

easy

Computer Basics

Windows 7 Edition

See it done. Do it yourself.



que

Michael Miller

EASY COMPUTER BASICS, WINDOWS® 7 EDITION

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INTRODUCTION TO *EASY* *COMPUTER BASICS,* *WINDOWS 7 EDITION*

Computers don't have to be scary or difficult. Computers can be *easy*—if you know what to do.

That's where this book comes in. *Easy Computer Basics, Windows 7 Edition* is an illustrated, step-by-step guide to setting up and using your new computer. You'll learn how computers work, how to connect all the pieces and parts, and how to start using them. All you have to do is look at the pictures and follow the instructions. Pretty easy.

After you learn the basics, I'll show you how to do lots of useful stuff with your new PC. You'll learn how to use Microsoft Windows to copy and delete files; use Microsoft Word to write letters and memos; use Gmail to send and receive email messages; and use Internet Explorer to search for information on the Internet. We'll even cover some fun stuff, including listening to music, working with digital photographs, and using Facebook and Twitter.

If you're worried about how to keep your PC up and running, we'll cover some basic system maintenance, too. And, just to be safe, I'll show you how to protect your computer when you're online—against viruses, spam, spyware, and computer attacks. It's not hard to do.

To help you find the information you need, I've organized *Easy Computer Basics, Windows 7 Edition* into 13 chapters.

Chapter 1, "Understanding How Your Computer Works," describes all the pieces and parts of a typical notebook or desktop computer system. Read this section to find out all about hard drives, keyboards, speakers, and the like.

Chapter 2, "Setting Up and Using Your PC," shows you how to connect all the pieces and parts of a typical PC and get your new computer system up and running.

Chapter 3, "Using Microsoft Windows 7," introduces the backbone of your entire system—the Microsoft Windows 7 operating system—including how it works and how to use it.

Chapter 4, "Working with Files and Folders," shows you how to manage all the computer files you create—by moving, copying, renaming, and deleting them.

Chapter 5, "Using Microsoft Word," shows you how to use Microsoft's popular word processor to create letters and other documents.

Chapter 6, "Connecting to the Internet," is all about how to get online—both at home and on the road, via Wi-Fi hotspots.

Chapter 7, "Browsing the Web," shows you what to do when you get online. You'll learn how to use Internet Explorer to surf the Web, search for information, shop for items online, and view and upload YouTube videos.

Chapter 8, "Communicating Online," is all about using the Internet to talk to other users. You'll learn about email, instant messaging, Twitter, and Facebook.

Chapter 9, "Setting Up a Wireless Home Network," helps you connect all the computers in your house to a wireless network and share a broadband Internet connection.

Chapter 10, "Playing Music and Movies," shows you how to download and play digital music files, listen to CDs on your PC, burn your own audio CDs, copy songs from your PC to your Apple iPod, and watch DVDs on your computer screen.

Chapter 11, “Working with Digital Photos,” helps you connect a digital camera to your PC and edit your digital photos using the Windows Photo Gallery program.

Chapter 12, “Protecting Your Computer,” is all about stopping spam, viruses, spyware, phishing scams, and the like.

Chapter 13, “Taking Care of Your Computer,” shows you how to keep your PC running smoothly, back up your important data, and recover from serious crashes.

And that’s not all. At the back of the book, you’ll find a glossary of common computer terms—so you can understand what all the techie types are talking about!

So, is using a computer really this easy? You bet—just follow the simple step-by-step instructions, and you’ll be computing like a pro!

Chapter 10



PLAYING MUSIC AND MOVIES

Your personal computer can do more than just compute. It can also serve as a fully functional audio/video playback center!

That's right, you can use your PC to listen to your favorite audio CDs and to watch the latest movies on DVD. The Windows Media Player software is a great music player program, and Windows Media Center is a terrific full-screen interface for playing DVD movies. They're both easy to use.

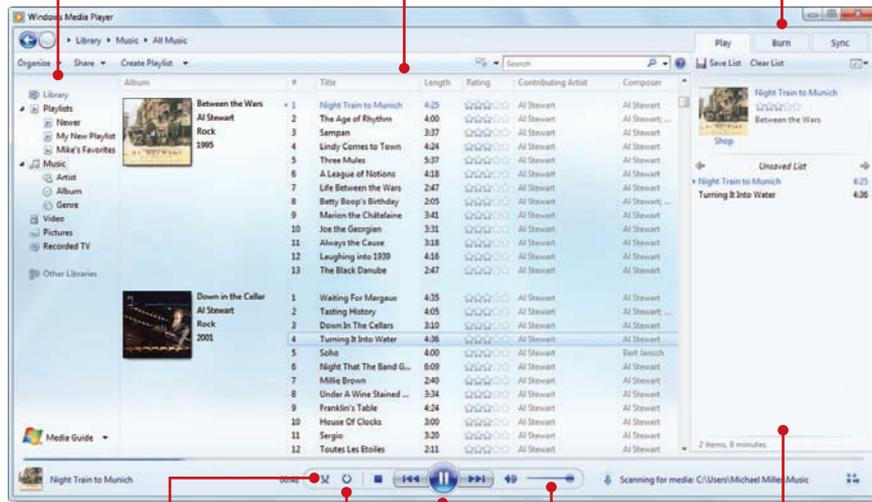
And, if you have an iPod portable music player, you can use your PC to manage all of your digital music with the iTunes software. It's easy to download music from the iTunes Store, connect your iPod to your computer, and then transfer your music to your iPod. You can even use the iTunes software to burn your own music CDs!

WINDOWS MEDIA PLAYER

Navigation pane

Contents pane

Tabs



Shuffle button

Repeat button

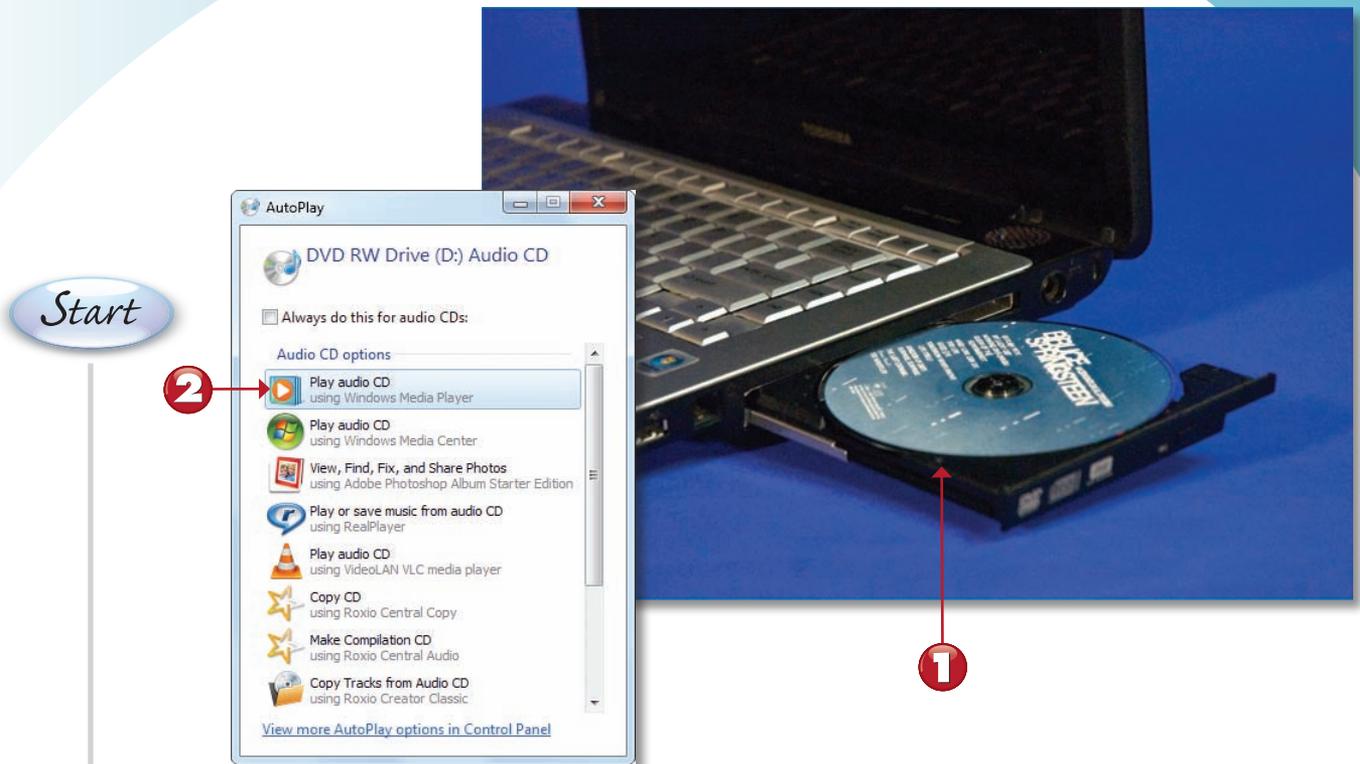
Volume control

List pane

Transport controls

PLAYING A CD WITH WINDOWS MEDIA PLAYER

You play audio CDs using your PC's CD-ROM drive and Windows Media Player (WMP). You can also use WMP to play songs you've downloaded to your PC from the Internet and (if your PC has a DVD drive) to play DVD movies.



- 1** Insert a CD into your PC's CD-ROM drive.
- 2** Windows will ask what you want to do; click **Play Audio CD Using Windows Media Player**.

Continued



TIP

Online Music Stores You can buy downloadable music at many online music stores, including Amazon MP3 Downloads (www.amazonmp3.com), Rhapsody (www.rhapsody.com), and Napster (www.napster.com). Some stores charge by the song, whereas others charge a monthly fee with unlimited downloads. ■



TIP

Download the Latest Version This book covers Windows Media Player version 12, included with Windows 7. To download the latest version of Windows Media Player, go to www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/. ■



- 3** The CD should start playing automatically the Now Playing window. To pause the CD, click the **Pause** button; then click **Play** to resume playback.
- 4** To skip to the next track, click the **Next** button.
- 5** To replay the last track, click the **Previous** button.
- 6** To stop playback completely, click the **Stop** button.

End



TIP

Switch to Larger Window To switch from the Now Playing window to the larger Windows Media Player window, click the **Switch to Library** button in the lower-right corner. ■



NOTE

Launching Windows Media Player If WMP doesn't start automatically when you load a CD into your PC's CD-ROM drive, you can launch it manually from the Windows Start menu. ■

RIPPING A CD TO YOUR HARD DISK

Windows Media Player lets you copy music from your CDs to your PC's hard drive. You can then listen to these digital audio files on your computer, transfer the files to a portable music player, or burn your own custom mix CDs. This process of copying files from a CD to your hard disk is called *ripping*.



- 1 Insert the CD you want to rip into your PC's CD-ROM drive.
- 2 Switch to the larger WMP window by clicking **Switch to Library**.
- 3 Make sure the CD is selected in the navigation pane. Then set the recording format by clicking **Rip Settings, Format**, and then selecting either **Windows Media Audio** or **MP3**.

Continued



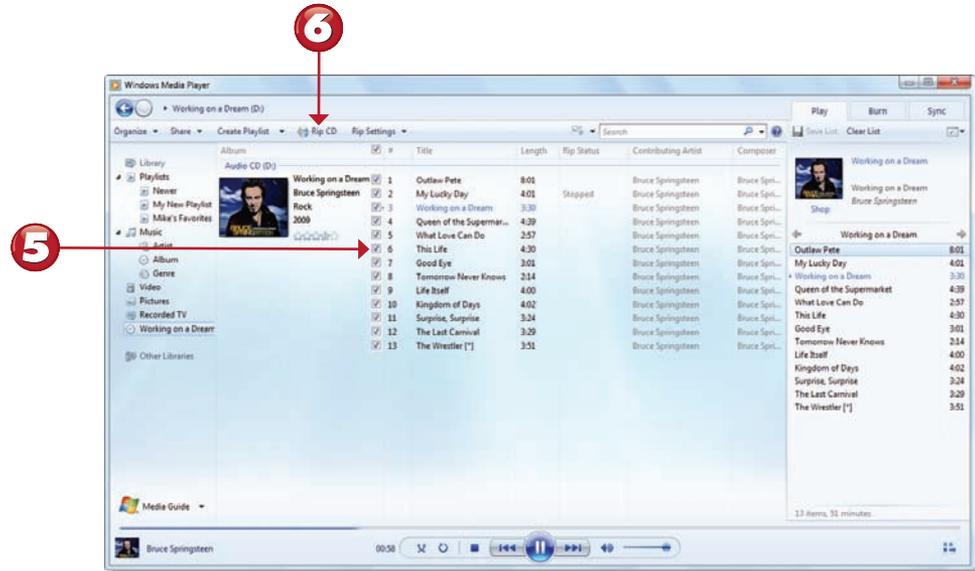
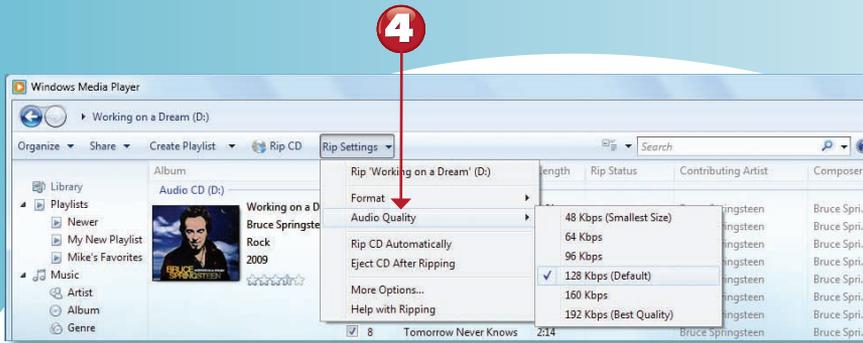
TIP

File Format For near-universal compatibility with other music player software and hardware, rip to the MP3 format. For slightly better audio quality with smaller file sizes, rip to the Windows Media Audio (WMA) format. ■



TIP

Bit Rate The higher the bit rate you select for audio quality, the better the sound. For WMA format files, 128Kbps is the default; 192Kbps is a good setting for MP3 files. ■



- 4 Select the recording quality by clicking **Rip Settings, Audio Quality** and then selecting the desired bit rate.
- 5 Put a check mark by the tracks you want to copy.
- 6 When you've selected which tracks to rip, click **Rip CD**.

End



TIP

Connect to the Internet Before you rip a CD, you should make sure your PC is connected to the Internet. This lets WMP download track names and CD cover art for the songs you're ripping. ■



TIP

Quick Rip After you've first set the rip settings for your recordings, you can rip directly from the Now Playing window by clicking **Rip CD**. ■

CREATING A PLAYLIST

Files in your Windows Media Player library can be combined into *playlists*. You can create playlists from the files you have stored on your hard disk, in any order you want—just like listening to a radio station’s playlist.



Start

- 1 Click the **Play** tab.
- 2 Click **Create Playlist**.
- 3 Enter a title for your new playlist.

Continued



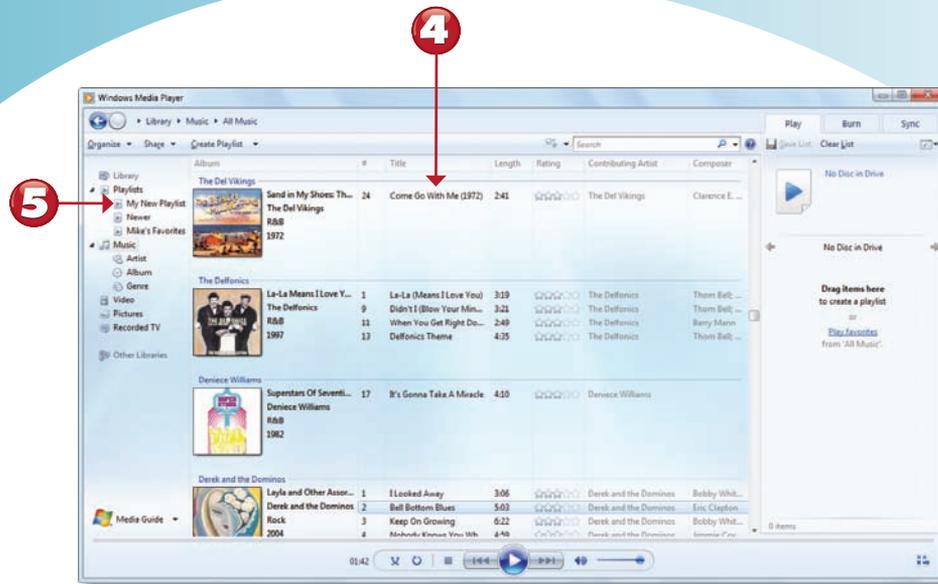
NOTE

Understanding Playlists When you create a playlist, you don't actually make copies of the individual songs. Instead, the playlist points to the songs where they continue to reside on your hard disk. When you play a playlist, Windows Media Player accesses each song file in turn on the hard drive. ■



TIP

Auto Playlists Windows Media Player also includes a feature called auto playlists, which are automatically generated based on criteria you specify. To create a new auto playlist, click the down arrow next to the **Create Playlist** button and select **Create Auto Playlist**. ■



4 Use the Navigation pane to navigate to albums or songs you want to add to the playlist.

5 Click and drag songs or complete albums from the Contents pane to the playlist's name in the Navigation pane.

End



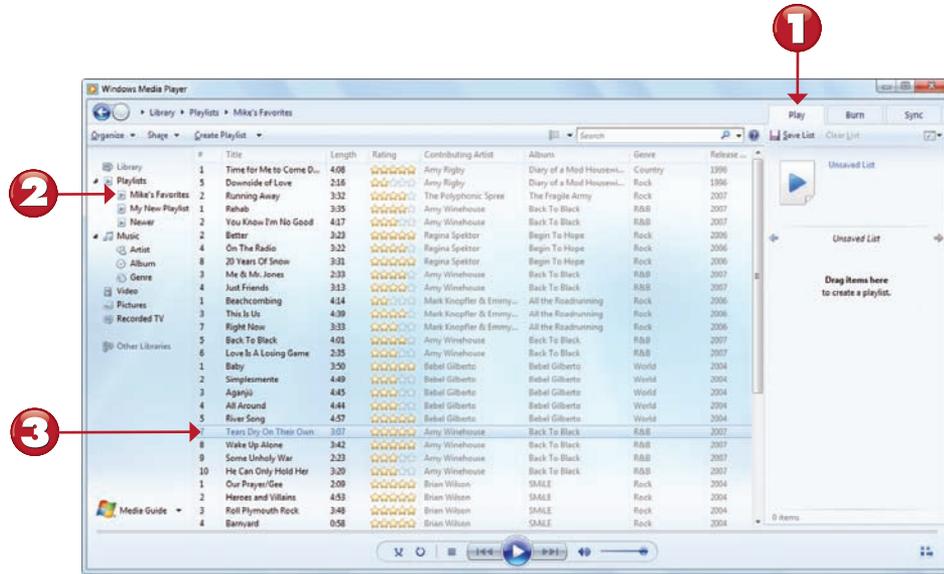
TIP

Editing Playlists To edit a playlist, click the **Playlists** item in the Navigation pane; this displays all your playlists in the Content pane. Right-click the playlist you want to edit and select **Edit in List Pane** from the pop-up menu. ■



PLAYING A PLAYLIST

After you've created a playlist, you can play back any or all songs in that playlist—in any order.



Start

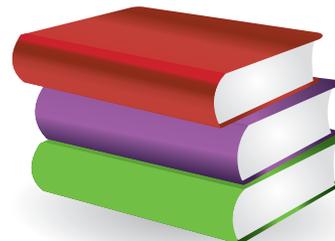
- 1 Click the **Play** tab.
- 2 In the Navigation pane, double-click the playlist name to play the entire playlist.
- 3 Double-click an individual song to play that song.

End



TIP

Random Play To play the songs in a playlist in random order, click the **Shuffle** button next to the transport controls. ■



BURNING A MUSIC CD

If you have a recordable CD drive (called a *CD burner*) in your PC, you can make your own audio mix CDs. You can take any combination of songs on your hard disk; “burn” them onto a blank CD; and then play that CD in your home, car, or portable CD player.



Start

- 1 Insert a blank CD-R disc into your computer's CD-R/RW drive.
- 2 From within WMP, select the **Burn** tab.
- 3 Click and drag the songs you want to burn from the Contents pane to the List pane.
- 4 Click the **Start Burn** button.

End



TIP

Use CD-R Discs To play your new CD in a regular (non-PC) CD player, record in the CD-R format and use a blank CD-R disc specifically labeled for audio use. (CD-RW discs will not play in most home CD players.) ■



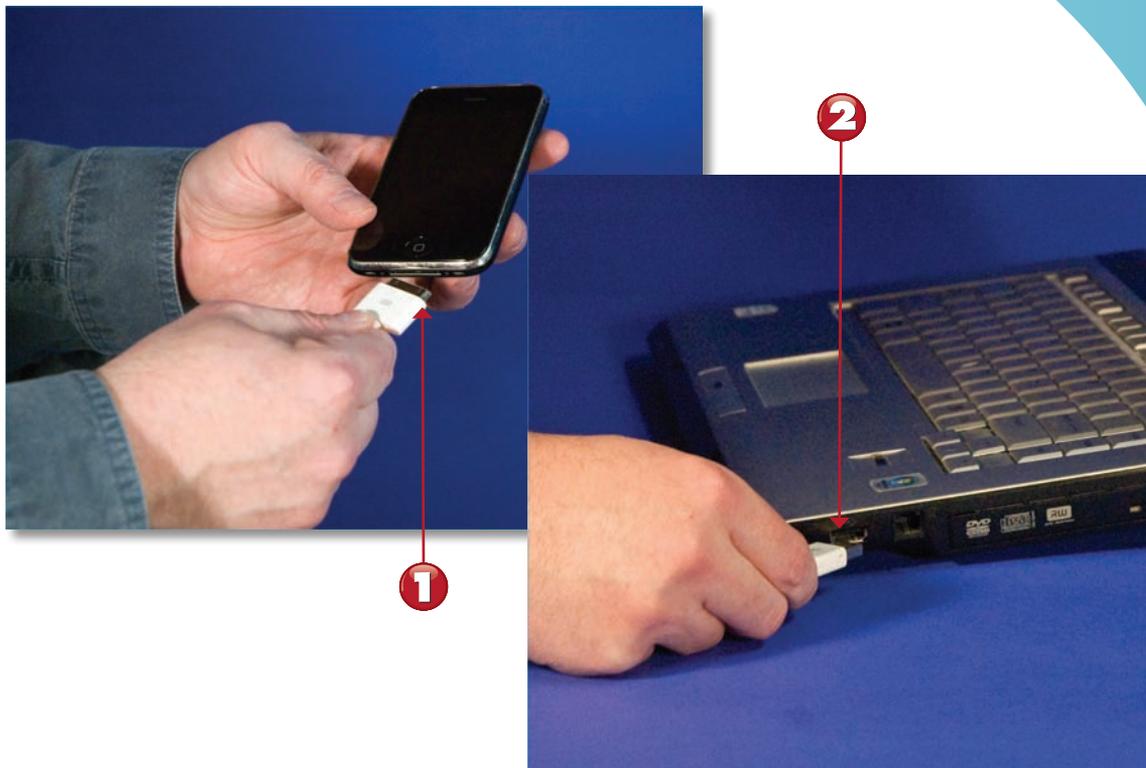
TIP

Burn a Playlist A quicker way to select songs to burn is to create a playlist first and then drag that playlist onto the List tab. ■

CONNECTING AN IPOD TO YOUR PC

To use an iPod or iPhone with your PC, you first have to install Apple's iTunes software from Apple's website (www.apple.com/itunes/download/). When you connect your iPod to your PC, your computer automatically launches the iTunes software and copies any new songs and playlists you've added since the last time you connected.

Start



- 1 Connect one end of the USB cable to your iPod.
- 2 Connect the other end of the USB cable to a USB port on your PC.

Continued



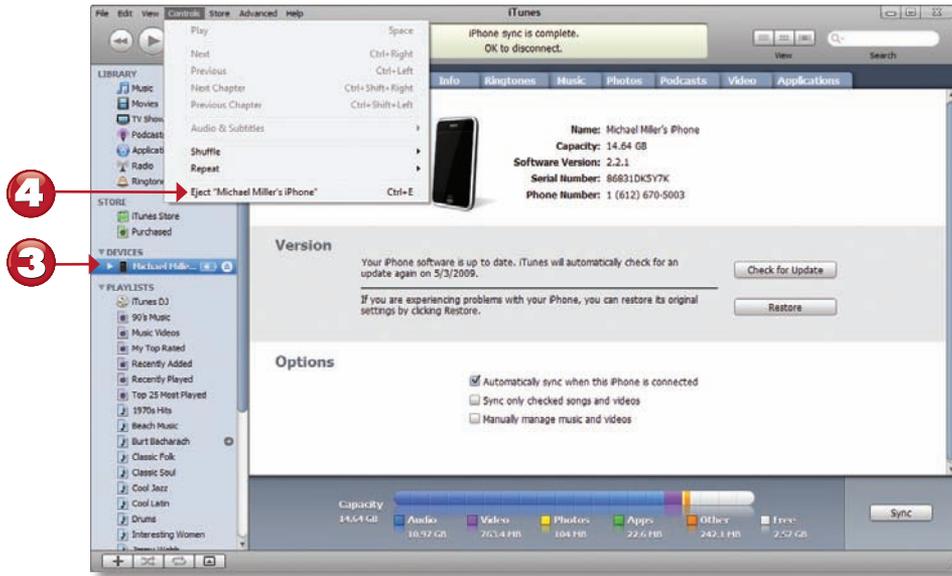
TIP

Manually Syncing You can also manually select which tunes are copied to your iPod. Just access the Music tab on the connection screen and opt to sync only selected tracks and playlists—those items checked in your iTunes library. ■



TIP

Autofill and the iPod Shuffle If you have an iPod shuffle, iTunes offers an Autofill option. This lets the software automatically choose songs to sync to your iPod—which is useful if you have more songs on your hard disk than you have storage capacity on your shuffle. ■



- 3** The iTunes software will now launch on your PC and automatically sync its songs and playlists to your iPod.
- 4** When the sync is complete, iTunes will display a message that it's safe to disconnect your iPod. Click the **Controls** menu and select **Eject**; then disconnect your iPod.

End



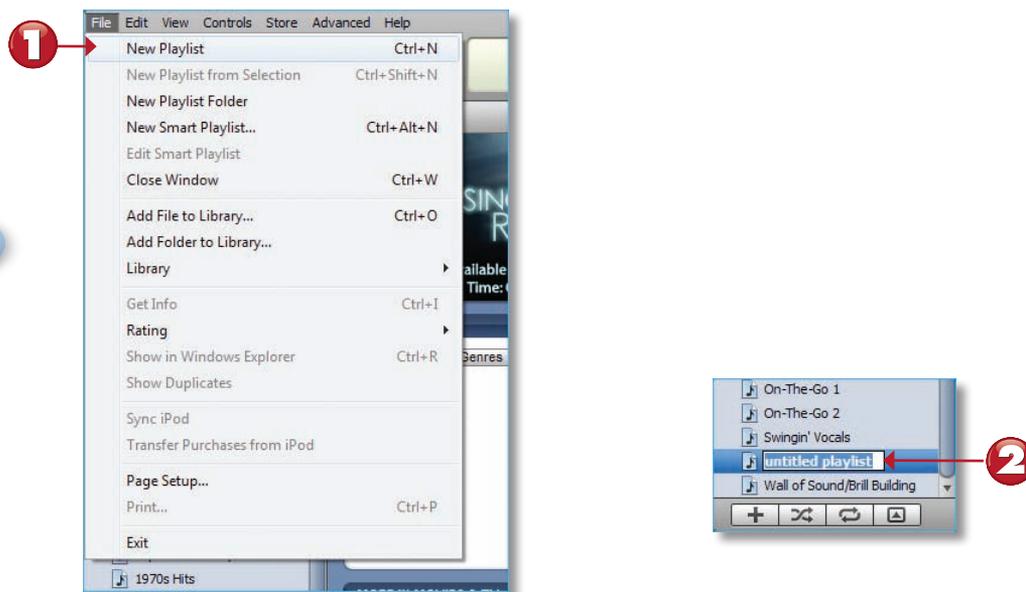
TIP

Syncing Videos If you have an iPod with video capability, you can configure which movies and videos are synced from the Video tab. From here you can choose to sync all videos, selected videos, or a selected number of unwatched videos. ■



CREATING IPOD PLAYLISTS

You can store thousands of songs on your iPod, which makes it a little difficult to find the music you want. One way to organize your music is to create playlists of your favorite songs.



Start

1 From within iTunes, pull down the **File** menu and select **New Playlist**.

2 Enter a name for the new untitled playlist.

Continued





3 Click **Music** in the Library pane.

4 Click and drag songs from the Contents pane onto the name of the new playlist in the Playlists pane.

End



TIP

Smart Playlists You can also create smart playlists (File, New Smart Playlist) that let you automatically select songs by artist, album, genre, and so on. ■



TIP

Playing a Playlist To play an iTunes playlist on your computer, just double-click the playlist name in the Playlists pane. ■

DOWNLOADING MUSIC FROM THE ITUNES STORE

If you want the latest music for your iPod, it's easy to purchase and download your favorite tunes from Apple's iTunes Store. All you need is an Internet connection and your credit card, and you're ready to shop!



Start

- 1** In the iTunes software, click **iTunes Store** in the Navigation pane.
- 2** The iTunes software now connects to the Internet and displays the iTunes Store's main page. To view music for purchase, click **Music** in the iTunes Store box.
- 3** To search for a specific song or artist, enter your query into the **Search iTunes Store** box and press **Enter**.

Continued



TIP

Browsing by Genre You can also browse the iTunes store by type of music—Alternative, Country, Classical, and so on. Just scroll down to the **Genres** section and click the genre you're interested in. ■





- 4 The iTunes Store now displays all the music that matches your search. To purchase an individual track, click the **Buy Song** button.
- 5 To purchase an entire album, click the **Buy Album** button.
- 6 When prompted if you're sure you want to purchase this item, click the **Buy** button.

End



TIP

Credit Card Required Before you purchase items from the iTunes Store, you need to enter your credit card information. Pull down the **Store** menu, select **View My Account**, and then click the **Edit Payment Information** button and enter the necessary data. ■



PLAYING A DVD

If your PC has a DVD drive, you can use your PC to watch prerecorded DVD movies via Windows Media Center, a full-screen interface for playing digital media.



Start

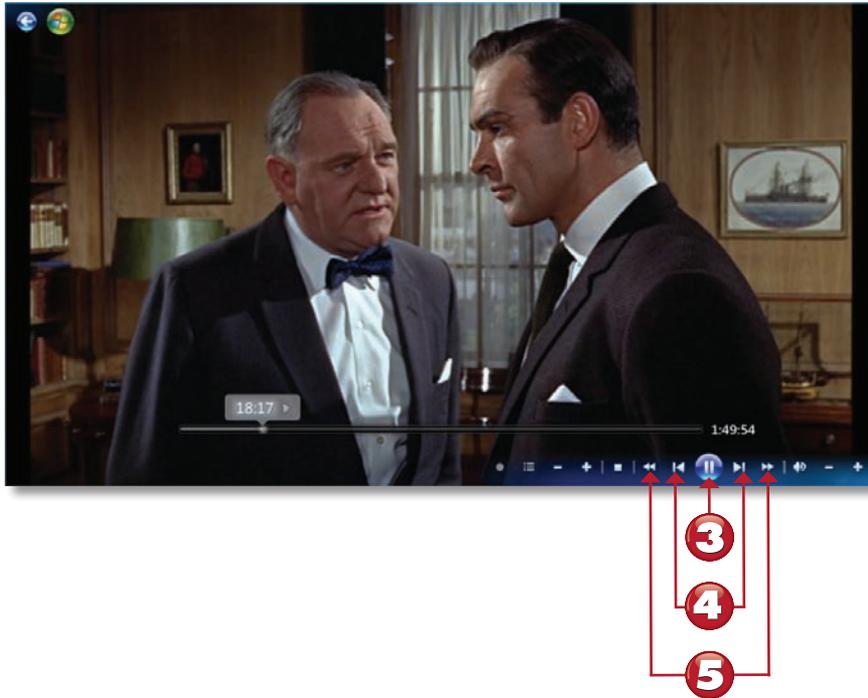


1 Insert the DVD into your PC's DVD drive.

2 When prompted, click **Play DVD Movie Using Windows Media Center**.

Continued





- 3 The movie should start playing automatically. To pause the movie, click the **Pause** button; then click **Play** to resume playback.
- 4 Click the **Next** button to go to the next chapter on the DVD, or click the **Previous** button to go to the previous chapter.
- 5 Click the **Fast Forward** or **Rewind** buttons to speed forward and backward through the movie.

End



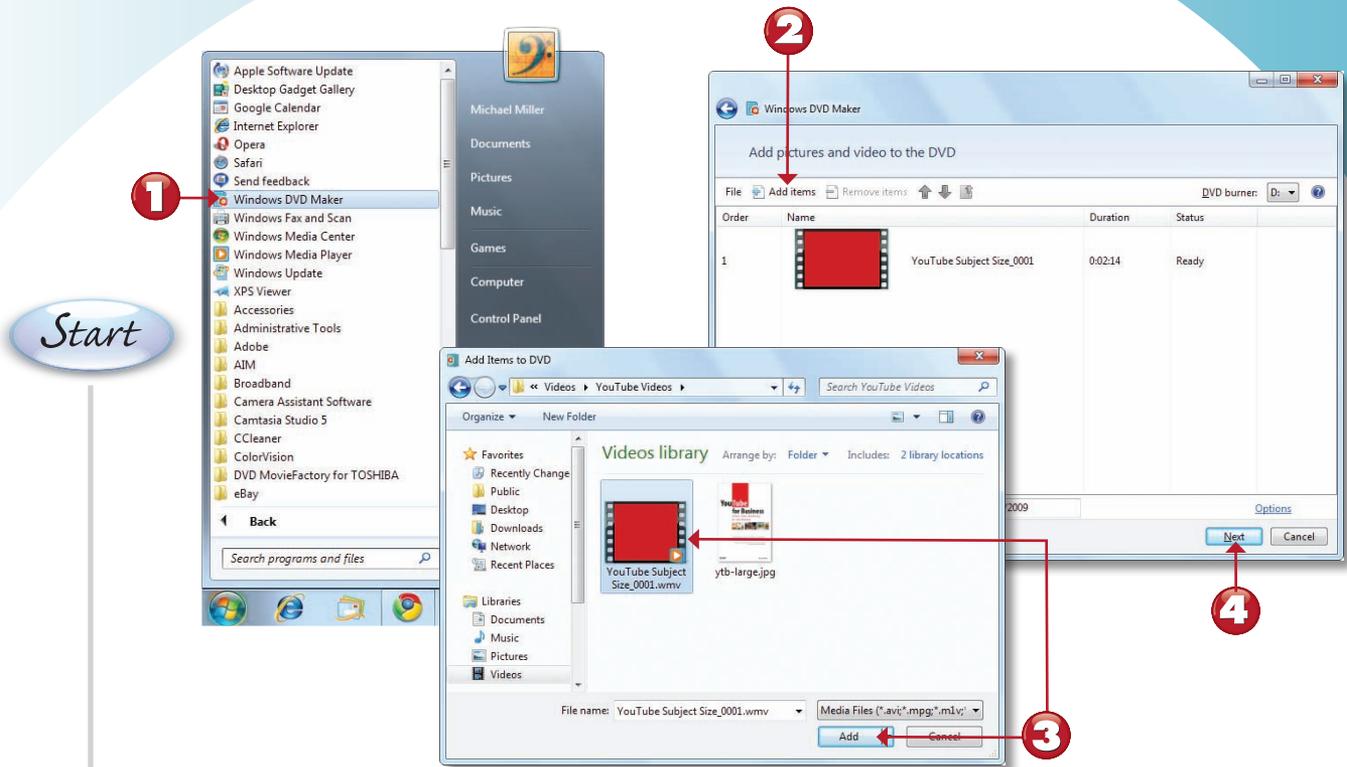
TIP

DVDs in Windows Media Player You can also play DVD movies in Windows Media Player and other media player programs. ■



CREATING A HOME MOVIE DVD

If you have a digital video camcorder, you can transfer your home movies to your PC and burn them to DVDs for playback on any DVD player. All you need is the Windows DVD Maker program—included free with Windows 7.



- 1** Click the Windows **Start** button, click **All Programs**, and then click **Windows DVD Maker**.
- 2** Click the **Add Items** button.
- 3** Select the movies you want to include on your DVD, and then click **Add**.
- 4** Click **Next**.

Continued



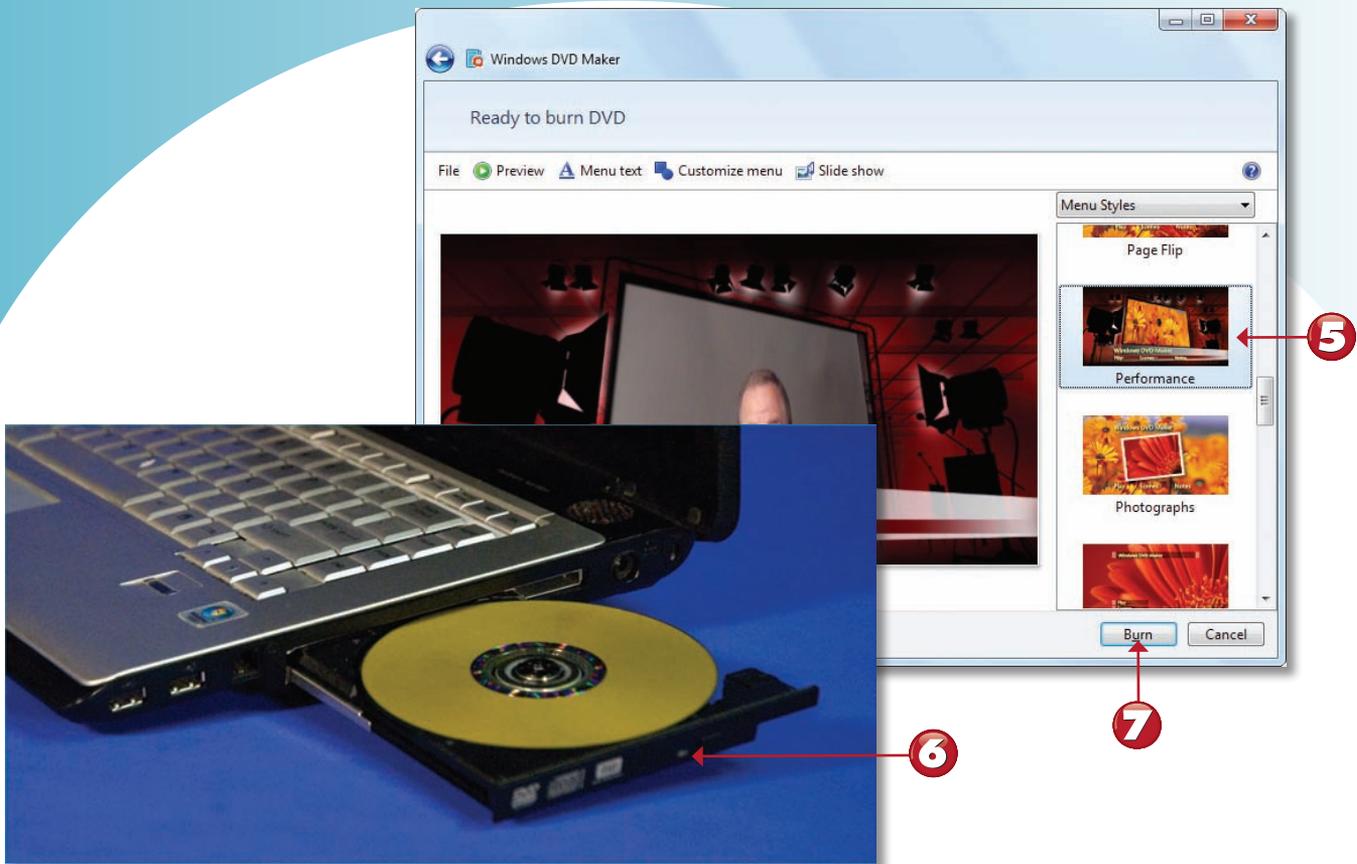
TIP

Change the Order To change the order of movie clips on your DVD, select a clip and click the up or down arrows in the program's toolbar. ■



TIP

Add a Slideshow To include a slideshow of still photos on your DVD, select JPG-format files from the Add Items to DVD dialog box. You can then click the new Slideshow item to change the order of photos in the slideshow. ■



- 5** Click the desired menu style.
- 6** Insert a blank DVD into your computer's DVD drive.
- 7** Click the **Burn** button.

End



TIP

Change DVD Title To change the title of the DVD, click the **Menu Text** button and enter the new text into the DVD Title field. ■



TIP

Slideshow Music To add music to a photo slideshow, click the **Slide Show** button and then click the **Add Music** button. You can also change the length of time each photo displays, as well as the transition effect between photos. ■

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