

7 ThinkorSwim Optimizations For A Day Trader PRO TIPS

By winkler · August 13, 2022

TL;DR

This blog post outlines seven pro tips for optimizing ThinkorSwim (TOS) for day traders, focusing on settings that enhance performance and efficiency. Key optimizations include adjusting memory usage, font size, order submission rates, and quote speeds, among others. These tips aim to improve trading experience and effectiveness for users of the platform.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. ThinkorSwim Memory Usage
 2. ThinkorSwim Font Size = Small
 3. Active Trader: Order Submission Rate
 4. Analyze Data Recalculations for options (For Options)
 5. Quote Speed: Real-time
 6. TOS Hotkeys
 7. Scanner Gadget Left Side Bar
- ThinkorSwim Performance Optimizations Final Thoughts

Here's the super quick [7 Pro Tips for \(TOS\) ThinkorSwim For Day Traders](#) video in under 60 seconds.

But for those who are looking for more detail, this post should give you what you're looking for. Including the reasons behind my personal settings. It's best to read in order to know where the settings are but with a bit of tinkering you could easily figure it out on your own.

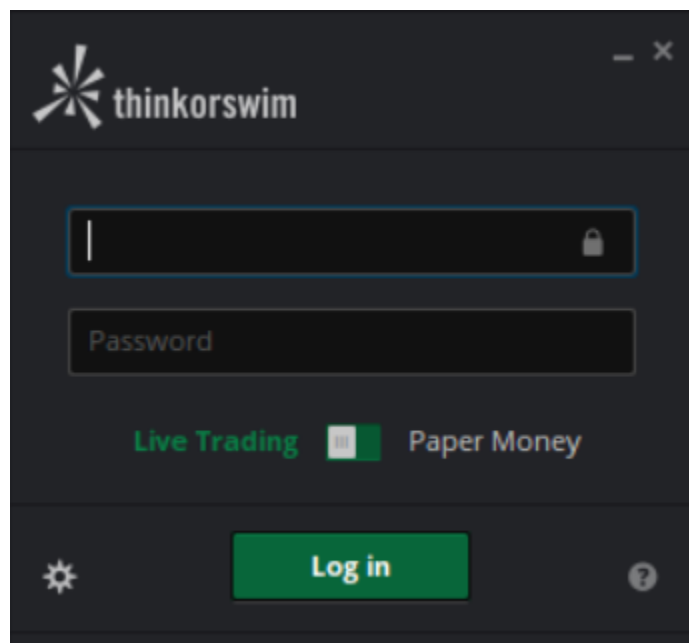
These are the exact settings I use for my [Small Cap Momentum Day Trading Strategy](#). This is the strategy on which I make my [youtube recap videos](#) on and many traders in our [day trading stocks discord channel](#) discuss every single weekday. I hope you enjoy and find value in these pro tips!

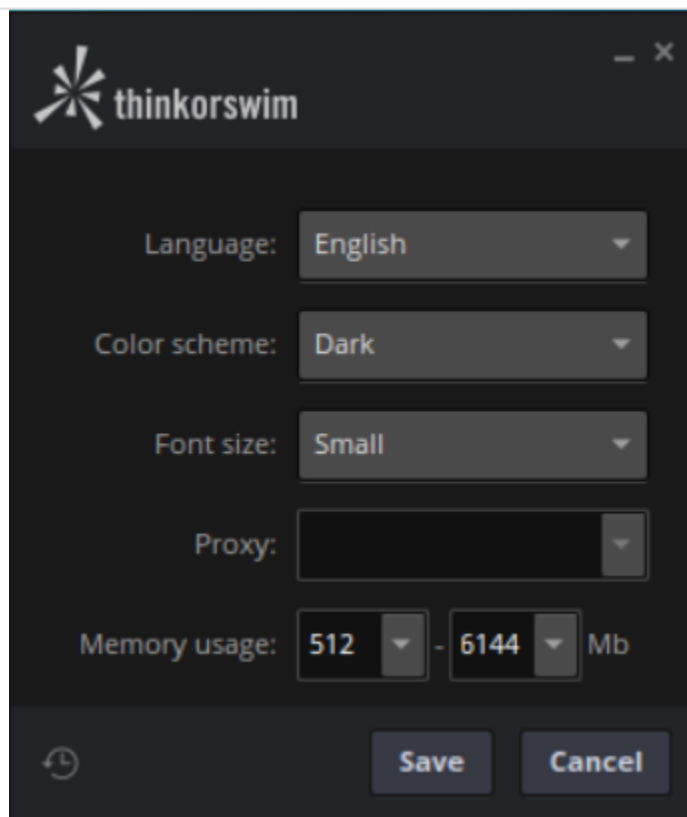
1. ThinkorSwim Memory Usage

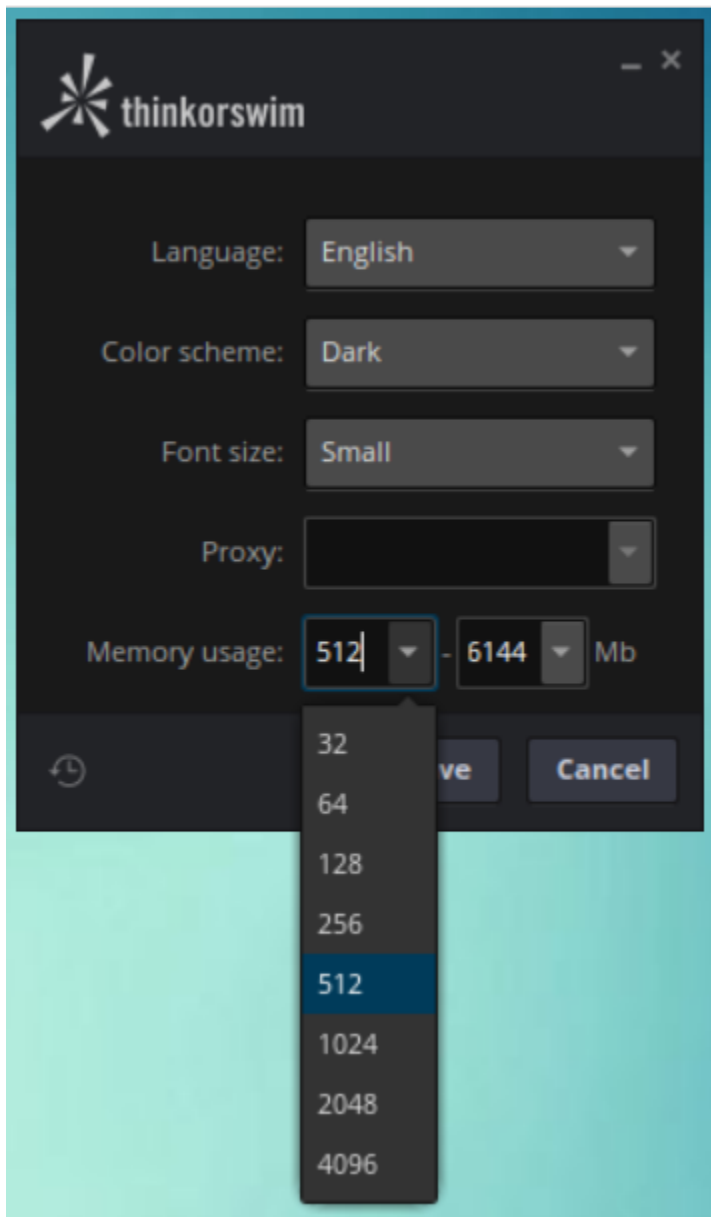
When you're on the login page don't log in yet, this is where you can adjust memory usage.

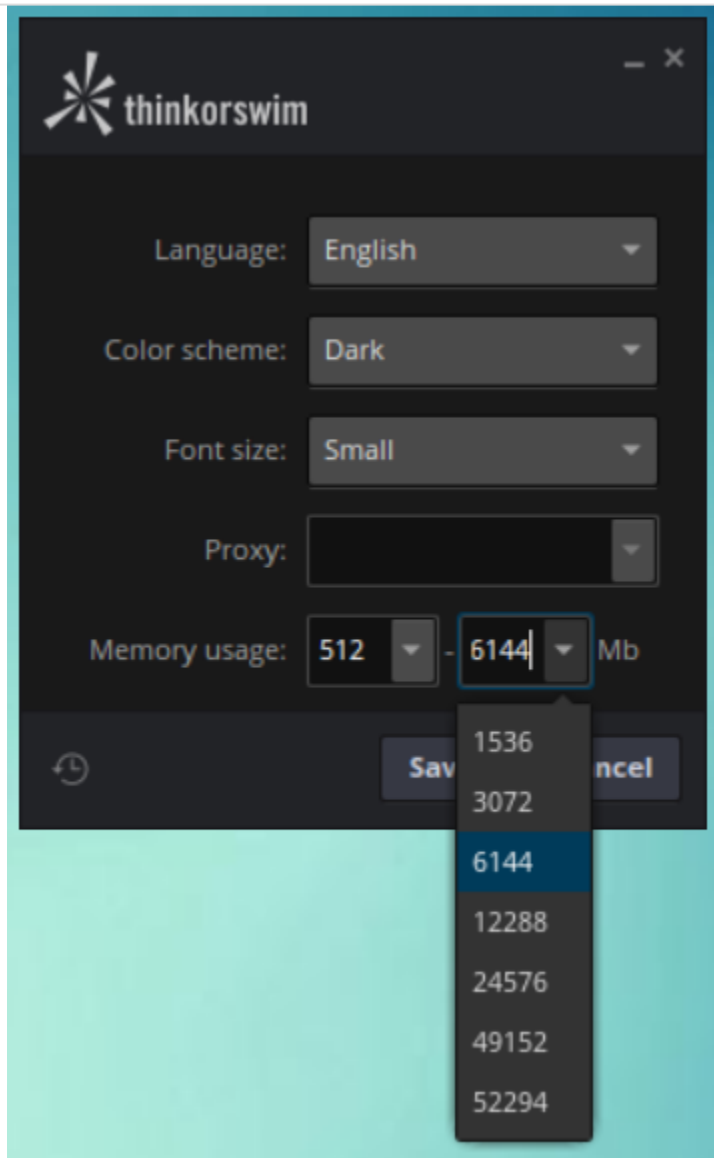
Click on the little gear icon at the bottom of the right login window. You'll then see more options and at the bottom Memory usage for TOS. That's what you'll want to edit. I have a laptop with 64GB ram that can handle [my trading station](#) with 3 additional screens, cameras, microphone, external keyboard/mouse, and OBS with what I record myself.

I also have TOS open on 2 of my screens but I've put it on all 4 with no major lag, although noticeable, especially during big vol. So if I had more than 2 charts open I'd probably dedicate even more max memory usage for ThinkorSwim.



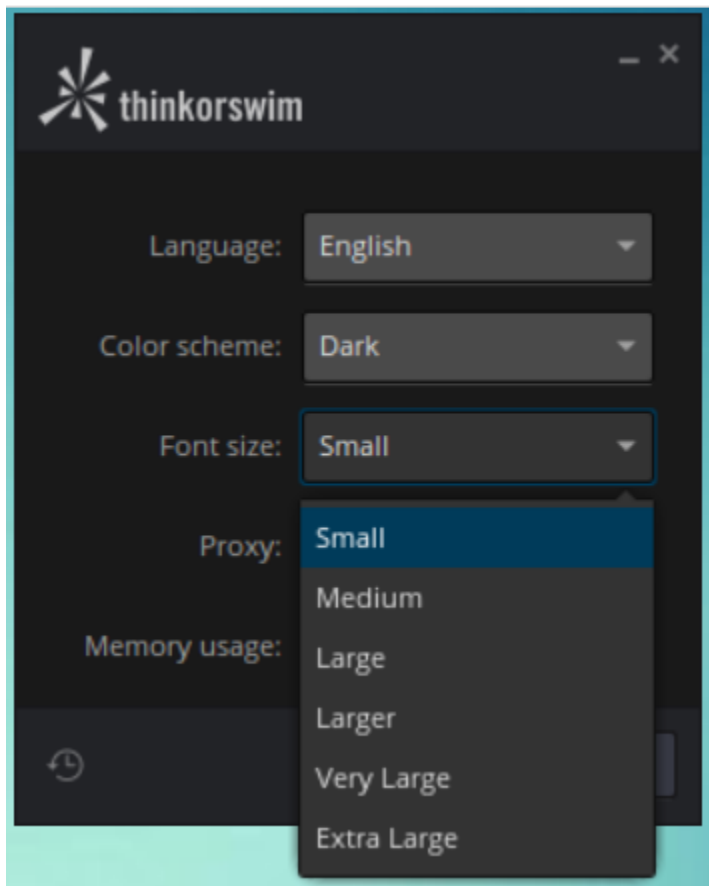






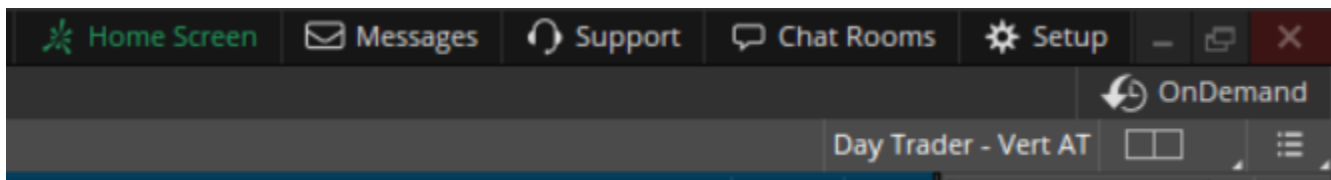
2. ThinkorSwim Font Size = Small

Since all my screens are classic 15.6' screens, you can see all my [trading setup hardware here](#), I prefer to use smaller font sizes to fit more price action onto my charts. This won't be a TOS performance booster but it will maximize screen real-estate. This is probably the most subjective pro tip and also the last tip before we log in and adjust settings there.



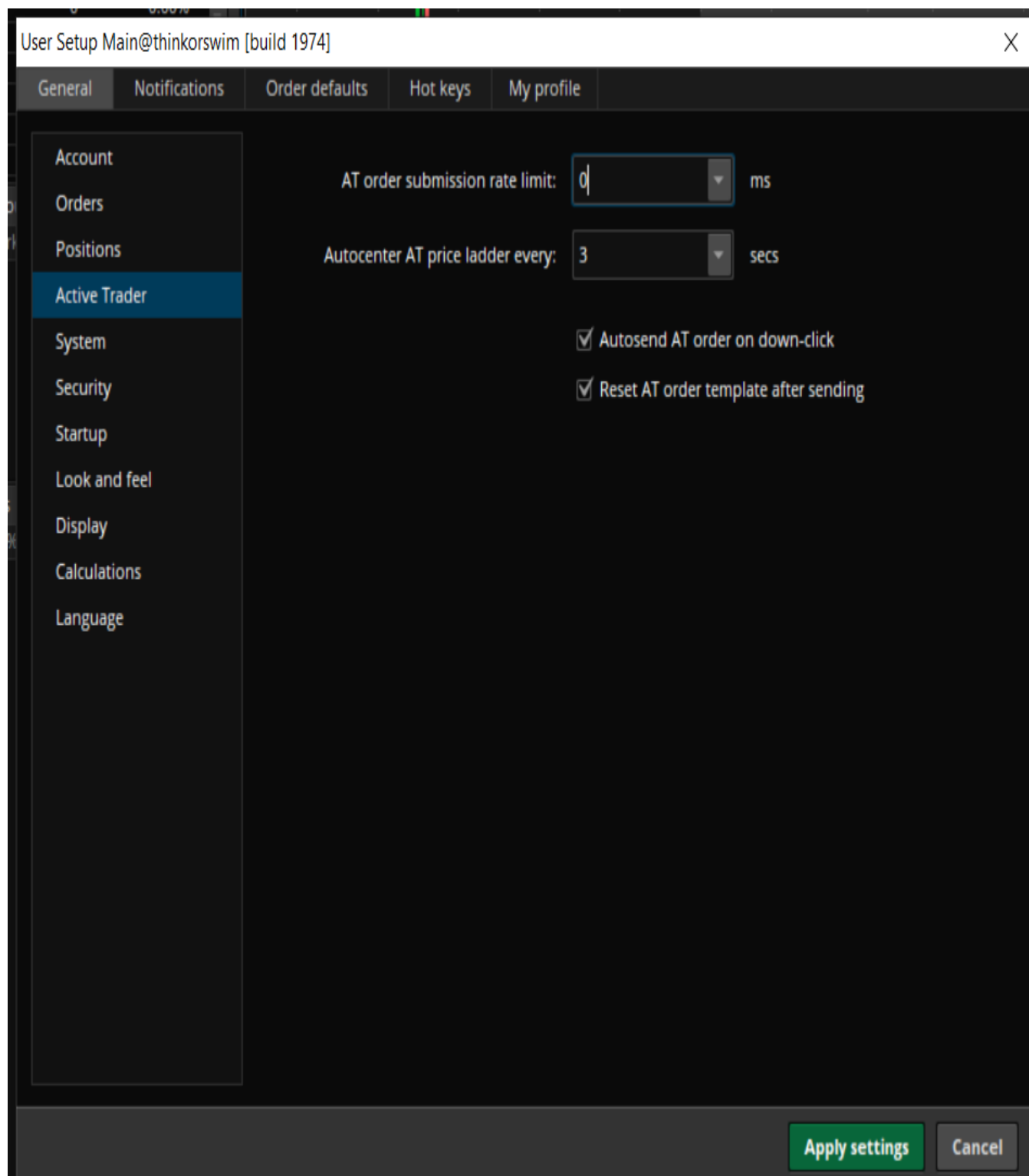
3. Active Trader: Order Submission Rate

The first step after login in is to zoom over to the top right of the TOS application and click on setup.

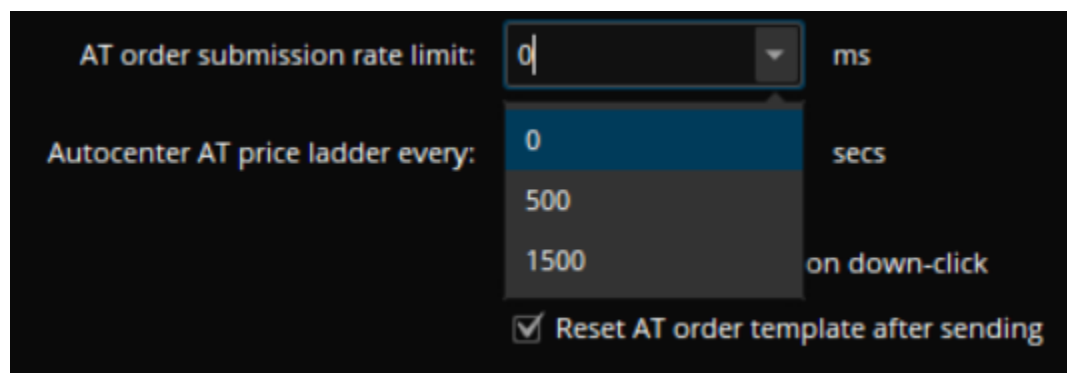


Once the TOS Settings window pops up go to, General settings, the first tab, and click on the Active Trader tab.

Here you'll see the "AT order submission rate limit:" by default, I believe this is set to 500ms, you'll definitely want to crank this down to 0ms for instant updates.



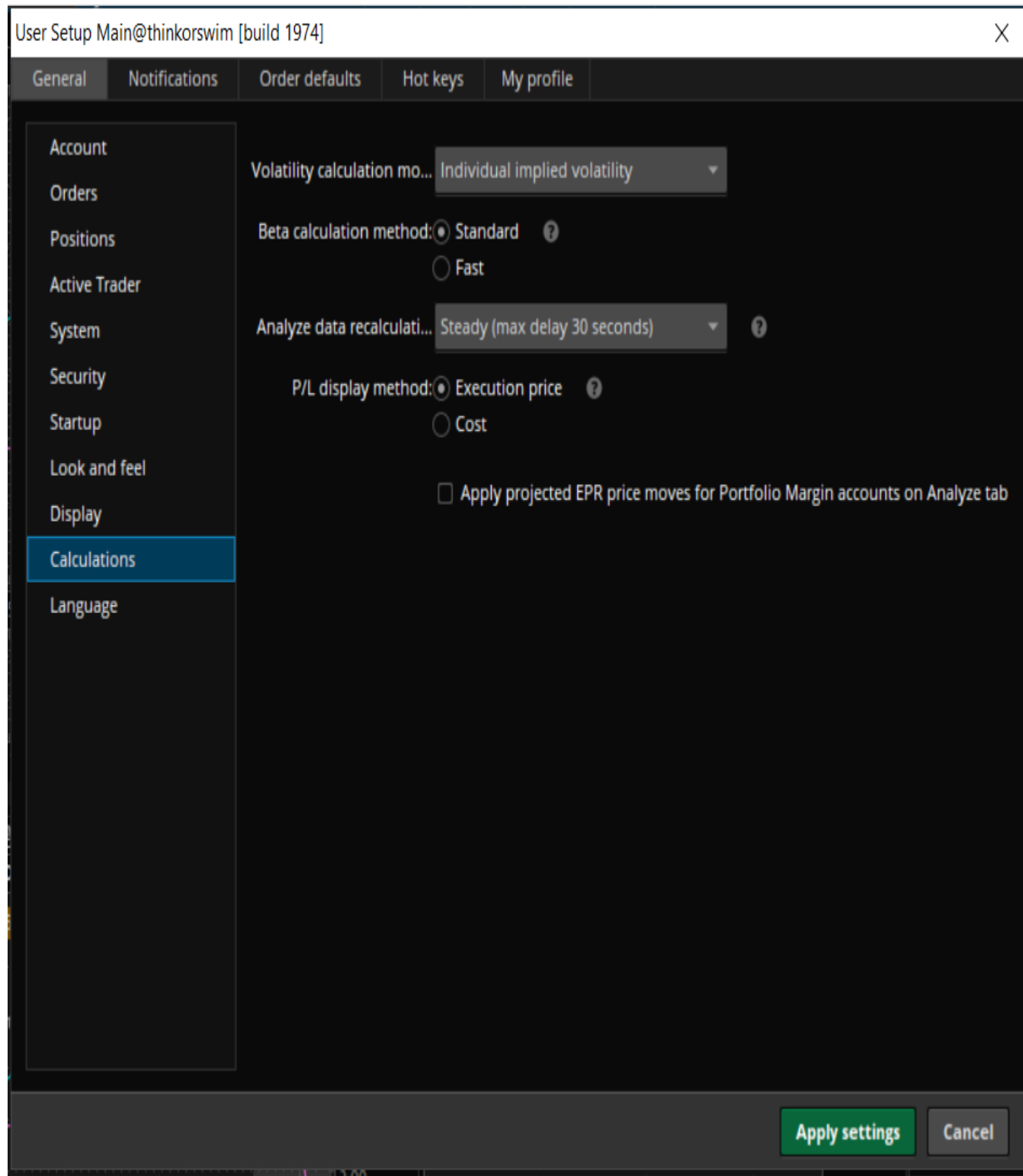
Extra picture of the options that ThinkorSwim by default provides for AT order submission rate.



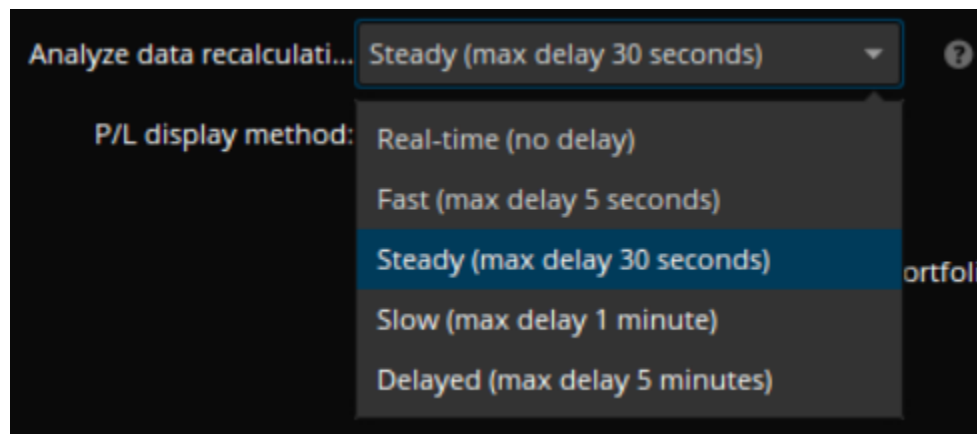
4. Analyze Data Recalculations for options (For Options)

This pro tip is for options trading only and is our only options-specific pro tip.

While still in the TOS Settings window go to the Calculations tab and you'll see the "Analyze data recalculations options", 3rd option from the top.



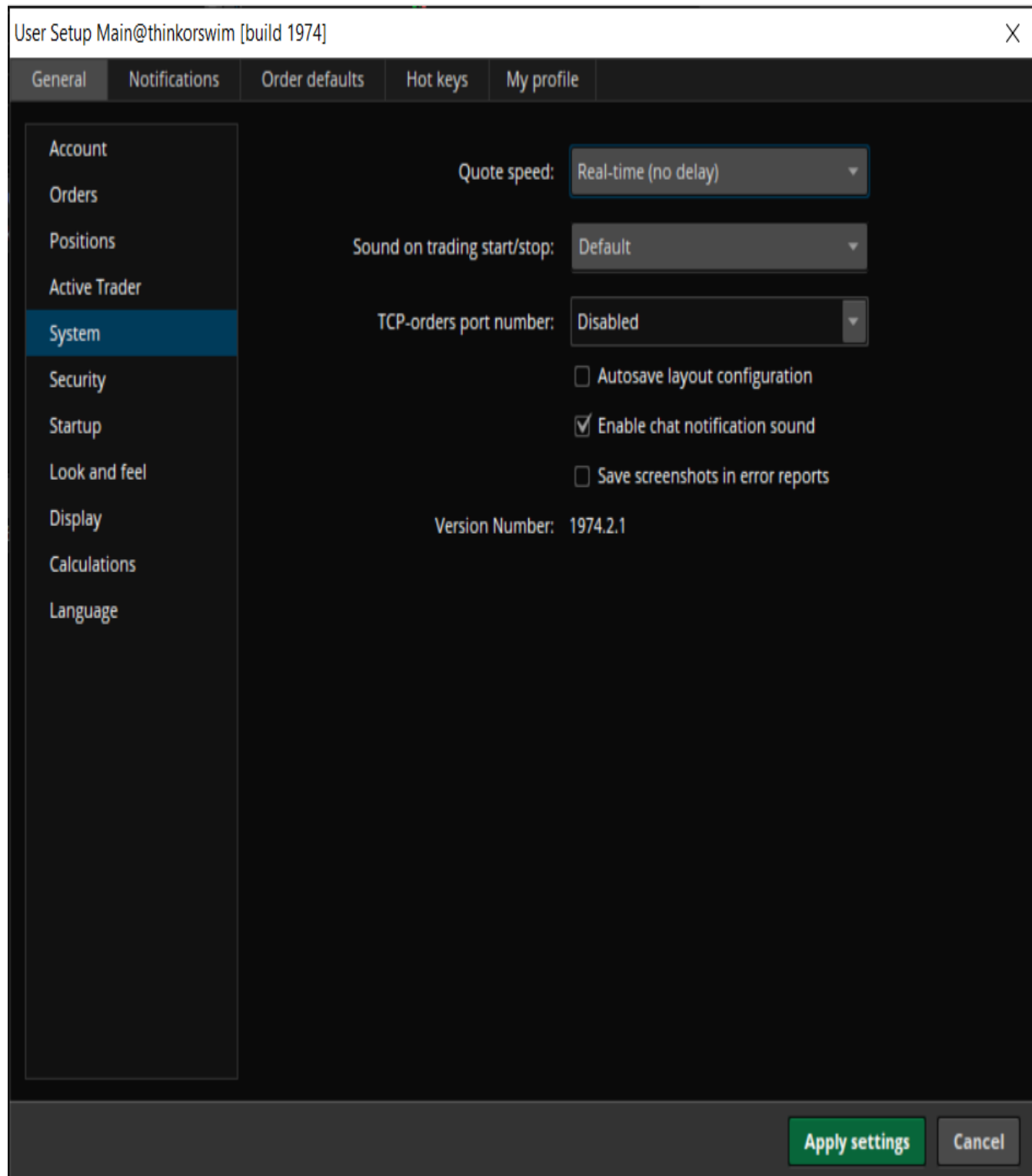
I actually left this one to "Steady (max delay 30 seconds) but would change it to "Real-time (no delay) if I used options.



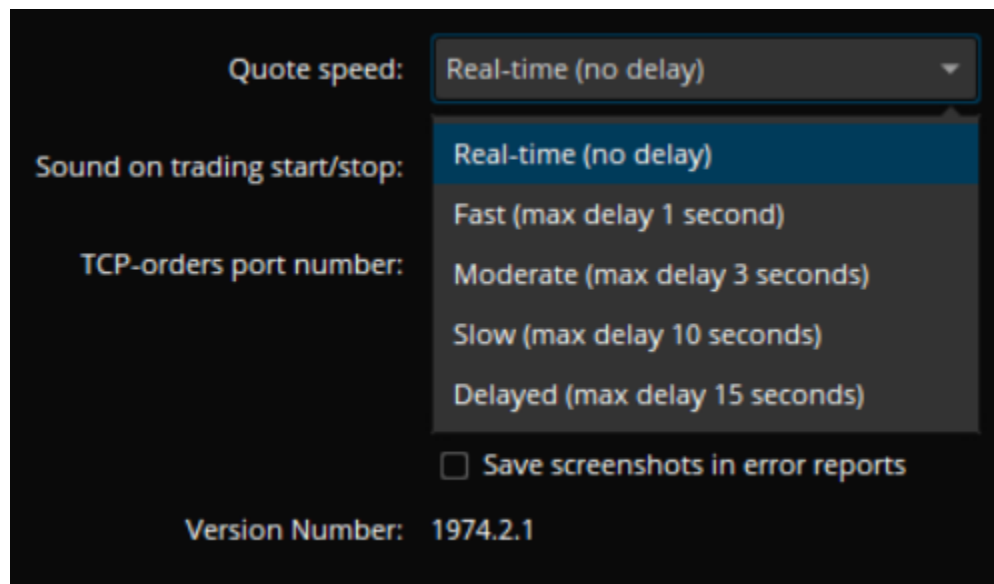
5. Quote Speed: Real-time

This one is one of my favorites because the strategy I trade is all about speed and watching that level 2!

While still in the TOS Settings window go to the System tab and the first option is "Quote speed:".



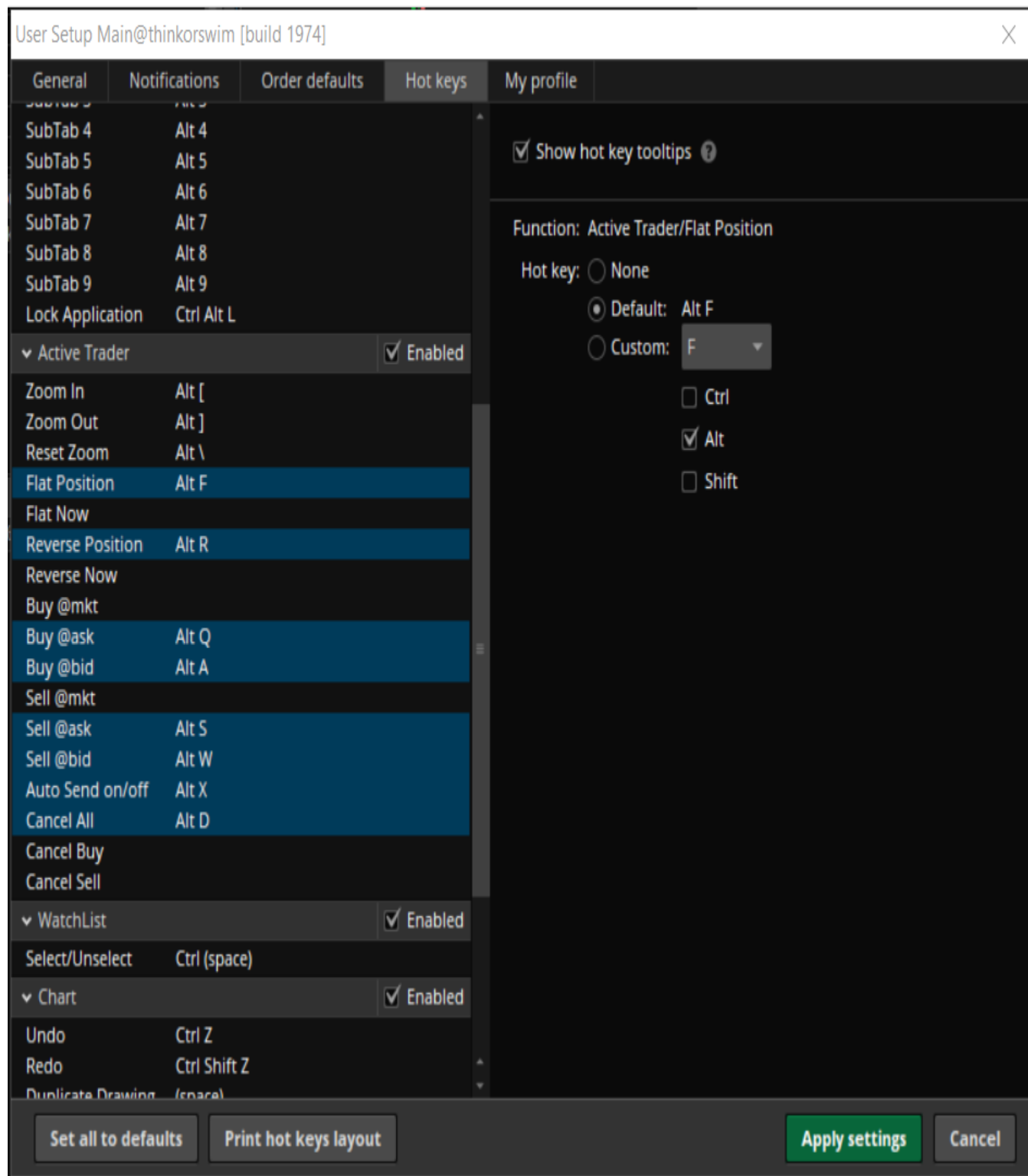
By default, I believe it was "Moderate (max delay 3 seconds)", you're definitely gonna want to change this to "Real-time (no delay)". If you didn't do this in the past this will be night and day when watching level 2. This tip alone can make a massive difference.



6. TOS Hotkeys

While still in the TOS Settings window you're gonna want to move over to the Kot keys settings. Once this tab is open you can scroll down to the active trader hotkeys bar.

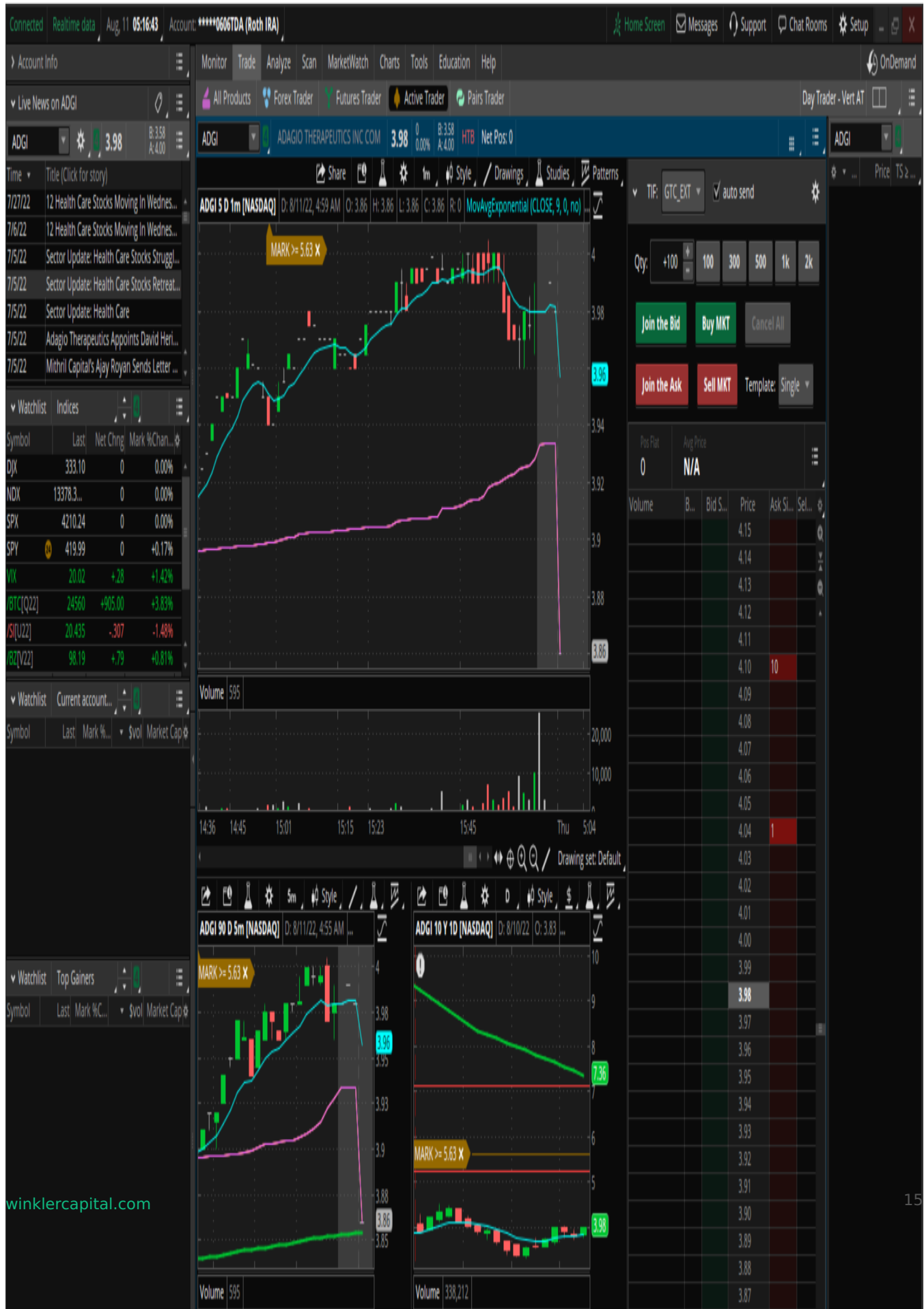
These are the ones I use on the Active Trader tab that allows quicker entry and exits. Especially when dealing with extended decimal place tickers. Check out this video, [ThinkorSwim TOS Hotkeys For Day Trading | BWV Stock](#), if you want a full breakdown of the hotkeys, in-depth thoughts behind them and see them in action.



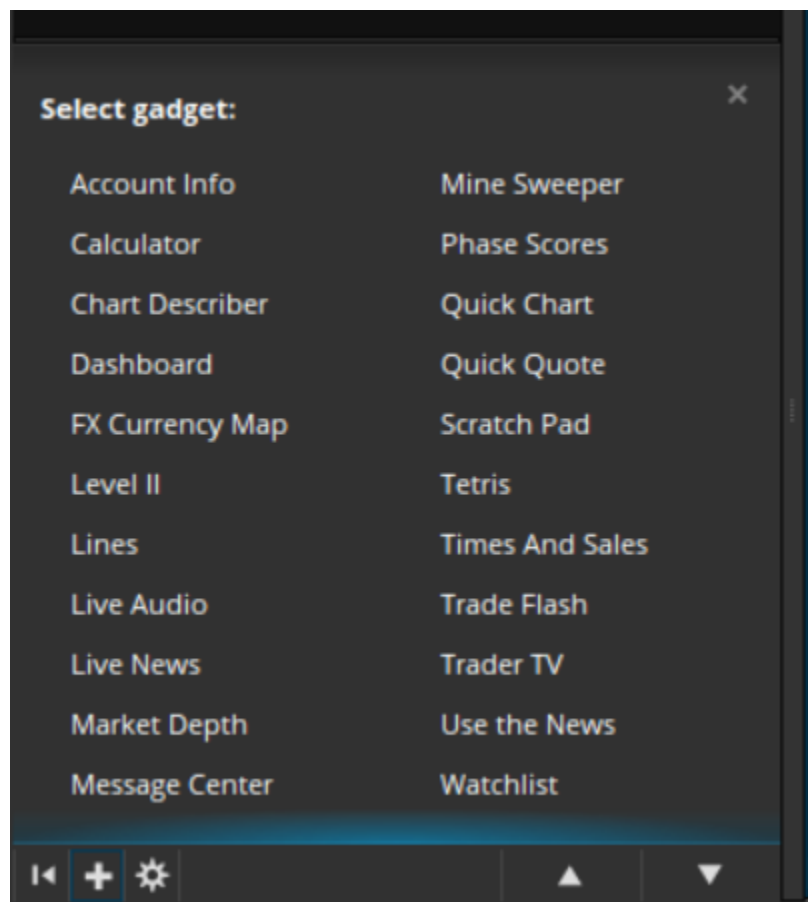
7. Scanner Gadget Left Side Bar

Some of you guys might not consider this last one as a ThinkorSwim performance optimization but I sure do because the alternative is hella slow. I used to use the Scan tab (in the middle of the image below) to always see the latest movers. I would either need to switch to the tab quickly or detach the whole window to a separate screen! Months later, someone called me out for it in one of my [live trading streams](#). I finally learned that you can just add a scanner to the left side panel gadgets bar!

Go to the bottom left and click the "+" icon.

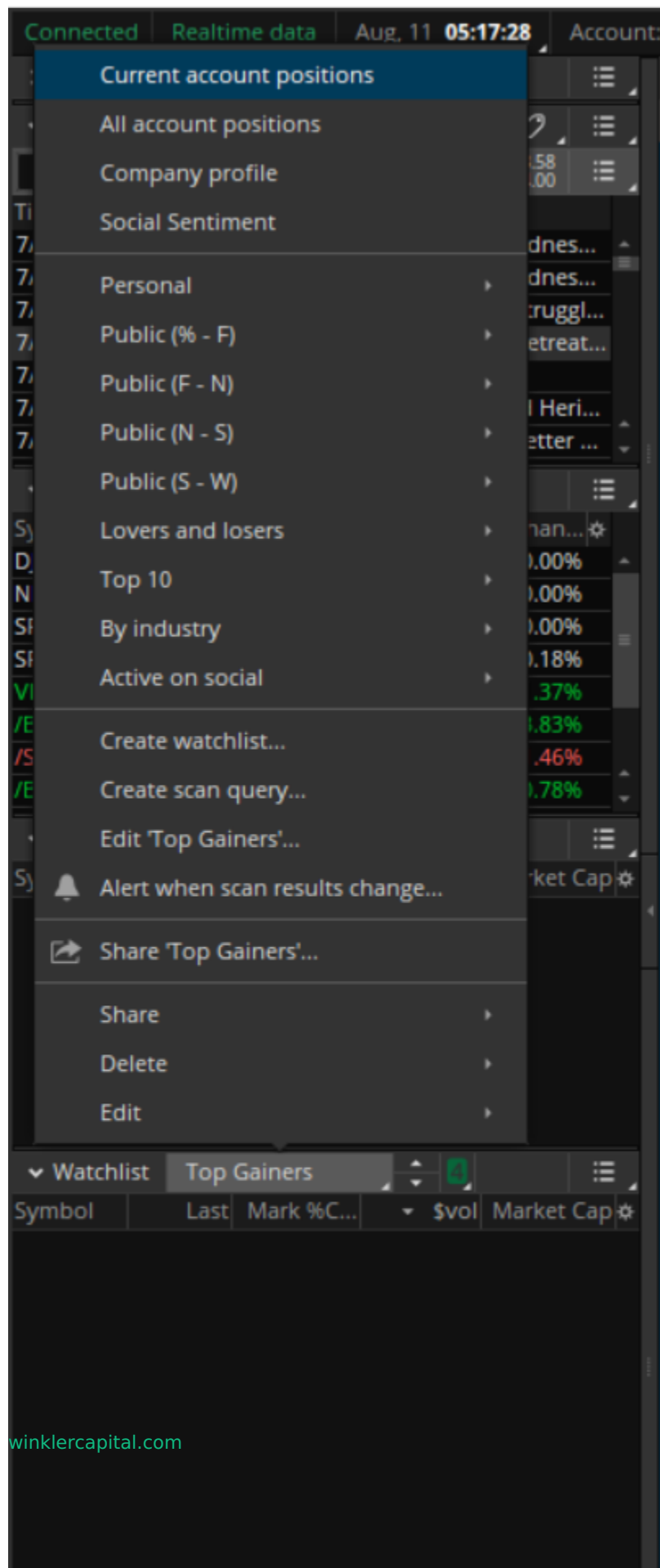


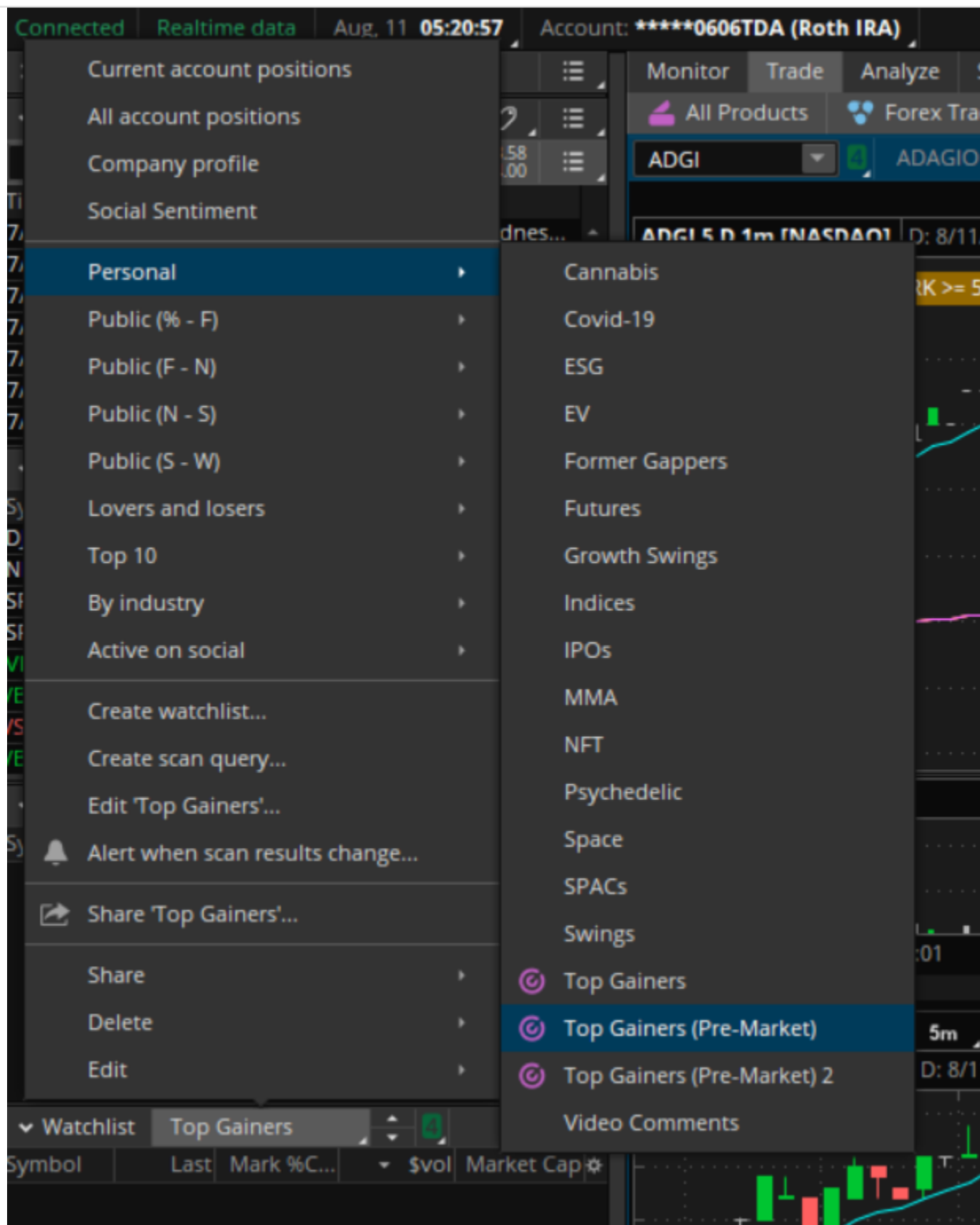
You'll then see all the available gadgets. Click on "Watchlist".



Here you'll be able to "Create scan query..." OR select one already created. Like I had from the "Scan" tab.

Game. Changer.





ThinkorSwim Performance Optimizations Final Thoughts

I hope you've found these ThinkorSwim optimizations as useful as I have! It's really changed the game for me and has made the whole trading day more efficient and relaxing. Not to mention probably added a few more years to my laptop.

Please leave a comment below about your favorite optimization. Either one you just learned or that isn't listed here. I'd be glad to update this list over time! Just live everyone else I am also learning every day and I couldn't do it without this amazing community.

If you are wondering about my exact day trading chart layout, checkout this video:

[NEW TOS Active Trader Chart Layout & GFAI Stock](#)

I show you my whole day trading layout, with entry/exit examples and how to quickly import it into your ThinkorSwim application.

Cheers everyone!

FAQ

What is ThinkorSwim?

ThinkorSwim (TOS) is a trading platform offered by TD Ameritrade that provides tools for trading stocks, options, and futures.

How can I optimize memory usage in ThinkorSwim?

To optimize memory usage, click the gear icon on the login page and adjust the memory settings according to your system's capacity.

What is the benefit of changing the order submission rate?

Lowering the order submission rate to 0ms allows for instant updates, which can significantly enhance trading speed and responsiveness.

Why should I set quote speed to real-time?

Setting quote speed to real-time eliminates delays, which is crucial for day traders who rely on timely data for making quick decisions.

How can I add a scanner to the left sidebar in ThinkorSwim?

To add a scanner, click the '+' icon in the bottom left corner, select 'Watchlist', and then create or select a scan query to display on the sidebar.