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Back up and restore your PC

Windows 8.1

To learn how to back up and restore individual files on a Windows-based computer:

- [How to back up or transfer your data on a Windows-based computer](#)

To learn how to back up and restore in Windows 10:

- [Backup and Restore in Windows 10](#)

Back up

There are several ways to back up your PC.

1. Select the **Start** ⊞ button, then select **Control Panel** > **System and Maintenance** > **Backup and Restore**.

2. Do one of the following:

   - If you've never used Windows Backup before, or recently upgraded your version of Windows, select **Set up backup**, and then follow the steps in the wizard.

   - If you've created a backup before, you can wait for your regularly scheduled backup to occur, or you can manually create a new backup by selecting **Back up now**.

Was this information helpful?   Yes   No   ✕

steps in the wizard.

Note: Do not back up files to the same hard disk that Windows is installed on. For example, do not back up files to a recovery partition. Always store media used for backups (external hard disks, DVDs, or CDs) in a secure place to prevent unauthorized people from having access to your files; a fireproof location separate from your computer is recommended. You might also consider encrypting the data on your backup.

Create a system image

System images contain all of the info on your PC at a particular state.

1. Right-click the **Start** ⊞ button, then select **Control Panel** > **System and Maintenance** > **Backup and Restore**.

2. In the left pane, choose **Create a system image**, and then follow the steps in the wizard. 🛡 If you're prompted for an administrator password or confirmation, type the password or provide confirmation.

Note: To create a system image of a drive, it must be formatted to use the NTFS file system. If you save the system image on a hard drive or USB flash drive, it must be formatted to use the NTFS file system.

Keeping different versions of system images

You can keep several versions of system images. On internal and external hard drives, older system images will be deleted when the drive runs out of space. To help conserve disk space, delete older system images.

If you're saving your system images in a network location, you can only keep the most current system image for each computer. System images are saved in the format of drive\WindowsImageBackup\computer name\. If you already have a system image for a computer and are creating a new one for the same computer, the new system image will

Was this information helpful?   Yes   No   ✕

If you want to keep the old system image, you can copy it to a different location before creating the new system image by following these steps.

1. Navigate to the location of the system image.

2. Copy the WindowsImageBackup folder to a new location.

Create a restore point

You can use a restore point to restore your computer's system files to an earlier point in time. Restore points are automatically created each week by System Restore and when your PC detects change, like when you install an app or driver.

Here's how to create a restore point.

1. Right-click the **Start** button, then select **Control Panel** > **System and Maintenance** > **System**.

2. In the left pane, select **System protection**.

3. Select the **System Protection** tab, and then select **Create**.

4. In the **System Protection** dialog box, type a description, and then select **Create.**

Restore

1. Right-click the **Start** button, then select **Control Panel > System and Maintenance** > **Backup and Restore**.

2. Do one of the following:

   - To restore your files, choose **Restore my files**.

   - To restore the files of all users, choose **Restore all users' files.**

Was this information helpful?   Yes   No   ✕

- To look through the contents of the backup, select **Browse for files** or **Browse for folders**. When you're browsing for folders, you won't be able to see the individual files in a folder. To view individual files, use the **Browse for files** option.

- To search the contents of the backup, select **Search**, type all or part of a file name, and then select **Search**.

Tip: If you're searching for files or folders associated with a specific user account, you can improve search results by typing the location of the file or folder in the **Search for** box. For example, to search for all JPG files that were backed up, type **JPG** in the **Search for** box. To only search for JPG files associated with the user Bill, type **C:\Users\Bill\JPG** in the **Search for** box. Use wildcard characters such as ***.jpg** to search for all JPG files that were backed up.

Restore a backup made on another computer

You can restore files from a backup that was created on another computer running Windows Vista or Windows 7.

1. Select the **Start** button, then select **Control Panel > System and Maintenance > Backup and Restore**.

2. Choose **Select another backup to restore files from**, and then follow the steps in the wizard. If you're prompted for an administrator password or confirmation, type the password or provide confirmation.

Find files that were restored from a backup made on another computer

If you're restoring files from a backup that was made on another computer, the files will be restored in a folder under the user name that was used to create the backup. If the user names are different, you'll need to navigate to the folder where the files are restored. For example, if your user name was **Molly** on the computer that the backup was made on but your user name is **MollyC** on the computer that the backup is being restored on, the restored files will be saved in a folder labelled **Molly**.

Was this information helpful?   Yes   No

1. Select the **Start** ⊞button, then select **Computer**.

2. Double-click the icon of the drive that the files are saved on, for example **C:**.

3. Double-click the **Users** folder. You will see a folder for each user account.

4. Double-click the folder for the user name that was used to create the backup. The restored files will be in the various folders based on where they were located originally.

Restore files from a file backup after restoring your computer from a system image backup

After you restore your computer from a system image backup, there may be newer versions of some of your files in a file backup that you want to restore.

To restore files from a file backup that was created after the system image backup was created, follow these steps.

1. Select the **Start** ⊞ button, then select **Control Panel** > **System and Maintenance** >**Backup and Restore**.

2. Choose **Select another backup to restore files from**. 🛡 If you're prompted for an administrator password or confirmation, type the password or provide confirmation.

3. In **Backup Period**, select the date range of the backup that contains the files that you want to restore, and then follow the steps in the wizard.

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