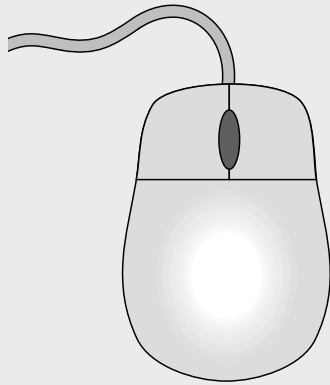


*What you should
know about your*

Mouse



Includes laptop touchpads,
touchscreens and fancy alternative mice

4th Edition: Windows 10

Introduction

PCs nowadays are designed to be used with a mouse, touchscreen or something similar, to move a pointer round the screen. Most people understand the basics, but sometimes you need more than that.

“What does the little wheel do...?”

“How do you change the settings if it’s too fast?”

“How do those flippin’ laptop touchpads work?”

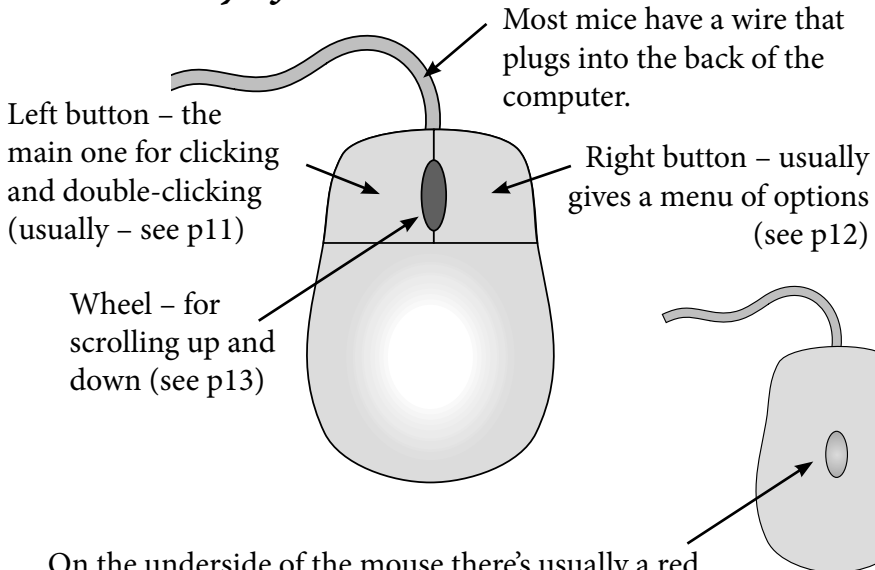
“How do I use this fancy new touchscreen laptop?”

If you can answer all those questions, great – you might not need this guide! For everyone else, here goes: everything you need to know about your mouse...

1. Basics

I thought it was worth starting with the absolute basics.

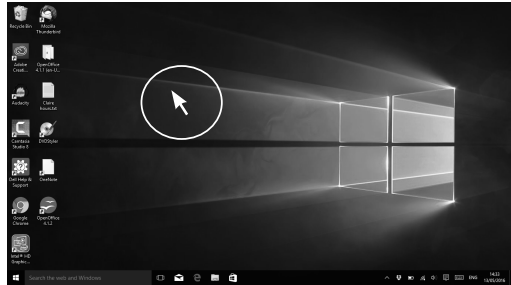
The anatomy of a mouse



On the underside of the mouse there’s usually a red light, which tells the computer which direction you’re moving the mouse. (In older mice, there might be a ball that rolls round as you move the mouse).

Moving the pointer (arrow) round the screen

The purpose of the mouse is to move the pointer round your computer screen. You move the mouse, and the pointer moves round the screen.



Clicking

A “click” is a single press of the left mouse button. With a single click you can select something on the screen, follow a link on a website or, within a text document, single click to tell the computer where you want to start typing.

Double-clicking

A “double-click” is two presses of the left mouse button. Usually these have to be done very quickly, one after the other, to count as a double-click. You can change how fast it needs to be if you can’t click fast enough (see p.7).

By double-clicking, you can do things like open a program from an icon on your desktop, or open a document directly from your “Documents” folder or library.

Dragging (aka “click and drag”)

To “drag” (move) something round the screen, you can click on it with the left mouse button, hold the button down, and move the mouse around. To put the thing down where you want it, you let go of the mouse button again.

You can use this to move a file to a different folder within “Documents”, move icons round your desktop and, within some programs, move words or pictures around on a page.

Right-clicking

A “right-click” is a single click with the right-hand mouse button. This will often bring up a menu of options, and there’s more about this on page 12.

2. Plugging it in

Most mice have a USB plug on the end – this plugs into the USB socket, which you’ll have on pretty much all computers (usually more than one).



A USB plug

They usually plug into the back of the computer (or side of a laptop) so you can keep the wires nicely out of your way.


And some are cordless – handy if you want to have your mouse and computer base at different sides of the desk. By the way, cordless mice (p23) still need something plugging in. You get a little gadget that plugs into the PC via a USB port and receives the mouse’s signals.

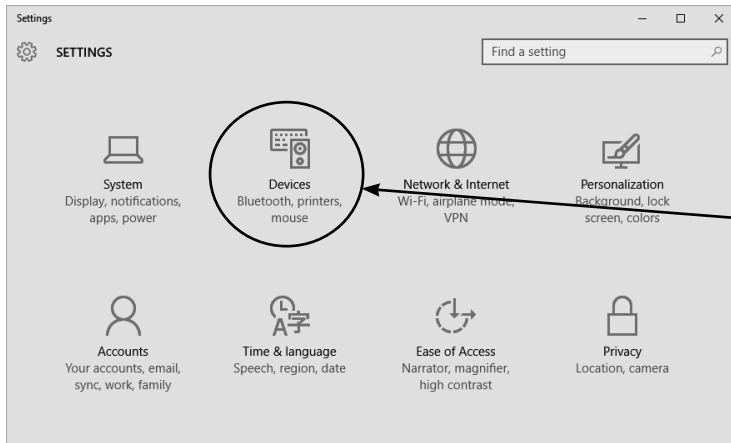
3. Settings

You might notice that when you use different computers, the mouse behaves differently. That’s because you can choose a lot of the settings, and different people prefer different ones. You may as well get yours set up as you like it – and here’s how you do it:

Changing the basic settings

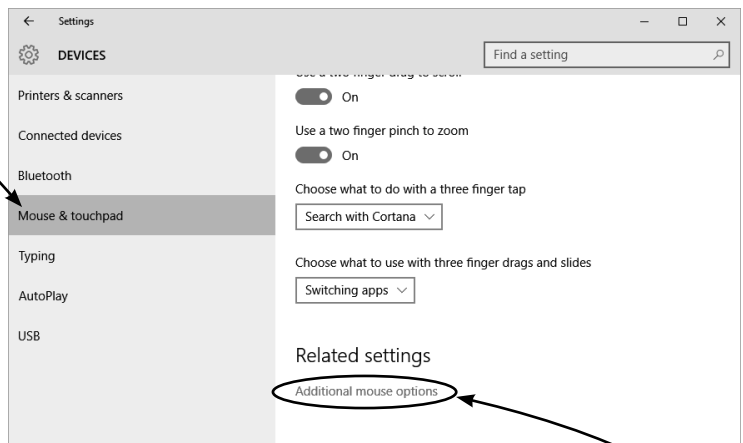
You change the mouse settings through the Settings app in Windows 10:

Click on the Start button, in the bottom left corner of your screen (which looks like this: ) , then click on “Settings”.



Click on
“Devices”
here...

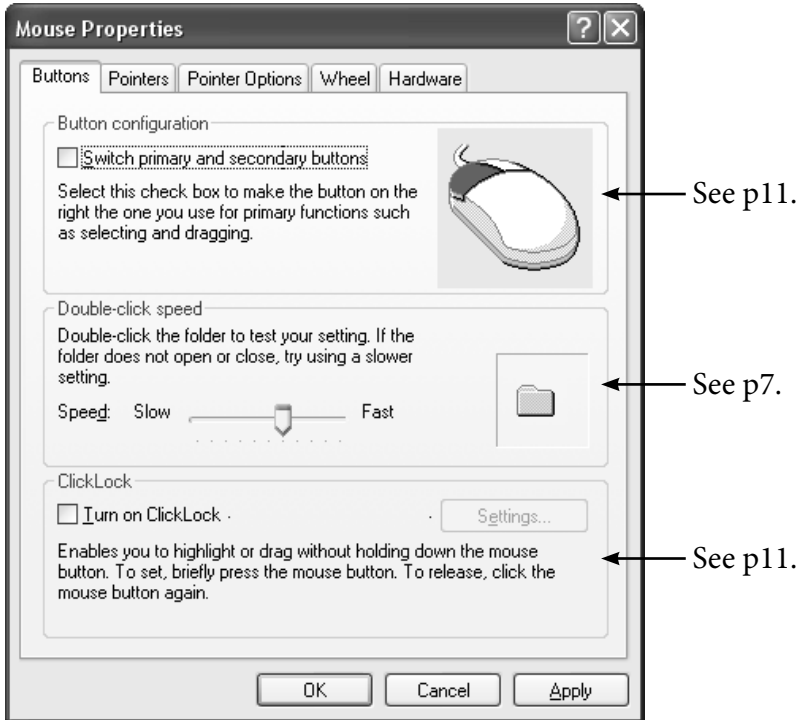
...and then
“Mouse &
touchpad”



If you're using a laptop, you'll see lots of settings to do with the touchpad. I'll come back to those on page 16. For now, scroll down to the bottom and click “Additional mouse options”.

Mouse Properties

You should now have the “Mouse Properties” window open on your screen. In this window there are 5 different sections that you can get to by clicking on the tabs along the top.

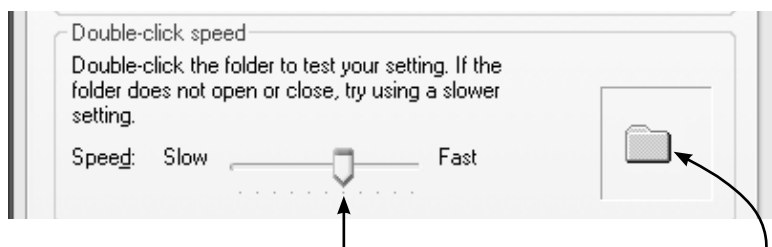


Each section lets you change a few things about how your mouse works. Once you’ve changed something, you need to click on “Apply” or “OK” to keep it, or “Cancel” to go back to how things were before. “OK” and “Cancel” both make the window disappear, so if you hadn’t finished what you were doing, you’ll have to reopen it again. Any changes you make you can easily change back by coming back to this screen, so it’s worth spending a while getting them right for you.

If you’ve got a fancy mouse, this window will look different because you have more choices – see p19.

Common problem – double-click speed is set too fast...

This can be really frustrating – however fast you click, it never seems to recognise it as a double-click! Grr. But you can change the speed, so that a slower double-click still “counts”. It’s in the middle of the first section you see when you open the “Mouse Options” (see previous page).



All you do is click on this little slider, hold the mouse button down, drag it towards the slower end and let go.

You can practise double-clicking on the folder icon here: If the folder opens when you double-click on it, then it’s recognised that as a double-click. If nothing happens, move the slider to an even slower speed and try again. Keep going until you find a speed that works for you.

If you just can’t get it to work, don’t worry! There are a few tricks it’s worth knowing about – you can often get away without double-clicking at all.

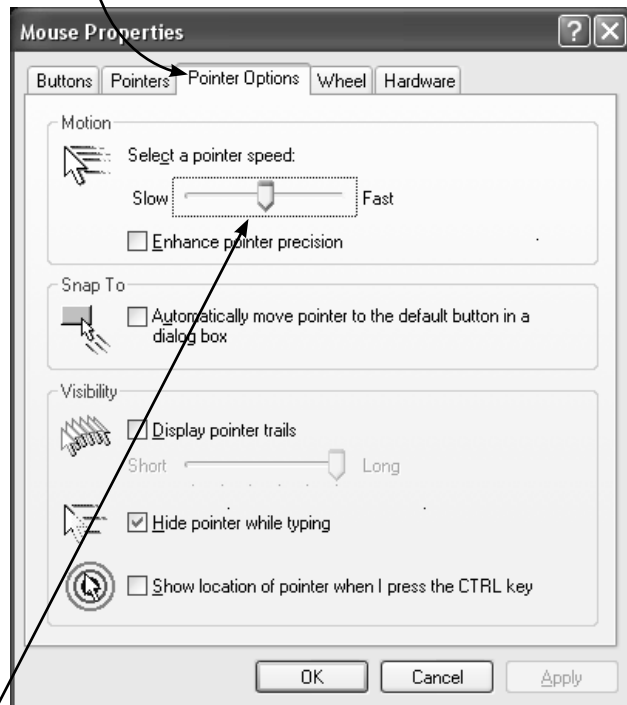
If you single-click on something to select it, then press the “Enter” key on your keyboard, it usually has the same effect as a double-click. This certainly works for opening, say, a picture from within your “Pictures” folder.

Also, some mice have extra buttons (see p19) that you can program to count as a double-click.

Another common problem – pointer moves too quickly or too slowly...

A lot of people don't know you can change this setting, and it can really make a difference. If it's set too slow, you have to move the mouse from one side of the mouse mat to the other several times to get it to move just a few inches. If it's too fast, a small movement of the mouse can send the pointer shooting across the screen faster than the speed of light. Most people, as you'd expect, prefer something in between.

Again, this is in "Mouse Properties" and this time it's in the "Pointer Options" tab:

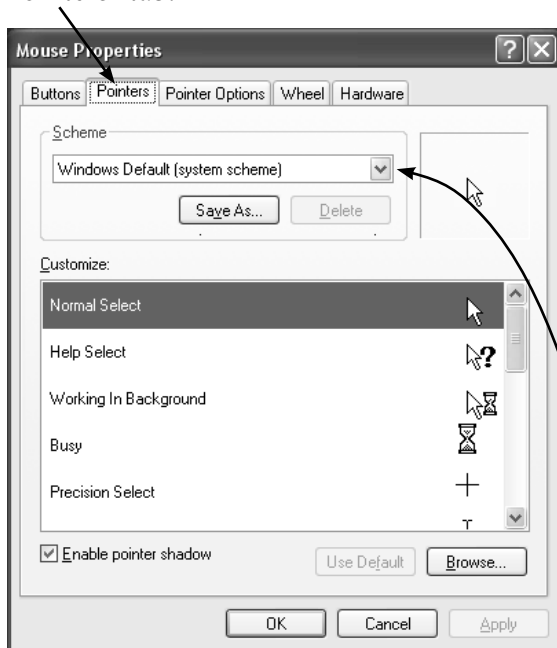


...and here's where you can change it, by clicking and dragging the slider.

Extra settings to make things easier

If you struggle finding the pointer on the screen, you have a few options that can help. You can change what the pointer looks like (and make it bigger), tell it to leave a trail so it's easier to follow or even get the computer to put a big ring round it!

First up, bigger pointers. Once you're in "Mouse Properties", click on the "Pointers" tab:



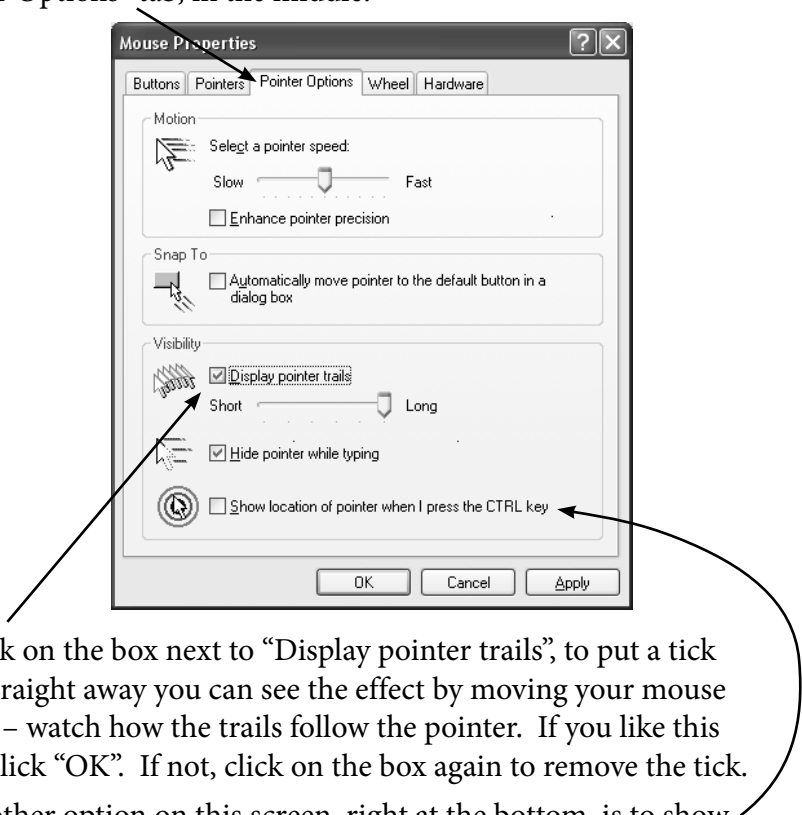
Most computers are set to a standard selection of pointers, such as "Windows default" like I've got. To choose a different set, click on this little arrow here:

You'll get a drop-down list of options, including some that say "large" or "extra large". Pick one of these if you want the pointer to stand out better. You just need to click on the name of the scheme once, and it'll show you underneath what the pointers are going to look like. If you like them, click on "Apply". If not, try another one.

Next, pointer trails. Now, I'm not a fan of pointer trails as they make me feel a bit dizzy! But they do make it easier to

follow your pointer, so some people find them really useful – it's just personal taste.

Here's how to turn them on – in “Mouse Properties”, click on the “Pointer Options” tab, in the middle:



Click on the box next to “Display pointer trails”, to put a tick in it. Straight away you can see the effect by moving your mouse around – watch how the trails follow the pointer. If you like this effect, click “OK”. If not, click on the box again to remove the tick.

Another option on this screen, right at the bottom, is to show the location of pointer when you press the “Ctrl” key on your keyboard. (There are 2 “Ctrl” keys – one at the bottom left of the keyboard and one at the bottom right.)

To choose this option, click to tick the box next to it, and each time you press either of the “Ctrl” keys, a big circle will appear round your pointer so you can see where it is.

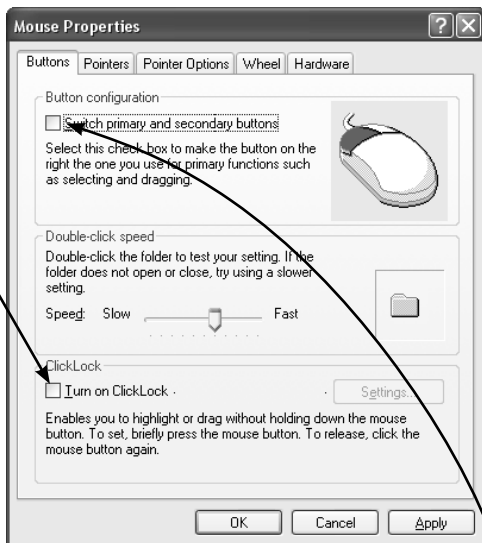
It's up to you if you want this, but as long as you know where to find the setting, you can always turn it off again if you find it annoying.

Clicking and dragging problems

To click and drag, you have to hold down the mouse button. For some people that isn't very easy, as it can put a lot of pressure on the wrist. There is another way though. You can turn "ClickLock" on – this lets you click once and let go while you drag, then click again to release.

Again, you find the setting in the "Mouse Properties" window, this time in the first section, "Buttons":

At the bottom, you need to click to tick this box.



Left-handers

If you're left handed and would rather use the mouse with your left hand, there's nothing to stop you doing it. But you do then end up having to use your middle finger to do an ordinary click, which isn't as natural. So if you like, you can actually switch the buttons round, so you can still use your forefinger for normal clicks.

What you need to do is go to the "Buttons" menu again and click in the box at the top, where it says "Switch primary and secondary buttons".

A couple of words of warning:

1. If you're reading any instruction books on PCs (like this one!), remember that where it says "right-click", for you that'll be "left-click" (& vice versa).

- Also remember that if you ever use someone else's PC it may well be set up with a right-handed mouse, so it might be a good idea to learn it with the buttons the normal way round as well, if you can.

4. Right-click menus

To right-click on something, you click once with the right mouse button. (If you've swapped the buttons over because you're left handed, it'll be the left button!)

Right-clicking on something almost always gives you a little menu of options that are relevant to the thing you just clicked.

For example, open file explorer and click on your "Documents" folder. Right-click on a picture or document in there – or even on another folder. You'll see something like this:

The most likely thing your computer thinks you might want to do with this is open it, so that's at the top.

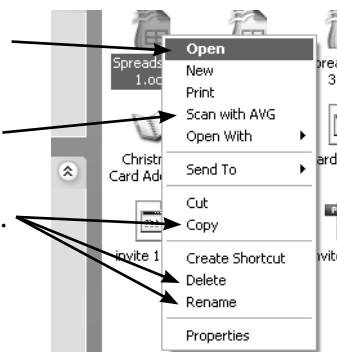
Or maybe you might want to scan it with your Anti-virus program...

...or make a copy, delete it, rename it...

This is covered in lots more detail in *Next Steps on your PC* (pages 1-3), so I won't go on about it here. It's worth

playing around a bit with right-clicking, though. If you want to do something and you can't work out how, try right-clicking on the thing you want to do it to. You never know, it might be in the right-click menu!

As a matter of interest... there's a button on your keyboard that does the same thing as a right-click. It's on the bottom row, a bit to the right of the Space bar, and it has a picture of a menu on it (or sometimes just three horizontal lines):



Click once on the thing you want to right-click on to select it, then press this button, and the menu comes up.

Now you may wonder what's the point of this, as you have to click on it anyway! But if the thing is selected already, you can use this button instead of reaching for the mouse, which could be slightly quicker. Ever so slightly!

5. The Wheel

The wheel on your mouse (if you have one) gives you another way of doing certain things, like scrolling up and down the screen. (Don't worry if your mouse doesn't have a wheel though – they're not essential.)

Scrolling up and down with the wheel

The wheel is literally a little wheel that you can roll/spin both ways – up and down.

In programs such as Edge and Microsoft Word, you can use it to scroll up and down the page. You just roll the wheel upwards to scroll up and downwards to scroll down – easy.

Other bits you can do with the wheel

Zoom in and out of a web page:

In Edge, you can use the wheel to zoom in and out – just hold down the “Ctrl” key on your keyboard and roll the wheel up and down. This works in some other programs too, although you might have to hold down the “Shift” key at the same time.

Scroll from left to right:

If a web page is a bit too big for your screen, you can also scroll from left to right. You need to hold down both the “Ctrl” and “Shift” keys together while you roll the mouse wheel. This also works in some other programs as well, but sometimes you just need the “Shift” key or the “Ctrl” key on their own.

Exactly how wheel scrolling works depends on the program itself, not on the mouse. In some programs, the wheel doesn't do anything at all! The best thing to do is try it – if you move the wheel and nothing happens, you haven't done any harm!

Clicking with the wheel

The wheel also doubles up as a button – you can press it as well as roll it. Here are a couple of really useful things you can do with it:

An even easier way to move around a web page

In Edge, you can press the wheel button in, and you'll see this symbol appear in place of the pointer:



You can now move your mouse up and down, and the web page will scroll up and down. And you can move it from left to right to scroll side to side. Press the mouse button again to stop it. (This works in some other programs too.)

Open a link in a new “tab”

In Edge, if you click on a link in a website using your wheel button instead of the normal left mouse button, it opens the link in a new tab, keeping your original page where it is.

This can be really useful, especially if you're searching for something in Google, and want to keep your page of search results open while you check which link is the most useful.

By the way, if you don't have a wheel button, you can do this by holding down the “Ctrl” key and left-clicking the link as normal.

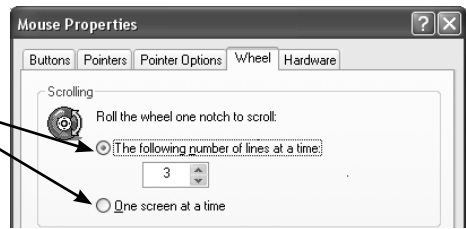
Changing the wheel settings

The only setting you really have control over is how sensitive the wheel is when you're scrolling. In the “Mouse Properties” window, click on the “Wheel” tab.

(Or you can change these settings directly from the “Mouse & touchpad” screen in the Settings app if you prefer.)

Here you can choose how far each notch of the wheel takes

you when you're scrolling – a number of lines, or even a whole screen at a time:

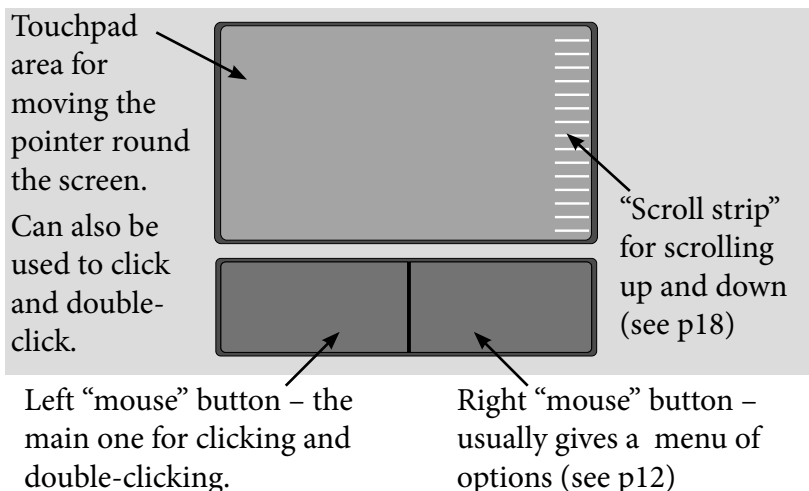


If you have a fancy mouse, you might not have a section called “Wheel” – it might be called “Scrolling” or something instead. You should have the same basic options, but you might have some extra ones as well.

6. Laptop touchpads

A laptop touchpad can do pretty much the same as a normal mouse, but they're a bit more tricky to use. So the first thing I'd say to anyone who has a laptop is: *Get a normal mouse and plug it in!* Just plug it into one of the USB sockets and away you go. If you're happy to persevere with the touchpad, here are a few basics of how to use it.

The anatomy of a laptop touchpad



Touchpad settings

To set up your touchpad, open the “Mouse & touchpad” settings (see p.5). There are quite a few options, so you’ll need to scroll down to see them all.

The screenshot shows the Windows 'Mouse & touchpad' settings window. The 'Touchpad' section is expanded, showing various settings. Annotations with arrows point to specific settings, explaining their function.

Touchpad
Your PC has a precision touchpad.

Touchpad ☒ On

Leave touchpad on when a mouse is connected ☒ On

No mouse connected

Reverse scrolling direction ☐ Off

To help prevent the cursor from accidentally moving while you type, turn off taps or change the delay before taps work.
Medium delay ▾

Change the cursor speed
[Slider bar]

Allow taps on the touchpad ☒ On

Press on the lower right corner of the touchpad to right-click ☒ On

Allow double-tap and drag ☒ On

Use a two finger tap for right click ☒ On

Use a two finger drag to scroll ☒ On

Use a two finger pinch to zoom ☒ On

Choose what to do with a three finger tap
Search with Cortana ▾

Choose what to use with three finger drags and slides
Switching apps ▾

Annotations:

- If you use a separate mouse, you can just turn off the touchpad here. (Points to the 'Touchpad' toggle)
- This is just like the pointer speed setting for a normal mouse (see p.8) (Points to the 'Change the cursor speed' slider)
- With this turned on, you can tap once on the touchpad to left-click. If you end up doing it by accident, you can turn it off. (Points to 'Allow taps on the touchpad')
- These two-finger options can be quite useful (see p.18). (Points to 'Use a two finger tap for right click' and 'Use a two finger drag to scroll')
- If this one's turned on, you can zoom on a touchpad like you would on a touchscreen (p.19) (Points to 'Use a two finger pinch to zoom')

Moving the pointer round the screen

With a touchpad, you move the pointer round the screen by lightly touching the mouse pad and moving your finger gently along the surface. Try not to be too heavy-handed with it!

Clicking

You have two choices.

The easiest thing to do is to use the buttons under the touchpad, just like you would use ordinary mouse buttons – they work exactly the same way. You make a single click by moving the pointer where you want it (using the touchpad) and then press the left-hand button once.

Alternatively you can tap lightly on the touchpad itself. To be honest, once you've got the hang of this method, you'll probably find it OK, but it's a real faff if you're not used to it. I think the buttons are much easier. (And you can turn this feature off, if you find you keep clicking by accident – see previous page.)

Double-clicking

Just like with ordinary mice, a double-click is two ordinary clicks done quickly, one after the other. This works whichever clicking method you use (see above), but in my experience, double-clicking on a touchpad really can be quite fiddly, so best use the buttons underneath it.

Dragging

To drag something using a touchpad, simply click on it using the left button, and hold the button down with one hand. With the other you can move the thing round using the touchpad. To drop it, just release the button.

It's technically possible to drag things just using the touchpad, by doing some kind of fiddly double-click-drag manoeuvre...

...frankly it's not worth the bother.

Right-clicking on something

This is just like on an ordinary mouse (page 12). Press the right-hand button once, and you'll get a little menu.

If you've got your touchpad set up this way (page 16), you can also tap with two fingers on the touchpad at the same time to right-click.

Scrolling

Some touchpads have a little striped band down the right hand side. You can use this area for easier scrolling up and down, for example in web pages. To scroll down, you just lightly move your finger down this strip, and to scroll up, move it upwards.

My laptop has one of these, and I use it all the time – I find it really useful. But even if you don't use it, it's worth knowing it's there, otherwise you might get confused when your finger strays over too far to the right!

If you don't have one (or have one and don't get on with it) you can set up your touchpad so you scroll by putting two fingers on the touchpad at once and moving them up and down (see settings on page 16).

7. Touchscreen gestures

If you have a touchscreen laptop you can control it by touching the screen as well as using a mouse. There are different ways to touch the screen (called gestures) to do different things.

Here are some of the most common ones that should work on any touchscreen (including tablet computers):

To “single-click” on something	Single finger tap
To show extra options related to what you’re doing (like “right-clicking” with a mouse)	Tap & hold (Touch the screen, hold your finger still for a couple of seconds until a box appears, then let go.)
To scroll up, down or across the screen	Single finger “swipe” (With one finger, touch the screen and slide it in the direction you want it to move.)
To zoom in or out to see the screen better (this will only work within an app or program)	Double finger pinch or stretch (To zoom in to make things bigger, pinch two fingers (or a finger and thumb) together on the screen, then spread them out. To zoom out and make things smaller, do the opposite – place your fingers apart on the screen and move them together.)
To select a group of things , e.g. some photos in a folder	Draw a box with your finger (Touch a blank part of the screen next to the first thing you want to select. Then drag your finger diagonally across the screen to make a box. When you let go, anything inside the box will be selected.)

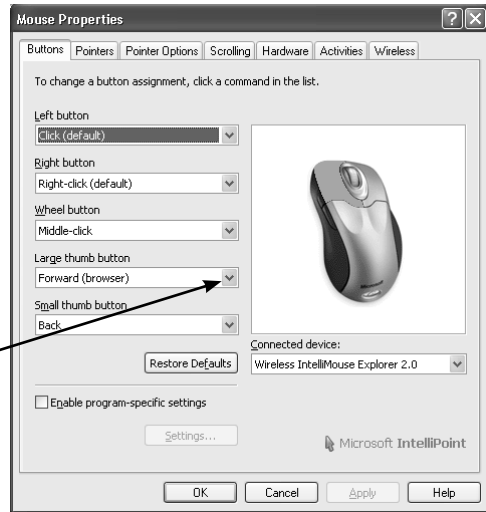
8. Fancy mice & extra buttons

You can get all sorts of fancy mice nowadays, such as Microsoft’s IntelliMouse®, which is nicely shaped with extra buttons on the side where you can press them with your thumb.

The extra buttons are usually programmed to do different tasks, such as double-click, or go back or forward in Internet Explorer. If you like, you can change what they do:

Start by going to the “Mouse Properties” screen, and look at the “Buttons” section, which looks a bit different from the standard one. It might be more like this:

To change the use of any of these buttons, click on the little arrow and choose from a list of options.



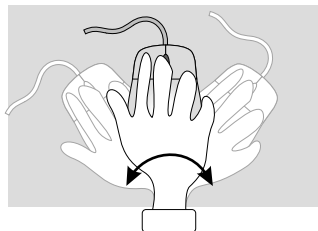
If you compare this “Buttons” section with the standard one, on p.6, you’ll see that you don’t have the options to choose double-click speed or the ClickLock feature. Don’t worry, they haven’t disappeared. They’re just in a separate section, called “Activities”:



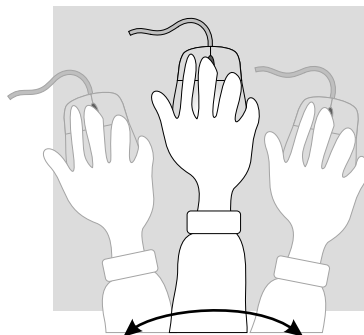
9. *How to hold a mouse*

There are good and bad ways to hold your mouse. If you get into bad habits and use your computer a lot, it can be bad news – beyond mere aching wrists, you could even end up with the dreaded RSI, which is often irreversible. It’s not all doom and gloom though! Just learn the good ways to use it, and you’ll be fine.

1. Don't rest your wrist on the desk while you use the mouse. This makes you keep your arm still and only use your wrist, which puts lots of pressure on the tendons. Try to move your arm from the elbow and shoulder instead.



Twisting your wrist isn't good for it.



Moving from the elbow or shoulder is much safer.

2. Don't grip it too tightly. Let go of it when you're not using it. And remember to stretch your fingers and arms every few minutes.
3. Try to make sure you're sitting comfortably. If you notice any stiffness in your mouse arm, aching fingers, or aching shoulders, it could be a signal that you're not in the best position. Try moving your mouse closer to you, to make sure you're not stretching your arm so far. You could also try changing the height of your seat – ideally your elbow should be at a right angle when using your mouse.
4. If your mouse isn't very responsive, you can find you're spending a lot more time moving it around than you should need to. Try and find out what the problem is – it could be dirty, its battery could be running low (if it's an optical mouse), or it could just be not a very well-made mouse. If all else fails, it could be worth just forking out for a new one. Do an internet search for “computer mouse reviews” and read up on what other people are saying about different types.

10. *Alternative mice*

If you use your mouse a lot, and an ordinary mouse gives you aching wrists, you could try a different style of mouse.

A tilted mouse is a popular alternative – you hold it with your hand tilted a bit sideways, rather than having to hold it completely flat, which isn't a very natural position. Some people find this shape of mouse a lot more comfortable to use, particularly people with bigger hands, as they're a bit bigger than ordinary mice. It can take a while to get the hang of them though, and usually you can only get right-handed versions, and the tilt makes them *very* right-handed... so if you're left-handed, remember to find one that's designed for you!



Mice that aren't mice at all

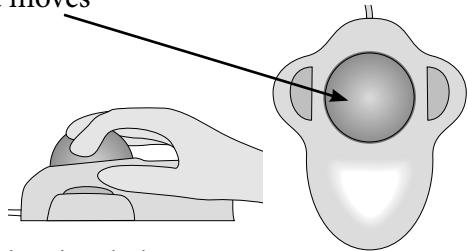
If you just don't get on with mice at all, don't worry – there are other things that you can use instead.

1. A “trackball” mouse

This is shaped a bit like a mouse, but instead of you moving it round, it stays still. The bit that moves is a “trackball” on the top.

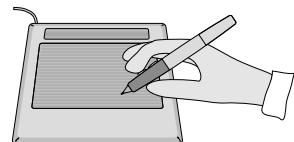
You move the ball with your fingers and that moves the pointer around the screen.

It also usually has buttons on it, same as the two on a standard mouse, for clicking and right-clicking.



2. The graphics pen and tablet

You get a tablet that plugs into the computer, and a battery-driven “pen” with a button on the tip and a couple of buttons on the side. You move the pointer around by touching the pen tip lightly to the tablet, and moving it around.



11. Cordless mice


Cordless mice are battery-operated and don't have to be plugged into your computer. Instead you have a device that plugs into your computer, and that receives and transmits the signals from the mouse back to the computer. They're great because:

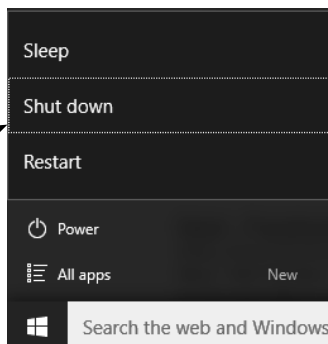
1. Your mouse isn't restricted, so you can put it anywhere on the desk instead of having to be within a few feet of your PC.

One or two downsides though:

1. You need batteries for it, which need replacing (I'd recommend rechargeable ones). If your batteries run out while you're using the computer, you can change them while the computer's switched on, since the mouse isn't physically plugged in to the computer. But if you don't have any spare batteries and just want to shut down the PC, you'll have to do it using the keyboard instead (see below).
2. You can get some interference from other signals, which can make the mouse start behaving oddly. Your best bet is to press the "reset" or "connect" button, which is usually on the underside of the mouse.

To shut down the computer using the keyboard if you need to:

1. Press the "Start" key (bottom left of keyboard): 
2. Press the upwards arrow on your keyboard twice – you should see a dotted line around "Power".
3. Press the "Enter" key.
4. Press the upwards arrow twice again to select "Shut down" and then press "Enter" again.



12. Two mice – not a good idea

You can actually have more than one mouse plugged in at once. Usually this will work, as long as one mouse is perfectly still and you only use one at any one time.

But I don't recommend it, as it could just get really confusing. For example, if the mouse you aren't using accidentally gets knocked while you're using the other one, your mouse pointer could suddenly jump across the screen and you might end up clicking on something you didn't mean to. Not a good idea.

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