

# How to make Windows 10 more tolerable with these six simple tricks

By Jared Newman | PCWorld | MAR 17, 2021

These eye-pleasing PC tweaks will make using Windows 10 a bit more pleasant.

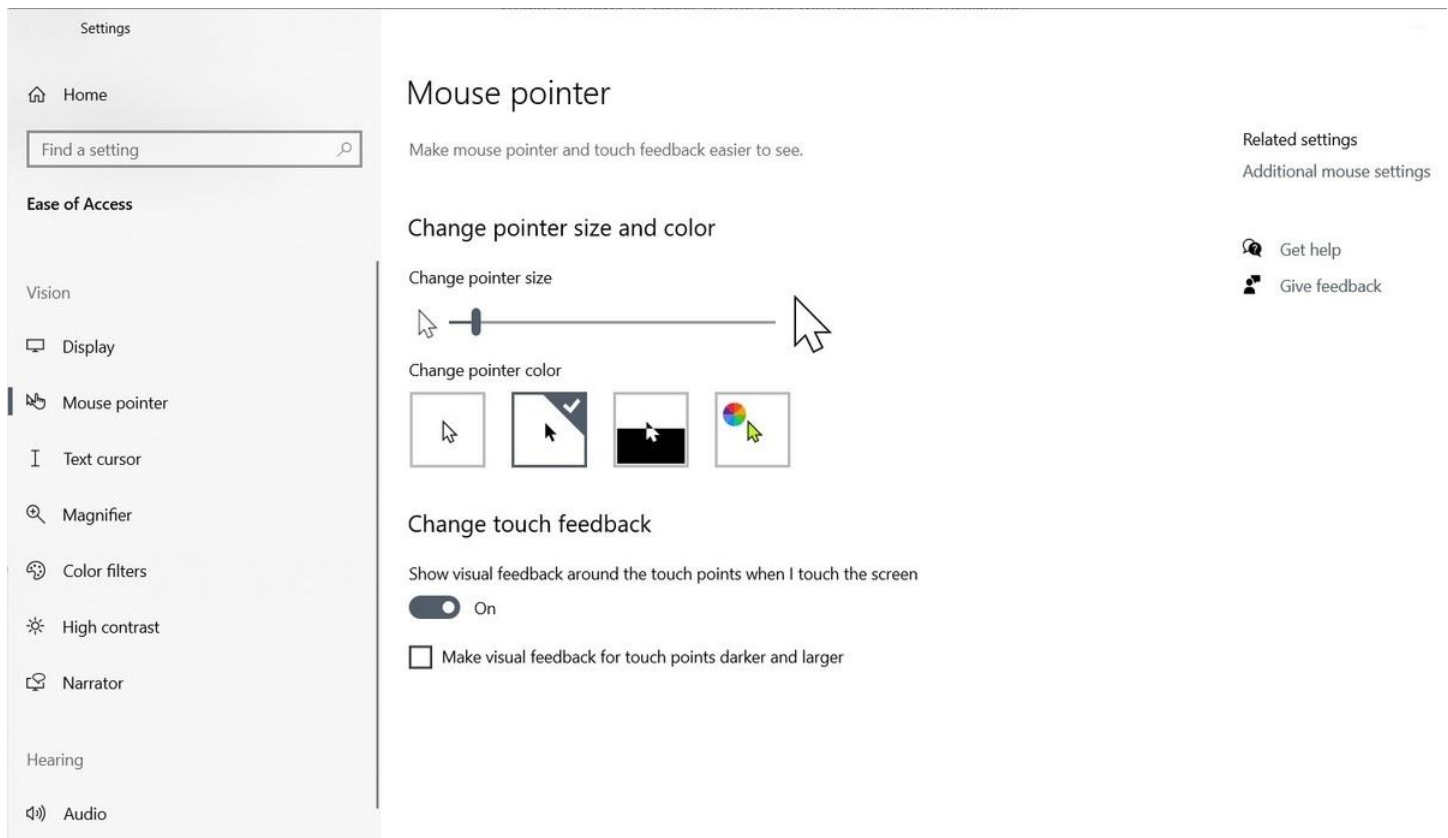
In what was either a revelation or a sign of getting older, I recently experienced a sudden urge to make my Windows 10 mouse cursor bigger.

Squinting at the teeny default cursor in Windows 10, I wondered why I was punishing myself. A quick trip to Windows settings, and I was in business with a larger pointer. Life's too short to feel ashamed at making screen elements larger than the default.

Making this switch got me thinking about all the other little tweaks I've done to make using Windows a little more pleasant. A short list is below:

## Change your Windows 10 cursor size and color

In Windows, you can make the cursor larger by heading to *Settings > Ease of Access > Mouse Pointer*, or by typing "mouse size" in the Start menu and pressing Enter. Look for the "Change pointer size" slider on the settings page.



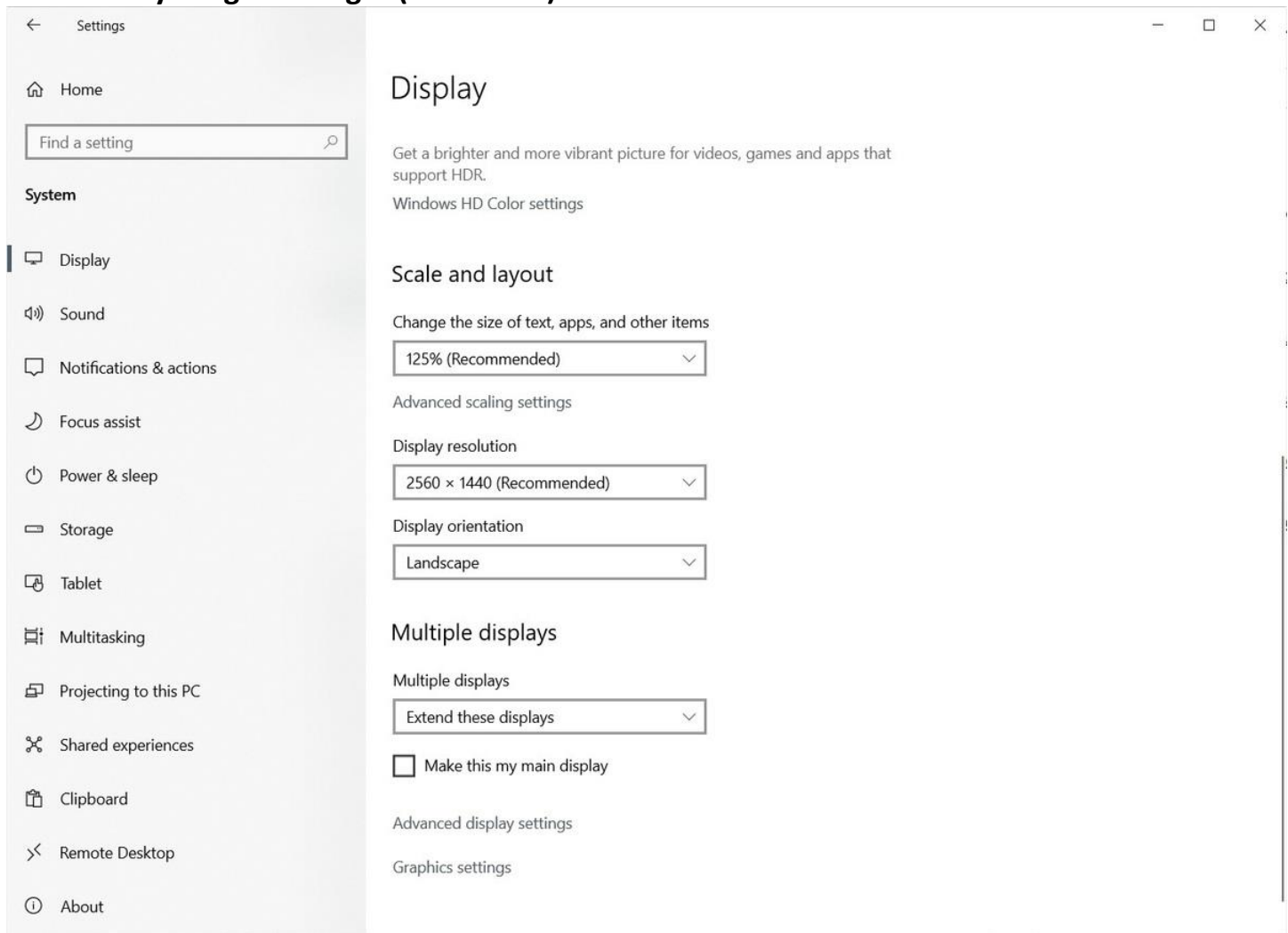
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You can also change the cursor color from its default white in the same menu. (I'm partial to the black cursor with a white outline. This resembles the default on Macs and stands out better against white backgrounds.)

## Make your Windows 10 taskbar or dock smaller

While it's nice to have a bigger cursor, you don't really need big taskbar or dock icons taking up valuable screen space. Shrink down the Windows taskbar by right-clicking on it, selecting "Taskbar settings," then enabling "Use small taskbar buttons."

## Make everything else larger (or smaller)



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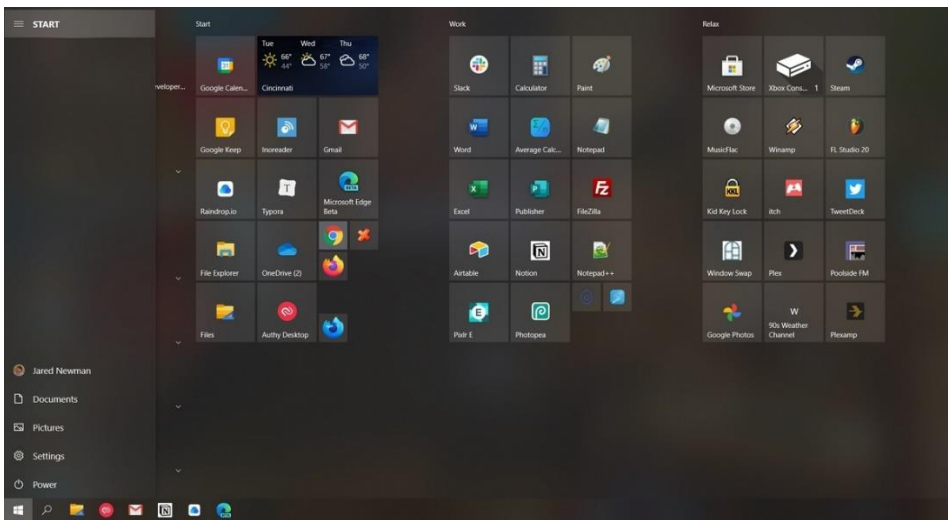
Do your icons, text, and other screen elements seem too small (or, perhaps, too large)? In Windows 10, you can easily adjust the size of everything without changing your screen's display resolution. Just head to *Settings* > *System* > *Display*, then look under “Scale and layout” for a setting called “Change the size of text, apps, and other items.” Increase or decrease the percentage to make items larger or smaller.

## Never combine taskbar buttons

This one might be a little contentious, but I've never liked the way Windows combines multiple windows from a single program behind one taskbar button. That just adds more time and friction to the process of switching between windows, especially if you group web browsing tasks into separate windows like I do. To fully spread your windows, right-click on the taskbar, select “Taskbar settings,” and change “Combine taskbar buttons” to “Never.”

## Stretch out the Windows 10 Start menu

In Windows 10, I've never understood why the Start menu only takes up a sliver of the screen by default. Give yourself more room to place your favorite app shortcuts by clicking the right edge of the Start menu, then dragging it out to the right. You can also make the Start menu taller by clicking and dragging up on the top edge.



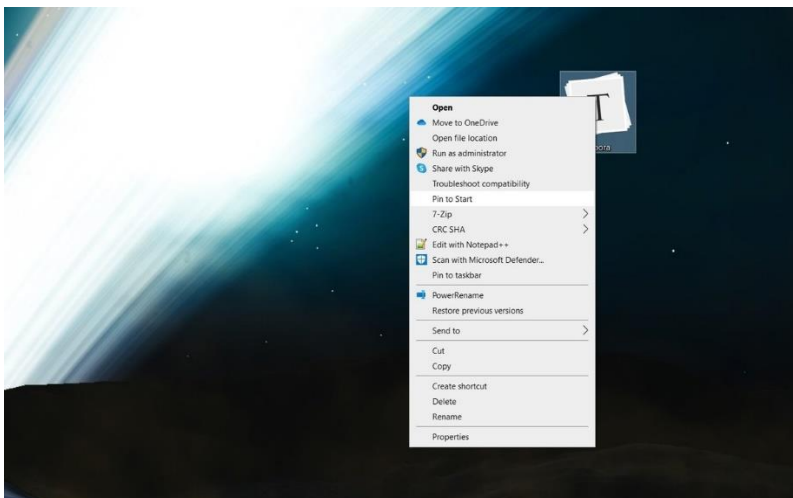
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If, after doing this, you want to cram more apps into each section of the Start menu—or add some more visual separation between sections—just head to *Settings > Personalization > Start* and enable “Show more tiles on Start.” This gives each section four columns instead of the usual three.

## Clean up your Windows 10 desktop

Ideally, your computer’s desktop should be a place of serenity, where you can showcase an interesting image or personal photo. Instead of cluttering it with files you’ll never use or icons you’ll never click, consider limiting your desktop to the handful of apps you really use most.

First, move your less frequently used apps from the desktop to your Start menu. You can do this by right-clicking on any desktop icon, selecting “Pin to Start,” then deleting the icon from your desktop.



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For files, just move them to a different folder on your computer, such as Documents or Photos. Or, at the very least, move them all into a single folder on your desktop. (Just don’t delete the files from your desktop unless they’re unnecessary; doing so will send them straight to the Recycle Bin.)

## More eye-pleasing tricks await

If you want to go even deeper with visual tweaks for Windows, check out [this handy guide](#), with tips on setting up automatic dark mode, night modes, grayscale mode for staying focused, and more.