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Moving a site from shared hosting to a VPS: what changes when you run the server

Moving a Website

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Moving a site from shared hosting to a VPS: what changes when you run the server

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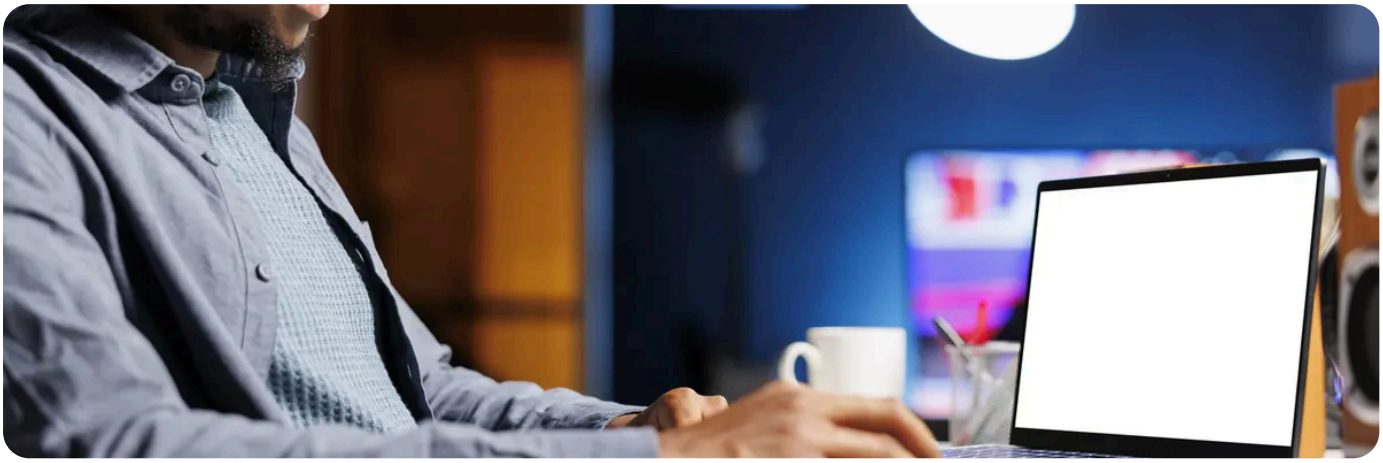

Copying the files and the database to a VPS is the same as any other migration. The difference is in what **does not come**: a VPS arrives empty, with no panel, no web server, no PHP, no e-mail, no backups. On shared hosting all of that was ours; on an unmanaged VPS it **becomes yours**. The migration itself is the easy part. Before you decide, check that the move is really needed in **shared hosting vs VPS: which one your project needs**.

What shared hosting did for you

On the shared account	On the VPS you must
Web server and PHP ready, version chosen per folder.	Install and configure the web server and PHP (**nginx** or **Apache**).
Databases ready, with phpMyAdmin.	Install the database server, create users and make your own copies.
Free SSL certificate renewed by itself.	Request and renew certificates yourself, and confirm renewal runs.
Automatic daily backup.	Set up your own copies, off the server (**backing up a VPS**).
System security and updates.	Handle updates, the firewall and access (**keeping your VPS secure**).
E-mail included.	Running a mail server is hard and risky: see **a mail server on your VPS**. The usual choice is to leave e-mail where it is.
A control panel.	Work from the command line, unless you buy and install a panel. See the **VPS** page for what each plan includes.

Step by step

1. **Choose the operating system** carefully, because it is hard to change later: **which operating system to choose**.

2. **Do the basics first:** key-based access, a user other than root, a firewall, updates (**first steps with your VPS**).

3. **Install the stack** the site needs: web server, PHP with its extensions, database. Use the same versions as the old account; changing versions and server at once makes it hard to know what broke.

4. **Bring the site.** The files with **rsync** from the old account, and the database by export and import (**mysqldump**). Edit the configuration file.

5. **Test with your computer's hosts file** (**testing before you change the DNS**).

6. **Decide about e-mail.** If the addresses were on the old account and you will keep needing them, leave them there, or use a separate e-mail service, and **do not change the MX**. The site's A record changes; the MX stays.

7. **Set up backups and rehearse the restore before switching off the old account.**

8. **Change the A record** (**changing the DNS of a domain already in use**), and keep the old account a few days.

On an unmanaged VPS, maintenance is yours.
Our support looks after the network and the hardware, not the commands you run or what you install. Read **managed or unmanaged VPS: who does what** and **how far our support goes** before deciding.

Often, the VPS is not the answer.
A slow site usually has a cause that can be fixed without changing machine (**the site is slow: what actually makes a difference**). Move to a VPS when you need to install something shared hosting does not allow, or when the plan genuinely no longer fits.

NEED A HAND?

Not sure a VPS is what you need? Describe the site and we will tell you plainly.

Open a support ticket →

In our plans

What	What our VPS gives you
Access	Full access over SSH, on a virtual machine of your own
Virtualisation	KVM
Disk	NVMe, from 40 GB on VPS1 to 1,280 GB on VPS6
Power	From 1 vCPU and 2 GB of RAM on VPS1 to 32 vCPU and 64 GB on VPS6

The operating system you start from, and whether any control panel is available, are shown on the VPS page and when you order, so read them there before you decide. The table is the machine; what runs on it is yours to install and keep up, as the article says. If you want the site running but would rather not administer the server yourself, tell us before ordering and we will say plainly what options exist.

SEE ALSO

- **First steps with your VPS** →
- **Managed or unmanaged VPS: which to choose and who does what** →
- **Keeping your VPS or dedicated server secure: the six that matter** →
- **VPS servers** →

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