

Windows features several built-in utilities for capturing and saving screenshots, and they're only a few keyboard clicks away. All methods covered in this guide are free, straightforward, and work fantastically on most PCs. Let's take a look.

Opinion 1: Using the Snipping Tool



The Snipping Tool is a built-in Windows utility that allows users to better define and capture portions of their desktop display as a screenshot. Aside from taking a screenshot of the entire screen and active window, the tool allows free-form outlines and rectangular screenshots for a more adjustable selection, as well as built-in annotation and sharing options.

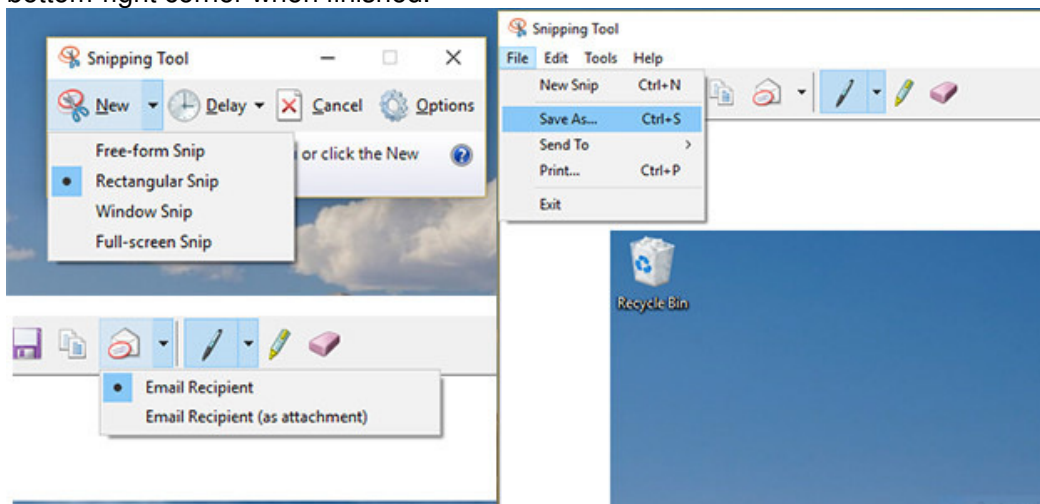
Step 1: Open the Snipping Tool — Click the Start menu, navigate to the *Windows Accessories* folder — or the *Accessories* folder, if using Windows 7 — and select *Snipping Tool* from the list of native Microsoft software.

The icon depicts a pair of blue scissors with two white ovals beneath. Alternatively, search and open the program from the Windows search bar.

Step 2: Choose the snip type — Once open, click the down arrow to the right of *New* in the upper-left corner of the program window and select your desired snipping type from the list of drop-down options. The free-form snip allows you to draw irregular shapes, the rectangular snip specified-sized rectangles, the window snip grabs the active window, and the full-screen captures the entire screen.

Step 3: Define the selection — Use your mouse or trackpad to manually define your screen-capture selection. Obviously, the full-screen snip and window-snip don't provide a ton of leeway in terms of versatility and selection choice, but the latter will still require you to choose the appropriate window before continuing.

Step 4: Save the screenshot — Perform any edits you want, such as highlights or annotations, and click the main *File* option in the top-left corner. Afterward, select *Save As...*, title the new file, choose a save location, and select your desired file format from the drop-down menu. If your screenshot includes text, you'll notice increased clarity if you save the file as a PNG. If you prefer, you can click the envelope icon to directly email the screenshot as an attachment. Click the gray *Save* button in the bottom-right corner when finished.



Opinion 2: Using the default keyboard shortcuts and Paint

Step 1: Capture the image — Assuming the area you want to capture is displayed on your screen, press the *Print Screen* (often shortened to “PrtScn”) key, typically located in the upper-right corner of your keyboard, to capture a screenshot of your entire display. Alternatively, press *Alt + Print Screen* to capture a screenshot of the active window. If you’re on a laptop or Surface, you may need to press *Fn + Print Screen* if your laptop has another feature assigned to that particular key.



***NOTE:** There will be no noise or any other indication the screenshot was taken, but the resulting image will be saved as a PNG file to your clipboard.

If using Windows 8 or 10, click the *Windows Key + Print Screen* to automatically save a full-screen screenshot within the *Screenshots* folder of your picture directory.

Step 2: Open Paint — Click the Start menu, navigate to the *Windows Accessories* folder — or the *Accessories* folder, if using Windows 7 — and click *Paint*. The icon depicts a painting palette with a brush on the right side, but it will vary slightly depending on your operating system.

In Windows 10, you can open the Start menu, go to *All Apps*, and scroll through the alphabetical list until you find Paint.

All Windows operating systems have Windows Search, which can be used to find *Paint* by searching for — you guessed it — Paint!

Step 3: Paste the screenshot — Once Paint is open you can:

-click the *Paste* button in the upper-left corner of the program,

-choose *Edit* then *Paste*,

-or-

-press *Ctrl + V* on the keyboard to paste your screenshot.

Step 4: Save the screenshot — Perform any edits you want, such as cropping the image to a specified area, and click the main *File* option in the top-left corner. Afterward, select *Save as*, title the new file, choose a save location, and select your desired file format from the drop-down menu. For most purposes, JPG will do fine, but a variety of other formats are available to choose from such as PNG, BMP, GIF, and others. Click the gray *Save* button in the bottom right-hand corner when finished.

