

To install and use **Claude Code** for free on your Windows PC,

you can leverage the **Anthropic Console's initial \$5 free credit**. This allows you to test the terminal-based agent before needing a paid subscription or additional credits.

1. Installation Command

You must have **Node.js** and **Git** installed on your system first. Once those are ready, open **cmd** as an Administrator and run:

```
npm install -g @anthropic-ai/claude-code
```

To link **Claude Code** with **Ollama** on Windows, you must redirect the CLI's API calls from Anthropic's servers to your local machine using environment variables.

1. Download a Coding Model

First, ensure you have a model pulled in Ollama that is capable of coding. In your **cmd terminal**, run:-

```
ollama pull qwen3-coder:latest
```

*Note: Using a model with at least a **64k token context window** is recommended for complex coding tasks.*

2. Set Environment Variables

You need to tell Claude Code to use your local Ollama server (<http://localhost:11434>) and provide a "dummy" token to satisfy its authentication check. Run these commands in PowerShell:

Set the Variables (CMD Syntax)

Copy and paste these two lines into your CMD window:

```
set ANTHROPIC_BASE_URL=http://localhost:11434  
set ANTHROPIC_AUTH_TOKEN=ollama
```

*To make these changes permanent, you can add them to your Windows **Environment Variables** (System Properties > Advanced > Environment Variables).*

3. Launch Claude Code with the Model

Once the variables are set, navigate to your project folder and launch Claude Code by specifying your downloaded model:

Launch Claude Code in cmd:-

Immediately after setting those, run the launch command in the same window:

```
claude --model qwen3-coder:latest
```

ALL IN ONE COMMAND:-

```
set ANTHROPIC_BASE_URL=http://localhost:11434 && set ANTHROPIC_AUTH_TOKEN=ollama && claude --model qwen3-coder:latest
```

Force All Model Tiers (One by One)

Open a **new** CMD window. Copy and paste these commands **individually**, pressing **Enter** after each one to ensure they are set correctly:

1. `set ANTHROPIC_BASE_URL=http://localhost:11434`
2. `set ANTHROPIC_AUTH_TOKEN=ollama`
3. `set ANTHROPIC_API_KEY=""`
4. `set ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_HAIKU_MODEL=qwen3-coder:latest`
5. `set ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_SONNET_MODEL=qwen3-coder:latest`
6. `set ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_OPUS_MODEL=qwen3-coder:latest`
7. `set DISABLE_TELEMETRY=1`

3. Verify the URL is Clean

Run `echo %ANTHROPIC_BASE_URL%`. It should return **only** `http://localhost:11434`.

And to launch use

Use the full path for now

If you're in a hurry, you can run it directly by pointing to the file:

cmd

```
"%USERPROFILE%\local\bin\claude.exe" --model qwen2.5-coder:7b
```

If you get `/init` error then fix the `/init` issue:

1. Pull the Model

Run this in a new CMD to download the latest Qwen3 coding model:

cmd

```
ollama pull qwen3-coder:latest
```

2. Update your Environment Variables

Since you are using a new model name, you must update the "tiers" to point to it. Run these **one by one**:

cmd

```
set ANTHROPIC_BASE_URL=http://localhost:11434
set ANTHROPIC_AUTH_TOKEN=ollama
set ANTHROPIC_API_KEY=""
set ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_HAIKU_MODEL=qwen3-coder:latest
set ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_SONNET_MODEL=qwen3-coder:latest
set ANTHROPIC_DEFAULT_OPUS_MODEL=qwen3-coder:latest
set CLAUDE_CODE_ATTRIBUTION_HEADER=0
Use code with caution.
```

(Setting `CLAUDE_CODE_ATTRIBUTION_HEADER` to 0 prevents the tool from invalidating the model's cache, which makes it much faster.)

3. Launch with the New Model

Use the model flag to ensure Claude Code starts with the correct local instance:

cmd

```
claude --model qwen3-coder:latest
```

If you're in a hurry, you can run it directly by pointing to the file:

cmd

```
"%USERPROFILE%\local\bin\claude.exe" --model qwen3-coder:latest
```

4. Run /init

Inside Claude Code, run the command again:

```
cmd
```

```
/init
```