

## The schedule menu

The schedule menu incorporates the following commands:

### **New** (Ctrl+N)

Creates a new schedule – you will be prompted to save the current schedule if changes have been made.

### **Open** (Ctrl+O)

Opens an existing schedule – you will be prompted to save the current schedule if changes have been made.

### **Save** (Ctrl+S)

Saves the current schedule – you will be prompted for a filename if it is the first time the schedule has been saved.

### **Save As** (Ctrl+A)

Saves the current schedule with a different filename.

### **Exit** (Ctrl+X)

Exits HAL – if you want to retain HAL in the system tray, click **Yes** when prompted, otherwise click **No** to terminate HAL completely. Clicking **Cancel** returns you to HAL without closing.

## The task menu

The task menu incorporates the following commands:

### **Compile/Decompile** (Ctrl+M)

Compiles or decompiles the task shown, dependant on the current compilation status of that task.

### **Run** (Ctrl+R)

Runs the task shown immediately – only enabled for compiled tasks.

### **Duplicate** (Ctrl+D)

Duplicates the task shown to any other task – you will be prompted to confirm that you are happy to overwrite the existing task. Password information is not duplicated to prevent possible security compromise; instead you are prompted to rekey the password in the duplicate task.

### **Erase** (Ctrl+E)

Erases the task shown, setting all values back to their defaults – you will be prompted to confirm that you really want to do this.

## Revision history

1.0.0	31 Jul 98	Initial release
1.0.1	7 Aug 98	Typo corrected, aesthetic reformatting
1.0.2	7 Jun 99	Added 32-bit filename support
1.1.0	14 Jun 99	Added system tray support
2.0.0	22 Jun 99	Added multiple schedule support, Exclusive function
2.0.1	23 Jun 99	Scheduling bug fix
2.1.0	28 Jun 99	Resequenced close-down order, added 'run now' function
2.1.1	29 Jun 99	Added task duplication function
2.1.2	15 Jul 99	Used control array to reduce app size
2.1.3	21 Jul 99	Used control arrays to reduce app size, version change bug fix
2.2.0	28 Jul 99	Added Common Dialog OCX, extra file type support, 'Save As' bug fix
3.0.0	3 Dec 99	Added task name, ability to create .hal file associations
3.0.1	18 Mar 00	Aesthetic reformatting
3.1.0	28 Mar 00	Aesthetic reformatting, reduced app size
3.1.1	7 Jun 00	Task title in task duplication bug fix
3.1.2	11 Nov 00	Streamlined code, reduced app size
3.2.0	17 Nov 00	Added Erase functionality, made ReadMe and License open in default text app, reduced app size
4.0.0	29 Nov 00	Repackaged with new install kit, removed 'create file association' function (the install now does this)
4.0.1	1 Dec 00	Reduced app size
4.0.2	4 Jan 01	Reduced app size
4.0.5	15 Jan 01	Streamlined use of Common Dialog
4.1.0	24 Jan 01	Embedded schedule icon in app
4.2.0	28 Jan 01	Enabled recognition of international time formats
4.2.1	29 Jan 01	Fixed time entry bug introduced in 4.2
4.2.2	7 Jul 01	Changed system tray icon tooltip to include active schedule, made v8 the default version of Access
4.3.0	11 Jul 01	Replaced use of comdlg32.ocx with native API call
4.4.0	4 Oct 01	Added v9 (2000) of Access and made it the default
4.5.0	2 Nov 01	Added v10 (2002) of Access and 'Decompile' action
4.5.1	3 Dec 02	Streamlined code
4.5.2	11 Dec 02	Task duplication bug fix, expanded 'days to run' option
4.6.0	26 Feb 03	Improved masking of task time field and enabled recurring tasks through use of ? in the time field
4.6.1		Beta only
4.6.2	03 Jul 03	Fixed bug with recurring tasks on the hour
5.0.0	13 Jul 03	Added support for Cmd command-line switch; systray icon now reappears if Explorer crashes; file browse buttons are more context-sensitive; generally streamlined; changed shortcut key to allow conventional use of Ctrl+C; added task info to tray icon tooltip
6.0.0	10 Nov 03	Added v11 (2003) of Access; increased task limit from 20 to 30; expanded 'days to run' option
6.1.0	5 Dec 03	Added double-click function on file location fields to store/retrieve default values.
6.1.1	8 Sep 04	Repackaged and reduced app size.
6.1.2	26 Feb 05	Repackaged to support donations from users.

You can always find the latest version of HAL online at [Accessory](#).

## Introduction

The Handy Access Launcher (HAL) is a scheduling tool that enables you, the Access developer, to schedule database administration tasks without having to invest in some sort of technical scheduling software. With HAL you can schedule compacts, repairs or macro runs to execute at any time; you can also choose to start Access with the Decompile or Cmd command-line switches. It supports multiple versions of Access and multiple system.mdw or INI files. In total, you can program 30 tasks in a schedule and, if it's a sequence of events you run often, store that schedule. If you need to run more than 30 tasks, simply open more than one HAL session (you can now store multiple schedules for future use too).

Why not just use the scheduling utility that ships with my PC, I hear you cry. Well, HAL lets you schedule database administration tasks on secured databases without compromising your account security, unlike (say) Windows Task Scheduler which reveals your password information to anyone who cares to look.

HAL is freeware but if you use it, and find it useful, you might consider making a donation to the author. With a PayPal account you can make a donation for author quickly, safely and securely. All donations are gratefully received, thank you... just click the link below.

[Make a donation with PayPal](#)

## Starting HAL

There are four ways to start HAL:

- Launch HAL from the Start Menu
- Launch HAL from the desktop
- Double-click on a HAL schedule file (identified by a .hal file extension)
- Run HAL with its /o command line parameter to open with a specific file, e.g.

```
C:\Program Files\HAL\hal.exe /o c:\mydbs\schedule.hal
```

This will launch HAL and load schedule.hal – this functionality is particularly useful if you want to include HAL in your startup group so that when your PC boots the saved schedule is automatically loaded.

## Creating a task

The steps involved in creating a new task are as follows:

- Select the task from the combo box.
- Type narrative text into the task name box.
- Enter the task's run time in the format hh:mm:ss (e.g. 07:30:00 or 17:45:00) [also, see [recurring tasks](#)].
- Enter the username for that database (accept the 'Admin' default if the database is unsecured).
- Enter the password for that database (leave blank if the database is unsecured).
- Select the version of Access from the drop-down menu.
- Select the action (compact, macro, repair, decompile or cmd) from the drop-down menu. If you choose 'macro' or 'cmd', another box will appear in which to enter the macro name/command to execute.
- Select the location of Access, i.e. browse and select the version of msaccess.exe you want to use.
- Select the location of the database, i.e. browse and select the MDB file you want to use.
- Select the INI or MDW file (dependant on version of Access) you want to use (leave blank if the database is unsecured or if no INI file is required).
- Specified which day, or days, you want the task to run on from the drop-down menu.
- If you want to open the database exclusively, check the relevant box.
- If you want HAL to shut down after this task has been run, check the 'Close HAL after running?' check-box.
- Click the **Compile command line** command button. If you have missed any required parameters, you will be prompted to supply them. If all required parameters are present, the run-time will turn red and all the parameter boxes will be disabled EXCEPT the run-time. This may be modified at any time. However, to change any of the other parameters, you must first click the **Decompile command line** command button. Don't forget to recompile the task after you have made changes - it will only run if the command line has been compiled.
- Once a task has been compiled, it can be run instantly by clicking the **Run now** command button.

Note: double-clicking the file location fields allows you to store or retrieve default values.

## **The system tray**

HAL appears as an icon in the system tray when launched. Different mouse-events with the icon have the following results:

### **Left click**

Displays the main HAL window.

### **Right click**

Displays the 'Exit HAL?' dialogue box.

### **Hover**

Displays the full application name and version number or last tack launched in a ToolTip over the icon.

## The HAL window

The HAL window appears as follows:

HAL - 11/12/2002 11:22:44

Schedule Task Help

Task ID: Task 6 Task name: Perform simple compaction

Launch at: 17:30:00 Username: sysadmin Password: \*\*\*\*\*

Version no: 9 (2000) Action: Compact

Location of Access: C:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office\M Browse

Location of database: C:\My Databases\db1.mdb Browse

Location of MDW file: C:\My Databases\system.mdw Browse

Days to run option: Weekdays only Compile task

Open exclusively?  Close HAL after running? Run now

A full explanation of each parameter and its permissible values can be found [here](#).



## **Security**

Although schedules are saved as glorified text files (\*.hal), you needn't worry about the security of passwords entered as parameters, as HAL encrypts them (this is the main reason NOT to use Windows Task Scheduler instead of HAL).

## **Uninstalling HAL**

Hard to imagine though it is, you might be dissatisfied with HAL and want to uninstall it. Therefore, you can remove HAL using Add/Remove Programs in your PC's Control Panel.

## **Support**

HAL is unsupported freeware. However, if you encounter any problems please feel free to contact the author and he will take a look when he can.

[HAL's homepage](#)

[Support forum](#)

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**Zzzzz...**

The name HAL and icon image are inspired by the HAL 9000 computer in Arthur C. Clarke's 2001: A Space Odyssey.

## Recurring tasks

Recurring tasks can be created by changing the seventh character of the task run time to a ? and using the eight character to specify the hourly interval. For example:

09:30:**?2** – this time indicates a task that will first run at 09:30:00 and then recur every **two** hours

11:00:**?4** – this time indicates a task that will first run at 11:00:00 and then recur every **four** hours

Note that recurrences only occur up to midnight of the same day the first instance of the task ran on, so 23:30:**?2** will **not** run at 01:30:00 the next day.

Also, note that the ? is **not** a wild-card character.

