

# 12 hidden Windows 11 features that are actually worth using

By [Anyron Copeman](#), Senior Staff Writer, Tech Advisor JAN 17, 2023

If you followed the Windows 11 launch in 2021 or have recently started using Microsoft's latest operating system, you'll be familiar with its main features.

A redesigned Start menu and taskbar, new multitasking functionality and Android app support are among the most well-known, but there are lots more you might not be aware of.

In this article, we'll run through 12 of the best [Windows 11](#) features which aren't obvious or easy to find. Some are buried deep in Settings, while others are just a couple of clicks away. Several are also available in Windows 10, but you might not have been using them there, either.

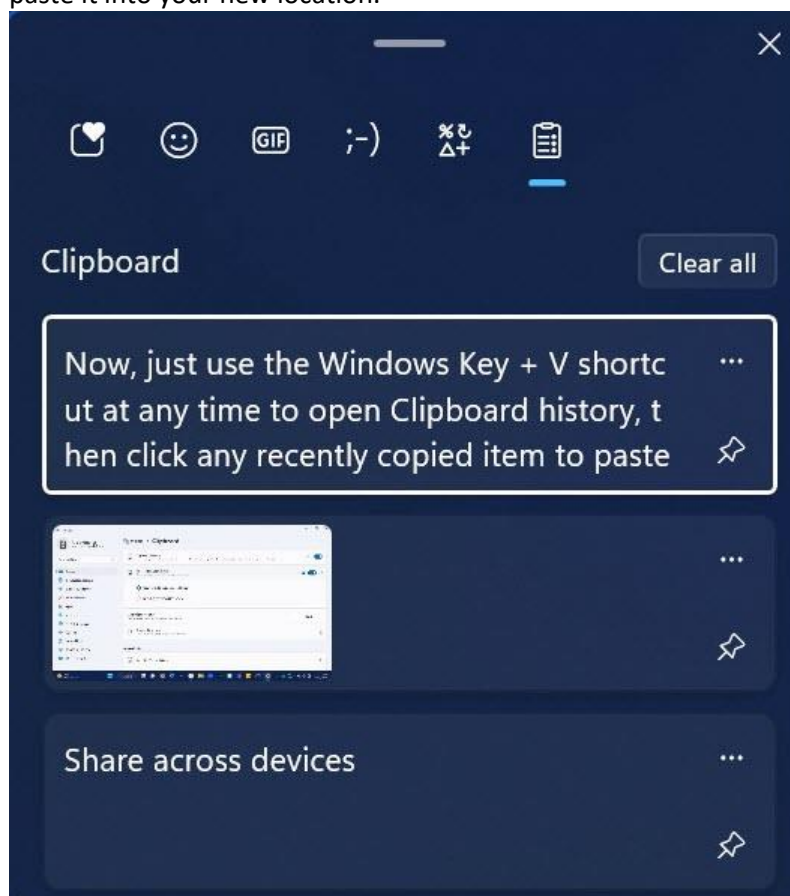
## Clipboard history

Copying and pasting is something many of us do every day, but there's no need to be limited to one thing at a time. Windows 11's Clipboard history feature lets you access everything you've recently copied in one place, including both text and images, but it needs to be enabled first:

Head to Settings > System > Clipboard

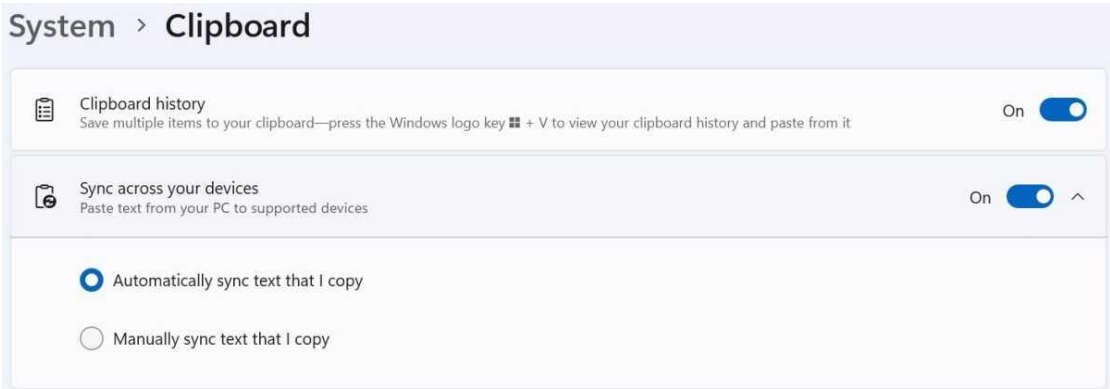
Make sure the toggle next to 'Clipboard history' is turned on

Now, just use the Windows Key + V shortcut at any time to open Clipboard history, then click any recently copied item to paste it into your new location.



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1. You can take this to the next level by turning on 'Share across devices', which lets you access all copied items from all your Windows 10 or 11 devices:
2. Head back into Settings > System > Clipboard
3. Next to 'Sync across your devices', either turn on the toggle or click 'Get Started'. In the case of the latter, you'll be prompted to verify the email linked to your Microsoft account
4. Once enabled, click the drop-down next to the toggle and choose either automatic syncing (everything you copy is shared) or manual syncing (you choose specific text to share)

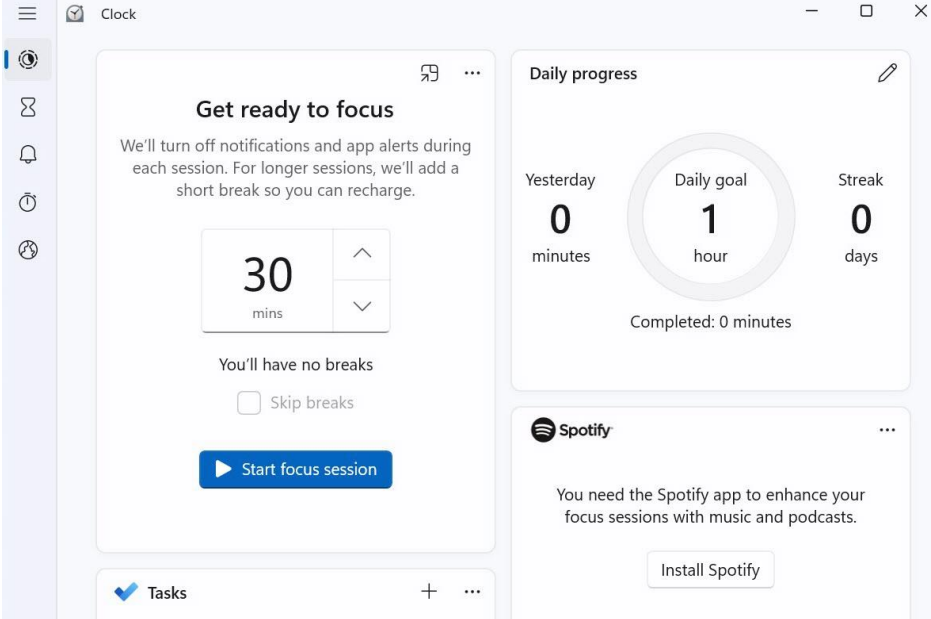


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### Focus sessions

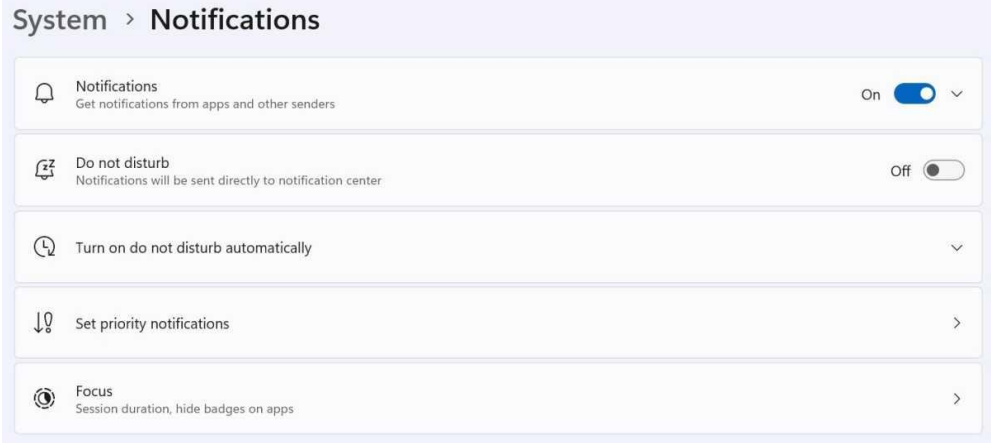
Did you know that Windows 11 can help you stay on task? The Focus sessions feature turns on do not disturb and hides flashing taskbar apps to reduce distractions.

Customisation is available at Settings > System > Focus, but starting a session via the Clock app is easier. Focus sessions is the screen you'll see as soon as the app opens, with options to specify duration, breaks and a daily goal. There's also integration with the Microsoft To-Do app and Spotify for music.



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Do not disturb turns off all notifications by default, but you can set 'priority notifications' to still be delivered via Settings > System > Notifications.



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## Taskbar keyboard shortcuts

You've probably pinned apps to the taskbar to make it easy to access them. Why not make the process even faster? For any windows you have open, Windows Key + 1 opens the first one, Windows Key + 2 opens the second and so on. But if you have nothing already open, the same shortcuts will open pinned apps in the corresponding position from left to right.

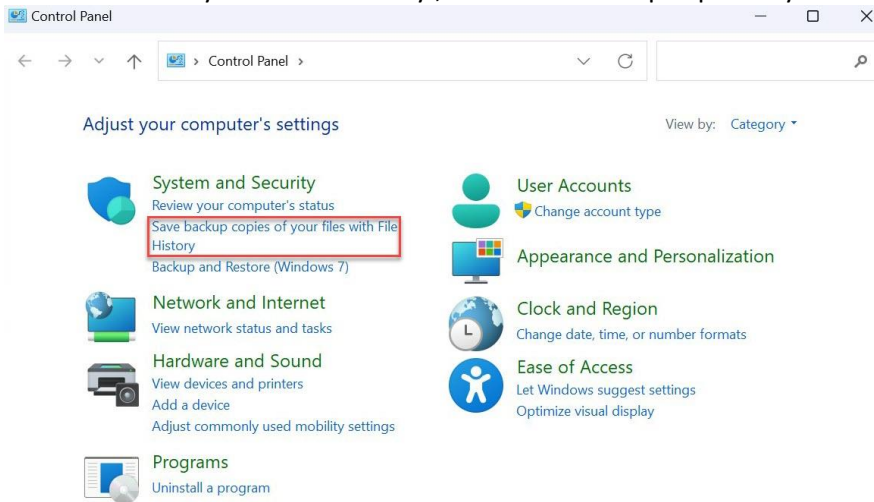
It's worth noting that this only applies to apps that you've manually pinned. It won't open the Widgets panel, Start menu, search bar, Task View or Microsoft Teams chat.

## File History

File History was introduced on Windows 8 to allow for automatic back up of specific files and folders – provided you always have a USB storage device connected.

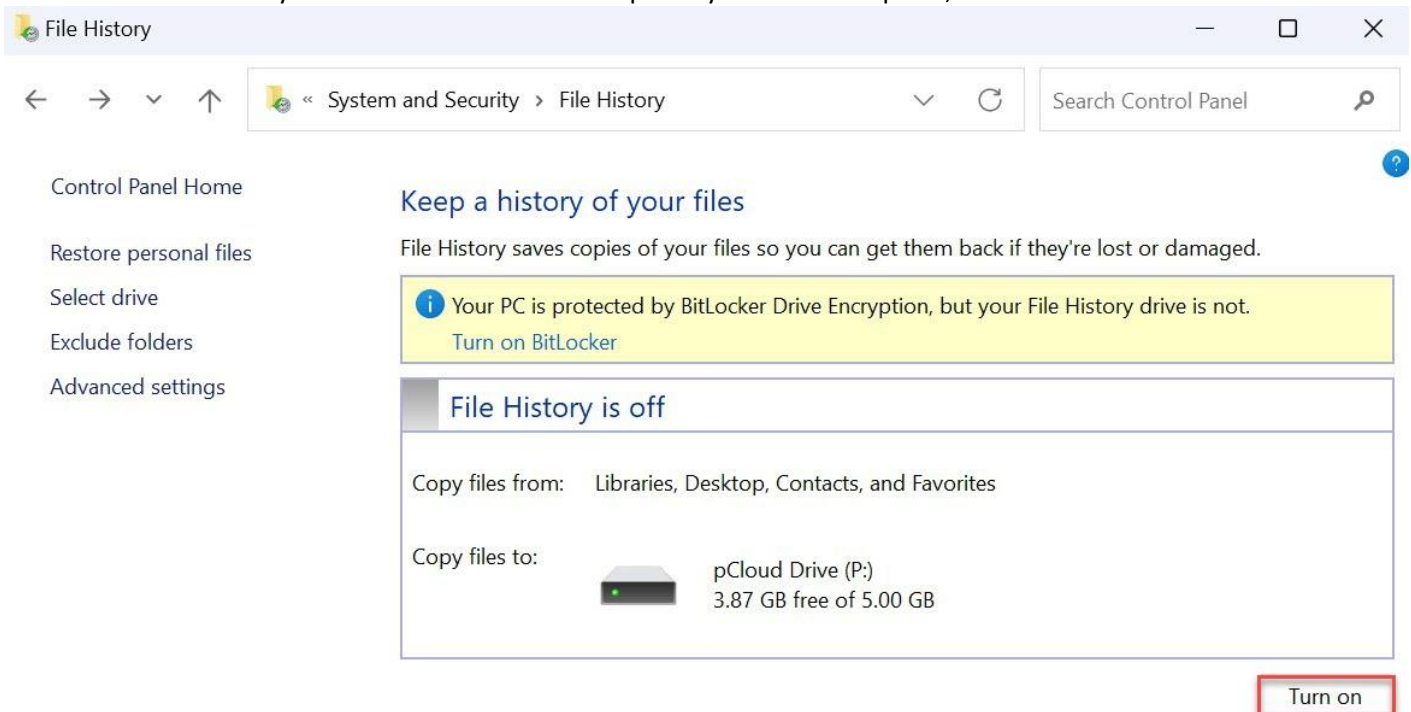
The option has been removed from the Settings app in Windows 11, but it's still available:

1. Search for 'Control Panel' and select the relevant app to open it
2. Under 'System and Security', click 'Save backup copies of your files with File History'



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3. Choose where you'd like files to be backed up to if you have the option, then click 'Turn on'

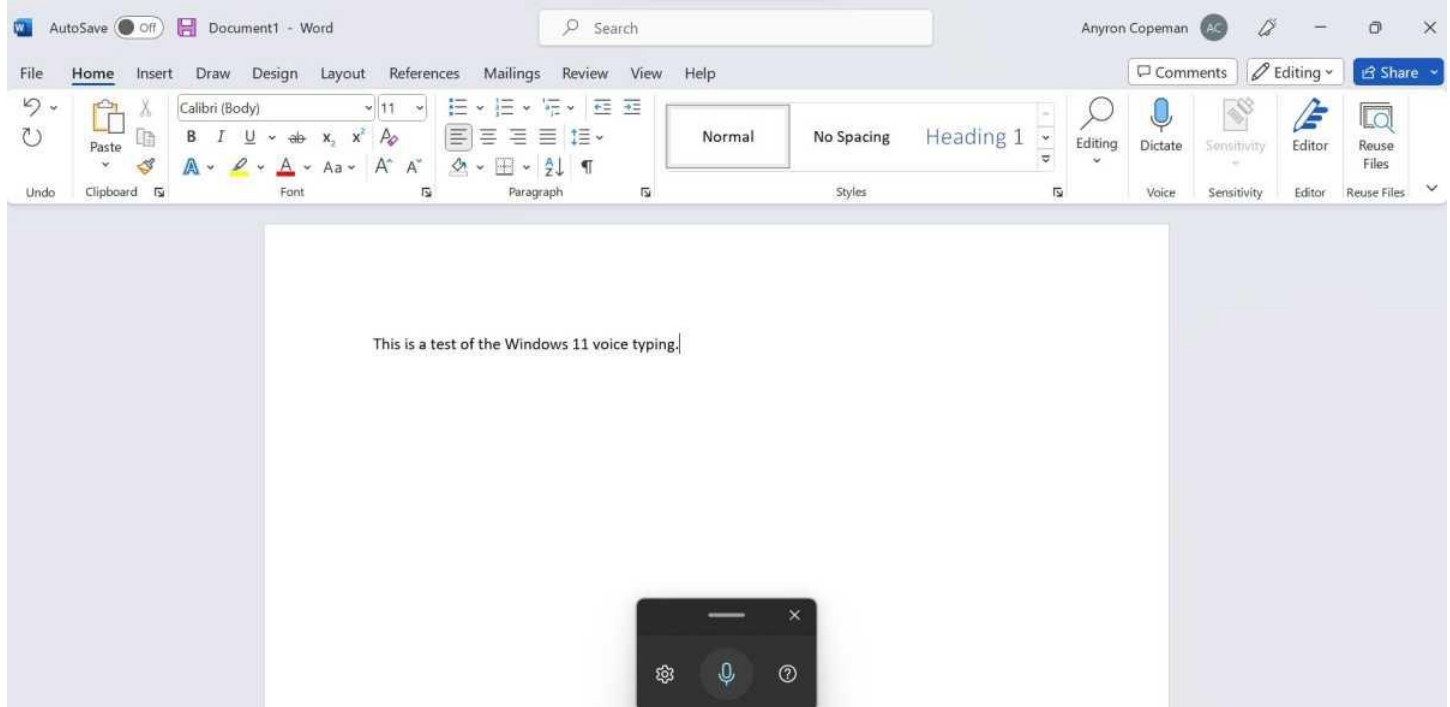


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It's worth noting that the BitLocker warning above will only appear if you have Windows 11 Pro. It's not available on Windows 11 Home, so can safely be ignored here.

## Voice typing

Voice-to-text technology has been around for a while, but did you know there's a version built into Windows 11? It's generally accurate and works everywhere that will let you type, although you'll need to stay connected to the internet. To get started, simply use the Windows Key + H shortcut and click the microphone icon if recording doesn't begin automatically. Stop at any time by clicking the microphone icon again. It was used to type this sentence, and no edits were required.

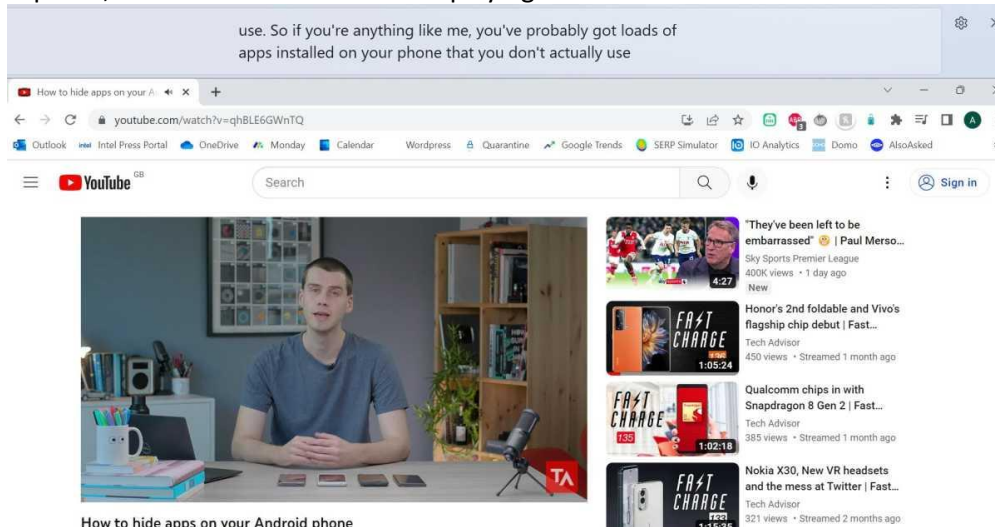


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## Live Captions

Live Captions is a great accessibility feature which provides real-time text transcription of any audio or video that you play. It's not perfect, but you usually get the gist of what's being said.

To get started, just search for 'live captions' and open the relevant app or use the Windows Key + Ctrl + L shortcut. Agree to the terms and conditions and click 'Download' if you've never used it before. Once you see the message 'Ready to caption', head to the audio and start playing it.



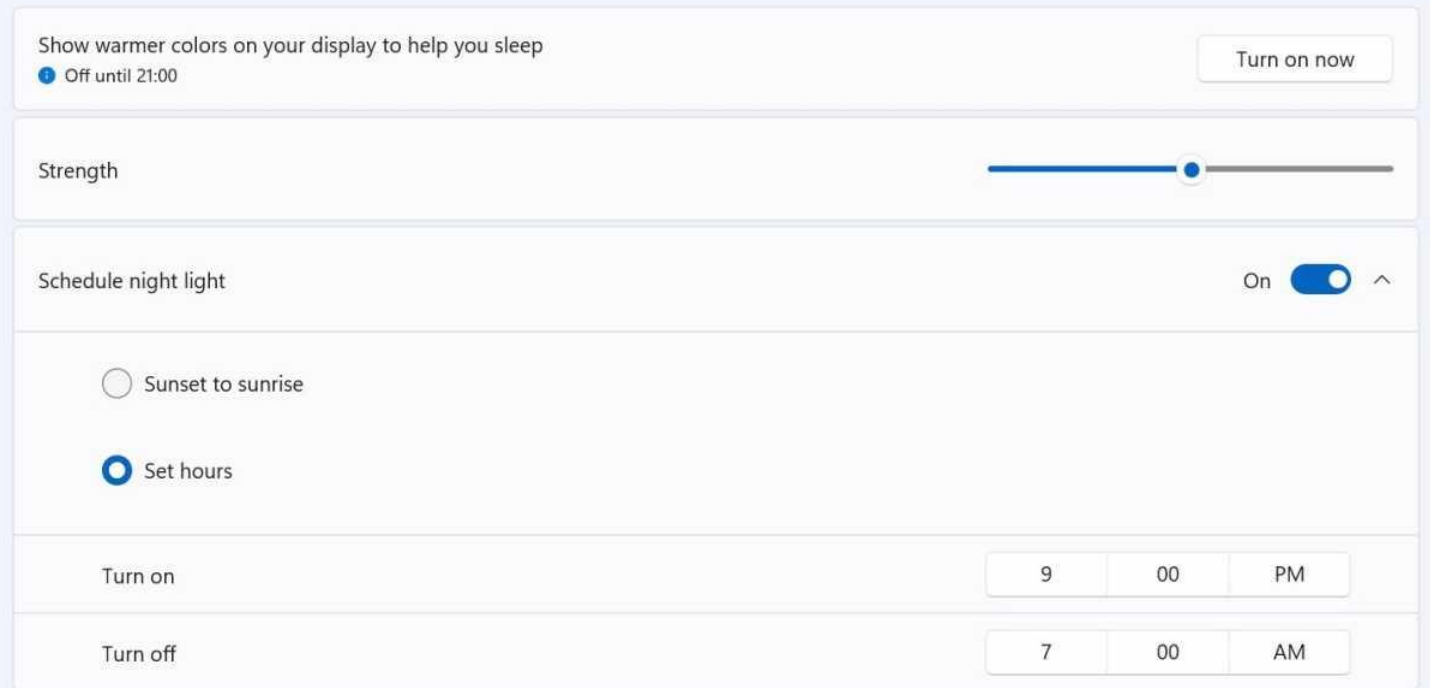
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## Night light

Just like most smartphones and tablets, Windows 11 has a built-in Night light, which shifts your display to warmer tones to help you sleep.

To turn it on, head to Settings > System > Display > Night light and click 'Turn on now'. But you might prefer to set a schedule – either specific hours or sunset to sunrise (if you have location turned on).

### System > Display > Night light



The screenshot shows the Windows 11 'Night light' settings page. At the top, there's a toggle switch for 'Show warmer colors on your display to help you sleep', which is currently turned off. Below this is a 'Turn on now' button. The 'Strength' section features a horizontal slider set to approximately 75%. The 'Schedule night light' section has a toggle switch turned 'On'. Underneath, there are two radio button options: 'Sunset to sunrise' (unselected) and 'Set hours' (selected). At the bottom, there are two time selection fields: 'Turn on' set to 9:00 PM and 'Turn off' set to 7:00 AM.

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From the same screen, you'll also find the option to choose the strength of the night light.

## Dynamic Refresh Rate

If your display can output at a higher refresh rate than the default 60Hz, it's worth checking if it can dynamically adjust according to what you're doing. This means you get the extra smoothness and fluidity of a 90Hz or 120Hz screen without such a hit to battery life.

To check, head to Settings > System > Display > Advanced display and choose your display from the drop-down next to 'Select a display to view or change its settings'.

Next the drop-down next to 'Choose a refresh rate' and see which options are available. You may have only one or several, but the 'Dynamic' mode is the one which will automatically adjust.

### System > Display > Advanced display



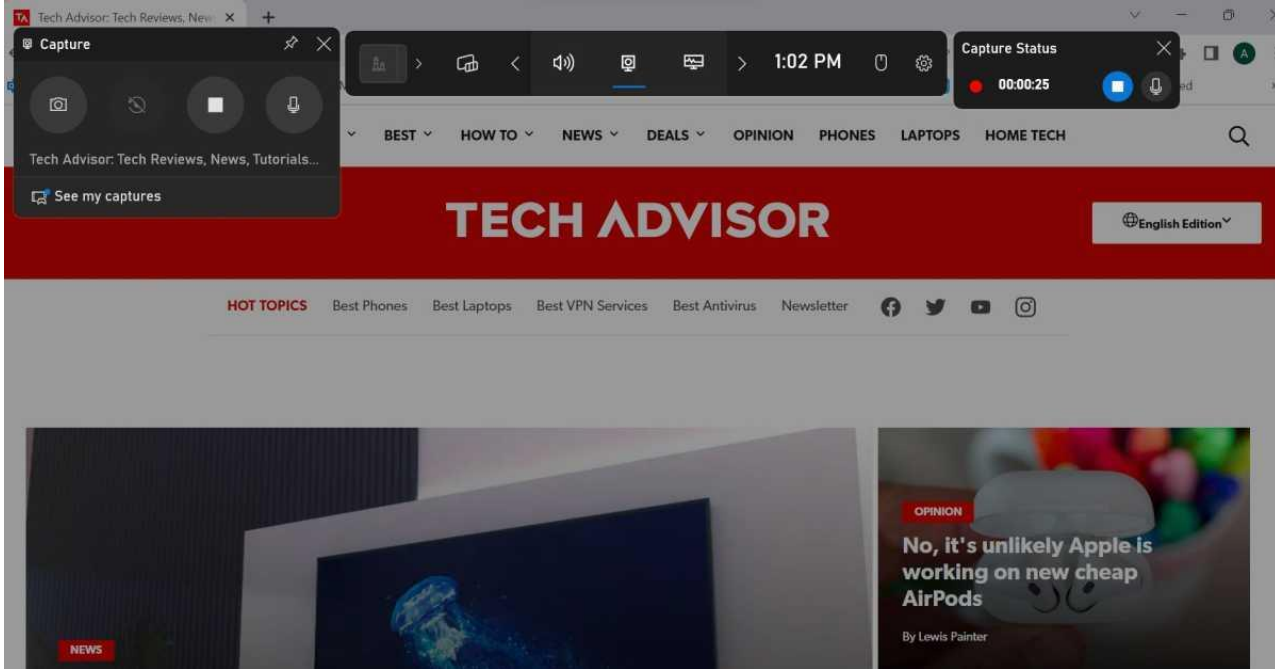
The screenshot shows the 'Advanced display' settings page. At the top, there's a dropdown menu for 'Select a display to view or change its settings' with 'Display 1: Internal Display' selected. Below this is the 'Display information' section, which shows details for 'Internal Display' (Display 1: Connected to Intel(R) Iris(R) Xe Graphics). The information includes: Desktop mode (1920 x 1080, 60 Hz), Active signal mode (1920 x 1080, 60 Hz), Bit depth (6-bit), Color format (RGB), and Color space (Standard dynamic range (SDR)). At the bottom, there's a 'Choose a refresh rate' section with a dropdown menu showing '60 Hz' and '48 Hz' options.

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## Screen recording

Microsoft has its own screen recorder tool pre-installed on Windows 11, but you might not be able to find it. It's built into the Xbox Game Bar, but offers all the functionality you'd expect.

To start using it, navigate to the app or page you'd like to record, then use the Windows Key + G shortcut. Click the 'Capture' icon (it looks like a small webcam) to begin recording, then the microphone icon at any time to start talking.



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All files are saved within File Explorer > Videos > Captures by default, but this can be changed via Settings > Gaming > Captures.

## Gaming > Captures

### Captures location

Screenshots and game clips will save to  
C:\Users\anyron\_copeman\Videos\Captures  
[How to save to a different folder](#)

Open folder

### Recording preferences



Record what happened

When something cool happened in your game, press Windows logo key + Alt + G to capture the moment

Off



Max recording length

Set the duration for recordings you start

2 hours



Capture audio when recording a game

On



Video frame rate

Recording at a higher frame rate may affect the quality of your game

30 fps (recommended)



Video quality

Recording higher quality video may affect the quality of your game

Standard

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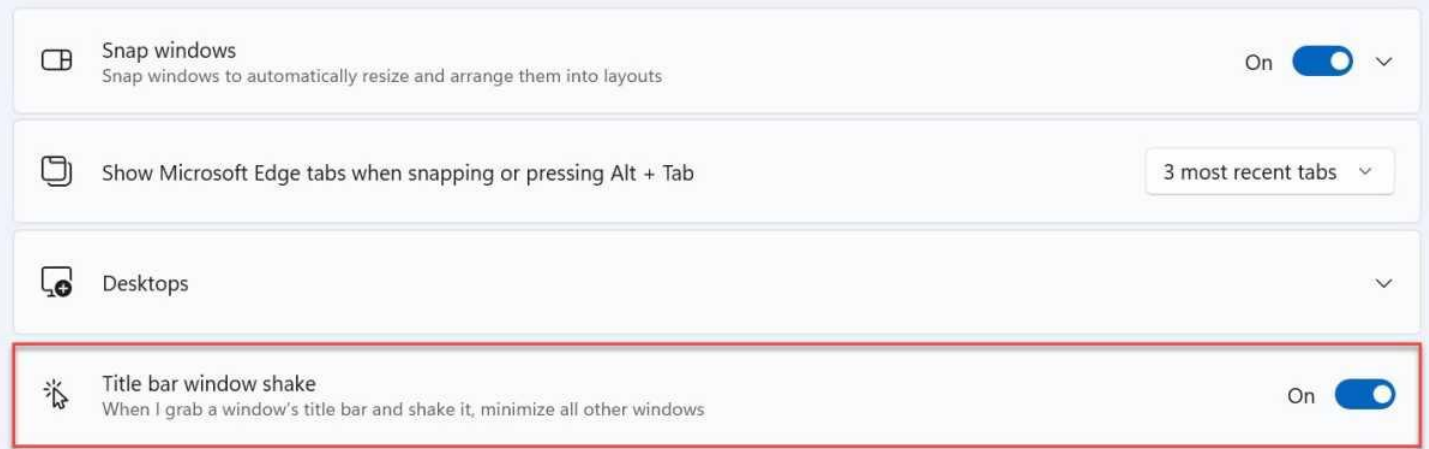


## Shake to minimise

If you've got lots of windows open at once, shaking the title bar of one can be used to minimise all the others. But the feature isn't turned on by default.

To enable it, head to Settings > System > Multitasking and turn on the toggle next to 'Title bar window shake'.

### System > Multitasking



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## Time stamp in Notepad

The pre-installed Notepad isn't the most advanced note-taking app, but it can be useful to quickly jot things down. One worthwhile feature is a shortcut for adding the current date and time at any moment.

Simply press F5 on your keyboard and it'll appear like below. You can also add this via Edit > Time/Date if you'd prefer.

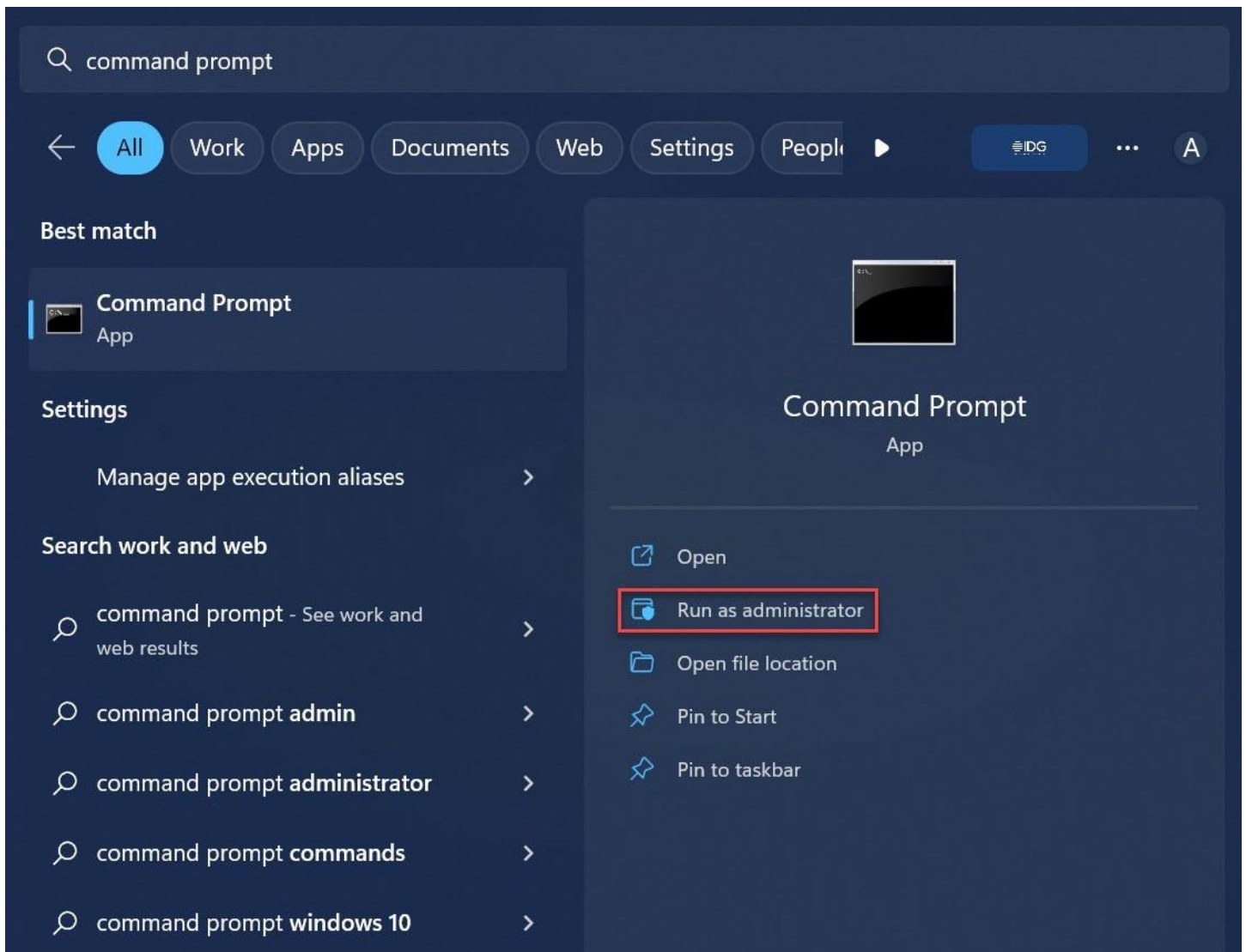


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## Hardware and Devices Troubleshooter

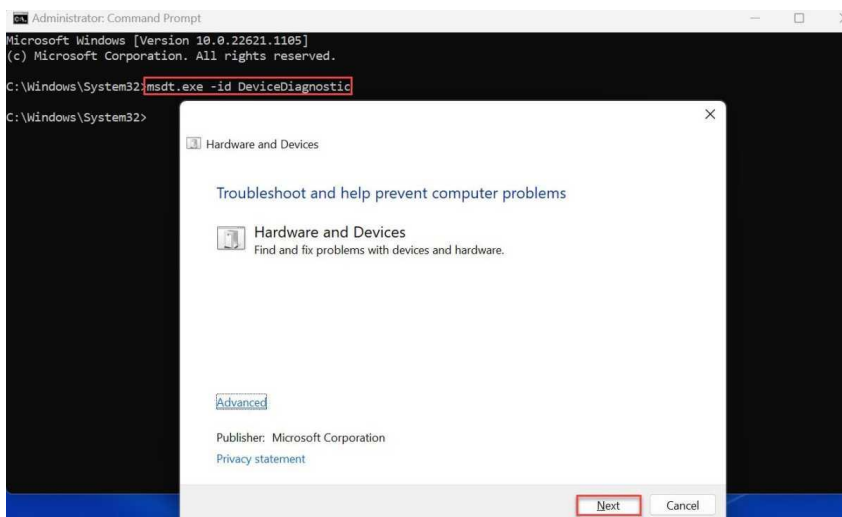
Microsoft still uses troubleshooters to solve issues in Windows 11, but the older 'Hardware and Devices' one has been removed from Settings. Fortunately, there's still a way to access it:

1. In the search bar on the taskbar, type 'Command Prompt', then choose 'Run as Administrator' followed by 'Yes'



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2. From the window that appears, type 'msdt.exe -id DeviceDiagnostic' and hit enter
3. The Hardware and Devices troubleshooter will now appear. Click 'Next' to get started, then follow the instructions



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