Backing-up your personal files in Windows 10

In previous versions of Windows the term Back-up implied a once a week/month job to keep a copy of the latest version of all your files. File History is a better description of the Windows 10 process – your files are copied to back-up automatically as regular as every 10 minutes and every version of the file is kept and can be recovered.

File History can be managed better through the new Settings app rather than though the 'legacy' control panel:

Where To Find File History In The Settings App

Before you can modify any settings of *File History*, you will need to plug in an external hard drive or a large USB memory stick with lots of free space on it, which will be used for your backups. Then, you have to open the *Settings* app. (It's just above the power button in the Start menu).

In the newly opened window, click or tap on the section labeled *Update & security*.
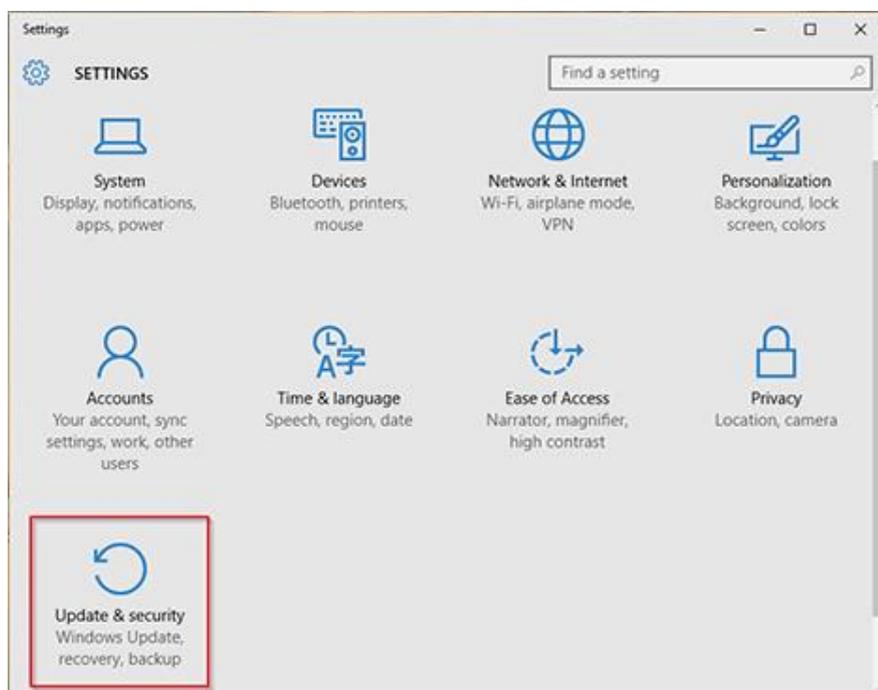
In the *Update & security* window, you will find six subsections in the left-side column, click or tap on *Backup*.
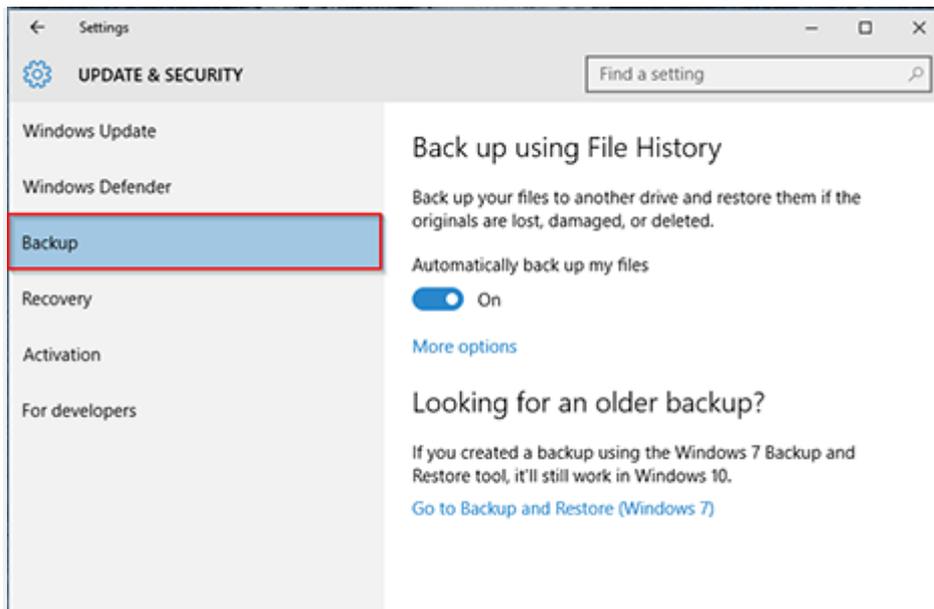
In the main *Backup* area you will be able to turn *File History On* or *Off*. So, if you have already plugged in an external drive, *File History* will automatically backup all your libraries (both default libraries and custom libraries you created), the *Desktop*, your *Contacts*, Edge favorites and, finally, *OneDrive*.
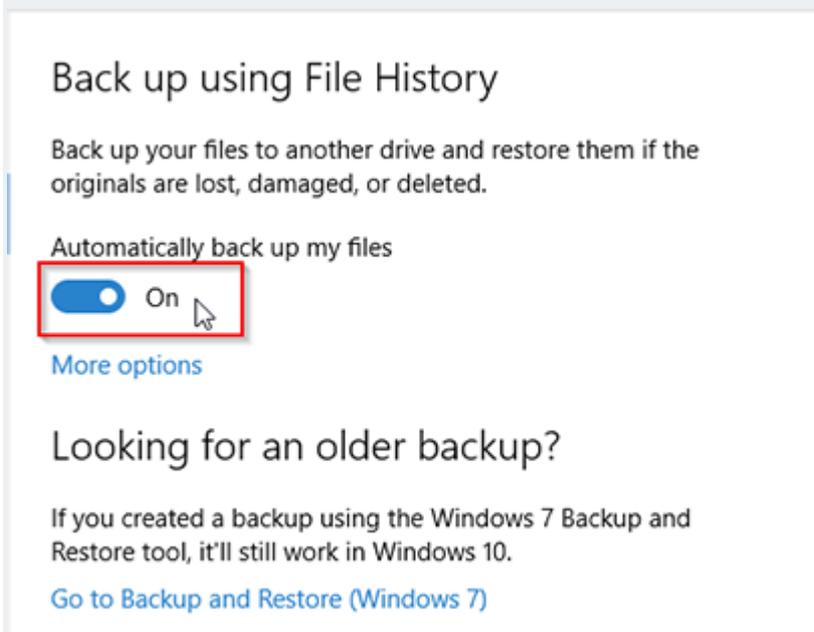

(Note the link at the bottom that will allow you to restore files from an old Windows 7 back-up should you need to).

Finally, you will find the *More options* button, that will send you to a separate menu where you can set up and modify advanced settings of *File History*.
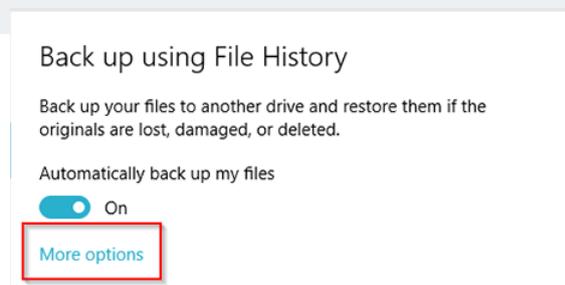
# How To Use The Settings App To Configure The Way File History Works

Go to the *Backup* subsection, as above, and then click or tap on the *More options* button. This action will take you to the *Backup Options* window, where many of the advanced settings of *File History* are gathered in single unified list.
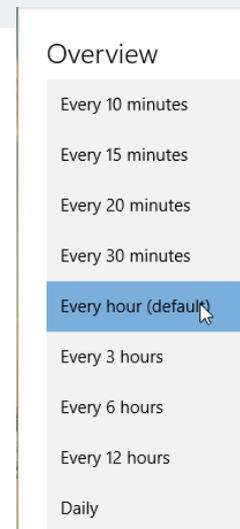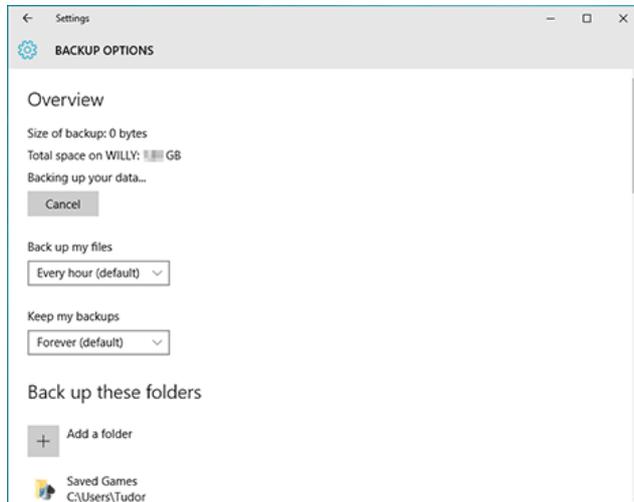
The first section of the *Backup Options* list, that is labeled *Overview*, will show you general details about your backups and your backup drive. Here, it is also possible to choose how often you want *File History* to create backup copies. The default setting is *Every hour*, but you can either shorten the period between backups to a limit of *Every 10 minutes* or increase it to a maximum limit of one per day.


Another important setting, that can be found in the *Overview* section, will allow you to choose how long *File History* keeps each of the backups. Evidently, the default option is *Forever*, but you can select a shorter period of time in other to not run out of space on your backup drive.
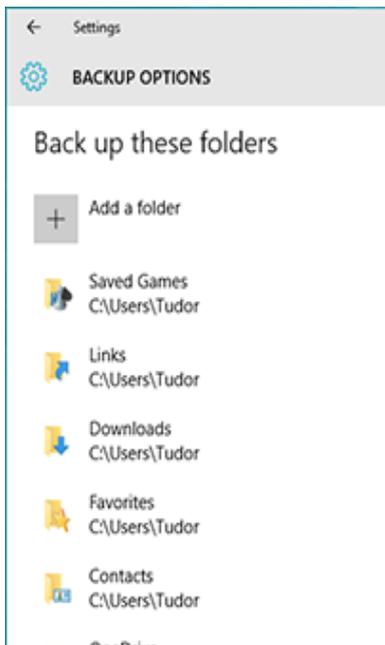
The next section, called *Back up these folders*, will show you all the libraries and folders that are currently being backed up. Windows 10 will now allow you to easily add folders that are not connected to the your libraries.

To start backing up a specific folder with *File History* all you need to do is click or tap on the *Add a folder* button from the top of the *Back up these folders* section.
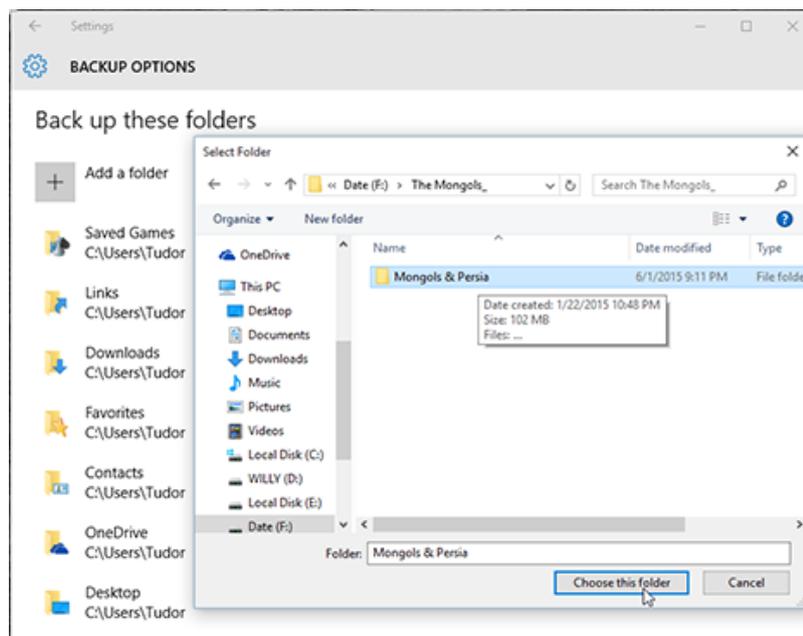
In the newly opened window, choose the folder you want to back up and then press the *Choose this folder* button. And that is it, you have just added a folder that is not related to your default or custom libraries.
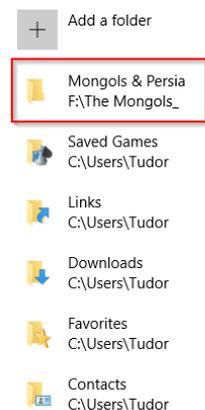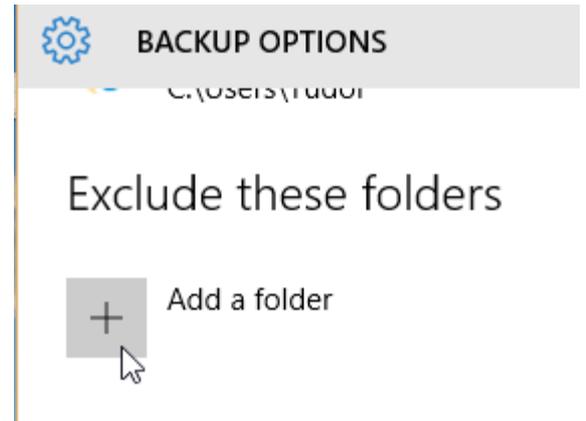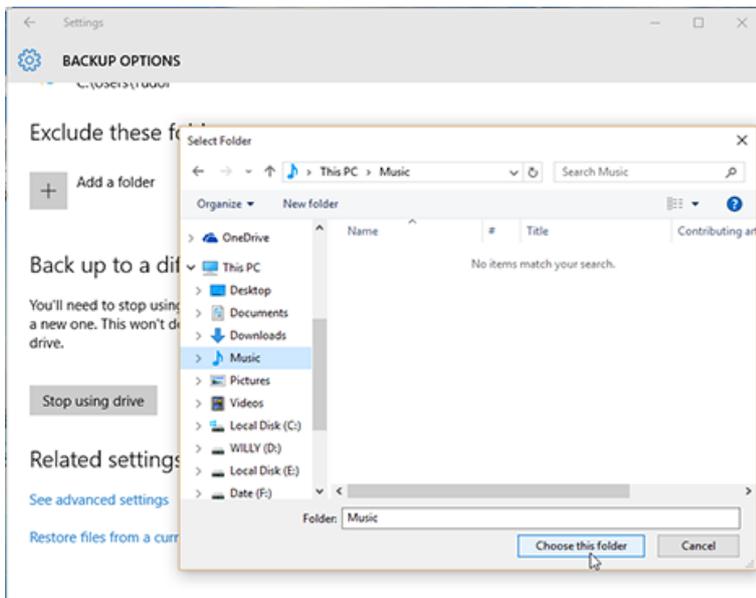
Of course, in the *Backup Options*, you also have the possibility to exclude specific libraries and folders from the backup. To do this, simply press the *Add a folder* button from the *Exclude these folders* section.

Then, select the item(s) you want to remove from the backup and click or tap on *Choose this folder*.

Finally, you can change the drive used for your backups, but this is a two stage process. First, you need to stop using your current backup drive by pressing the *Stop using drive* button from the *Back up to a different drive* section of the *Backup Options*.

The second step requires you to go back to the main *Backup* window and press the *Add a drive* button. This will show you a small drop down menu, where you can select a different drive by clicking or tapping on it.
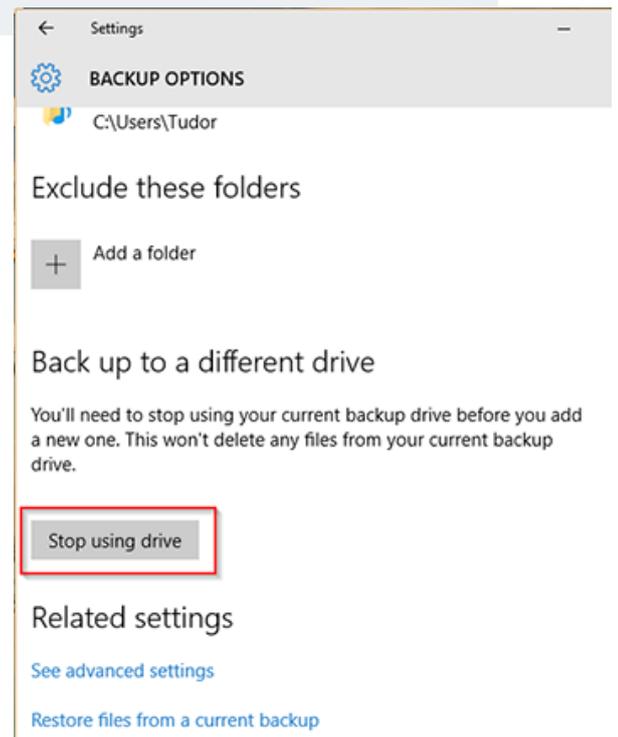
Adapted from an article by Tudor Mandache on Digital Citizen