

Change Windows Desktop Icons - Frequent Questions



There are seven [Icon Types](#) found on this site: [desktop icons](#), [application icons](#), [messenger icons](#), [emoticons](#), [avatars](#), [website icons](#), and [Rogue Icons](#). If you need help defining icon types or are altogether new to the idea of icons [[Click Here for a Basic Overview](#)]. All files are compressed using a free utility called [WinZip](#).

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1 How do I open .zip Files after I download them ?

You must have WinZIP Installed or a program that can handle the .zip filename extension! If you do not have WinZip you can download it free here: [[CLICK HERE to Download WinZIP](#)] You will need to "unZIP" the downloaded file before you can use the icons or graphics found on this site.

What is WinZip ?

Winzip is one of many utilities that compress files making them smaller so you don't wait as long for the file to download. If you have a PC and no compression software then WinZIP is recommended. They offer a [free trial version](#).

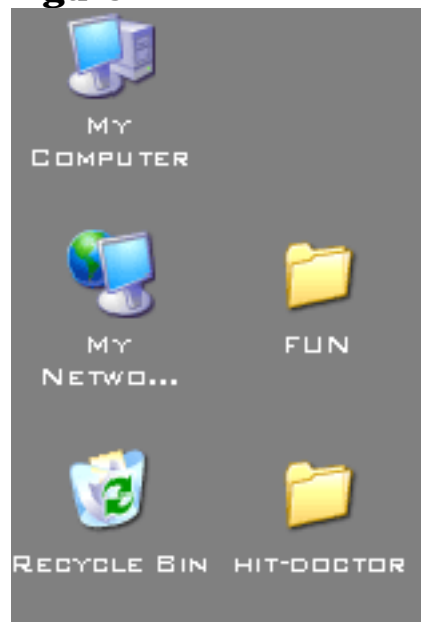
Okay I have WinZip installed. Now what ?

Once installed WinZip should automatically recognize any ".zip" files on your computer. Simply run WinZip on the files you download. When you unzip them you must specify a folder to UnZip the icon files to. Make sure you REMEMBER where you "unzip to". I usually create a folder on my desktop with a name that's easy to remember.

2 How do I Change my Windows Desktop Icons ? [[back to top](#)]

The example below (figure 1) is a portion of my own desktop in Windows XP. You can see there is "My Computer" , "My Network" , "Recycle Bin" and two folder desktop icons.

Figure 1



You would probably see something like the Figure 1 example on most Windows operating systems. My Computer, My Network, and Recycle Bin are called **System Icons**. You can easily change their appearance individually. On the other hand, the yellow folders in the example are like **clones** and by default have no unique identity among other folders. This means if you change ONE folder they will all change to the same icon (that's why I call them clones). Folders are more complicated to change without the help of an installer or 3rd party application. So the first set of instructions below deals with the easy part -- changing system icons.

Changing System Icons (not folders)

This shows you how to change the system icons like Recycle Bin, My Computer, and My Network.

Change System Icons

1. Click the **Start** button, go to **Settings**, and select "**Control Panel**"
2. Double-click the "**Display**" icon
3. Click on the **Effects** tab
4. From Desktop icons display, click the one that you would like to change/modify.
5. Click the "**Change Icon**" button.
6. Click the new icon that you would like use in place of the old one.

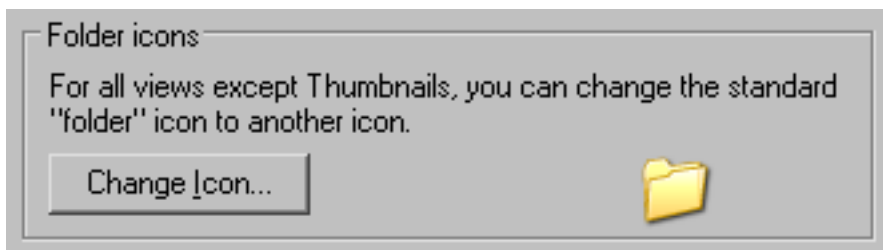
Hint: Can't find the icon(s) ? Click the "**Browse**" button to locate folders containing icons which have ".ico" format file extensions.

7. Once you have chosen the icon you want, click **OKAY** then, click **Apply**...then of course one last **OKAY** and you are ALL SET!

Is there a way to change individual desktop folders (**clones**) ?

In simple terms **YES!** But you have to be motivated enough to download another program like [MicroAngelo](#) (a very fast download). IF you download MicroAngelo trial version you will see how easy it is TO CHANGE ANY ICON BY SIMPLY RIGHT CLICKING ON IT!

Figure 2 Right-Click an Icon to easily Change it with MicroAngelo



The dialogue box above is one of the nice features of [MicroAngelo](#). (1) Right-click on a folder Icon (2) Choose "Properties" (3) Choose "Customize" from the tabs. (4) Choose "Change Icon".

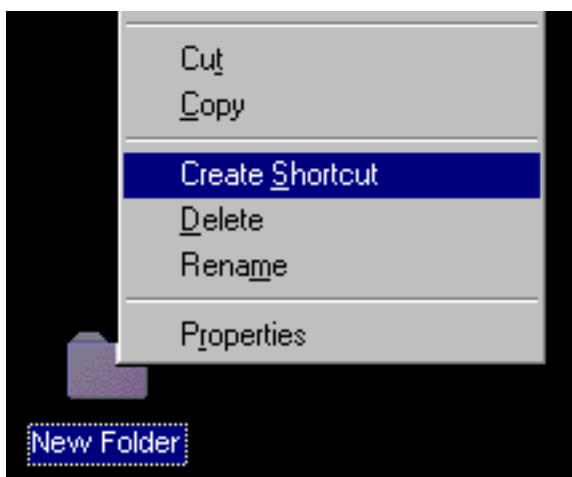
Is there any other way besides using software like MicroAngelo ?

Yes but the end result isn't as nice. It's the "Shortcut Icon" approach. See steps below:

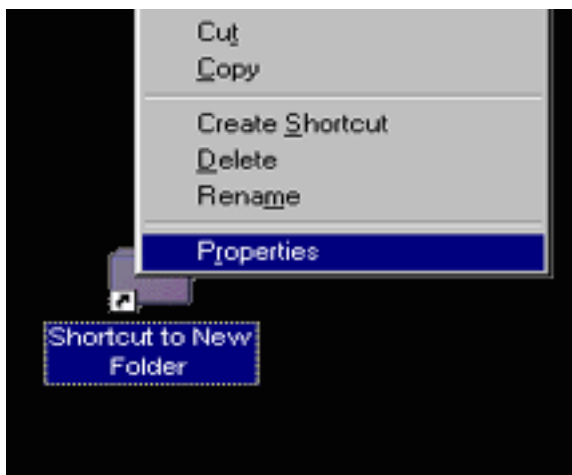
Procedure begins below:

This example is making a custom desktop icon be a shortcut to another folder. This was demonstrated using WIN98 but should work on WIN95/98/2000/XP. If another solution is found I will post it here.

1. Download the icon set you want. I recommend you download the file to someplace like your desktop so the file is easy to find. Then make a new file on your desktop called "new icons" or similar. Decompress/unzip the file to "new icons."
2. Create a new folder on your desktop or find a file that you want to change to one of the new icons.
3. Right click on the folder you have selected and choose "Create Shortcut." For this example we created a shortcut appearing on our desktop.



4. Once you have created a shortcut locate it on your desktop and then right click on it to get the "Properties" option and go ahead and select properties.



5. Selecting the Properties option will bring you to another dialogue window where you can click on "Change Icon." After selecting Change Icon another window will appear showing numerous system icons you can choose from. Since your icons reside in another location (the file was placed on your desktop in this example) you need to "browse" and locate the file containing the icons.



6. The rest is pretty simple: click on your desired icon (you should see the filename at the bottom of the window for the icon you have selected), then click on "open." At this point another window should open confirming your selected icon. Click on "okay" and new icon you have chosen should show. Since the original folder and the shortcut folder both reside on your desktop (in this example) you may want to hide the original folder someplace safe so you don't have too much redundancy. After all, why would you have a shortcut to something that is already right there on your desktop.



3 This describes how to customize the appearance of your desktop by changing the icon size on the desktop. [[back to top](#)]

- Microsoft Windows XP 64-Bit Edition
- Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional

Details...

In **Windows XP**, you can personalize the look and feel of your desktop by changing the size of **icons**.

To change **SIZE** follow these steps:

1. > Right-click an empty area of your desktop, and then click **Properties**.
2. > Click the **Appearance** tab, and then click **Advanced**.
3. > In the **Item** list or in the preview window, click the Window element that you want to change. You can select from any of the following items:

- 3D Objects
- Active Title Bar
- Active Window Border
- Application Background
- Caption Buttons
- Desktop
- Icon**
- Icon Spacing (Horizontal)
- Icon Spacing (Vertical)
- Inactive Title Bar
- Inactive Window Border
- Menu
- Message Box
- Palette Title

Selected Items

ToolTip

Window

4. Do any of following to achieve the look that you want:

o Under **Item**:

- In the **Size** box, specify the size that you want to use for the item.

When you are finished making the changes that you want, click **OK** twice to save your settings.

Are the files on [AlienEntity](#) safe to download? [[back to top](#)]

Yes. All downloads are .zip format and the only files contained inside the zipped files are (.ico, .gif, .jpg, .html, .txt). Every WinZip file is scanned with Norton Antivirus 2005 with the latest definitions. I do not include any Adware / Spyware inside any downloads. If you ever see an .exe file or anything that seems suspicious [e-mail me](#).

Are these icons free? What are the terms of use? [[back to top](#)]

Yes they are free for **personal use only**. By downloading you agree to the following terms and conditions of copyright. Images protected under Federal and International Copyright Law. All images contain embedded digital copyright - DS00934 through DS020343.a signature. Personal Website (up to 3 icons), personal messengers like AIM (unlimited), personal desktop icons (Unlimited), NOT TO BE REDISTRIBUTED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION - No Exceptions - agreement must be included with each set at all times). All images and content on this site is copyright 2005 AlienEntity. All Rights Reserved.

It's okay to use icons if:

- You want to use an avatar/icon in your favorite forum for your own use.
- You want to use a Buddy Icon for your personal AIM window or similar client.
- You want to use desktop icons for your own computer.
- You want to use icons on your personal home page (a maximum of 3 and not to be redistributed)
- You must always include the agreement/terms of use readme .txt file with icon sets at all times

You must [contact me](#) if:

- You want to use any icon for commercial use.
- You want to display more than 3 icons on your website.
- You want to use icons for anything that might be construed as non-personal use.
- Any form of redistribution



AlienEntity (Gratuitous definitions) [[back to top](#)]



ENTITY

1 a : BEING, EXISTENCE; especially : independent, separate, or self-contained existence
b : the existence of a thing as contrasted with its attributes
2 : something that has separate and distinct existence and objective or conceptual reality

ALIEN (see *extraterrestrial*)

1. a: originating, existing, or occurring outside the earth or its atmosphere

Some facts about this site and the author ([Alex](#)):

AlienEntity was "loosely" created/established in 1991. AlienEntity was formerly *The Unknown Entity* and only housed Original Macintosh Icons. It's basically a hobby site that kept growing and now it's primarily offering [Windows based icons](#), gif images like [Avatars for Online Forums](#), [Custom Emoticons](#), [AIM Buddy Icons for AOL Instant Messenger](#), and [Website Buttons](#).

The original work found here has been used by computer users of all kinds as well as software developers, military, defense contractors, book authors, game developers, web designers & web developers. I receive frequent e-mails from commercial organizations that want to use icons or some variations of them for projects. Freelance work web (webmaster) or graphic design requests are welcome.

I have been a freelance web designer & contract webmaster for over 10 years. This site is my playground and a fun departure from the more mainstream websites I manage. It's nice to have a place to upload **ANY** image I want, doodle, or write completely **bizarre descriptions for things that don't really need explaining :)**

Thanks for visiting!

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