

Parallels Desktop for Mac – Compressor

Compressor is a free, built-in utility that cleans up and organizes a Virtual Hard Drive (VHD) that holds the contents of a Windows 2000, 2003, XP, or Vista virtual machine (VM).

As you use your virtual machine, the operating system (OS) constantly writes and deletes files. This normal process creates empty spaces and fragments of files on the VM's virtual hard drive. The OS writes data to these empty spaces and if the space is not big enough for the total amount of information, moves to the next empty space and continues to write data. Eventually this normal process slows down the VM as the OS is forced to go to more and more locations to read data.

Compressor organizes the data on the VHD so that the files are consolidated into single locations, deletes unnecessary file fragments, and compresses the data so that there are no longer any empty spaces. Periodically running Parallels Compressor helps you save real disk space and improve virtual machine performance by compressing your virtual machine's VHD.

This tutorial guides you through an express compression, which is recommended for most users. Please see the Parallels Desktop for Mac User Guide for detailed instructions on running a manual compression.

Getting Started

Before you use Compressor, always create a backup copy of your virtual machine. Although running Parallels Compressor is completely safe and has been thoroughly tested, it is always wise to backup your virtual machine before running any disk maintenance utility.

Parallels Desktop 3.0 for Mac has a feature called Snapshots, an important new security and backup tool that instantly saves the state of a virtual machine's memory, settings, and hard disk to the Snapshot Manager. If you are using Parallels Desktop 3.0 for Mac, you must delete any snapshots in the Snapshot Manager to run Parallels Compressor. Parallels Compressor will not run if your virtual machine has any saved snapshots in the Snapshot Manager. Parallels Compressor is also incompatible with static virtual disks.

Before launching Compressor, be sure that your Mac is plugged in and is not running on battery. Compressor is a resource-intensive utility and may exhaust even a full battery.

Running Parallels Compressor

1. Launch Parallels and start your Windows virtual machine. Wait for Windows to completely load. Make sure that you have access to the Parallels Desktop menu bar shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1

2. Select **Run Parallels Compressor** from the **Actions** menu. See Figure 2.

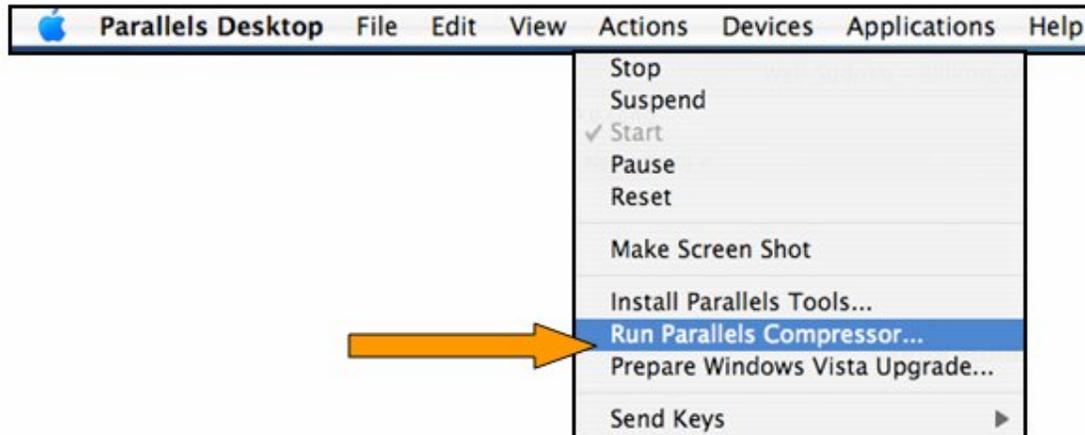


Figure 2

3. The following dialog box will display. Click **OK**. See Figure 3.

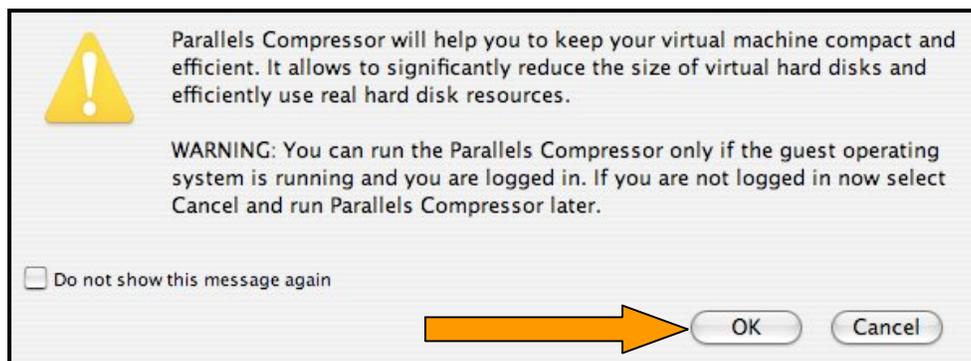


Figure 3

4. A timer will display. At this time, you may choose to enter manual mode. For more detailed information on manual compression, please see the Parallels Desktop for Mac User Guide. To run an express compression, allow the timer to expire.
5. The process will run without the need for user interaction. Depending on the size of your virtual machine's VHD and the level of compression needed, this process can take between 30 minutes to several hours. When Compressor is finished, a dialog box will display indicating that Compressor was successful.
6. When Compressor has successfully finished, restart your virtual machine. After you restart your VM, you can delete the backup copy you created before running Parallels Compressor.