



WINDOWS[®] 10

PORTABLE GENIUS

PAUL MCFEDRIES

WILEY

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Paul McFedries

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Paul McFedries is a technical writer who has been authoring computer books since 1991 and has nearly 100 books to his credit. Paul's books have sold more than four million copies worldwide. These books include the Wiley titles *Teach Yourself VISUALLY Windows 10*, Third Edition, *G Suite For Dummies*, *iPhone Portable Genius*, Sixth Edition, and *iPad Portable Genius*, Fourth Edition. You can visit Paul on the web at www.mcfedries.com or on Twitter at www.twitter.com/paulmcf.

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Introduction

If you head down to your local bookstore (assuming, of course, that by the time you read this, the entities known as “local bookstores” still exist) and peruse the Computer Books section, you’ll almost certainly see several Windows books that are nothing less than gargantuan. We’re talking here about books that weigh in at well over a thousand pages and make even the thickest phone book (again, assuming such a thing exists in your time) look like a mere pamphlet.

Who would want to read such a book, much less *write* one? Well, as someone who has written more than one of them, I can tell you the answer with some authority: Windows is a sprawling, complex beast that some say is easily the most complicated piece of software ever created. If you want to teach people everything there is to know about Windows, then the resulting tome is going to be big—*very* big.

Ah, but there’s the rub: How many people want or even *need* to learn everything there is to know about Windows? That’s right: very few. The rest of us just want to know how to get things done using Windows with a minimum of fuss and as little bother as possible. The rest of us aren’t members of the Windows Fan Club; we’re not Windows geeks; we don’t want to look under the hood to see what makes Windows run. The rest of us have a job to do—a job that means using a Windows PC—and we just want Windows to help as much as it can and then get out of our way. The rest of us, in short, don’t need a massive, encyclopedic guide to all things Windows. What we Windows users really need is a reference that’s easier to read, more convenient,

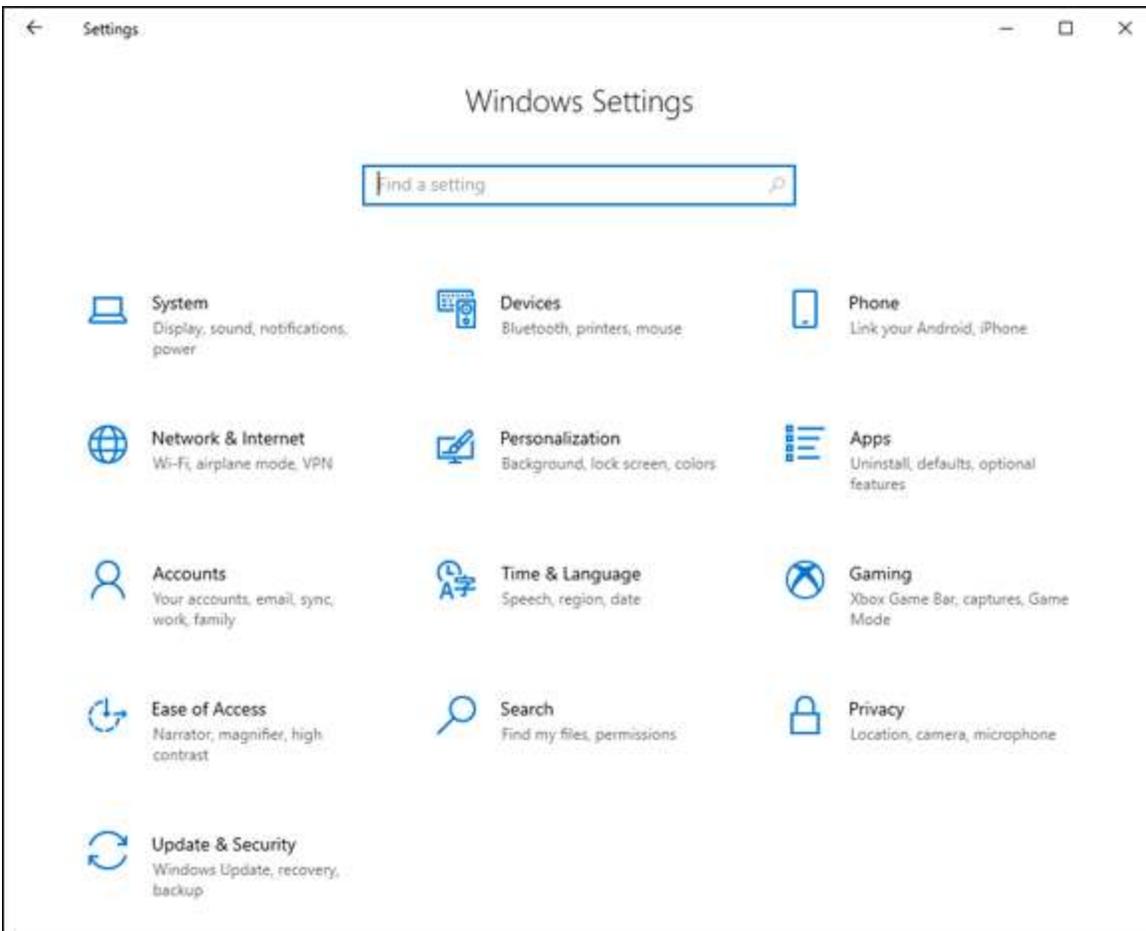
and doesn't require a regular weight-training regimen to lift. What we really need is a *portable* reference that enables us to be more productive and solve problems wherever we and our PCs happen to be.

Welcome, therefore, to *Windows 10 Portable Genius*. This book is a Windows guide that's presented in an easy-to-use, easy-to-access, and eminently portable format. In this book, you learn how to get more out of Windows by learning how to access all the really powerful and timesaving features that aren't obvious at a casual glance. In this book, you learn how to avoid the more annoying character traits of Windows and, in those cases where such behaviors can't be avoided, you learn how to work around them. In this book, you learn how to prevent Windows problems from occurring, and just in case your preventative measures are for naught, you learn how to fix many common problems yourself.

A few special elements provide guardrails and inspiration. Notes help you delve a bit deeper into some topics, Cautions give advice and help you steer clear of problems, and Genius boxes convey the pro tips that will make you more efficient, more productive, and more impressive in the results that you crank out from Windows.

This book is for Windows users who know the basics but want to take their Windows education to a higher level. It's a book for people who want to be more productive, more efficient, more creative, and more self-sufficient (at least as far as their Windows life goes, anyway). It's a book for people who use Windows every day but want to incorporate Windows into more of their day-to-day activities. It's a book for people who pooh-pooh the notion that you have to be a geek, a nerd, or a computer scientist to get the most out of Windows. It's a book I had a blast writing, so I think it's a book you'll enjoy reading.

Chapter 1: How Do I Customize Windows?



You've probably found that Windows works pretty well right out of the box. Microsoft has configured Windows with default settings that make Windows relatively easy and efficient for most users. Ah, but your purchase of this book shows that you don't fall into the Most Users category. You are your own, unique self, and that uniqueness cries out for and deserves a correspondingly unique Windows experience. Fortunately, as you learn in this chapter,

Windows is bristling with tools that enable you to customize almost every aspect of the system, including the Start menu, taskbar, and Lock screen.

[Working with Settings](#)

[Customizing the Start Menu](#)

[Customizing the Taskbar](#)

[Customizing the Lock Screen](#)

[Extending Your Desktop with Multiple Monitors](#)

[Setting Up Multiple Desktops](#)

Working with Settings

Most of your Windows customization work involves tweaking *settings*, which are options—usually in the form of a check box, switch, radio button, or list—that control the look and operation of either Windows itself or of a particular app that’s installed on your PC.

Opening the Settings app

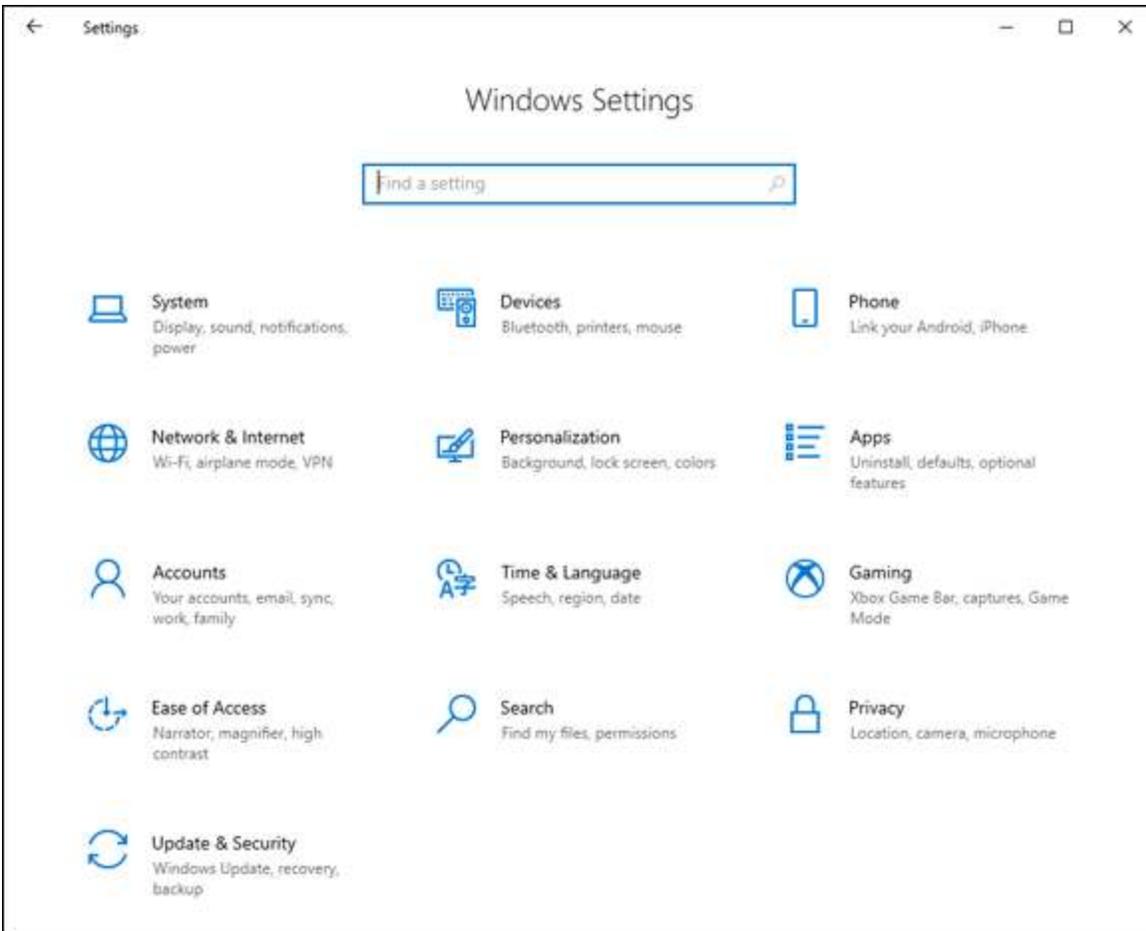
When you want to customize Windows, you’ll almost always need to open the aptly named Settings app, which is home to most Windows customization options. The Settings app is so important that Windows gives you a dozen or so ways to open it. Here are the six most useful methods:

- Click Start and then click Settings (the gear icon).
- Press Windows+I. (The Windows key is the one that has the Windows logo on it; you’ll find it on the lowest row of the keyboard, to the left of the spacebar, between the Ctrl and Alt keys.)

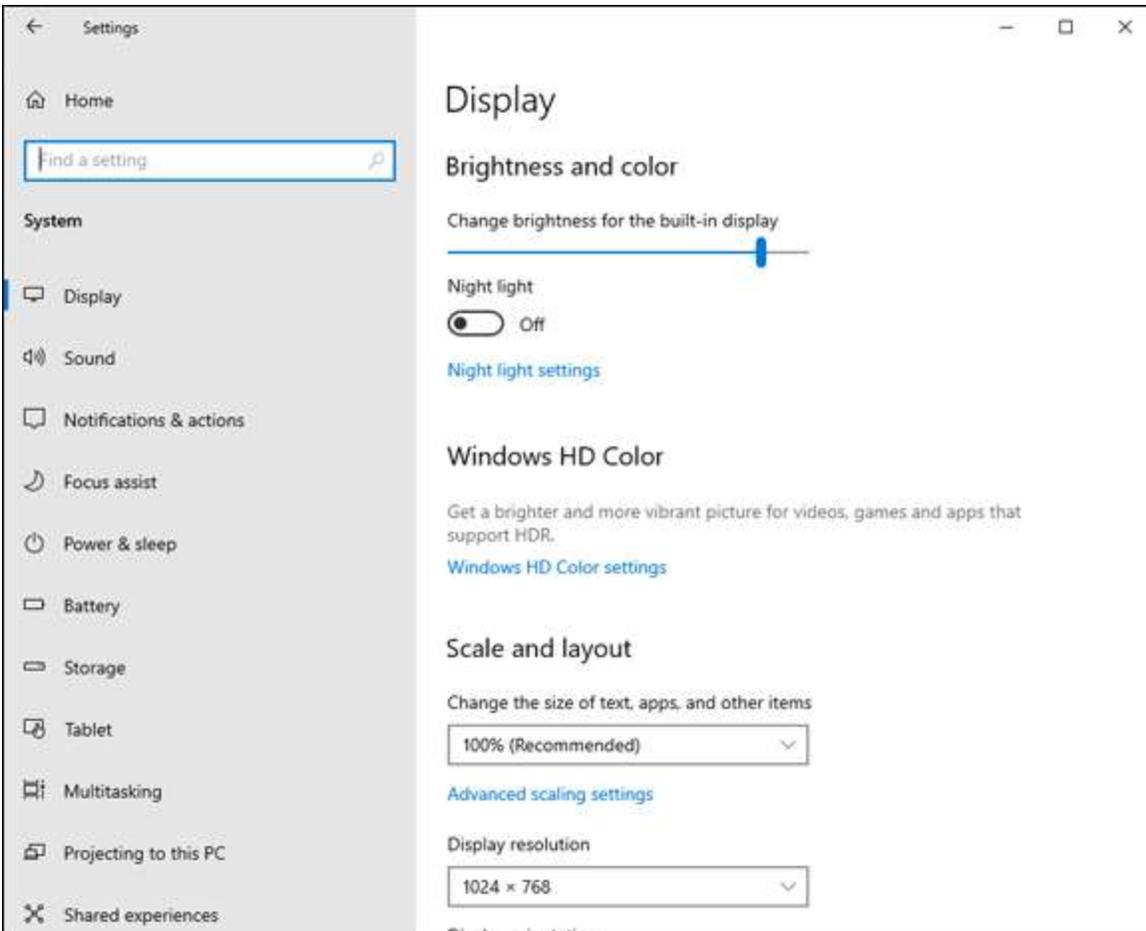
- Click the Notifications icon on the far right of the taskbar and then click All Settings.
- In the taskbar's Search box, type **se** (which should be enough to display the Settings app in the search results; if not, continue typing **settings** until you see Settings in the results) and then press Enter.
- If you have Cortana enabled (see [Chapter 5](#)), say "Hey Cortana" and then say "Open Settings."
- Right-click the Start icon and then click Settings.

Whichever method you use, you see the Home screen of the Settings app, as shown in [Figure 1.1](#).

From here, you can either use the Settings app's Search box to locate the setting you want or click a category to see the subcategories and settings associated with that category. For example, [Figure 1.2](#) shows the screen that appears when you click the System category. When you click a subcategory on the left, the settings for that subcategory appear on the right (such as for the Display subcategory shown in [Figure 1.2](#)). To return to the previous Settings screen, click the Back arrow in the top-left corner; to return directly to the Home screen, click Home.



1.1 The Home screen of the Settings app.



1.2 When you open a category, click a subcategory on the left to see its settings on the right.



Genius

Use the taskbar's Search box to quickly search for the setting you want to work with. Click inside the taskbar's Search box, type **settings:**, a space, and then begin typing the setting name. For example, to work with the Show More Tiles on Start setting, type **settings: show more**, then click Show More Tiles on Start from the search results that appear.

Synchronizing settings between PCs

If you use the same Microsoft account to sign in to Windows on multiple devices, you can get a more consistent and more efficient experience by synchronizing your settings on all those devices. Here's how to set this up:

1. **Open the Settings app.**
2. **Click Accounts.**
3. **Click Sync Your Settings.** The Sync Your Settings screen appears.
4. **Make sure the Sync Settings switch is set to On.** Click it to toggle it On if needed.
5. **In the Individual Sync Settings section, set the switch to On for each type of setting you want synced.** The four setting types are Theme, Passwords, Language Preferences, and Other Windows Settings.

Accessing an app's settings

Most apps also come with a collection of their own settings, which you can work with to get more out of the app or to customize the app to suit the way you work. For most Windows apps, there are two main ways to access settings:

- Open the app and click Settings (the gear icon), which usually appears in the lower-left corner of the screen (see [Figure 1.3](#)).
- In the Start menu, right-click the app, click More, and then click App Settings.



Settings

1.3 For many Windows apps, click Settings (the gear icon) to access the app's options.

Customizing the Start Menu

Although you can use keyboard shortcuts and features such as the taskbar to launch and work with apps and other features, to perform most of your Windows work, you need to negotiate the Start menu. Therefore, you can make your Windows chores easier and more efficient if you take a few moments to customize the Start menu to suit your needs.

Pinning an app to the Start menu

If you have an app that doesn't appear as a tile on the Start menu, you usually open the app by first navigating the Start menu's apps list to locate the app, possibly negotiating one or more submenus along the way. For an app you use often, you can avoid this extra work by *pinning* the app so that it appears permanently on the right side of the Start menu. After you have pinned an app, you launch it by displaying the Start menu and clicking the app.

Follow these steps to pin an app to the Start menu:

1. **Click Start.**
2. **Locate the app that you want to pin to the Start menu.**
3. **Right-click the app and then click Pin to Start.** A tile for the pinned app appears on the right side of the Start menu.



Note

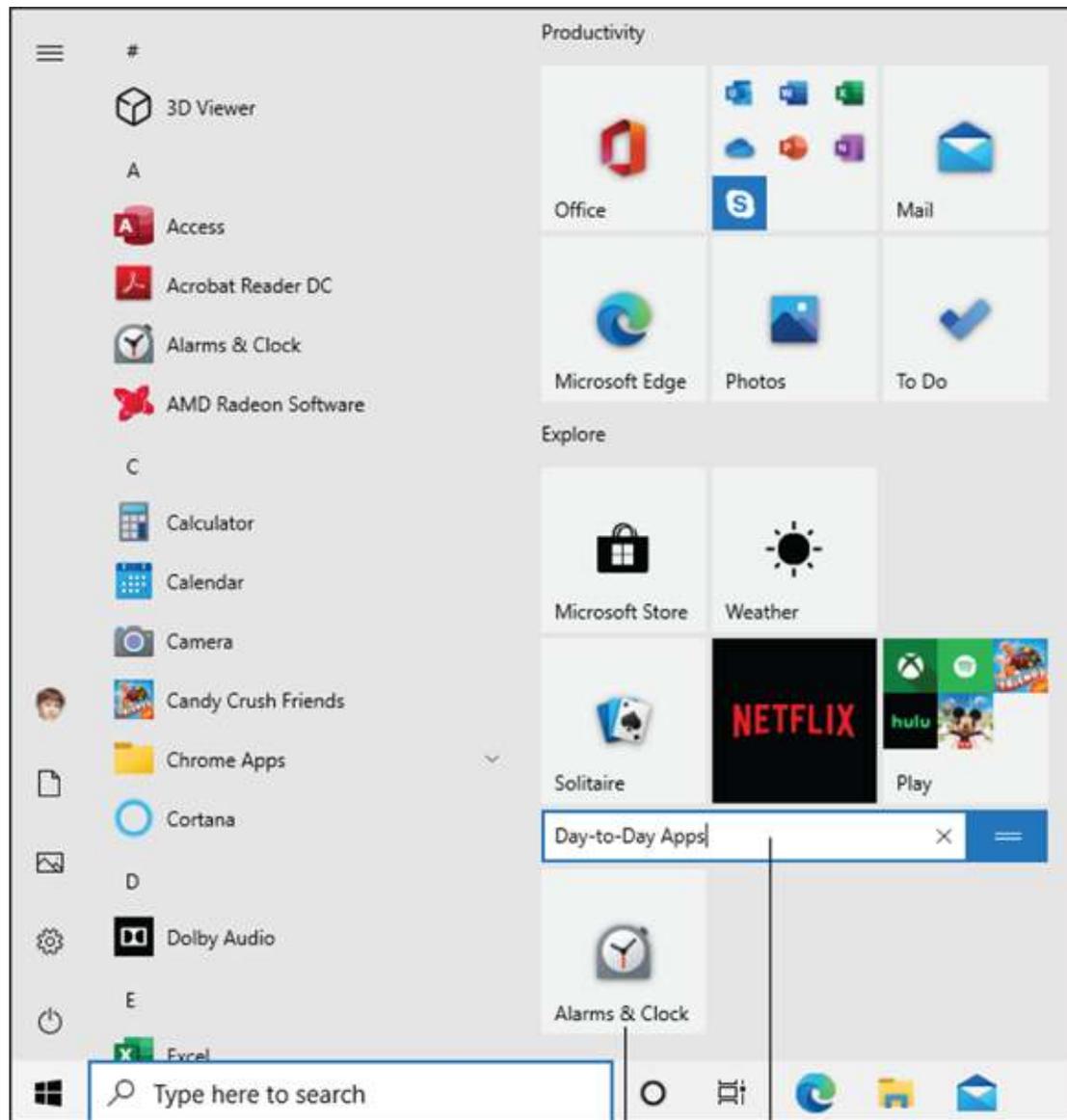
To remove an app tile from the Start menu, click Start, right-click the tile, and then click Unpin from Start.

Arranging and sizing Start menu tiles

Here are some useful techniques for restructuring the Start menu's tiles to suit the way you work or play:

- **Move an app tile within the Start menu.** Click Start, then click and drag the app tile to its new position.
- **Group app tiles.** Move an app tile below any existing tile to create a new group. Hover the mouse pointer just above the moved app, then

click the Name Group text box that appears. Type your group name (see [Figure 1.4](#)) and then press Enter. Move other apps into the new group as needed.



A new Start menu group

Type the group name here

1.4 You can create groups to organize your Start menu apps.

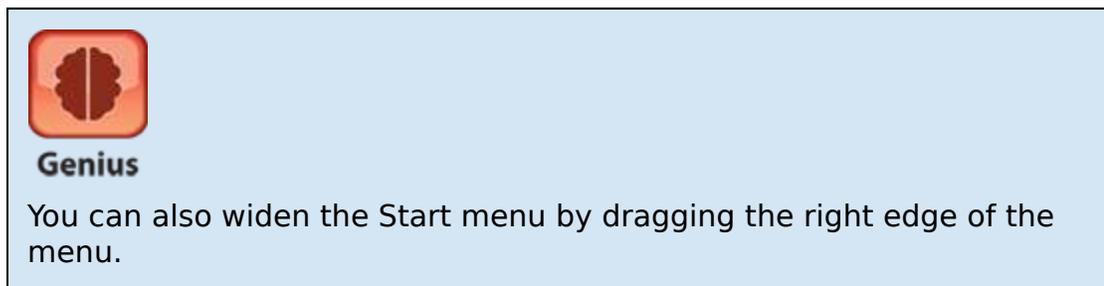
- **Change the size of a Start menu tile.** Click Start, right-click the app's tile, click Resize, and then click the size you want. In all cases, you can

choose either a Small or Medium square. With some apps, you can also choose either a Wide rectangle or a Large square.

Customizing Start menu settings

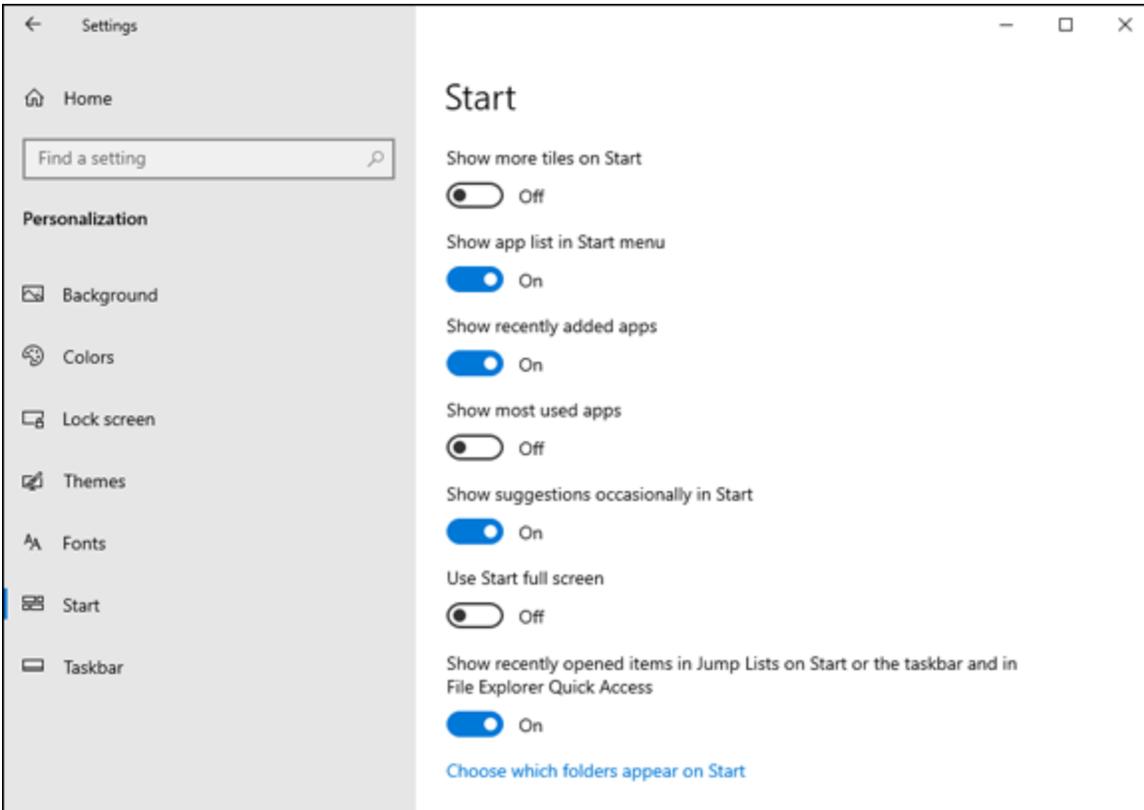
The Start menu offers a few settings that you can tweak to customize how the Start menu works. Open the Settings app, click Personalization, and then click Start. This opens the Start screen (see [Figure 1.5](#)), which offers the following switches:

- Show more tiles on Start.** Set this switch to On to expand the size of the Start menu to show more tiles.



- Show app list in Start menu.** Set this switch to Off to remove the list of installed apps from the Start menu. If you set this switch to Off, you can still access the apps by opening the Start menu and then clicking All Apps.
- Show recently added apps.** Set this switch to On to see newly installed apps at the top of the Start menu's app list.
- Show most used apps.** Set this switch to On to add a Most Used section to the top of the Start menu's app list. Windows uses the Most Used section to display the apps you launched most frequently.
- Show suggestions occasionally on Start.** Set this switch to Off to prevent Windows from displaying suggestions (that is, ads) about which apps to install.
- Use Start full screen.** Set this switch to On to have the Start menu take up the entire screen when you open it.
- Show recently opened items in Jump Lists on Start or the taskbar and in File Explorer Quick Access.** Set this switch to On to see a Recent section when you right-click an app that enables you to open items such as documents.

- **Choose which folders appear on Start.** Click this link to open the Choose Which Folders Appear on Start screen, which includes a switch for each potential Start menu folder. For each switch, set the switch to On to display the folder, or Off to hide the folder.



1.5 Use the Start screen settings to personalize your Start menu.

Customizing the Taskbar

The taskbar that runs across the bottom of the Windows screen gives you one-click access to the Start button, the Search box, the Cortana voice assistant, and Task View (see [Chapter 5](#)). The taskbar also enables you to switch to a running app (by clicking the app's taskbar button), access an app's recent documents (by right-clicking the app's button), and launch an app (by clicking its button; see the next section). In short, the taskbar is one of the most useful and most important features in Windows, so you need to