

Backing up: What, how, where ¹

There are many ways to lose information from a computer: A child playing the keyboard like a piano, a power surge, lightning, floods, and sometimes equipment just fails. If you regularly make backup copies of your files and keep them in a separate place, you can get some, if not all, of your information back if something happens to the originals on your computer.

What to back up

Back up anything you cannot replace easily. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- Bank records and other financial information
- Digital photographs
- Software you purchased and downloaded from the Internet
- Music you purchased and downloaded from the Internet
- Personal projects
- Your e-mail address book
- Your Microsoft Outlook calendar
- Your Internet Explorer bookmarks

Next, decide where to store your backup copies-external hard disk drive, CDs, DVDs, or some other external storage format in a different location from your computer.

Where to back up your files

The following are some storage devices and locations to consider.

- External hard drive
- CD
- DVD
- USB flash drive
- Online backup and storage service

How to back up your files

When you make backup copies of your information, a simple copy and paste works well. If you use Windows 7, Windows Vista or Windows XP, a backup tool is available.

Windows 7: Backup and Restore

Windows 7 helps you configure backup settings in three quick clicks. You can choose to automatically back up all your personal files and, if you choose, your system files. You can schedule regular backups, so you won't have to remember to do it manually. You can

¹ **Microsoft** (Microsoft@newsletters.microsoft.com), Security for Home Computer Users, Tue 12/08/09 8:19 PM, Back Up Your Files

back up everything or just specific files, and you can choose from a number of advanced backup options, such as backing up files to a network location and performing system backups to a DVD.

To access Backup and Restore:

1. Click **Start**, and click **Control Panel**.
2. Click **System and Security** and then click **Backup and Restore**.

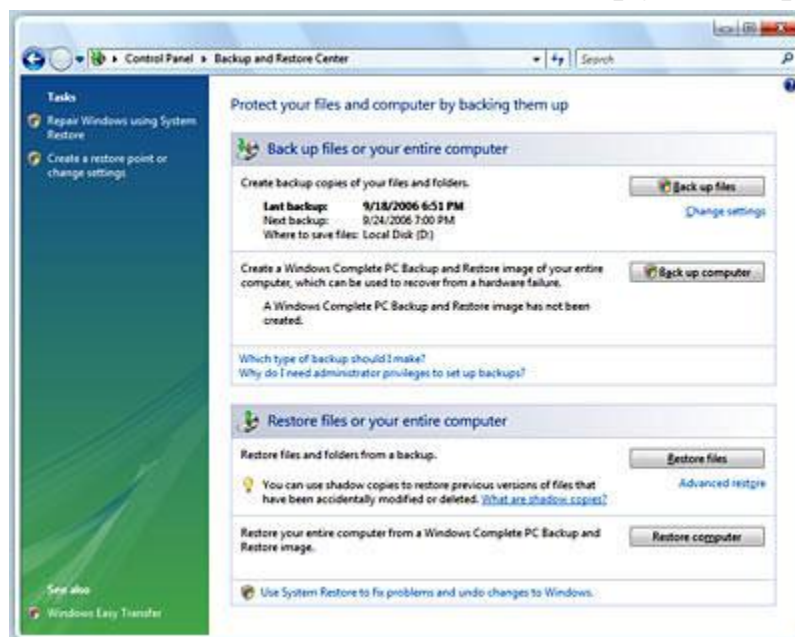
For a more detailed step-by-step guide to using the wizard, see [Back up your files](#).

Windows Vista: Backup and Restore Center

Depending on the version of Windows Vista you have, there are two ways to back up files: **Automatic Backup**, which backs up just your files and data; or **Complete PC Backup**, which backs up everything on your computer, including the operating system and applications. You can choose the method in the [Backup and Restore Center](#).

To access the Backup and Restore Center:

1. Click **Start**, and point to **Control Panel**.
2. Click **System and Maintenance** and then click **Back up your computer**.



Windows XP Professional: Use the built-in Backup utility

If you use Windows XP Professional, you can use the built-in Backup utility to help you make copies of files, settings, or everything on your computer.

You can schedule the utility to back up certain files on a regular basis.

To start using the Backup utility:

1. Click **Start**, and point to **All Programs**.
2. Point to **Accessories**, and then point to **System Tools**.
3. Click **Backup**.

If you've never used the Backup utility, the first screen you will see is the **Backup or Restore Wizard** welcome window.

Click **Next** and follow the instructions on the wizard. For a more detailed step-by-step guide to using the wizard, see [Windows XP Backup Made Easy](#).

Windows XP Home Edition: Add the Backup utility

If you're using Windows XP Home Edition and you want to install the Backup utility, first locate your original Windows XP CD.

Add the Backup utility manually to your computer from the CD by following these steps:

1. Insert your **Windows XP CD** into the drive and, if necessary, in **My Computer**, double-click the CD icon to display the Welcome screen.
2. On the **Welcome to Microsoft Windows XP** screen, click **Perform Additional Tasks**.
3. Click **Browse this CD**.
4. In **Windows Explorer**, double-click the **ValueAdd** folder, then **Msft**, and then **Ntbackup**.
5. Double-click **Ntbackup.msi** to install the Backup utility.

Making backup copies manually

Regardless of what version of Windows you use, you can manually make a backup copy of any file or folder by following these steps:

1. **Right-click** the file or folder that you want to back up, and then click **Copy** from the menu.
2. In **Computer**, **right-click** the disk or external hard drive where you want to store the backup copy, and then click **Paste** on the menu.

After you've copied all the information you want to back up onto your chosen storage format, don't forget to keep it protected.




Tip: To learn how to make a backup of your e-mail messages in Outlook, read [Back up Outlook e-mail messages](#) and [Back up or synchronize: Ways to copy Outlook data](#).

Protect your backup files

Backing up is just the first step. Here are a few suggestions to help you protect important files and information after you back them up:

- **Remove your information from your house-or office.** Keep your backups away from your computer-in a separate room, in a fireproof box. If you use a safe deposit box to protect valuable paper documents, keep your backup disks there, too.
- **Make more than one copy.** Keep the backups in two separate locations, so if disaster strikes one area, you still have your secondary backup.

- **Keep your storage tidy.** From time to time (and particularly if you are paying for storage), delete old files or use compression software to compress information so it takes up less space.
 - **Protect your information with a password.** Some media formats include password protection. Consider this feature if you back up personal or sensitive information.
-  **Hint:** Write down your password and keep it in a secure location, such as a safe deposit box, along with your will and other personal documents. This allows your loved ones to get your personal information if you can't.