

How to Install Windows XP from a USB Flash Drive

If you are looking for guidelines on installing Windows XP from a USB drive, you have landed on the right page. This article provides step by step guidelines about the same.

With the new netbooks in the market, you must have noticed that some of them come without an optical drive. If you purchase such a notebook and you have to install Windows XP, or any other operating system, it goes without saying that an installation CD won't work. You will have to set it up, from a USB flash drive. In another scenario, if the optical drive of your desktop computer or laptop breaks down and you need to repair or install Windows XP, what do you do? Use a bootable USB drive of course.

Even if your optical is fine and dandy, it doesn't hurt you to have a bootable USB flash drive ready for any emergency. USB flash drives serve many purposes including being a bootable drive for installation.



How to Install Windows XP from a USB Drive

Once the bootable Windows XP drive is created, you won't need an optical drive for installation but you will need one for copying and extracting the ISO image from a Windows XP installation disc. Other than that, you will need a USB flash drive (obviously!) with at least 1GB of memory space (2 GB is recommended). Here is a step by step procedure.

Download & Install WinToFlash

You may have expected me to provide you with instructions on how to create a bootable USB flash drive through commands typed in the command prompt. It is true that you can do that through the command prompt, but the creation of **WinToFlash** software that specializes in converting Windows XP, Windows Vista and Windows 7 installation DVDs into bootable USB flash drives, has eliminated that need. All you need to do is download **WinToFlash** and install it on your PC. However, this won't work if you want to install Ubuntu from USB or any other Linux distribution. For that, you will have to use a different program.

Prepare Windows XP Bootable USB Drive

Insert your Windows XP installation disk in the optical drive. Insert the USB flash drive in a USB port and format it. Open the *WinToFlash* program and locate the Windows XP installation location and the USB flash drive location for it. Run the program and let it do its job. It will copy the ISO image of your installation disk on to the flash drive and convert it into a bootable drive. Once the transfer is complete, close the program and remove the bootable USB drive.

Booting From USB & Installing It

Insert the flash drive in the USB port of the laptop or netbook on which you intend to install the operating system. Restart the computer and go into BIOS setup (by pressing F12 during start up). Change the bootable drive setting to USB drive. Once you do that, save the settings and exit. Then installation will go ahead and you will have Windows XP installed the normal way. For any other installation, including Windows Vista and Windows 7 from a USB, the procedure is the same as above.

You can use the bootable USB drive to install Windows XP on any computer that does not come with the luxury of an optical drive like netbooks. If you need to install Windows 7 from a USB flash drive, Microsoft provides a tool called 'Windows 7 USB/DVD Download Tool' that you can use. It can help you install Windows 7 from USB by creating a USB bootable installation for you. Just visit the Microsoft site for a download.



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