

How to Format Windows

Windows Xp, Vista, Seven

8/14/2011

<http://Tips4pc.com>

Mitz



Disclaimer:

The following tutorial on how to format Windows has been developed and refined over a period of 10 years. Every time I realized there was a minor piece of information missing, I would add it to the tutorial. Even though these instructions are precise, I have no idea about your computer skills and your ability to follow instructions. Therefore if you use these instructions to format your computer I cannot be held responsible for your outcome.

Please use these instructions at your own risk.

Contents

Contents.....	2
Disclosure Policy.....	4
How to navigate	4
Why should you format a computer and what does it mean?	4
<i>Reasons why you might need to format a computer:.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Things you will need before you format a computer:.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Programs and data you need to restore after formatting your computer:</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>How much does a computer IT person charge to format a computer?.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Notes:</i>	<i>5</i>
How to Format a Computer Using a Windows XP disc	6
<i>Stop! Backup before you learn how to format windows xp!</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>How to format a windows xp computer – Find the system disc</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>How to format windows xp using a Windows XP disc</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Notes on how to format windows xp.....</i>	<i>9</i>
How to get into your BIOS and change settings.....	9
<i>What is the main reason you would enter the BIOS?</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>How to access my computer BIOS?.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Tips to getting in your BIOS:</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Some examples of different brands of bios software:</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>NOTES on how to get into your BIOS and change settings:.....</i>	<i>11</i>
Format Windows – How to delete a partition on a hard drive	11
<i>How to delete a partition without formatting Windows</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Notes on how to delete a partition:.....</i>	<i>12</i>
Should I choose a FAT32 or NTFS file system when I format my computer?	12
<i>Notes on NTFS or FAT32:</i>	<i>12</i>
What is a Windows COA (certificate of authenticity) retail or OEM sticker?	13
<i>What is a COA?.....</i>	<i>13</i>

<i>Where can I find my COA Sticker?</i>	13
<i>How do I know if my COA is a counterfeit?</i>	13
<i>What's the difference between retail and an OEM Windows version?</i>	13
<i>Notes:</i>	14
Formatting a Hard Drive Using the Windows Operating System	14
<i>Getting prepared for formatting a hard drive</i>	14
<i>Backing up your files before formatting a hard drive</i>	15
<i>The difference between formatting a hard drive with Windows XP, Windows Vista, or Windows 7?</i>	15
<i>Common factors when formatting a hard drive with any Windows operating system</i>	15
<i>Common problems people have when formatting a hard drive with Windows</i>	16
<i>Formatting your hard drive with Windows</i>	16
<i>Formatting a hard drive using Windows XP</i>	16
Formatting a hard drive using Windows Vista	18
Formatting a hard drive using Windows 7	20
<i>Formatting a spare hard drive</i>	21
What are Device Drivers and why do I need them for my computer?	21
<i>What is a Device Driver?</i>	21
<i>Where can you find your drivers for your computer?</i>	22
<i>Some Examples of Devices that require drivers</i>	22
<i>How long does it take to find device drivers for my computer?</i>	22
<i>Notes:</i>	22
How to format an external hard drive or a spare hard drive	23
<i>Reasons why you would want to format an external hard drive</i>	23
<i>If your hard drive is not installed anywhere?</i>	23
<i>Format an external hard drive when it is connected to your computer</i>	23
<i>Notes on how to format an external hard drive:</i>	24

Disclosure Policy

This Free report is full of great information that has been tested and proved to work, however you may use this information at your own risk. The author holds no responsibility or gives no guarantee that the information will work for you as there is no way to gauge your technical skills and ability to follow instructions.

Formatting your hard drive incorrectly may cause your computer to stop working. Just remember that this task is usually performed by a qualified IT person. Please proceed at your own risk.

How to navigate

- To navigate through this report you can click on a title in the content section to get taken directly to that position within this document.
- Blue links contained in this document will most likely lead to the Tips4pc website for more information. Some might be affiliate links where if you buy I might get a commission for the sale.

Why should you format a computer and what does it mean?

To format a computer means that ALL your data will be lost. Your operating system, programs, emails, drivers, pictures, everything! All of the updates on your programs will be gone; in fact every entire program will be gone. Formatting your computer makes your computer clean and new just like the day you bought it.

But be warned! Your computer may have even less than it did when you bought it because the salesperson may have loaded it with extra software to make the sale.

When you format a computer you are actually formatting the hard drive. This is the main storage component of your computer. It is usually labeled as C drive on your computer.

I have had people ring me up after they have formatted their computer to ask me where all their files have gone? And don't laugh because it is very common.

Reasons why you might need to format a computer:

- You have built a computer and you must format the hard drive so you can put an operating system on it.
- You have replaced your main hard drive and the new one needs to be formatted.
- Your computer has a [black screen on startup](#). Sometimes formatting can wipe a problem away.
- You have a software problem that is too detailed to fix.
- You have a major virus that you cannot get rid of.

If you PC cannot enter Windows, or Windows has a problem, then [this CD can help!](#)

Things you will need before you format a computer:

- You will need to backup your computer files. This can be the hardest part of formatting your computer because if you forget something important it could be a disaster. Here is [A list of the most important computer system files and folders to Backup](#)
- You will need your original system discs. This will include a drivers disc and the Windows operating system disc. [What are Device Drivers and why do I need them for my computer?](#)
- You will need to know everything about formatting a computer. [How to Format a Computer](#)

Programs and data you need to restore after formatting your computer:

1. After you have installed your operating system you must **install your antivirus software**.
2. Install your drivers to your computer. They are usually the sound, network adapter, display or graphics, and maybe more if you have add ons.
3. Set up your internet connection. You must have a network adapter driver installed for the [Ethernet](#) cord or the wireless signal to be recognized.
4. Download updates for your anti-virus software and your Windows operating system.
5. Setup your email account. [How to set up an Email Account in Outlook Express](#)
6. Import settings you have saved. Restore files that you backed up before formatting your computer. [Backup and restore your Email Account Settings](#)
7. Install all other programs.

How much does a computer IT person charge to format a computer?

- Just a simple format with you supplying the original operating system disc and drivers it may cost from \$100 to \$400.
- If you require your computers data to be backed up it could cost extra.
- Sometimes you can get a friend to format your computer for a small fee, or even free.
- An older computer that requires more attention can also cost extra.
- If you don't have a copy of your discs the IT persons will have to search for your computer drivers and you may have to pay for a new operating system. Anywhere from \$100 and up.

Instead of hiring an IT person or risk formatting the computer yourself you can clone your hard drive and avoid all this work. [Clone ENTIRE hard disk in minutes! Never Need to reinstall Windows and all the necessary software!](#)

Notes:

- You can also format a spare hard drive or a portable device and not affect your main operating system and data. [How to format an external hard drive](#).
- Keeping your computer neat and tidy helps you with the backup process. This way you know where everything is and can copy it easily. Here's how to [Organize your Computer Files](#)

As you can see, formatting a computer can be a huge and sometimes daunting task to the newbie. However the bulk of the work is in the [backup and restore](#) stage. If you are organized, you can backup your files every week to a safe place. This way when you do format your computer it will be a lot easier.

How to Format a Computer Using a Windows XP disc

Learning **how to format windows xp** used to be a task that was reserved for professional IT guys only. Even though I know how to format a computer, it took me a few goes to be comfortable with the process.

However now days most computer users will try to repair their computer themselves and even go to the extent of learning *how to format windows xp* and then doing it themselves. There is nothing wrong with this, as this is how I started out 25 years ago (maybe more now). If I did not take the risk and learn [how to format windows xp](#), I would not be where I am today. (If you have Windows vista or Windows seven see [Formatting a hard drive](#).)

The word Format can mean quite a few things in the world of computers. You could format text in a word document, have a different file format, or in this case, format a computer hard drive. Sometimes you need to format a windows computer to ultra clean your computer. It makes it faster, new looking and gets rid of errors and viruses.

Windows XP disc is bootable and really does everything for you. (Well nearly) This means that when you insert a Windows XP disc into your computer, it should start automatically. Learning how to format windows xp does not take long.

If you do not have a cd you still can [Boot Up Any Computer; Recover & Install Windows Easily!](#)

Stop! Backup before you learn how to format windows xp!

Before you do learn how to format windows xp and start this process you should backup your files and data. Some things to backup include: photos, my documents, favourites folder, emails, all contacts, passwords and more....

Go and check out [my backup list](#). There is absolutely no excuse for not backing up your data and files now days. You can buy a [2 TB external hard drive](#) to save your files on for well under \$100 (actually \$89 or less). If you have around \$50 to spend then check out this [500 GB External Hard Drive](#). This is a huge amount of space to store your files on.

How to format a windows xp computer – Find the system disc

Next is to make sure you have a **system disk** that came with your computer for display drivers, LAN drivers, USB, audio etc. If you do not have this there is a program called Driver Robot which find your drivers for you after you have formatted windows...It is a lifesaver. Its a must have program and saves you a load of work. Even after it is has found your drivers it will also keep them up to date later on.

If you do not want to spend money you will have to find your computers drivers on the internet and download them manually. [Here is where to find drivers](#). Drivers are one of the most important tiny bits of software that will make your computer run like its meant to.

Ok, enough lecturing let's move on to how to format windows xp.

Warning: [Formatting a hard drive](#) will wipe everything off your computer. When you format Windows XP all of your files will be gone and it will be like a new computer. All your e-mail contacts, all your saved webpages, all your documents that you may, will be gone! if this is your first time to format a computer I suggest you get a friend that has done this before to help you. This is not rocket science, but pressing the wrong button can turn into a disaster. I do not mean to scare you off, but when you format a computer, it must be done right.

How to format windows xp using a Windows XP disc

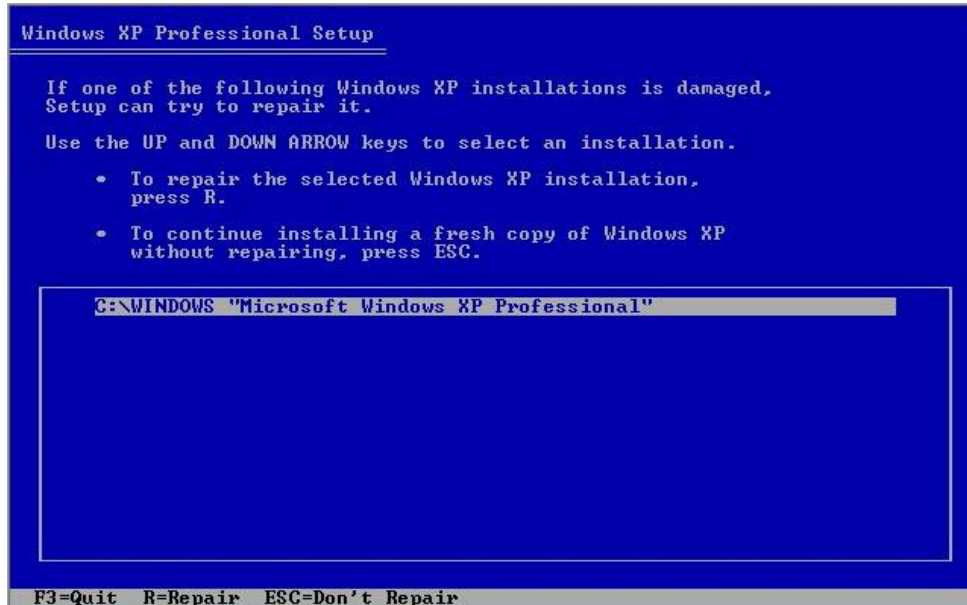
Okay guys let's learn how to format windows xp. But calm down and take your time. To learn *how to format a computer* is a matter of being patient! This is the best advice I can give you.

1. First you must put your **Windows XP CD in the drive.**
2. Then **restart** your computer.
3. When it says **press any key to boot from cd**, Press any key on the keyboard. I use the space bar, easy to get to. (If you can do this Go to step 6)
4. If it doesn't ask you to **press any key to boot from cd** then **restart** your computer again.
5. **Go into the BIOS** settings of your PC, usually by pressing the F1, F2, F10, or maybe the delete key. If you are not sure watch the screen at startup and it will say "To enter setup press.....". You have to be quick and press it. If you miss it restart again. Once you are in the bios you have to change the boot options. You have to make your cd rom the first boot option. Save and exit. If you do not understand how to get into your BIOS please see [how to get into your BIOS and change settings](#).
6. When the CD starts up **A blue screen will appear** and you are on your way..



1. Press **Enter** to setup Windows XP now. See screen shot above. Do not rush through this process as pressing the wrong key here can take you down the wrong road. You should take your time when its your first time learning how to format a computer using windows xp.
2. If there is a copy of Windows XP on your computer and you wish to overwrite it you will have to press the **escape button** when prompted. (screen shot below) Do not install Windows XP in another directory unless you

know what you are doing. Just overwrite the previous version as you should have backed up your files anyway. In this example I am showing you **how to format a computer** that has already had Windows installed on it.



1. You should now make the partition that had windows on it **blue** and press **D** to delete the partition. It will ask if you are sure. Press **L** to confirm. More details on [deleting partitions](#).
2. Then Press **C** to create another partition and Windows will estimate a size for you. If you wanted to partition your hard drive into two equal parts you would have to do some math's and then type the appropriate number in. Otherwise just going with what Windows puts there will be the minimum partition size. If you make a mistake when estimating the size of a partition you can simply go back now and delete the partition and start again. Do not move forward if you have made a mistake.
3. Press **Enter** to confirm size.
4. Then it will ask you which partition you want to install Windows on. The default is C: drive. Select this by making it blue and press **enter**.
5. If there are no partitions it will **create one for you**.
6. Then it will ask you to format quick, normal, in [fat32 or NTFS](#). Fat32 suits older computers so I choose a quick format with NTFS. Quick or Slow is fine. If you had errors it is better to use a **slow format** which can also be known as **a low level format**. When you format a computer please note that a low level format can take a long time, depending on what size hard drive you have.
7. From now on you just Follow the prompts and let it go..the process of formatting your computer is on its way. Some setup files will be taken from the Windows CD onto your computer to complete this process.
8. The computer will restart and it will try to boot from cd again...**Do not press anything on the keyboard**.. Just let it go through the stages of setup. You only press the **ANY KEY** at the start to get it to boot to the Windows XP cd.
9. Make sure you have your **serial number ready** to enter in. This can be found on your [coa certificate](#) which is a sticker usually put on the side of your computer.
10. Do not remove the Windows XP CD until the computer has started up with a new desktop and icons.

Now the next process begins.. Installing your device drivers for your computer. See [What are Device Drivers and why do I need them for my computer?](#)

[BIOS](#) How to get there and change settings

Notes on how to format windows xp

- Follow the instructions carefully to learn how to format a computer. Once you have done this a few times, you will see how easy it is. the problem is that many people think it is easy and that it is OK to make mistakes when formatting a computer. It is not OK to make a mistake when you format Windows Xp. This is a critical time and errors can cause a disaster.
- Learning how to format a computer using Windows Xp will also help you when [formatting a hard drive](#) with Windows Vista and Windows Seven. To format a computer is pretty much the same process, it is just some set out with a different design.
- The only way to learn how to format windows xp is to try it yourself but take your time. Do not format a new computer if it is under guarantee as you will void your warranty.
- Be very careful not to make mistakes as restarting this process over and over can corrupt your computer. If you do make a mistake, try pressing the escape button as it can sometimes take you back to the previous screen.
- If you cannot proceed through the format process, maybe you did not delete the old partition?
- If there is more than one partition on your hard drive you can just format the one that has the previous version of Windows on it. That way the data on the other partition will be safe.
- After errors and viruses have been found on your computer, you should format a computer on on **low level format** , and not a quick format.
- You can also go to the Microsoft website for more information on how to format windows xp. <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/313348> You can get all the information from this site, however it can be very confusing for most people, including me!!!

See more computer tips on how to [format windows](#).

I hope this tutorial helps you learn how to format windows xp. Please take your time as learning how to format a computer looks like an easy task but mistakes can happen.

How to get into your BIOS and change settings

Sooner or later you will have to go into your computers bios and change certain settings and especially if you want to format your computer. The Bios is the first piece of software on your computer before the operating system is installed. Without the BIOS you would not have a working computer. The **BIOS** (basic input operating system) is a set of programs, which controls the PC hardware and is stored in a memory chip on the motherboard. The chip is a Read Only Memory (ROM) chip, which keeps its contents even when the power is off. When a computer is turned on, the CPU will execute all of the instructions in the BIOS, which are stored in the ROM. These instructions will then load the Operating System.

What is the main reason you would enter the BIOS?

The main reason I go in there is to set the **boot sequence** or **boot order** of the computer. This means that you tell the computer to boot up to C: drive (windows on the computer) or to a cd or dvd drive. For example you might want to boot to an operating system CD when you [format your computer with Windows XP](#). Different computer makes and models

have different version and types of bios however they all have the common basics, but may call them different things. I do not know why they could not follow the same menu and features but don't panic because they are similar.

How to access my computer BIOS?

To access any bios on any computer you must watch the startup screen on the computer. It will usually say "To enter setup press....." Some common keys you may have to press are F1, F2, F10, or maybe the delete key. You must press this key when the startup screen is showing. There will be a message on the bottom of the screen flashing by saying "press ??? to enter setup." If you miss this you have to restart again.

Tips to getting in your BIOS:

1. Watch the screen when you are starting the computer. Be calm and don't worry if the computer starts before you get to press the right key and the keyboard.
2. Restart the computer and now that you know the key to press, have your finger on it ready to push when you see the details screen.

Some examples of different brands of bios software:

In the screen shot below you can see a Phoenix BIOS. You need to select the boot menu at the top, and then get the CD rom to the top of the list you see there to make it the first boot device.



With the American Megatrends Bios, choose Boot from the top menu, then click on Boot Device Priority. Then you will see a list of devices and you need to make the cd or dvd drive the first priority. To adjust these settings you will see instructions on how to control your keyboard in the right column and also in the bottom bar.



Once you have entered the bios there will be a menu to choose from. Some Bios have Boot sequence as a menu item, but if they do not you have to find it under another menu name. As you can see the BIOS brands above have a boot menu. Once you have found what you are looking for, change the cd rom to be the first to boot to, then hard drive as the second. Save and Exit the bios. This is for when you format your computer. To change it back, repeat steps and change it to boot to hard drive 0.

NOTES on how to get into your BIOS and change settings:

1. For tips on how to control, change, and save bios settings look at the bottom of the screen. It tells you which key to press.
2. Do not change anything you are not sure of. Changing the settings can easily cause your computer to stop working or have major annoying problems.
3. When you are not sure what you have done you can go in and choose to restore to system default settings. This is a good way to get out of trouble.

Format Windows – How to delete a partition on a hard drive

When you format a computer it is always best to start fresh. If it is a new computer then you will have to create a partition, however if it already has windows on the hard drive, you will have to delete it. To delete the previous copy of windows you will need to delete the partition on your hard drive where it is stored. If you are not formatting a hard drive and simply deleting an extra on partition your hard drive then see this article on how to [delete and merge a partition](#).

This will mean that you will lose all the information and data that was previously on that section of the hard drive. Obviously you should [backup your important files](#).

If there is a copy of Windows XP on your computer and you wish to overwrite it you will have to press the **escape button** when prompted. Do not install Windows XP in another directory unless you know what you are doing. Just overwrite the previous version as you should have backed up your data anyway.

To delete the partition that windows is on you have to select it by making it blue. Then you can press the **letter D** on the keyboard. You will have to press the **letter L** to confirm that you want to delete this partition.

If there is more than one partition with other data on it , you can either leave it there or delete it as well. If you leave it there, create another partition to replace the one you deleted, and install Windows to this one. Therefore the other partition will still have it files intact.

How to delete a partition without formatting Windows

If you have more than one partition on your computer you can [delete a partition](#) as long as it has not got Windows system files on it. If you want to change a partition that has Windows system files on at you will need to download a third-party program such as partition Magic.

Notes on how to delete a partition:

- When you first start deleting partitions it can be a bit scary, however it is not a problem if you have everything backed up anyway.
- You can format any other hard drives or partitions while still in Windows. You cannot format the partition that holds Windows unless you start from scratch with the install cd. This article on how to [format an external hard drive](#). will help to format a spare hard drive.
- I have a 400gb hard drive divided into two 200gb partitions. When [formatting a hard drive](#) I only delete the first 200gb partition with Windows on it. All the other data has been backed up onto the second 200gb. Of course I have another backup hard drive just in case the whole thing packs up on me.
- If you need to *delete a partition* on windows Xp then this article on [how to format a computer](#) might also help.

Should I choose a FAT32 or NTFS file system when I format my computer?

I could easily bore you with a load of technical jargon on this subject, however why bother? Its all about how we store files and folders, access them, compress them and more. FAT16 and FAT32 (File allocation table) have become outdated and NTFS is the latest development. NTFS is not exactly new either but its all we have.

Like all new technologies, NTFS was designed to be bigger and better than FAT32 in every way. It has better security features, enables compression, and allows the use of larger files. It is the default file system for new installations of Windows XP an windows Vista. .

Notes on NTFS or FAT32:

- Hard drives formatted with NTFS are not recognized by Windows 95/98/Me.
- FAT and FAT32 volumes can be converted to NTFS volumes. NTFS cannot be converted to FAT32 without reformatting.
- FAT32 provides very little security. A user with access to a drive using FAT32 has access to the files on that drive.
- NTFS supports file compression. FAT32 does not.

- A FAT partition used to be created with emergency system files and drivers stored on it which would allow you to boot your system from a floppy disc. This is all not necessary now as Windows XP and Vista have come equipped with great self recovery abilities.

What is a Windows COA (certificate of authenticity) retail or OEM sticker?

What is a COA?

A Windows COA is a certificate of authenticity sticker that proves that your copy of Windows is genuine. This, along with an original Windows cd, confirms that your copy is genuine.

Where can I find my COA Sticker?

A COA (certificate of authenticity) sticker can be found on either side of a tower or desktop computer case. It can also be found on the top, however very rarely at the bottom or back of a computer case.

How do I know if my COA is a counterfeit?

If you have tried to activate your copy of Windows and have been rejected than there is usually something wrong. I have never had a problem activating Windows. You must make sure you have the disc that matches your COA. For example if it says Windows XP Home then the cd must say this also. You can go to the Microsoft website to see if your COA is genuine.



What's the difference between retail and an OEM Windows version?

- **Retail** - A retail version Of Windows is more expensive than the OEM and usually comes in the big fancy box with the COA attached. You can install this Windows on any computer, only one at any time, as long as it has the COA with it. If your computer breaks down you can remove the sticker and the software to use on your new pc.
- **OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer)** – An OEM COA is meant the pc it was originally made for. The OEM sticker will have the version of Windows with the manufacturers name underneath. You cannot remove the sticker and use it on another computer as this copy of Windows is only to be used with the original pc it came with. An OEM is cheaper than the retail version of Windows.

Notes:

- An OEM and a retail version of Windows is the same program, except for the limitations on the OEM.
- If you have a computer with a COA sticker but no cd, it is not genuine until you have an original cd that matches your COA.
- If you change your hardware in your computer drastically, you may not be able to use your OEM copy of Windows as it will think it is a different computer.

Formatting a Hard Drive Using the Windows Operating System

Formatting a hard drive using the Windows operating system is quite an easy task now days. Over the years technology has granted us easy ways to take care of our own computers, without having to always employ an IT repair guy. I personally love *formatting a hard drive* regularly to keep my computer running to its optimum performance. I guess you might say I have a problem as I find that it is the only way that I can really keep my computer in order.

My friends and family cringe when I mention the F Word and it is not what you think, as I am speaking about the word format. Formatting a hard drive is the ultimate computer maintenance task. It cuts out all the hard work of either maintaining your computer or trying to fix it when errors occur.

Getting prepared for formatting a hard drive

When formatting a hard drive you will need certain things to perform this task correctly. Here is a list of things you will need when you want to format your computer.

- You will need a Windows operating system CD. Hopefully you will have the original CD hanging around somewhere. It is also okay to use a copy of your exact disk that you had as long as you have your certificate of authenticity sticker attached to your computer. This is also known as the COA sticker and holds the serial number for your copy of Windows.
- You will definitely need to have your files backed up to either an external hard drive or maybe even an online backup service.
- When formatting a hard drive you will obviously need a computer that needs a format. This might be a computer with so many errors that it is not worth fixing. It may also be a computer that just hasn't had a good format in a long time.
- If you are formatting using Windows XP or even Windows Vista you will need to have either a backup of your device drivers or a system disk that holds your drivers. If you do not have a disk that holds your device drivers then you might have to search for them on the Internet. Before formatting a hard drive I seriously recommend making sure that you have a driver for your network adapter so you can connect to the Internet. This will allow you to download the other drivers if needed.

Backing up your files before formatting a hard drive

This is one of the most important things that you can do. People do not understand that when you are formatting a hard drive, this means that you will wipe every piece of data from that hard drive. If you had saved photos and files or even e-mail addresses, they will all be gone after formatting the hard drive. I hope you understand what I am saying here. Absolutely everything will be gone from your computer and you will only have a fresh new copy of Windows installed on your computer. This also means that any programs that you have installed, such as photo editing programs, games, and so on, will be absolutely gone. When you have finished formatting your computer, the usual procedure is to reinstall all of your necessary programs and drivers to enable you to start using your computer again.

The difference between formatting a hard drive with Windows XP, Windows Vista, or Windows 7?

Obviously Windows XP was released approximately 10 years ago and along the way we have had Windows Vista and now Windows 7. Technology has changed over the years but the basic knowledge on how to format a hard drive stays the same. You still have to partition the hard drive you are formatting and installing Windows on. You also still have to delete the old partition where the original version of Windows existed. There are many things that are exactly the same when formatting a hard drive with Windows XP, Windows Vista, or Windows 7. Of course, Windows 7 looks a lot prettier, but the essence of formatting a hard drive is still there.

If I was talking about formatting a hard drive with Windows millennium or Windows 95, that would be a totally different story. Back in those days most computers still had a floppy drive and this was used as a start-up disk. However now the modern Windows operating system CD's are bootable without having to use a floppy disk.

Another major difference between formatting a hard drive with Windows XP and the later versions of Windows is that the newer versions are on a DVD disc and not a CD.

Common factors when formatting a hard drive with any Windows operating system

- When formatting a hard drive with any version of Windows you must insert the operating system CD and boot from it. This means that you will see a message on the screen saying "press any key to boot from CD or DVD..". If you do not see this message when you start your computer with the Windows operating system CD in the CD drive, then you must enter your computer BIOS and change the boot settings. Here is a brief tutorial on how to [change settings in your BIOS](#).
- It is always recommended that you delete the previous partition that Windows was installed on and create a new partition for the new installation.
- In all versions of Windows you will have the chance to divide or partition your hard drive into any size you require.
- All of the recent versions of Windows use the NTFS file system. It is not recommended that you use the old FAT32 file system.
- When formatting a hard drive in any version of Windows you will see an option to choose a quick format or a slow format. A slow format is always better when you have had major errors on your computer. This can also be known as a low level format.

Common problems people have when formatting a hard drive with Windows

1. The first step is probably the hardest. As previously mentioned above, you will need to insert the original Windows operating system disk and then start your computer so it boots to that CD. People do not realize that you need to enter the BIOS to change the settings to make the computer boot to the CD first. Some people think there is a problem when the CD does not start.
2. People often get confused when deleting the partition and creating a new one. Please pay particular attention to this area as it is not as hard as you think.
3. When you have had your Windows disc for a long time it can become worn. Often I will make a copy of my original disks to use as the original would not transfer the system files to my computer correctly. If you find that when formatting a hard drive, the process stalls a number of times, then it could be your CD is worn out. If you cannot work your cd then this [Bootable Cd](#) will help for any version of Windows.
4. One of the common problems that people have when formatting a hard drive is that they accidentally interrupted the process. It is not okay to stop the process of formatting a hard drive half way through. This is a definite way to cause major errors or even the dreaded [black screen](#) on your computer.

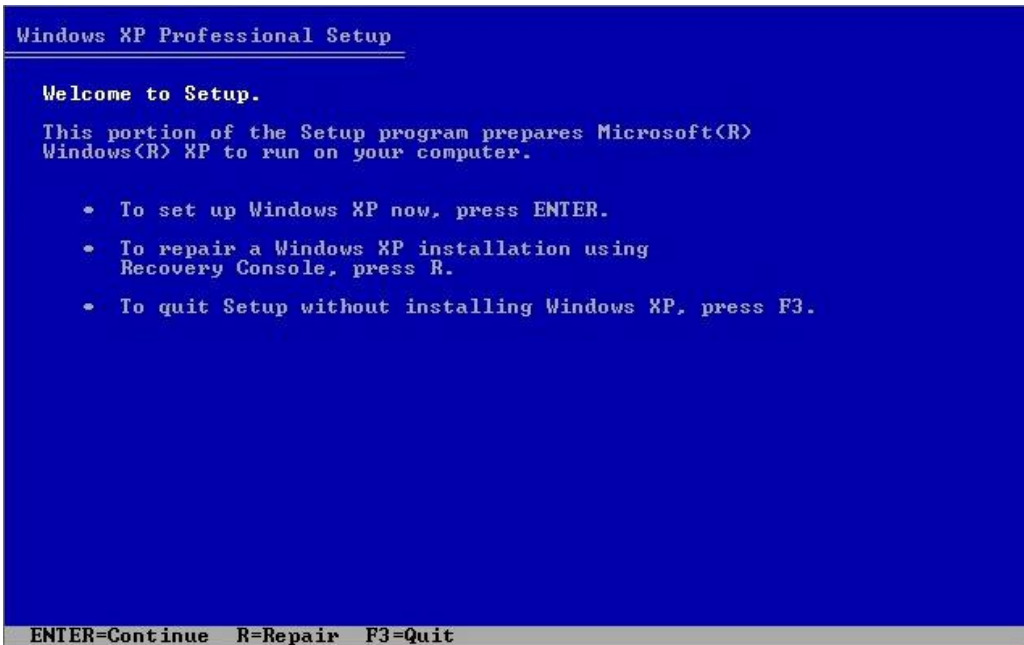
Formatting your hard drive with Windows

Below I am going to list step-by-step instructions to follow when formatting a hard drive in various versions of Windows. They are all very similar with only a few minor differences. Therefore if you are experienced in formatting a hard drive using Windows XP, you will definitely have no problem formatting with Windows Vista or Windows 7.

The following steps below presume that you have entered your BIOS and change the settings for your computer to boot to your CD or DVD drive. Therefore you will see the message on the screen saying "press any key to boot from CD or DVD..." If you have not this far and press a key on your keyboard, this means that you are booting into the CD to start formatting your hard drive.

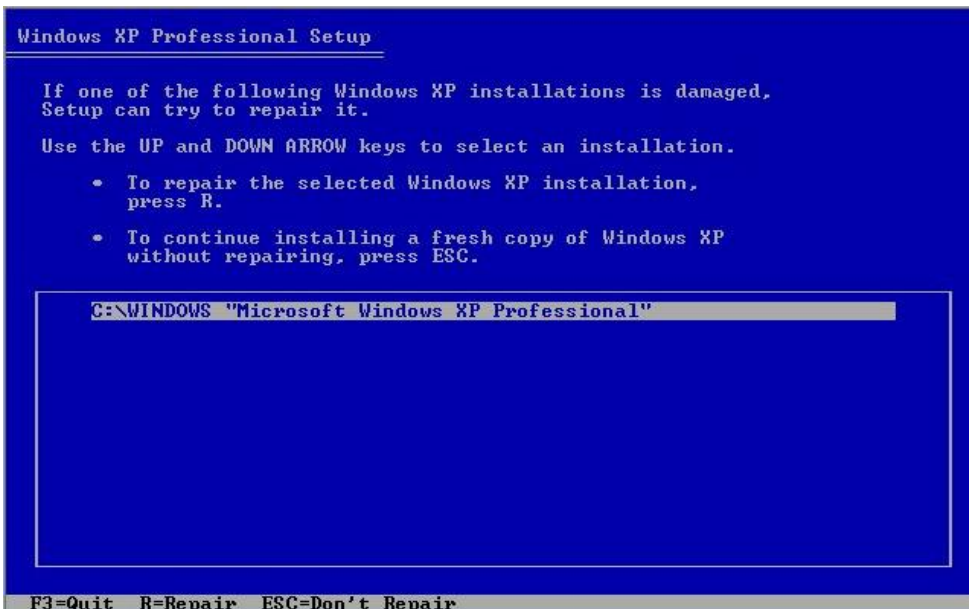
Formatting a hard drive using Windows XP

1. The first screen you will see will be blue and it will look like files are being loaded onto your computer. You will be prompted to **press the F8 key** to agree to the **Windows terms and conditions**.
2. The next screen you will see after booting from the CD will be a blue screen. On the screen you will need to read it carefully and then **press enter**. If you press enter on your keyboard, this means that you want to **install Windows XP**. See the screen shot below.



3. Now you will see a screen showing the *previous installation* of Windows.

4. **Select that version of Windows** so we know which partition we are going to delete. If you have not got a previous version of Windows on your computer you will see an un-partitioned space.



5. As you can see in the screenshot above I have selected the previous version of Windows.

6. Now I will press the **escape key** to install a fresh copy of Windows XP.

7. On the next screen I will **select the partition** with Windows on it and **press D** on the keyboard to **delete** it.

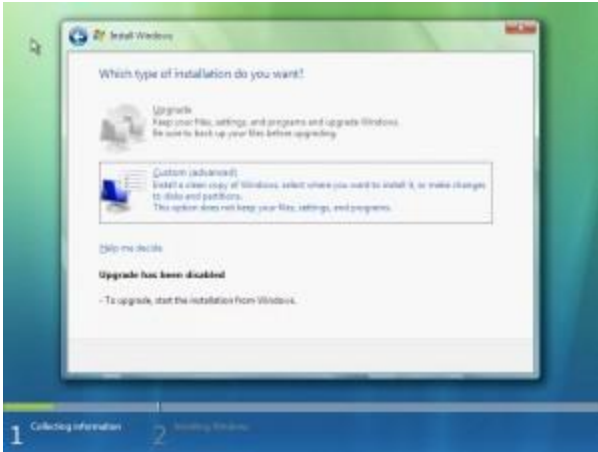
8. Then I will press the letter **L to confirm** that I want to delete that partition.
9. To recreate a partition we will need to **press the C** on the keyboard. Your computer will estimate the size for the partition and all you have to do is **press enter**.
10. To see **more instructions** please see this detailed tutorial on how to [format Windows XP](#).

Formatting a hard drive using Windows Vista

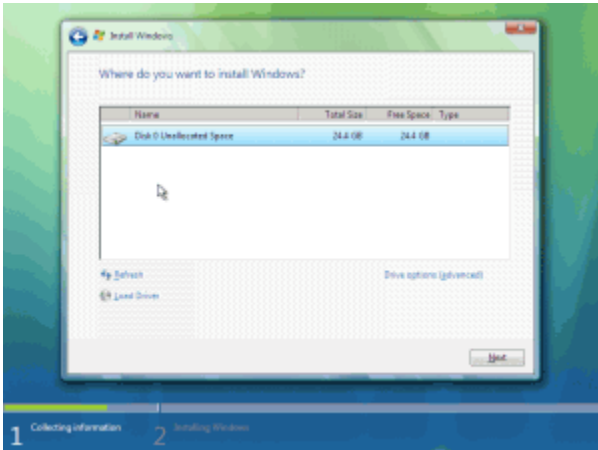
When formatting a hard drive with Windows Vista, it is very much the same as Windows XP except the operating system will probably be on a DVD and not a CD. This means that you will have to have a DVD drive to read the disc. once you have booted from the DVD disc you will be prompted to “press any key to boot from the CD or DVD..”



1. After pressing any key to **boot from the DVD** you will be presented with the screen shown above. This is where you need to **set your language options**.
2. After pressing **Next** you will need to press on the **Install Now button** in the middle of the screen.
3. Enter your **license key** which you will find on your **COA sticker**.
4. Next you will have to **accept the license agreement** by ticking the box and pressing next.
5. In the next window you will have the choice to upgrade or have a custom installation. Choose **custom installation**.

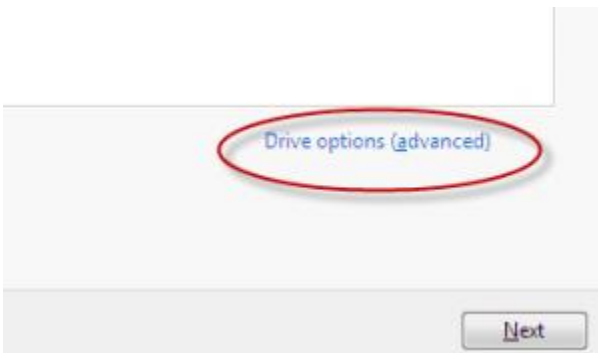


6. Now you can choose the the partition where your previous Windows version is installed.



7. If you have an un-partitioned hard drive then you can simply continue but if you have a previous installation of Windows you will need to [delete the partition](#) and create a new one.

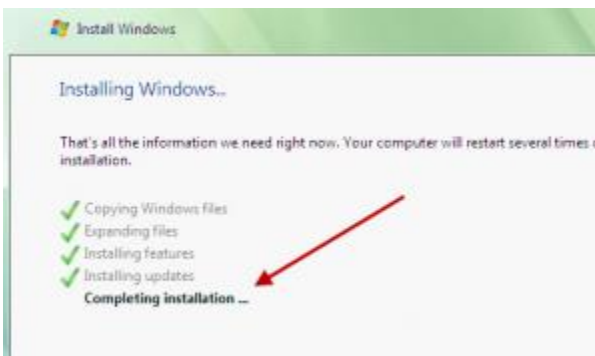
8. Press on **Drive options (advanced)** link to see more options on editing the partition.



9. After pressing on the **Drive options** link you will see an option to delete. If you have selected the partition you can now **delete it**.



10. After deleting the partition keep the partition selected and **press on format**.
11. Now you can press on **new** to create a new partition. This section is the most difficult part.
12. The **rest is a breeze** and is pretty much automatic.



13. The computer will want to **restart**. Do not touch anything while restarting, especially if you have left the DVD disc in the drive.
14. When the computer restarts you will need to **fill in a few details** such as time zones and network options.

Formatting a hard drive using Windows 7

Formatting a hard drive with Windows Seven is identical to Windows Vista. All you need to do is follow the instructions above. Every step is the same.



Formatting a spare hard drive

It is even easier to [format an external hard drive](#) if it is attached to your computer as a second hard drive or even if it is in an old hard drive in an external hard drive case. All you have to do is access that particular hard drive in Windows Explorer, right click on it to access a menu, and then choose to format. That is the easiest way I know of formatting a hard drive. This only works on hard drives that do not contain Windows system files.

See more helpful articles on how to [format windows](#).

Just remember, that when formatting a hard drive with any version of Windows, practice makes perfect.

What are Device Drivers and why do I need them for my computer?

Many people are unaware that you actually need device drivers to run your computer smoothly. This could include display drivers, network, audio, and chipset drivers. Every device that is on your computer has a driver for it. Even a mouse, keyboard, and a monitor have drivers, however windows usually installs those ones for us. Often people format their computer and then wonder why they have no internet connection. It is simply because they have not installed a driver for their network adapter to work yet.

What is a Device Driver?

A driver is a small software program that helps your computer identify and run particular types of hardware. You need drivers for onboard video, an AGP video card, or even a usb storage device. When you purchase a new computer it should always come with a device driver or system disk and Windows usually takes care of the common and generic drivers.

Where can you find your drivers for your computer?

If you bought a computer the discs should come with your computer. If you have lost your disc, drivers can be downloaded from manufacturer's websites for free as you already own their product. Like, <Http://www.acer.com> All you have to do is type in the model number and name of your computer. For Example: Acer desktop T310 and then type "driver download" with it.

If you built the computer yourself, a driver disk should have been supplied with your motherboard. Store this disk in a safe place. If you buy a separate video card then you will need a driver disc for this also.

If you have a second hand computer with no disks and all components are on-board, then you must search for the motherboards model number in Google. However if you have a separate sound card, you need to find the device driver for its model number and not for on-board sound on the motherboard.

If you have a restoration disk for your computer then everything you need should be on that disk, including the operating system. It also doesn't hurt to ask for some free computer help from a friend.

Some Examples of Devices that require drivers

- Monitors, keyboards, mouse (Windows will install these)
- Video cards, Sound Cards, PCI Cards (Rarely will Windows install these drivers)
- Usb, [Ethernet](#), modems, flash drives (Rarely will Windows install these drivers)
- CD/DVD Roms (Windows install most drivers for these)
- And the list goes on....

How long does it take to find device drivers for my computer?

I have spent hours looking for difficult hard to find drivers. Some websites and manufacturers do not make it easy to find what you want. This is why it is recommended to keep that resources disc nice and safe..You should also update your drivers as a new one is released. If you are totally hopeless at all this I would use a program such as Driver Robot or [Driver Finder](#) to do all the work for you. It eliminates any problems to do with device drivers on your computer and is a much safer way to keep your computer running correctly. This program is great for when you have lost your disc or you just want your drivers kept up to date.

Notes:

- If you upgrade your operating system from Windows XP to Vista, for example, you will need to upgrade your drivers as well. For a particular device there is sometimes 5 different versions, depending on the age of the device. A new modem would have drivers for Windows Xp and Windows Vista. They have phased out drivers for Windows 95, 98, and 2000.
- Windows Seven can magically find most drivers however sometimes it has proven to find the wrong ones causing problems with some devices. for example it will use a generic driver for your video card when it actually needs the correct driver to work properly.

How to format an external hard drive or a spare hard drive

If you need to **format an external hard drive** it is a lot easier than [formatting a hard drive](#) that is being used to house your main Windows operating system. Your external hard drive might be an old hard drive that you have placed into an external hard drive case for storage purposes, and you now need to format it.

To *format an external hard drive* it must be attached to a computer in one way or another. They are very easy to connect to your computer now days and most of them use a USB plug and possibly a power cord. This article can apply to formatting an external hard drive, formatting a spare hard drive, or formatting any hard drive that you place into an external hard drive case. It can also show you how to format a USB flash drive. This article is not about [how to format a computer](#) with a hard drive that has the Windows operating system installed on it. That is a different story. Please be clear that this article is about how to [format an external hard drive](#).

Reasons why you would want to format an external hard drive

- To clean the hard drive of all previous information and start a fresh. You might buy a an external hard drive at a garage sale and it could be full of files that you do not want. It is recommended that you format the external hard drive, especially if you don't know the person who you purchased from.
- To recycle an old hard drive to use for storage. When you have put this old hard drive into an external case, this is definitely when you want to format an external hard drive
- To get rid of corrupted files or viruses. If you think that the hard drive in your external hard drive has problems or maybe viruses they can be transported to your actual computer. This is why you should format your external hard drive if you are using it to connect to your computer. This will keep your computer safe from anything that was stored on that external hard drive.

If your hard drive is not installed anywhere?

- Install it into your computer as a second hard drive [How to install a hard drive](#)
- Put it in an external hard drive case. [What is an external hard drive?](#)

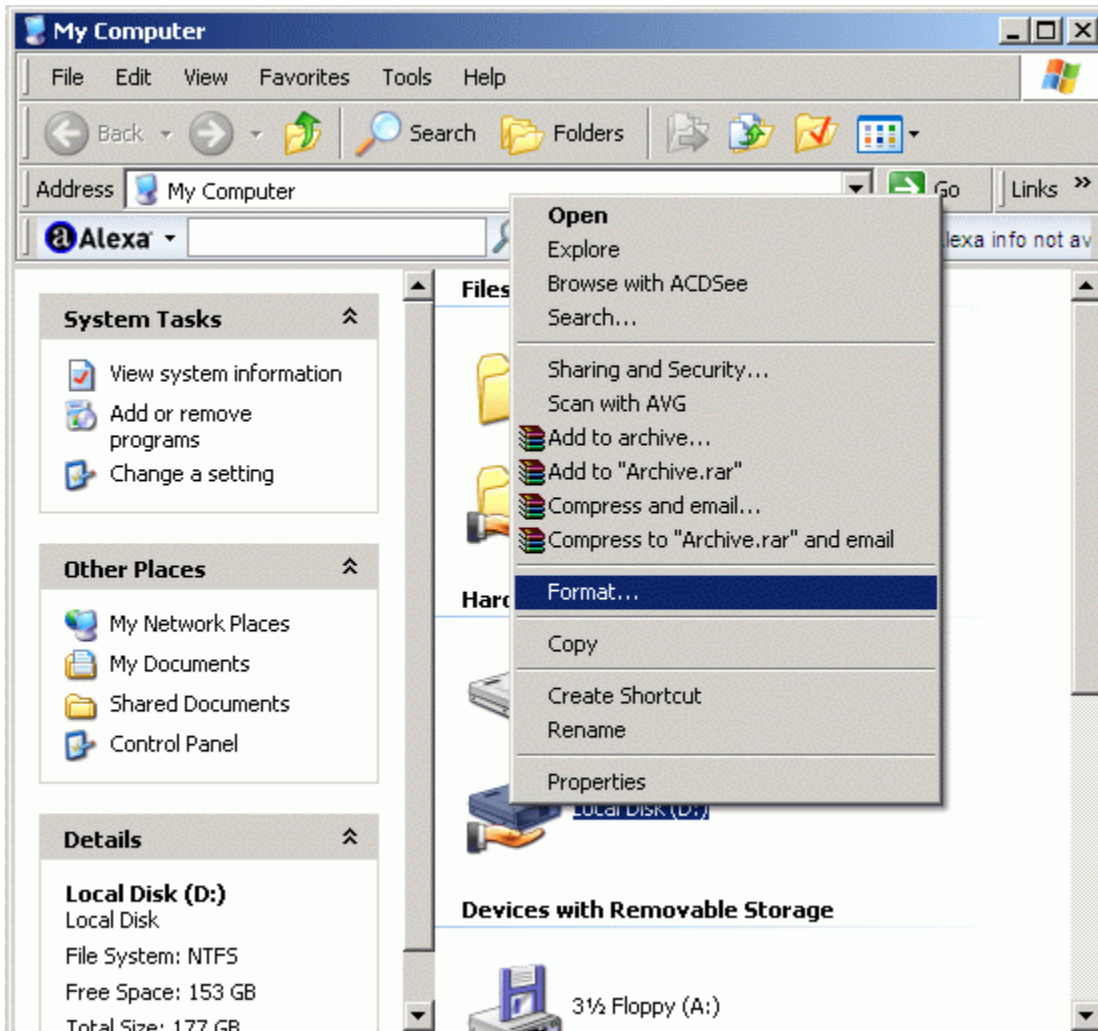
Once your spare hard drive is installed in some way, it can be formatted from Windows XP, Vista, or Windows 7.

Format an external hard drive when it is connected to your computer

To format an external hard drive you will have to connect it to your computer. Hopefully your external hard drive does not hold an operating system and has just been used for storage device. To begin to format an external hard drive in Windows XP, Windows Vista, or Windows 7, you simply need to go to my computer on any of these versions of Windows.

1. Go to the **start menu** at the bottom left of your desktop.
2. Choose **My Computer** for Windows XP or **Computer** for Windows Vista.

3. **Right click on the hard drive** you want to format.
4. Please **double check** that you have the right hard drive.
5. Choose **Format** from the menu. All data will be lost. The hard drive will be like brand new.
6. After choosing to format you will be asked to **reconfirm your decision**.



When you decide to format an external hard drive or even a USB drive, doublecheck that you are formatting the correct drive. It would be a disaster if you accidentally had something plugged into your computer and formatted the wrong drive.

To see a video please see [How to format an external hard drive or a spare hard drive](#)

Notes on how to format an external hard drive:

- You can create your own [external hard drive](#) by placing a hard drive into an external case.
- Now days everyone has an external hard drive for backup purposes and to aid with their [computer maintenance](#).

Learning how to format an external hard drive is very easy after you have connected this device to your computer.

If you need any further help please visit our [Forum](#) to ask questions. I would love to see everyone interested in computers join our forum. We can all learn from each other! ☺

Please feel free to share this information with your friends and family.



Kinds Regards

Mitz <http://tips4pc.com>

Add me to your Google Plus Circles



The End