



HOW TO **SETUP** & **USE**

**KODI**

FOR **BEGINNERS**

by Dan Price



# How to Set Up and Use Kodi: For Beginners

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Do you have a vast library of TV shows, movies, and music saved locally? If so then you probably need an efficient way to manage all your content.

Alternatively, you might be looking for legal ways to access on-demand video and live television. Perhaps you even want to cast the media to different screens around your home.

If these scenarios describe your situation, you have two choices from a software perspective: Plex or Kodi. We have previously explained [how to set up and use Plex](#), but this guide will focus on how to use its great rival, Kodi.

By reading on, you'll learn how to install the Kodi software, how to navigate through the initial setup, and how to load repos and add-ons.

## What Is Kodi?

Kodi is best described as a home theatre app. It began life back in 2002 as Xbox Media Player, and quickly evolved into the Xbox Media Center (XBMC). It finally transformed into Kodi in 2014. We have a complete guide to [setting up and using the final version of XBMC](#), should you require it.

Arguably, Kodi's most significant selling point is that it is open-source. Because it's open-source, a vast community of programmers and developers has built up around the app. If you're a skilled coder, you can even make changes to the source code yourself.

The community is responsible for all the good stuff the app offers. Kodi by itself is an entirely underwhelming shell and provides nothing beyond the interface.

Let's stress that again because [Kodi newbies](#) often overlook it: if you don't have any locally saved media, and you don't have any interest in learning how to use repos and add-ons, you don't need Kodi. **No media is included in the app.**

Lastly, be aware that Kodi's customizability comes at a cost. It requires a lot of user input to make the app run the way you want it to, and it necessitates more effort to keep everything working as time goes by. If you want a plug-and-play app, Plex might be a better choice.

## How to Install Kodi

Kodi is available on Windows, Mac, Linux, Android (mobile and TV), iOS, and Raspberry Pi.

If you're running the app on a desktop machine or Android, you just need to grab the app from either the website or the associated app store. Windows users can also use the Windows Store version, while Android can download the APK file and sideload the app. Sideloaded apps will make it more difficult to update the app, however, so we recommend using the Play Store method.

## Choose your weapon

Kodi has many flavours, our developers have worked hard to make it support a large range of devices and operating system. We provide final as well as development builds for future final release versions. To get started, simply select the platform that you want to install it on.



Windows



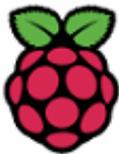
Linux



MacOS



Android



Raspberry Pi



iOS



Other

If you want to install Kodi on iOS, the situation is a lot more complicated.

Kodi is not available in the Apple App Store. Instead, you need to compile an app using XCode. To get started, you need iOS 10.9 or higher, a copy of Kodi's DEB file, XCode 7 or higher, an iOS app signer, and an Apple ID.

The process is quite complex and not suitable for beginners. Given its complexity, it is beyond the scope of this guide. But don't worry, we've **covered everything in detail** in another article on the site.



# Welcome to Xcode

Version 8.1 (8B62)



## Get started with a playground

Explore new ideas quickly and easily.



## Create a new Xcode project

Create an app for iPhone, iPad, Mac, Apple Watch or Apple TV.



## Check out an existing project

Start working on something from an SCM repository.



## Show this window when Xcode launches

It's also possible to install Kodi on iOS by using Cydia on a jailbroken device, but many users don't want to risk voiding their warranty. However, if you have an older iOS gadget that you're willing to take a few risks with, it's certainly the easier approach.

For the other platforms, just get the installation file and follow the on-screen instructions. You will have Kodi running on your device in minutes.

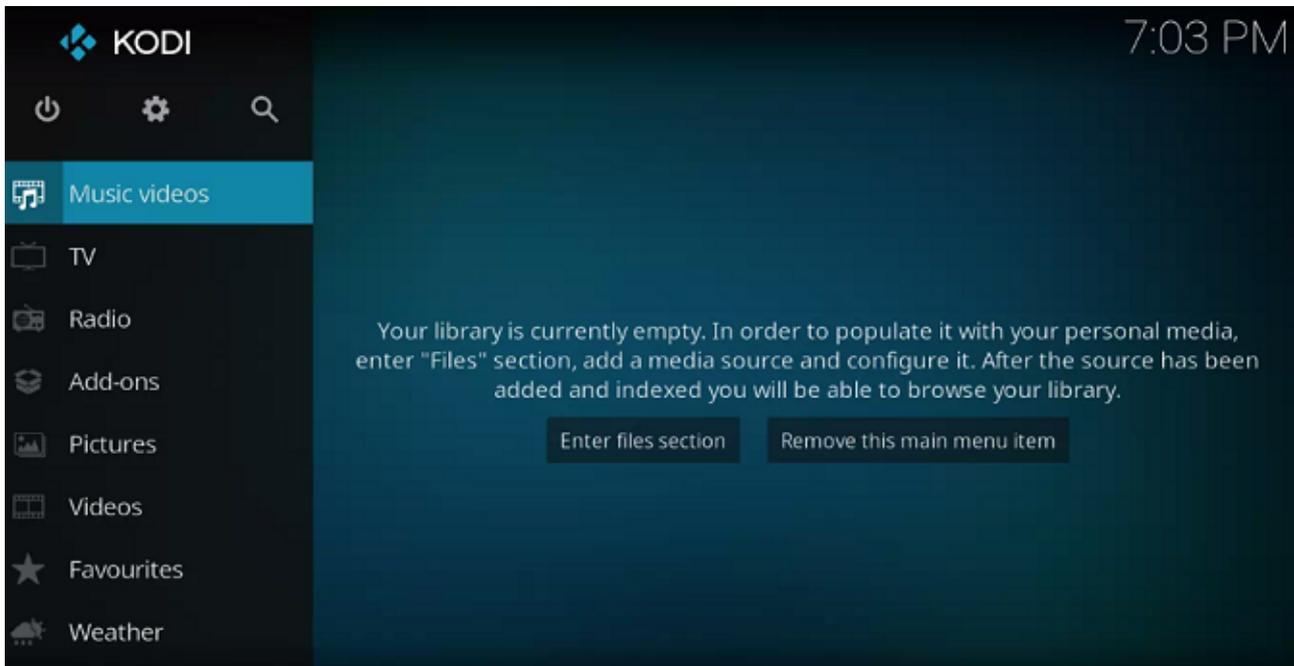
Download: [Kodi](#)

## Running Kodi for the First Time

Hopefully, you're now looking at Kodi's main interface. But there's no content there, no setup wizard, and no hint of how to use add-ons and repos.

Don't worry, we're going to explain everything, but let's get some basics out of the way first.

On the left-hand side of your screen, you will see shortcuts for all the different media classes. They are **Movies**, **TV shows**, **Music**, **Music videos**, **TV**, **Radio**, **Add-ons**, **Pictures**, **Videos**, and **Weather**. If you're not planning to use all the shortcuts, you can remove some by heading to **Settings > Skin settings > Main menu items** and sliding the appropriate toggles into the **Off** position.



## Controlling Kodi

As you use Kodi more, you will probably find it's easier to navigate through the app using your keyboard rather than your mouse.

There are more than 100 different keyboard shortcuts you can use. Some even perform different functions depending what's on the screen. For example, **Page Down** will skip to the previous queued video (or previous chapter) if you're watching a video, but will decrease the rating of a song if you're listening to audio.

Nonetheless, there are some important keyboard shortcuts that all users should know about. Here are some of the most common:

- **F9** or **-**: Volume Down
- **F10** or **+**: Volume Up
- **Spacebar** or **P**: Play / Pause
- **X**: Stop
- **F**: Fast Forward
- **R**: Rewind
- **Left arrow**: Jump back 30 seconds
- **Right arrow**: Jump forward 30 seconds



- **I**: Show information about the currently playing video
- **T**: Turn subtitles on or off

**Note:** You can use a keymap editor add-on to change which keys perform which function. Advanced users can also change the shortcuts by editing the **userdata** file.

## Adding Your Media to Kodi

If you're just starting your Kodi journey, there are probably three forms of media that you've keen to add to the app as soon as possible: videos, music, and photos.

We're going to look at each one individually.

### Adding Videos to Kodi

Kodi is a supremely powerful app which skilled users can force to perform all manner of tricks. However, for the vast majority of users, the principal reason for installing the software is to watch videos.

If you want to maximize the enjoyment of watching videos on Kodi, there is an exact process you need to follow.

### Prepare Your Video Files

Preparing your video files is crucial because Kodi uses scrapers to search for the appropriate metadata for your videos. Metadata includes artwork, synopses, show/movie descriptions, season numbers, episode numbers, cast lists, directors, and a whole lot more.

This data isn't essential to being able to watch your videos through Kodi, but it's the only way to build your library into a vibrant and dynamic list.

So, if you're naming a TV show, place the files in the following folder structure:

- /ShowName/Season XX/ (for example, Friends/Season 05)

For single episodes, name each file as sXXeYY, and for multiple episodes, name the file as **sXXeYY-eYY**. For example, **S05E02**.

Specials should be put into the following folder structure:

- /ShowName/Specials/

Movie files can either be saved as standalone files or each saved in their own sub-folder. Use the following structure for the movie file itself:

- [Movie Name] (Year) (for example, The Hurt Locker (2008))

Therefore, the folder tree should look like either Movies/ The Hurt Locker (2008).mp4 or Movies/ The Hurt Locker (2008)/The Hurt Locker (2008).mp4.

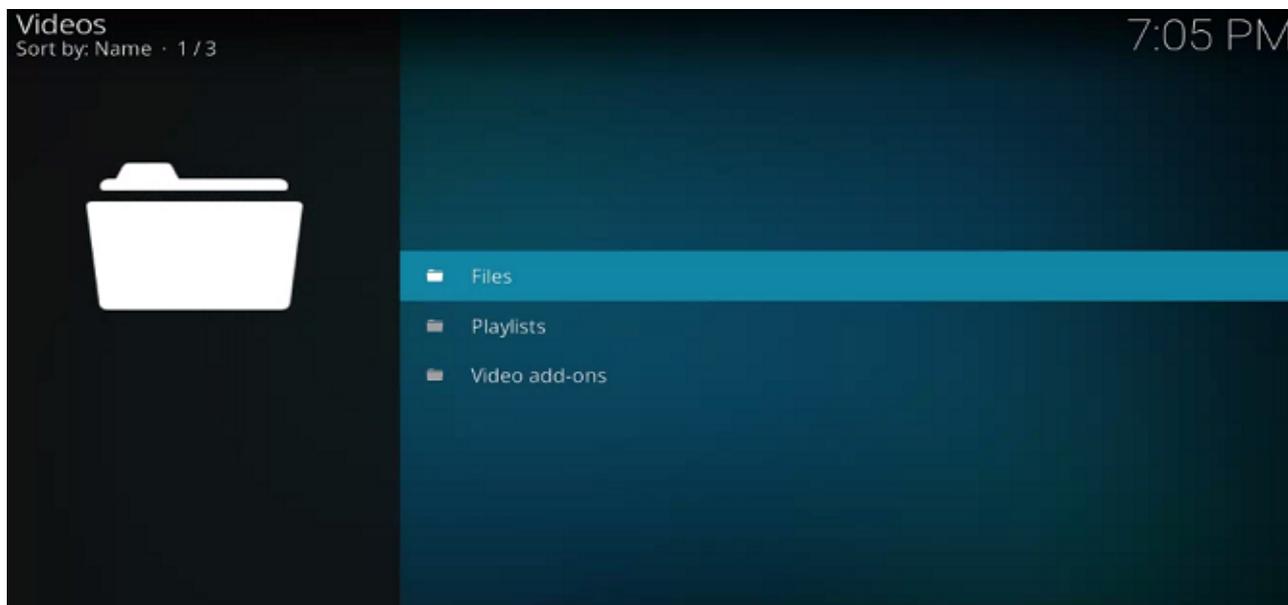
If your content is a disorganized mess, you could try using **FileBot**. It's a TV show and movie renamer; it'll scan online databases and do all the hard work on your behalf. However, FileBot does cost \$19.99.

**Note:** You should keep your movie and TV shows in separate folder trees.

## Add Your Videos

Now it's time to add your video files into Kodi.

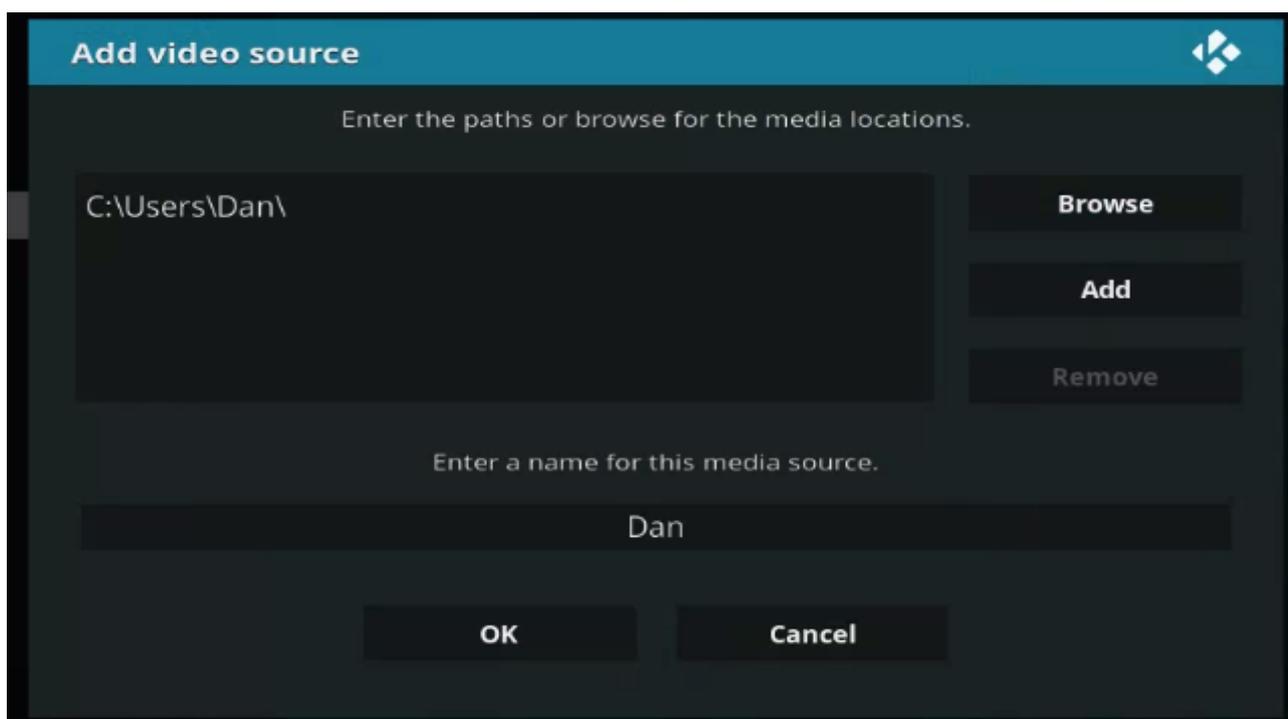
To begin, select **Videos** from the menu on the left-hand side of Kodi's home screen. On the next screen, choose **Files**. Finally, click on **Add videos**.



Now you need to add the video source. "Source" is a word you will come across frequently while using Kodi. It can refer to many different things. In this case, it just means you need to select the folder on your hard drive when you have saved your video files.

You can give your source a name. Typically, you should name it Movies, TV Shows, Home Videos, or something else that's similarly descriptive.

Now you need to tell Kodi what type of videos are in the source folder. It will allow Kodi to scan the correct online database for metadata. It uses TheTVDB for TV-based metadata and TheMovieDB for film information.



On the final screen, you can set some additional options. They include how frequently Kodi will scan the folder for new content and some movie naming conventions. When you're ready, hit **OK** and Kodi will start importing your content. If you have hundreds of TV episodes and movies, the process might take a long time.

Repeat the above steps for each type of video content you want to add.

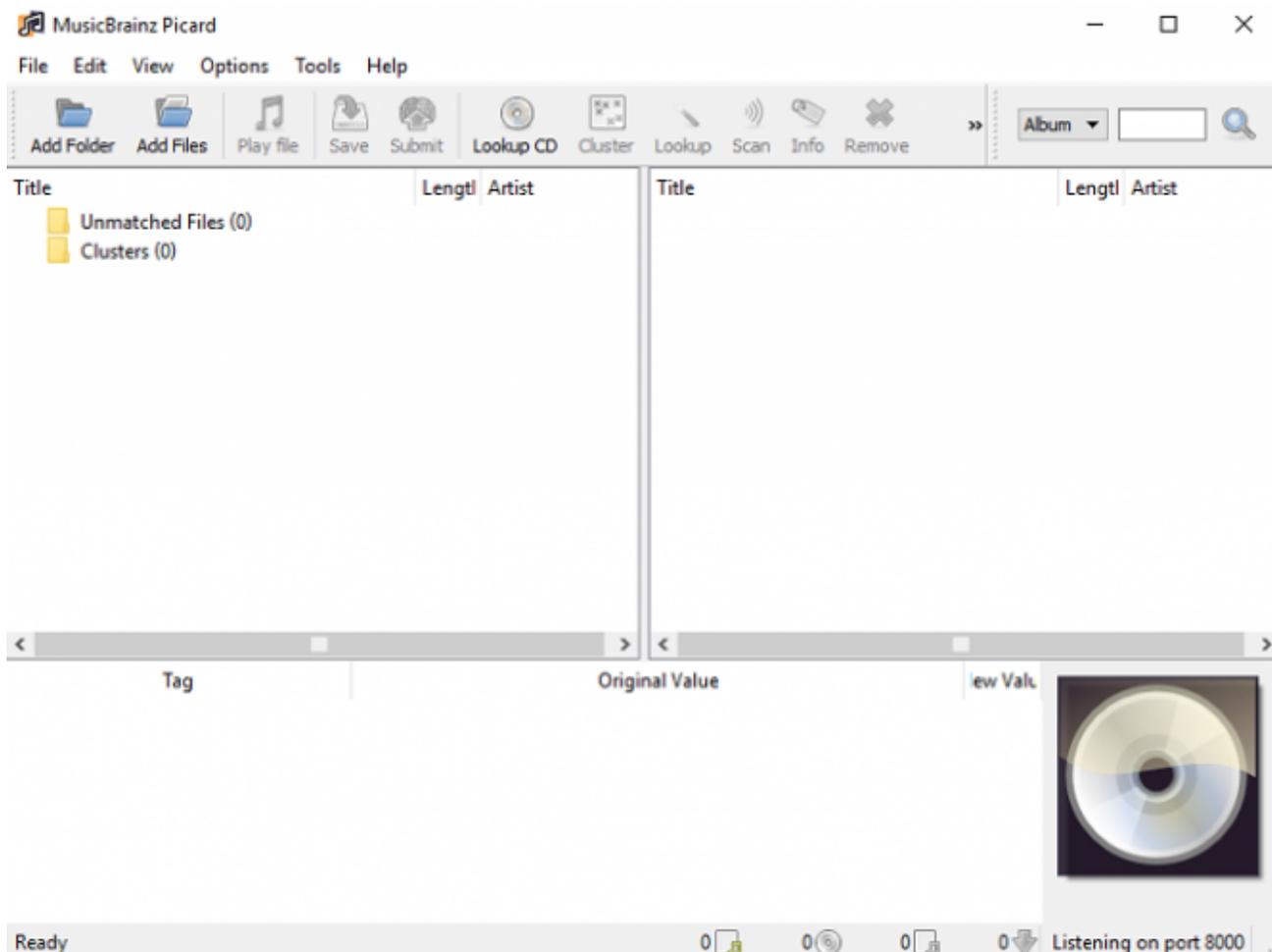
## Adding Music to Kodi

Once your video collection is up and running, it's time to turn your attention to your music library.

### Prepare Your Music Files

Like with video files, if you want Kodi to find the metadata relating to your music, you need to prepare your music collection before you can add it.

Kodi uses the open-source MusicBrainz database for music tagging. The database includes more than 1.2 million artists, 1.8 million albums, and 17.5 million songs.



Luckily, MusicBrainz provides a free desktop app that can **automatically tag all the music** on your behalf. You can download it for free on Windows, Mac, and Linux.

If MusicBrainz cannot correctly tag your music, you can do it yourself. The file tree of your music needs to follow the **Artist > Album > Song** structure. For example, **Michael Jackson > Thriller > Billie Jean**.

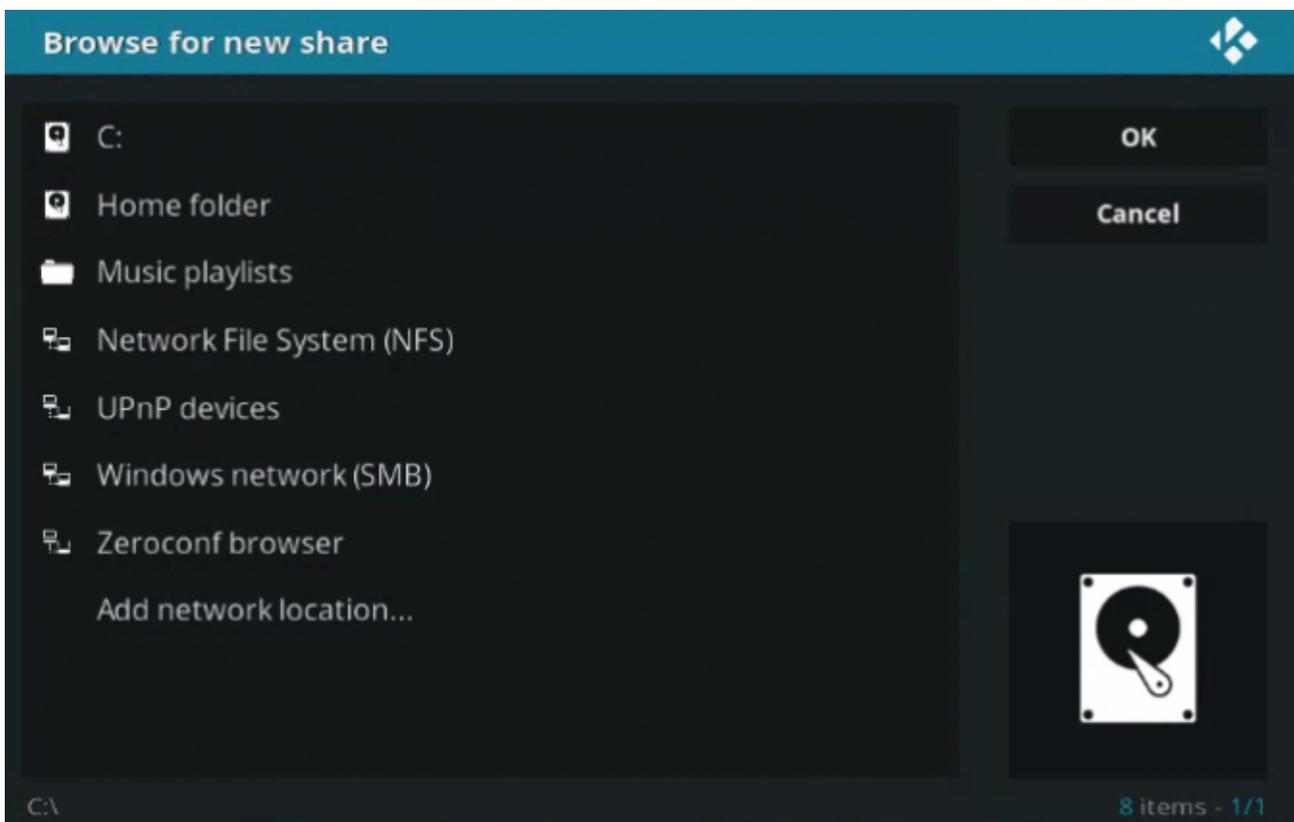
Download: [MusicBrainz](#)

## Add Your Music

Correctly tagging all your music is a painstaking process. But when you've finally finished, you're ready to add your music collection into the Kodi app.

Adding music to your library is a two-part process. Firstly, you need to scan your collection so Kodi can import it. Secondly, you need to scrape your library for additional information. You must finish the first step before you can move on.

To start the scanning process, you need to tell Kodi where your music collection is saved on your hard drive. Go to the Kodi home screen and click on **Music** in the menu on the left-hand side of the screen. On the next screen, go to **Files > Add music**. Click on **Browse** and choose the folder when your music is located.



Now give your music collection a name. If you're going to import multiple collections, choose something recognizable.

On the next screen, Kodi will ask whether you want to add your media source to the library. Click on **Yes** and the app will start scanning.

Again, if you have an extensive collection, this process could take a while.

Next, it's time to scrape your collection for additional information. The additional data comes in many forms: it could include artist style, the formation date of a band, the theme of an album, or even the date and location where the artist died.

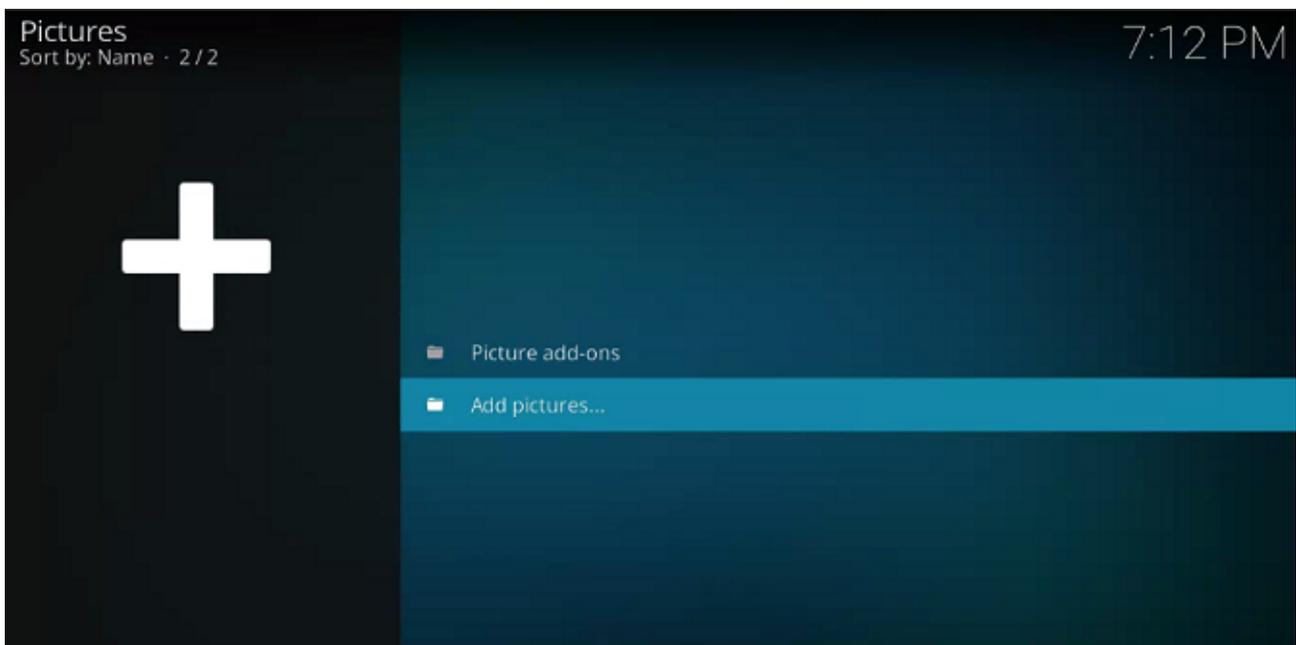
To scrape more information, start by clicking on **Music** on the Kodi home screen. On the next screen choose **Artists**. Right-click on any artist name to pull up the context menu and select **Query info for all artists** to start the scrape.

The scraping process could take many hours to finish. It will cover about 300 artists per hour. When it's complete, you should run it for a second time to make sure any "server busy" responses are fixed.

## Adding Photos to Kodi

You will be pleased to learn that adding photos and pictures to Kodi requires much less preparation and time than adding music or video files.

To add a folder of photos, select **Pictures** from the menu on the left-hand side of the Kodi home screen. On the next screen, choose **Add pictures**.



A new window will pop up. Click on **Browse** and point to the folder which contains the images you want to add. When you're ready, click on **OK**.

Kodi offers a few features to make viewing pictures more enjoyable. They include a slideshow, a randomizer, and zoom.

## Using Add-Ons and Repos

The other big part of using Kodi is the vast catalog of repos and add-ons. They enable you to access on-demand services like BBC iPlayer as well as **some live TV**. You can also find add-ons for non-video content such as weather tickers, context menus, skins, and even mini-programs.

When you're installing add-ons and repos, **please ensure the content you're watching is legal** in your area. Kodi has developed an unfortunate reputation as being a haven for pirates and copyright thieves over the last few years. Authorities in both North America and Europe are **starting to put end users in their crosshairs**.

A repo (or repository) is a library of add-ons. The add-ons themselves are what allow you to access and watch content. You need to add a repo before you can install an add-on.

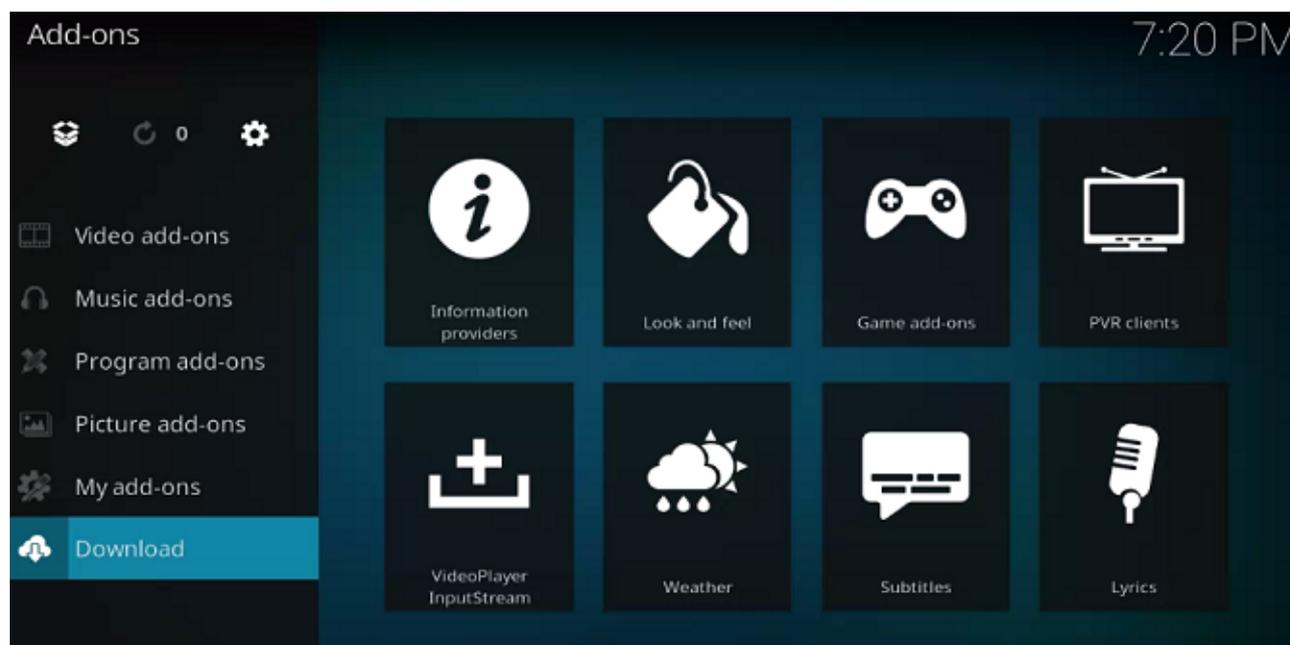
Kodi offers an official repo, but you can also find many third-party repos from people who create their own add-ons. The Kodi repo is included in the app automatically.

Sadly, given the recent clampdown on Kodi by the authorities, many once-popular repos have disappeared for good. It's no longer possible to direct you to "must-have" repos because the situation is so fluid. We can, however, explain how to add repos.

## Using the Official Kodi Repo

The official Kodi repo contains loads of add-ons, and many users won't even need to consider using third-party repos. Available add-ons include BBC iPlayer, Pluto TV, Crackle, SoundCloud, Arte TV, Bravo, BT Sport, and the Disney Channel. Most importantly, all of the add-ons in the official repo are entirely legal.

To browse the official repo from within the Kodi app, select **Add-ons** from the left-hand side of the Kodi home screen. On the next screen, click on **Download** (again, on the left-hand side of the screen).



You will now see a list of add-on categories. You can click on any of them to see what's available. In the image below, you can see the list of video add-ons.

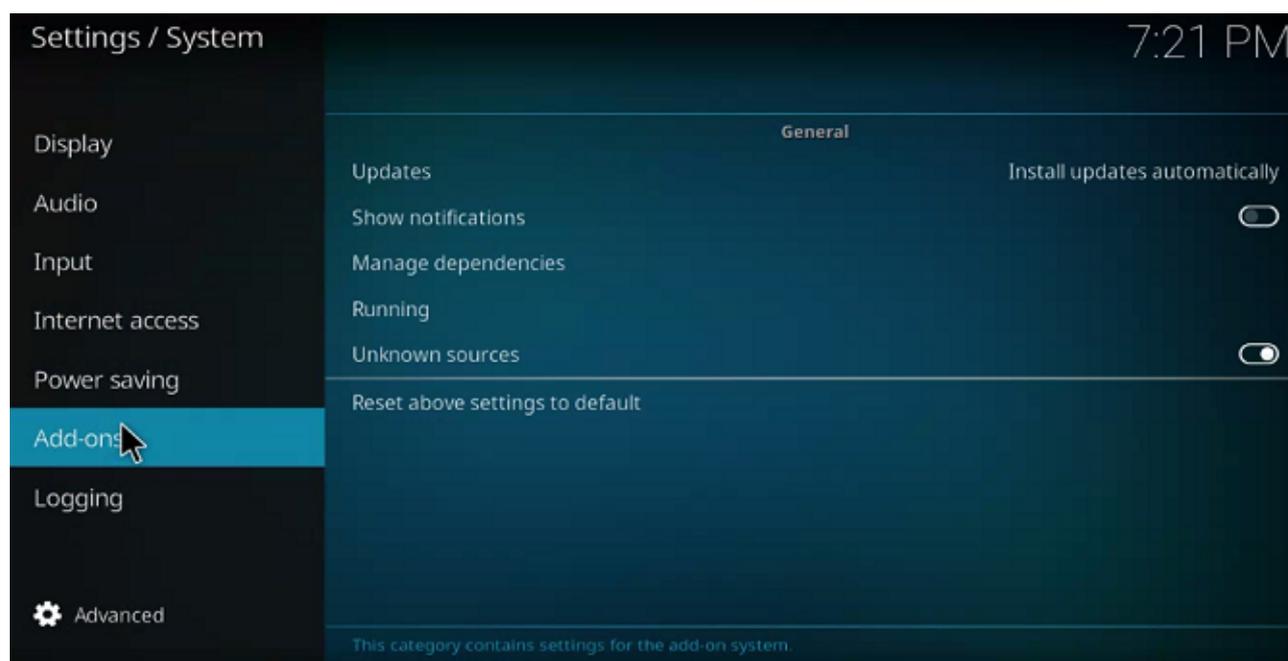
To install an add-on, click on the name of the item in question and choose **Install**. Once the process is finished, you can launch the add-on from the relevant section of the Kodi home screen.

## Installing Third-Party Repos

Before you can install a third-party repo, you will need to do some research online. You cannot simply browse a list of repos from within Kodi.

When you've located a repo you want, download its ZIP file onto your hard drive.

Now, head to your Kodi app and navigate to **Settings > System > Add-ons**. Mark the checkbox next to **Unknown Sources**.



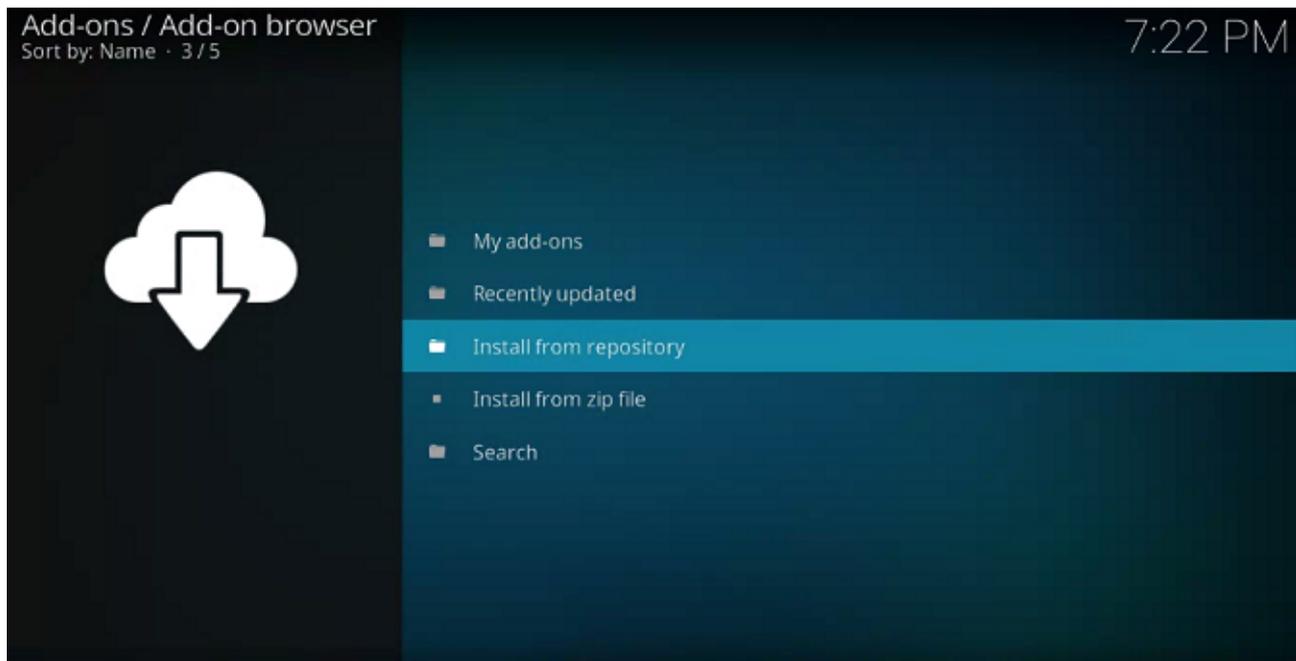
To install the ZIP file, follow the step-by-step instructions below:

1. Click on **Add-ons** on the Kodi home screen.
2. In the top left-hand corner, click on the box icon.
3. A new screen will pop up. Select **Install from ZIP** file.
4. Use the browser window to point Kodi at the ZIP file.
5. Highlight the ZIP file you want to install and click on **OK**.

## Installing an Add-On From a Third-Party Repo

The add-ons from any third-party repos will be mixed together if you go to **Add-ons > Download > [Category]**. However, it's possible only to see add-ons from a particular repo. It makes it much easier to find add-ons you want to install.

To see add-ons from a specific repo, go to the Kodi home screen and click on **Add-ons**. Next, in the top left-hand corner, click on the box icon.



A new list of options will pop up. Click on **Install from repo**, and finally, click on the name of the repo you want to browse. To install an add-on, click on its name and choose **Install**.

## Troubleshooting Kodi

As with any app, things can occasionally go wrong.

### Excessive Buffering

You can't do much about buffering on live TV you're streaming, but buffering issues on locally saved media and on-demand video are quite straightforward to cure.

Usually, the cache causes the issue. Specifically, the amount of memory the cache can use. You can change the cache settings by tweaking the **Advanced Settings** file.

Open the file and paste the following code:

```
<advancedsettings>

<cache>

<buffermode>1</buffermode>

<memorysize>20971520</memorysize>

<readfactor>8 </readfactor>

</cache>

</advancedsettings>
```



For a more detailed look at what the above code means, check out our [tips for fixing buffering issues on Kodi](#).

## Black and White Screen When Playing Video on Windows

DirectX is often responsible. Either you don't have it installed, or you're running a very old version. Grab the [latest copy of the software](#) from the Microsoft website.

## Audio Delay Issues on Android

The Android version of Kodi is notorious for audio sync issues. If updating your app does not help, you can adjust the delay manually by going to **Audio Options > Audio offset** while a video is playing.

## Other Solutions

No matter what issue you encounter, there are some tried-and-tested steps you can take that frequently make the problem go away.

**Updates:** Always make sure both the Kodi app and any add-ons you're using are running the latest version.

**Delete recently installed repos and add-ons:** Sometimes the code in add-ons can interfere with other add-ons or the Kodi app itself.

## Have You Got Kodi Working?

This guide should be enough to get everyone up and running on the Kodi app. To recap, we've covered the essential parts of the app, including the initial setup, adding your videos, music, and photos, and installing add-ons and repos.

**Did this guide to setting up Kodi answer all of your initial questions? If you're still unsure about anything related to getting started with Kodi, please leave us a [the comments section](#) and we'll do our best to answer it.**

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