



# THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO SETTING UP MULTIPLE DISPLAYS IN WINDOWS 10

by Christian Bonilla



# The Complete Guide to Setting Up Multiple Displays in Windows 10

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When it comes to desktop PCs, one thing is for certain: two screens are better than one. That's especially true for the tech expert who has to multitask several graphics intensive programs at once.

Whether you be a graphic designer, data analyst, programmer, or anyone else who's a heavy PC user, a **multiple monitor setup** can be both aesthetically and practically appealing. Why encumber your desktop with countless tabs and minimized programs when you could scan all of your work in one interface?

Whatever your need, enabling multiple displays on your PC is a surefire way to increase productivity. It also doesn't hurt that you can customize your second monitor from top to bottom using largely free tools available online.

Are you ready to embrace the next frontier in PC setups? Then read on!

## The Benefits of a Second Monitor



Image Credit: [i\\_mormon\\_stuff/Reddit](#)

There are a plethora of benefits from adding an additional monitor, or monitors, to your workstation.

For one, the aesthetic opportunities of a dual or triple monitor setup are fantastic. Compared to a single display, multi-display setups allow you to tailor different screens according to their distinct function and purpose. Where dual or multi-monitor setups excel, however, is in their productivity bump. Most programs—especially those used in professional settings—display tools rather poorly when using even half of a complete display.

That's why a dual-monitor setup, for example, allows users dramatic increases in productivity. You're able to view all available tools, menu selections, and information at all times without having to constantly switch between tasks. In other words, alternate displays **allow users additional screen real-estate**. You don't have to sacrifice any particular function to monitor hardware, listen to music, edit graphic elements, analyze data, or write content.



Watch the Youtube video here: [Multiple Monitors: Right for You?](#)

You don't even have to invest in an ultra-high definition display out of the gate to have a decent multi-monitor setup. Most older, flat-screen monitors can still do their job rather well in a dual monitor setup. This is especially the case when you consider flipping your monitor from landscape to portrait.

A typical 24-inch monitor, when in **portrait mode**, can provide plenty of screen real estate, allow for easier reading and scrolling functions, or pose as a live (and endless) news and timeline UI.

Whether you're a novice or a pro, everyone can benefit from a basic dual monitor setup. Best of all, most graphics cards allow for a multiple monitor setup out of the box. Besides, multi-monitor configuration couldn't be easier!

## Step 1: Picking Your Monitor

Assuming you're already viewing this via a PC monitor, picking a second monitor couldn't be easier. That's because most modern monitors in the market are both flat-screen and high definition (16:9 aspect ratio). This allows users plenty of space either in landscape or portrait mode. For example, a simple 23.8-inch Acer monitor can give you crisp 1080p resolution in vivid color.

Higher price points are typically determined by larger screen sizes and display resolutions. Yet, the setup for an expensive or budget monitor is exactly the same. For a basic dual-monitor setup, not much more than a 23.8-inch display would be necessary. You can even use your **laptop as a second monitor!**

### Proper Cable Input

More important than your new monitor's dimensions is the proper cable type needed to connect your monitor to its appropriate port. Many confuse one cable type for another, which can be a serious hassle. For a multiple monitor setup, you'll have to ensure that your graphics card supports multiple monitors in the first place.

There are a **few types of cables** which you will generally encounter when connecting a monitor to your PC: **DVI** (white by default), **VGA** (blue by default), **HDMI**, and **DisplayPort**.

HDMI and DisplayPort are the newer types of connections for monitors, while DVI and VGA are older. There are many benefits to these newer cable types, two of which are immediately pertinent: newer cable types offer better image display, and **DisplayPorts** function as the Swiss army knife of cables by adapting to all the connection types mentioned.

Ensure you know the exact cable type required to connect your monitor to your PC. Most of the time, no cables are provided for you. The Acer monitor suggested above allows for VGA, DVI, and HDMI connections.

### Beauty From All Angles

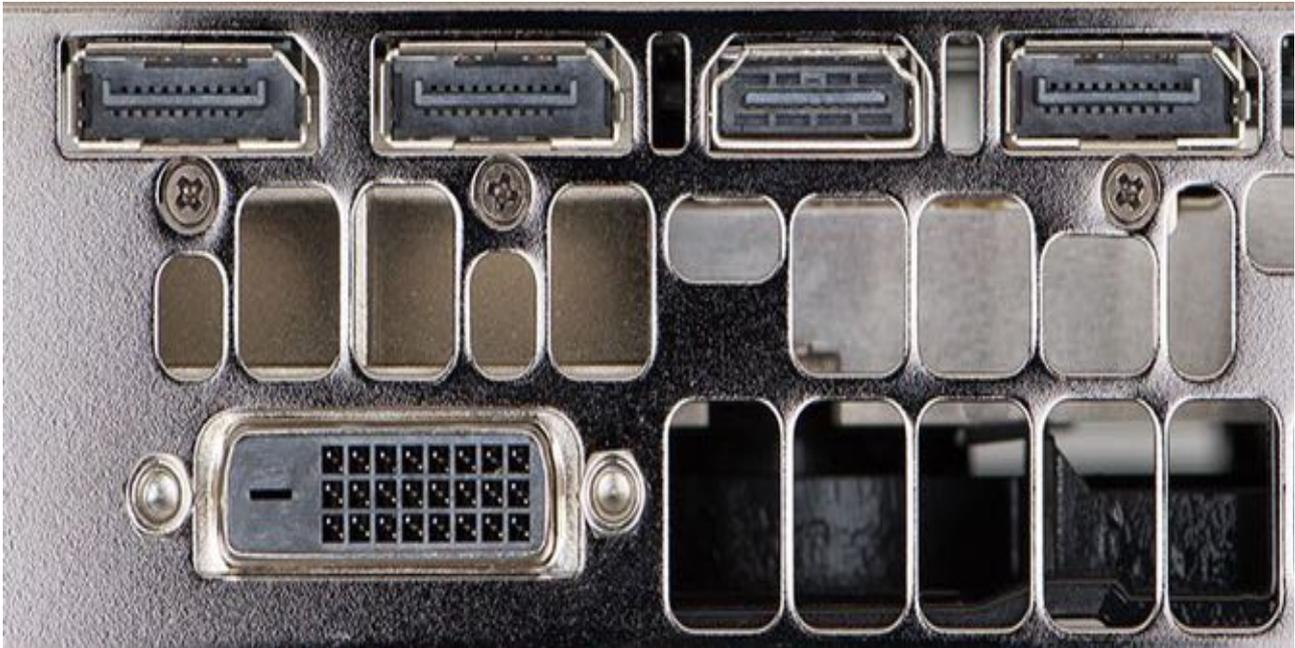
The Acer R240HY 23.8" IPS display shows every detail clearly viewing angle. Its zero frame design puts no boundary on your finish stand matches any environment. It also supports VGA, extend the enjoyment from your smartphone or tablet on Fu



- 23.8" Full HD (1920 x 1080) widescreen IPS display
- 178 degree viewing angles
- Zero Frame Design
- -5 to 15 degree adjustable stand
- **VGA, DVI (w/HDCP) & HDMI (v1.4) Ports**

Monitors and displays connect to the PC via its graphics card, otherwise known as a GPU. The GPU handles the graphics processing capabilities of a PC, so you'll naturally have to connect your monitor to your GPU component. Ensure you're connecting your display to the main graphics card used in your PC—often an external GPU—and not the default, integrated graphics ports.

We'll compare the above monitor's possible connection types to the following, a high-end **NVIDIA GeForce GTX 1070**.



Above are the following cable types, from top to bottom and left to right: 2 DisplayPort, 1 HDMI, 1 DisplayPort and 1 DVI. That means you can use a total of five monitors of various cable types using this graphics card. So, while you wouldn't be able to connect a VGA cable from your monitor to this graphics card, you would be able to use a DVI, HDMI, or DisplayPort connection.

If you have multiple monitors with the same connection type, but only have one space in your graphics card for that type of connection, you'll have to use a cable type called a **splitter**.

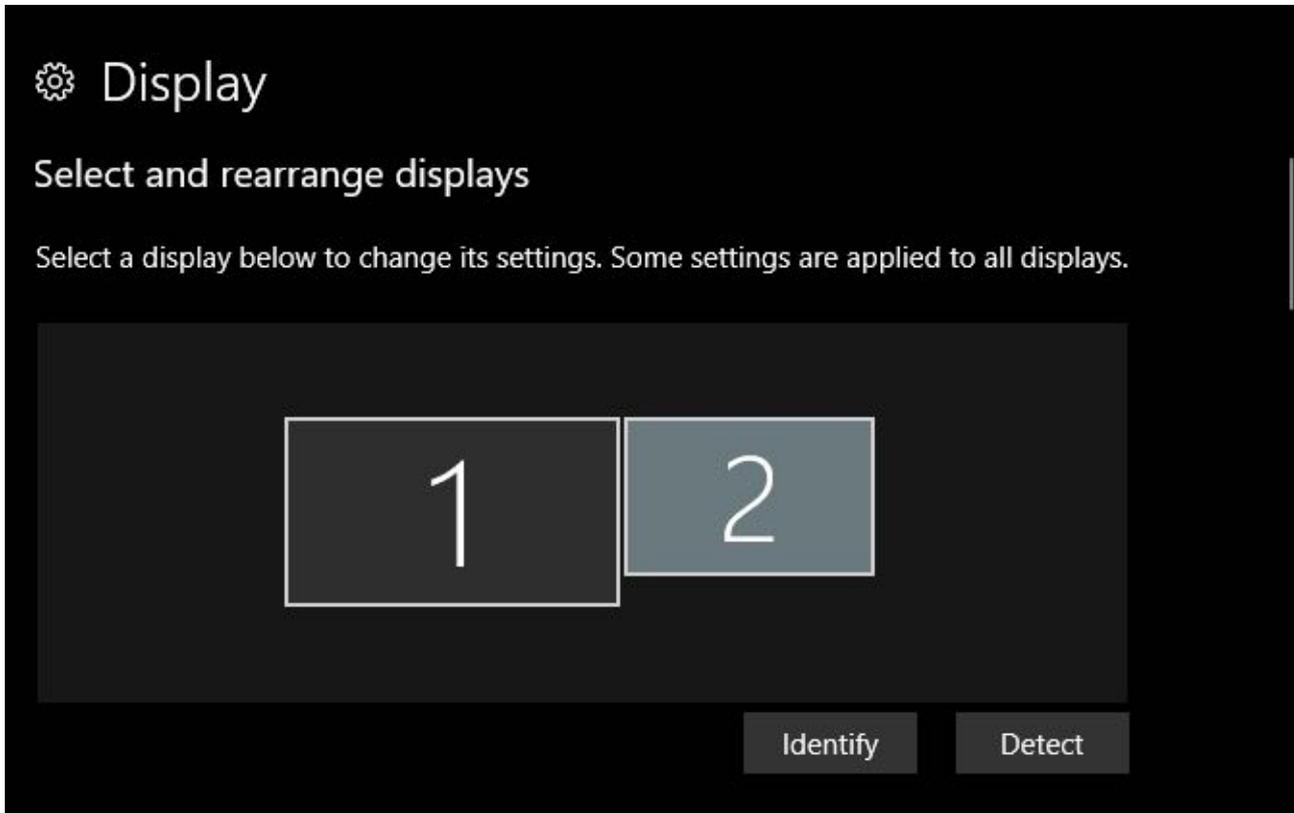
Splitter cables split an individual connection into two separate connections. For example, if you want to connect two different monitors to a single HDMI port you'll need an HDMI splitter.

That's it! It's not advised to use a splitter if you already have port space on your GPU, but if there's none left, a splitter is certainly the way to go.

## Step 2: Configuring Second Monitor

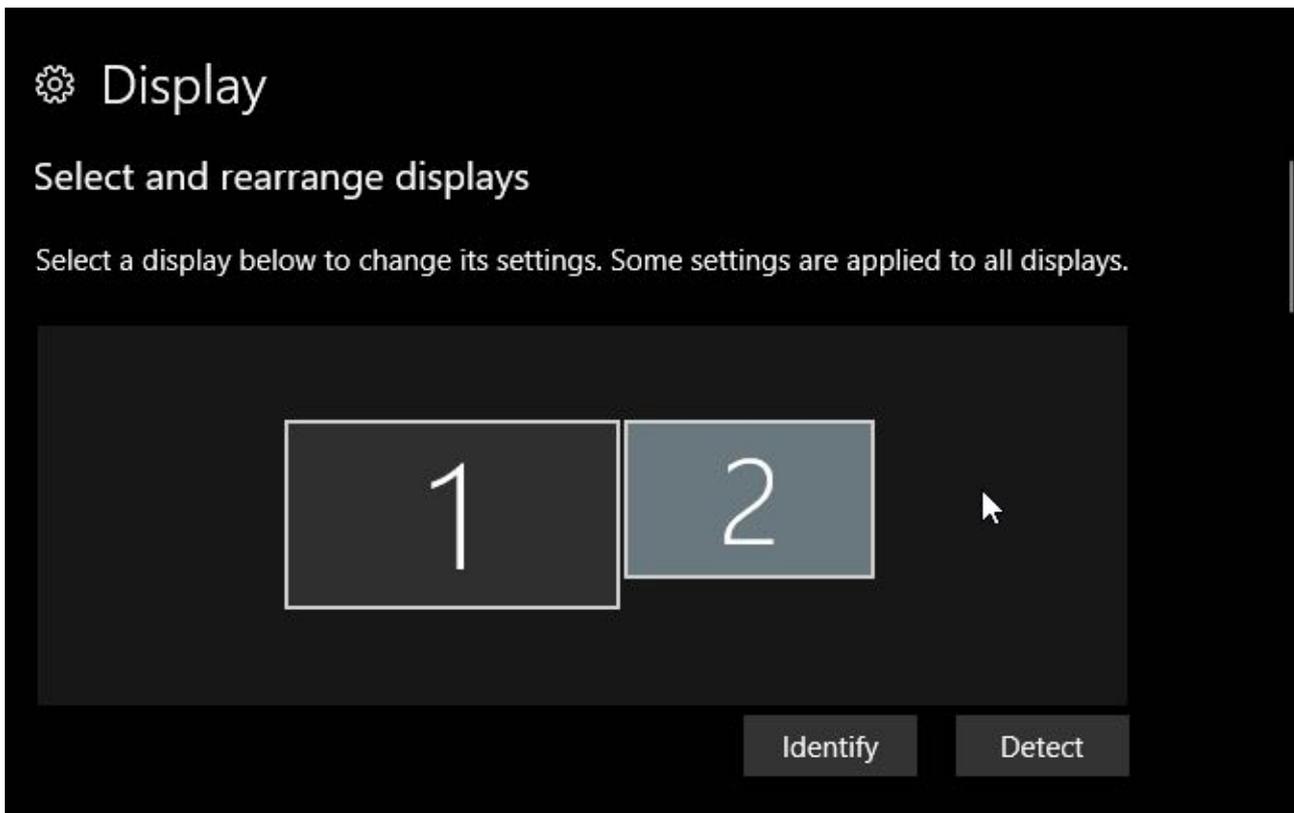
Once your monitor is connected to your GPU, turn on both your PC and your monitor. Wait for it to display an image. If your monitor remains blank, **check your connection**.

Once you see an image on your second monitor, right-click on your desktop and select **Display settings**.

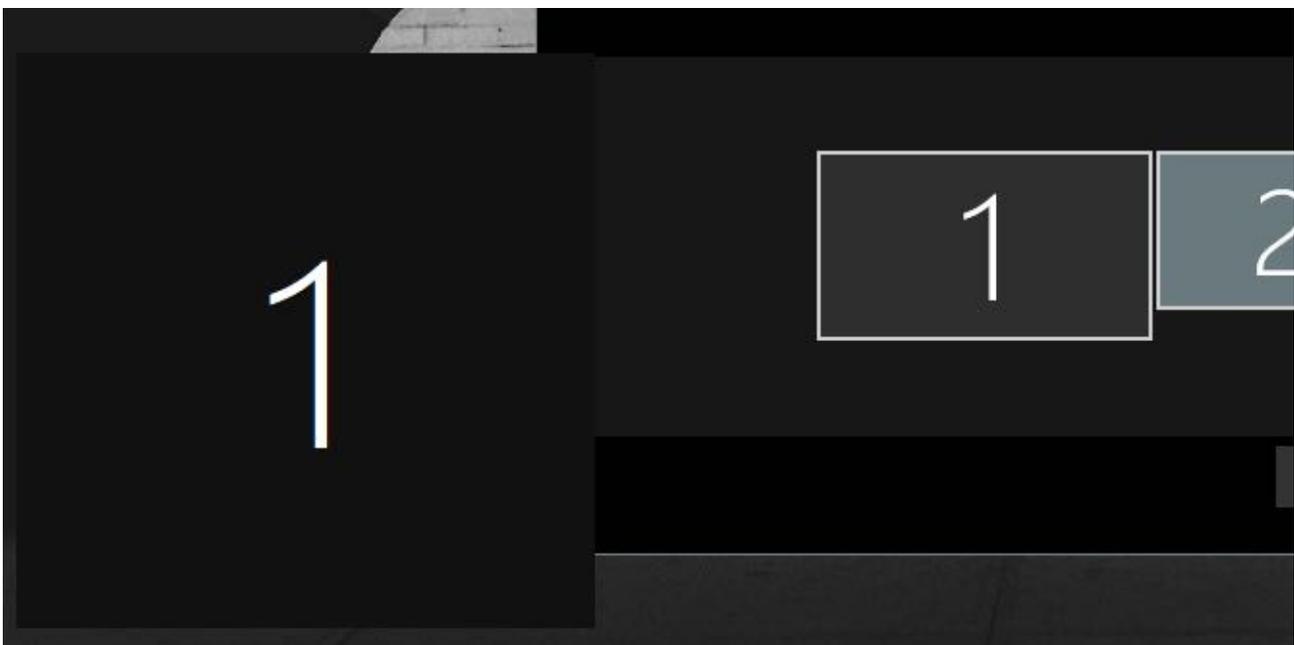


You should see your second display within the settings image. Windows 10 conveniently provides this interface so users can configure their multiple displays easily.

First off, drag and drop your monitor to configure the display position. If you have a second monitor on the left side of your first, but the display settings show the second monitor on the right, drag the second monitor to the left of your main display.

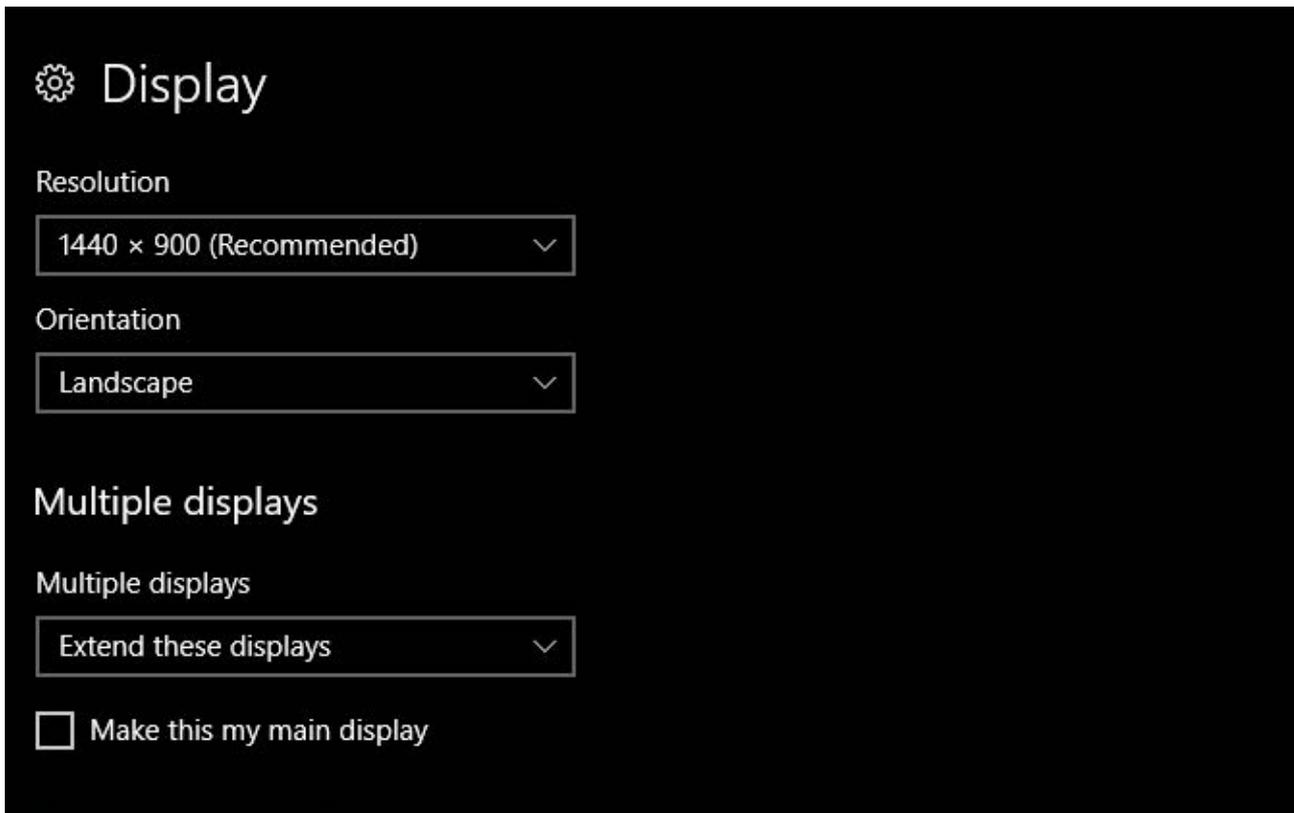


The **Display** window allows for both X and Y coordinates, meaning monitors don't have to be placed directly beside one another to function. If you're confused as to which display your PC is referring to, click the **Identify** button to view which monitor is which.



Next, scroll down the options until you reach **Resolution**. This will be the main setting you would have to change in order to get your monitor in working order.

For one, Windows 10 will sometimes display your monitor at a smaller resolution than native to the display. Set your Resolution to the **Recommended** setting (or higher).



If you have an older monitor but are using a newer graphics card, you can also adjust settings to **hike your resolution higher** than possible by default.

Continue changing whatever options suit you. **Orientation** will allow you to change whether your display has a portrait or landscape orientation. **Multiple displays** allow you to extend, or mirror, your displays. Remember to select the display you want to change before you change it by clicking on the display image.

The option labeled **Make this my main display** will, among other things, make programs display on the main monitor you've chosen.

## Taskbar Display

Another more subtle aspect of a multi-monitor setup is what you'll do with the taskbar. If you're working on a clean desktop setup, the taskbar may become an issue.

To change or remove your taskbar, head to your background settings by clicking on your start menu, typing **background**, and selecting the **Background settings** option. Expand the window and select **Taskbar**. Scroll down until you see a **Multiple displays** section.

## Taskbar

### Multiple displays

Show taskbar on all displays



Show taskbar buttons on

Main taskbar and taskbar where window is open

Combine buttons on other taskbars

Always, hide labels

To turn the taskbar off on all displays (except your main monitor), set **Show taskbar on all displays** to **Off**. If you leave it on, you can decide whether the taskbar will show all pinned programs or only programs present within the given monitor under **Show taskbar buttons on**.

Additionally, you can choose to show or hide program text labels under **Combine buttons on other taskbars**.

## Cross-Platform Controls

What if you have two PCs with different operating systems, and would like to use both of them at the same time? Sounds impossible, unless you've heard of **Synergy**. Synergy is a mouse and keyboard sharing application that allows users to use any combination of Mac, Windows, or Linux PCs at the same time, seamlessly, with one keyboard and mouse combination.



Watch the Youtube video here: [Apple Wishes THEIR Mouse was this "Magic" - Synergy](#)

Synergy is impressive, even for nerds like myself. Setting up a new Linux distro while using your regular PC? You can do that. Have an office setup which uses both Mac and Windows, but don't want to spend your time unplugging the mouse and keyboard from one to use the other? Are you the office tech guy and constantly have to correct a coworkers mistakes, but hate walking over to their desk? Synergy does all of this and more.

Keep in mind, Synergy isn't free. \$29.99 will get you the basic, complete version of Synergy while \$39.99 will get you such awesome features as clipboard sharing (copy and paste anything from one PC to another). Nevertheless, these are one time fees to use on as many PCs as you require. In other words, you're paying a one-time fee to **never use a separate mouse and keyboard combo** on other computers for life!

### Step 3: Customize Your Multiple Displays

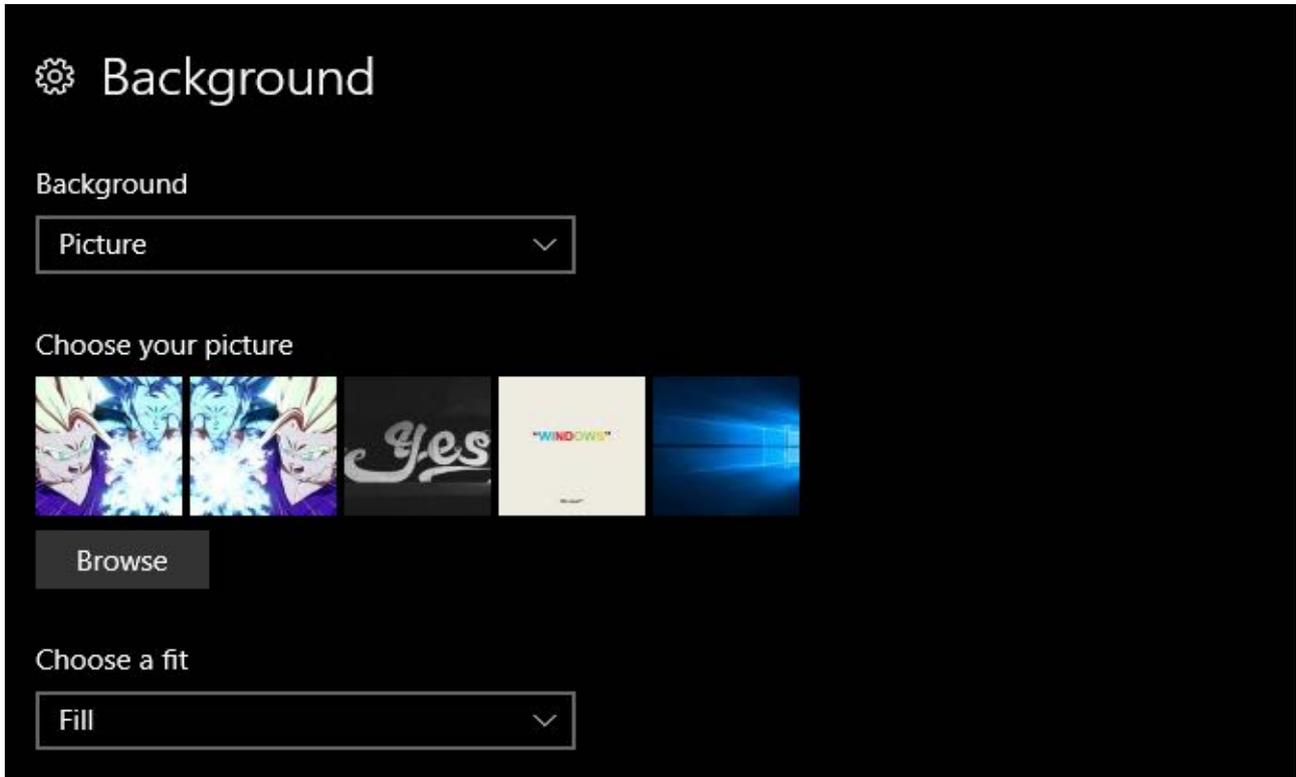
Now that your display is in working order, you can now think about customizing your second display. Even if you enjoy customizing displays, your work will often go unnoticed in a single display setup.

With multiple monitors, you can sit back and enjoy your customized desktop (or others can enjoy it for you) without having to abandon your work.

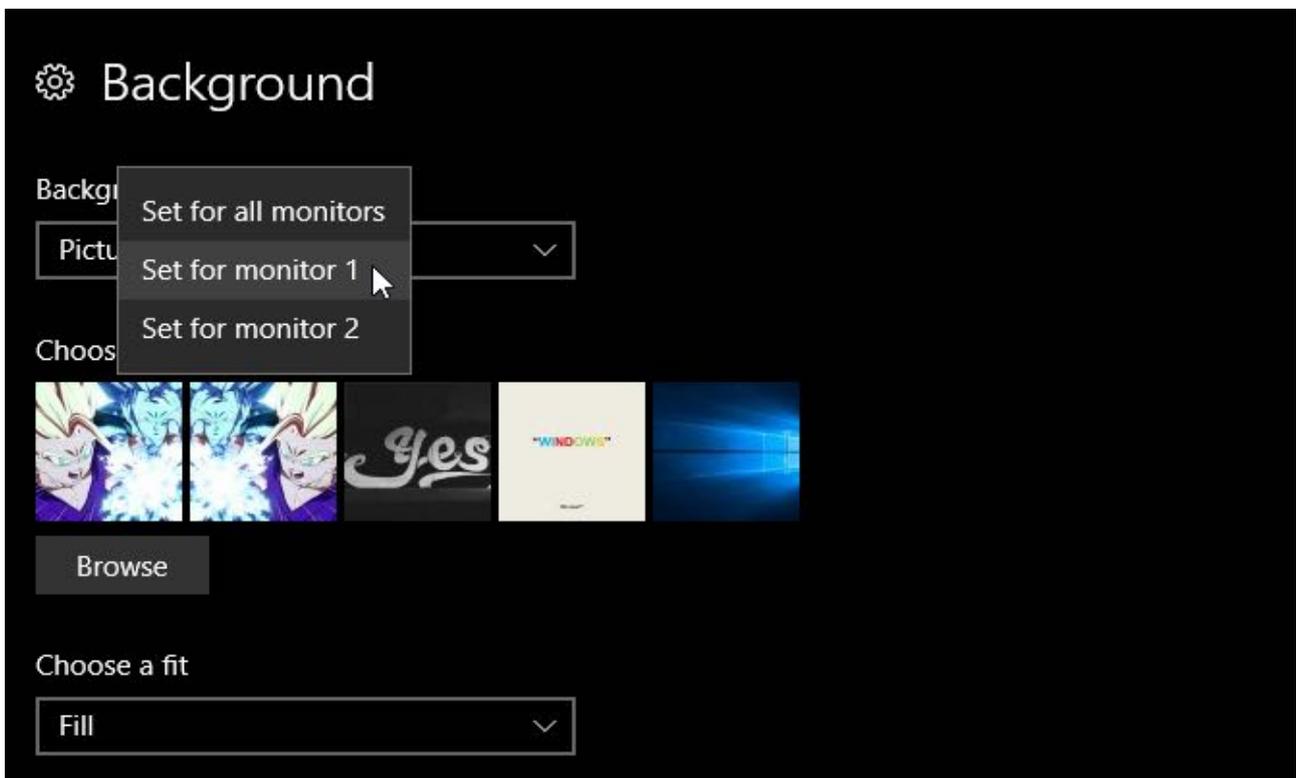
#### Multiple Wallpaper Setup

Part of the fun of a dual or multi-monitor background, as trivial as it may sound, is the use of multiple backgrounds. No longer are you tied down to a stale, single background. Better yet, it's readily available to do in Windows 10!

In order to use separate backgrounds on a multiple monitor setup, open your **Background settings** window again. Once your window is open, scroll down until you see the **Browse** button under the **Choose your picture** category. **Click** on the Browse button and select the image you want to use as a background. Do this for as many backgrounds as you'd like to have.



Once you have your backgrounds slotted, right-click on its thumbnail image. You should see a selection labeled **Set for all monitors** or **Set for monitor X**. Select whichever one you'd like.



That's it! While there are third-party applications out there which also allow for a multiple background setup, the easiest and fastest way to get it done is by default. Below is an example of two reflected wallpapers on a dual-monitor setup.

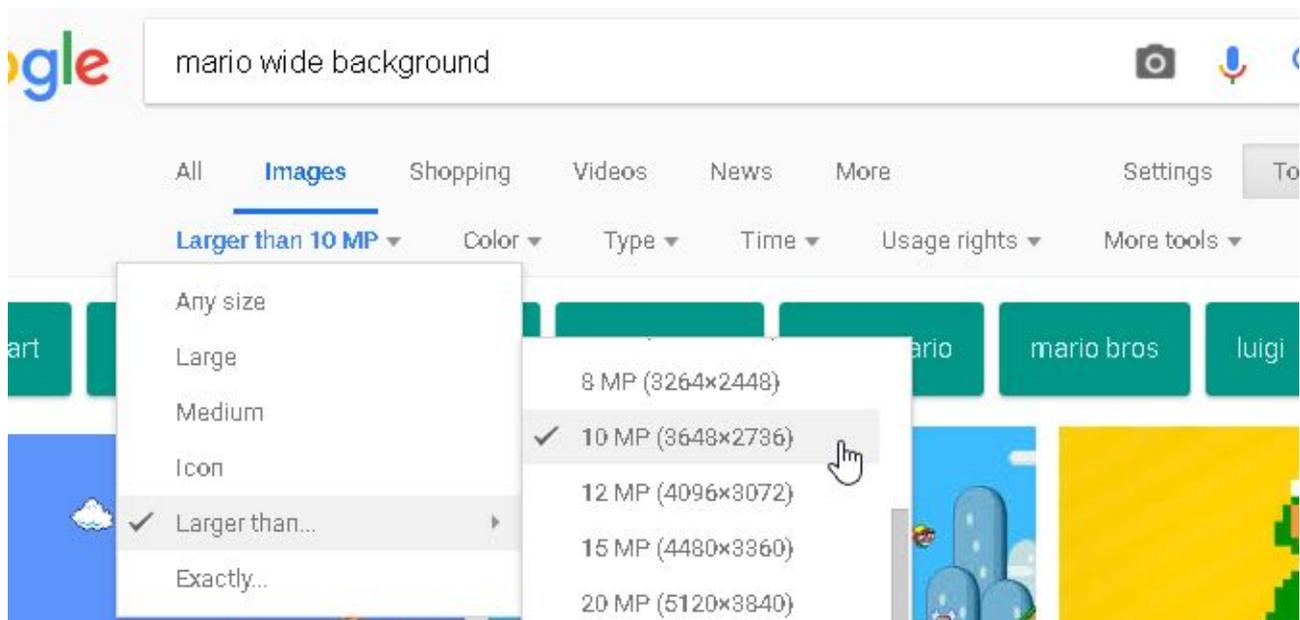


That's all fine and well, but what if I want to create a single, extra-wide background image spanning all of my desktops?

## Extra-Wide Desktop Background

To find an extra-wide desktop background, simply head to **Google Images** and enter the keyword of whatever image you'd like followed by the phrase **wide background**. Then, on the Google images page, click on the **Tools** option beside **Settings**. Then, click on the dropdown menu labeled **Any size** and select **Larger than** and **10 MP (3648x2786)**.

While not an exact science, this Google search should provide you a flurry of appropriate, high quality images to download and use.



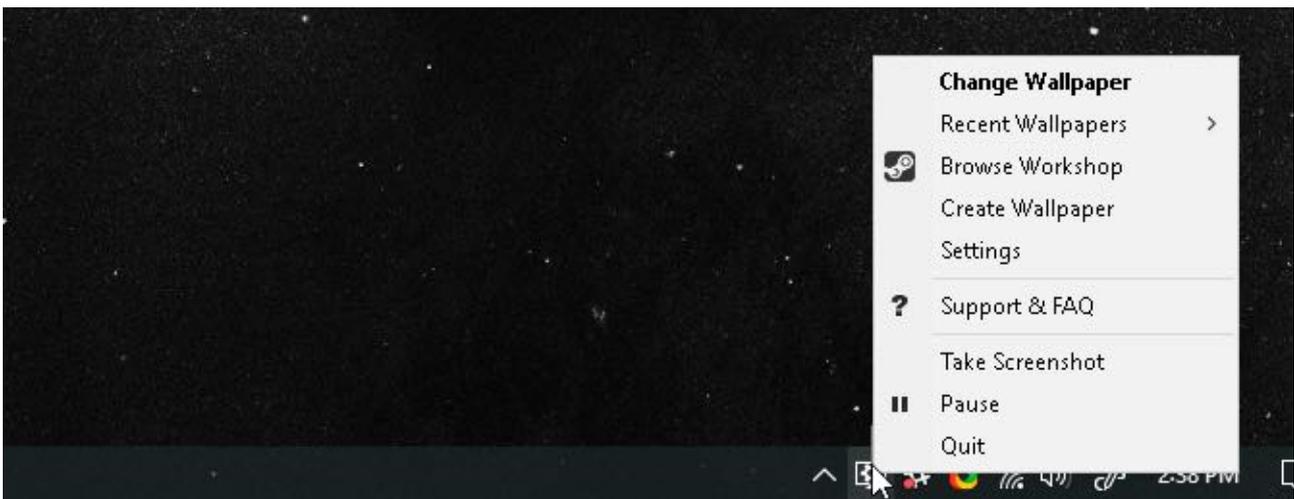
Finally, head to your background settings again and **Browse** for your wide image. Then, under the **Choose a fit** option, select **Span**. That's it! Now you know how one background spanning multiple monitors looks.



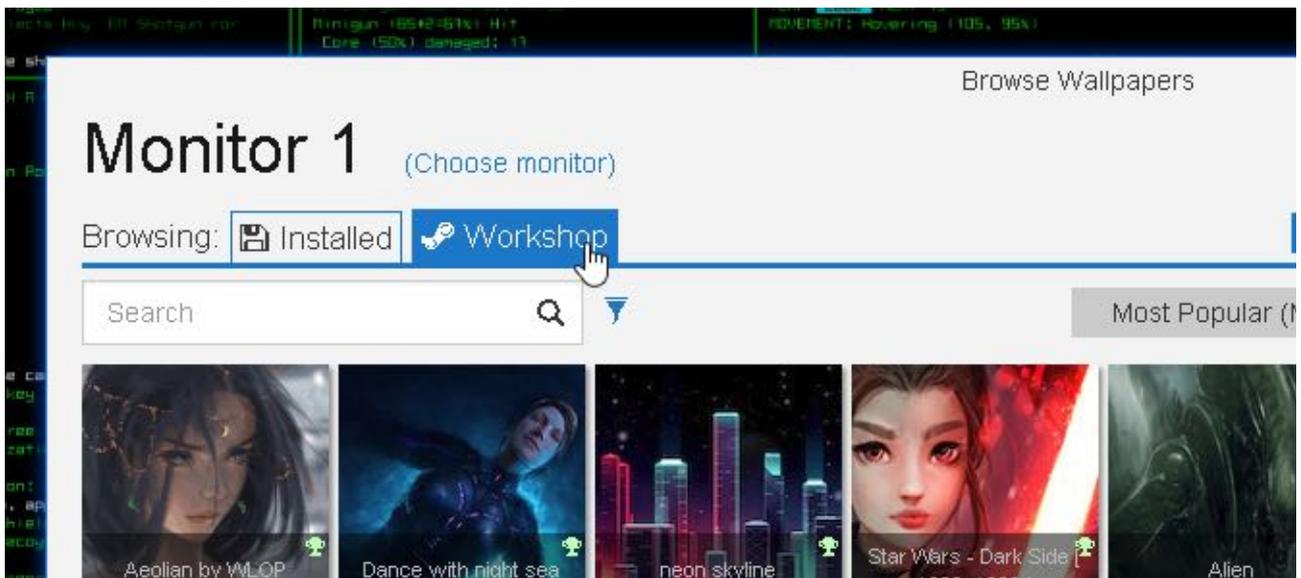
## Multiple Video Wallpaper Setup

Now that you know how to configure multiple wallpapers, the natural next step is obvious: video. Setting up a video wallpaper on one or both of your monitors is now a breeze using a well-recommended software from the Steam store, **Wallpaper Engine**. Don't feel like spending money on a **video wallpaper**? We've got other resources for you, too!

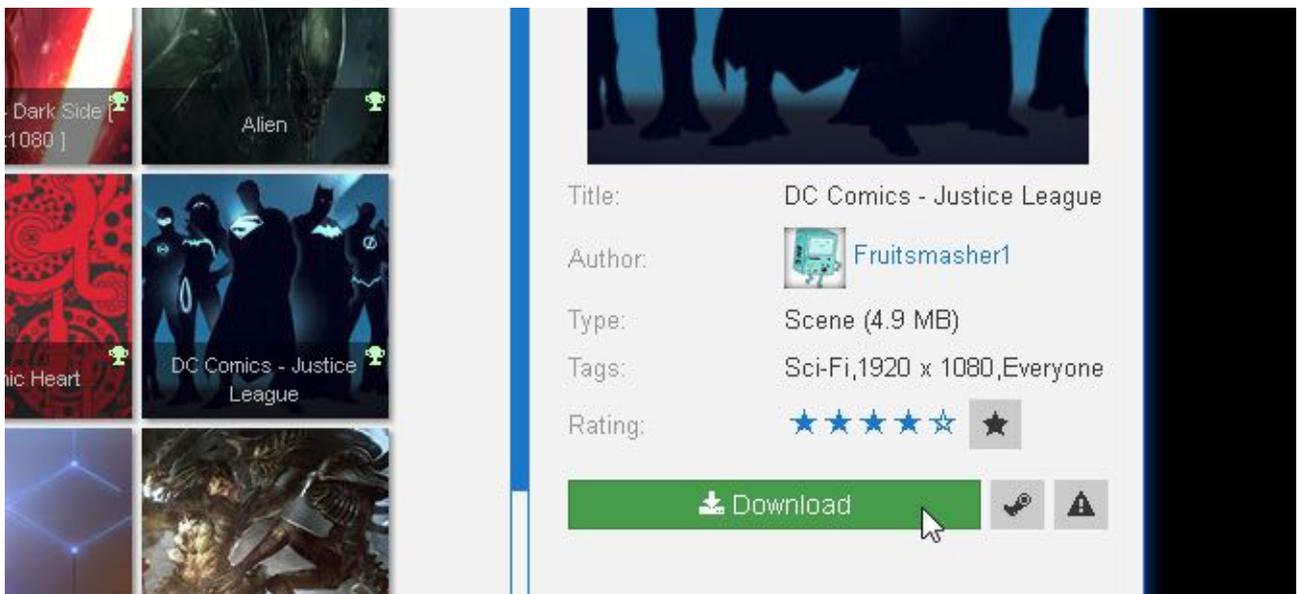
To get multiple videos on multiple monitors, open Wallpaper Engine. You can reach the program, after you've open it via Steam, by locating its taskbar icon, **right-clicking** the icon, and selecting **Change Wallpaper**.



Once you've opened the software, select a monitor (all of which should appear in the software) and select either **Change Wallpaper** or **Remove Wallpaper**. You can also extend a single video to span your monitors via the **Layout** option in this window as well. After you've chosen a display, select **Change Wallpaper**. In this window, switch to the **Workshop** tab. This is where you'll download your video background.

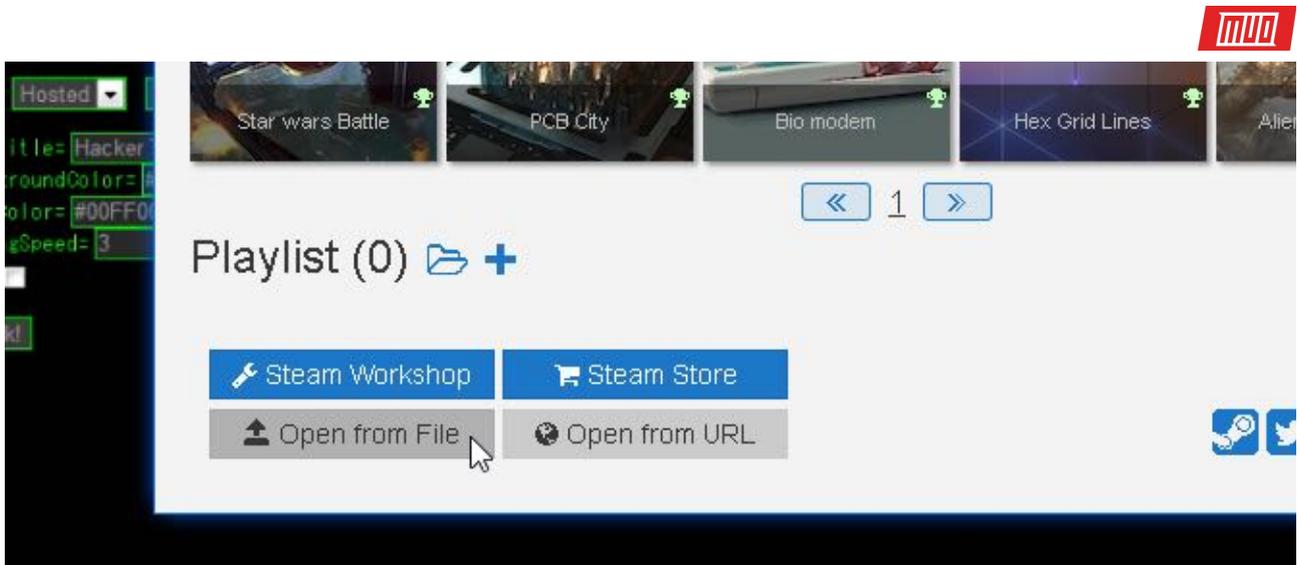


Work your way through the selection, select one of the choices, and click the **Download** button on the right side of the screen.



Once you've clicked Download, your video will be installed via the **Installed** tab. This tab functions as a library for your video wallpapers. Keep in mind, this method only allows you to download popular video wallpapers via the Steam Workshop.

You can also download and install your own videos as wallpapers in the application as well. Simply click on the button labeled **Open from File** on the bottom of your window and find your own video file.



Then, navigate to your Installed tab, click on an option, **adjust** your settings on the right-hand side of your window, and select **OK**.



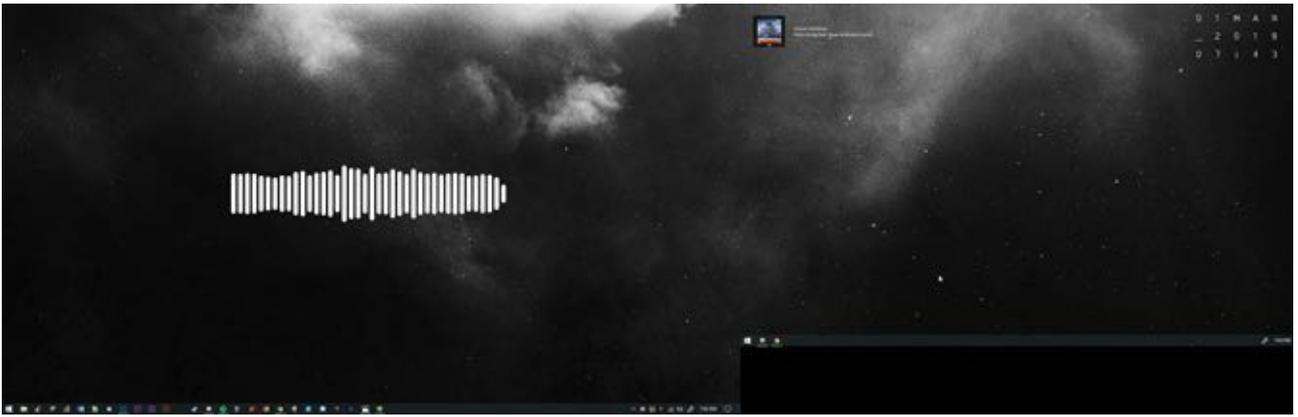
Close Wallpaper Engine and restart the process for as many monitors as you'd like. That's it! You now have stunning, crisp video wallpapers on every monitor at your disposal. Keep in mind: this will affect your PC's general performance and/or slow down applications that are running in the background.

Nevertheless, if your processor can handle it, there's no cooler background than a video desktop backgrounds. If not, why not **overclock it**?

## Rainmeter

Rainmeter is my favorite **Windows desktop customization tool**. It allows users to create a simple or complex multi-monitor setup easily. If you are completely unaware of Rainmeter's potential, head to the article link below to get up to speed.

Download and install **Rainmeter**. Load your skin as you would regularly. Then click and drag your skin across monitors.



It's that easy, and Rainmeter will automatically save your configuration and allow you to use your skins with multiple monitors.

## You Need a Multi-Monitor Setup in Your Life!

Dual monitor setups remind me of solid state drives. Before users own one, they seem frivolous. After they own one, they become absolutely necessary. Maybe you want to be more productive, or maybe you have a flair for a dramatic PC setup.

You can make tiny changes to **upgrade your workspace** and enjoy the glory of a multi-monitor setup today.

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