CHAPTER

Getting Started with Windows XP

Are you ready to learn about Windows XP? In this chapter, you learn the basics of starting and activating Windows XP, getting help, and shutting down your system.

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Start Windows XP

When you turn on your computer, Windows XP starts automatically, but you may have to navigate a screen or dialog box along the way.

How you start Windows XP depends on whether you are running Windows XP Home or Windows XP Professional. Note, too, that the first time you start your computer, you may need to run through a series of configuration steps.

Start Windows XP Home

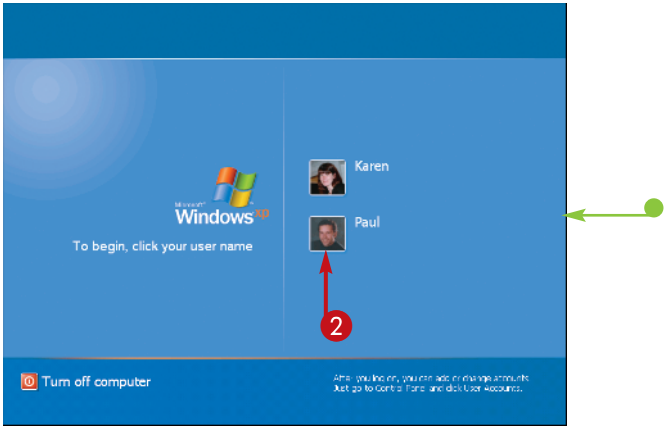
START WINDOWS XP HOME

1. Turn on your computer.
   - The Welcome screen appears.

Note: *If your version of Windows XP Home is configured with just a single user, then you will bypass the Welcome screen and go directly to the desktop.*

2. Click the icon that corresponds to your Windows XP user name.

   Windows XP may ask you to enter your password.

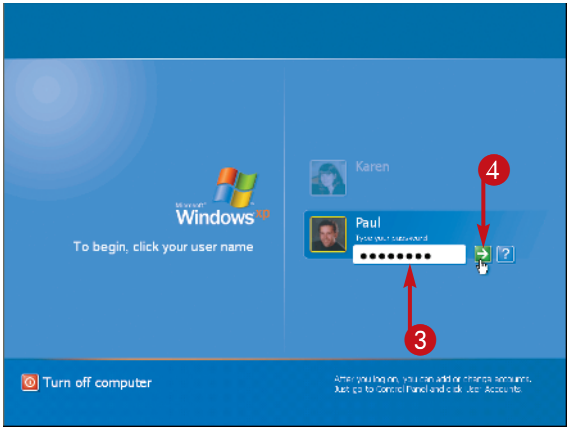


3. Type your password.

Note: *The password characters appear as dots so that no one else can read your password.*

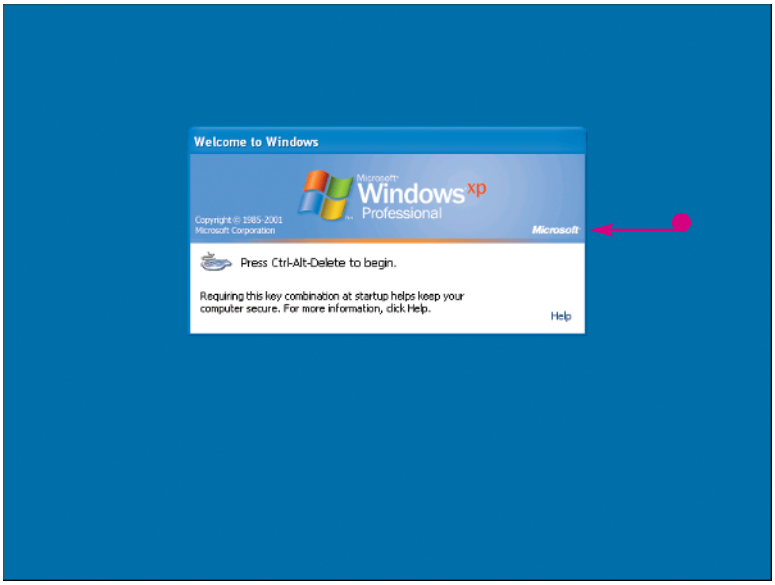
4. Click .

   The Windows XP desktop appears.



START WINDOWS XP PROFESSIONAL

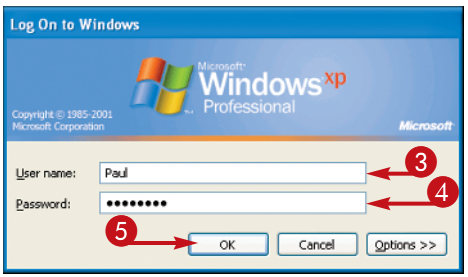
1. Turn on your computer.
   - The Welcome to Windows dialog box appears.
2. Press Ctrl + Alt + Delete.
   The Log On to Windows dialog box appears.



3. Type your user name.
4. Type your password.

Note: *The password characters appear as asterisks so that no one else can read your password.*

5. Click **OK.**
   The Windows XP desktop appears.



TIP

What happens if I forget my Windows XP Home password?

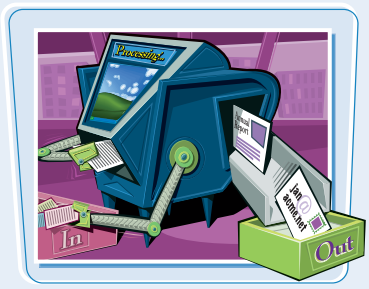
Most Windows XP Home user accounts that are password protected are also set up with a password "hint" — usually a word or phrase designed to jog your memory. You choose the question when you set your password, as explained in the section titled "Protect an Account with a Password" in Chapter 7. If you forget your password, click ? to see the password hint.

What You Can Do with Windows XP

Windows XP is an operating system that contains a collection of tools, programs, and resources. Here is a sampling of what you can do with them.

Get Work Done

With Windows XP, you can run programs that enable you to get your work done more efficiently, such as a word processor for writing memos and letters, a spreadsheet for making calculations, and a database for storing information. Windows XP comes with some of these programs (such as the Word Pad program you learn about in Chapter 3), and there are others you can purchase and install separately.



Create and Edit Pictures

Windows XP comes with lots of features that let you work with images. You can create your own pictures from scratch, import images from a scanner or digital camera, or download images from the Internet. After you create or acquire an image, you can edit it, print it, or send it via e-mail. You learn about these and other picture tasks in Chapter 4.

Play Music and Other Media

Windows XP has treats for your ears as well as your eyes. You can listen to audio CDs, play digital sound and video clips, watch DVD movies, tune in to Internet radio stations, and copy audio files to a recordable CD. You learn about these multimedia tasks in Chapter 5.

Get on the Internet

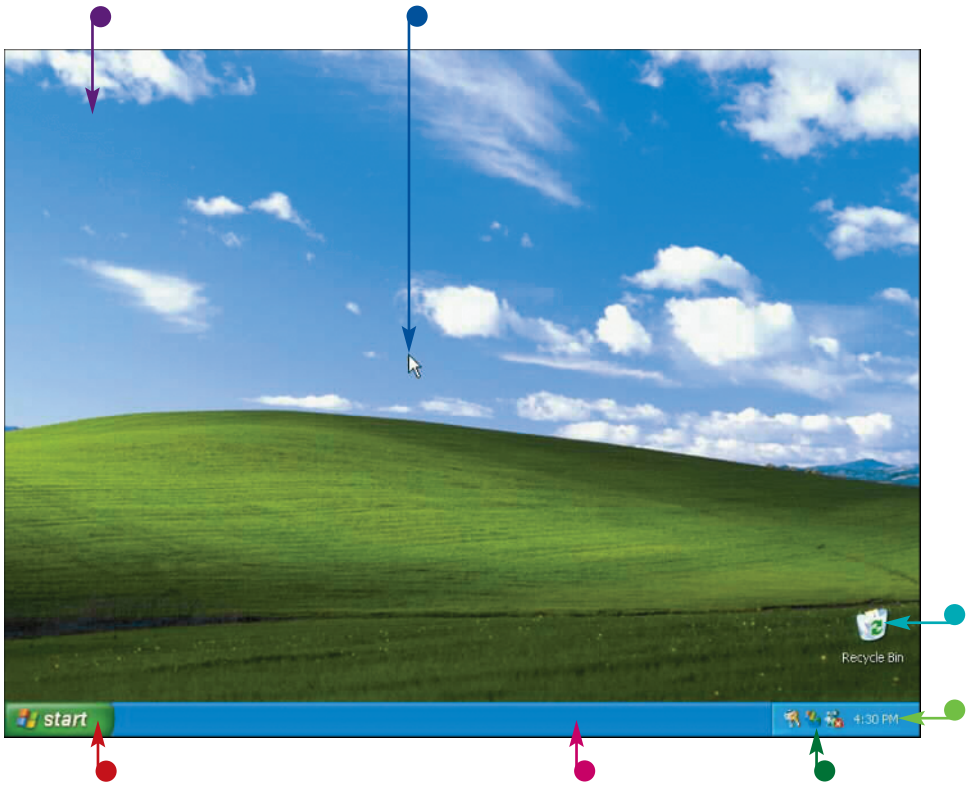
Windows XP makes connecting to the Internet easy (see Chapter 9). And after you are on the Net, Windows XP has all the tools you need to get the most out of your experience. For example, you can use Internet Explorer to surf the World Wide Web (see Chapter 10) and Outlook Express to send and receive e-mail (see Chapter 11).

The Windows XP Screen

Before getting to the specifics of working with Windows XP, take a few seconds to familiarize yourself with the basic screen elements.

Desktop
This is the Windows XP "work area," meaning that it is where you work with your programs and documents.

Mouse Pointer
When you move your mouse, this pointer moves along with it.



Desktop Icon
An icon on the desktop represents a program or Windows XP feature. A program you install often adds its own icon on the desktop.

Time
This is the current time on your computer. To see the current date, position the mouse over the time. To change the date or time, double-click the time.

Notification Area
This area displays small icons that notify you about things that are happening on your computer. For example, you see notifications if your printer runs out of paper or if an update to Windows XP is available over the Internet.

Start Button
You use this button to start programs and launch many of Windows XP's features.

Taskbar
The programs you have open appear in the taskbar. You use this area to switch between programs if you have more than one running at a time.

Using a Mouse with Windows XP

Windows XP was built with the mouse in mind, so it pays to learn early the basic mouse techniques that you will use throughout your Windows career.

If you have never used a mouse before, there are two keys to learning how to use it: Keep all your movements slow and deliberate, and practice the techniques in this section as much as you can.

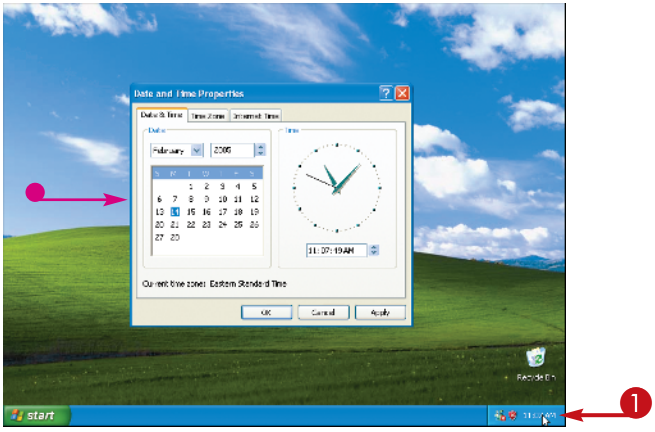
Using a Mouse with Windows XP

CLICK THE MOUSE

1. Position the mouse over the object you want to work with.
2. Click the left mouse button.
   - Depending on the object, Windows XP either selects the object or performs some operation in response to the click (such as displaying the Start menu).

DOUBLE-CLICK THE MOUSE

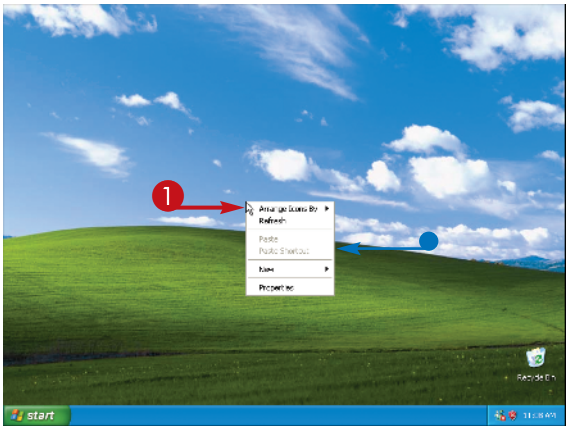
1. Move the mouse over the object you want to work with.
2. Click the left mouse button twice in quick succession.
   - Windows XP usually performs some operation in response to the double-click action (such as displaying the Date and Time Properties dialog box).



RIGHT-CLICK THE MOUSE

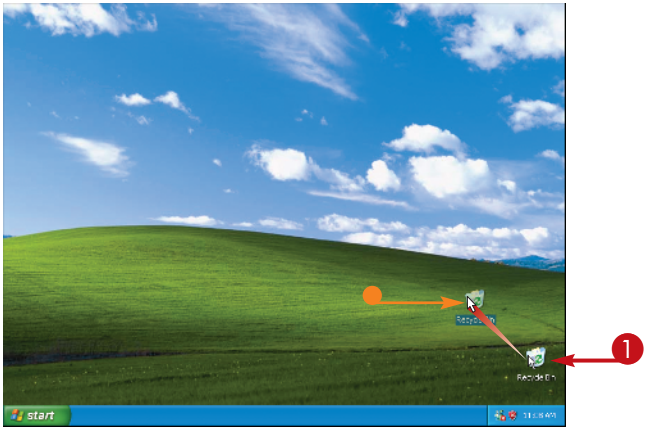
1. Position the mouse over the object you want to work with.
2. Click the right mouse button.
   - Windows XP displays a shortcut menu when you right-click something.

Note: *The contents of the shortcut menu depend on the object you right-clicked.*



CLICK AND DRAG THE MOUSE

1. Position the mouse over the object you want to work with.
2. Hold down the left mouse button.
3. Move the mouse to drag the selected object.
   - In most cases, the object moves along with the mouse .
4. Release the mouse button when the selected object is repositioned.



TIPS

Why does Windows XP sometimes not recognize my double-clicks?

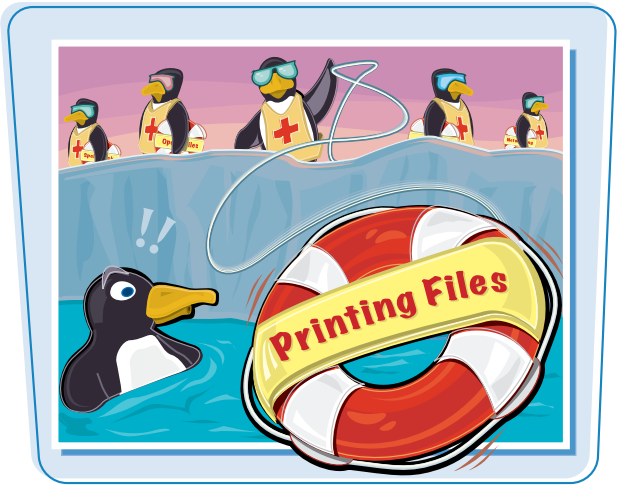
Try to double-click as quickly as you can, and be sure not to move the mouse between clicks. If you continue to have trouble, click **start, Control Panel, Printers and Other Hardware,** and then **Mouse**. In the Double-click speed group, click and drag the slider to the left (toward Slow).

How can I set up my mouse for a left-hander?

Click **start**, **Control Panel**, **Printers and Other Hardware**, and then **Mouse**. Click **Switch primary and secondary buttons** (☐ changes to ☑).

Get Help

You can find out more about Windows XP, learn how to perform a task, or troubleshoot problems by accessing the Help system.



Most of the Help system is arranged into various topics, such as "Customizing your computer" and "Fixing a problem." Each topic offers a number of subtopics, and each subtopic contains a collection of related tasks, articles, tutorials, and other items.

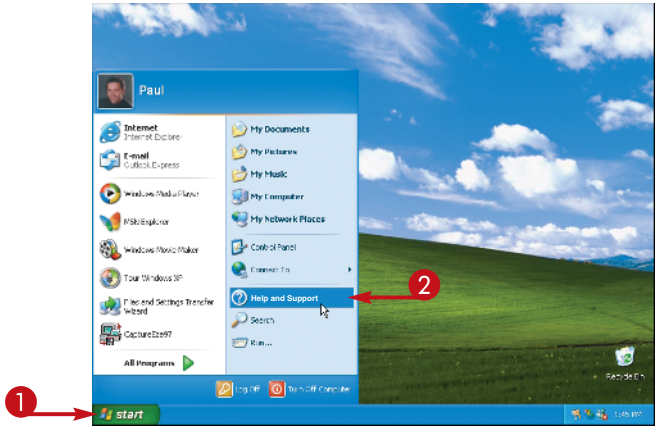
Get Help

1. Click **start**.

   The Start menu appears.

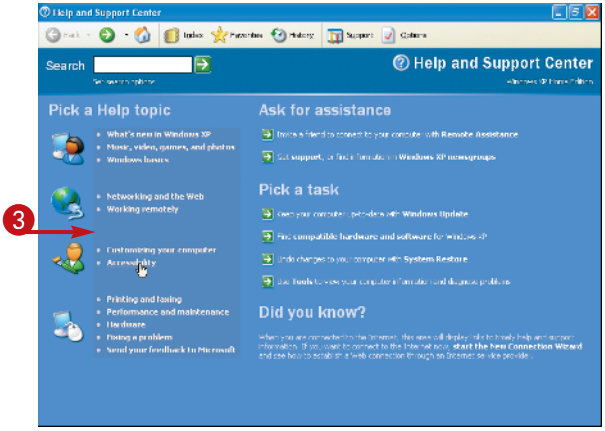
2. Click **Help and Support**.

   The Help and Support Center window appears.

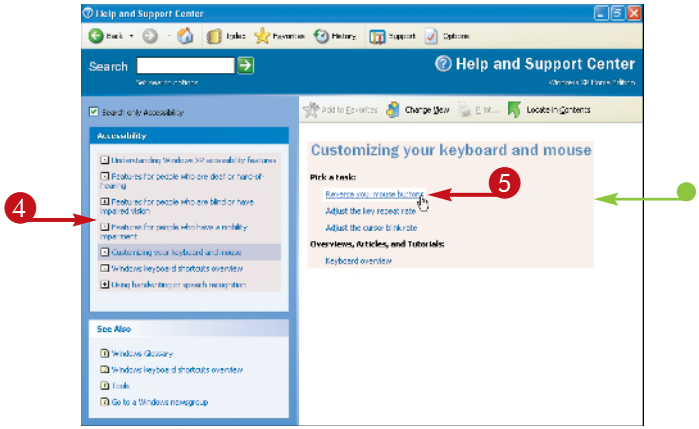


3. Click a topic.

   A list of subtopics appears for the topic you selected.

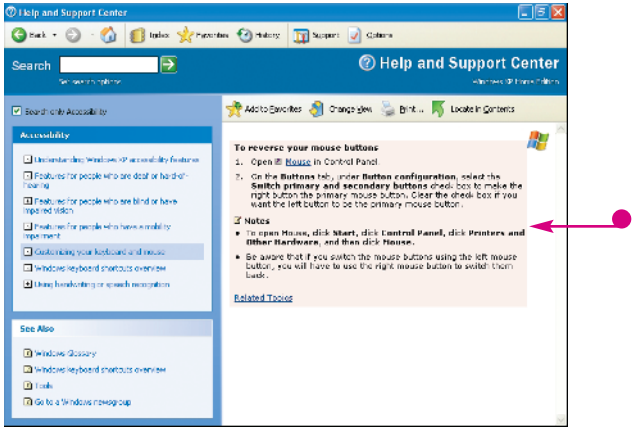


4. Click a subtopic.
   - A list of Help articles appears for the subtopic you select.
5. Click an article, task, overview, or tutorial.



   - The item you select appears in the Help and Support Center window.
6. Read the article.

Note: *To return to a previous Help and Support Center screen, click* ***Back*** *until you get to the screen you want.*



TIP

How do I get help for a specific program?

Almost all Windows programs have their own Help features. You can access Help in a specific program in three main ways:

- Click **Help** from the menu, and then click the command that runs the Help features (it may be called **Help Contents**, **Help Topics**, or **Program Help**, where *Program* is the name of the program (for example, **Microsoft Word Help**).
- Press F1.
- In a dialog box, click ?, and then click a control to see a description of the control.

Activate Your Copy of Windows XP

To avoid piracy, Microsoft requires that each copy of Windows XP be activated. Otherwise, your copy of Windows XP will refuse to run after about 60 days.

Activate Your Copy of Windows XP

1. Click **start**.

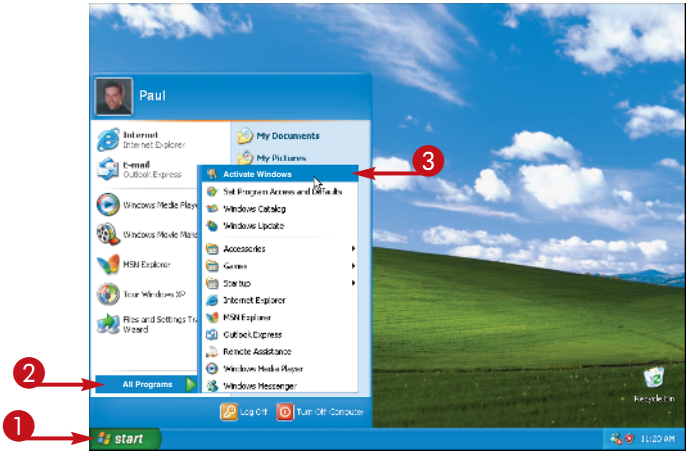
   The Start menu appears.

2. Click **All Programs**.

3. Click **Activate Windows**.

   The Activate Windows screen appears.

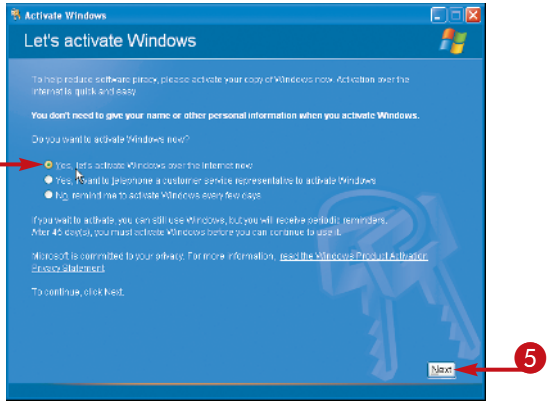
Note: *If you see an icon in the taskbar's notification area that looks like a set of keys ( ), you can click that icon to go directly to the Activate Windows screen.*



4. Click the radio button choice for Internet activation (changes to).

5. Click **Next**.

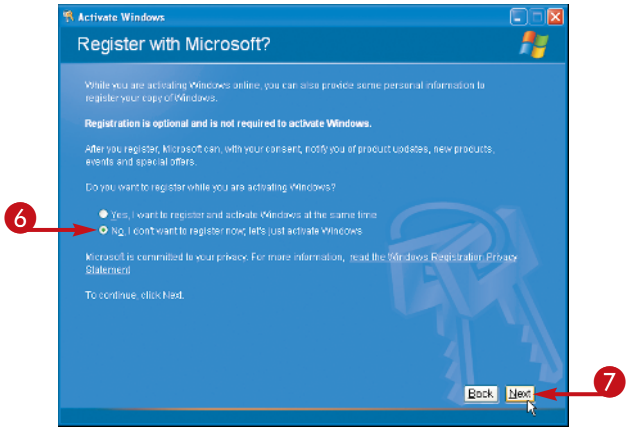
Note: *If you do not have Internet access, click the radio button choice for telephone activation, instead.*



The Register with Microsoft? window appears.

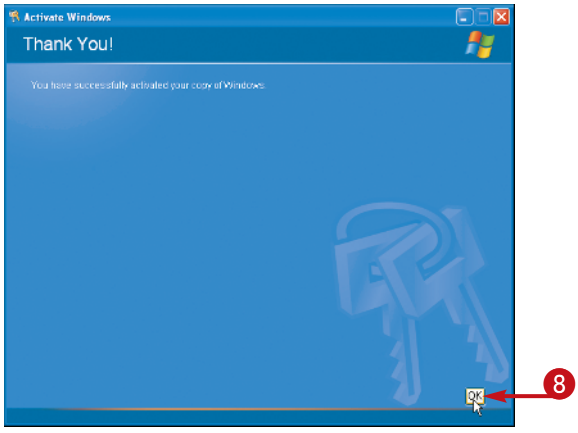
Note: *Registering with Microsoft is optional; you can still activate your copy of Windows XP without registering.*

6. Click **No, I don't want to register now; let's just activate Windows** (○ changes to ◉).
7. Click **Next**.



Windows XP confirms that it has been activated.

8. Click **OK**.



TIPS

Can I activate Windows XP on more than one computer?

No, not usually. The activation process creates a special value that is unique to your computer's hardware configuration. When you activate Windows XP, your copy of the program is associated with this unique hardware value, which means your copy will only ever work with that one computer. However, if that computer breaks down, you can telephone Microsoft to let them know and they should allow you to activate XP on another computer.

I do not see the Activate Windows command on my All Programs menu. Why not?

This probably means that your copy of Windows XP has already been activated. If your computer came with Windows XP preinstalled, the manufacturer may have taken care of the activation process for you. To confirm this, click **start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools,** and then **Activate Windows**. The Activate Windows screen appears and tells you your activation status.

Restart Windows XP

You can restart Windows XP, which means it shuts down and starts up again immediately. This is useful if your computer is running slow or acting funny. Sometimes a restart solves the problem.

Knowing how to restart Windows XP also comes in handy when you install a program or device that requires a restart to function properly. If you are busy right now, you can always opt to restart your computer yourself later on when it is more convenient.

Restart Windows XP

1. Shut down all your running programs.

Note: *Be sure to save your work as you close your programs.*

2. Click **start**.
3. Click **Turn Off Computer**.

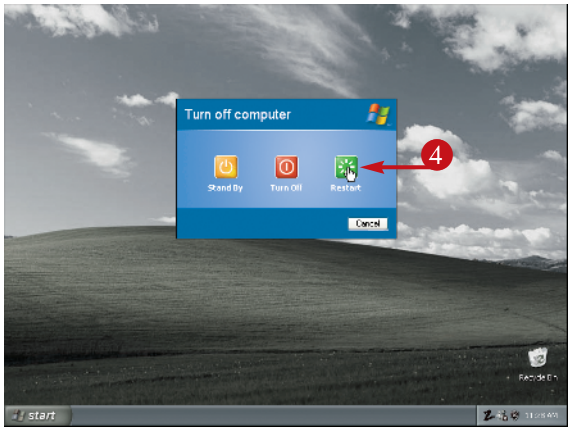
The Turn off computer window appears.

Note: *In Windows XP Professional, the Shut Down Windows dialog box appears.*

4. Click **Restart**.

Note: *In Windows XP Professional, click , click* ***Restart****, and then click* ***OK****.*

Windows XP shuts down and your computer restarts.



Shut Down Windows XP

When you complete your work for the day, you should shut down Windows XP. However, do not just shut off your computer's power. Follow the proper steps to avoid damaging files on your system.

Shutting off the computer's power without properly exiting Windows XP can cause two problems. First, if you have unsaved changes in some open documents, you will lose those changes. Second, you could damage one or more Windows XP system files, which could make your system unstable.

Shut Down Windows XP

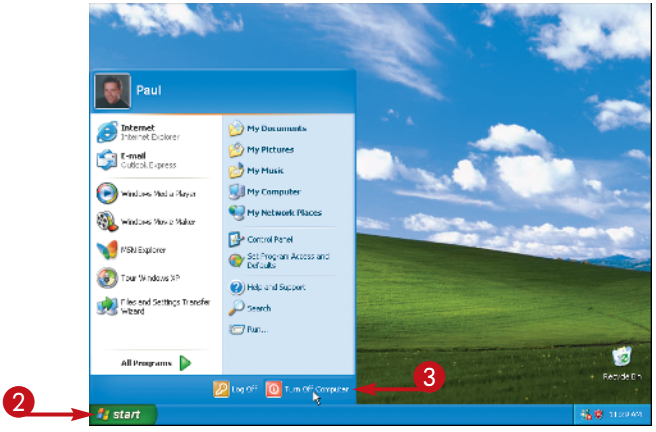
1. Shut down all your running programs.

Note: *Be sure to save your work as you close your programs.*

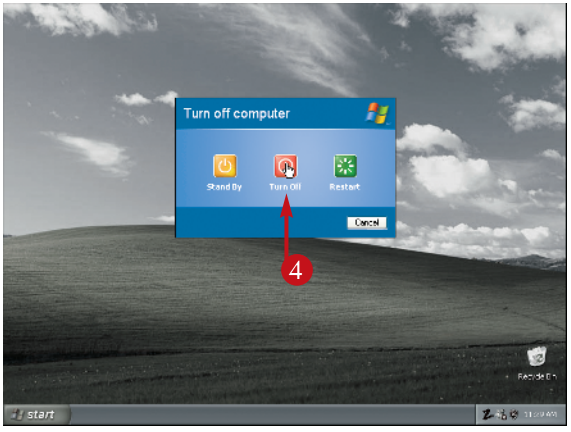
2. Click **start**.
3. Click **Turn Off Computer**.

The Turn off computer window appears.

Note: *In Windows XP Professional, the Shut Down Windows dialog box appears.*



4. Click **Turn Off**.

Note: *In Windows XP Professional, click* , *click* ***Shut down****, and then click* ***OK****.*

Windows XP shuts down and turns off your computer.