How to put a Gmail shortcut on the desktop and icon on the taskbar
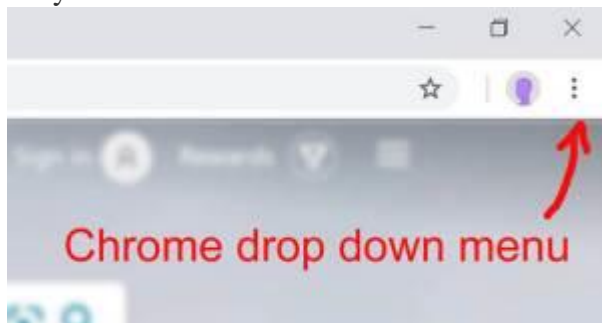
By Pinkeye29th January 200955 Comments

Let's assume you're using Windows, and, like us monkeys at Pinkeye Graphics, you also use Gmail for email. If so, you might well want to have a convenient shortcut to Gmail on your desktop – you know, just like the one that used to go to Outlook Express, all those years ago? In fact, for those changing over to an online email system like Gmail from Windows Mail or a similar desktop email app, having an email icon in the task bar is a nice bit of convenience. Even though it just opens up a browser it still retains some of that offline look and feel which is reassuring and easy to use.

Find out below how to make this happen in a few brief clicks of the mouse. This should work for Windows 11, Windows 10 and all earlier versions . We're using Gmail as it's a common example, but this will work if you are using Outlook online, as well. This will work on any desktop or laptop Windows computer, but not phones or tablets.

If you don't know which browser you are using, find out at the "What browser am I using?" website.

Making a shortcut to Gmail using Chrome, Firefox or Edge

First of all, if you're using either the Chrome, Firefox or Edge browsers, it's almost all done for you.

Chrome drop-down menu location

If you are using Chrome

1. Go to the Gmail home page,
2. Choose 'More tools' from Chrome's drop-down menu.

3. In the tools menu you'll see either '**Add to desktop**' or '**Create shortcut**'. Click on that option and follow the quick instructions in there – the icon should appear on your desktop automatically.

If your version of Windows supports it, you can then also right click on the icon and get the option to 'Pin to taskbar' or 'Pin to start menu' if you want to do that. Or you might be able to simply drag the new icon to the task bar and it will stay there.

This should now work. Test and make sure it does. If you want to customise your icon to have the Gmail logo on it we have instructions for that too – you don't need to do this unless you want to change the icon's look.

If you are using Firefox

You can use Firefox to create a shortcut on your computer's desktop to any webpage like Gmail. This method also works in Chrome.

1. Go to the Gmail home page
2. Resize the Firefox window so you can see both your computer's desktop and the Firefox window on the same screen.
3. Click the icon on the left of the address bar (where the URL is shown – see below for more detail of where this is). This will usually be a padlock icon.
4. Whilst you are still holding the mouse button down, drag the pointer to the desktop, then let go of the mouse button.
5. An icon should appear where you dropped it. Right-click on the icon if you want to change its name to Gmail (or something else).

This should now work. Test it and make sure it does. If you want to customise your icon to have the Gmail logo on it we have instructions for that too – you don't need to do this unless you want to change the icon's look.

If you are using Microsoft Edge

1. Go to the Gmail home page
2. Open the Edge dropdown menu.
3. There are two options, '**Pin this page to the taskbar**' or '**Pin this page to Start**'. Choose one of those options and Gmail should appear on the taskbar or Start menu automatically.
4. If you want the shortcut on the desktop itself, you can just drag it from the 'Recently added' top section of the start menu and put it where you want it.

What is the taskbar? The taskbar is the line of icons that is usually at the bottom of your screen. You can add things to the taskbar so you can easily find them.

What is the Start menu? The Start menu is the list of programs and apps at the bottom of the screen. If you can't see it, it should pop up when you click the Windows icon at the very bottom left of your screen, or press the Windows key on your keyboard.

This should now work. Test and make sure it does. If you want to customise your icon to have the Gmail logo on it we have instructions for that too – you don't need to do this unless you want to change the icon's look.

If you're not using Chrome, Firefox or Edge – or if the above methods didn't work for you – don't worry, you can have an icon too. There are two stages, and you don't even have to do the second one if you don't want to. Here's the first.

Making a shortcut to Gmail using any other browser

You can put a shortcut to any webpage on your desktop or task bar, so Gmail, being just a webpage, is a doddle. This will work with any website at all, but we're using Gmail as an example.

1. Go to your Gmail inbox using your browser of choice
2. Copy the text that is in the address bar (see below if you don't know what that is)
3. Go to the desktop and right-click, then choose **New>Shortcut**
4. Paste the webpage address you copied into the '**Create Shortcut**' dialogue. Click 'next'
5. Type a name for the shortcut. 'Gmail' is the obvious one. Click 'Finish'.
6. Test your new shortcut and make sure it works. A window or tab should open showing Gmail. If not, delete it and have another try.
7. The shortcut is now on your desktop. Leave it there, or we suggest drag it to the taskbar (the taskbar is the row of icons at the bottom of the screen that are always there), and that's where it will stay. Or if your version of Windows supports it, you can sometimes just right click on the icon and get the option to 'Pin to taskbar' or 'Pin to start menu'.

What's the address bar? It's the box at the top of the browser window that has the address of the webpage you are looking it. For this post, for example, it will read something like

`pinkeyegraphics.co.uk/putting-gmail-shortcut-desktop/`

If you can't find that or it doesn't work, just type "`https://mail.google.com`" into the '**Create Shortcut**' dialogue instead.

That's the basic bit done. It will now work, and if you are happy with how it looks stop now.

Customise your new shortcut

But there's more! Still want more? OK, here's the second part, if you need it. You may notice that the icon is not the nice Gmail icon that you usually see. So if that applies to you, you'll want to change that. Here's a file to download: Gmail icon file. It's called gmail-new-icon.ico. If you know how to do that, go ahead. If not, follow these instructions (it's the same file, so you only need to do one). To download the file right-click on the icon file. In Edge or Internet Explorer, chose '**Save target as**'; or in Chrome or Firefox '**Save link as**'. Other browsers have similar options.
Once you've downloaded the file, this is how to use it.

1. Save the gmail-icon.ico file on your computer. Anywhere is fine but a good place is C:/windows/system32 on many Windows systems, as that's where a lot of other icon files live. You probably shouldn't save it to the desktop as although it will work, you

might mistake the icon file for your new shortcut, because they will look the same. The icon file's got a version of the icon for Gmail in it.

2. Right-click on the new shortcut you made earlier and choose **Properties>Change icon**
3. Choose '**Browse…**' and navigate to where you saved the gmail-new-icon.ico file
4. Select the file and you should see the icon. Choose it! Click OK and then OK again.

Your icon now has an authentic Gmail look.

Oh, and did you prefer the old red and white icon for Gmail? We have that too, right here. Use this link to download as above, then follow the same instructions.

Why stop there? Make a shortcut to Outlook instead.

Ok, so if you got that working you can do some more. Why not make a shortcut to Facebook on your desktop? Or Twitter? Or your local newspaper? The first steps above will work for any website, so go ahead and try it.

If you prefer to use Microsoft Outlook, this will work too if you are using the online version (Office 365). Just follow the above instructions, using your Outlook email inbox page instead of Gmail. We've even found you a free Outlook icon you can download here.

If you want to change the look of your new shortcuts, you will need to download icons that look good though, as otherwise all the shortcuts will look the same. It's not hard to find them though, just use Google!

Good luck!