

Automatic Backups with Acronis True Image Home 2009

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Backing up your computer's hard drive on a regular basis is the most important thing every user should be doing on their computer. The hard drive on your computer will eventually crash and when it does, you will be protected if you have a good backup. Without a backup, your computer will no longer function and all of your important files and pictures will be lost. Start doing backups today and be safe!

The best way to backup your computer is to use *Acronis True Image Home 2009* and save your backups on an external hard drive. You should backup your main hard drive at least once a week including the entire hard drive and not just a few files or folders on the drive. I recommend a full backup image at the beginning of each month and then weekly incremental backup images during the month. See my article titled the *Perfect Backup Approach* at <http://www.ugr.com/nl0804.html> for more details on the best way to do your backups. You can order the latest version of *Acronis True Image Home 2009* from us at <http://www.ugr.com/TrueImage.html>. Use the order code of **UGNL0609** when completing the order to get an excellent discount price.

Many users start with a great determination to do their backups on a regular basis, but after a couple of weeks of doing backups they tend to forget to do regular backups. I have found that it is best to automate your backups, so that you don't need to remember to do this very important task. Let the computer remember to do its own backups when they need to be done. That way, your backups will get done on the weekly basis, so that you are properly protected. The purpose of this paper is to help you set up automatic backups on your computer.

Acronis completely redesigned the end-user interface to *True Image 2009* to make the product easier to use. The automatic backup function was also completely revamped. This new automatic backup function was not ready to release when the rest of the product was released in October 2008. It took Acronis a couple of extra months to complete and perfect this important function and it was then put in the product with follow-on builds of the software.

Before you start to set up an automatic backup on your *True Image 2009*, you need to update your *True Image 2009* software to install the latest build (#9709) which became available on January 23, 2009. To do this, you must do three things: 1) set up an account on the Acronis web site, 2) register your product serial number in this account, and 3) download and install the build from the entry on your registered product. Details on how to do this can be found on my web site at <http://www.ugr.com/AcronisQuestions.html>. The rest of this paper assumes that you have upgraded your system to this latest build in order to work properly.

Before we begin the detailed steps to set up your automatic backup, let me suggest a calendar change that needs to be considered. I recommend a full backup at the beginning of each month and then weekly incremental backup images at the end of each week during the month. The

problem in doing this is that every month has a different number of days and begins on a different day of the week. So, setting up a rule to do exactly this schedule is not possible. A better approach is to adopt the 13-month calendar of exactly 4 weeks that many businesses use. That would give you exactly a full backup followed by 3 weekly incremental backups 13 times each year. This approach is more regular than trying to fit a regular backup schedule into our irregular monthly calendar. So, in this paper, I will be showing how to set up a 13-month approach.

First, create a folder on your external hard drive to contain your backups. Name this folder after the computer and partition that you plan to backup in this folder. If you have one computer and one main partition on it, this folder may simply be named something like *My Backups*. If you have two computers to backup on the same external hard drive, set up two folders and name them after each computer. For example, name them *My Backups HP Computer* and *My Backups Dell Computer*. Now we are ready to start setting up the automatic backup process with *True Image 2009*.

Setting up Automatic Backups with True Image 2009

Run *Acronis True Image Home 2009* on your computer and on the main screen, click on the *Task Management* button under the *What would you like to do?* heading. This will take you to the area in *True Image* where you set up and manage your automatic backups. Now click on the *Scheduled Tasks* tab in the middle of the screen under the calendars. Below the tabs is an area where you will see all of the automatic scheduled tasks on your computer. At this point, you should see the indication, *No items to display*. Next, click on the *Create Backup Task* menu item near the top of the screen. This will begin the *Backup Wizard* which will guide you through setting up an automatic backup task on your computer.

The first window in the *Backup Wizard* identifies what type of a backup you want to do. Click on *My Computer* to do a full backup image of your computer's hard drive.

The next window identifies the partitions you want to backup. Most users will see two disks listed -- your main hard drive and your backup external hard drive. Check the box next to your main hard drive, probably listed as Disk 1. Do NOT check the box next to your external hard drive. Click on *Next* to continue.

The next window identifies your *Target Backup Archive*, which is where you want to save your backup image files. Near the top of this wizard are two options. Make sure the circle next to the item, *Create New Backup Archive* is selected. This will create a full backup image to begin your automatic backups. Next, click on the *Browse* button next to the *Backup Location* box to find your folder on the external hard drive where you will be saving your automatic backup images.

This will bring up a directory tree screen on the left side of the window. Find your external hard drive and the folder name where you want to save your automatic backup images. Click once on this name to highlight it. You will notice that the path to this folder is listed in the *File Name* box below. Now click on the *Generate Name* button at the end of the *File Name* box. This will add a file name to your path on the external hard drive. Click on *OK* to return to the prior screen.

You will notice that the *Backup Location* box on this screen is now filled in with your backup path and file name from the prior screen. Click on *Next* to continue.

The *Backup Wizard* is now ready to identify the frequency of your backups. Click on the *Weekly* round button to select it. This will bring up additional information on this box to fill in. Under *Run this task weekly*, enter in the time of the day you wish to do your backups. While *True Image* can do backups while you are using your computer for other things, I prefer to run my backups in the middle of the night. So, I set 4:00am as my start time. Then I select which day of the week to run my backups. I picked Sunday as my backup day, but any day that is convenient to you can be selected. So, my backups will run at 4am on Sunday morning, a time I am seldom at my computer working. I just need to remember to leave my computer running Saturday night when I go to bed. Leave the settings at the bottom of the screen unchanged for now. They will work just fine in most cases as they are listed. If I forgot and turned off my computer Saturday night, the backup will start when I power on Sunday morning. Click on *Next* to continue.

On the *Backup Methods* screen, you should have selected the round button next to *Incremental* backups. Then check the box next to *Create a new full backup after* heading. Below it, change the number to 3 to permit three incremental images between each full backup image. That will give you a total of four backup images (1 full and 3 incremental images) in each of 13 months that follow. Do NOT check the *Remove old archives* option as you want to save more than one month of backups on the external hard drive. Click on *Next* to continue.

The *Files to exclude* screen lets you exclude certain files from your backup image. Personally, I want to include everything on my backup image, so I leave this screen blank and just click on *Next* to continue.

If you have followed my recommendations in the paper titled, *Using Acronis True Image Home 2009* at <http://www.ugr.com/nl1008b.html>, you will have already set up your backup options and do not need to repeat it at this point. If you wish to change any of your default backup options set earlier for this automatic backup, you can do so on this screen. Otherwise, click on *Next* to continue.

The *Automatically Consolidate Backup* screen is new to *True Image 2009*. With past releases, when your backups exceeded certain limits, those over that limit were simply thrown away. With *True Image 2009*, you can now keep the older backups, but consolidate them into using a smaller space for storage. What will happen is that the oldest incremental backup will be merged into the full backup it is based on to make an updated full backup. Then if more space is still needed, the next oldest incremental backup will be consolidated into the full backup. Thus, all of the backups are kept, but they will be consolidated to take up less room. This is certainly better than just deleting the old backups all together.

You have three tests to do your consolidations – the *number of backup images*, the *age of the backups*, or the *size of the backups*. I prefer to use the last option, the *size of the archives*. To use this, check the box next to *Size of archive exceeds*: and then set the number below it to about 80% of the size of your external hard drive. For example, if your external hard drive is 500GB, then you would set the size of this option to 400GB. That means that when you exceed the use of 400GB of space on your external backup hard drive, *True Image* will start some consolidation till

the backup space used is below 400GB. For most users, this is the best option to pick. Click on *Next* to continue.

You can place a comment in the *Archive Comments* screen if you want to. I seldom do, so click on *Next* to continue.

This brings you to the *Summary* screen where you will see listed the steps that your automatic backup will follow. If you have no objections, you can select *Proceed* to start the automatic backup task working. Do NOT click on the *Run task now* box. You will notice an entry under the *Scheduled Tasks* tab is now showing. This is the task you just completed. It will sit their quietly until the time when you specified you wanted to do your automatic backup. At that time, it will come alive and start either a full or incremental backup as you had specified. You can now exit *True Image 2009* and let your backups run automatically.

In closing, let me suggest that you periodically look at the backup image files *True Image* is automatically making for you on your external backup hard drive. Use *Windows Explorer* to do this. After a few weeks, you should see a list of files something like this:

My Backups	(folder name)
MyBackup.tib	(full backup image of first month)
MyBackup2.tib	(incremental backup image of first month)
MyBackup3.tib	(next incremental backup image of first month)
MyBackup4.tib	(last incremental backup image of first month)
MyBackup(1).tib	(full backup image of next month)
MyBackup(1)2.tib	(incremental backup image of next month)
MyBackup(1)3.tib	(next incremental image of next month)
MyBackup(1)4.tib	(last incremental image of next month)
MyBackup(2).tib	(full backup image of current month)
MyBackup(2)2.tib	(incremental image of current month)

If they do not look similar to this, then you may have set up your automatic task wrong and you need to check it and edit it so that it is set up correctly.

I hope this helps you set up *True Image 2009* to run automatic backups on your computer. If you have questions about this article or have problems setting up your automatic backup tasks, send a note to support@ugr.com and I will try to assist you. With a little care, you should be able to have your backups run automatically on your system.