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On The Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk 118KB

For: [Windows 95](#) | [Windows 98](#) | [Windows ME](#)

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1. Introduction

Note: For information on the Windows 2000/XP Setup Disks, see [On The Windows 2000/XP Setup Disks](#) (stevestechresource.com).

The Windows 95, Windows 98, and Windows ME (Windows 9x/ME) Startup Disk is a bootable drive from which a near minimal version of MS-DOS is loaded. After booting a computer from the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk, the user can run the programs provided by the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk to fix drive errors and to prepare a hard disk for the installation of Windows 9x/ME. Moreover, if the computer is booted from the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk (not the Windows 95 Startup Disk) and CD/DVD drive support is selected, the user can initiate the installation of Windows 9x/ME from the Windows 9x/ME product CD.

2. The Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk Is A Bootable Drive

Note: A hard disk and floppy disk are physical (i.e., hardware) devices. A drive is a partition assigned a drive letter by an operating system. A hard disk can have multiple partitions/drives. A floppy disk can only have one partition/disk.

A bootable drive is a drive from which an operating system is loaded. A hard disk can have multiple bootable drives. A floppy disk can only have one bootable drive. A hard disk with at least one bootable drive is known as a bootable hard disk. A floppy disk with a bootable drive is known as a bootable floppy disk. Although known as bootable disks, technically, it is the drives that are bootable, not the disks (hard or floppy) themselves.

A bootable drive is a drive from which an operating system is loaded. The Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk is a bootable floppy disk drive from which a near minimal version of MS-DOS is loaded.

IO.SYS, MSDOS.SYS, and COMMAND.COM are the minimal MS-DOS operating system files and, as such, are known as MS-DOS system files. Copying the system files to a drive, however, does not make a bootable drive. To make a bootable drive, the drive's boot record must include the instruction to pass the boot process to the system files. In the absence of this instruction, a drive containing the system files functions merely as file storage.

Note: Because IO.SYS, MSDOS.SYS, and COMMAND.COM are system files, they might have the hidden file attribute and might not appear in a directory listing. For information on showing all files, folders, and file extensions in Windows 2000/XP, see [Showing All Files, Folders, And File Extensions In Windows 2000/XP \(stevestechresource.com\)](#).

The command, `FORMAT X: /S`, where X: is a drive, creates a bootable drive X. `FORMAT X: /S` formats drive X, writes the drive X boot record to include the instruction to pass the boot process to the MS-DOS system files, and copies the MS-DOS system files to drive X.

The Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk is created by clicking the Create Disk button in the Windows 9x/ME Add/Remove Programs | Startup Disk tab. When the Create Disk button is clicked, `FORMAT A: /S`, or an equivalent, is issued after which additional files and functions are copied to drive A.

3. Creating The Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk

Creating the Windows 9x Startup Disk requires one floppy disk, starting a computer to Windows 9x, and the Windows 9x product CD. Creating the Windows ME Startup Disk requires one floppy disk and starting a computer to Windows ME.

Note: Floppy disks are extremely unreliable. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you create at least two copies of the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk. Moreover, if an error message appears while creating the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk, the floppy disk is probably bad. Try again with a different floppy disk.

3.1. Creating The Windows 9x Startup Disk

1. Start the computer to Windows 9x.
2. Insert the Windows 9x product CD into the CD/DVD drive. If the Windows 9x product CD autoruns, close the dialogs that appear.
3. Click **Start | Settings | Control Panel | Add/Remove Programs | Startup Disk | Create Disk**.

Note: If the Insert Disk: Please insert the disk labeled 'Windows 9x CD-ROM' and then click OK prompt appears, and if the Windows 9x product CD is already in the CD/DVD drive, in the Copy files from field, type either `X:\WIN95`, where X is the CD/DVD drive with the Windows 95 product CD, or `X:\WIN98`, where X is the CD/DVD drive with the Windows 98 product CD, and click **OK**.

4. The Label a disk "Windows 9x Startup Disk" and insert it into drive A prompt appears. Label a floppy disk according to the prompt, insert it into drive A, and click **OK**.
5. After the Windows 9x Startup Disk is created successfully, the progress bar disappears and the Create Disk button becomes active again. Remove the Windows 9x Startup Disk from drive A. To create another Windows 9x Startup Disk, click **Create Disk**. When finished, click **OK**.

3.2. Creating The Windows ME Startup Disk

1. Start the computer to Windows ME.
2. Click **Start | Settings | Control Panel | Add/Remove Programs | Startup Disk | Create Disk**.
3. The Label a disk "Windows Millennium Edition Startup Disk" and insert it into drive A prompt appears. Label a floppy disk according to the prompt, insert it into drive A, and click **OK**.
4. After the Windows ME Startup Disk is created successfully, the progress bar disappears and the Create Disk button becomes active again. Remove the Windows ME Startup Disk from drive A. To create another Windows ME Startup Disk, click **Create Disk**. When finished, click **OK**.

4. Booting A Computer From The Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk

To boot a computer from the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk, insert the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk into the floppy disk drive and

power on/restart the computer. If the computer does not boot from the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk as described below and the computer has multiple floppy disk drives, insert the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk into the other floppy disk drives and try again. If the computer still does not boot from the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk as described below, and if the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk was created successfully and is functional, and if the floppy disk drive(s) are functional, then either: 1.) the computer BIOS does not support booting from floppy disk drives, which is unlikely for computers with floppy disk drives, or 2.) the computer BIOS is not configured to boot from floppy disk drives, which means, to boot the computer from the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk, you must enter the BIOS setup program and configure the BIOS to boot from floppy disk drives.

Note: Further discussion of the BIOS is beyond the scope of this page. For information on how to enter the BIOS setup program and how to configure the BIOS to boot from floppy disk drives, see the computer motherboard/BIOS documentation.

4.1. Booting A Computer From The Windows 95 Startup Disk

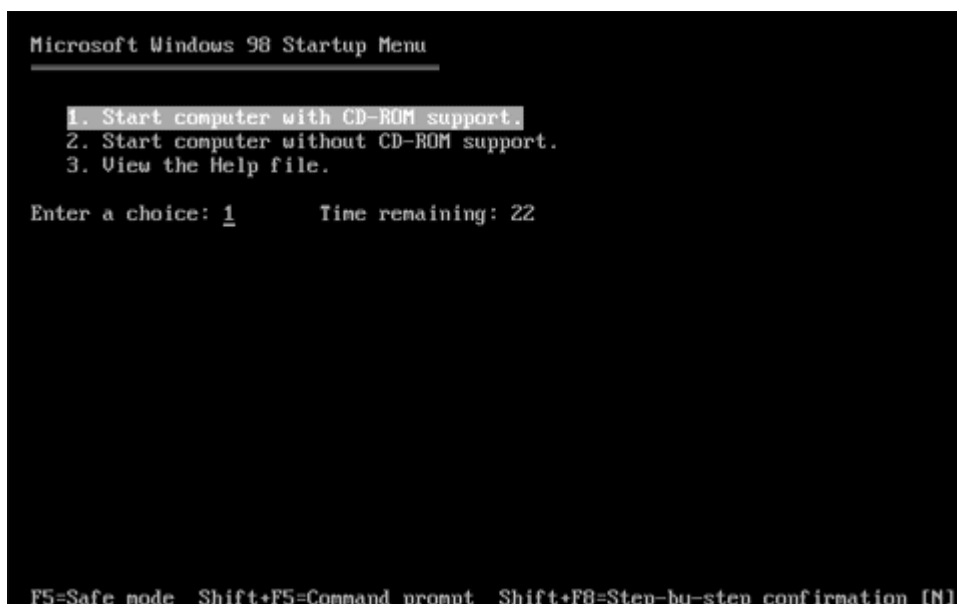
1. Insert the Windows 95 Startup Disk into the floppy disk drive and power on/restart the computer.
2. The near minimal version of MS-DOS is loaded from the Windows 95 Startup Disk and the DOS prompt at A:\> appears:

A screenshot of a DOS command prompt window. The text displayed is: "Starting Windows 95...", "Microsoft(R) Windows 95", "(C)Copyright Microsoft Corp 1981-1996.", and "A:\>".

```
Starting Windows 95...
Microsoft(R) Windows 95
(C)Copyright Microsoft Corp 1981-1996.
A:\>
```

4.2. Booting A Computer From The Windows 98 Startup Disk

1. Insert the Windows 98 Startup Disk into the floppy disk drive and power on/restart the computer.
2. The near minimal version of MS-DOS is loaded from the Windows 98 Startup Disk and the Microsoft Windows 98 Startup Menu appears:

A screenshot of the Microsoft Windows 98 Startup Menu. The text displayed is: "Microsoft Windows 98 Startup Menu", "1. Start computer with CD-ROM support.", "2. Start computer without CD-ROM support.", "3. View the Help file.", "Enter a choice: 1", "Time remaining: 22", and "F5=Safe mode Shift+F5=Command prompt Shift+F8=Step-by-step confirmation [N]".

```
Microsoft Windows 98 Startup Menu
1. Start computer with CD-ROM support.
2. Start computer without CD-ROM support.
3. View the Help file.
Enter a choice: 1          Time remaining: 22
F5=Safe mode  Shift+F5=Command prompt  Shift+F8=Step-by-step confirmation [N]
```

3. To start the computer with CD/DVD drive support, press **1 | Enter**. Otherwise, press **2 | Enter**.

Note: The only difference between starting the computer with or without CD/DVD drive support is that starting the computer with CD/DVD drive support loads DOS-mode CD/DVD device drivers that enable CD/DVD drive function. Since loading the drivers approximately doubles the boot time, if you are in a hurry and do not need to use a CD/DVD drive, it is recommended to start the computer without CD/DVD drive support.

4. The DOS prompt at A:\> appears:

```
This may take a few minutes. Please wait...

Windows 98 has detected that drive C does not contain a valid FAT or
FAT32 partition. There are several possible causes.

1. The drive may need to be partitioned. To create a partition on the drive,
run FDISK from the MS-DOS command prompt.

2. You may be using third-party disk-partitioning software. If you are using
this type of software, remove the Emergency Boot Disk and restart your
computer. Then, follow the on-screen instructions to start your computer from
a floppy disk.

3. Some viruses also cause your drive C to not register. You can use a virus
scanning program to check your computer for viruses.

The diagnostic tools were successfully loaded to drive C.

MSCDEX Version 2.25
Copyright (C) Microsoft Corp. 1986-1995. All rights reserved.
Drive D: = Driver MSCD001 unit 0

To get help, type HELP and press ENTER.

A:\>
```

4.3. Booting A Computer From The Windows ME Startup Disk

1. Insert the Windows ME Startup Disk into the floppy disk drive and power on/restart the computer.
2. The near minimal version of MS-DOS is loaded from the Windows ME Startup Disk and the Microsoft Windows ME Startup Menu appears:

```
Microsoft Windows Millennium Startup Menu

1. Help
2. Start computer with CD-ROM support.
3. Start computer without CD-ROM support.
4. Minimal Boot

Enter a choice: 1      Time remaining: 21

F5=Safe mode  Shift+F5=Command prompt  Shift+F8=Step-by-step confirmation [N]
```

3. To start the computer with CD/DVD drive support, press **2 | Enter**. Otherwise, press **3 | Enter**.

Note: The only difference between starting the computer with or without CD/DVD drive support is that starting the computer with CD/DVD drive support loads DOS-mode CD/DVD device drivers that enable CD/DVD drive function. Since loading the drivers approximately doubles the boot time, if you are in a hurry and do not need to use a CD/DVD drive, it is recommended

to start the computer without CD/DVD drive support.

4. The DOS prompt at A:\> appears:

```
Windows Millennium Edition has detected that drive C does not contain a valid
FAT or FAT32 partition. There are several possible causes.

1. The drive may need to be partitioned. To create a partition on the drive,
run FDISK from the MS-DOS command prompt.

2. You may be using third-party disk-partitioning software. If you are using
this type of software, remove the Emergency Boot Disk and restart your
computer. Then, follow the on-screen instructions to start your computer from
a floppy disk.

3. Some viruses also cause your drive C to not register. You can use a virus
scanning program to check your computer for viruses.

The diagnostic tools were successfully loaded to drive C.

MSCDEX Version 2.25
Copyright (C) Microsoft Corp. 1986-1995. All rights reserved.
  Drive D: = Driver MSCD001 unit 0

Your CD-ROM is drive D

To view Help, type HELP and then press ENTER.
A:\>
```

5. The Windows 98/ME Startup Disk EBD.CAB File And RAMDrive

When a computer is booted from the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk, a temporary virtual drive is created in memory known as a RAMDrive, and the compressed Windows 98/ME Startup Disk file, EBD.CAB, is extracted to the RAMDrive. The RAMDrive is assigned a drive letter next in line after hard disk partitions formatted with the FAT or FAT32 file system, and before CD/DVD drives. For example, if a computer with a hard disk FAT32 partition and a CD/DVD drive is booted from the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk and CD/DVD drive support is selected, then the hard disk FAT32 partition is drive C, the RAMDrive is drive D, and the CD/DVD drive is drive E. And if a computer with a hard disk having no partitions or only NTFS partitions and a CD/DVD drive is booted from the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk and CD/DVD drive support is selected, then the RAMDrive is drive C and the CD/DVD drive is drive D. In other words, when a computer is booted from the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk and CD/DVD drive support is selected, the drive letters assigned to CD/DVD drives might be different than if the computer was started to Windows installed on a hard disk drive.

The RAMDrive is 2MB and the user can read, write, and execute files in the RAMDrive from the DOS prompt. The use of file compression/extraction and the RAMDrive gives the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk a virtual capacity that exceeds the floppy disk 1.44MB physical capacity, which, in turn, allows the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk to provide functionality not included on the Windows 95 Startup Disk.

The RAMDrive is temporary and only exists when a computer is booted from the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk. In other words, if the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk is removed from the floppy disk drive and the computer is powered on/restarted, the RAMDrive is erased from memory and no longer exists.

6. The Windows 98/ME Startup Disk DOS-Mode CD/DVD Drive Support

When a computer is booted from the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk and CD/DVD drive support is selected, DOS-mode (a.k.a., Real-mode and 16-bit) CD/DVD device drivers are loaded from the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk that enable CD/DVD drive function. Because of this functionality, the user can initiate the installation of Windows 9x/ME from the Windows 9x/ME product CD after booting a computer from the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk.

The Windows 95 Startup Disk does not provide DOS-mode CD/DVD drive support. The differences in the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk compared to the Windows 95 Startup Disk with respect to DOS-mode CD/DVD drive support are as follows:

- AUTOEXEC.BAT file added, including the line:
 - LH %ramd%:\MSCDEX.EXE /D:MSCD001 /L:%CDROM%
- MSCDEX.EXE file added.

- Lines added to CONFIG.SYS:
 - DEVICE=OAKCDROM.SYS /D:MSCD001
 - DEVICE=BTCDROM.SYS /D:MSCD001
 - DEVICE=ASPICD.SYS /D:MSCD001
 - LASTDRIVE=Z
 - DOS-mode CD/DVD device driver files added:
 - OAKCDROM.SYS
 - BTCDROM.SYS
 - ASPICD.SYS
-

7. Programs Provided By The Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk

After the near minimal version of MS-DOS is loaded from the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk, the DOS prompt (a.k.a., system prompt and command prompt) at A:\> appears, the system is ready to accept commands, and the user can run the programs provided by the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk. So that the programs extracted from the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk EBD.CAB file to the RAMDrive (and programs located on CDs/DVDs) can be run from the DOS prompt at A:\>, the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk includes an AUTOEXEC.BAT file with the line, path=%RAMD%:\;a:\;%CDROM%:\.

7.1. Running The Programs Provided By The Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk

1. Boot the computer from the Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk.
2. The DOS prompt at A:\> appears. Type **filename.exe**, where filename.exe is the program executable file, and press **Enter**.

7.2. Programs Provided By The Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk To Fix Drive Errors

- CHKDSK.EXE: Fix basic drive errors.
- SCANDISK.EXE: Fix a wider range of drive errors.

7.3. Programs Provided By The Windows 9x/ME Startup Disk To Prepare A Hard Disk For The Installation Of Windows 9x/ME

- FDISK.EXE: Create/delete partitions (i.e., drives).
- FORMAT.COM: Apply the FAT file system to partitions/drives.

Note: For additional information on:

- FDISK.EXE, see [On Partitioning \(Draft\) \(stevestechresource.com\)](#).
 - FORMAT.COM, see [On Formatting \(Draft\) \(stevestechresource.com\)](#).
-

8. Can I Use The Windows 98/ME Startup Disk To Prepare For And Initialize The Installation Of Windows 95 From The Windows 95 Product CD?

Since the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk provides DOS-mode CD/DVD drive support, the question arises: Can I use the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk to prepare for and initialize the installation of Windows 95 from the Windows 95 product CD?

Yes, the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk can be used to prepare for and initialize the installation of Windows 95 from the Windows 95 product CD. All of the programs included on the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk, including FDISK.COM and FORMAT.COM, are backward compatible with Windows 95. Moreover, because the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk includes improved memory management, it is recommended that you use the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk to prepare for and initialize the installation of Windows 95 from the Windows 95 product CD.

8.1. Initializing The Installation Of Windows 9x/ME From The Windows 9x/ME Product CD After Booting A Computer From The Windows 98/ME Startup Disk

1. Boot the computer from the Windows 98/ME Startup Disk.
2. The Microsoft Windows 98/ME Startup Menu appears. Start the computer with CD/DVD drive support:
 - Windows 98 Startup Disk: Press **1** | **Enter**.
 - Windows ME Startup Disk: Press **2** | **Enter**.

3. The DOS prompt at A:\> appears.
 4. Insert the Windows 9x/ME product CD into the CD/DVD drive.
 5. To initialize the installation of Windows 9x/ME from the Windows 9x/ME product CD, type **SETUP.EXE** and press **Enter**.
-

9. Additional Reading

- [Windows 98 Or Windows 95 Startup Disk Tools And Capabilities \(259066\) \(support.microsoft.com\)](#)
- [How To Use Real-Mode CD-ROM Drivers From Windows 98 Startup Disk \(190303\) \(support.microsoft.com\)](#)
- [Cannot Access CD-ROM Drive From MS-DOS Mode Or Command Prompt \(135174\) \(support.microsoft.com\)](#)
- [Contents Of Windows 95 And Microsoft Plus! Startup Disks \(142943\) \(support.microsoft.com\)](#)
- [How To Create A Windows 98 Startup Disk \(296532\) \(support.microsoft.com\)](#)
- [Contents Of The Windows 98 Startup Disk \(185645\) \(support.microsoft.com\)](#)
- [How To Create A Windows 98 Startup Disk That Supports FAT32 \(187632\) \(support.microsoft.com\)](#)
- [How To Create A Windows 98 Boot Disk After You Upgrade To Windows 2000 \(255292\) \(support.microsoft.com\)](#)
- [How To Create A Startup Disk In Windows ME \(267287\) \(support.microsoft.com\)](#)
- [Contents Of The Windows Millennium Startup Disk \(262502\) \(support.microsoft.com\)](#)
- [BootDisk.com](#)

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