

HOW TO: Extract Original Compressed Windows Files

The information in this article applies to:

- Microsoft Windows Millennium Edition
- Microsoft Windows 98 Second Edition
- Microsoft Windows 98
- Microsoft Windows 95

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SUMMARY

This step-by-step article describes how to extract compressed files. Many Microsoft product files are compressed and stored in cabinet (.cab) files; to use a file in a .cab file, you must first extract that file. You may want to extract a new copy of a file if you have a missing or damaged file. This article shows you multiple methods for doing so. Windows 95 and Windows 98 are available on CD-ROM or floppy disks, both of which contain compressed cabinet files. Windows Millennium Edition (Me) is available on CD-ROM; it contains compressed cabinet files and also installs compressed cabinet files in the C:\Windows\Options\Install folder. These cabinet files contain the actual Windows files. This article describes how to extract individual files from compressed cabinet files.

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Windows Me

In Windows

To extract files in Windows Me, use the System Configuration Utility tool. To do this, follow these steps:

1. Click **Start**, and then click **Run**.
2. Type msconfig, and then press ENTER.
3. On the **General** tab, click **Extract File**.
4. In the **Specify the system file you would like to restore** box, type *drive:\windows\path\file* (where *drive* is the drive on which the Windows folder is installed, generally drive C, *path* is the location in the Windows folder is the destination of the file that you are extracting, and *file* is the file that you want to extract).

5. Click **Start**, click **Browse**, and then locate the Windows installation files. If you are using an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) version of Windows Me, the installation files are on the hard disk at C:\Windows\Options\Install by default. If you are using a retail full version or upgrade version, you can also insert the Windows Me installation CD-ROM into the CD-ROM drive or DVD-ROM drive, and then locate the installation files.
6. Click **OK**, and then follow the on-screen instructions.

Because Windows Me has a feature called System File Protection, extraction is different for these files. For additional information about how to extract protected files in Windows Me, click the article number below to view the article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

[Q265371](#) How to Extract and Replace a Protected File in Windows Me

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Cannot Start Windows

When you install Windows Me, you are prompted to create a Windows Me startup disk. A feature included in the Windows Me startup disk is support for CD-ROM drives. This may be of benefit if you have to extract a file from the Windows Me CD-ROM but you cannot use the System Configuration Utility tool (for example, if your computer does not start properly).

NOTE: The Windows Me startup disk provides support for most types of CD-ROM drives, including IDE and SCSI CD-ROM drives, but it may not support your particular CD-ROM drive.

Create a Startup Disk

You must have a Windows Me startup disk to perform the steps in the following sections of this article. If you do not have one, you can create one using any Windows Me-based computer to which you have access. To create a Windows Me startup disk, follow these steps:

1. Click **Start**, point to **Settings**, and then click **Control Panel**.
2. Double-click **Add/Remove Programs**.
3. On the **Startup Disk** tab, click **Create Disk**, and then follow the on-screen instructions.

Extract Files By Using Startup Disk

To start your computer with CD-ROM support and then extract files, follow these steps:

1. Insert the Windows Me startup disk into drive A, and then restart your computer.
2. When the Microsoft Windows Me Startup menu appears, choose **Start computer with CD-ROM support**.

NOTE: If your computer was purchased with Windows Me installed, the cabinet files may be installed in the following folder: Windows\Options\Install. If these files are on your computer, you do not have to have CD-ROM support at this step, and you can extract the files that you have to have from the Windows\Options\Install folder. Choose **Start computer without CD-ROM support**, and then continue to step 4 without doing step 3.

3. Insert the Windows Me CD-ROM into the CD-ROM drive.
4. At the command prompt, type ext, press ENTER, and then follow the on-screen instructions.

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Windows 98 and Windows 98 Second Edition

In Windows

To extract files in Windows 98 or Windows 98 Second Edition, use the System File Checker tool. To do this, follow these steps:

1. Click **Start**, and then click **Run**.
2. Type `sfc`, and then press ENTER.
3. Click **Extract one file from installation disk**.
4. In the **Specify the system file you would like to restore** box, type `drive:\windows\path\file` (where *drive* is the drive on which the Windows folder is installed, generally drive C, *path* is the location in the Windows folder is the destination of the file that you are extracting, and *file* is the file that you want to extract).
5. Click **Start**. Next to the **Restore from** box, click **Browse**, and then locate the Windows installation files. If you are using an OEM version of Windows 98 or Windows 98 Second Edition, the installation files are on the hard disk in C:\Cabs, by default. If you are using a retail full version or upgrade version, you can also insert the Windows installation CD-ROM into the CD-ROM drive or DVD-ROM drive, and then locate the Windows installation files.
6. Click **OK**, and then follow the on-screen instructions.

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Cannot Start Windows

When you install Windows 98, you are prompted to create a Windows 98 startup disk. A feature included in the Windows 98 startup disk is support for CD-ROM drives. This may be of benefit if you have to extract a file from the Windows 98 CD-ROM but you cannot use System File Checker tool (for example, if your computer does not start properly).

NOTE: The Windows 98 startup disk provides support for most types of CD-ROM drives, including IDE and SCSI CD-ROM drives, but it may not support your particular CD-ROM drive.

Create a Startup Disk

You must have a Windows 98 startup disk to perform the steps in the following sections of this article. If you do not have one, you can create one by using any Windows 98-based computer to which you have access. To create a Windows 98 startup disk, follow these steps:

1. Click **Start**, point to **Settings, and then click Control Panel**.
2. Double-click **Add/Remove Programs**.
3. On the **Startup Disk** tab, click **Create Disk**, and then follow the on-screen instructions.

NOTE: If you do not have a startup disk or access to a Windows 98-based computer, you may be able to create one from the MS-DOS prompt on your computer. For additional information about how to create a startup disk in MS-DOS for Windows 98, click the article number below to view the article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

[Q186300](#) How to Create a Windows 98 Startup Disk from MS-DOS for Windows 98

Extract Files by Using Startup Disk

To start your computer with CD-ROM support and then extract files, follow these steps:

1. Insert the Windows 98 startup disk into drive A, and then restart your computer.
2. When the Microsoft Windows 98 Startup menu appears, choose **Start computer with CD-ROM support**.

NOTE: If your computer was purchased with Windows 98 installed, the cabinet files may be installed in the following folder: C:\Cabs. If these files are on your computer, you do not have to have CD-ROM support at this step, and you can extract the files that you have to have from the folder on the hard disk. Choose **Start computer without CD-ROM support**, and then continue to step 4 without doing step 3.

3. Insert the Windows 98 CD-ROM into the CD-ROM drive.
4. Type `ext` at the command prompt, press ENTER, and then follow the on-screen instructions.

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Windows 95

To extract files in Windows 95, use the **extract** command. To do this, follow these steps.

In Windows

1. Click **Start**, point to **Find**, and then click **Files or Folders**.
2. In the **Look in** box, click **Drive C**. Click to select the **Include subfolders** check box.
3. In the **Named** box, type `.cab` to search for cabinet files.
4. Click **Find Now**. If the cabinet files do not exist on the hard disk, insert the Windows installation CD-ROM, and then repeat the search on the CD-ROM drive.
5. When you find the cabinet files, note the location of the file (for example, `C:\Cabs`). This is your source path.
6. In the **Named** box, type `extract.exe` to search for extract command program.
7. Click **Find Now**. If the extract command does not exist on the hard disk, copy the `Extract.exe` file from disk 1 or the Windows 95 CD-ROM to the root folder of drive C. To copy the `Extract.exe` file from disk 1 to the root folder of drive C, type the following command at the MS-DOS prompt:

```
copy cd_drive:\extract.exe hard_disk:\
```

where *cd_drive* is the drive that contains the Windows 95 CD-ROM or disk and *hard_disk* is your hard disk. For example:

```
copy a:\extract.exe c:\
```

8. Click **Start**, and then click **Run**.
9. The general form of the **extract** command is:

```
extract source_path\file /L c:\windows\command
```

For example, if the source path is `C:\Cabs`, the extract command is

```
extract drive:\cabs\file /L drive:\windows\path
```

where *drive* is the drive on which Windows is installed (typically drive C), *path* is the destination folder for the extracted file, and *file* is the file that you want to extract.

Type the following command, and make the appropriate substitutions as previously noted:

```
extract source_path\file /L c:\windows\command
```

10. Click **OK**.

Access Denied Error

The Extract tool has only a command-line interface. That is, there is no graphical user interface (GUI). Because Windows does not allow you to delete or overwrite a file that is in use, you may have to restart your computer in Command Prompt Only mode before you can use the Extract tool. If you receive an "access denied" error message when you try to delete a file before using the Extract tool, or when you use the Extract tool to overwrite an existing file, restart your computer in Command Prompt Only mode and then use the Extract tool. To do this, follow these steps:

1. Click **Start**, and then click **Shut Down**.
2. Click **Restart**, and then click **OK**.
3. When you receive the "Starting Windows 95" message, press the F8 key, and then choose **Command Prompt Only**.

NOTE: If you are extracting Windows files from a CD-ROM, make sure that you can change directories to your CD-ROM drive from the command prompt. For example, type the following, pressing ENTER after each line:

```
cd drive:  
dir
```

where *drive* is the drive letter of your CD-ROM drive.

If you receive an "invalid drive specification" error message, you may not have real-mode CD-ROM support. For additional information about real-mode CD-ROM support, click the article number below to view the article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

[Q135174](#) Cannot Access CD-ROM Drive from MS-DOS Mode or Command Prompt

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Cannot Start Windows

When you install Windows 95, you are prompted to create a Windows 95 startup disk. A feature included in the Windows 95 startup disk is support for CD-ROM drives. This may be of benefit if you have to extract a file from the Windows 95 CD-ROM but you are cannot use the preceding steps (for example, if your computer does not start properly).

NOTE: The Windows 95 startup disk provides support for most types of CD-ROM drives, including IDE and SCSI CD-ROM drives, but it may not support your particular CD-ROM drive.

Create a Startup Disk

You must have a Windows 95 startup disk to perform the steps in the following sections of this article. If you do not have one, you can create one by using any Windows 95-based computer to which you have access. To create a Windows 95 startup disk, follow these steps:

1. Click **Start**, point to **Settings**, and then click **Control Panel**.
2. Double-click **Add/Remove Programs**.
3. On the **Startup Disk** tab, click **Create Disk**, and then follow the on-screen instructions.

NOTE: If you do not have a startup disk or access to a Windows 95-based computer, you may be able to create one from the MS-DOS prompt on your computer. For additional information about how to create a startup disk in MS-DOS for Windows 95, click the article number below to view the article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

[Q284943](#) How to Create a Windows 95 Startup Disk in MS-DOS

Extract Files by Using Startup Disk

To start your computer with CD-ROM support and then extract files, follow these steps:

1. Insert the Windows 95 startup disk into drive A, and then restart your computer.
2. When the Microsoft Windows 95 Startup menu appears, choose **Start computer with CD-ROM support**.

NOTE: If your computer was purchased with Windows 95 installed, the cabinet files may be installed in the following folder: C:\cabs. If these files are on your computer, you do not have to have CD-ROM support at this step, and you can extract the files that you have to have from the folder on the hard disk. Choose **Start computer without CD-ROM support**, and then continue to step 4 without doing step 3.

3. Insert the Windows 95 CD-ROM into the CD-ROM drive.
4. The general form of the **extract** command is:

```
extract source path\file /L c:\windows\command
```

For example, if the source path is C:\Cabs, the extract command is

```
a:\extract drive:\cabs\file /L drive:\windows\path
```

where *drive* is the drive on which Windows is installed (typically drive C), *path* is the destination folder for the extracted file, and *file* is the file you want to extract.

Type the following command at the command prompt, making the appropriate substitutions as previously noted, and then press ENTER:

```
a:\extract source path\ file /L c:\windows\command
```

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