

# CLEAN UP YOUR CONTEXT MENU

Beginners' Kaffee Klatch  
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The context menu is the menu that pops up when you right-click on a file, folder, and window, the desktop, or taskbar. Over the years, these menus have become more and more useful. However, with the extra entries in the context menu, they often become cluttered with options and features that you just don't need. This presentation is intended to show how you can get your menus back under control as well as how you can take advantage of the new features to make your own context menu entries.

If you want to remove an entry on a Context menu, follow these steps.

1. Open **My Computer**.
2. Click on the Tools menu, select Folder Options, and click on the File Types tab.
3. Scroll through the list of file types and select the extension that you would like to modify.
4. Click the Advanced button to bring up the Edit File Type window. This is where you will see a list of all of the different entries that will show up in the context menu.
5. Select the item that you want to remove and click Remove.
6. Click OK and you are finished.

If you ever want to revert back to your original context menus, you can just reinstall the target application.

As mentioned earlier, when you right-click on any folder or file, a Context Menu will appear that will contain options that apply to that particular item. At times, however, this list of context items, especially in the "***Open With***" subset, becomes cluttered with options that are no longer applicable to your needs. Compression applications such as Winzip always end up adding program entries to all of the context menus. This can be a convenient feature, but if you don't compress and extract zip files very often, then you might not need the added convenience. Instead you could remove these entries from your context menu, which will give your system a cleaner interface as well as a small performance boost.

How then do you remove programs from this list that appears when you select the Open With, Choose Program option in your context menu?

Windows makes it easy to add a program to those listed in the ***Open With*** submenu of your context (right-click) menu: All you need to do is right-click the

document, select **Open With**, Choose Program, pick the appropriate program from the list, and click OK. Your choice will be on the **Open With** submenu the next time you right-click that file type.

Removing an item from the list of Open With programs, however, requires editing the Windows Registry. Therefore, it is important to start the process by backing up your Registry, following the steps below.

**To back up the Registry:**

1. Click Start
2. Click Run
3. Enter **regedit** in the box and click OK
4. The Registry Editor opens
5. Click **File**, then **Export**
6. Select a folder in which to store the backup. The default is **My Documents**
7. Enter a name for the file (such as *Registry Backup*) and click Save.
8. **(If you make a mistake in executing the process below and need to restore the Registry:** Double click the Registry backup file that you created in the steps above, click Yes, then OK.)

Once the backup is complete, choose Start, Run, type **regedit**, and press Enter to open the Registry Editor.

1. In the left pane, expand the HKEY\_CURRENT\_USER folder (click on the + sign).
2. Click on the + sign in front of the Software folder.
3. Click on the + sign in front of the Microsoft folder.
4. Click on the + sign in front of the Windows folder.
5. Click on the + sign in front of the CurrentVersion folder.
6. Click on the + sign in front of the Explorer folder.
7. Click on the FileExts folder.
8. If necessary, click the + (plus sign) next to the FileExts key to expand the branches beneath it. Next, click the + beside the key representing the file extension for the menu you want to edit. Select the OpenWithList key under the extension key.
9. In the pane on the right side, select the icon that corresponds to the menu item you would like to remove from your context menu. (Note that you won't see the menu item by name, but rather the name of the file that the menu item launches.) Right-click it, choose Delete (or just press the Delete key on your keyboard), and click Yes (or press Enter) to confirm.

The next time you right-click a file and choose the Open With shortcut, only the program options you decided to keep there will be presented to you.