

Computer Backup

Quick Tips:

How often should I backup my computer?

- It is recommended to keep the automatically backup function enabled, which defaults to once an hour.
- If you rather not have these programs automatically backup, you should be backing up at the very least once a week.

NOTE: See our [Image Management, Search, & Use Best Practices Page](#) for image backup information.

Which backup tool should I use?

The backup tools listed below are free, built-in software provided by Mac OS and Windows.

Also, there is a software program called *Macrium Reflect*, which allows you to clone or image your entire storage drive. Please see our KB Page [Create a Disk Image with Macrium Reflect](#) for information about this software.

macOS: Time Machine

- Time Machine takes periodic snapshots of all your files and catalogs them on an external hard drive or a NAS on your network.
 - **NOTE:** Make sure your external hard drive is connected to your computer or laptop.
- As the drive gets full, Time Machine will delete the oldest backups and replace them with newer versions.
- For more information visit [Time Machine Support](#).
- To verify that Time Machine is periodically backing up your computer, open Time Machine Preferences to view the latest and upcoming backup statuses.

Windows 10 and Newer: File History

- File History takes snapshots of versions of your files and stores them on an external hard drive and creates a library to restore previous.

- Enables restoration of lost, damaged, or deleted files.
- For more information visit [File History Support](#).

How do I backup my computer?

Below are instructions on how to backup using the free, built-in software provided by Mac OS and Windows:

macOS Time Machine:

- Connect your external hard drive
 - You might be asked if you want to use the drive to backup with Time Machine:
 - Select Encrypt Backup Disk (recommended) → Use as Backup Disk. An encrypted backup is accessible only to users with the password.
- If Time Machine doesn't ask you to choose a backup disk when you connect the drive to your Mac:
 - System Preferences → Time Machine → ON
- Select which disk you'd like to use as a Time Machine backup
- Check the Backup Automatically box if you wish to automatically backup your Mac to the device
 - Time Machine backups hourly, daily, and weekly as the drive gets full

Windows File History:

- Settings → Update & Security → Backup
- Connect your external hard drive
- Select "+" in Settings next to "Add a drive"
- Choose your external hard drive from the list
- There is a slider to automatically backup your files
- File History automatically backups all folders in your User folder
 - Select "More Options" under on/off slider then scroll down to "Back up these folders" to change these preferences

How often should I backup my computer?

- It is recommended to keep the automatically backup function enabled, which defaults to once an hour.
- If you rather not have these programs automatically backup, you should be backing up at the very least once a week. However, if you work on your computer creating new files several days a week, it may be advantageous to backup at least everyday. In this way it is sometimes easier to default to "Automatically backup" in these programs.

How do I restore my Files?

Using the free, built-in software provided by Mac OS and Windows follow the instructions below:

macOS Time Machine:

- Restoring Files
 - System Preferences → Time Machine → Check box Show Time Machine in menu bar
 - Click Time Machine icon in Menu bar → Select Enter Time Machine
 - Find the file or folder you'd like to retrieve and select Restore
 - Time Machine will copy that file back to its original location your hard drive
- Restoring Hard Drive
 - Power on Mac and hold down the Command and R keys to enter the macOS Recovery Partition
 - Your mac should boot to a screen that says macOS Utilities
 - Select Restore from Time Machine Backup → Continue
 - Read info on Restore Your Systems page → Continue
 - Select your Time Machine Backup → Continue
 - Select the most recent backup of your hard disk → Continue
 - It will restore the backup and restart

Windows File History:

1. You can recover backed up versions of file(s) or folders by right-clicking on it in File Explorer → select Properties → select Previous Versions
2. You can also access the files through your external hard drive in File Explorer
 - Open File Explorer → open the folder that contains the item(s) you'd like to retrieve
 - Select the Home tab on the Ribbon atop your folder → then select the History button
 - Choose what you'd like to restore (i.e. folder, files, one file)
 - Move forward or backward in time with the arrows at the bottom of the window to find the version you'd like to restore
 - Click the Restore button to restore your desired version.
 - It will place the item (folder, file(s)) back into the place it used to live
 - If you have a newer file with the same name Windows will ask you to choose from the following options:
 - Replace the File in the Destination Folder - old file being restored will replace the file currently in it's destination
 - Skip this File - will not restore this file/folder
 - Compare Info for Both Files - compare file sizes and dates before choosing, this option also will let you keep both. Windows will add a number at the end of the restored file.