

## Auto-launching `ssh-agent` on Git for Windows

If you're using Git Shell that's installed with GitHub Desktop, you *don't* need to follow these steps. GitHub Desktop automatically launches `ssh-agent` for you.

Otherwise, follow these steps to run `ssh-agent` automatically when you open bash or Git shell. Copy the following lines and paste them into your `~/.profile` or `~/.bashrc` file in Git shell:

```
env=~/.ssh/agent.env

agent_load_env () { test -f "$env" && . "$env" >| /dev/null ; }

agent_start () {
  (umask 077; ssh-agent >| "$env")
  . "$env" >| /dev/null ; }

agent_load_env

# agent_run_state: 0=agent running w/ key; 1=agent w/o key; 2= agent not running
agent_run_state=$(ssh-add -l >| /dev/null 2>&1; echo $?)

if [ ! "$SSH_AUTH_SOCK" ] || [ $agent_run_state = 2 ]; then
  agent_start
  ssh-add
elif [ "$SSH_AUTH_SOCK" ] && [ $agent_run_state = 1 ]; then
  ssh-add
fi

unset env
```

If your private key is not stored in one of the default locations (like `~/.ssh/id_rsa`), you'll need to tell your SSH authentication agent where to find it. To add your key to `ssh-agent`, type `ssh-add ~/path/to/my_key`. For more information, see "[Generating a new SSH key and adding it to the `ssh-agent`](#)"

**Tip:** If you want `ssh-agent` to forget your key after some time, you can configure it to do so by running `ssh-add -t <seconds>`.

Now, when you first run Git Bash, you are prompted for your passphrase:

```
> Initializing new SSH agent...
> succeeded
> Enter passphrase for /c/Users/you/.ssh/id_rsa:
> Identity added: /c/Users/you/.ssh/id_rsa (/c/Users/you/.ssh/id_rsa)
> Welcome to Git (version 1.6.0.2-preview20080923)
>
```

```
> Run 'git help git' to display the help index.  
> Run 'git help ' to display help for specific commands.
```

The `ssh-agent` process will continue to run until you log out, shut down your computer, or kill the process.