Compress hard disk to file

It it convinient to take a snapshot of your disk just in case something goes wrong. The whole disk can be easily compress into an image file for backup. This is done easily with dd command.

To efficiently compress the disk first fill it with zeros.

#mount /dev/sdb1 /mnt

#dd if=/dev/zero of=/mnt/zero.dat ; sync ; rm -f /mnt/zero.dat;

#umount /dev/sdb1

If your disk has multiple partitions do the same for each of them. Then use dd to copy it save the disk to file. Use gzip to compress

#dd if=/dev/sdb | gzip - > usb.img.gz

later if you want to extract the image file to disk. Note that dest disk must be at least size of original

#zcat usb.img.gz |dd bs=512K of=/dev/sdb