

First steps

Getting to know a new mobile device can be pretty exciting, especially if this is your first smartphone or tablet. The key is to start with the basics and take it one step at a time so you don't get overwhelmed.

First, make sure you're comfortable with the **interface**, including the screen, some of the built-in apps, and the various gestures you'll use to get around. Then you can move on to some other fundamental tasks, like connecting to the Internet using **Wi-Fi**.

Google account



The first time you turn on your device, you'll be asked to set up a few different things, including your preferred language, the date and time, and (most importantly) your **Google account**. If you don't have a Google account yet, you can create one during the setup process.

There are a few reasons this step is so important. In short, your Google account is your **identity** on your device. Not only does it connect you to the **cloud**—where things like photos and contacts are stored—but it also gives you access to the **Play Store**, where you can download and purchase apps. The more you use your device, the more you'll see how integrated your Google account really is.

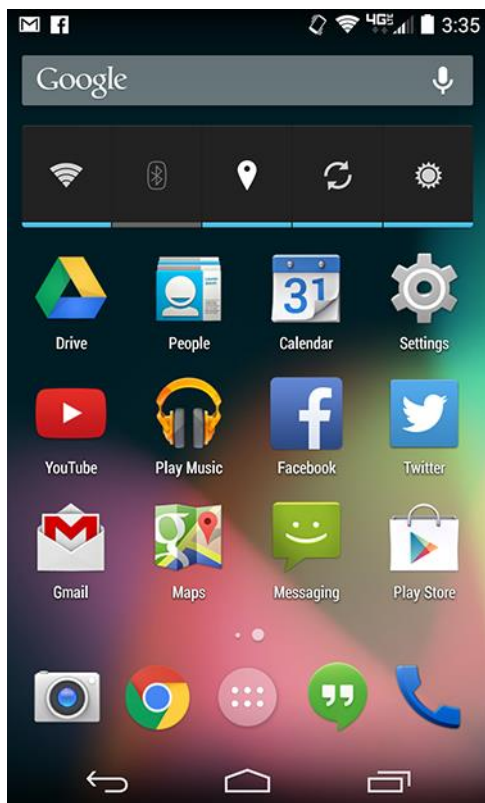
You may have a Google account already if you use any other **Google services**, like Gmail, Chrome, Google Drive, or even YouTube. For more information, check out our [Google Account](#) tutorial.

Getting to know your device

Once your device is set up, you should be taken to a simple screen with some icons, buttons, and other miscellaneous features. This is actually one of the most important parts of your device—it's called the **Home screen**—and it's where you'll store all your favourite apps.

Remember, every Android device is unique. (We discussed some of the reasons for this in the previous lesson, [Intro to Android Devices](#).) This means your experience may vary depending on your phone or tablet. Luckily, you can still learn a lot by comparing your device to ours.

Click the buttons in the interactive to learn more about the interface, including the Home screen and other features.



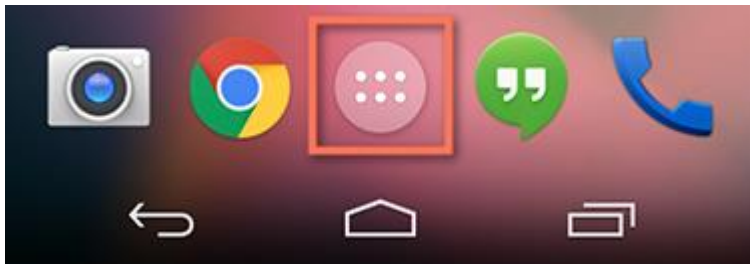
Basic apps

Ready to get started with some everyday tasks, like email and text messaging? We'll discuss these things in detail over the next few lessons, but in the meantime you can check your device for these **basic built-in apps**. They may go by slightly different names depending on your phone or tablet, but the icons will usually give you some clue.

- **Phone** for making phone calls
- **Messaging** for text messaging
- **Email** for managing your email, or **Gmail** if you have a Gmail account
- **People** for your contacts list (may also be called **Contacts**)
- **Chrome** for browsing the Web (may also be called **Internet** or **Browser**)
- **Camera** for taking photos and videos

- **Play Store** for downloading apps
- **Settings** for adjusting your settings

Some of these apps may be on your **Home** screen already. If they aren't, take a look in your **Apps** view. This special view gives you access to every app on your device. To open it, look for the icon near the bottom of the **Home** screen.



Basic gestures

Gestures are what you'll use to interact with your device's **touchscreen**. For instance, instead of clicking something with your mouse, you'll tap the screen with your finger. We'll refer to gestures throughout this tutorial, so make sure you're familiar with the examples below.

- **Tap** to "click", select, or open something on your device, like a button or an app
- **Tap and hold** to occasionally access other options (think of this as "right-clicking")
- **Drag** to scroll up and down, left and right, or any other direction on the screen
- **Swipe left or right** to "flip through" things, like pages on the Home screen, photos, or pages in an e-book
- **Double-tap** to zoom in or out in certain apps, like Maps or Chrome
- **Pinch** (i.e., open or close your thumb and forefinger) to zoom in or out almost anywhere

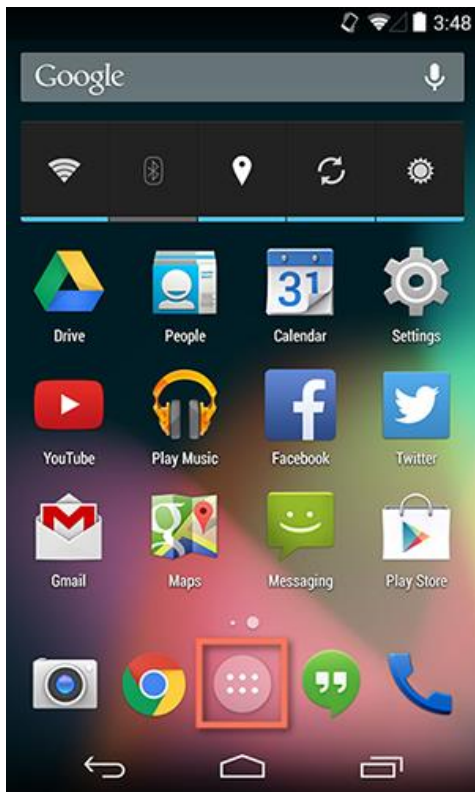
Accessing the Internet

Your device can connect to the Internet almost anywhere, either through **mobile data** (3G/4G or LTE) or nearby **Wi-Fi**. So what exactly is the difference? Most data plans only give you a certain amount of data per month, and there can be repercussions if you go over your limit. With Wi-Fi, you can use the Internet as much as you want, and it won't count against your data.

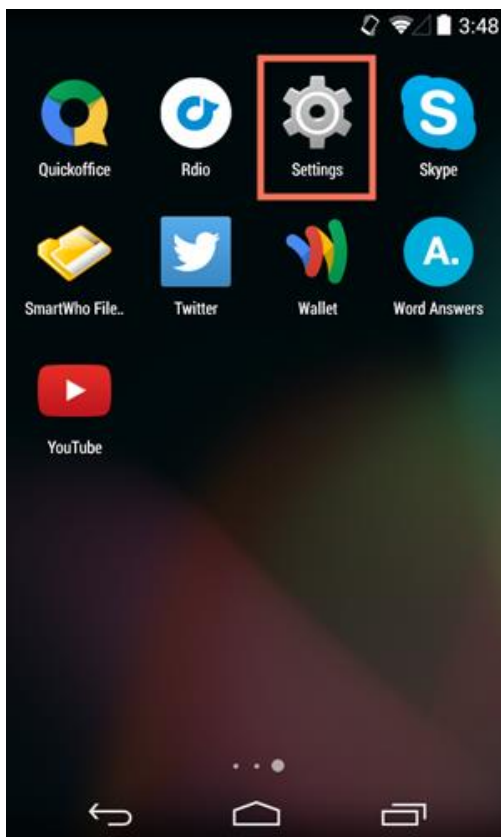
To connect to Wi-Fi (optional):

Do you have access to a nearby **Wi-Fi network** (for example, at home or at work)? You can easily connect to it using the steps below. For networks that you access repeatedly, you generally only have to do this once. The next time you're in range, you'll be connected to the network automatically, as long as you leave the Wi-Fi feature turned on.

1. Make sure you're on the **Home** screen, then open the **Apps** view. Your icon may look different from ours, but it's usually found in the Favourites tray near the bottom of the screen.



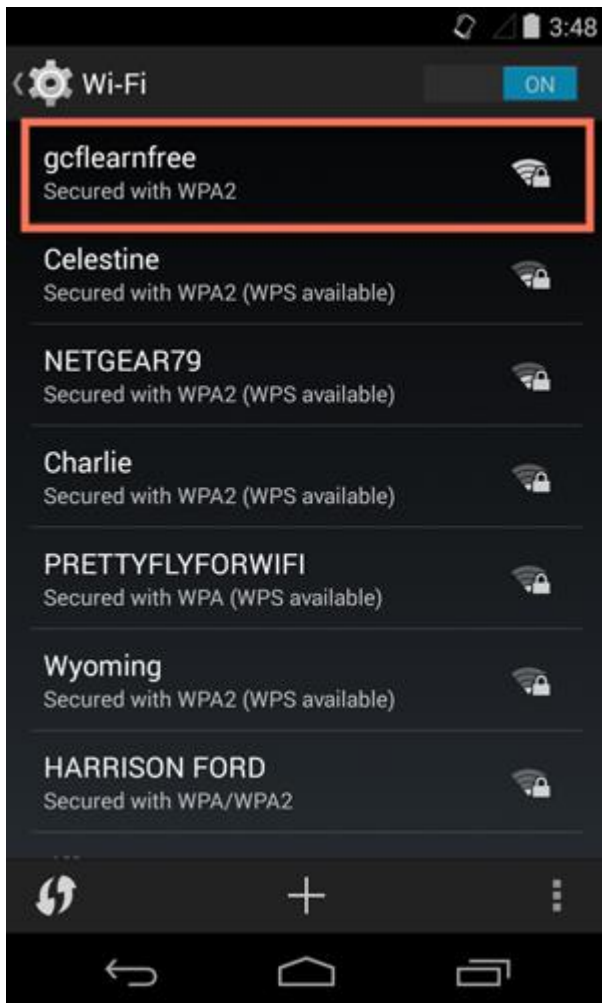
2. Tap the **Settings** icon. You may need to swipe through a few screens to find it.



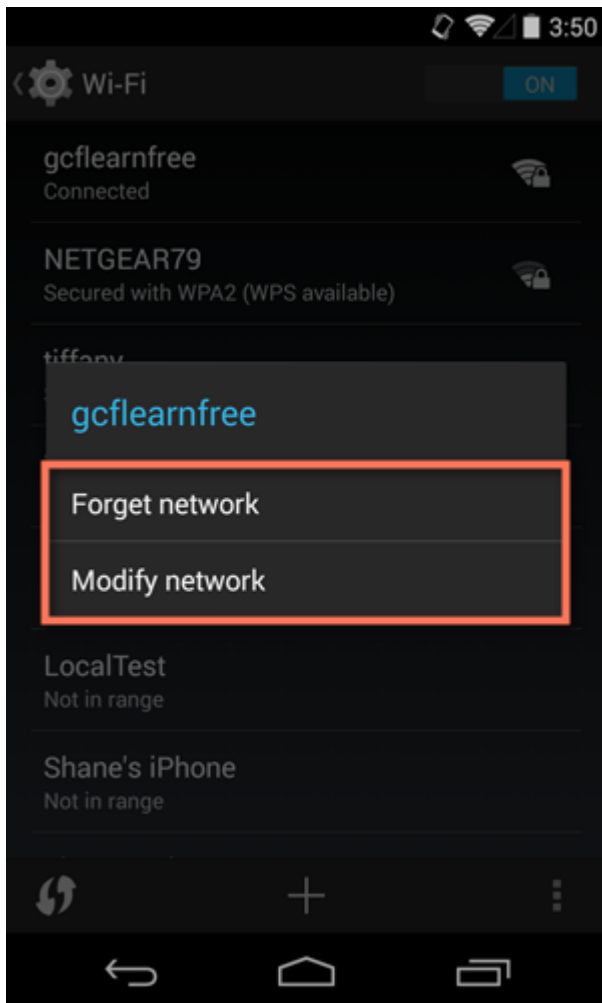
3. Scroll through the list of settings until you find the **Wi-Fi** feature. If it isn't already set to **ON**, tap the control on the right.
4. When you're done, tap the word **Wi-Fi**. This will open a list of nearby networks.



5. To join a network, just **tap** the one you want. If the network is secured, you'll need to enter a **password** to connect to it.



6. When you're done, your device will remember the details of the network (including the password if applicable), so you can connect to it automatically in the future. If you ever want to change these settings, **tap and hold** the network name, then choose **Forget** or **Modify**.



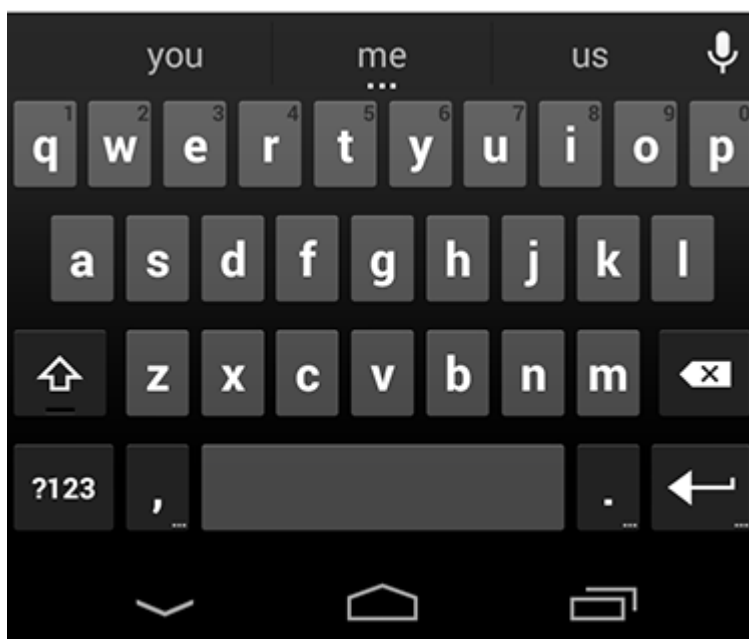
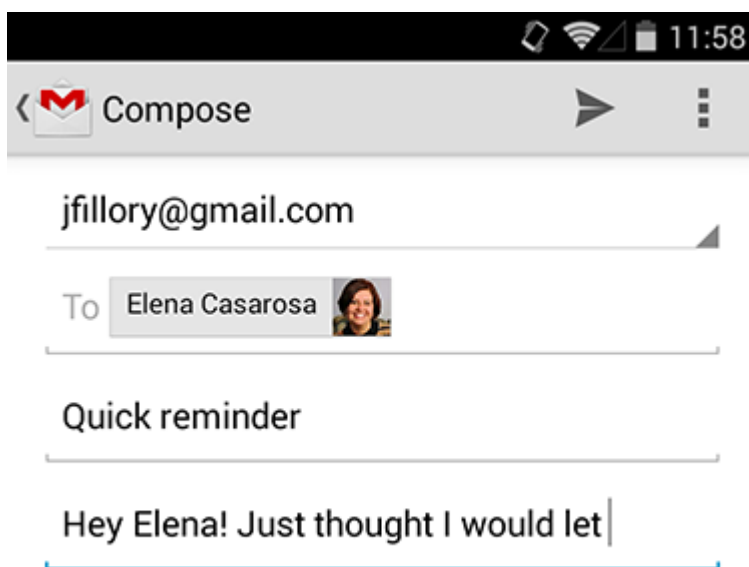
If the network you're connecting to is **unsecured**, you can access it without a password, but you should think carefully before you do (especially if it's a public hotspot, like Wi-Fi at your local coffee shop). Anything you view or share over an unsecured network is not necessarily safe from prying eyes.

Keyboard tips

By now, you've probably already encountered the **keyboard** on your device. It's designed to pop up automatically whenever you need to type something; for example, when you're composing an email, searching the Web, or filling out a form.

This keyboard may be smaller than a traditional keyboard, but it comes with several **convenient shortcuts** to make typing easier. Take the example below. Things like symbols, numbers, and capital letters are actually easy to access—you just have to know where to look.

Click the buttons in the interactive below to learn more about using your device's keyboard.

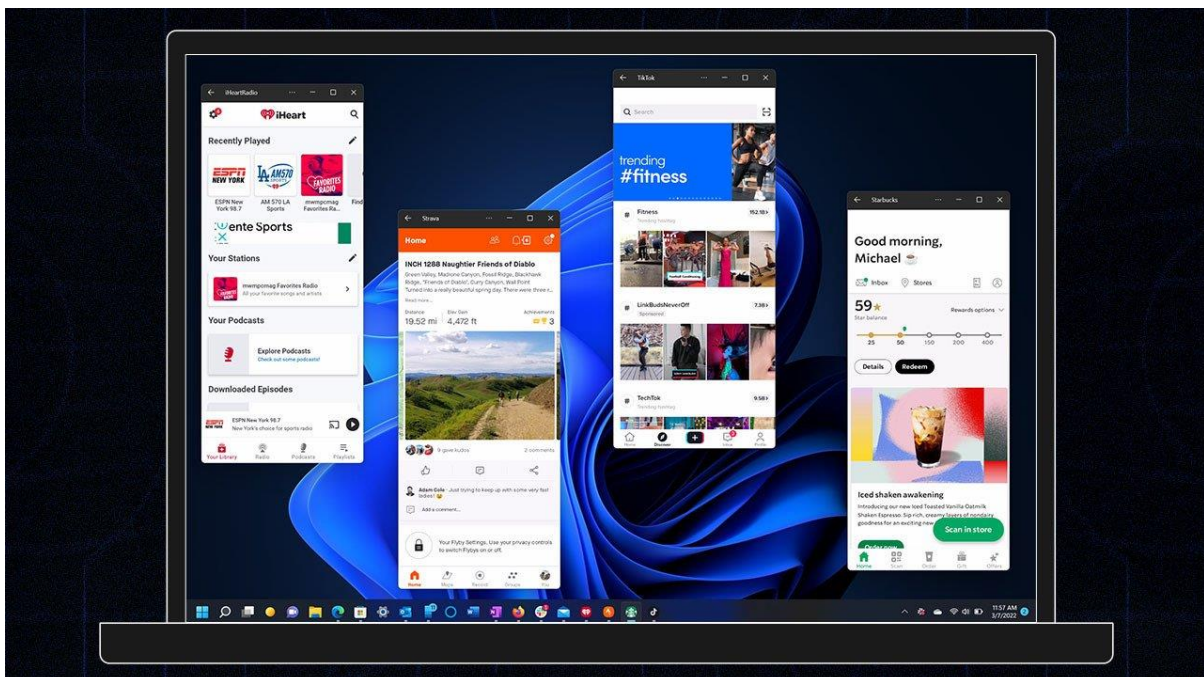


How to Connect Your Android Phone to Your Windows 11 PC

Connecting the two lets you send text messages, see notifications, instantly grab photos, and even run apps from your Android on your Windows 11 PC. We show you how to get started.

You take a picture on your phone, and now you want to see it on a bigger screen. You get a text message, but you don't want to dig out your phone to reply to it while you're working on your PC. Windows 11 lets you see that photo and reply to that message right from your keyboard. All you have to do is connect your Android device to Windows 11. Most impressive of all, with some Android phone models you can simultaneously use *multiple* mobile apps right on your computer.

For years, Apple has topped Windows in terms of mobile-desktop integrations with macOS's ability to let users text and make calls from their desktop. Apple Silicon-based Macs go even further, with mobile-app-running capability. Windows users can finally claim at least parity with mobile-to-desktop functionality described here, which Microsoft updated in March.



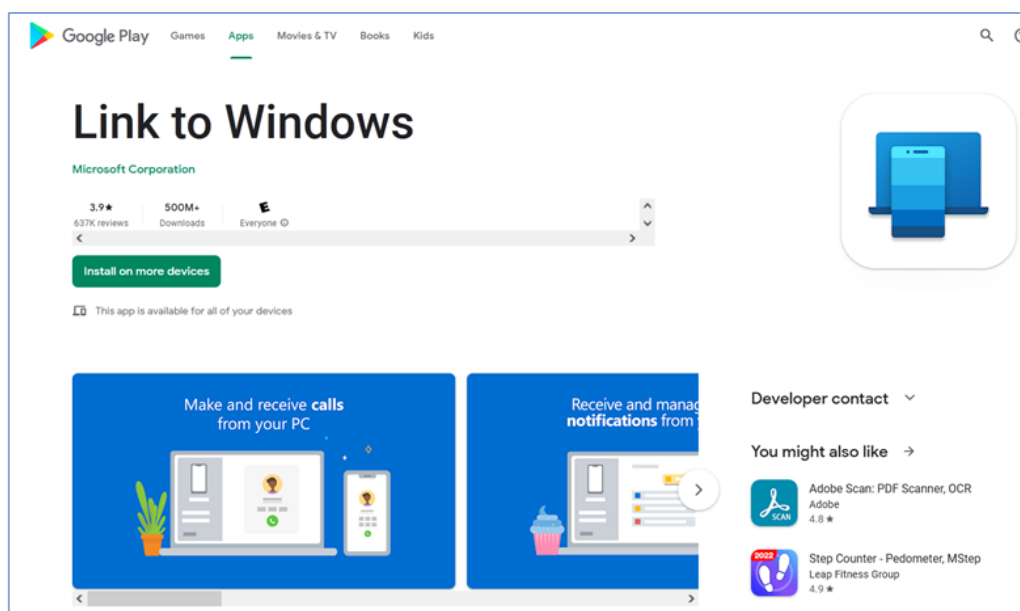
If you have an iPhone, you can also connect it to a computer running Windows 11, but you won't get the same depth of experience Android

users do. Microsoft has stated it wants to bring the same functionality for iPhones to Windows, but Apple has long been uninterested in releasing users from lock-in with its products. That said, you can connect an iPhone to a Windows PC for some basic file-transfer functions. Here, however, we show you how to connect an Android phone and a Windows 11 PC for a richer mobile-and-desktop integrated setup.

What You Need to Get Started

Windows 11 prompts you to connect your smartphone during its initial setup process. Assuming you didn't do so at the time, we'll take you through the procedure and call out a few things you should know before you start.

One important requirement is that you need to install an app on your phone called Link to Windows from the Google Play Store and sign into the app with the same Microsoft account you're signed into on your PC. On certain phones, the app is preinstalled. No worries on the PC side of the connection, since the Phone Link app is preinstalled on all Windows 11 PCs.



Another requirement is the phone has to be in range of the PC with Bluetooth and WiFi because, although display and control occur on the PC, the apps are still running on the phone.

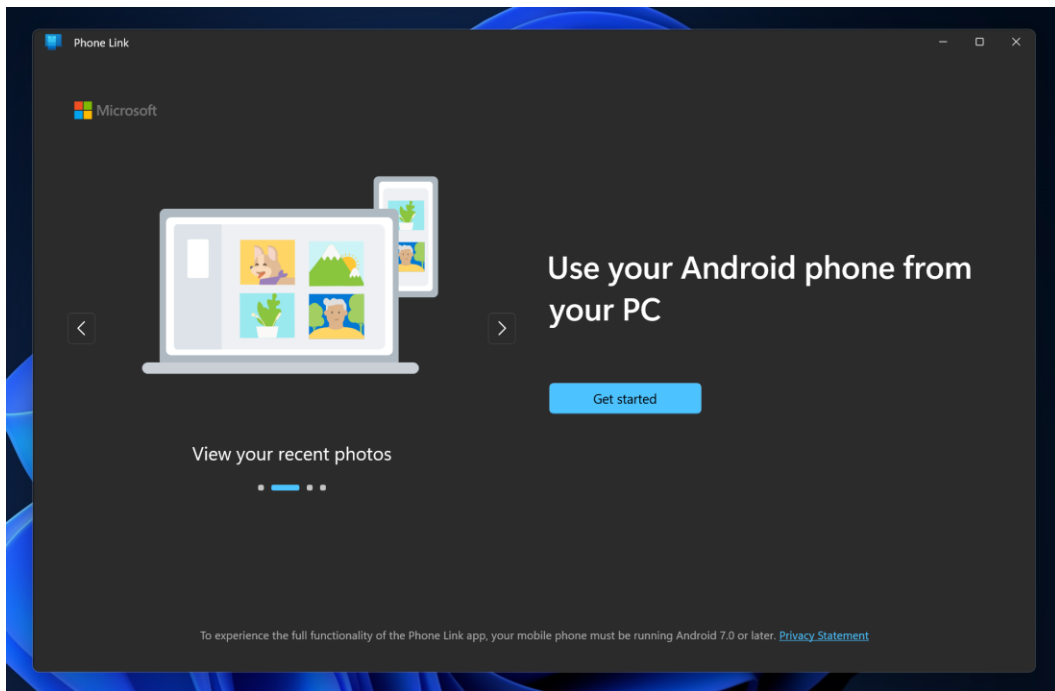
Additionally, to get Android-to-Windows 11 functionality, you need to be running Android 7 or later. Any Windows 11 PC works. To test the setup, we used a Surface Laptop 3 and a Samsung Galaxy S21 Ultra. The phone model is more important than the PC model in terms of what functions you get.

With the latest update, Microsoft has simplified its phone-linking strategy. There's an app called Phone Link on your PC and another app called Link to Windows you install on your mobile device. Previously, Link to Windows only worked with select Samsung models and Surface Duo phones (some Honor models were recently added for users in China). Those models still get more capabilities, like mirroring Android apps on the PC. Note this is different from the much-touted ability of Windows 11 to run Android apps, in which the apps actually run on the PC hardware.

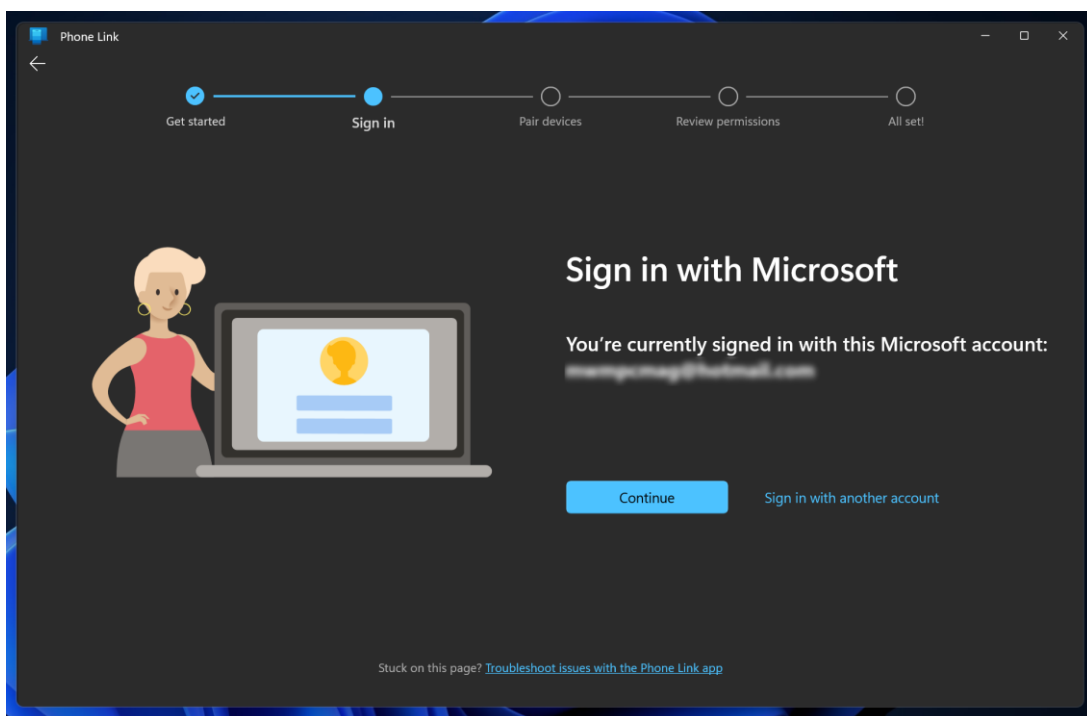
One final introductory note about the Link to Windows system: You can install it on multiple PCs for the same phone, so if you move between a desktop and home and a laptop on the road, it'll work on both.

Step-by-Step: How to Connect Your Android and Your PC

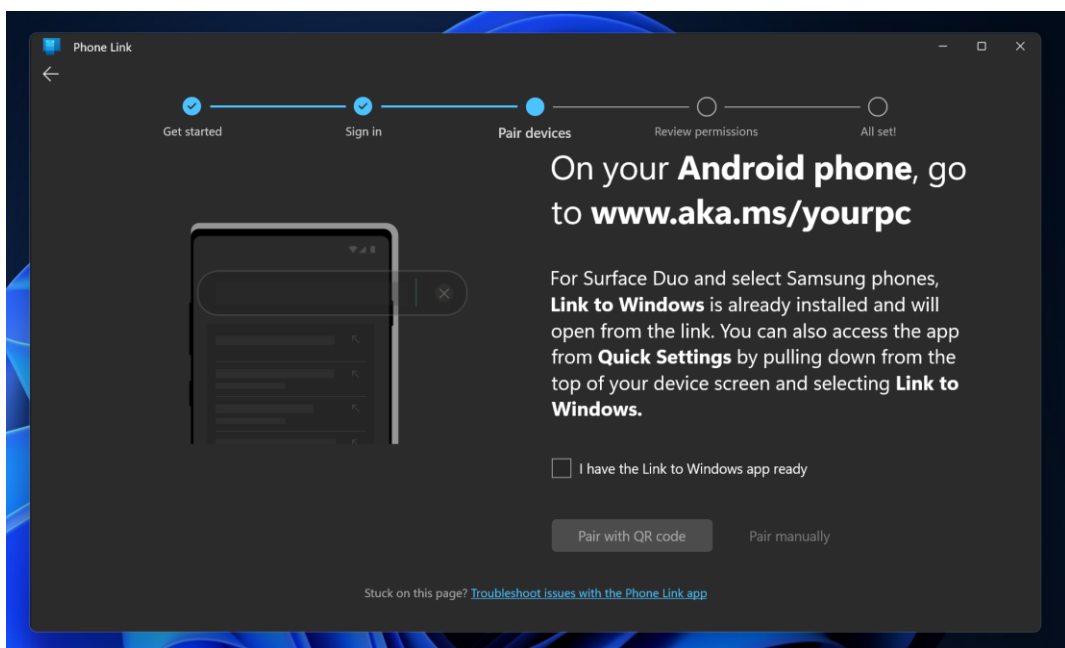
- **Open the Phone Link app on your Windows 11 PC.** Here you'll see the first page of a four-step setup process.



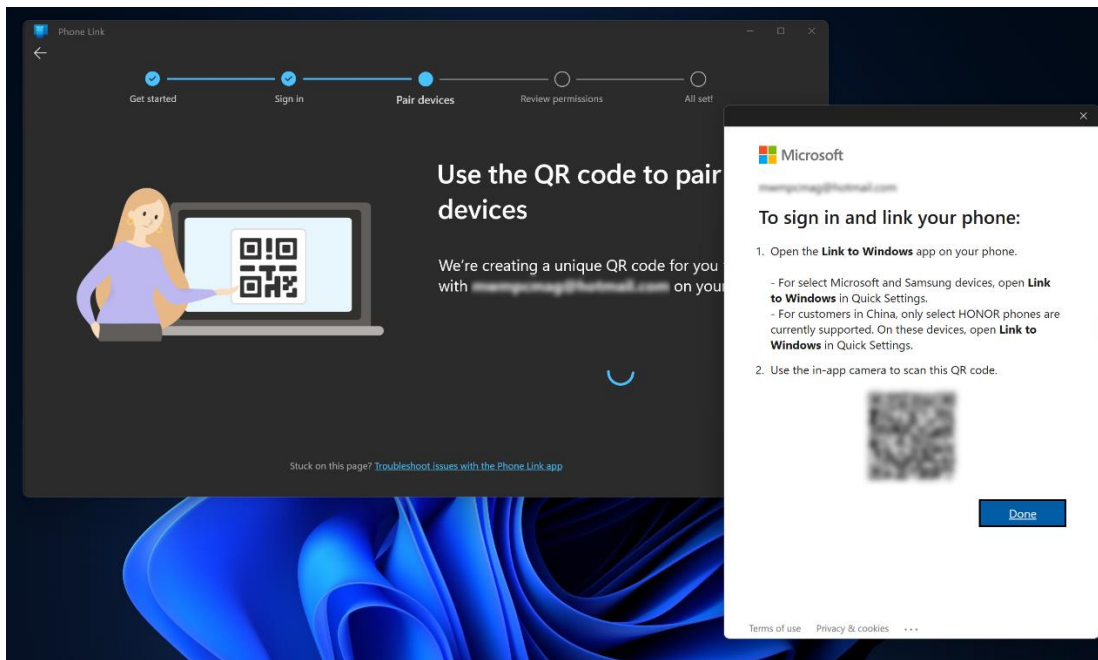
- **Sign in to your Microsoft account.** If you already signed in to an account at PC setup, this is a simple matter of accepting the account in the wizard.



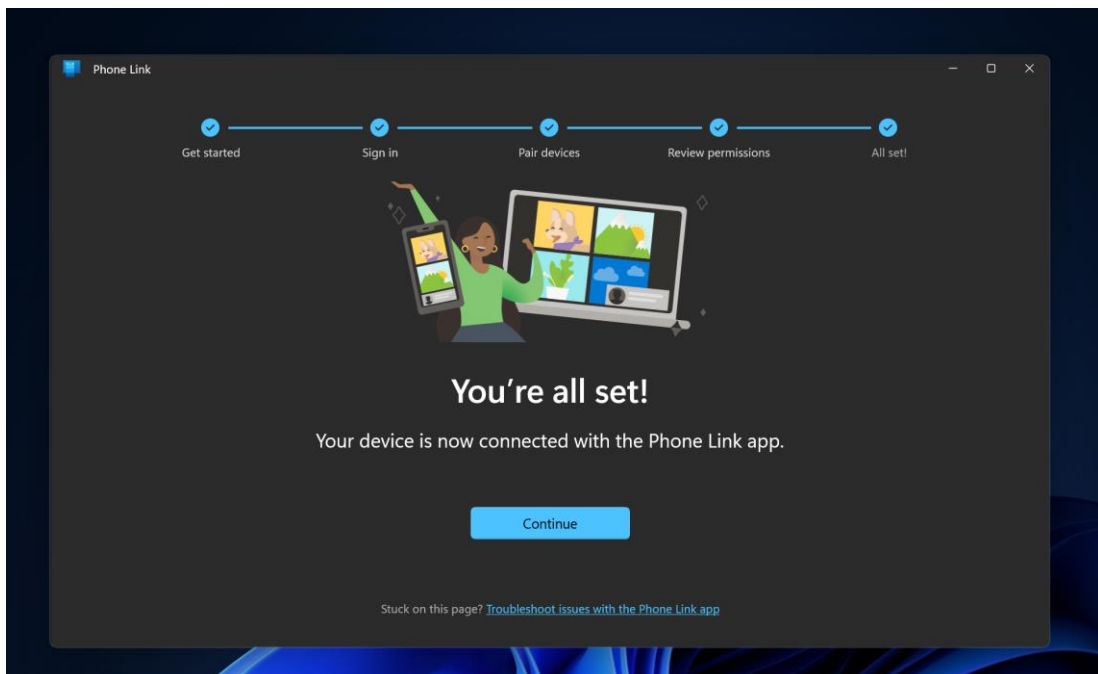
- **Install the Link to Windows mobile app.** You get it either by searching in Google Play or entering www.aka.ms/yourpc in your mobile browser. Alternatively, on recent Samsung and Surface Duo phones, simply pull down the Quick settings shade and choose Link to Windows. Long-press it to get to the syncing settings.



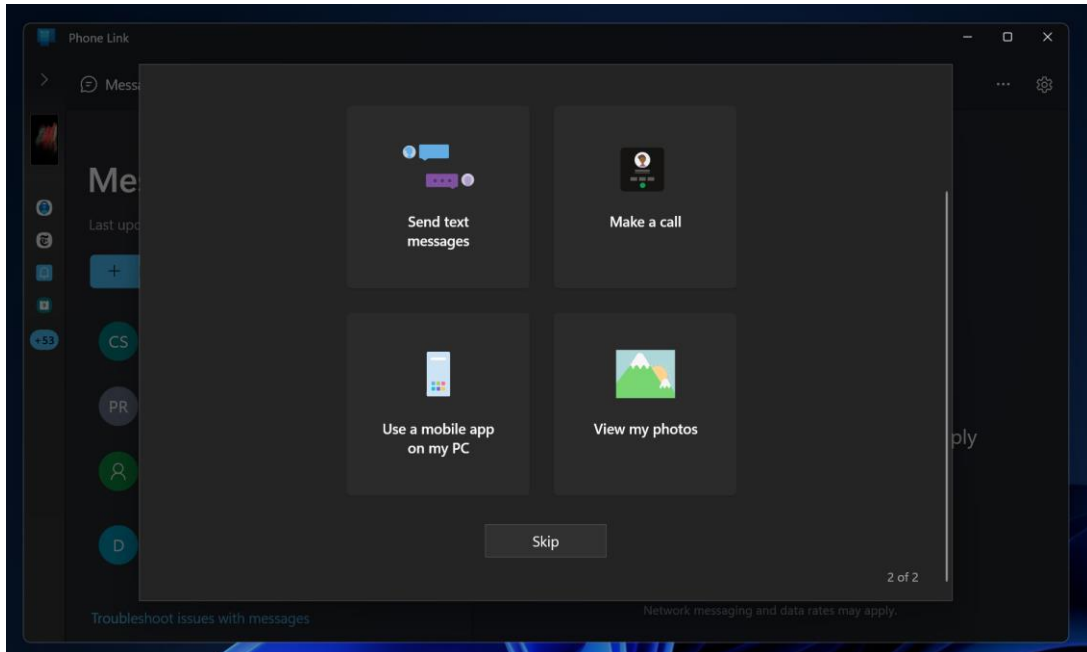
- **Pair your phone and PC.** You have a choice here between pairing using a QR code or entering a text code displayed in the PC's Phone Link app into the phone's companion app. Note that you need to scan the QR code in the Link to Windows app on the phone—be sure to use the in-app camera. Once you've done either pairing method, that's it. You're done!



You get a congratulatory page indicating the connection was successful.



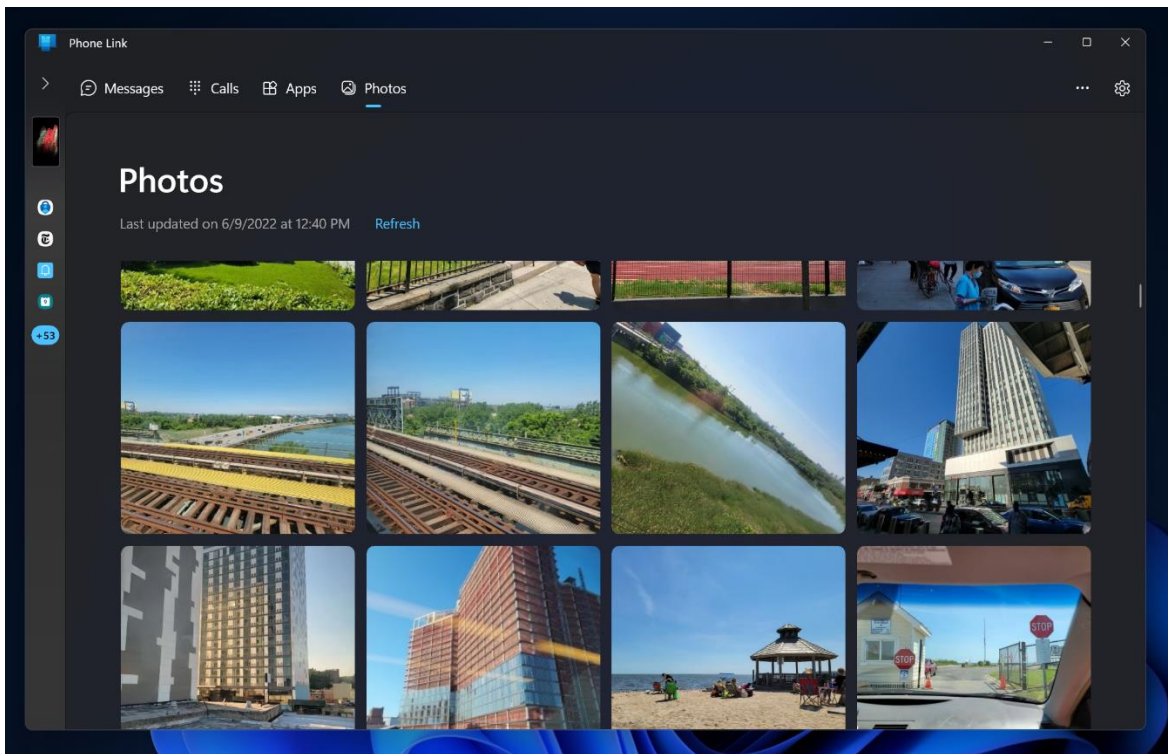
Next comes a quick visual tutorial of what you can do with the app now that your phone is connected.



What Can You Do With a Connected Phone?

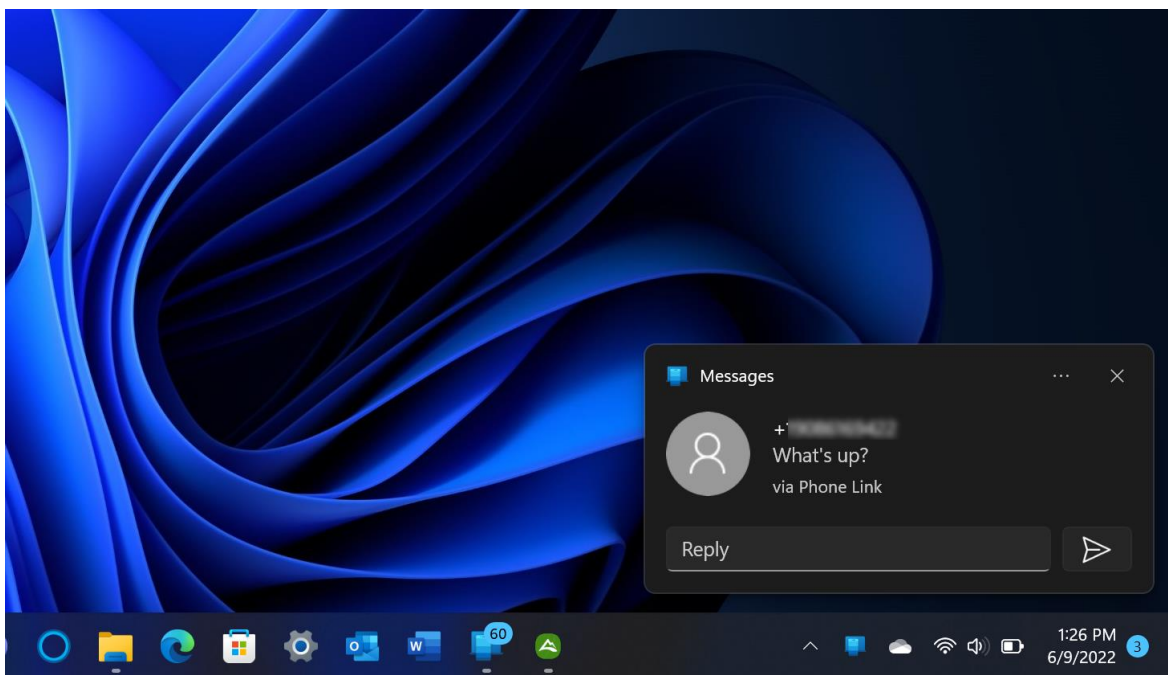
As mentioned, the spiffier functions only work on specific phone models, but connecting to any Android phone you set up lets you see and reply to text messages, see and manage notifications, make and answer calls, and get photos instantly on the computer.

Microsoft redesigned the app's interface recently to show main options (Messages, Calls, Apps, Photos) across the top. You now see recent apps and a View All Apps link when you click on the system tray icon. Notifications are tucked into a left-side panel.



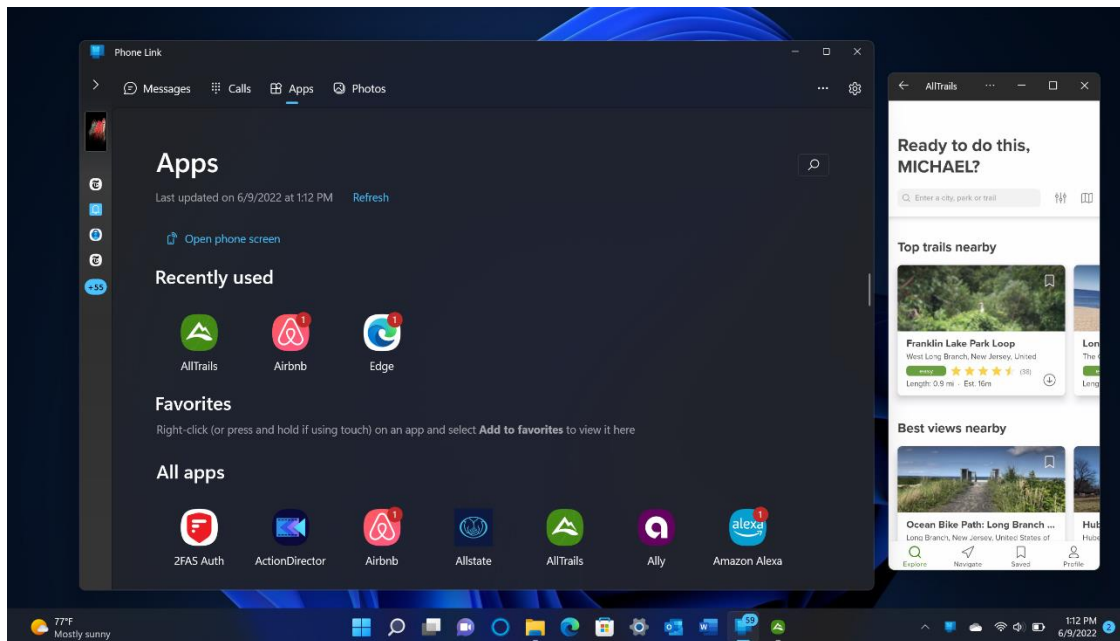
You can drag and drop photos from the phone to desktop applications.

The taskbar entry for Phone Link shows a badge with the number of notifications awaiting you. You can choose which apps to receive notifications from and whether to respond on the PC or on the phone. And not everything happens in the app. You can directly respond to messages in the Windows Notification toast at the lower-right corner of the screen.



You can reply to a text message directly from its Windows notification.

If you don't have one of the more capable phone models, you won't see the Apps section in the top menu.



Windows 11's Phone Link app lets you use Android apps on your desktop, though they're actually running on the nearby phone.

The most useful features are the ones that work with any Android device, and that's accessing text messaging and photos from your phone on your PC. Even with the less advanced models, you see photos on your PC right after you shoot them with your phone and can drag them into a document or other app that works with photos, such as [Photoshop](#).

Navigating apps can be slightly tricky, as you can't use the mouse wheel to move up and down a screen. Instead you have to click and drag. But if you have a PC with a touch screen or trackpad, it's pretty darn close to the real McCoy. A nifty attribute is that apps you run via Phone Link get their own Taskbar icons as though they were standard PC apps. That way you can minimize, resize, and close the apps just as if they were desktop apps.

For more tips and news about Microsoft's newest desktop operating system, visit our [Windows 11 page](#).

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