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One of the most useful tools included in Windows is the Snipping Tool. This app allows you to capture any part of your screen, save the screenshots as images, or copy them to the clipboard. You can also annotate your screenshots with pens, highlighters, and erasers. The Snipping Tool is available in all versions of Windows, and there are many ways to start it, including with the keyboard. In this article, I show you how to open or activate the Snipping Tool in both Windows 10 and Windows 11. I share various methods, including ways of opening the Snipping Tool without using the Start Menu. Lets get started; The fastest way to begin using the Snipping Tool is with a keyboard shortcut:Windows + Shift + SIf you press these keys simultaneously in Windows 11, the screen darkens, and you see a small toolbar with four buttons at the top of the screen. The toolbar you see in Windows 11 when pressing Windows + Shift + SHeres what each of these buttons does, from left to right:Snip (camera icon) - captures a screenshot using the shape shown as the third icon. By default, a rectangle is selected, but clicking or tapping it shows a dropdown menu where you can select another shape. Pressing the Snip icon without changing this setting lets you take screenshots with a rectangular shape you draw on the screen with the mouse or touch.Snip (video recorder icon) - allows you to draw a rectangle shape on the screen and start a video recording of the selected area.Snipping mode - opens a menu where you can select the type of snip you want to make: Rectangle (the default option), Windows (which allows you to choose the app window you want to capture), Full Screen (which captures the entire screen), or Freeform (draw any shape you want on the screen and capture that area).Close - closes the Snipping Tool without taking a screenshot.Now that you know how to activate the Snipping Tool, heres a detailed guide on how to use it in Windows 11 to take screenshots, edit them, and record video. In Windows 10, you activate the default screenshot-taking app using the same shortcut:Windows + Shift + SHowever, pressing these keys displays a different menu at the top side of the screen, with options different from the ones in Windows 11. Youre also encouraged to Draw a shape to create a screen snip. Snip is Microsofts term for screenshot. The buttons you see in Windows 10 when pressing Windows + Shift + SHeres what each of these icons does, from left to right:Rectangular Snip - the default option, captures screenshots using a rectangular shape you draw on the screen with the mouse or touch.Freeform Snip - draw any shape you want using the mouse or touch, and then save it as a screenshot.Window Snip - captures the entire window of a specific app you select with the mouse or touch.Fullscreen Snip - saves the whole screen in a screenshot.Close Snipping - closes the snipping menu. IMPORTANT: One difference is that the screenshots taken using the Windows + Shift + S keyboard shortcut in Windows 10 are not made with the Snipping Tool. Instead, this shortcut opens a different app called Snip & Sketch, which is also used for taking screenshots. By default, you cant open the Snipping Tool using a shortcut key in Windows 10. However, theres a workaround which Im going to detail in the next section of this article. Windows 10 has this limitation because Microsoft decided to phase out the old Snipping Tool inherited from Windows Vista when developing the operating system. Instead, it create a modern app called Snip & Sketch. However, seeing that users were accustomed to the Snipping Tool name and didnt use the new app as much, Microsoft decided to improve the Snip & Sketch app further and rebrand it back to Snipping Tool in Windows 11. As a result, Windows 11 has just one app for taking screenshots, called the Snipping Tool and based on the latest code-base from Microsoft, which represents an evolution of the Snip & Sketch from Windows 10. Unfortunately, Windows 10 users are stuck with two screenshot-taking apps: Snip & Sketch and the old Snipping Tool. Confusing, isnt it? If youre a Windows 10 user, and you want to use a keyboard shortcut for opening the Snipping Tool, not the (newer) Snip & Sketch app, do this:Open File Explorer and navigate to this path:C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\AccessoriesYou can also use environment variables to navigate to this path, leading to the same folder:%PROGRAMDATA%\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\AccessoriesHere, you find shortcuts to several Windows apps, including the old Snipping Tool. Where the Snipping Tool shortcut is stored in Windows 10Right-click or press-and-hold on the Snipping Tool shortcut, and then choose Properties in the menu that opensRight-click on Snipping Tool and choose PropertiesYou see the properties of the Snipping Tool shortcut in Windows 10. First, click or tap inside the Shortcut key field, then press the keys you want to use as a keyboard shortcut for this app. I chose Ctrl + Alt + S, but you can use any combination of keys. Then, click or tap OK to save your new keyboard shortcut. Set the Shortcut key you want for the Snipping ToolThe next time you press your chosen keys, the Snipping Tool app opens in Windows 10. The Snipping Tool from Windows 10TIP: For more information on assigning any shortcut key to a Windows app, heres how to run a Windows app or program with a keyboard shortcut. A fast way to open the Snipping Tool in Windows 11 is to click or tap inside the search box on the taskbar or press the Windows key. Then, type the word snipping, and when you see the Snipping Tool search result, press Enter on your keyboard or click or tap the result. Notice that on the right side of the search result, you also have options for taking screenshots right away. Searching for Snipping Tool in Windows 11Similarly, in Windows 10, click or tap inside the search box on the taskbar and type snipping. You should see the appropriate search results almost immediately. Click or tap the Snipping Tool result or press Enter on your keyboard to start the app. Searching for the Snipping Tool in Windows 10IMPORTANT: Notice how the Snipping Tool has different icons in Windows 11 and Windows 10. Thats because it is a separate app with other features. The Windows 10 version dates from 2002, while the Windows 11 version dates from 2021 and has received updates and improvements since. If youre using Windows 10, click or tap the Windows icon on the taskbar, scroll down the list of apps to the letter W, and open the Windows Accessories folder. There, youll find the Snipping Tool shortcut. Click or tap it, and the app is launched. Accessing the Snipping Tool shortcut in the Windows 10 Start MenuWindows 11s procedure is lengthier: open the Start Menu and click or tap All. Scroll down the list of apps until you see those that start with the letter S. Then, click or tap Snipping Tool. Accessing the Snipping Tool shortcut in the Windows 11 Start MenuTIP: Heres a detailed guide on how to use the Windows 11 Start Menu including how to jump to shortcuts that start with different letters. If you like working with Windows Terminal, Powershell, or Command Prompt, open the app you prefer, and then type this command:snippingtoolOr this one:snippingtool.exeDont forget to press Enter on your keyboard to run the command. Opening the Snipping Tool from CMDThis command opens the Snipping Tool from CMD in Windows 11 and Windows 10. Another method of accessing the Snipping Tool is to use the Run window, Launch Run (Win + R) and type snippingtool or snippingtool.exe in its Open field. Then, click or tap OK or press the Enter key on your keyboard to open the app. Opening the Snipping Tool from RunIn Windows 10, the Snipping Tool app has an executable file that is easy to run. Simply open File Explorer, and then access or copy and paste this path into the address bar:%WINDIR%\System32\SnippingTool.exeOn my computer, its found at:C:\Windows\System32\SnippingTool.exeThe location of the Snipping Tool file in Windows 10In Windows 11, the Snipping Tool is a Windows app installed in a folder like:C:\Program Files\WindowsApps\Microsoft.ScreenSketch_ a number and some random characters\SnippingTool\SnippingTool.exeFor example, on my computer, this is the path to Snipping Tool:C:\Program Files\WindowsApps\Microsoft.ScreenSketch_11.2409.25.0_x64_8wekyb3d8bbwe\SnippingToolOn your computer, the Microsoft.ScreenSketch_ part of the folder path may have a different number or character string at the end. The location of the Snipping Tool file in Windows 11Another issue is that you cant open the WindowsApps folder from File Explorer. Windows 11 will tell you that you dont currently have permission to access this folder. You need to change the permissions for the WindowsApps folder, a complicated process you shouldnt undergo just to get to the folder where Snipping Tool is installed and run its executable file. If you regularly use the Snipping Tool, pin its shortcut to the taskbar or your Start Menu for quicker access. To do so, open the Start Menu, go to All, and locate the Snipping Tool shortcut. Next, right-click or press and hold on it, and in the context menu, go to More > Pin to taskbar or Pin to Start, depending on where you want to pin the Snipping Tool. Pinning the Snipping Tool shortcut to Start or the taskbar in Windows 11The options available in Windows 10 are the same as in Windows 11. Simply open the Start Menu, go to Windows Accessories, find the Snipping Tool shortcut, right-click (or press and hold), and select the option you prefer. Pinning the Snipping Tool shortcut to Start or the taskbar in Windows 10 You can always make a shortcut that opens the Snipping Tool. An easy way to do this is by dragging and dropping the Snipping Tool shortcut from the Start Menu onto the desktop or in any other folder you prefer. When you see the word Link displayed on the screen, release the shortcut, and its immediately placed in that spot. Drag the Snipping Tool shortcut to the desktopAnother method is to manually create a Snipping Tool shortcut. Right-click or press-and-hold on an empty space on the desktop, and then select New > Shortcut. Make sure to enter snippingtool.exe as the shortcuts location and follow the instructions of the Create Shortcut wizard. Creating a Snipping Tool shortcutNOTE: If you need help creating shortcuts, read How to create shortcuts for files, folders, apps, and web pages in Windows. The Snipping Tool is a handy and easy-to-use tool for capturing screenshots on Windows 10 and Windows 11. In Windows 11, you can also use it to record the screen, making it useful when you need help troubleshooting a problem and want to share whats going on with someone else. I hope this article has helped you learn how to open the Snipping Tool on your Windows computer or device. And if you have a favorite method, share it using the comment options below. For example, would you rather open the Snipping Tool using a keyboard shortcut, a desktop shortcut, Run, the Command Prompt, or some other way?On Windows 11, you can use the Snipping Tool to take screenshots without resorting to a third-party tool. In this guide, I will teach you how to get started and get the most out of the app.The new Snipping Tool app replaces the old version of the Snipping Tool and the Snip & Sketch (still available on Windows 10) with a new experience that combines the best of both apps.The app lets you take screenshots in different ways. You can select a rectangle, use free mode, or quickly capture a window or the entire screen. The second part of the experience is the new editor that lets you crop, annotate, extra text, redact sensitive information, and save or share screenshots. You can even use the app to screen record videos with and without audio.You may like In this how-to guide, I will explain how to take screenshots and screen record videos using the Snipping Tool app on Windows 11.The Snipping Tool is a straightforward app that allows you to take screenshots on Windows 11 through the app or shortcut. The app also includes settings you can configure, including the ability to use the "Print screen" key instead of the "Windows key + Shift + S" shortcut.Screen capture via appTo take screenshots through the Snipping Tool app, use these steps:Open Start.Search for Snipping Tool and click the top result to open the app.Select one of the available screen capture modes, including:Rectangle mode creates a rectangle screenshot using the mouse.Window mode saves a screenshot of a window.Full-screen mode takes a screenshot of the entire screen.Free-form mode allows you to use the mouse to select any form you want from the screen.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)(Optional) Use the Delay option to delay the capture for up to 10 seconds.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Quick note: This option can come in handy when trying to capture a particular action.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Create the screenshot with the mode you selected.Once you complete the steps, the screenshot will open in the Snipping Tool editor, where you can save the capture or annotate it before sharing it.All the latest news, reviews, and guides for Windows and Xbox diehards.Screen capture via shortcutAlternatively, you can use a keyboard shortcut to quickly bring up the tools to take a screenshot on Windows 11. Heres how:Use the "Windows key + Shift + S" keyboard shortcut.Select one of the screen capture modes:Rectangle mode.Window mode.Full-screen mode.Free-form mode.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Create the screenshot with the option you selected.After you complete the steps, the capture will open with the Snipping Tool editor.Basic screenshot editingTo edit and save the screenshot, use these steps:Click the Image Crop tool in the command bar.Use the edges to crop and resize the screenshot.Click the Check button to apply the changes.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Use the "Ballpoint pen, Highlighter," or "Touch Writing" features to annotate the image.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Quick tip: The Ballpoint pen and Highlighter have different options to change the color and stroke size to annotate the image.Use the Eraser tool to delete strokes.(Optional) Click the Copy button from the top right to copy the image to the clipboard and paste it onto a document.Click the Save button from the top right to save the screenshot as an image file (.jpg, .png, or .gif).(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Click the Share button from the top right to share the capture with other people using different apps.Once you complete the steps, the screenshot will save on the computer.Adding shapes to screenshotTo add shapes to the screenshot, use these steps:Click the Shapes button from the command bar.Choose the share (square, circle, straight line, or arrow).(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Open the Fill menu and choose the color (if applicable).Open the Outline menu and choose the outline color and size.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Create the shape on the image.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Once you complete the steps, the shape will be added to the screenshot.To redact text to hide sensitive information on a screenshot, use these steps:Click the Text actions button from the command bar.(Option 1) Select the desired text, right-click the selection, and choose the Copy text option.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Quick tip: You can also use the "Copy all text" option from the "Text actions" menu.(Option 2) Select the desired text, right-click the selection, and choose the Redact text option.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Quick tip: You can also use the "Quick redact" option from the "Text actions" menu to redact emails and numbers automatically. Also, from the drop-down menu, you can choose the details the app can redact automatically.Once you complete the steps, the sensitive information will be redacted on the screenshot.How to use Snipping Tool to screen recordingTo record the screen with the Snipping Tool app, use these steps:OpenStart.Search forSnapping Tooland click the top result to open the app.Click theRecordbutton.Click theNewbutton.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Choose an area of the screen to record.Click theMicrophonemenu and select the voice capture device. (You can also choose the "Mute" button to disable audio capture.)(Optional) Click the"mute system audio"button to prevent the app from recording audio from your computer.Click theStarbutton.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Continue with the interaction you want to capture.Click theStopbutton.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Quick note:You can click the"Delete"(trash) button to discard the recording and start over.(Optional) Click thePlaybutton to playback the screen recording.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Click theSavebutton.Choose the location to store the video recording.Click theSavebutton one more time.Once you complete the steps, Snipping Tool will create a video file with the screen recording.How to change settings on Snipping ToolThe Snipping Tool lets you configure various settings.To change the app settings, use these steps:Open Start.Search for Snipping Tool and click the top result to open the app.Click the menu (three-dotted) menu and select the Settings option.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)In the Settings page, enable or disable the options as needed:Automatically copy changes Copies the capture in the clipboard for easy pasting onto documents.Automatically save screenshots Saves capture into the Screenshots folder automatically.Ask to save edited screenshots Ask to save the capture as you close the editor.Multiple windows Launches a new instance of the app for each capture.Add border to each screenshot Inserts borders to each snip automatically.HDR screenshot color corrector Adjusts colors for screenshots taken on HDR monitors.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Select the App theme setting under the "Appearance" section.Select the color theme. Options available:Light.Dark.Use system setting.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)(Optional) Choose the screen recording settings, including:Include microphone input by default when a screen recording starts.Include system audio by default when a screen recording starts.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Click the "Use the Print screen key to open Snipping Tool" button under the "Shortcuts" section.(Image credit: Mauro Huculak)Click the Yes button.Turn on the "Use the Print screen button to open screen snipping" toggle switch to use the Print screen key instead of the "Windows key + Shift + S" keyboard shortcut to open the tool. Once you press Enter, the tool will pop up, ready for action. You can also pin it to your taskbar for quick access next time. Click on the New button and select the type of snip you want: Free-form, Rectangular, Window, or Full-screen. Each snip type serves its purpose. For instance, Free-form lets you draw any shape to capture, while Rectangular is perfect for standard screenshots. Choose the one that fits your needs! Drag your cursor over the area you want to capture. Hold the mouse button and drag it over the area you want to capture. Dont worry if it doesnt look perfect; you can always try again. Use the built-in tools to annotate, highlight, or erase parts of your snip. The editing tools are your screen-capture paintbrushes. Add notes, circle important bits, or erase mistakes to make your snip more informative. Click the save icon to store your snip or use the share button to send it directly. Saving your snip ensures youll have it for later. If you need to send it to someone, the share button is there to make that process quick and painless. After youve completed these steps, youll have a saved or shared screenshot, ready for whatever you need. Whether its for a project, a reminder, or just something cool you saw, the Snipping Tool makes it easy to capture and keep those images. Use keyboard shortcuts to speed up your snipping process. Press Windows + Shift + S to start a new snip without opening the full tool. Customize your snip with different colors and pen sizes in the editor for better clarity. Save your snips in different formats, like PNG or JPEG, for versatility. Use the delay feature if you need to capture a menu or a tooltip that disappears quickly. Enable the Print Screen shortcut in settings to take a snip instead of printing the screen. Press Windows + Shift + S for an instant snip without launching the full tool. Yes, use the delay feature to capture dynamic menus that may disappear. Currently, you need to manually choose the save location each time, as theres no default setting for this. Absolutely! Use the built-in editing tools to add annotations like text, highlights, or drawings. The Snipping Tool doesnt support scrolling captures, but third-party tools like Snagit do. Open the Snipping Tool. Choose your snip type. Capture the snip. Edit your snip. Save or share your snip. Understanding how to use the Snipping Tool on Windows 11 can transform the way you capture and share information from your screen. Its more than just a toolits your digital scissors, ready to slice out precisely what you need from the virtual world. By mastering the steps of opening the tool, choosing the right snip type, capturing the screen, editing, and finally saving or sharing your snips, youve empowered yourself with a valuable skill. Remember, technology is all about making life easier. The Snipping Tool is one of those hidden gems in Windows 11 that might seem simple but can be incredibly effective. Whether youre a student capturing lecture slides, a professional saving important graphs, or just someone who loves sharing funny memes with friends, this tool is your ally. If youre eager to explore more, consider diving into additional Windows 11 shortcuts or productivity tips. The digital world is vast, and theres always more to learn. So, next time you need to capture something on your screen, reach for the Snipping Tool and snip away!Matthew Burleigh has been writing tech tutorials since 2008. His writing has appeared on dozens of different websites and been read over 50 million times.After receiving his Bachelors and Masters degrees in Computer Science he spent several years working in IT management for small businesses. However, he now works full time writing content online and creating websites.His main writing topics include iPhones, Microsoft Office, Google Apps, Android, and Photoshop, but he has also written about many other tech topics as well.Read his full bio here. Readers help support MSPoweruser. We may get a commission if you buy through our links. Read our disclosure page to find out how can you help MSPoweruser sustain the editorial team Read more The Snipping Tool in Windows 11 lets you quickly take screenshots of your screen whether its a full screen, a window, or a custom selection. Heres how to use it effectively. Table of contents Press Windows + Shift + SThis instantly opens the Snipping Tool in capture mode.Click Start, type Snipping Tool, and press Enter.Tip: You can pin it to the taskbar for quick access. Once opened, youll see four snip types: Rectangular Snip Draw a box around the area you want to capture. Freeform Snip Draw any shape around the area. Window Snip Click on a specific app window. Fullscreen Snip Captures the entire screen instantly.Press Windows + Shift + S Choose the desired snip mode from the toolbar. Select the area or window to capture. The screenshot is copied to your clipboard.Youll also see a notification in the bottom-right corner click it to open the capture in Snipping Tool for editing. Once the screenshot opens in Snipping Tool: Draw or highlight using the pen, highlighter, or eraser. Crop the image as needed. Click Save (floppy disk icon) to store the screenshot on your PC. You can also Copy or Share the snip directly from the app. Want to capture something after a few seconds? Open Snipping Tool from Start. Click the arrow next to the New button. Choose a delay: 3, 5, or 10 seconds. After the delay, your screen will dim and you can take a screenshot. If you dont manually save, your snips are only copied to the clipboard. To save automatically: After editing, click File > Save As, or use Ctrl + S. Choose your folder and format (PNG, JPG, GIF).Snipping Tool not opening?Try restarting your PC or updating Windows. Clipboard not saving?Check Clipboard settings: Settings > System > Clipboard. The Windows 11 Snipping Tool is a powerful and easy-to-use tool for taking screenshots. Whether youre capturing full screens or specific windows, the tool is flexible, fast, and built right into the OS.

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