

How to use File History to back up data in Windows 11

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Compared to third-party backup applications, the Windows 11 File History feature is easier to set up and use. After configuring File History on Windows 11, you need to connect a USB drive to your computer, and Windows 11 will automatically back up files to that drive. Below is a guide on using File History to back up Windows 11 data.

What is Windows File History? How does it work?

File History was introduced in Windows 8 as a file backup option. While it still exists (and can be used) in Windows 11, it has been abandoned by Microsoft and is no longer a recommended way to back up Windows computers.

File History backs up your files by periodically copying them to an external hard drive or network share. It keeps these copies for a certain period of time, so if you accidentally delete or modify a file, you can revert to a previous version of the file. If you set up your File History drive to use an external device (such as a USB hard drive or network share on another computer), it also protects you from losing files in case your computer is lost or stolen.

Windows File History is not a comprehensive backup solution and is limited to storing files in the user's default folders. For example, in Windows 11, File History backs up specific folders (e.g., Documents, Desktop, Pictures) by default. While you can include other folders, it's easy to forget to add them when they're created, and this often creates gaps in the backup scope. This makes it one of the least popular Windows backup solutions, but it's still a useful tool when no other options are available.

Instructions on using File History to back up Windows 11 data.

Step 1:

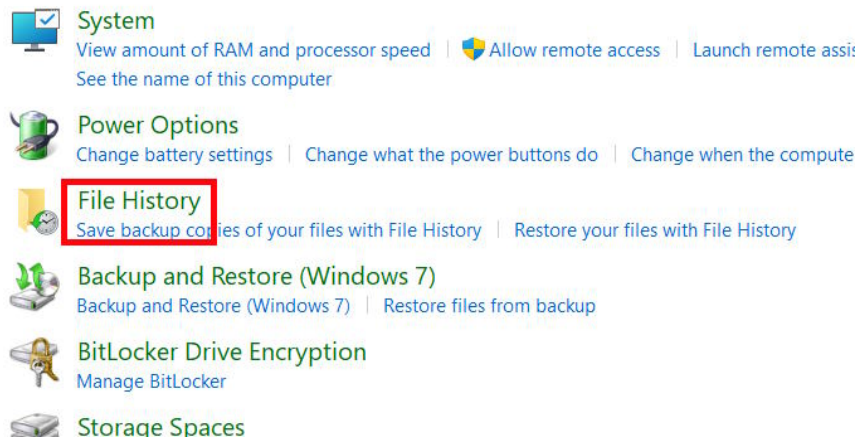
Type "**Control Panel**" into the search bar and then access it . Next, select **System and Security** to make adjustments.

Adjust your computer's settings

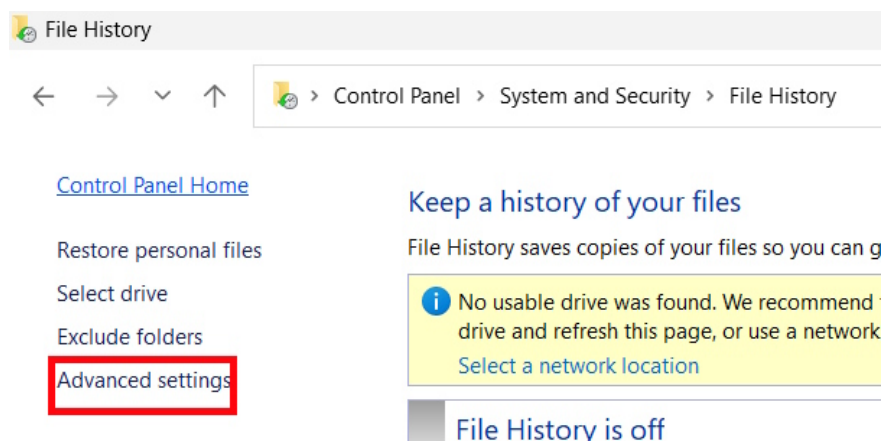


Step 2:

In the next interface, we click on **the File History option** to proceed.



Connect your **external hard drive** and refresh Windows. Click on **Advanced Settings** in the left sidebar.



We need to **set a schedule to run File History**. The default is every hour, and we can change it to your desired time.


Advanced settings

Choose how often you want to save copies of your files, and how long to keep saved versions.


Versions


Save copies of files:

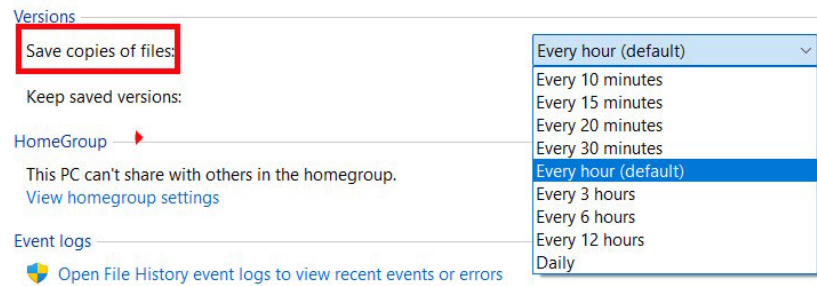
Keep saved versions:

HomeGroup 

This PC can't share with others in the homegroup.
[View homegroup settings](#)


Event logs 

 [Open File History event logs to view recent events or errors](#)





Next, under **Keep saved versions**, choose how long you want to keep the backups.

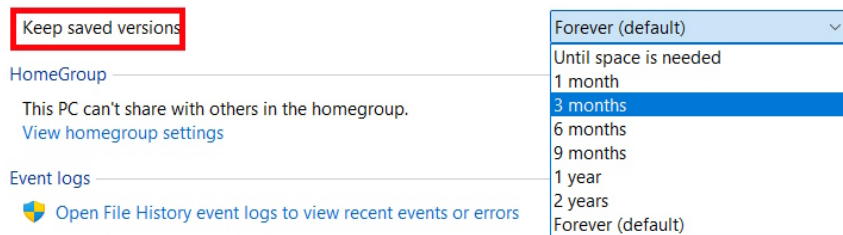
Keep saved versions:

HomeGroup 

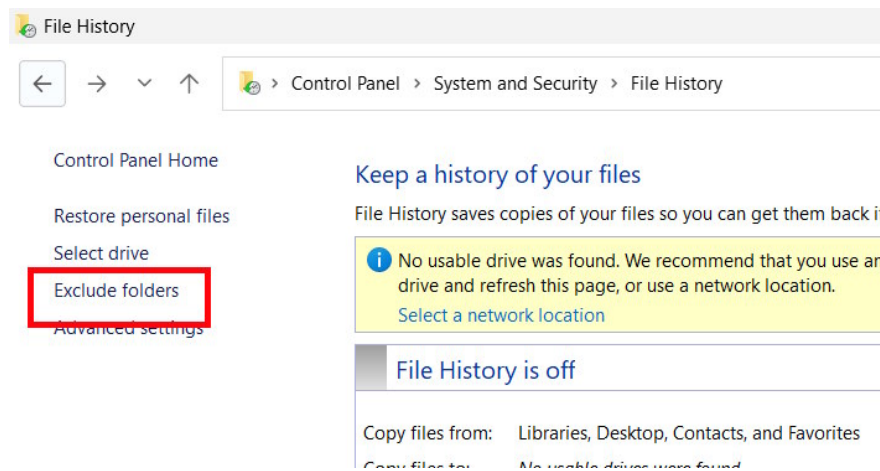
This PC can't share with others in the homegroup.
[View homegroup settings](#)

Event logs 

 [Open File History event logs to view recent events or errors](#)



If you want to **exclude a folder**, click **Exclude folders** and then add the folder to exclude.



Step 3:

Finally, click **Turn on** to enable the File History feature.

Keep a history of your files

File History saves copies of your files so you can get them back if they're lost or damaged.

i No usable drive was found. We recommend that you use an external drive for File History. Connect a drive and refresh this page, or use a network location.
[Select a network location](#)

File History is off

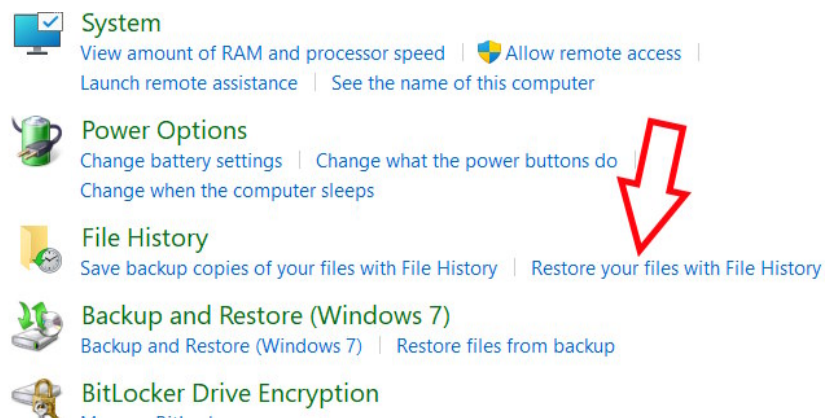
Copy files from: Libraries, Desktop, Contacts, and Favorites
Copy files to: *No usable drives were found.*

[Turn on](#)

File History only backs up files from the Library, Contacts, Desktop, and Favorites folders.

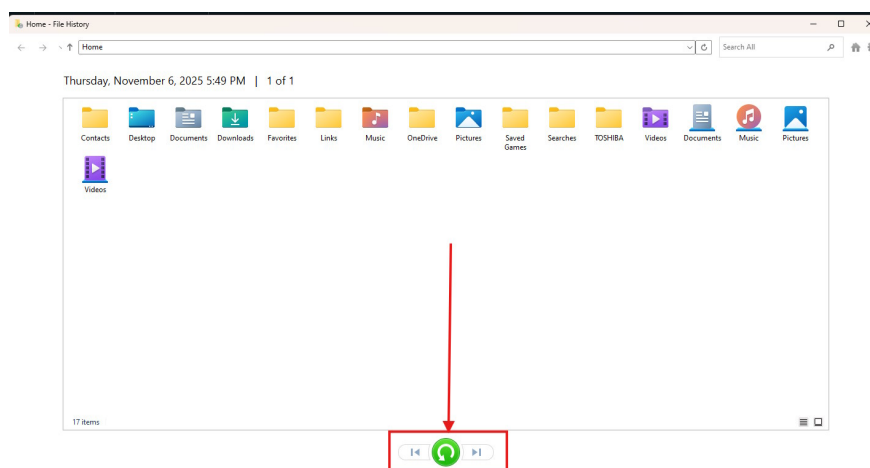
Instructions for recovering data using File History in Windows 11

You can also access the Control Panel, select System and Security, and then click File History. Next, click **Restore your files with File History**.



The screenshot shows the Windows Settings application, specifically the System page. The 'File History' option is highlighted with a red arrow. The 'File History' section includes the text 'Save backup copies of your files with File History' and 'Restore your files with File History'.

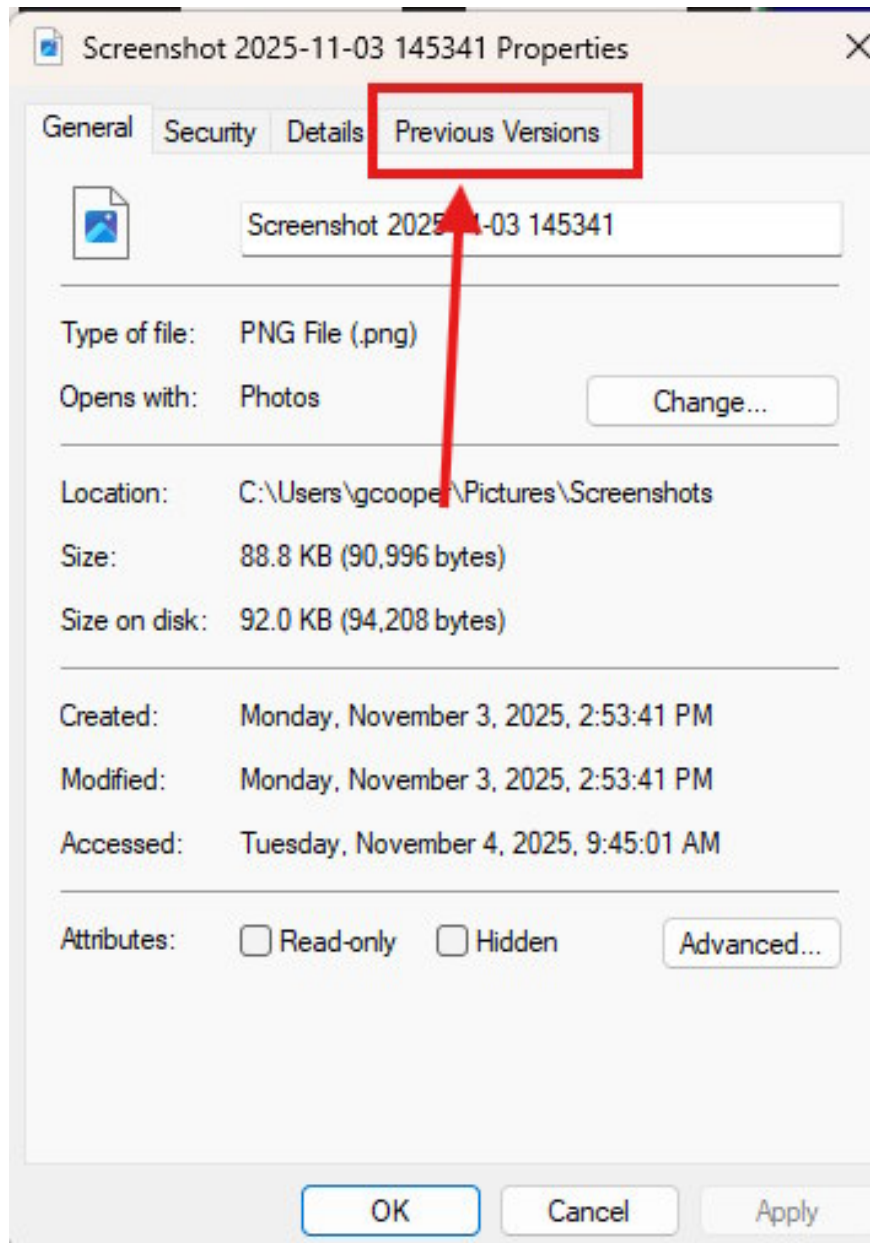
Now, select **the date you want to restore** using the arrow buttons at the bottom, then **click the green button**. This will restore all files from the backup you selected.



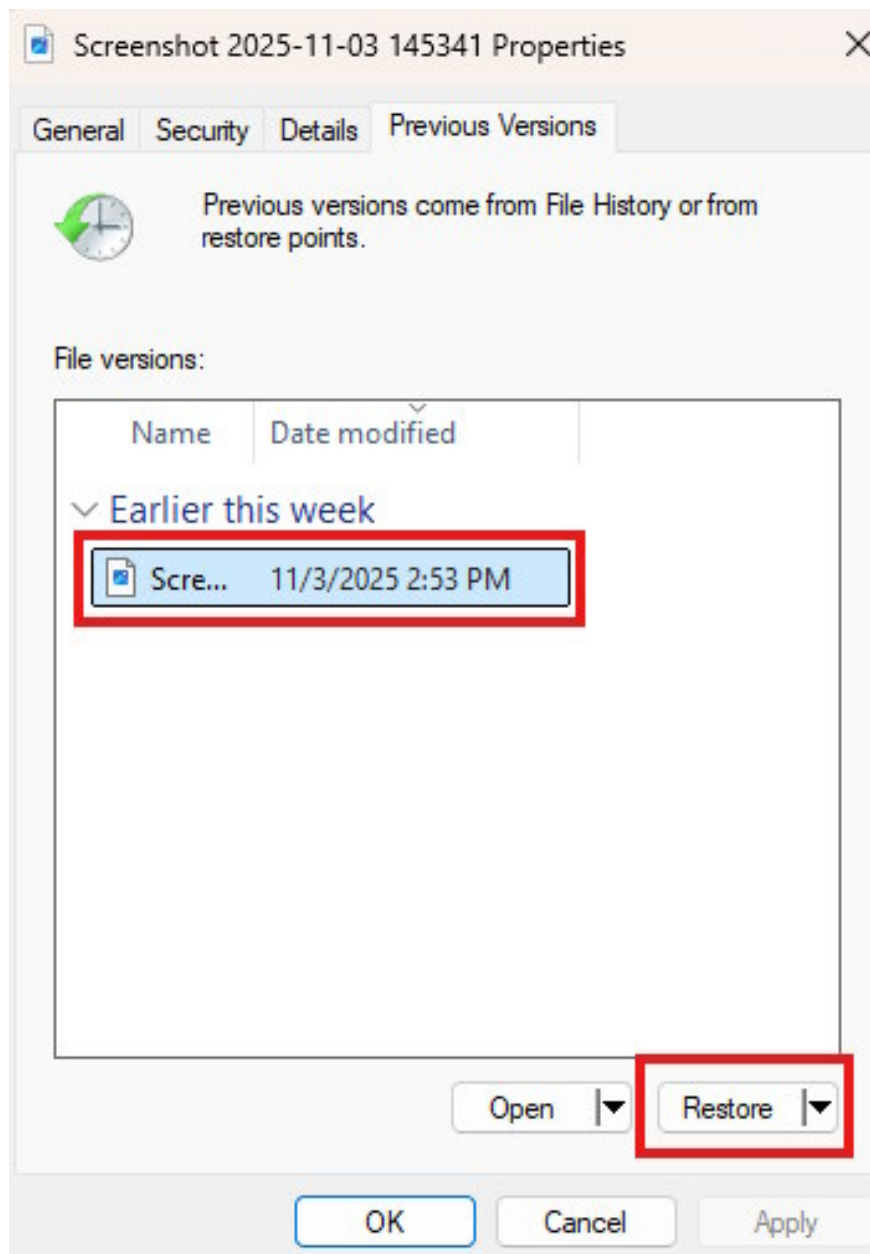
The screenshot shows the Windows File History interface. The 'Home' tab is selected, and the 'File History' section is visible. The 'File History' section includes a list of folders and a 'Restore' button. A red arrow points to the 'Restore' button, which is highlighted with a red box. The 'Restore' button is a green circle with a white play icon.

Instructions on how to recover files or folders using File History

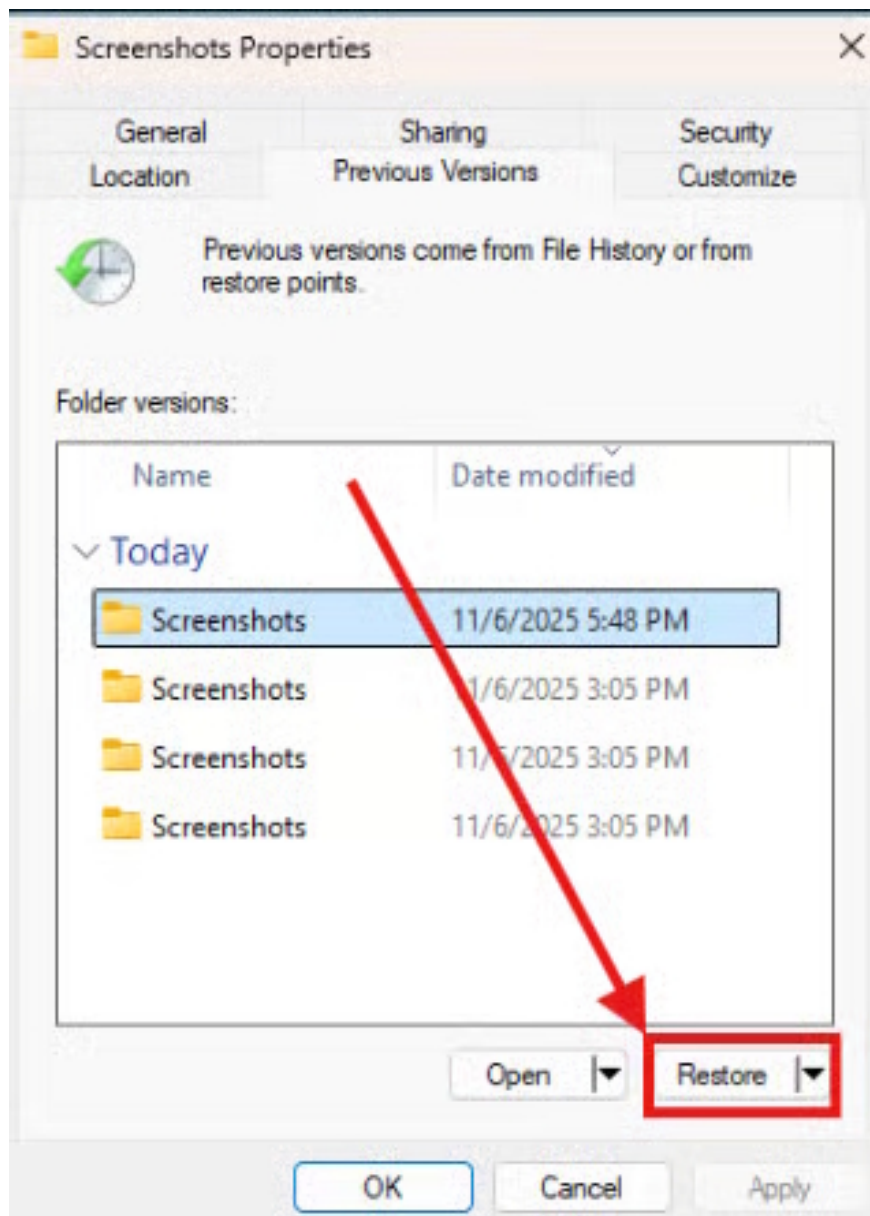
Right- click **on the file** you want to restore and **select Properties** from the list that appears. Then **click on the Previous Versions** tab .



Next, select the version of the file you want to restore, and then **click Restore** .



To **restore** your folder to a previous version, **right-click the folder and select Properties** . Then click **the Previous Versions tab** , select the version of the folder you want to restore, and **click Restore** .



Video tutorial on using Windows File History

You finished reading the article "[How to use File History to back up data in Windows 11](#)" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.