How to Use the Copy Command Prompt Command

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The **copy** [Command Prompt command](#) duplicates a file, storing the second version in a different location of your choosing.

Use the command to copy a file using its specific name and [file extension](#) or use a wildcard to copy groups of files at once, regardless of the file names or extensions. Some other command options include verification that the files were copied correctly and suppression of prompts to overwrite files of the same name.

Copy Command Availability

Copy Command Options (Windows 11 Command Prompt).

The copy command is available from within the [Command Prompt](#) in [Windows 11](#), [Windows 10](#), [Windows 8](#), [Windows 7](#), [Windows Vista](#), and [Windows XP](#), as well as from the [Advanced Startup Options](#) and [System Recovery Options](#) repair/recovery menus.

The availability of certain copy command switches and other command [syntax](#) might differ from operating system to operating system.

Copy Command Syntax

The command accepts the following general form:

copy [**/d**] [**/v**] [**/n**] [**/y** | **/-y**] [**/z**] [**/l**] [**/a** | **/b**] *source* [**/a** | **/b**] [+ *source* [**/a** | **/b**] [+ ...]] [*destination* [**/a** | **/b**]] [**/?**]

See [How to Read Command Syntax](#) if you're not sure how to interpret the copy command syntax as it's described above or in the list below.

Append files by choosing several *source* files but just one *destination* file.

Copy Command Examples

Below are several examples of how to use the copy command:

Copy to a Different Folder

```
copy Z:\Software\program.iso C:\Users\Jon\Downloads\Programs\
```

The copies *program.iso* from the *Z:* drive to the user's *Programs* folder.

Copy and Rename

```
copy Y:\install\j93n.exe Y:\more\m1284.msi
```

You can use the copy command to rename a file and even change its file extension. In this example, the *j93n.exe* file copies to a new folder on the *Y:* drive as *m1284.msi.*

This isn't a [file conversion](#) technique (i.e., the [EXE](#) file isn't really being converted to [MSI](#)) but instead a way to make an identical copy but with the *destination* file saved under a different name and inside a different folder.

```
copy D:\i386\atapi.sy_ C:\Windows\atapi.sys
```

In the above example, the *atapi.sy_* file, located in the *i386* folder on the Windows XP installation CD, is copied to the *C:\Windows* directory as *atapi.sys.*

Unlike the *Y:* drive example above, this one is a bit more realistic, since copying files like that from a disc is a common practice when fixing some specific Windows problems.

Copy to Current Path

```
copy D:\readme.htm
```

In this example, the copy command has no *destination* specified, so the *readme.htm* file is copied to whatever directory you typed the copy command from.

For example, if you type *copy d:\readme.htm* from the *C:\Windows>* prompt, that HTM file will be copied to *C:\Windows.*

Copy Only Certain File Types

```
copy /y /v C:\Users\Jon\Downloads\*.mp3 C:\Users\Jon\Music\DownloadedMusic\
```

This command copies all MP3s (*.mp3) from the *Downloads* folder to the *Music\DownloadedMusic* folder, but we want to make sure that every file is copied, even if there's already one in *DownloadedMusic* with the same name (*/y*). We'll verify the copy (*/v*) to make sure Command Prompt tells us whether the files were actually copied or if an error happened in the process.

A folder has to already exist in the *destination* location before the copy command will copy files to it. Make new folders in Command Prompt with the **mkdir** command.

Merge Files Into One

```
copy Z:\file1.txt+Z:\file2.txt+Z:\file3.txt Z:\combined.txt
```

This will merge three [TXT](#) files into a new one called *combined.txt*. As you can see, each file that should be part of the merge need to be separated by a + sign, but no spaces.

You can also use the asterisk to append multiple files. So, in our example, we could replace all those *.txt* instances with *Z:*.txt,* but only if we want to merge *every single TXT file* from the *Z:* drive.

Copy Related Commands

This command is similar to the [xcopy command](#), but unlike copy, xcopy works on folders, too.

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