

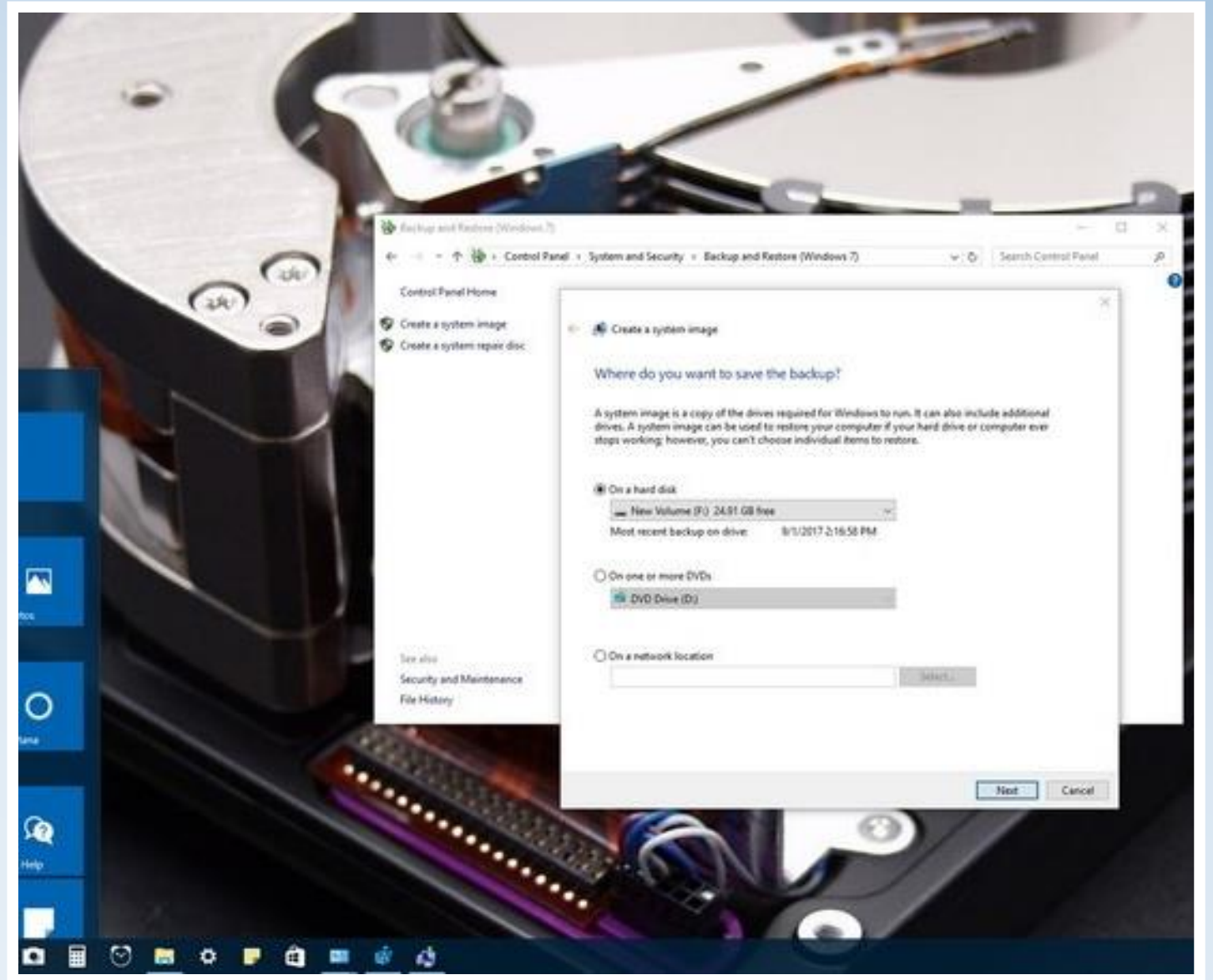
How to make a full backup of your Windows 10 PC

Palm Creek Computer Club
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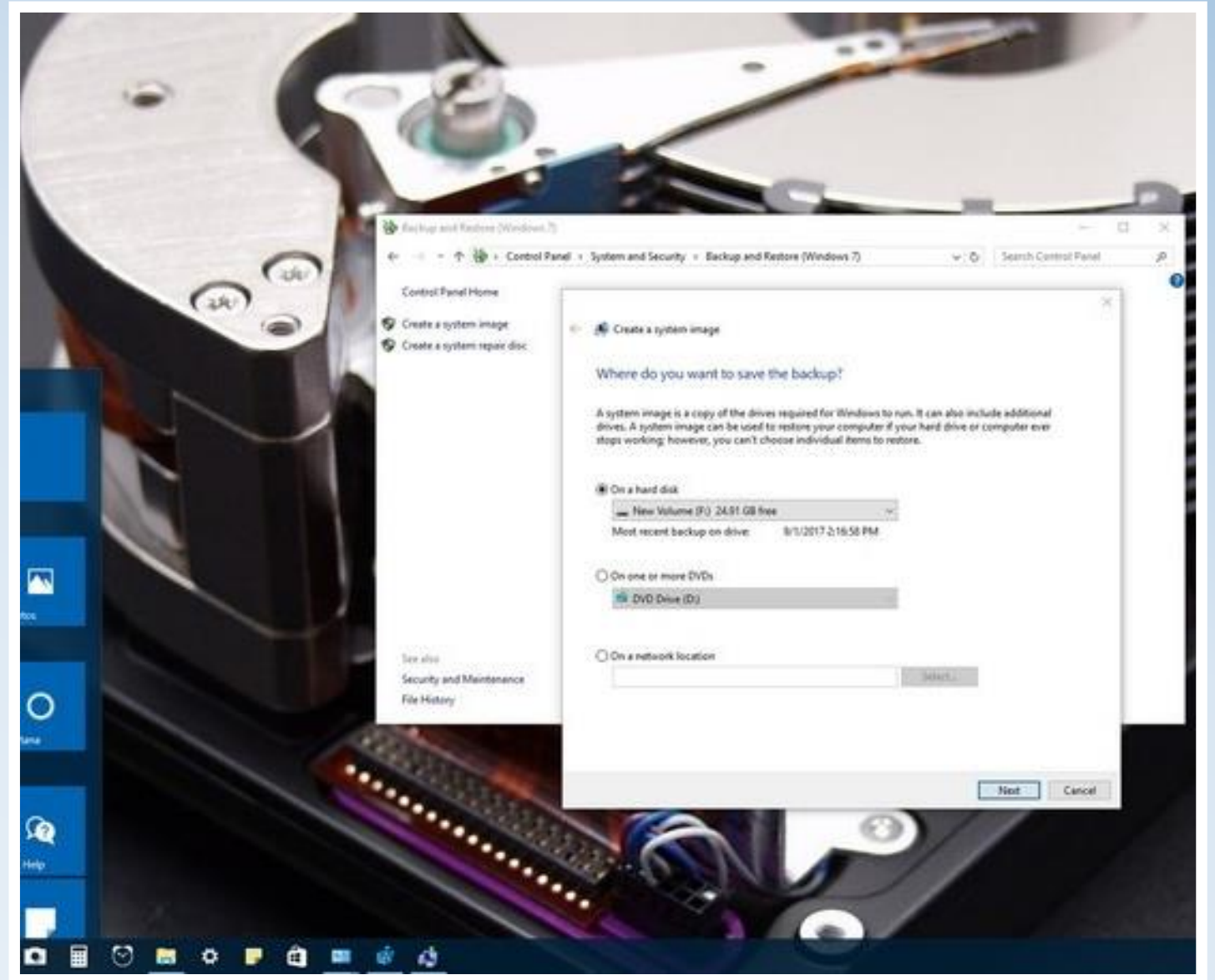
It's not the question of *if*, but *when*. Sooner or later the hard drive on your computer will fail, malware may take control of your system, or a critical error may corrupt your data. If you don't make regular backups, you could lose important documents, irreplaceable pictures, and settings that you may have spent hours configuring on your device.

On Windows 10, there are plenty ways to backup your system and data without having to resort to third-party solutions, and the built-in system image tool is one of them.



A system image is a backup that contains everything stored on your computer, including the full installation of Windows 10, settings, applications, and all your files, as well as any additional drives you may have connected. If your computer fails, you can use the system image backup to restore your computer, getting you up and running in a matter of minutes on the same or different hard drive.

In this Windows 10 guide, we walk you through the steps to create a full backup, including all your settings, apps, and files, using the built-in system image tool.

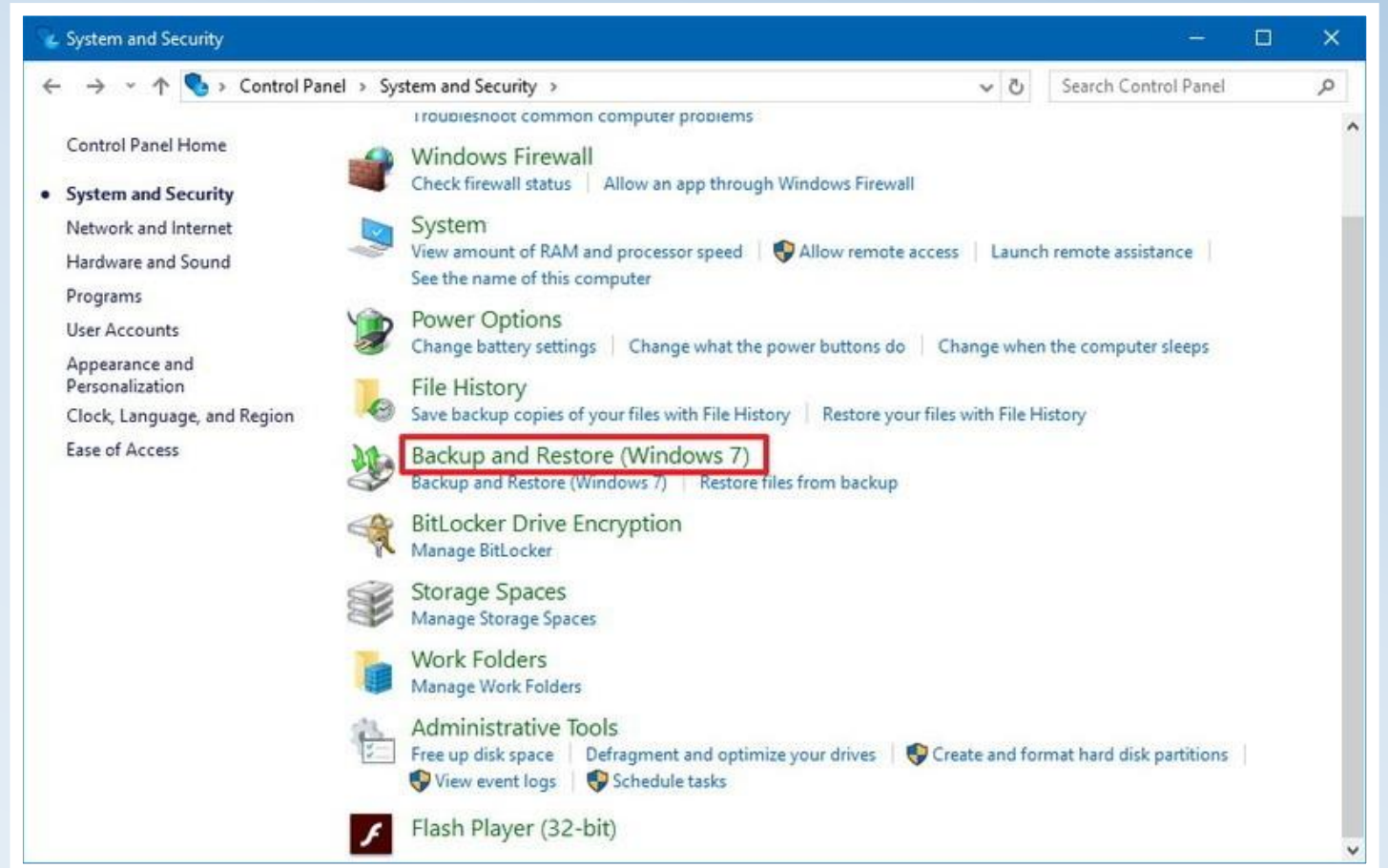


How to create a system image backup of Windows 10

While you can store the backup on a secondary drive, network location, and even use blank DVDs, it's best to connect to external storage, which you can quickly disconnect and store in a safe place.

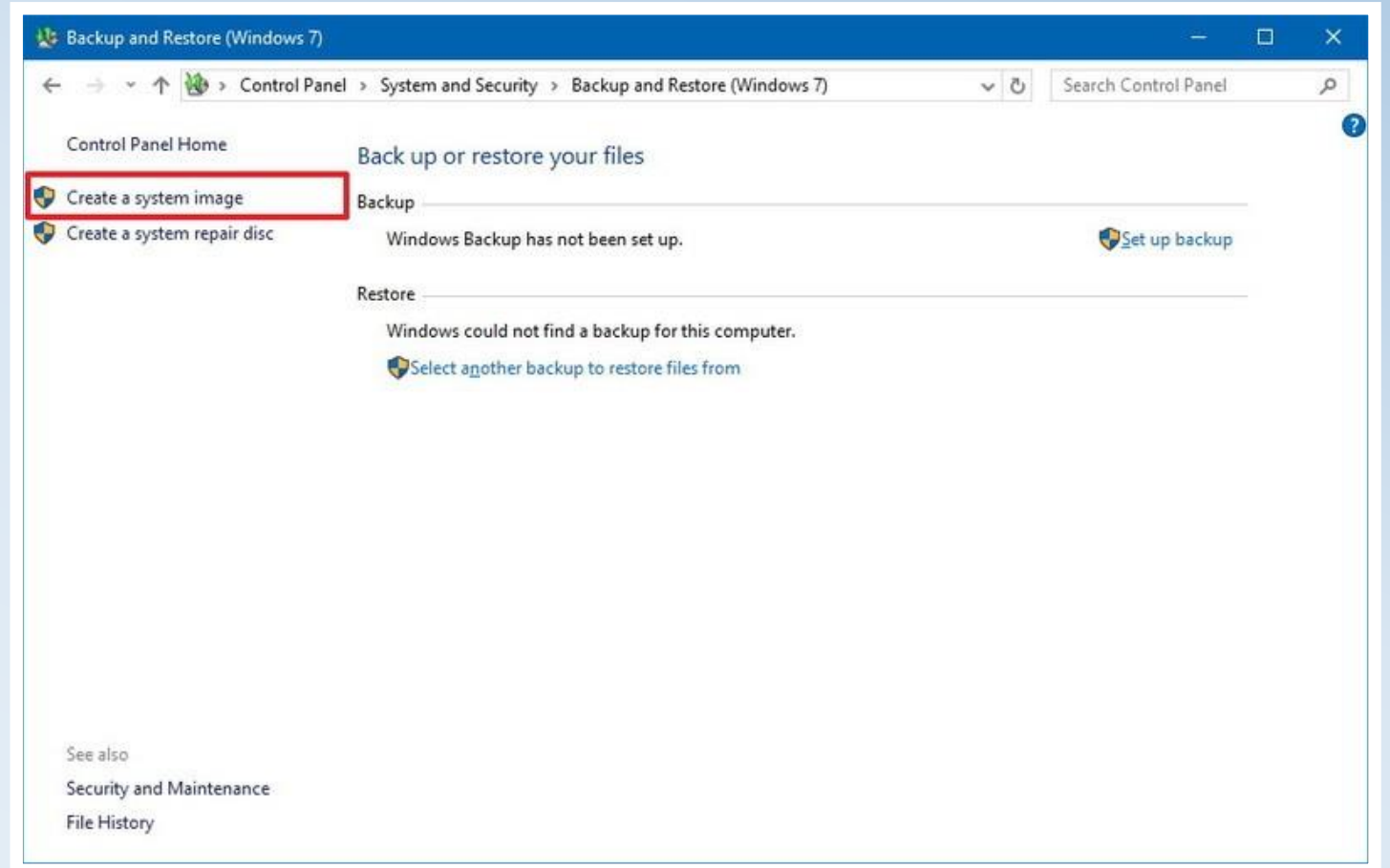
To create a full backup using Windows 10's system image tool, you need to connect external storage with enough available space and then use these steps. (If you don't know exactly how much space will be needed to store the backup, you can always connect the drive, and the wizard will let you know.) Here's how:

1. Open **Control Panel**.
2. Click on **System and Security**.
3. Click on **Backup and Restore (Windows 7)**



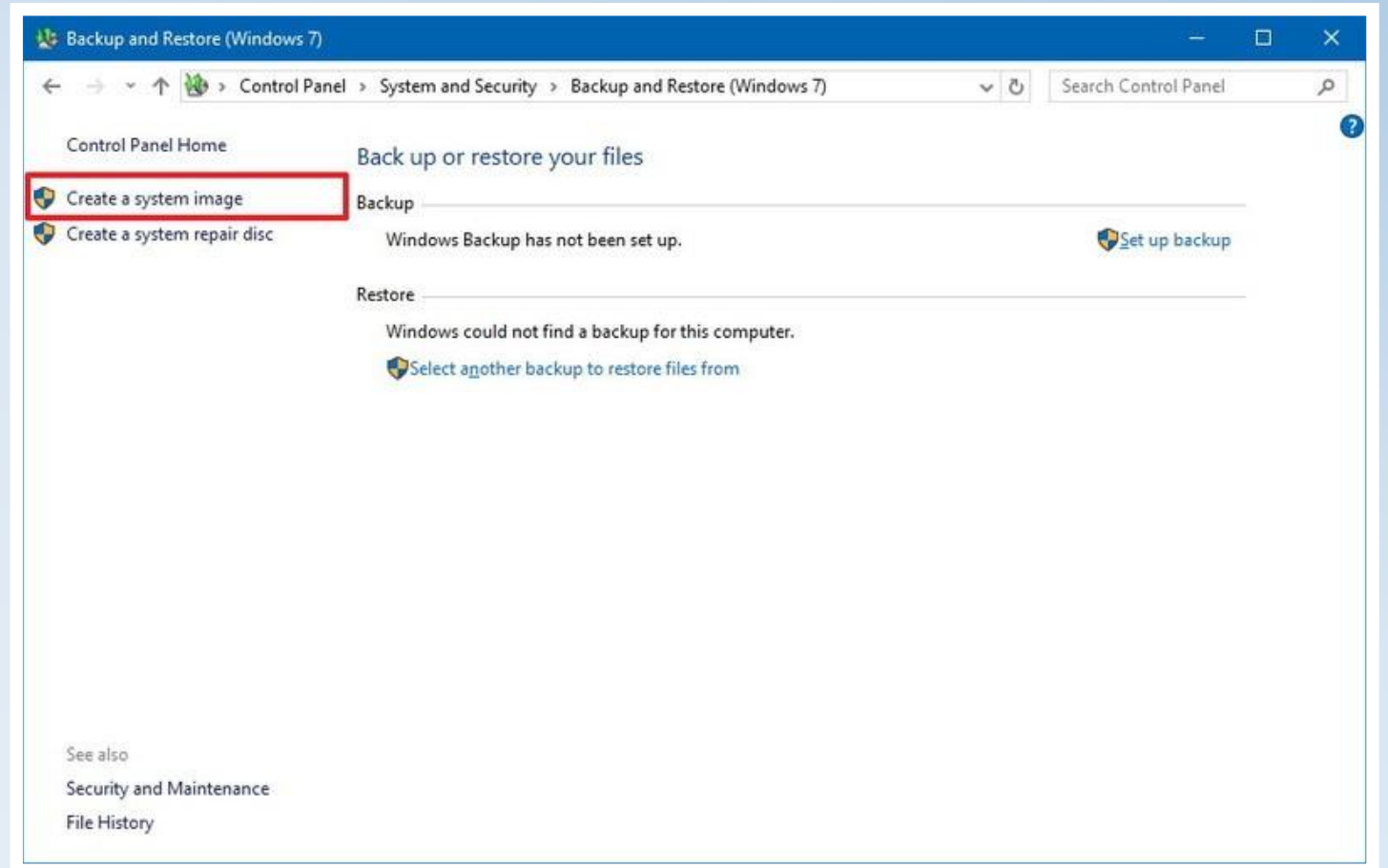
How to create a system image backup of Windows 10

4. On the left pane, click the **Create a system image** link.
5. Under "Where do you want to save the backup?" select the **On a hard disk** option.
6. Using the "On a hard disk" drop-down menu, select the storage to save the backup.

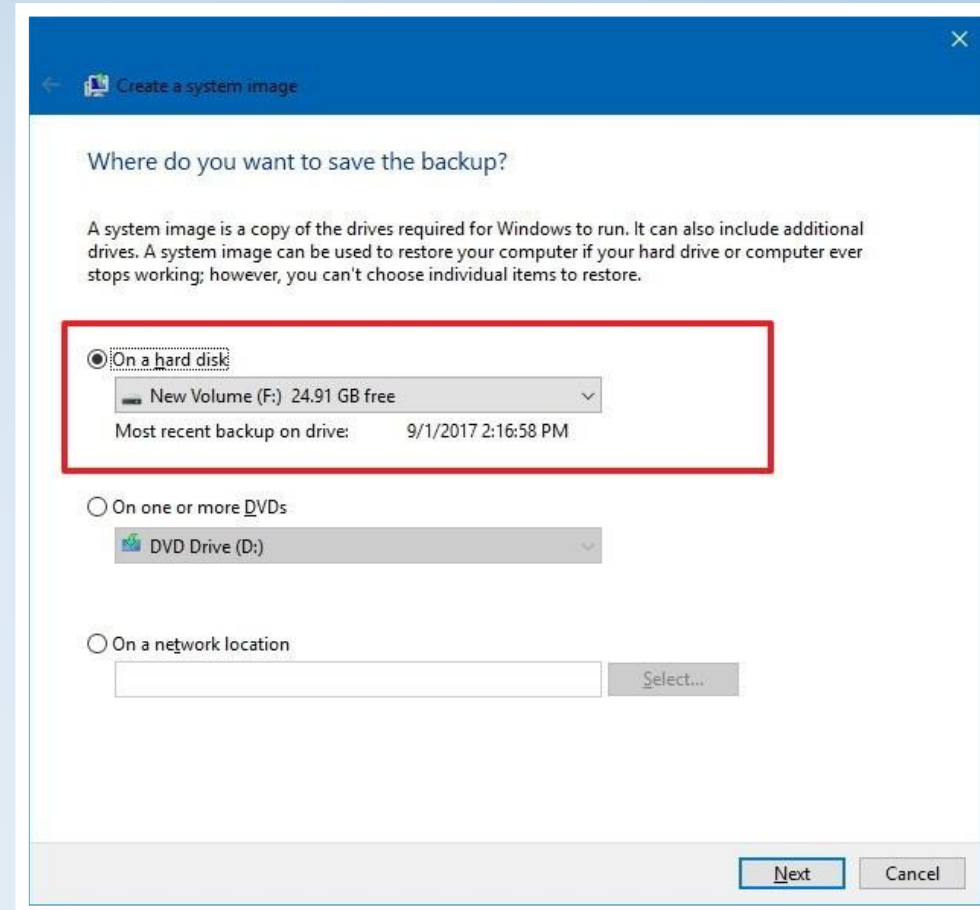


7. Click the **Start** backup button

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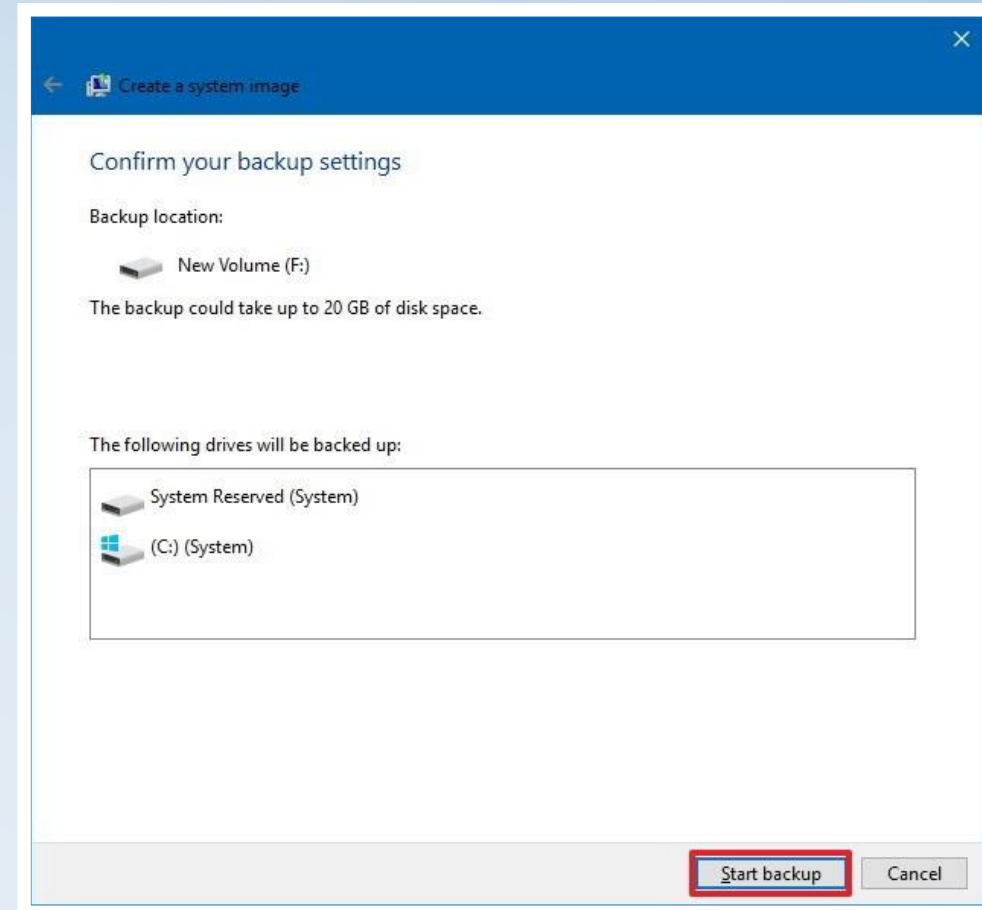
How to create a system image backup of Windows 10



How to create a system image backup of Windows 10

Once you completed these steps, the wizard will proceed to create a full backup of your system, including everything that is stored on the main drive, as well as the system reserved partition.

During the backup process, Windows 10 will also use Shadow Copy, a technology that allows you to create a backup while files are still in use, which means that you can continue to work normally as the image is being created.

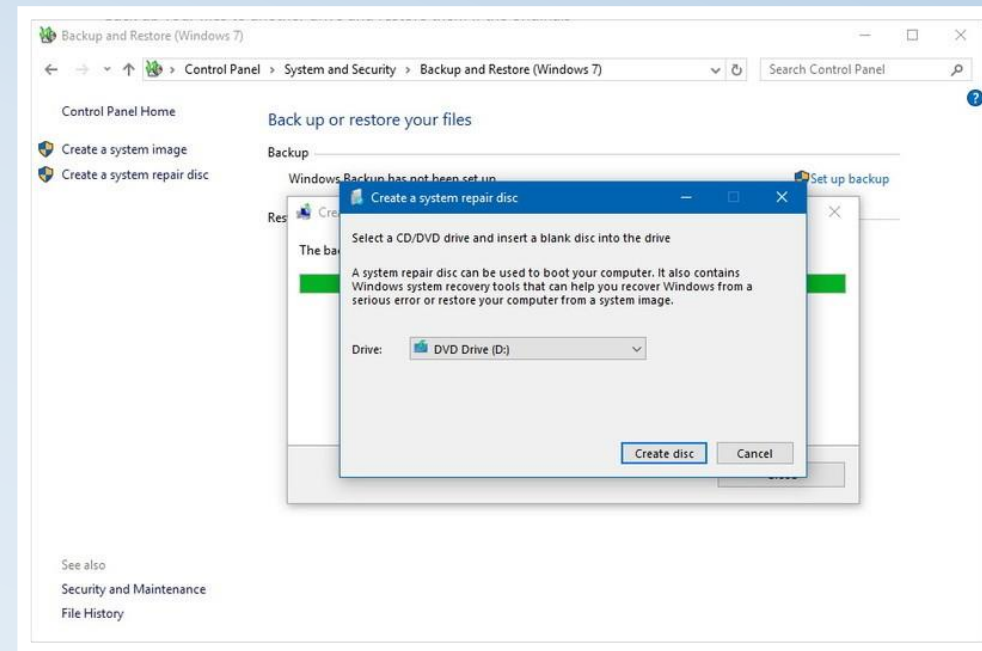


How to create a system image backup of Windows 10

After the backup is done, you'll be prompted to create a system repair disk to access the recovery options if your computer is unable to boot. While it's recommended to create the repair disc, you can always access the recovery options using a bootable USB drive with the installation files for Windows 10.

Quick tip: You can always create a repair disc by clicking the **Create a system repair disc** link within the **Backup and Restore (Windows 7)** settings page.

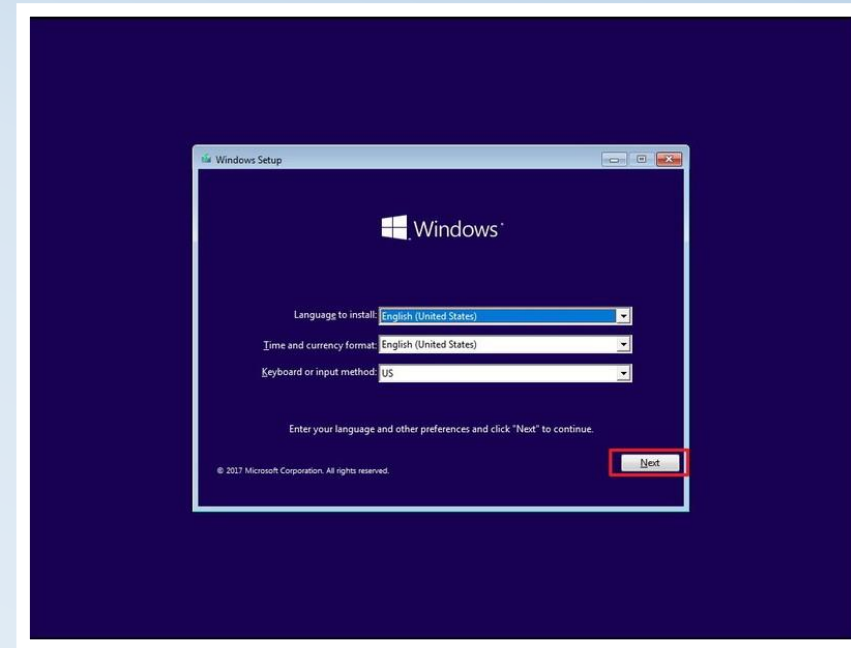
Finally, remember to disconnect the external backup drive and store it in a safe place.



How to restore a system image backup of Windows 10

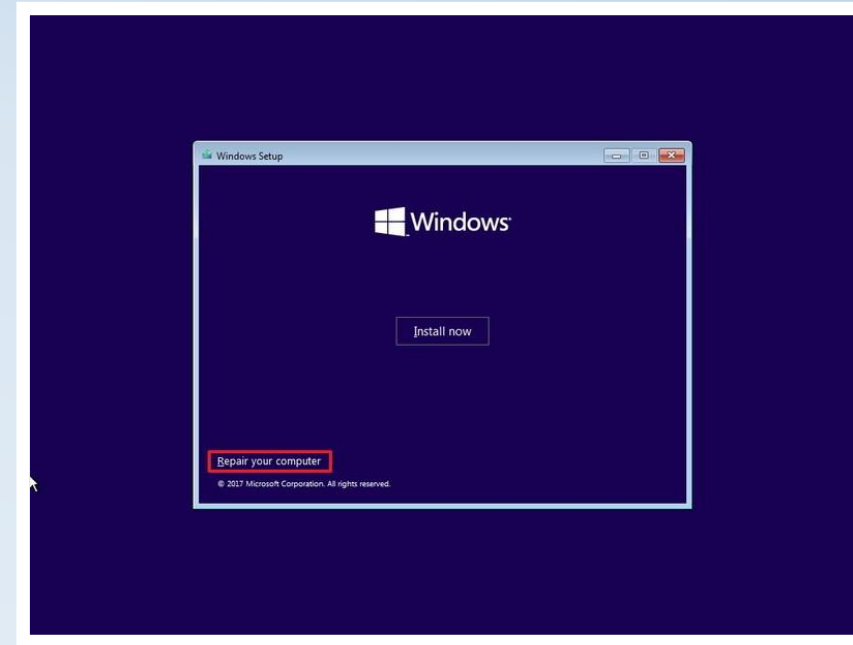
If your computer won't boot, you want to start over with a previous installation, or you're replacing the main hard drive on your device, use these steps to recover from a backup:

1. Connect the external drive with the system image backup to your device.
2. Connect the disk that contains the system repair files (or USB bootable drive with the Windows 10 installation files) to your device.
3. Reboot your computer.
 1. Quick tip: If your device isn't booting into the Windows Setup wizard, you'll need to change your system's BIOS settings to make sure it can boot from the USB or DVD drive. Usually, you can access the BIOS by starting your device and hitting one of the functions or ESC keys, but make sure to check your manufacturer's support website for more information.
4. On the "Windows Setup" page, click the **Next** button.



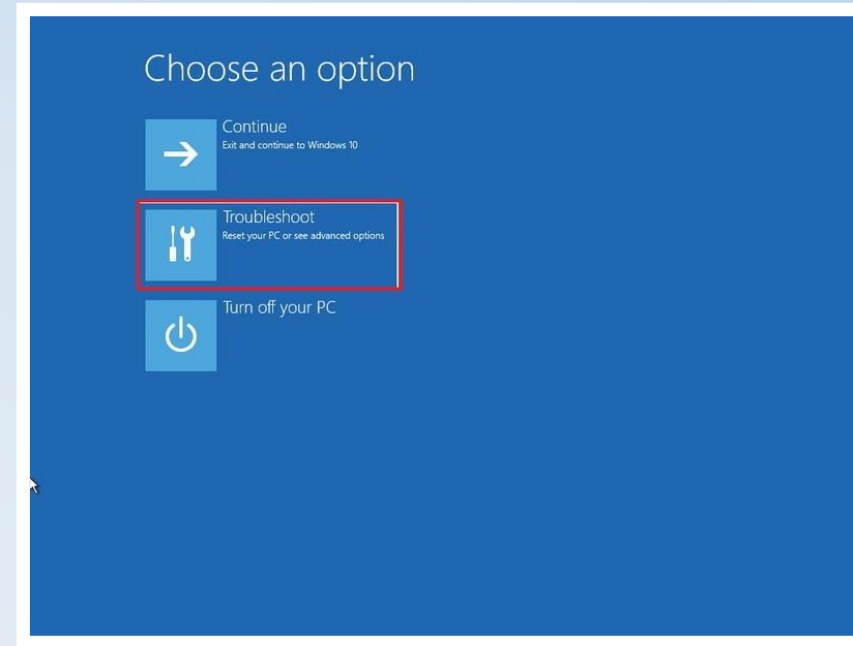
How to restore a system image backup of Windows 10

5. Click the **Repair your computer** link located at the bottom-left corner.



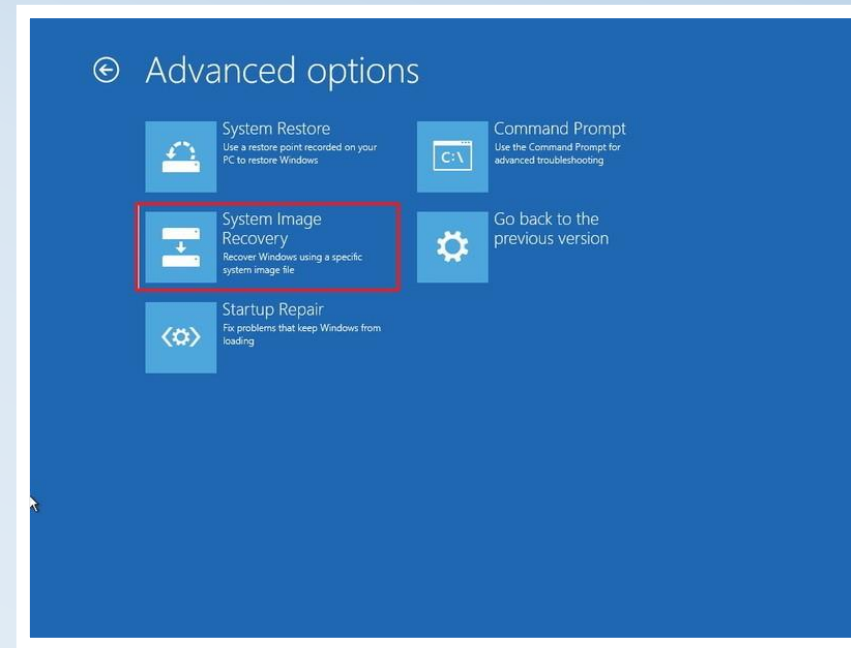
Click the **Troubleshoot** option.

How to restore a system image backup of Windows 10



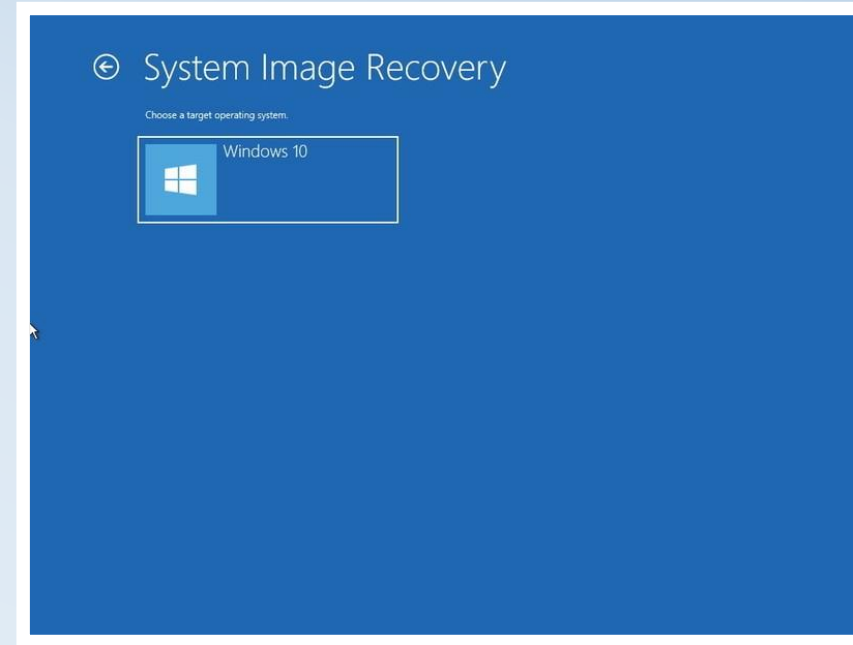
Click the **System Image Recovery** option.

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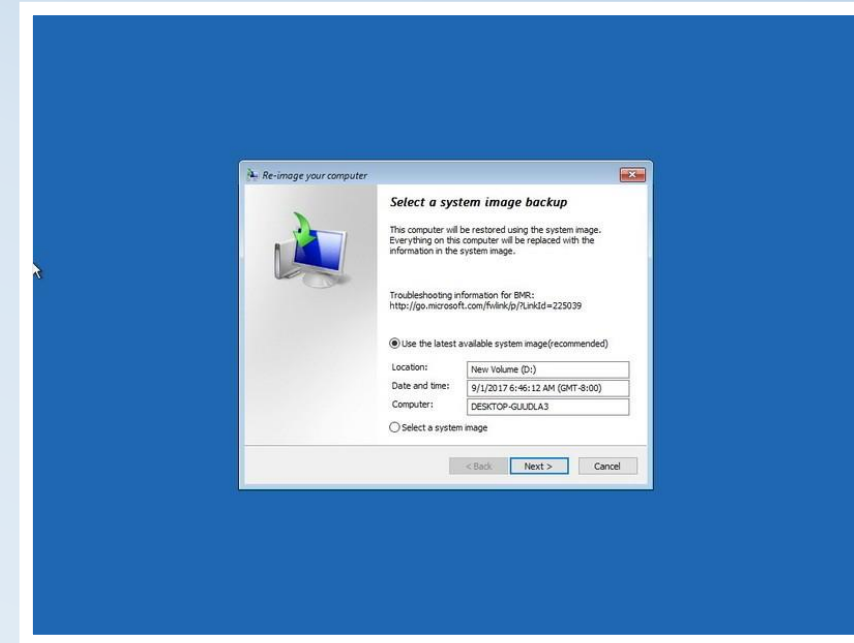
Choose the target OS. (In this case, Windows 10.)



How to restore a system image backup of Windows 10

On the "Re-image your computer" page, select the **Use the latest available system image** option.

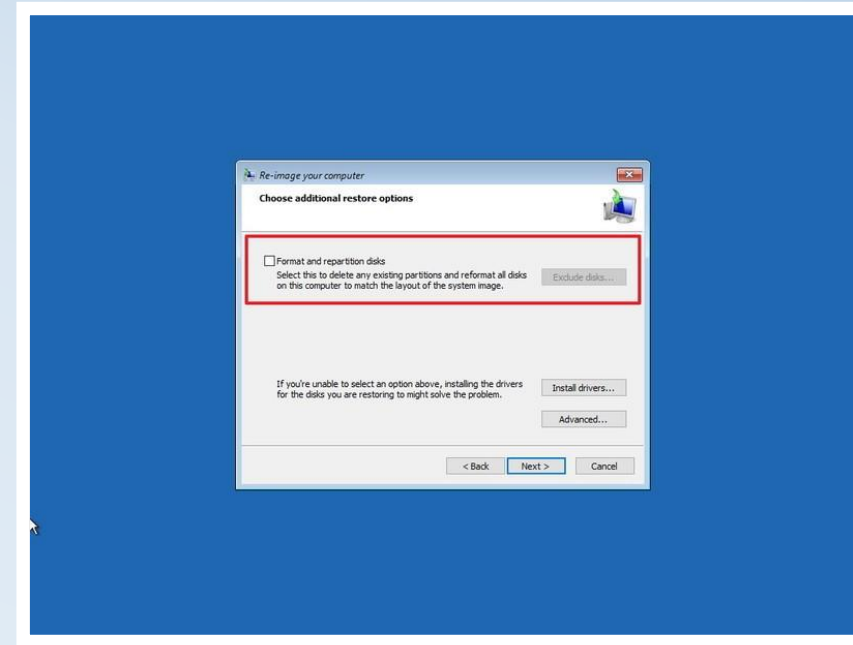
Click **Next**.



How to restore a system image backup of Windows 10

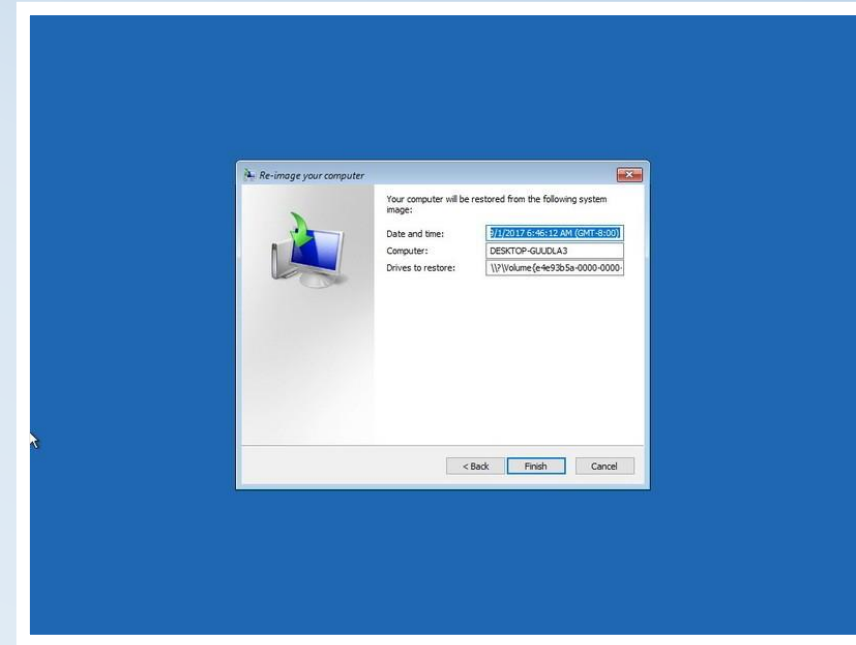
If you're restoring a full backup to a new drive, you can also select the **Format and repartition disks** option. (Use this option carefully, as it will erase any existing partitions and disks on your computer.)

Click **Next**.



Click **Finish**.

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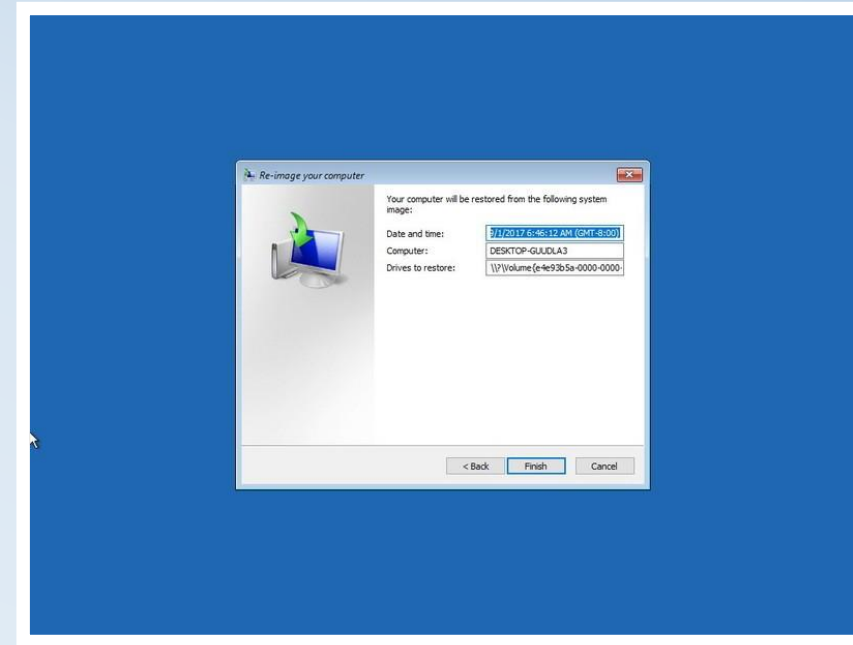
How to restore a system image backup of Windows 10

Click **Finish**.

Click **Yes** to confirm that the backup will replace the data on the drive.

After completing these steps, the recovery process will begin. Remember that the time to finish the recovery will depend upon the amount of data and your hardware configuration.

If it's been a while since the last time you created a full backup, remember to use Windows Update on the Settings app to download the latest security patches.



Wrapping Up

Usually, a system image backup comes in handy to create a copy of your entire system before upgrading to a new version of Windows 10 in case something goes wrong or you want to rollback to a previous version if your device is experiencing issues after Windows 10 automatically deletes the previous installation.

It's also a good idea to create a full backup regularly in case of system or hardware failure, or after spending many hours configuring your system with a clean installation and applications. Then if something goes wrong, malware sneaks in, or you simply want to start from scratch, you can always restore your system in minutes with all your settings and apps, including those traditional desktop programs.

The only caveat with this particular feature is that you must be proactive making full backups regularly, as you can only recover your system and files since the last backup you created. Any documents, settings, and apps you may have created, changed, or installed after the backup won't be recoverable through this process.

In addition, this is a feature designed to recover your entire system, not to restore files, settings, and applications individually.

If you want to keep an up-to-date copy of your files, you should think about using the system image tool in combination with [File History](#) or [OneDrive](#).



Questions???