**Attach mdf file without ldf file in Database**

**FROM:** [**http://blog.sqlauthority.com/2010/04/26/sql-server-attach-mdf-file-without-ldf-file-in-database/**](http://blog.sqlauthority.com/2010/04/26/sql-server-attach-mdf-file-without-ldf-file-in-database/)

**By Pinal Dave**

**Background Story:**  
One of my friends recently called up and asked me if I had spare time to look at his database and give him a performance tuning advice. Because I had some free time to help him out, I said yes. I asked him to send me the details of his database structure and sample data. He said that since his database is in a very early stage and is small as of the moment, so he told me that he would like me to have a complete database. My response to him was “Sure! In that case, take a backup of the database and send it to me. I will restore it into my computer and play with it.”

He did send me his database; however, his method made me write this quick note here. Instead of taking a full backup of the database and sending it to me, he sent me only the .mdf (primary database file). In fact, I asked for a complete backup (I wanted to review file groups, files, as well as few other details).  Upon calling my friend,  I found that he was not available. Now,  he left me with only a .mdf file. As I had some extra time, I decided to checkout his database structure and get back to him regarding the full backup, whenever I can get in touch with him again.

**Technical Talk:**   
If the database is shutdown gracefully and there was no abrupt shutdown (power outrages, pulling plugs to machines, machine crashes or any other reasons), it is *possible* (there’s no guarantee) to attach .mdf file only to the server. Please note that there can be many more reasons for a database that is not getting attached or restored. In my case, the database had a clean shutdown and there were no complex issues. I was able to recreate a transaction log file and attached the received .mdf file.

There are multiple ways of doing this. I am listing all of them here. Before using any of them, please consult the Domain Expert in your company or industry. Also, never attempt this on live/production server without the presence of a Disaster Recovery expert.

**USE [master]  
GO  
-- Method 1: I use this method  
EXEC sp\_attach\_single\_file\_db @dbname='TestDb',  
@physname=N'C:\Program Files\Microsoft SQL Server\MSSQL10.MSSQLSERVER\MSSQL\DATA\TestDb.mdf'  
GO  
-- Method 2:  
CREATE DATABASE TestDb ON  
(FILENAME = N'C:\Program Files\Microsoft SQL Server\MSSQL10.MSSQLSERVER\MSSQL\DATA\TestDb.mdf')  
FOR ATTACH\_REBUILD\_LOG  
GO**

Method 2: If one or more log files are missing, they are recreated again.

There is one more method which I am demonstrating here but *I* *have not used myself before*. According to Book Online, it will work only if there is one log file that is missing. If there are more than one log files involved, all of them are required to undergo the same procedure.

**-- Method 3:  
CREATE DATABASE TestDb ON  
(FILENAME = N'C:\Program Files\Microsoft SQL Server\MSSQL10.MSSQLSERVER\MSSQL\DATA\TestDb.mdf')  
FOR ATTACH  
GO**

Please read the [Book Online](http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ms176061.aspx) in depth and consult DR experts before working on the production server. In my case, the above syntax just worked fine as the database was clean when it was detached. Feel free to write your opinions and experiences for it will help the IT community to learn more from your suggestions and skills.

PS: Do not try this on production server.

Reference: **Pinal Dave (**[**http://blog.SQLAuthority.com**](http://blog.sqlauthority.com/)**)**

USE [master]

GO

-- Method 1: I use this method

EXEC sp\_attach\_single\_file\_db @dbname='WHOISACTIVE\_DB',

@physname=N'D:\MSSQL\Data\WHOISACTIVE\_DB.mdf'

GO