



Do you need more room on your Windows desktop? You can change the size of the icons on your desktop and also their spacing - particularly useful for small netbook screens. And if you thought you knew how to change icon spacing in Windows XP you could be driven mad looking for the same command in Windows 7. So, I hope there's at least one person out there who can benefit from a half hour of my weekend spent trying to work out how to do it!

So, let's look at this as two separate tasks (icon size and icon spacing) and with two sets of instructions (XP and Vista/7).

Icon Size

XP

- Right-click on an empty part of the desktop
- Left-click on Properties
- Left-click on the Appearance tab (at the top of the window)
- Left-click on the Advanced button
- Left Click on the triangle next to "Desktop" (see figure 1)
- Click on "Icon"
- Change the number in the "size" box
- Note that you can also change the size and font of the text beneath the icon as well
- Close all Windows, clicking on the "OK" button where applicable.



Figure 1

Vista/7

The easiest way:

- Press the Ctrl key and roll the wheel mouse up or down to change the icon size

Or:

- Right-click on the desktop
- Left-click on "View"
- Left-click on "Large Icons", "Medium Icons" or "Classic Icons" (Vista) or "Large Icons", "Medium Icons" or "Small Icons" (Vista)

Or (if you want more control over the exact size of the icons):

- Right-click on the desktop
- Left-click on "Personalize"
- Left-click on "Window Color" near the bottom of the screen. Yes, in order to change icon size you click on "Window Color". Thank you, Microsoft. That one cost me half an hour of my life.
- Click on "Advanced appearance settings"
- Left-click on the triangle next to "Desktop" (see figure 1)
- Click on "Icon"
- Change the number in the "size" box from the default
- Note that you can also change the size and font of the text beneath the icon as well
- Close all Windows, clicking on the "OK" button where applicable.

Icon Spacing

XP

- Right-click on an empty part of the desktop
- Left-click on Properties
- Left-click on the Appearance tab (at the top of the window)
- Left-click on the Advanced button
- Left Click on the triangle next to "Desktop" (see figure 1)
- Click on Icon spacing (horizontal)
- Change the number in the "size" box from the default of 43
- Do the same for the vertical spacing
- Close all Windows, clicking on the "OK" button where applicable.

Vista/7

- Right-click on the desktop
- Left-click on “Personalize”
- Left-click on “Window Color” near the bottom of the screen.
- Click on “Advanced appearance settings”
- Left Click on the triangle next to “Desktop” (see figure 1)
- Click on Icon spacing (horizontal)
- Change the number in the “size” box from the default of 43
- Do the same for the vertical spacing
- Close all Windows, clicking on the “OK” button where applicable

If you are using a netbook with Windows 7, you may also like to reduce the size of the icons on the taskbar (the row of icons that are usually at the bottom of the screen). To do this:

- Right-click on the Start button
- Left-click on Properties
- Left-click on the Taskbar tab (at the top of the window)
- Click on the box next to “Use small icons”
- Click on “OK”

By the way, the reason I was messing with Windows 7 desktop arrangements at the weekend (sad person that I am) was that I’ve just put Windows 7 on my netbook. I thought it might struggle, but so far it seems fine. No doubt that’s because there’s 2gb of memory in it and not the standard 1gb that netbooks usually come with.

So, that looks like the end of using XP on a regular basis for me. I’ve put XP back onto my old laptop so that I can still see what my computer clients are looking at when providing telephone support for XP. This doesn’t apply, of course, if I’m remotely controlling the client’s computer using Teamviewer. In that situation I can see exactly what the remote computer client can see on his/her own screen, whatever the operating system. This type of support really can cut the costs: it only takes a few minutes to set up the first time and after that a connection can be made in seconds. It’s often possible to solve an issue in 10 minutes of a remote control session that would previously have needed a visit. You can find out more about how this works by visiting the [remote support page of my website](#).

Share this:

- [Click to share on Twitter \(Opens in new window\)](#)
- [Click to share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\)](#)