

What is Windows?

Microsoft® Windows® is an operating system for personal computers. The operating system is “the brains” of the computer. It is able to react to your instructions. It also monitors and manages all of the devices that make up your PC’s “anatomy,” such as disk drives, printers, and modems.

How to Give Instructions to Windows

The Windows operating system (as well as the software programs that run on it) needs instructions from you in order to do anything useful. You give instructions by typing on your computer’s keyboard or by using the mouse to point to items on the screen, activating them with a click of the mouse button.



Keyboard



Mouse

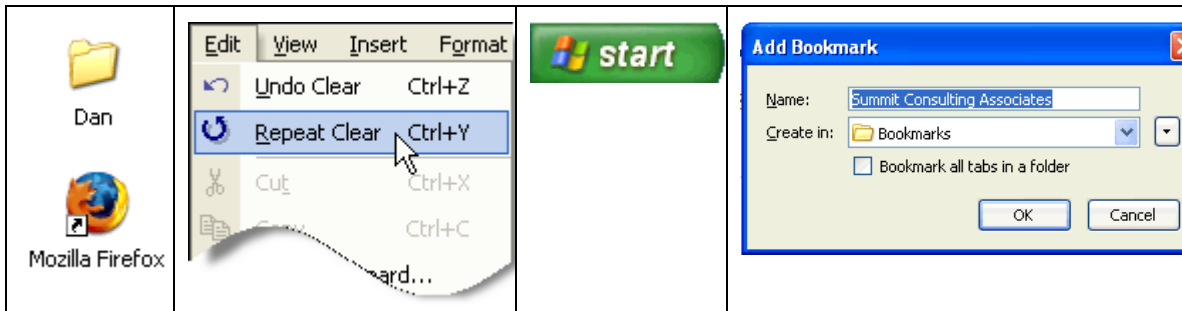


Make sure your elbows form a 90-degree angle when using the keyboard or mouse. If they don’t, raise or lower the keyboard and mouse platform or your chair if possible. Wrist and hand fatigue—as well as injury—can occur if you use the keyboard or mouse at awkward angles.

Types of Instructions

There are many ways that Windows (and the programs that run on it) can get instructions from you. The most common of these are shown below.

Icons	Menus	Buttons	Dialog Boxes
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The Mouse





Correct hand position. The correct way to use the mouse is to gently drape your hand over it. Do not grip or squeeze the mouse or you'll soon develop hand and wrist fatigue. Position your index finger over the left button and let it rest there.




Use a mouse pad. Always use a mouse pad, which helps keep the mouse clean and provides the slight amount of friction needed to operate the mouse smoothly.

The mouse pointer. The mouse pointer appears on the computer screen. As you move the mouse on the mouse pad, the mouse pointer moves on the screen. The pointer changes shape as it slides over different items or areas of the screen, but most of the time it's a small arrow.

Mouse Pointer Shapes

The mouse pointer can appear in many different shapes. When the mouse pointer changes shape, it's communicating something to you. Some of the most common shapes are illustrated below.

Pointer Shape	What it Means
	This is the normal mouse pointer, ready to point and click on icons, menu items, or other objects on the screen.
	The hourglass pointer tells you the computer is processing some information, and you can't use the pointer to start another action right now.

Pointer Shape	What it Means
	The hourglass attached to the arrow tells you that an instruction is being processed “in the background” and that the pointer is still available to begin other tasks.
I	This narrow vertical pointer appears whenever you’re in area where you can edit text. It’s narrow so that you can position it and click between two letters.
	When the mouse pointer becomes a magnifying glass, clicking the mouse will zoom in or out on the current screen view.
	The pointer becomes a pointing hand when it’s positioned over a hyperlink. A hyperlink is an instruction to launch a web page or e-mail message.
↕, ↔, and ↗	The mouse pointer changes to one of these double-headed arrows when you’re able to resize something on the screen.