

Guidelines for Installing Software on a Windows 95/98 PC

The following are guidelines for the home and small business user on how to install off-the-shelf or downloaded software on your PC. Nowadays the great majority of off-the-shelf or downloaded software can be installed by almost anyone, however the installation instructions that come with such software do not always advise on simple precautions that would prevent an otherwise straightforward installation from going wrong, other types of instructions are over-complicated, while some are simply incomplete.

You will find below the guidelines that we, at AnswersThatWork, follow to the letter whenever installing software. By keeping to those guidelines we have found that, unless there are actual bugs in the actual installation software, we almost never experience problems. Before using the guidelines below, remember however :

- If you are **upgrading** software that you already have on your PC, before you even start the installation you should a) make sure you have a reliable backup of your data, and b) make sure you have the installation disks/CD for the old program you are about to upgrade as it is not unusual for an upgrade to be so problematic, incompatible, not suited to your needs, full of bugs, etc..., that you end up wanting to go back to the "old" program !
- Specialist software packages often have specific installation instructions. Follow their instructions rather than the instructions in this document.
- Installation of software that is to be used over a network quite often also requires specific procedures to be followed. These are usually in the installation manual. If you are not sure, call in a consultant.
- If in any doubt whatsoever, call in a consultant, use a friend who is definitely knowledgeable, or call the helpline for the software you are attempting to install.



Check the Requirements of the Software

Before you start installing the software you will need to check the requirements of the software to make sure that your PC has all the minimum features required by the software. You should find those requirements somewhere on the sides of the box in which your software came. If your PC is a **Windows 95 Pentium 200MHz with 32Mb of memory or better, or a Windows 98 Pentium 266MHz with 48Mb of memory or better**, then all you'll probably need to check is whether you have enough disk space left on your hard disk.

If you are not familiar with the technical details of PCs in general, we suggest that you download Dmitry Inihov's **SysInfo** program from our Library of Answers That Work.

That program will display in a clear and uncluttered screen all the “vital statistics” of your PC.

The typical requirements that you will see listed on the box of software you are about to install, would be :

- The type of PC you have. This refers, effectively, to the speed of your PC. Is it a 486, a Pentium 200MHz, a Pentium II 500MHz, an AMD K6-2 400MHz, etc...? If you are not sure, download the **SysInfo** program from our site (Library of Answers That Work page) and see what it tells you about your PC.
- The operating system, e.g. DOS, Windows 3.1, Windows 95/98, Windows NT (**Windows 95 or 98** can run all Windows 3.1 and Windows 95/98 programs, as well as a lot of DOS programs, and, sometimes, Windows NT programs). Again, if you are not sure, the **SysInfo** program mentioned above will tell you what you have.
- Amount of memory needed (RAM). Typical requirements are for 32Mb RAM or more these days, although from **Year 2000 onward our advice is for 64Mb RAM minimum.** To determine the amount of memory (RAM) that you have, click on **Start \ Settings \ Control Panel** and then double-click on the “**System**” icon; you will find the RAM amount in your PC in the lower right half of the window that comes up, under the heading “Computer”.
Incidentally, in case you did not already know, this window will also tell you if your PC is running Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows NT.
Alternatively, download the **SysInfo** program from our site.
- Free hard disk space needed. Start **Explorer (Windows Explorer)**, scroll the **left** window all the way to the Top, click on your **(C:)** drive, just below the “3½ Floppy (A:)” drive, and then read the status line at the bottom of the Explorer screen, just above the Windows 95/98 task bar. That status line tells you “Number of objects” and to the right of that **(Disk free space : xx Mb)**. Compare that figure with the figure the box says is the minimum amount of disk space that you will need (remember, 1Gb = 1000Mb = 1,000,000Kb = 1,000,000,000 bytes).
If the amount of disk space you have left on your C: drive is **at least 100Mb more than what the box stipulates you will require, then go ahead with the installation,** otherwise abandon the installation as you do not have enough free hard disk space to both install the new software and then subsequently be able to use your PC without running out of hard disk space (in other words, you need a new bigger hard disk).
If you do not have a Status Bar at the bottom of your Windows Explorer screen, it probably is not enabled. To enable it, click on the **View** menu and choose **Status Bar**.
- Whether you will need a CD-ROM drive or not. From Year 2000 onward almost all new software comes on CD-ROM.

- Multimedia (sound card & speakers). If your PC is not multimedia, ie. it does not have a sound card and speakers, then check this requirement very carefully. Some programs will simply not run if you do not have a sound card and speakers, in which case there is no point in installing them, while others will run without problems except that you will only be able to enjoy the visual aspects of those programs and not the audio aspects as well.

Close all Programs Down

Never attempt to install a program while you have other programs open as that can often lead to conflicts and/or crashes which you may never be able to completely resolve without calling specialist help.

Thus, before you install any new piece of software, always close all programs currently open (e.g. Word, Excel, games, etc....).

Run the installation program (Install.exe or Setup.exe)

All programs have an installation procedure detailed either in the installation manual, or somewhere on Disk 1 of the installation disks, or on the installation CD-ROM. As regards software produced from 1996 onward, however, the installation procedure will in 95% of cases be no different to the installation procedure outlined below.

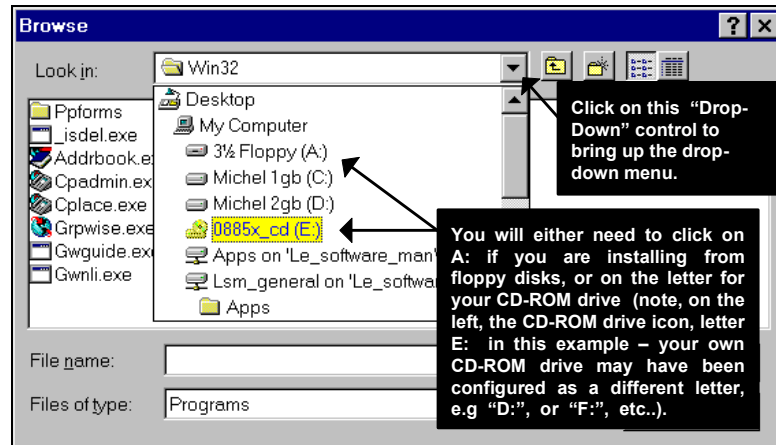
To install the software you will need to find the program that will start the installation. This will be called either **Install.exe** or **Setup.exe**. Here is how to proceed :

- If you are installing from disks, insert **Disk 1** or any disk labelled in a way that clearly marks it out as the "first installation disk".

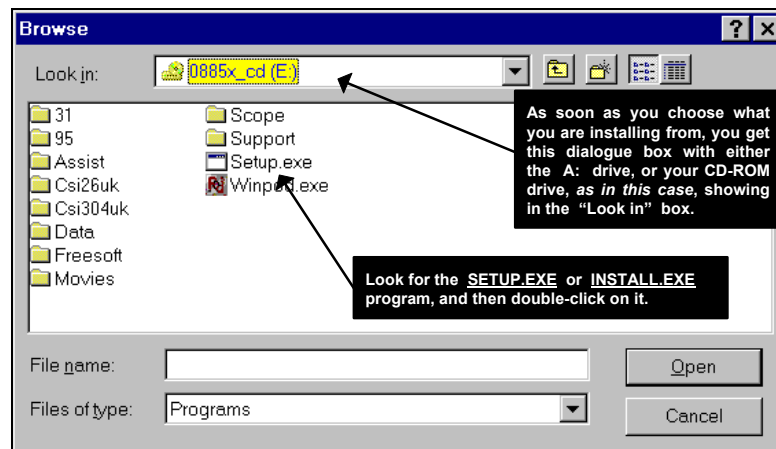
If you are installing from CD-ROM, insert the CD-ROM into your CD drive.

- Click on **Start \ Run**. *(Note : If installing from CD-ROM, depending on how the CD-ROM drive of your PC has been configured, you may find that you do not need to go through this step and that, instead, the installation program starts automatically and that you can go straight to "If the Software wants to install itself in the Program Files directory" later in this document).*

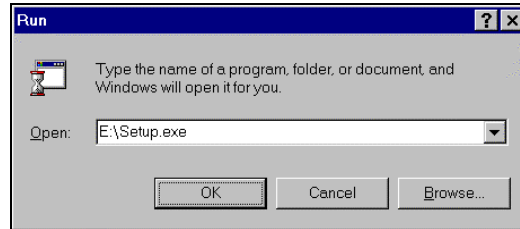
- Click on the **Browse** button of the box that comes up.
- You next get a dialogue box. Navigate in this dialogue box as illustrated below :



- Next, you will get the following dialogue box. Again, follow the instructions shown in the illustration below :



- As soon as you double-click on **Setup.exe** or **Install.exe**, you should find yourself back to the following dialogue box which confirms that you are about to run **SETUP.EXE** or **INSTALL.EXE** from the drive where you double-clicked on it.

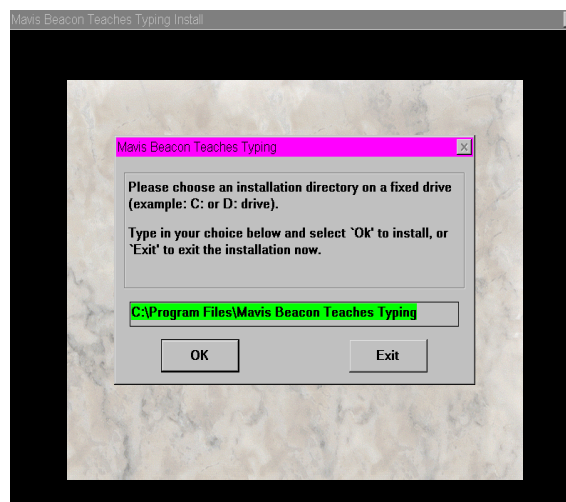


- Click on **OK**.

At this point the installation program for your new piece of software will start to run and will guide you through the installation process.

- **If the Software wants to install itself into the “Program Files” directory, let it.**

During the installation process you will be given the option to choose the directory in which you want the software installed. If the software suggests that it will install itself in a directory called **“Program Files”**, as per the Mavis Beacon example below, then accept the default and continue with the installation.



□ **If the Software does not automatically want to install itself into the “Program Files” directory, then**

If the installation program comes back to you and prompts you for an installation directory (folder) which is not inside “Program Files”, then it will typically be in a directory in the form **C:\<Directory_Name>**.

Try never to accept such default directories as, although it will not in any way prevent your new software from working, if you install a lot of software you could eventually end up with so many directories in the root directory that your PC will slow down dramatically, and eventually even stop working altogether if you go past the Windows 95a limit for root directory entries !

Thus, if you are prompted for an installation directory in this way, edit the suggested directory name so that it looks instead like **C:\<Standard_Dir>\<Directory_Name>** where “**Standard_Dir**” is any of the following :

Type of software you are installing	Use this name for “Standard_Dir”
Game	GAMES
Communications software (e.g. Fax software, Internet software, anything that uses your PC’s modem, etc...)	COMMS
Accounts software (e.g. Quicken, Quickbooks, Microsoft Money, etc...)	ACCOUNTS or FINANCE
Finance software (e.g. Shares, investments, etc...)	FINANCE
<u>All other types of software</u>	APPS

Example

Let us say you were installing the well known **Quicken** personal accounting and finance programs and that, as it usually does, the installation program suggested that it installed the product in a directory called **C:\Quickenw**, then, using our suggested table above, you should edit the suggested installation directory and make it **C:\Accounts\Quickenw** instead. (Remember to use “\” to separate the directory names).

Once you have appropriately modified the suggested installation directory, continue with the installation. If there is anything during the rest of the installation process which you are unsure about, you will find that all good installation programs either have “**Recommended**” choices, shown clearly as “recommended”, or a HELP button for the user to be able to make a more informed decision – either use the HELP, or the

“recommended” choices (Note, it is strongly “recommended” that if you use one “recommended” choice then you should choose all further “recommended” choices throughout the rest of the installation process).

Reboot the PC (Shut down and restart)

We strongly recommend that you always reboot your PC after installing a new software package.

About 40%-50% of software packages will prompt you at the end of the installation process as to whether you want to reboot your PC (also called “Restarting Windows”). Always answer “Yes”.

If the installation process does not ask you if you want to reboot your PC, then reboot your PC anyway (Click on **Start \ Shutdown \ Restart the Computer? \ YES**).

Rebooting/restarting your PC is an insurance against badly behaved installation programs. Some software packages absolutely need Windows 95/98 to have specific internal Windows 95 settings correctly set up at start-up if they are to run properly; without those specific settings they will not only not run properly, but in the case of some of them they can potentially corrupt Windows 95/98 and make it unstable forever after till you get specialist help. In the case of such programs the installation program usually compels you to restart your PC; however, some badly written installation programs forget to do so, **which is why we recommend that you ALWAYS restart your PC whenever you have just installed a new software package.**

Make a mental note of the installation date

Or even better, have a written log of when you installed various bits of software. Unfortunately, about 10% of all software creates *quite serious* problems : problems with specific other programs, or, worse, problems with everything else !!

For example : the 1997/98/99 Windows 95/98 versions of the software that comes with one of the world’s leading personal organizer, and which enables you to synchronize your appointments and tasks with those you keep on your PC, will prevent almost all types of communication programs (fax, Internet access, etc...) from working properly, if at all (!!), with the result that unwary end-users end up with no e-mail, fax, or web browsing capabilities when they install it.

In another example, it is not uncommon for a home user to go and buy a brand new printer, install it exactly as recommended, which includes installing software so that Windows 95/98 recognises it, and for the user to then start experiencing endless Windows 95/98 crashes, freezes, etc..., simply because the printer driver is full of bugs !

It is for all these reasons that making a mental or written note of when you installed a new software package, can save you a lot of stress, time, and money, should you be unlucky in having installed a piece of software that is full of bugs, as one can then quickly correlates the start of your problems with the installation of that piece of software.



Use the software

Crunch time !

Most installation programs create what is called a **Program Group** within which they create the program icons that you can use to fire up the software. These are what we, at AnswersThatWork, call **well behaved installation programs** as they preserve the “orderliness” of your Start Menu structure, and we wish all installation programs were that well behaved. Not all installation programs behave themselves, however. Incredibly, the worst behaved installation programs in this respect are, amazingly, **Microsoft** installation programs which almost always never create relevant program groups, and which put program icons “all over the place”, literally, or which sometimes forget to create program icons altogether!).

To get to the program you just installed and start it, simply click on **Start \ Programs ** and then locate the program group into which your new software program was installed (usually a relevant name, but not always – if you cannot locate the relevant program group through trying to find the name of the package, try a program group that is the name of the company that either published or wrote the software – on the box).

You should now be up and running Good Luck !

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