adjust computer settings
- Get help with the Windows operating system
- Turn off the computer
- Log off from Windows or switch to a different user account

To open the Start menu, click the Start button  in the lower-left corner of your screen. Or, press the Windows logo key  on your keyboard.

### *The Start menu is divided into three basic parts:*

- The large **left pane** shows a short list of programs on your computer. Your computer manufacturer can customize this list, so its exact appearance will vary. Clicking All Programs displays a complete list of programs .
- At the bottom of the left pane is the **search box**, which allows you look for programs and files on your computer by typing in search terms.
- The **right pane** provides access to commonly used folders, files, settings, and features. It's also where you go to log off from Windows or turn off your computer.

### *Opening programs from the Start menu*

One of the most common uses of the Start menu is opening programs installed on your computer. To open a program shown in the left pane of the Start menu, click it. The program opens and the Start menu closes. If you don't see the program you want, click All Programs at the bottom of the left pane. Instantly, the left pane displays a long list of programs in alphabetical order, followed by a list of folders.

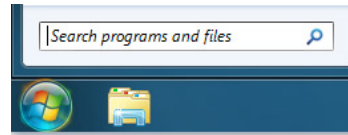
Clicking one of the program [icons](#) launches the program, and the Start menu closes. So what's inside the folders? More programs. Click Accessories, for example, and a list of programs that are stored in that folder appears. Click any program to open it. To get back to the programs you saw when you first opened the Start menu, click Back near the bottom of the menu.

If you're ever unsure what a program does, move the pointer over its icon or name. A box appears that often contains a description of the program. For example, pointing to Calculator displays this message: "Performs basic arithmetic tasks with an on-screen calculator." This feature works for items in the right pane of the Start menu, too.

You might notice that over time, the lists of programs in your Start menu change. This happens for two reasons. First, when you install new programs, they get added to the All Programs list. Second, the Start menu detects which programs you use the most, and places them in the left pane for quick access.

## **The search box**

The search box is one of the most convenient ways to find things on your computer. The exact location of the items doesn't matter—the search box will scour your programs and all of the folders in your personal folder (which includes Documents, Pictures, Music, Desktop, and other common locations). It will also search your e-mail messages, saved instant messages, appointments, and contacts.



*The Start menu search box*

- The ***right pane of the Start menu*** contains links to parts of Windows that you're likely to use frequently. Here they are, from top to bottom:
  - **Personal folder**. Opens your [personal folder](#), which is named for whoever is currently logged on to Windows. For example, if the current user is Molly Clark, the folder will be named Molly Clark. This folder, in turn, contains user-specific files, including the Documents, Music, Pictures, and Videos folders.
  - **Documents**. Opens the Documents folder, where you can store and open text files, spreadsheets, presentations, and other kinds of documents.
  - **Pictures**. Opens the Pictures folder, where you can store and view digital pictures and graphics files.
  - **Music**. Opens the Music folder, where you can store and play music and other audio files.
  - **Games**. Opens the Games folder, where you can access all of the games on your computer.
  - **Computer**. Opens a window where you can access disk drives, cameras, printers, scanners, and other hardware connected to your computer.
  - **Control Panel**. Opens Control Panel, where you can customize the appearance and functionality of your computer, install or uninstall programs, set up network connections, and manage user accounts.
  - **Devices and Printers**. Opens a window where you can view information about the printer, mouse, and other devices installed on your computer.
  - **Default Programs**. Opens a window where you can choose which program you want Windows to use for activities such as web browsing.
  - **Help and Support**. Opens Windows Help and Support, where you can browse and search Help topics about using Windows and your computer.

At the bottom of the right pane is the Shut down button. Click the Shut down button to turn off your computer. Clicking the arrow next to the Shut down button displays a menu with additional options for switching users, logging off, restarting, or shutting down.

***You can make the following:***

- \* Pin and remove a program icon to and from the start menu.
- \* Move the start button.
- \* Add and clear recently opened files or programs to and from the start menu.
- \* Adjust the number of shortcuts for frequently used programs.
- \* Customize the right pane of the start menu.
- \* Search for programs from the start menu.
- \* Add the run command to the start menu.