

How do I set up a computer?

Introduction

How Do I Set Up a Computer?



Watch the video (2:35). [Need help?](#)

You have a **new computer** and are ready to set it up. While this may seem like an overwhelming and difficult task, it is really very simple. It does not matter what name brand of computer you have, as most computers are set up in a very similar way.

If you are setting up a newly purchased computer that is still in the box, you will probably find a **how-to guide** in the packaging that includes **step-by-step details**. If it is poorly written, doesn't include pictures, or you don't have a guide, this lesson will help you get that new computer set up easily.

Setting Up a Desktop Computer



Monitor and Computer Case on Desk

Step 1

Unpack the **monitor** and **computer case** from the box. Remove any plastic covering or protective tape. Place the monitor and the computer case where you wish on the desk or work area.

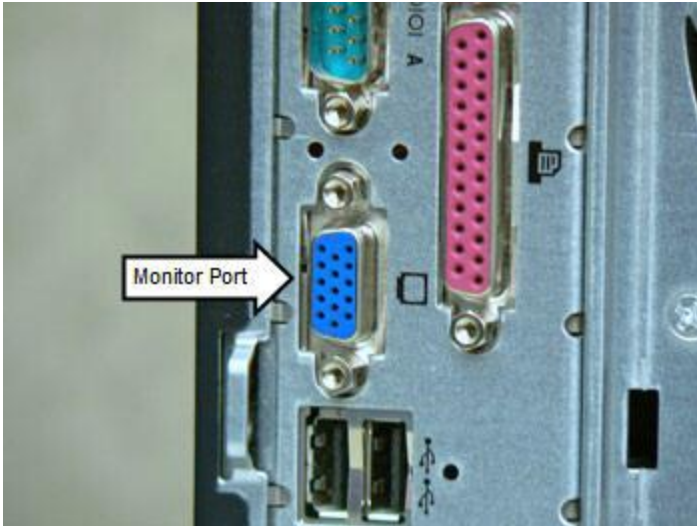
Think about where you want your desk or work area to be located, and where in that area you want your monitor, computer case, and other hardware. Be sure to place your computer case in an area that is **well ventilated** and that has good air flow. It is important that the computer stay cool, as overheating is a concern, especially if you plan on leaving your computer turned on for long periods of time.



Monitor Cable

Step 2

Locate the **monitor cable**. With PC computers, the ends of the monitor cable are often blue.

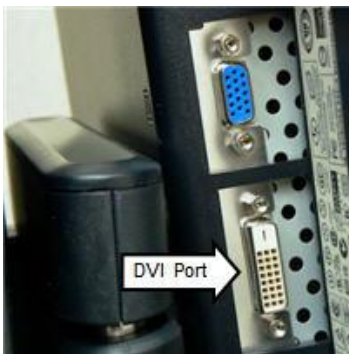


Monitor Port on Back of Computer Case

Step 3

Locate the **monitor port** on the back of the **computer case**, and on the **monitor**. You may have to look under the screen to locate the port on the monitor. These ports are also called VGA ports and are usually **blue**.

Note: While blue VGA ports are common, monitors can be connected with other ports, such as the beige **DVI port**. Read the owner's manual if you have any questions about the type of monitor port your computer uses.



DVI Port

Setting Up a Desktop Computer (cont.)



Monitor Port Under Monitor Screen

Step 4

Connect the cable into the monitor port on the monitor. The pins on the cable fit the port in a specific way, so line up the cable connector and the port. **Be careful not to force or bend the pins.** If you have misaligned the pins, then they will bend very easily without much resistance.

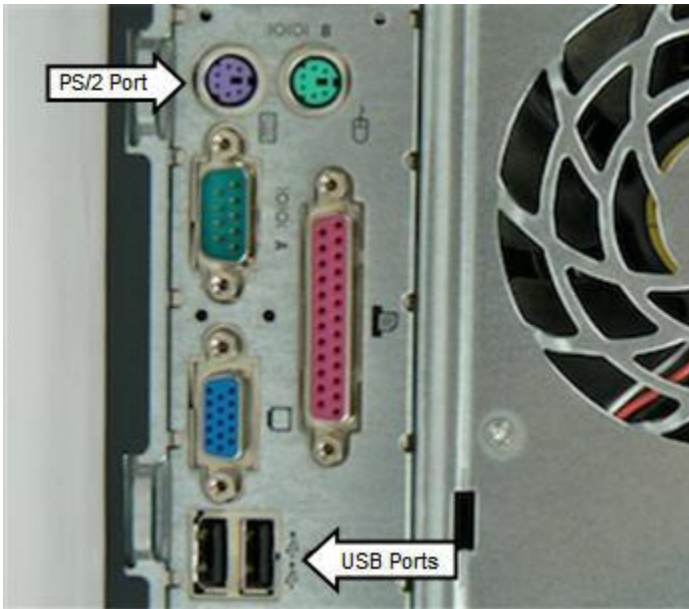
Once the pins in the cable connector are pushed into the port, turn the plastic-covered screws on each side of the cable to secure it to the monitor.



Monitor Port on Back of Computer Case

Step 5

Connect the **cable** into the monitor port on the back of the computer case. Like with the monitor, be careful not to **misalign the pins** with the port. Once the pins in the cable connector are pushed into the port, turn the plastic-covered screws on each side of the cable to secure it to the computer case.



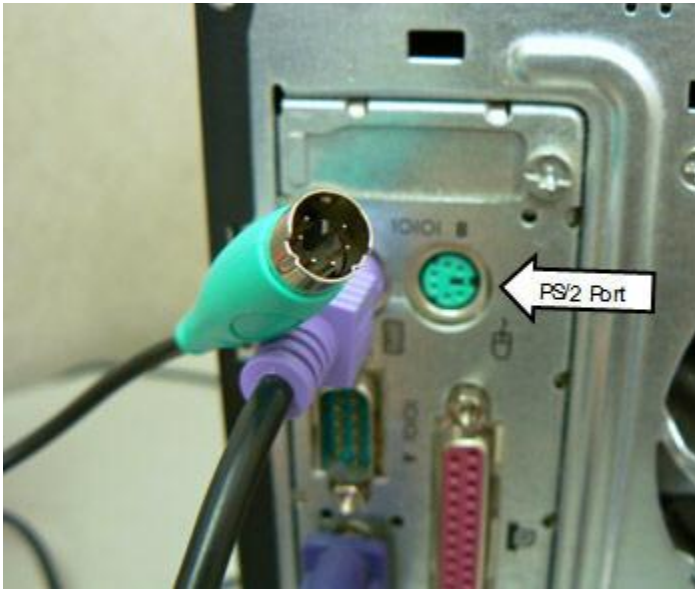
PS/2 and USB Ports for Keyboards

Step 6

Unpack the **keyboard** and locate the **PS/2** , or keyboard, port on the back of the tower. Plug the cable on the end of the keyboard into the PS/2 port. If the keyboard has a **USB** connector, locate a USB port on the back of the case and connect the keyboard.



Keyboard with PS/2 Connector



PS/2 and USB Ports for a Mouse

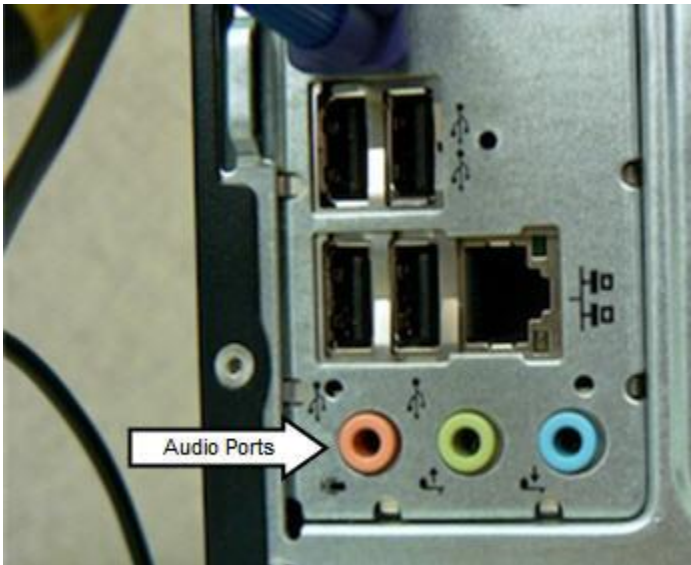
Step 7

Unpack the **mouse** and locate the **PS/2**, or mouse, port on the back of the computer case. Plug the cable on the end of the mouse into the PS/2 port. If the mouse has a **USB** connector, locate a USB port on the back of the tower and connect the mouse.



USB Mouse

Setting Up a Desktop Computer (cont.)



Audio Ports

Step 8

If your computer uses **external speakers**, locate the bank of audio ports on the back of the tower and connect the speakers. In this example, the speakers are located in the monitor so speakers do not have to be connected.

The audio ports are often confusing. If your computer has **color-coded peripherals** that match the colors on the back of the computer case, then connecting the audio components is generally very easy. If the peripheral does not have a color-coded cable, then remember that the **speakers will always go in the green port**. Headphones connect to the pink port, and various other devices will connect to the blue port, which is the Line In port.

Additionally, many devices, including headphones, now come with USB connectors. In most computers, the USB ports are located directly above the bank of audio ports.



Plug Power Supply Cord into Computer Case

Step 9

Plug the **power supply cable** into the back of the tower, and then into a **surge protector power strip**.



Power Supply Socket on Monitor

Step 10

Plug the second **power supply cable** into the monitor, and then into the **power strip with surge protection**. The power supply port may be located beneath the screen on the monitor.



Power Supply Cable Plugged into Power Strip

Step 11

Plug the power strip into a wall outlet, and turn the power on to the monitor, tower, and any external speakers.

It is not a good idea to plug the computer directly into a wall outlet, due to the possibility of electrical surges. A **power strip with surge protection** is a good investment because it helps protect your computer from this. Some warranties may even exclude electrical damage, so a power strip is really important. Additionally, special power strips with noise filtration can be purchased if interference from multiple appliances is an issue.

You have other sources of protection, like an **Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)**, which not only protects your computer from surges, but also serves as an alternate source of power in the event of power loss. As these decrease in price, some home users are finding a UPS a worthwhile investment.

Set Up Complete

Your basic computer hardware is now set up. You might be ready to start working, but before you do, spend a little time arranging your workspace. It needs to promote your productivity, but also be arranged in way that is comfortable and promotes health.

The design and arrangement of our computer equipment is not simply a question of what looks nice, but how it can impact our bodies. **Computer ergonomics** is the science of equipment design and how specific equipment usage and placement can reduce the user's discomfort and increase productivity.

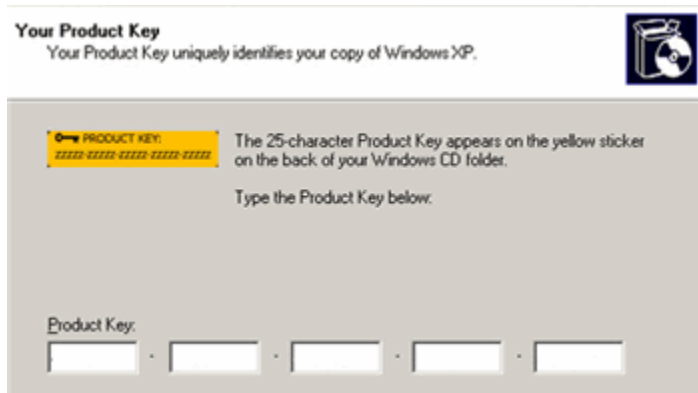
For example, to **decrease injuries** associated with the soft tissue in the wrists, keep your mouse at the same level as the keyboard and do not use wrist pads while typing. Additionally, to decrease eye strain and neck injuries, position your monitor screen so that your eyes are level with the top of the screen. There are numerous other guidelines regarding chair height, equipment placement, and more that can help you create an efficient and comfortable work area.



Basic Computer Setup Complete

Visit the [U.S. Center for Disease Control](http://www.cdc.gov) website for more information about computer work area ergonomics.

After the Hardware...



Part of Windows Setup Wizard

The computer box is empty, but your computer isn't fully set up yet. If you are working with a new computer, the manufacturer usually includes a guide to help you with the next steps.

Here are some of the things you can expect to do when you turn the computer on for the first time.

Customize Windows

Once you turn on your computer, you will be prompted to **customize Windows** to meet your needs. You will have to enter your **product key**, make decisions regarding the region and language settings, set the computer's **date and time**, and other administrative-type tasks.

Network Decisions

If you have a home network, you should probably select the **typical** installation setting, which is best for beginners, and enter a domain name. If you aren't connecting your new computer to a network, you'll be able to skip these steps.



Printer

Automatic Updates

The Windows installation wizard will complete the install process. You will be prompted to decide whether you would like to turn on **automatic updates**. This is up to you, but if you think you may forget to seek out updates, it is not a bad idea to have them prompted automatically.

Register Software

At the end of the installation process, a dialog box will appear that asks you how you connect to the Internet. You need to provide this information so that **Windows** can be **activated** and your copy of the software **registered**.

Connect Other Devices

Once Windows is running, you can **connect your printer and other devices**. Each printer and other peripherals install differently, so review the related instruction manual before connecting a device. For example, a printer from company A may require software to be loaded before the printer can work, while a printer from company B may simply require the device be plugged into a USB port.