

Windows laptops & PCs | Medium | 2 min read

How to back up your files

A backup is a second copy of your files kept somewhere else. If your computer is lost, broken or locked by a virus, a backup means your photos and documents are not gone for ever.

The simple rule

Keep your important files in at least two places, and make sure one of them is not in your home. This could be an external drive plus cloud storage.

Option 1: external drive

1. Plug in an external hard drive or large USB stick.
2. Windows 11: open **Settings**, then **Accounts**, then **Windows Backup** to back up folders to OneDrive. Windows 10: open **Settings**, then **Update & Security**, then **Backup**, and choose **Add a drive** to use File History.
3. Mac: open **System Settings**, then **General**, then **Time Machine**, and choose **Add Backup Disk**.
4. Let it finish and disconnect the drive afterwards, ideally storing it away from the computer.

Option 2: cloud storage

Services such as OneDrive, iCloud and Google Drive copy your files online. Sign in, choose the folders to save, and check the files appear on another device or on the service's website. Free space is limited, so you may need to pay for more.

Keep it working

- Check once a month that the backup is still running and that you can actually open a file from it.
- Take care with a drive that only holds the one copy of your files. A single drive is not a backup.
- Do not leave your only backup plugged in all the time, as a virus can damage it too.

When to get more help

Stop and ask for help if you see an error saying the backup has failed, your drive is not recognised, you have a lot of files and are unsure what to include, or you are about to wipe or sell a computer and have not saved your files. Please do not reset or reinstall the computer until we have talked.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.