



How to backup a virtual machine

- Parallels Desktop for Mac Standard Edition
- Parallels Desktop for Mac Pro Edition
- Parallels Desktop for Mac Business Edition
- Parallels Desktop for Mac App Store Edition

Information

Parallels Desktop virtual machines are very similar to real computers, therefore they are vulnerable to the same threats as real computers: hard disk corruption, data loss, power outage. We recommend creating virtual machine backups on a regular basis to keep your work and data safe.

Note: Our general recommendation for any backup method is to keep the virtual machine **Shut Down** during this process.

When should I backup my virtual machine?

We strongly recommend to backup your virtual machine before performing the following operations:

- Compressing virtual hard disk
- Expanding / resizing virtual hard disk
- Reinstalling / upgrading macOS
- Upgrading Windows (guest OS)

In all other situations, it is recommended to backup virtual machine once in few months depending on the amount of changes done to the system.

What are backup options?

Manual backup

You may simply back up the entire virtual machine by copying its .pvm file (it contains the whole virtual machine) to another place on your Mac HD or to an external disk (recommended).

If you run your virtual machine from the external drive, the backup of the virtual machine should be put to a different external hard drive.

To find your virtual machine's pvm file, follow these instructions :[How do I find my virtual machine on Mac?](#)

3rd-party solution

You may also use a preferred third party backup utility like Acronis True Image, Carbonite, etc.

How to protect Guest OS from corruption?

A snapshot is a saved state of the guest OS. It's useful to create snapshots, for example, before:

- You are going to run some programs that may damage the guest OS
- You are going to configure some guest OS software that requires a lot of settings and changes
- You want to mark milestones in the development process

Additional information

- Snapshots cannot be created for Windows virtual machines that use the Boot Camp partition
- If your virtual machine has one or more snapshots, you can neither compress nor resize the virtual hard disk
- Creating a snapshot increases the size of the virtual machine .pvm bundle

If you have a snapshot, you can revert to a state of the virtual machine saved in there at any time.

For the additional information please check [working with snapshots](#) article.

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