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Generating a new SSH key and adding it to the ssh-agent

After you've checked for existing SSH keys, you can generate a new SSH key to use for authentication, then add it to the ssh-agent.

Mac Windows Linux

In this article

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- [Adding your SSH key to the ssh-agent](#)
- [Further reading](#)

If you don't already have an SSH key, you must [generate a new SSH key](#). If you're unsure whether you already have an SSH key, check for [existing keys](#).

If you don't want to reenter your passphrase every time you use your SSH key, you can [add your key to the SSH agent](#), which manages your SSH keys and remembers your passphrase.

Generating a new SSH key

- 1 Open Git Bash.
- 2 Paste the text below, substituting in your GitHub email address.

```
$ ssh-keygen -t rsa -b 4096 -C "your_email@example.com"
```

This creates a new ssh key, using the provided email as a label.

```
> Generating public/private rsa key pair.
```

- 3 When you're prompted to "Enter a file in which to save the key," press Enter. This accepts the default file location.

```
> Enter a file in which to save the key (/c/Users/you/.ssh/id_rsa):[Press enter]
```

- 4 At the prompt, type a secure passphrase. For more information, see ["Working with SSH key passphrases"](#).

```
> Enter passphrase (empty for no passphrase): [Type a passphrase]
> Enter same passphrase again: [Type passphrase again]
```

Adding your SSH key to the ssh-agent

Before adding a new SSH key to the ssh-agent to manage your keys, you should have [checked for existing SSH keys](#) and [generated a new SSH key](#).

If you have [GitHub Desktop](#) installed, you can use it to clone repositories and not deal with SSH keys. It also comes with the Git Bash tool, which is the preferred way of running `git` commands on Windows.

- 1 Ensure the ssh-agent is running:
 - If you are using the Git Shell that's installed with GitHub Desktop, the ssh-agent should be running.
 - If you are using another terminal prompt, such as Git for Windows, you can use the "Auto-launching the ssh-agent" instructions in ["Working with SSH key passphrases"](#), or start it manually:

```
# start the ssh-agent in the background
$ eval $(ssh-agent -s)
> Agent pid 59566
```

- 2 Add your SSH private key to the ssh-agent. If you created your key with a different name, or if you are adding an existing key that has a different name, replace `id_rsa` in the command with

the name of your private key file.

```
$ ssh-add ~/.ssh/id_rsa
```

3 Add the SSH key to your GitHub account.

Further reading

- ["About SSH"](#)
- ["Working with SSH key passphrases"](#)
- ["Authorizing an SSH key for use with SAML single sign-on"](#)

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