

CLEAN UP A MESSY DESKTOP IN WINDOWS XP

Beginners' Kaffee Klatch
Presented by Bill Wilkinson
April 22, 2006

Do you have desktop icons all over the place? You can cause each of them to pop into a grid block that is in closest proximity to the icon. (The desktop grid is made up of invisible vertical and horizontal lines that form neatly organized columns and rows.) To activate this procedure:

1. Right click on a blank area of the desktop.
2. Click on **Arrange Icons**.
3. Select **Align to Grid**.

You can also rearrange your desktop icons so that they will appear in neat columns and rows along the invisible grid, beginning with the column along the left side of the desktop and working to the right. To activate this procedure:

1. Right click on a blank area of the desktop.
2. Click on **Arrange Icons**.
3. Select **Auto Arrange**.

You can also **arrange icons by**: Name, Size, Type, and Date (Modified).

If you insist on having many shortcut icons on your desktop and are running out of room, you may wish to run the **Desktop Cleanup Wizard**. The Wizard displays a list of the desktop icons that have not been used for 60 days or more, enabling you to automatically move those icons that you don't want on your desktop to an **Unused Desktop Shortcuts** folder. You can retrieve icons you have removed by opening the Unused Desktop Shortcuts folder on your desktop. Clear the **Run Desktop Cleanup Wizard every 60 days** check box if you don't want the wizard to run automatically every two months. To activate the Desktop Cleanup Wizard:

1. Right click on a blank area of the desktop.
2. Click on **Arrange Icons**.
3. Select **Run Desktop Cleanup Wizard**.

Here is a neat trick:

If you want to have a desktop that is free of all icons, but yet have all of them immediately available to you, follow these steps:

1. Right click on a blank area of the desktop.
2. Click on **Arrange Icons**.
3. Deselect **Show Desktop Icons**. This action will clear all icons from the desktop. To restore the icons to their previous desktop locations, simply click on **Show Desktop Icons** again. (The button acts as a toggle on/off switch.)

You can **remove** an individual desktop icon by right-clicking the icon and then clicking Delete. Another way is to left-click on the icon and press the delete key on the keyboard.

You can **remove** multiple icons at one time by left-clicking on one of them, then hold down on the **Ctrl** key and clicking on others. Once all the icons that you want to have removed are selected, follow one of the two procedures listed in the paragraph immediately above.

By default, every time you delete a file, Windows asks you if you are sure you want to delete it. However, it makes good sense to turn off the Recycle Bin's Delete Confirmation feature. Because the Recycle Bin makes file deletion a pretty impermanent operation (any item sent to the Recycle Bin can be restored to its original location with two mouse clicks), Windows XP's "Are You Sure?" message is a waste of time and an unnecessary mouse activity.

To eliminate the message:

1. Right-click the **Recycle Bin**.
2. Choose **Properties**.
3. Click the **Global** tab.
4. Remove the check mark from the box next to **Display Delete Confirmation Dialog**.
5. Click **OK**.