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Automatic daily backup or your own copy: which one saves you, and when

Servers & Technology

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Automatic daily backup or your own copy: which one saves you, and when

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Short answer: they are not alternatives, they cover different problems. The automatic daily backup handles most everyday disasters (a deleted file, a plugin that broke the site). Your own copy, made by you and kept off the server, handles the ones the automatic one cannot reach. The useful question is not "which do I pick?" but **"what situation am I in?"**

While your service is active, an automatic backup runs once a day, before dawn, and the last 30 days are kept. You restore them yourself, in My Interweb, under cPanel › JetBackup, without asking anyone. How it works is in **how long we keep backups and how to restore one**.

Situation by situation

The situation	Is the daily backup enough?	Your own copy
You deleted a file or folder yesterday	Yes. Restore just that file.	Not needed.
A plugin or an update broke the site last week	Yes. Pick the day before the damage.	Useful, but optional.
You worked on the site for two hours and want to go back	No. The backup is from before dawn and today's work is not in it.	Only if you made it before you started.
You are about to update WordPress, change the PHP version or migrate	There is one, but it may be almost a day old.	Make one now. It is your way back.
The site was infected and you only noticed weeks later	Maybe not. Recent copies may already carry the infection, and there are only 30 days.	Helps only if it predates the infection.

The situation	Is the daily backup enough?	Your own copy
You deleted or damaged database data more than 30 days ago	No. That copy has left the history.	Only if you kept it.
The account was terminated	The history ends. The last one is kept for the period in the Terms and Conditions, and recovering it is a request to support.	It is the one that saves you.
You want to change provider	Not what it is for. You can download, but it is not your archive.	It is the one you take with you.

How to decide, in four steps

1. **List what you cannot lose.** Orders, original photographs, the shop database, years of e-mail. What can be rebuilt in ten minutes needs no special care; what cannot, does.

2. **Make a copy of your own before every big change.** Before updating, migrating, switching theme or touching PHP. It is quick and turns the change into something reversible. How: **making a full cPanel backup and downloading it**.

3. **Keep a copy off the server** as often as the site demands: weekly for a site that rarely changes, daily for a shop taking orders. The less you can afford to lose, the shorter the interval. The three-copies rule is in **the 3-2-1 rule**.

4. **Restore once, on purpose.** A copy that has never been restored is a hope, not a copy. A rehearsal on a test site shows whether the file is whole and whether you know the steps.

A copy in the same account is not a copy of your own.
If you leave it in the site folder or on the same server, you lose it in the same accident that took the site. Download it to your computer or send it somewhere else.

Restore as little as possible: if you broke one file, bring back that file; if you broke the database, only the database. Restoring the whole account puts everything back to that day, including what was fine. Step by step in **restoring a backup yourself**. And if the reason is an attack, see **which backup to restore after a hack**.

NEED A HAND?

Not sure your site is well protected? Tell us what is on it and what you cannot lose.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- How long we keep backups, and how to restore one →
- Making and keeping your own backup, and testing it →
- The 3-2-1 backup rule for a website →
- Hosting plans →

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