



How to install software in a Windows virtual machine

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

The process of installing any software in a virtual machine is almost identical to that on a physical PC. Nevertheless, there are a few things to keep in mind.

Note: If the installation process is not successful (installation wizard fails to start, installation breaks at some point with or without the error message, installed software fails to start) don't hesitate to get in touch with your software manufacturer support department directly. And if you are using a Mac computer with Apple silicon, please try the steps outlined in [KB 128796](#).

Prerequisites

Virtual machine

Make sure you have [Windows virtual machine installed](#).

System requirements

Make sure your Windows virtual machine meets the system requirements of the software you want to install.

Memory. Since a virtual machine [uses system memory for graphics](#), the amount of memory (random access memory, RAM) dedicated to the virtual machine should be equal to the amount of RAM + video memory required by the application. For example, if an application requires a system with 8 GB RAM and 2 GB video memory, the virtual machine should be assigned 10 GB RAM. The steps to adjust the amount of memory allocated to a virtual machine are outlined in [KB 113649](#).

Graphics capabilities. Since a virtual machine has no direct access to your Mac's GPU, it utilizes a [virtual one](#) powered by your physical one. This virtual graphics adapter currently supports **DirectX 11** and **OpenGL 3.3**. If an app requires a higher version of either DirectX or OpenGL, it might not operate correctly. If you are not sure, it would be best to test to give it a try. You may want to use [Parallels Desktop trial](#) for that.

CPU Architecture (M-series chips). Please note that currently, Parallels Desktop only supports running Windows 11 on Arm virtual machines on Mac computers with Apple silicon. This means that the system behaves exactly as a physical machine running Windows on Arm (such as Microsoft Surface X Pro): thanks to the built-in x86 compatibility layer, most applications do run as they would on a classic x86 (Intel/AMD) machine. However, some applications may not work correctly in Windows on Arm. If you are experiencing issues installing an application in a Windows virtual machine on a Mac computer with Apple silicon, please refer to [KB 128796](#).

Digital download

If you want to install a **program downloaded from the Internet**, then the installation process would be the **same as on a physical PC**:

1. Start Parallels Desktop and Windows virtual machine.
2. Log in to Windows.

3. Open a web browser and download an installation file.

Note: your Mac downloads are also available in Windows user's Downloads folder by default.

4. Open the installation file and follow the instructions until the installation is complete.
5. Some Windows programs may require to reboot Windows after installation.

Using CD/DVD disk

If you want to use a CD/DVD disk to install a software, you need to connect the disk or image to Windows virtual machine first, and then proceed just as you would on a physical PC.

1. Start Parallels Desktop and Windows virtual machine.
 2. If your Mac is equipped with CD/DVD drive, insert the disk. Otherwise, you would need to create a disk image using these [instructions](#).
 3. Go to **Devices** menu on Mac menu bar > **CD/DVD** > select the disk or click **Connect Image...** to choose an image file on Mac to connect to Windows.
 4. A pop-up notification should appear in Windows indicating that the disk or image was successfully connected to Windows. If notification does not appear, open Windows File Explorer and navigate to Computer > CD/DVD Drive > Launch the installation file (usually called `setup.exe` or `install.exe`).
 5. Follow the installation instructions. Refer to the software's User's Guide/Manual or website for more details on installation process.
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