

# Using Disk Cleanup in Windows 10

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Disk Cleanup in Windows 10 is a handy tool for freeing up space on your hard drive. I'll show you how it's done, and what to clean up. It's one of the first places I recommend people turn to when they're running low on disk space.

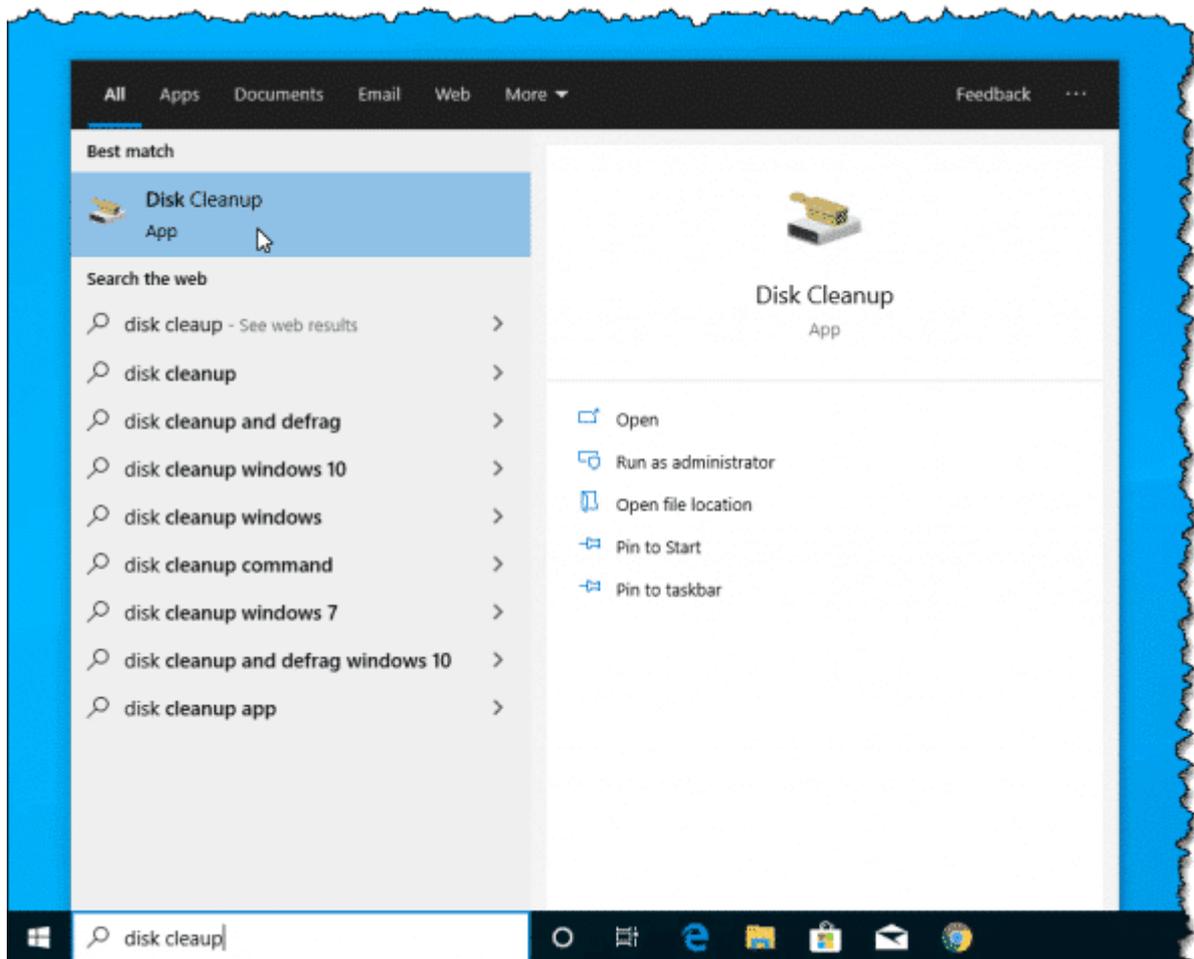
Over time, it's not uncommon for files to accumulate on your system — unused files, old files, or files you no longer need. There are many reasons for this buildup, if you dig into to the details.

Fortunately, you don't need to dig into details to clean things up; Windows includes a helpful disk clean-up tool for just this kind of thing.

Disk Cleanup in Windows 10 and is best found using Windows search. The most common and effective cleanup targets include user temporary files, and the system's Windows Update files. In most cases it's also OK to clean up all items offered. CCleaner from Piriform is an additional disk cleaning utility worth evaluating, as it doesn't limit itself to Windows components.

## Launching Disk Cleanup in Windows 10

In Windows 10, click the Start button and start typing "disk cleanup".



Disk

Cleanup via the Start menu.

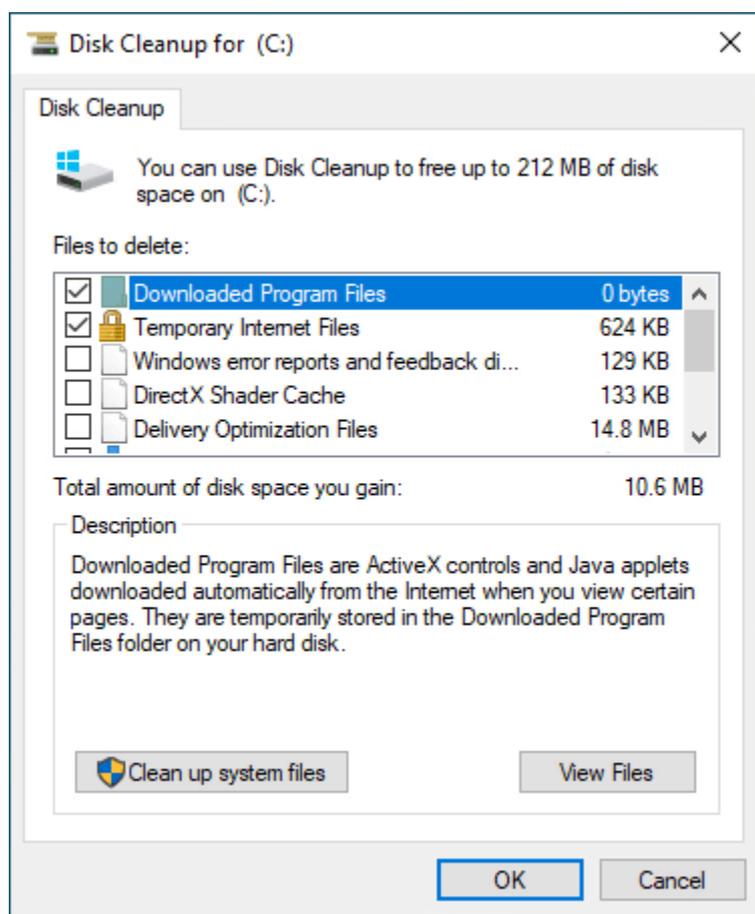
Click on “Disk Cleanup” when it appears.

In earlier version of Windows, you’ll find Disk Cleanup on the Start menu, in All Programs, Accessories, System Tools.

Disk Cleanup begins by calculating what could be removed to save space on the disk.

## Cleaning up user files

The default action is for disk cleanup to clean up files associated with or accessible by your currently logged-in account.



Disk cleanup selections.

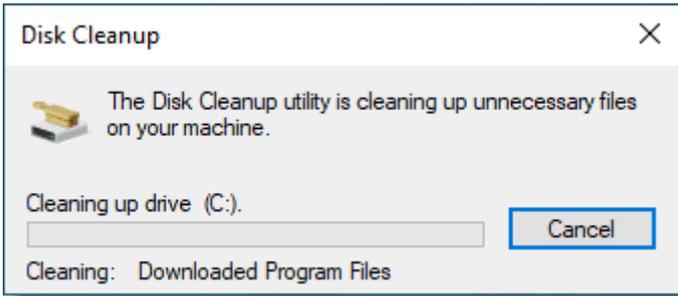
There’s a list of different items that can be deleted (or “cleaned up”) to save space. Click on each, and a description is displayed below.

In my experience, the most useful item to select is:

- **Temporary files.** These are files created by applications and the system itself that, as the name implies, are temporary. For various reasons, they often aren’t deleted by the processes that created them. As a result, they accumulate over time. This is often a large amount of space if Disk Cleanup has never been run.

My approach, however, is to select everything.

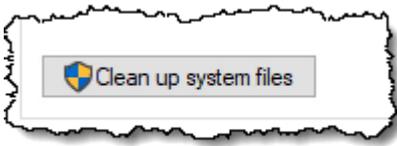
Click **OK**, and after a confirmation message, Disk Cleanup goes to work.



Disk Cleanup in progress.

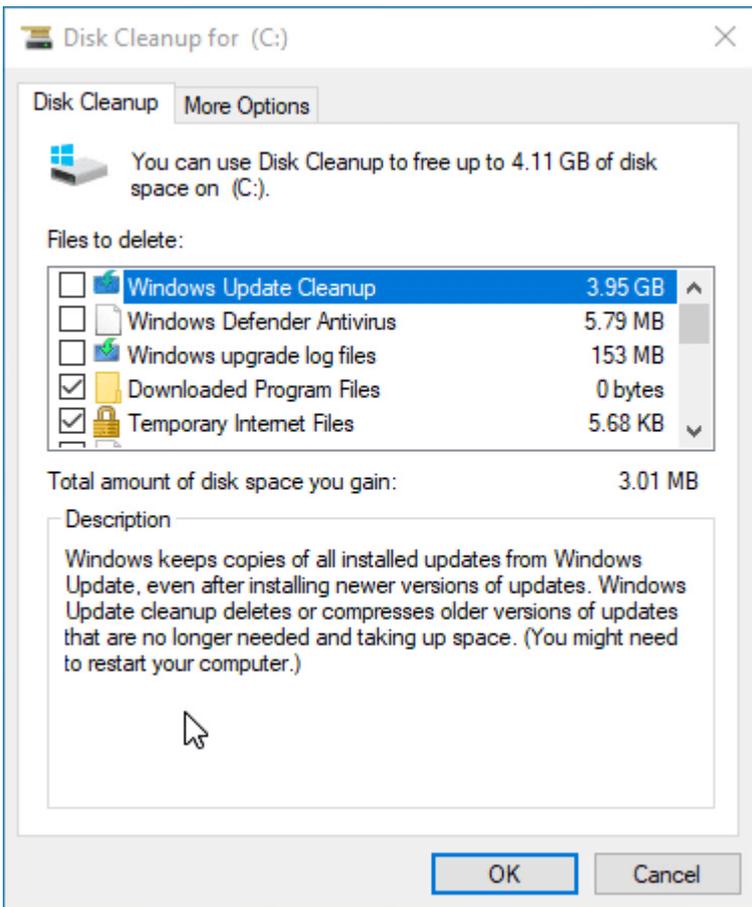
## Cleaning system files

You may have noticed a button in the user interface:



Clean up system files button.

Click that, and (perhaps after asking for administrative confirmation), the Disk Cleanup utility will re-launch, this time to operate on system-wide cleaning opportunities:



Disk cleanup for the system.

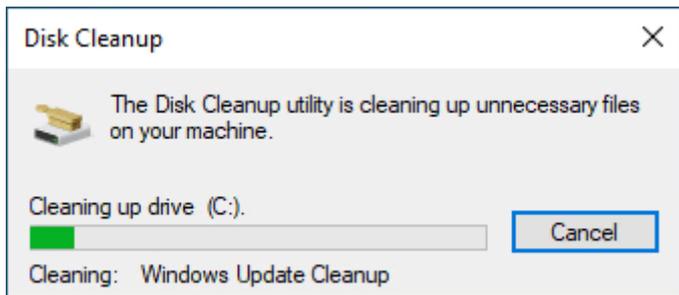
While this list looks very similar, several items are new and some are slightly different.

The most interesting and common item to clean is:

- **Windows Update Cleanup:** This can free up a lot of space, but it comes at a cost. Once you've deleted these [backup](#) files, Windows update items on your machine *cannot be uninstalled*. Fortunately, the need for this rare; typically, cleaning these files is a fine idea.

And once again, it's just fine to select everything in the list to be cleaned up.[2](#)

Click **OK**, and Disk Cleanup goes to work once again.



Disk Cleanup in progress (again).

The net result after running Disk Cleanup should be more free disk space. Perhaps a lot more space, if this is the first time Disk Cleanup has been run.