



# MX-23 Fluxbox Manual

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## 1. Introduction

This Help document supplements the **User's Manual (Shift+F1)**, which covers general MX Linux topics including installation, configuration and software management. The first-time user would profit from an overview of the previous version:



[MX-Fluxbox: what's new](#)

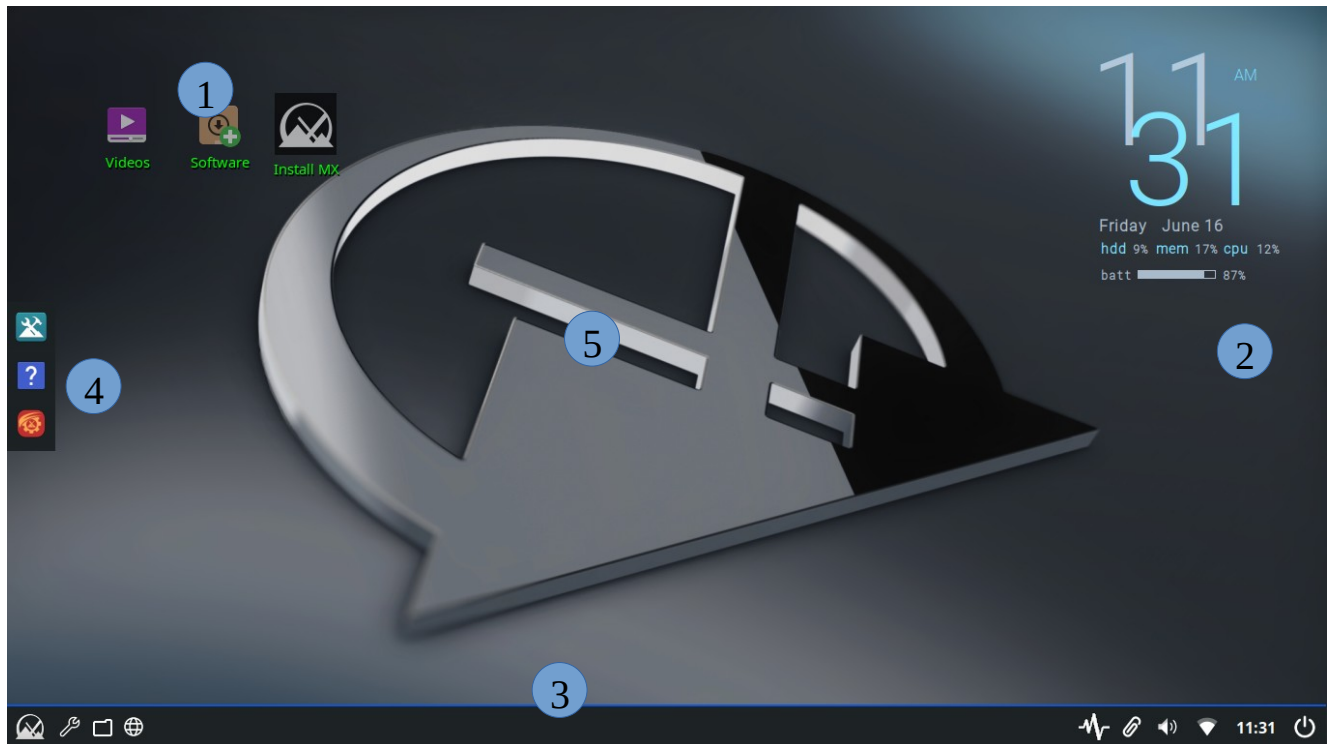
MX Fluxbox (=MXFB) constitutes a minimal or “base” version of MX Linux that can be used out-of-the-box. By design it does not contain all the software automatically included with the other MX-Linux versions. But additional software can be easily installed using the MX Package Installer by clicking on the desktop icon “Software”. There you can find and install a multitude of other applications such as an office suite (LibreOffice) or sophisticated graphics editor (Gimp).

As the name suggests, MXFB employs [Fluxbox](#) as a [Window Manager](#) to control the placement and appearance of windows. Its small memory footprint and quick loading time are very effective on low-resource systems—and very fast on higher-level machines.

MXFB can be run in two basic configurations, with many possible variations in between:

- **Default**, that includes the basic Fluxbox components but follows the MX Linux preference for the use of convenient graphical apps.
- **Fluxbox**, to which various components from the default configuration may be added with a simple click or two.

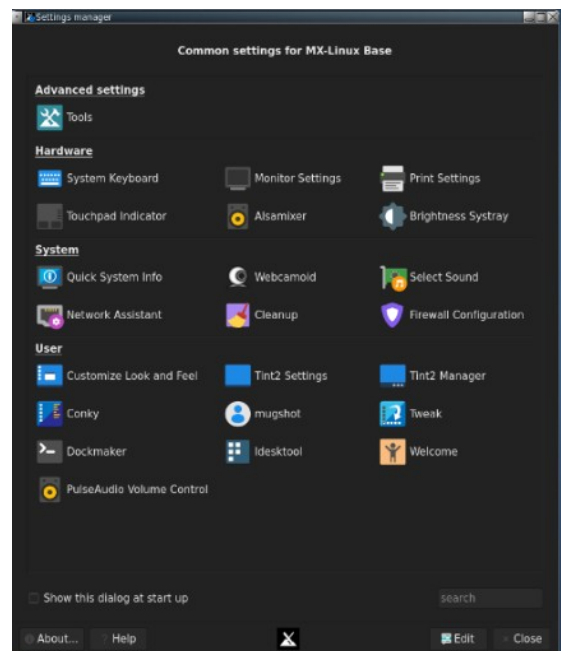
## 2. MX-Fluxbox Default Setup



Going clockwise from the upper left corner, here are the principle components:

- 1 Desktop icons (Section 2.1)
- 2 System information display, called a “conky” (Section 2.2)
- 3 The tint2 panel (Section 2.3)
- 4 A native dock (Section 2.4)
- 5 The hidden Fluxbox “Root Menu” (Section 2.5)

The first step for new users might well be the **Settings manager**, available from the dock (red icon in the middle), the panel (wrench icon) or the Root Menu.



In addition to desktop icons and dock items, applications can be launched with any of the following tools:

- click the panel's Start (MX logo) button to open a menu called Appfinder
- right-click the desktop to see the Root Menu
- right-click the desktop: *Menu > All Apps* for a Debian-like categorical menu
- click the keyboard's logo key (Windows or Apple icon) for an app-list with handy properties
- click Ctrl+F2 to bring up a small run window for the actual program name, or a command that you can launch in a terminal if wanted with Shift+Enter

The following sections aim to give users a basic understanding of how to use and manage each of the principle components.

#### NOTES:

- 1) the tilde symbol “~” is a shortcut for the user's home folder (e.g., /home/demo).
- 2) the word “Menu” refers to the Root Menu that appears with a right-click on the desktop.

## 2.1 Desktop icons

**Hide:** Menu > Out of sight > Toggle icons

**Remove (icon):** middle-click icon to launch iDesktool

**Stop:** Menu > Out of sight > Toggle iDesk

**Manage:** Menu > Appearance > Desktop icons

**Help:** [in the Wiki](#)



[MX-Fluxbox: the Power tools](#)

Desktop icons are enabled in MXFB by iDesk, an older tool that MX Linux Devs and users adapted, modernized and expanded to produce **iDesktool**: *Menu > Appearance > Desktop icons*.

This tool greatly facilitates the use of desktop icons on MX-Fluxbox. It is very straightforward and should raise few questions about its use.

Here are the basic mouse actions for a desktop icon (config in ~/.ideskrc), using the default “Videos” icon as an example:

Action	Mouse	Example
Execute	Left single click	Opens to the MXFB YouTube channel
Execute alt	Right single click	Opens an action menu
Manage	Middle (scroll button) single click	Opens iDesktool focused on the icon
Drag	Left click hold, release to stop	

## 2.2 Conky

**Hide:** Menu > Out of sight > Toggle conky

**Remove (conky):** Menu > Appearance > Conky

**Stop:** Menu > Out of sight > Toggle conky

**Manage:** Menu > Appearance > Conky

**Help:** in the Wiki: MX Conky, Conky Manager

A conky is a desktop system display with great customization potential. MX-Fluxbox users can make use of the large conky set for MX Linux by clicking Menu > Appearance > Conky to bring up **Conky Manager**. Conky Manager is a handy method of basic management, while the tool **MX Conky** supplies advanced features unique to MX Linux such as color manipulation.

In Conky Manager follow these simple steps to edit, view and display a conky:

- Highlight each conky and, if necessary, hit Preview to see what it looks like. Be sure to close each preview before going to another.
- Click on the Settings icon (gears) to change basic properties such as location.
- Check the box to select any conky you want to use. It will be auto-installed.
- The configuration files are stored in the folder `~/.conky/` in individual theme files. They can be edited, though it is not easy to understand, by highlighting the conky in the list and clicking on the edit icon (pencil).

For more complicated conkies, you may need to make use of a compositor. Click Menu > Settings > Config > Startup, and uncomment the line about a compositor so it looks like this: *compton &*

## 2.3 The tint2 panel

**Hide:** Menu > Out of sight > Toggle autohide panel

**Remove:** Manual: delete the config file from `~/.config/tint2/`

**Stop:** Manual: put a comment (#) in front of line in the “startup” file

**Manage:** Settings manager > Tint2 manager

**Help:** [in the Wiki](#)

The original Fluxbox toolbar is very different from what today’s users expect in function and design. That’s the reason an alternative toolbar was added starting with MX-Fluxbox 2.2 using a highly configurable app known as “**tint2**.” (You can toggle back and forth between the two: Menu > Appearance > Toolbar > Fluxbox/Traditional)

## WARNING

When creating a brand new panel (not starting with one of the MX defaults), there may be an error with some fluxbox versions. Setting the panel to 100% width causes the panel to be mislocated (e.g., floating above the screen bottom); in addition, space is reserved where the tint2 panel is supposed to be located, so it looks like maximized apps don't fill the screen when tint2 is mislocated.

There are two solutions:

- Set the width to 99% and the panel goes back to where it belongs.
- Set the panel to "100%" width and add a 1 pixel horizontal margin

To change the panel, click the wrench icon next to the Start button, the gear icon on the dock or the listing in a menu. This launches the Settings manager, where you can click on “**Tint2 manager.**”

The screen opens showing all the tint2 configurations in the location `~/config/tint2/`. MXFB supplies a set of very different configurations that you can try out.

In addition to selecting an existing configuration you can also change the elements of any panel—in fact, that is one of the great pleasures of using tint2. Click on either the “Config” button for a graphical editor or the “Edit” button to directly edit the configuration file.

The Graphical editor includes two applications:

- “Themes” displays all the tint2 configs in the user’s location as well as a few others brought in during installation.
- “Properties” displays the features of the running config. If the Properties window is not visible, click on the little gear icon in the upper left corner.

Here are a couple of common actions in the “Properties” window to get you started, using the Graphical editor:

- Adding/Removing launchers. Click the “Launcher” entry on the left side. The right panel has two columns: on the left a list of application icons currently displayed on the toolbar, while on the right a list of all desktop applications installed. Use the arrows to move items up/down.
  - **Add:** select the application you want from the list in the right column, click the “left arrow” icon on the middle and then click the “Apply” button, to instantly add it to the toolbar.
  - **Remove:** reverse the procedure.
- Moving or resizing the panel. Click the “Panel” entry in the left panel and then choose its placement and size in the right panel. Click the “Apply” button. That is also where you can scroll down and check the “Autohide” box if desired.
- Changing to time/date format. Click the “Clock” entry in the left panel and then change the field “First line format” or “Second line format” to whatever you like. To get 24hr time, for instance, you would change “%I” to “%H”. Codes [in the Wiki](#).

**NOTE:** Back up your current configuration before changing it: click on `~/config/tint2/tint2rc` and then save it under a new name such as “`tint2rc_BAK.`” You can then copy all your customized lines from your backup file to the correct place on your new `tint2rc` configuration.

## 2.4 Docks

**Hide:** *Menu > Out of sight > Toggle autohide dock*

**Remove/Add (a Dock item):** *Menu > Appearance > Dockmaker*

**Stop (Default dock):** *Menu > Out of sight > Disable Default dock*

**Manage:** *Menu > Appearance > Dockmaker*

**Help:** [in the Wiki](#)



MX-Fluxbox: the Power tools

MXFB has a native app called Dockmaker which makes it easy for the user to create, modify and manage docks. A small dock appears on the left side of the desktop when the user logs in for the first time whose configuration is set in `~/fluxbox/scripts/DefaultDock.mxdk`.

This default Dock contains the following items (from left to right):

- MX Tools
- Help (this Manual)
- Settings Manager

**NOTE:** you can also use `tint2` as a dock, and a few examples can be found using **Tint2 manager**.

## 2.5 The Root Menu

The Root Menu is hidden by default and offers a quick and easy way to access many functions and settings.

**Show:** *right click on desktop*

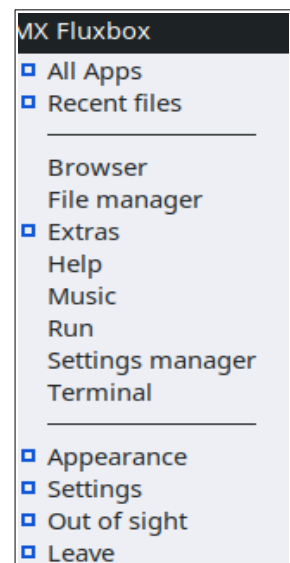
**Remove/Add (a menu item):** *Menu > Settings > Configure > Menus*

**Stop:** *put a comment (#) in front of the line in the init file that starts with:  
session.menuFile:*

**Manage:** *Menu > Settings > Configure > Menus*

**Help:** *Section 3.5 and Links*

This short and static menu (`~/fluxbox/menu-mx`) is designed to contain frequently used entries—with a few exceptions. It incorporates three submenus (Appearance, Settings, Out of sight) that are located in `~/fluxbox/submenus`.



The root menu is divided into three sections:

- Top
  - All Apps: a Debian-like categorical menu. It is updated automatically when using Package Installer; otherwise click “Update.” Click on “Disable” to stop automatic updating.
  - Recent files: displays the most recent files used (click Refresh if necessary)
- Middle Section: links to directly open some frequently used apps, along with a new entry called “Extras” that contains a few interesting items.
- Bottom
  - Appearance
    - conky
    - docks
    - desktop icons
    - font
    - monitors: small system monitors (*gkrellmI*)
    - theme (now part of **MX Tweak**): windows treatment, icons, cursor
    - toolbars
    - wallpaper: rotate, separate by workspace, select
  - Settings
    - backup
    - configure: the Fluxbox files such as menus, startup, etc.
    - display: change display parameters, help on how to save
    - keyboard: quick change to one of 11 languages, easy to modify (Root Menu > Settings > Configure > Settings)
  - Out of sight: a collection of handy commands to hide elements
  - Leave:
    - refresh: used to restart fluxbox after changing a configuration file
    - suspend
    - logout
    - reboot
    - shutdown

The new user would do well to work through that menu in order to appreciate its contents, power, speed and flexibility. Particularly attractive is the fact that these menus are easy to read and completely under the user’s control.



## 3. Fluxbox details

### 3.1 Styles

Traditionally, the word “style” in Fluxbox refers to a simple text files that tell it how to decorate the window, toolbar and menu. MXFB ships with a large number of such styles, located in `/usr/share/fluxbox/styles/`, that can be selected with Menu > Appearance > Theme. Many more styles can be found online with a web search on “fluxbox styles.”

In the wider sense, style can be thought of the combination of themes, decorations, icons and cursor. There are many tools available to set up a style that you like.

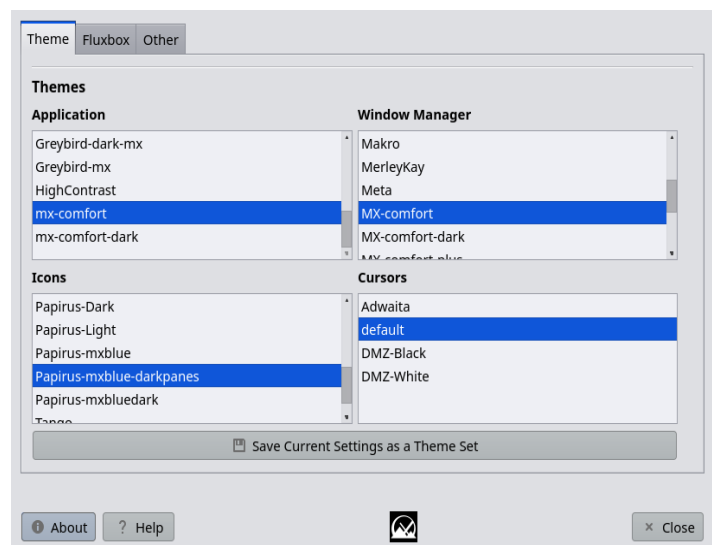
- **MX Tweak** > Styles tab makes it easy to test and select these elements as well as to combine them into your own particular theme. It links to **MXFB Look** to provide the option of designating your selections as specific collection of graphic features (a “look”) that you can save.
- **MX Comfort** tool enables you to edit the colors of the default MX-comfort fluxbox style and save the changes as a new style. If you want to manually edit an existing fluxbox style, copy the style to `~/fluxbox/styles/`, rename it, and make your changes (consult Ubuntu style guide under Links, below).
- **Exit Options Manager** enables you to determine the icons and layout you wish.
- **Rofi Manager** offers a set of vetted rofi configurations along with the tools and help to modify them.

Traditional styles can include a wallpaper, but that is blocked in MX-Fluxbox by default with the top lines in Menu > Settings > Configure > Overlay. To allow the style to determine the background, place a hash mark in front to the line so that it looks like this:

*! The following line will prevent styles from setting the background.*  
`#background: none`

### 3.2 Themes

The default theme for MX-Fluxbox is called MX-Comfort. It can be changed with the Root Menu > Appearance > Theme, or Settings Manager > Theme, which makes it very easy to choose other possibilities and then save them as a Theme Set or “look.”



### 3.3 Wallpaper

First make sure the overlay file is blocking the style from determining the background. Then click Menu > Appearance > Wallpapers > Select or Settings Manager > Backgrounds launches **Nitrogen** which displays the available choices. The selection includes by default any user backgrounds (`~/.fluxbox/backgrounds`) as well as system backgrounds (`/usr/share/backgrounds`). This setup allows you to add backgrounds in the user folder and then be able to select them from the menu. You can add other sources in **Nitrogen** by clicking “Preferences.”

There is a traditional method using **fehbg** which can be enabled in Root Menu > Settings > Configure > Startup—search for “fehbg” to switch from using Nitrogen.

### 3.4 Key Shortcuts

Fluxbox allows the user to set key combinations as shortcuts. The settings are stored in the file `~/.fluxbox/keys`, which can be accessed for editing via Menu > Settings > Configure > Keys. A handy overview is available by selecting the conky “MX-FluxKeys” in Conky Manager.

The names used for of a couple of the keys are a bit obscure:

- Mod1 = Alt
- Mod4 = Logo key (Windows, Apple)

There are dedicated function key combinations in MX-Fluxbox (see top of *keys* file to change):

- Ctrl+F1: MX-Fluxbox documentation
- Ctrl+F2: Run command; if you enter a command that needs terminal input, use Ctrl+Enter.
- Ctrl+F3: File manager
- Ctrl+F4: Drop-down terminal
- Ctrl+F5: MX Tools

Function keys are programmed with the modifier “Ctrl” to avoid conflict with usage by apps.

### 3.5 Menus

#### Main menu (MX icon on panel)

The main menu is called Appfinder which uses a special rofi theme (see below). The contents are taken automatically from `/usr/share/applications`. You can change formatting by clicking the question mark on the left side of the menu to open up the **Settings** app.

#### Root Menu

You can change, add and rearrange the elements in the root menu. Subsections of the root menu can be dragged away as separate active menus. (Left click and hold the titlebar)

Open the menu file you wish to edit with Menu > Settings > Configure > Menus.

(The main menu and submenus Appearance, Settings and Out of sight are all separate files)

The syntax is: [category] (name) {command} – be sure to use brackets, parentheses and braces correctly.

Example 1: change “Music” to open Clementine instead of DeaDBeeF

- Find the line with the word Music (use Ctrl+F if necessary)

```
[exec] (Music) {deadbeef}
```

- Double-click the word “deadbeef” in the command part so it is highlighted, then type “clementine” and save, producing this result:

```
[exec] (Music) {clementine}
```

- Click Menu > Leave > Refresh to use the new settings

Example 2: add Skype to the menu

- Decide where you want it to show up; for this example, let’s assume you want to add a new category “Communicate” in the Common apps section and enter it there
- Create the category using the submenu commands (see below), introduce a new line and follow the pattern: [exec] (menu entry) {command}
- The result will look something like this:

```
[submenu] (Communicate)
```

```
    [exec] (Skype) {skypeforlinux}
```

```
[end]
```

- Menu > Leave > Refresh

NOTE: as the second example shows, the command to use may not always be obvious.

## All Apps

This top entry in the Root Menu uses the category label listed in the app’s desktop file (in /usr/share/applications) to set up its structure. The items it contains are refreshed by default every time the update program is run. You can change that behavior by checking the box in MX Tweak > Fluxbox > Update existing menu entries, after which you can use the bottom menu entry “Update.”

To stop this menu from updating automatically: open MX Tweak > Other tab and uncheck the entry “Automatic update of Fluxbox Applications menu after package installation, removal and updates.”

## Rofi

This app launcher is accessed by pressing on the logo/”Windows” key on your keyboard. It is structured alphabetically but includes frequently used apps at the top. [More here](#).

## 3.6 Config files

All basic settings are controlled by [text files](#) with straight-forward format. Before you begin editing any configuration files, you should back up your current configuration. In the file manager Thunar click on the config file to open it, then use File > Save as to rename it (e.g., “filename\_BAK”). Should things go wrong you can always restore the previous setup.

When editing these configuration files, you can prevent individual settings from being applied by simply commenting out the relevant line (adding a hashtag # at the beginning of the line)

For example: Setting A: This line will be read by Fluxbox  
              # Setting B: but this one won't be

## 3.7 Overlay File

Fluxbox allows the user to globally override settings, eg. System fonts, xxx,xxx via the overlay file. These override settings are stored in the file ~/.fluxbox/overlay, which can be accessed for editing via Menu > Settings > Configure > Overlay.

Element settings defined in the overlay file will override settings defined elsewhere in the fluxbox setup. For example, font settings in the overlay file will override the font settings defined in the current fluxbox style.

You can adjust the font being used by a theme or style using the theme selector; default for MX-Fluxbox is Sans 11. More detailed control is available by using Root Menu > Appearance > Font or typing “font” in Appfinder.

## 3.8 Window Settings and Controls

Moving and adjusting windows can be controlled with various key and mouse combinations

- Resize: Alt + right click near the corner you want to change and drag.
- Move: Alt + left click and drag.
- Stick: use the little icon in the top left corner to show the window on all desktops.
- Options: right-click the window's toolbar at the top. Of special value is the ability to select to remember size and location (recorded in ~/.fluxbox/apps).
- Tabbing: combine multiple windows into one window with tabs across the top by simply Ctrl-Clicking and holding the titlebar of one window and dragging and dropping it on another window. Reverse the procedure to separate them again.
- Reduce window to titlebar (“shade”): Double click the titlebar.

A variety of detailed original Fluxbox settings for how windows look and behave can be accessed with Menu > Settings > Configure > Window.

## 3.9 Terminals

- Ctrl+F4 = Drop-down Xfce4-terminal

- Menu > Terminal: preferred terminal

### 3.10 Screen Options

- Brightness: Settings Manager > Tools > Brightness systray
- Capture: mxfb-quickshot. Triggered by default with the button “Print Screen” (AKA Print, PrtSc, etc.) or Alt+q key.
- Tiling: Alt+<number 1-9>, details are listed at the bottom of the **keys** file.
- Resolution: Menu > Settings > Display (arandr). Be sure to read the “Help” file to see how to save any changes you wish to make.

## 4. Traditional Fluxbox

This section addresses the user who wants to run a traditional Fluxbox setup.

### How do I start?

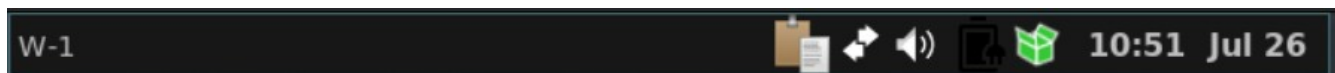
It is very easy to restore a traditional Fluxbox setup. Right-click anywhere on the desktop to see and use the desktop menu (Root Menu). The following changes are at your fingertips:

- Settings > Toolbar > Fluxbox: the traditional (tint2) panel will disappear and the Fluxbox toolbar will appear at the top of the screen.
- Out-of-sight > Kill dock\*
- Out-of-sight > Kill conky\*
- Out-of-sight > Toggle iDesk and Toggle icons\*

\*For persistent changes, comment out (#) the relevant lines in the file **which opens with Root Menu** Settings > Configure > Startup so they look like this:

```
#$HOME/.fluxbox/scripts/DefaultDock.mxdk
#$HOME/.fluxbox/scripts/conkystart
#idesktoggle idesk on 1>/dev/null 2>&1 &
```

Let's go through how to understand and use the changed desktop:



### What is the toolbar across the top?

This fluxbox toolbar offers MX users information about workspaces, open applications, a system tray, and the current time. Its width and placement can be set with the options available by middle-clicking (=scroll wheel) the clock or pager on the toolbar—if that doesn't work for some reason, click Menu > Settings > Window, slit and toolbar > Toolbar. Height is set in `~/.fluxbox/init/`:

```
session.screen0.toolbar.height: 0
```

If a zero is there, it means that the selected style will set the height. Otherwise, a value of 20 to 25 is often comfortable.

The toolbar contains the following default components (L-R):

pager

- Allows you to switch workspace up (right click) or down (left click); same as Control + F1/F2/ etc., Ctrl-Alt + ←/→ or using the scroll wheel over an empty section of the desktop. Number and name are set in the `~/.fluxbox/init`. “W” stands for “Workspace.” Not used by default.

iconbar

- Here open apps will show an icon, with various window options available by right-clicking the relevant icon (including the toolbar itself) > iconbar mode. Default for MX-Fluxbox is to show All Windows.

systemtray AKA systray

- Equivalent of Notification Area in Xfce. Default components set in `~/.fluxbox/init`; apps that have a `systemtray` option will show there when launched.

clock

- To adjust the clock to 12h or 24h, right-click and click 12h or 24h, whichever shows. If that doesn't work, select "Edit clock format."
- 24h: `%H:%M`, 12h: `%I:%M`.
- The default is 12h time and date in day/short month format: `%I:%M %b %d`. Many other time/date options can be found [in the Wiki](#).

You can move or delete any of the toolbar components in `~/.fluxbox/init/`, which by default are set up in this way:

`workspacename, iconbar, systemtray, clock`

## I have read about the slit: what is that?

The slit was originally conceived as a container for [dockapps](#), but in MXFB it is primarily used for the dock. It can be located at various locations on the desktop:

- TopLeft, TopCenter, TopRight
- LeftCenter, RightCenter
- BottomLeft, BottomCenter, BottomRight

You can search the default repo for dockapps with this terminal command:

`apt-cache search dockapp`

Many available in the repos may not work well, but it's worth taking a look.

One very interesting and useful dockapp not found with that apt-cache search is the monitor stack [gkrellm](#), installed by default in MX-Fluxbox. It is available by clicking Menu > System > Monitors and has many configuration options (right-click on the top label or on one of the charts), [many skins](#) and [many plugins](#). A few skins are installed by default, and can be reviewed and selected by clicking Shift-PageUp.

## 5. FAQ-Finder

How do I...	From Desktop	With App
Open the Root Menu	Right click on Desktop	
Open programme X	Root Menu > All apps	
	Click MX Logo (Appfinder)	
	Press Windows/ Apple key (rofi)	
Install new apps	Software icon	MX Package Installer
Toggle desktops icons on/off	Root Menu > Out of sight > Toggle iDesk	
Change to a different Conky	Conky Manager	
	Root Menu > Appearance > Conky	
Toggle Conky on/off	Root Menu > Out of sight > Toggle Conky	
Select a different Panel		Settings manager > tint2manager
Edit a Panel		tint2settings
Edit the items in a Dock	Root Menu > Appearance > Dockmaker	
	For a rofi dock > Rofi Manager	
Change appearance of window Title bar and FB-Menu	Root Menu > Appearance > Style	
Change appearance of	Root Menu > Appearance	Settings manager > Customize look and feel



window contents, icons, font	> Theme	
	MX-Tweak	
Change the wallpaper	Root Menu > Appearance > Wallpapers	Nitrogen
Edit key shortcuts	Root Menu > Settings > Configure > Keys	
Edit root Menu	Root Menu > Settings > Configure > Menu	
Remove desktop items	Root Menu > Out of sight >	
Open a Terminal	Root Menu > Terminal	Xfce4-terminal or other preferred terminal

## 6. Links

The man files (in terminal or <https://linux.die.net/man/>):

- fluxbox
- fluxbox-keys
- fbrun
- fluxstyle
- fluxbox-remote

<http://fluxbox.sourceforge.net/docbook/en/pdf/fluxbook.pdf>

Basic handbook, somewhat dated but still useful

<https://bbs.archlinux.org/viewtopic.php?id=77729>

Some good general explanations with examples

<https://wiki.archlinux.org/index.php/Fluxbox>

Some commands are Arch-specific

<https://wiki.ubuntu.com/HowToFluxboxStyles>

<https://ubuntuforums.org/showthread.php?t=617812>

Excellent thread on fluxbox keys

<https://wiki.debian.org/FluxBox>

<https://wiki.debian.org/FluxboxIcon>

<http://fluxbox.sourceforge.net/docbook/en/html/chap-tabs.html>

Window tabbing.

<https://github.com/jerry3904/mx-fluxbox>

The GitHub repo of MX-Fluxbox

<https://mxlinux.org/wiki/help-files/help-mx-fluxbox/>

The MX-Fluxbox Wiki entry

<https://bit.ly/2Sm1PJl>

YouTube: MX-Fluxbox