

Introducing Norton Registry Tracker

Norton Registry Tracker helps you keep track of changes made to critical files, folders, and registry keys on your system. Norton Registry Tracker takes "snapshots" of tracked items when they change, showing you the changes that were made and allowing you to restore tracked items to their former state with the Quick Fix and Restore features.

Most applications change either the registry or an initialization (INI) file when you install them. In some cases, you may not be happy with the changes. Building and maintaining an "audit trail" of system snapshots with Norton Registry Tracker can save hours of frustrating trial and error to restore your system to its original state.

In addition to registry keys and text files, Norton Registry Tracker lets you track changes to data files and folders on your system. Data files store information in binary (non-text) form; they frequently have a DAT file extension. While Norton Registry Tracker can't show you the exact changes made to these types of files, it does allow you to restore earlier versions, should the data become corrupted. Whenever a change is made to a tracked folder, Norton Registry Tracker takes a snapshot to show you what files were added or deleted.

You can configure Norton Registry Tracker to start automatically and run in the background whenever you start Windows. The camera icon in the notification area (right side) of the Windows taskbar tells you Norton Registry Tracker is running and continually monitoring changes to the items you have specified for tracking.

If you choose not to run Norton Registry Tracker continuously in the background, we recommend that you run it at the very least whenever you add, modify, or remove any hardware or software on your system. Norton Registry Tracker takes a new snapshot when it starts, thus keeping a log of the tracked items on your system through the most critical periods of change.

To track registry changes, click here  to start Norton Registry Tracker.

{button ,AL(^Introducing Norton File Compare;About Norton Registry Tracker snapshots;About the Window registry;To specify items to be tracked;To undo the most recent changes (Quick Fix);To restore files and registry keys;To open Norton Registry Tracker at Windows startup',0,`,`)}

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About tracked items

By default, Norton Registry Tracker tracks the following items on your computer:

- The Windows folder (usually C:\WINDOWS)
- The Windows System folder (usually C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM)
- The HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE registry key and the subkeys it contains
- WIN.INI
- SYSTEM.INI
- CONFIG.SYS
- AUTOEXEC.BAT

You can specify additional items to track, and remove tracking from any of the default items if you wish. Choose Settings from the Options menu to specify items for tracking. From the Registry Keys tab you can specify whether Norton Registry Tracker should track a key alone (Track Key) or the key together with all subkeys it contains (Track Subtree).

Whenever Norton Registry Tracker detects a change to one of the tracked items, it takes a new snapshot. Thus, each new snapshot records the changes made since the previous snapshot was taken. Taken together, the Norton Registry Tracker snapshots provide a log of modifications made to tracked items. Norton Registry Tracker can use these snapshots to restore any tracked item to its state at the time of any snapshot.

 Tracking items that change continually, like dynamic registry keys or the Windows swap file, triggers frequent snapshots. You should avoid tracking these types of items, or mark them as tracking exclusions. On the other hand, you may want to track a database or word processing file as you work on it, to have a record of changes you can undo if need be.

{button ,AL(`Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;Excluding items from tracking;To specify items to be tracked;To remove items from tracking;To exclude items from tracking',0,`,`')}} [Related Topics](#)

Excluding items from tracking

In some cases, you may not want to track a particular item:

- Windows automatically maintains a set of registry keys that record performance statistics for various system functions. These values are continually being updated, yet have no effect on your system. Were you to track these registry keys, Norton Registry Tracker would take frequent, unnecessary snapshots.
- The size of the Windows swap file changes dynamically with the needs of the system. If you track the folder that contains this file, Norton Registry Tracker would take a new snapshot with every change in swap file size. For this reason, the Windows swap file is excluded from tracking automatically.
- Some initialization (INI) files include sections whose contents are updated frequently by their associated application programs. Because this data is not critical to the functioning of your system, you may not want these sections tracked.

Normally you would simply choose not to track these types of registry keys and files. But if you choose to track the registry key or folder that contains them, these items would be included in the tracking automatically. You can prevent this by explicitly excluding these types of items.

It's easy to exclude specific registry keys, files, folders, or INI file sections from tracking with Norton Registry Tracker. Right-click the item in the Snapshot Log that you want to exclude from future tracking, and choose Exclude.



You cannot exclude registry values from tracking; only the keys that contain them.

You can also remove exclusions easily from the Settings dialog box tabs. Check the Show Exclusions checkbox, select the excluded item you wish to include in future tracking, and click Remove to remove that exclusion. From the Registry Keys tab you can specify whether a key alone is to be excluded (Exclude Key) or the key together with any subkeys it contains (Exclude Subtree).

{button ,AL(^Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;About tracked items;Editing EXCLUDE.INI;To exclude items from tracking;To remove tracking exclusions;To specify items to be tracked;To remove items from tracking',0,'')} [Related Topics](#)

Editing EXCLUDE.INI

Norton Registry Tracker uses its own INI file to keep track of two types of exclusions:

- Files that are excluded from their containing folder's tracking
- Specific INI file entries that are excluded from their parent INI file's tracking

These types of exclusions are specified in the file EXCLUDE.INI, which is stored in the REGTRK folder under Norton Utilities. Normally, this file is updated automatically whenever you add or remove these types of exclusions, but you may freely edit this file if you wish. Use your favorite text editor, such as Windows Notepad.

EXCLUDE.INI is broken down into sections, each of which represents a tracked folder or INI file. Entries under folder sections represent files; entries under INI file sections represent entries in those INI files. If an entry is set equal to one, the file or INI entry it represents is excluded from tracking. Norton Registry Tracker ignores changes to these files or INI entries.

If you delete entries in EXCLUDE.INI, Norton Registry Tracker tracks the corresponding files or INI file entries again.

{button ,AL(^Excluding items from tracking;To exclude items from tracking;To remove tracking exclusions',0,`,`;`)} [Related Topics](#)

About Norton Registry Tracker snapshots

Whenever Norton Registry Tracker detects a change to a tracked item, it takes a new snapshot. Each snapshot captures the state of the tracked items on your system. There are three main types of events that trigger Norton Registry Tracker to take a snapshot:

- Whenever Norton Registry Tracker starts, it takes a snapshot to serve as a baseline record of the initial state of tracked items. If this snapshot differs from the last snapshot stored for your system, or if it is the first time you have run Norton Registry Tracker, the snapshot is labeled an "Activation Snapshot".
- Whenever Norton Registry Tracker detects a change to a tracked item it takes a new snapshot. This allows you to compare the snapshot with previous snapshots to see what changes were made. Having a series of snapshots also lets you restore your system to the state it was in prior to any changes recorded in the snapshots.
- You can also "force" Norton Registry Tracker to take a snapshot (a "manual snapshot") at any time. It is a good idea to take a manual snapshot prior to making major changes in your system, such as installing new hardware or software. Taking a manual snapshot allows you to name the snapshot anything you like.

To help you locate changes quickly, Norton Registry Tracker snapshots can display only those items that have changed since the previous snapshot.

{button ,AL(^Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;To take a manual snapshot;To open Norton Registry Tracker;To open Norton Registry Tracker at Windows startup',0,`,`')} [Related Topics](#)

About the Snapshot Log

The Snapshot Log is where Norton Registry Tracker displays a list of snapshots it has taken.

Whenever Norton Registry Tracker starts, it takes a snapshot of your system. If this snapshot differs from the final snapshot from the last Norton Registry Tracker session, (or if this is the first time you have run Norton Registry Tracker) this snapshot is labeled an "Activation Snapshot," and functions as a baseline to record an initial state for tracked items.

If there is a previously stored snapshot, and Norton Registry Tracker detects no changes between it and the new snapshot, the new snapshot is not saved. In this case, Norton Registry Tracker updates the Last Checked time displayed at the top of the Snapshot Log.

Any time Norton Registry Tracker detects a change to a tracked item, it takes a new snapshot to record the changes. Automatic snapshots are tagged with the date and time of the snapshot, and the program that effected the change. You can also force Norton Registry Tracker to take a snapshot at any time, whether or not there have been changes made to tracked items. These "manual snapshots" are also tagged with the date and time. By default, they are labeled "Manual Snapshot," but they can be labeled anything you like.

You can display the Snapshot Log sorted either "By File" (by tracked items) or "By Snapshot." The log is displayed in an expandable browser format similar to that used by the Windows Explorer. Items with plus signs to their left can be "expanded" by clicking on the plus sign to reveal more details. At the finest level of detail (items fully expanded), the Snapshot Log shows changes made to the tracked items. Specific changes are not displayed for binary files.

By default, the Snapshot Log displays full details of the snapshot contents, and the changes that occurred between snapshots. Use the View menu to change the level of detail displayed.

You can reset the snapshot log by choosing Reset Snapshot Log from the Options menu. After the Snapshot Log is reset, Norton Registry Tracker automatically takes a new snapshot to record baseline conditions of tracked items.

● Resetting the Snapshot Log erases any existing snapshots, then takes a new snapshot. After resetting the Snapshot Log you will not be able to restore tracked items to the state they were in prior to the reset. Reset the Snapshot Log only if you are certain you will not need to restore information from the currently existing snapshots.

{button ,AL(^Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;About Norton Registry Tracker snapshots;How changes to tracked items are displayed;Excluding items from tracking;To specify items to be tracked;To remove items from tracking;To exclude items from tracking;To reset the Snapshot Log;To take a manual snapshot',0,`,`)}

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How changes to tracked items are displayed

Norton Registry Tracker lets you select which registry keys and INI file sections should be tracked. Whenever a change is made to a tracked item, the change is recorded in the Snapshot Log.

Changes to tracked items are indicated by the icons to the left of the items:



Indicates something that has been added.



Indicates something that has been removed.



Indicates a line in a text file that has been moved within a file.

The moved text is preceded by the line number from which the text was moved.



Indicates a line in a text file that has been moved within a file.

The moved text is preceded by the line number to which the text was moved.



For an on-screen reminder of these symbols, choose Legend from the View menu.

A line moved in a text file is generally shown in the Snapshot Log as a paired change with the first line indicating where the line was moved to, and below that a line indicating where the line was moved from. You'll also frequently see paired add/delete change lines. These indicate an existing value that has been changed, since a change involves essentially deleting the old value and adding the new value.

{button ,AL('Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;About Norton Registry Tracker snapshots;Recovering previous versions of tracked items;To compare versions of tracked items;To undo the most recent changes (Quick Fix);To restore files and registry keys',0,','')} [Related Topics](#)

Recovering previous versions of tracked items

The latest Norton Registry Tracker snapshot captures the current state of your tracked items. If you ever need to recover earlier versions of your tracked items, Norton Registry Tracker gives you two ways of doing so:

- **Quick Fix** reinstates all tracked items from the snapshot immediately preceding the current snapshot. It returns these items to the state they were in just prior to the last snapshot. Choose Quick Fix from the file menu.
- **Restore** reinstates selected tracked items from a specific snapshot. Just select a snapshot from the Snapshot Log, then choose Restore from the File menu. A dialog box lets you designate which of the tracked items from the snapshot should be restored. You can also right-click a registry key in the snapshot log and choose Restore.
- Norton Registry Tracker cannot reverse changes that have been made to tracked folders.

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To take a manual snapshot

1 Click here  to start Norton Registry Tracker.

2 Choose New Snapshot from the File menu.

3 Type in a name for the new snapshot, or use the default, "Manual Snapshot."

 If none of the tracked files and folders have changed since the last snapshot, the latest snapshot in the snapshot log is simply renamed to the name you specified in the New Snapshot dialog box ("Manual Snapshot" is the default name).

{button ,AL(^Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;To specify items to be tracked',0,`, `')} [Related Topics](#)

To undo the most recent changes (Quick Fix)

- 1 Click here  to start Norton Registry Tracker.
- 2 Choose Quick Fix from the File menu. The Quick Fix dialog box lists the files and registry keys whose changes will be reversed.

After Norton Registry Tracker reverses the changed items, it takes another snapshot and labels it "Snapshot After Restore." Because files and/or registry keys have been restored, the changes may not take effect until the system is restarted. Norton Registry Tracker gives you the option of restarting your system or continuing with your work.

{button ,AL(^Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;To restore files and registry keys;To compare versions of tracked items',0,`,`;`')} [Related Topics](#)

To restore files and registry keys

- 1 Click here  to start Norton Registry Tracker.
- 2 From the Snapshot Log, click the snapshot from which you want to restore files or keys.
- 3 Choose Restore from the File menu.
- 4 Click the files and keys in the list that you want to restore. Only the items selected will be changed.
- 5 Click OK.

Registry Tracker restores the selected items and takes a new snapshot labeled Snapshot After Restore.

Depending on the files and keys that are restored, some changes may not take effect until the system is restarted. Norton Registry Tracker asks you if you want to restart or continue working.

{button ,AL(^Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;To undo the most recent changes (Quick Fix);To compare versions of tracked items',0,`,`)`)} [Related Topics](#)

To compare versions of tracked items

- 1 Click here  to start Norton Registry Tracker.
- 2 Click a tracked item in the Snapshot Log.
- 3 Choose Compare from the File menu.

Norton Registry Tracker runs Norton File Compare to compare versions of the item.

If the most recent version of the item is selected in the Snapshot Log, the item is compared to the version in the previous snapshot. If an older version of the item is selected in the Snapshot Log, Norton Registry Tracker gives you the option of comparing it with the previous or current version.

{button ,AL(`Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;To undo the most recent changes (Quick Fix);To restore files and registry keys',0,`,`)`)} [Related Topics](#)

To exclude items from tracking

- 1 Click here  to start Norton Registry Tracker.
- 2 Right-click the item in the Snapshot Log that you want excluded from further tracking.
- 3 Click Exclude.

 You can exclude registry keys, but not specific registry values, from tracking.

{button ,AL(^Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;To remove tracking exclusions;To remove items from tracking',0,`,`;`")} [Related Topics](#)

To remove tracking exclusions

- 1 Click here  to start Norton Registry Tracker.
- 2 Choose Settings from the Options menu.
- 3 Click the Text Files, Folders, or Registry Keys tab, as appropriate.
- 4 Check the Show Exclusions check box (Text files and Folders tabs only).
- 5 If necessary, click the plus signs to show the exclusion you want to cancel.
- 6 Click the exclusion to select it.
- 7 Click Remove.

{button ,AL(^Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;To remove items from tracking;Excluding items from tracking',0,`,`)}

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To specify items to be tracked

- 1 Click here  to start Norton Registry Tracker.
- 2 Choose Settings from the Options menu.
- 3 Click the tab for the type of item you want to track. INI files are Text Files, binary files are Data Files.
- 4 Click Add.
- 5 Select the specific item you want Norton Registry Tracker to start monitoring.
- 6 Click Open.

 Although Registry Tracker can track folders for changes, Registry Tracker cannot Quick Fix or Restore folders from snapshots.

{button ,AL('Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;About tracked items;About Norton Registry Tracker snapshots;To remove items from tracking;To exclude items from tracking;Excluding items from tracking',0,`,`,`')} [Related Topics](#)

To remove items from tracking

- 1 Click here  to start Norton Registry Tracker.
- 2 Choose Settings from the Options menu.
- 3 Click the tab for the type of item you want to remove: .INI files are Text Files, binary files are Data Files.
- 4 Click Remove.

{button ,AL(^Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;About tracked items',0,`,``)} [Related Topics](#)

To reset the Snapshot Log

- 1 Click here  to start Norton Registry Tracker.
- 2 Choose Reset Snapshot Log from the Options menu.

Resetting the Snapshot Log erases any existing snapshots, then takes a new snapshot. After resetting the Snapshot Log you will not be able to restore tracked items to the state they were in prior to the reset. Reset the Snapshot Log only if you are certain you will not need to restore information from the currently existing snapshots.

{button ,AL(^Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;About tracked items;To take a manual snapshot',0,`,`;`)} [Related Topics](#)

To hide Norton Registry Tracker

- 1 Click here  to start Norton Registry Tracker.
- 2 Choose Hide from the File Menu.

 To redisplay Norton Registry Tracker, click the camera icon in the notification area of the Windows taskbar (the area at the right side of the taskbar). The Norton Registry Tracker Snapshot Log will reappear.

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To open Norton Registry Tracker

You can open any of the Norton Utilities programs from Norton Utilities Integrator.

To open Norton Registry Tracker:

- 1 Double-click Norton Utilities Integrator on the Windows desktop.
- 2 Click Preventative Maintenance in the left pane.
- 3 Click Norton Registry Tracker in the right pane.

- ▶ Or click here
- 🔗 to start Norton Registry Tracker now.

{button ,AL(^Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;To specify items to be tracked;To open Norton Registry Tracker at Windows startup',0,`,`;`)} [Related Topics](#)

To start Norton Registry Tracker at Windows startup

- 1 Click here  to start Norton Registry Tracker, if it is not already running.
 - 2 Choose Settings from the Options menu.
 - 3 Check Start Automatically With Windows.
-  To have Norton Registry Tracker run hidden, choose Hide from the File menu. Subsequently, Norton Registry Tracker will start automatically and run hidden whenever you start Windows. To redisplay Norton Registry Tracker, click the camera icon in the notification area of the Windows taskbar (the area at the right side of the taskbar).

{button ,AL('Introducing Norton Registry Tracker;To specify items to be tracked;To hide Norton Registry Tracker',0,','')} [Related Topics](#)

Enter a description for the new snapshot.

Clears the Norton Registry Tracker snapshot data files.

● Resetting the Snapshot Log erases any existing snapshots, then takes a new snapshot. After resetting the Snapshot Log you will not be able to restore tracked items to the state they were in prior to the reset. Reset the Snapshot Log only if you are certain you will not need to restore information from the currently existing snapshots.

Cancels this operation without resetting Norton Registry Tracker.

Lists the tracked files and registry keys that changed in the last snapshot. These files will be returned to the state they were in prior to the last snapshot.

Lists the tracked files and registry keys that had changes recorded in the selected snapshot. The items you select from this list will be restored to the state they were in immediately following the selected snapshot.

Click items in the list to select (highlight) and deselect them. Only the selected items will be restored.

Compares the selected snapshot with the version previous to it.

Compares the selected snapshot with the current snapshot.

Loads Norton Registry Tracker automatically whenever Windows is started.

Automatically removes old snapshots after a specified number of days. To change the number of days between purges, use the up and down buttons on the box at the right, or type a new number.

Sets the maximum number of snapshots that Norton Registry Tracker stores. As new snapshots beyond this number are taken, the oldest snapshots are automatically deleted from your system. To change the number, use the up and down buttons on the box at the right, or type in a new number.

Shows only those items in the Snapshot Log that have changed between snapshots. If this box is unchecked, each snapshot lists all tracked items, regardless of whether there have been changes to the items.

Determines whether change details are shown in the Snapshot Log.

Determines whether the Snapshot Log legend is displayed. The legend is displayed at the bottom, in the status bar.

This option is only available when Show Details is checked.

Shows all currently tracked text files, for example, INI files.

Lets you specify a new text file to be tracked.

Removes the selected text file from the list of tracked files, and prevents the file from being tracked in the future.

Shows INI file entries that have been excluded from tracking.

Shows all currently tracked data (binary format) files.

Lets you specify a new data (binary format) file to be tracked.

Removes the selected data (binary format) file from the list of tracked files and prevents the file from being tracked in the future.

Shows all currently tracked folders.

Lets you specify a new folder to be tracked.

Removes the selected folder from the list of tracked folders and prevents the folder from being tracked in the future.

Shows files that have been excluded from tracking. Norton Registry Tracker ignores changes to these files when determining what folders have changed.

Shows the Windows registry hierarchy. Registry keys marked with a camera icon are being tracked; those marked with a camera-and-tree icon also have their subkeys tracked, and the tracked subkeys have checkmarks on their folder icons. Subkeys that have been excluded from tracking lack checkmarks on their folders.

Click to track the currently selected key.

Click to track the currently selected key and all subkeys it contains.

Click to exclude the currently selected key from tracking.

Click to exclude the currently selected key and its subkeys from tracking.

Click to clear selected key of checkmark. Subsequently, the key will be tracked or excluded only if its parent key is marked for subtree tracking or exclusion.

Displays only those branches of the registry that are currently being tracked.

Hides Norton Registry Tracker. Norton Registry Tracker continues to operate in the background, tracking changes to the specified files and folders.

 A camera icon appears in the notification area (right side) of the Windows taskbar when Norton Registry Tracker is hidden.

Closes Norton Registry Tracker.

- Closing Norton Registry Tracker prevents it from automatically tracking changes to your system.

Prevents this confirmation dialog box from appearing in the future. Check this box to exit Norton Registry Tracker without showing the Exit or Hide Norton Registry Tracker dialog box in the future.

