

Restore previous Windows version from Windows 7

This article will show you how to manually restore the previous Windows operating system installation to replace the version of Windows 7 operating system you are using by using the Windows.old folder.

Network Administration - This article will show you how to manually restore the previous Windows operating system installation to replace the version of Windows 7 operating system you are using by using the Windows.old folder.

To follow this method you will need to use the Command Prompt and use some CMD commands to rename and move folders between different versions of Windows operating systems.

Restore Windows 7 to previous installation:

Step 1: Determine whether the Windows.old folder exists on the system and check the free space on the Windows hard disk

1. **Go to Start**, select **Computer** .
2. In the **View** menu , click on **Details** .
3. In the **Free Space** column check the available free space on **Local Disk (C :)** in the **Hard Disk Driver area** .
4. In the **Hard Disk Drives area** , double-click **Local Disk (C :)** and then check if the **Windows.old** folder exists.

Important: *If the **Windows.old** folder does not exist on the system, you cannot follow the steps in this article to restore the system to a previous Windows version. Instead you will have to backup and restore or move the file to the previous operating system.*

1. Right-click on the **Windows.old** folder (already existing).
2. Then Windows 7 will perform a check on the size of this folder.
3. Determine if the size of the **Windows.old** folder is smaller than the **Local Disk (C :) available** space.

Note: *If the Windows.old folder size is greater than twice the available space, you will not be able to perform the restore process.*

Step 2: Launch the Windows Recovery environment

1. Insert the Windows 7 installation disc into the DVD drive and restart the computer.
2. Press any key when you are notified to restart from the disk.
3. In the **Install Windows** window, click **Repair your computer** .

4. In the **System Recovery Options** window click on the version of Windows 7 operating system you want to edit and click **Next** .
5. In the **System Recovery Options** window, click the **Command Prompt** .
6. Then the **Command Prompt** window will appear with the **command prompt** . The **Command Prompt** window is where you will enter the commands that will be described in the next steps.

Step 3: Rename the folders of Windows 7

Note: *When you enter one or more commands into the Command Prompt window below and press Enter you may receive the message **The system cannot find the specified file** (**The system cannot find the specified file**).*

If you see this message, enter the next command.

List of commands to enter into Command Prompt:

1. Enter **c:** then press **Enter** .
2. Enter **Windows renaming** command **Windows.7** and press **Enter** .
3. Enter the **thread** command "**Program Files**" "**Program Files.7**" and press **Enter** .
4. Enter the command **ren** "**Users**" "**Users.7**" and press **Enter** .
5. Finally enter the command "**Documents and Settings**" "**Documents and Settings.7**" and press **Enter** .

Step 4: Copy or move the contents of the Windows.old folder

Note: *In this step, when you enter one or more of the following commands into the Command Prompt window and press Enter, you may also receive the message **The system cannot find the specified file** (**The system cannot find the specified file**).*

If you see this message, enter the next command.

Enter the following commands into the Command Prompt:

1. Enter the **move /y c:windows.oldwindows c:** command and press **Enter** .
2. Enter the **move /y** command "**c: windows.oldprogram files**" **c:** then press **Enter** .
3. Enter the command **move /y c:windows.oldusers c:** and press **Enter** .
4. Enter the **move /y 'c: windows.olddocuments and settings' c:** command and press **Enter** .

Step 5: Restore Boot Sector for the previously installed Windows version

Select one of the following commands (appropriate for your situation) and then enter the Command Prompt.

Note: *In the commands listed below, D: represents the DVD drive. If the DVD drive on your system is F: then use this label.*

If the previously installed Windows version is **Windows Server 2003** , **Windows XP** , or **Microsoft Windows 2000** , enter the following command in the **Command Prompt** and press **Enter** :

D: bootsect / nt52 c:

If the previously installed Windows version is **Windows Vista** , use the following command:

D: bootsect / nt60 c:

Step 6: Restore the Boot.ini file for a previously installed Windows version (including Windows XP and Windows 2000)

Note: *This step is only required if the Windows operating system version installed on the previous system is Windows XP or Windows 2000 .*

Run the following commands in **Command Prompt** :

1. Enter **c:** then press **Enter** .
2. Enter the command **attrib boot.ini.saved -s -h -r** and press **Enter** .
3. Enter the command **ren "boot.ini.saved" "boot.ini"** and press **Enter** .
4. Enter the **attrib boot.ini + s + h + r** command and press **Enter** .

Step 7: Close the Command Prompt window then restart the system

1. On the **Command Prompt** window enter the **exit** command and press **Enter** .
2. Click **Restart** to restart the system.

This method can be applied to restore the system back to previously installed Windows versions while using Windows 7 Enterprise, Windows 7 Home Basic, Windows 7 Home Premium, Windows 7 Professional, Windows 7 Starter, Windows 7 Ultimate.

If you cannot restore Windows 7 this way, you can proceed to reinstall Windows 7 according to the following instructions: [How to install Windows 7 from USB](#)

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