

AI Usage Meter

What it does, why it helps, and how to use it

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How to use this manual

Chapters 1 to 7 are for everyone who uses Claude Code. The appendix is for developers: how it works inside, and how to build it from the source code.

NOTE — Unofficial project

AI Usage Meter is an unofficial community project. It is not affiliated with, endorsed by or sponsored by Anthropic. "Claude" is a trademark of Anthropic.

1. See your limits at a glance

AI Usage Meter is a thin strip at the top of your Windows screen. It shows how much of your Claude usage you have used, while you work.



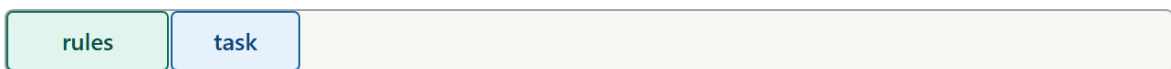
Figure 1. 34 % of the 5-hour limit and 21 % of the weekly limit are used. The times show when each limit resets.

- 5h: how much of your 5-hour limit you have used, and when it resets.
- Week: the same for your weekly limit.
- Context: how full the conversation of your Claude Code session is (chapter 4).

2. Why use it

context window = the working memory of one session

1. Session start



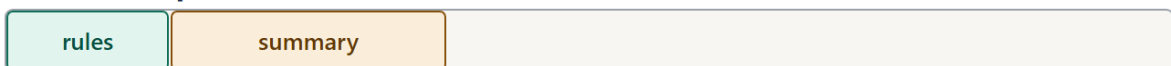
Lots of room. Claude sees every rule and every detail.

2. After a long day



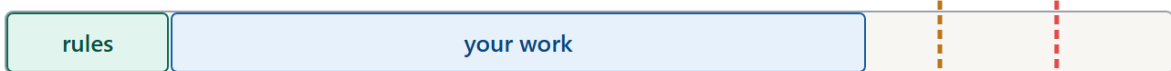
Almost full. Early rules get less attention; answers get vaguer.

3. After compaction



Room again, but the details are gone: paths, figures, decisions. Claude doesn't notice.

4. With the Session view



Warned in time: notes first, then a fresh session.

80 %: write notes

90 %: new session

Figure 2. After compaction Claude keeps a summary, not the details. The Session view warns you before that happens.

Without the meter	With the meter
You hit a usage limit in the middle of a task, without warning.	The bar turns orange, then red, and a Windows notification warns you in time.
The session gets full. Claude Code compacts it: older parts become a short summary. Claude may then forget paths, rules and decisions.	The Session view warns you at 80 % and 90 % of the compaction point, so you can write your notes and start a new session first.
You don't know when a limit resets.	The strip shows the time to each reset, and tells you when a limit has reset.
You work at a fast pace and run out early.	The strip warns "100 % in 1h 20m" when your pace would reach the limit before the reset.

It only reads the usage figures that Claude Code itself reports. It never reads your Claude login and never sends your data anywhere.

3. Install it in three steps

1. Unzip `AIUsageMeter-1.6.zip` anywhere, for example in Downloads.
2. Double-click `AIUsageMeter.exe`. It lists what it will change and asks to install. Click Yes.
3. Restart the Claude desktop app, open the Code tab and send any message. After Claude's first reply, the strip fills in.

NOTE — What you need

Windows 10 or 11, a Claude plan with usage limits (Pro or Max) and an up-to-date Claude desktop app.

TRAP — Windows protected your PC

The program is not code-signed, so Windows SmartScreen may show this warning. Click More info, then Run anyway. Your antivirus may also ask; allow it if you trust the download.

TIP — Check your download

Compare the file's checksum with `SHA256SUMS.txt` in the zip. In a Command Prompt, type `certutil -hashfile AIUsageMeter.exe SHA256`. The two values must be the same.

Installing changes	Where
The program and its Claude Code add-on	%LOCALAPPDATA%\AIUsageMeter
One entry, so Claude Code loads the add-on (a backup is saved first)	%USERPROFILE%\\.claude\settings.json
A shortcut	Start menu: AI Usage Meter
An entry, so you can uninstall it	Windows Settings > Apps > Installed apps

Claude Code in the terminal works too: check its version with `claude --version` and update it with `claude update`.

4. Read the colours and warnings

Your 5-hour and weekly limits

If the bar is	Then
Green (below 80 %)	Keep working.
Orange (from 80 %)	A notification warns you. Plan the rest of your work.
Red (from 95 %)	A second notification. Save your work; the limit is close.
? with an empty bar	The limit has reset. The new figure comes with Claude's next reply.
Dimmed, "updated 3h ago"	The figures are old. Send Claude Code a message to update them.

NOTE — When the figures update

The strip updates when a Claude Code session starts or replies. Chat use counts toward the same limits but doesn't update the strip.

Your session's context window

The context window is everything Claude keeps in mind during one session. When it is full, Claude Code compacts it. The Session view measures how close you are to that point.

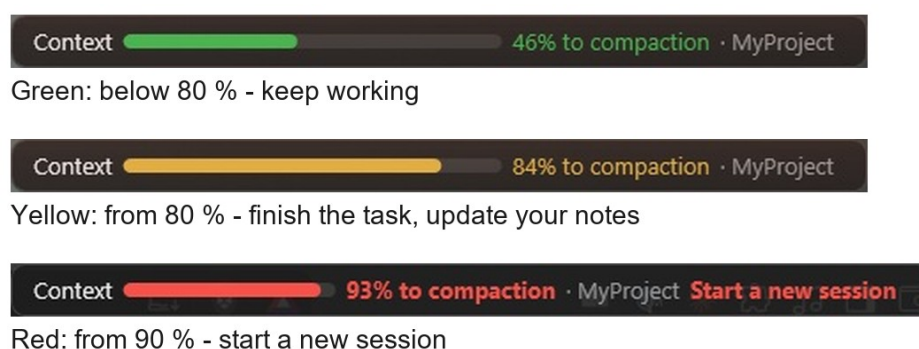


Figure 3. The colour tells you what to do next.

TRAP — Red means: start a new session now

At red the strip stays on the Session view and blinks. Write down what matters (for example in your session notes), then start a new session before compaction runs.

TIP — Still need your usage figures?

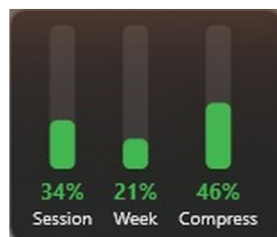
Right-click the strip and choose Show usage (10 min). The 5-hour and weekly bars come back for 10 minutes.

5. Choose your layout

Horizontal



Vertical



Square, one at a time



Figure 4. The same figures in three layouts.

Layout	Best for
Horizontal	A wide screen: everything in one line. It switches between the usage figures and the Session view.
Vertical	A narrow corner: Session (5-hour limit), Week and Compress (context window) side by side, all at once.
Square	The smallest: 72 x 72 pixels. It shows Session, Week and Compress one at a time.

Hover over a figure for the details: reset time, pace and the list of sessions.

6. Change the settings

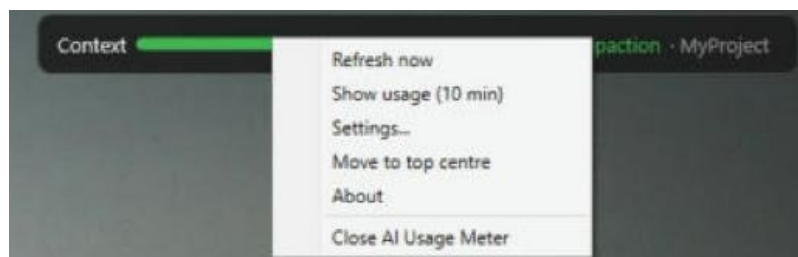


Figure 5. Right-click the strip, or the tray icon near the clock, for the menu.

To	Do this
Move the strip	Drag it.
Keep it in that place	Settings > Save current position > Save.
Change the layout	Settings > Layout.
Change how fast the views switch	Settings > Switch views every ... seconds (0 = don't switch).
Change the warning levels or colours	Settings: first and second warning, Session view yellow and red.
Start it with Windows	Settings > Start automatically when I log in to Windows.
Bring it back after closing	Start menu > AI Usage Meter.

Once a day the program checks hanstandt.be for a new version. If there is one, the strip shows "update" and Settings > Download update opens the download page. Nothing is installed by itself. You can switch the check off in Settings.

7. Remove it

1. Open Windows Settings > Apps > Installed apps, find AI Usage Meter and click Uninstall. Or right-click the strip and choose Settings > Uninstall.
2. Click Yes. The shortcuts, the add-on entry and the program's settings are removed.
3. Delete the AIUsageMeter folder that opens.
4. Restart the Claude desktop app.

Appendix: technical details

How it works

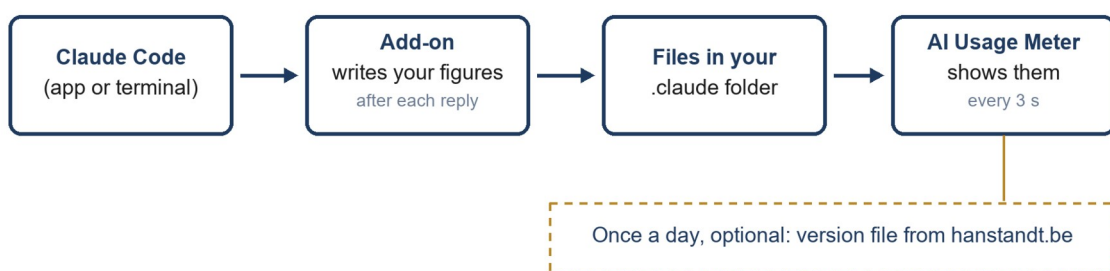


Figure 6. The add-on writes the figures; the program only reads them.

- The add-on is a Claude Code plugin (`hooks/register.tsx`). After each reply it writes the 5-hour and weekly figures, and per session the context fill, measured against the auto-compaction threshold.
- The program (`overlay/src/AIUsageMeter.cs`, WPF, .NET Framework 4) reads those files every 3 seconds and draws the strip.
- Every write in the add-on is wrapped, so it can never break a Claude session.

What it reads and stores

File	Contents
<code>.claude\usage-meter.json</code>	5-hour and weekly percentages, reset times, time of the last update
<code>.claude\usage-meter-context\<session>.json</code>	Per session: folder name, fill, last activity, compaction time
<code>.claude\usage-meter-settings.json</code>	Your settings

Session files older than 7 days are deleted. The only network use is the optional daily version check: it reads one small file from hanstandt.be and sends no data of yours.

Build it from the source code

1. Open the `source` folder from the zip.
2. Run `overlay\build.cmd` to compile `AIUsageMeter.exe` with the C# compiler built into Windows.
3. Run `package\make-package.cmd` to build the zip with its checksum file.

To preview the strip without spending usage, type `/usage-demo 85`, `/usage-demo context 93` or `/usage-demo off` in Claude Code.

Limits

- It sees Claude Code sessions on this PC only (app and terminal), not cloud or WSL sessions or other computers.
- It needs a recent Claude Code; an old terminal version doesn't load the add-on.

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