

3.5.1 Backing Up Your Site

Wordpress is a constantly evolving platform that has many moving parts that require regular updating. The themes and plugins you install come from 3rd party providers and they need to keep their software updated to keep up with the security and feature updates of the Wordpress core.

Keeping all of these elements updated is vital for the health of your website however, because there are so many moving parts – errors and incompatibilities can occur when updating. To insure against these errors I strongly recommend that you backup your website before doing updates – especially when updating the Wordpress core files.

Another compelling reason to regularly backup your site is as a precaution against malicious hacking on your site. Hacking can take many guises – malware that sends out spam advertising from your website, ransomware where a hacker takes control of certain parts of your site and demands a ransom to return it and particularly frustrating is defacement where a hacker puts up their own message instead of your homepage. In all these cases having a clean copy of your website backed up provides you with enormous piece of mind.

1.1 Installing Updrafts Plus

Thankfully there is an excellent free backup service that I have been using for years and use on all of my client sites called Updrafts Plus.



The screenshot shows the WordPress.org plugin page for UpdraftPlus. It features the UpdraftPlus logo (an orange 'U' with a circular arrow) and the text 'UpdraftPlus WordPress Backup Plugin'. A blue 'Install Now' button is in the top right corner, with a 'More Details' link below it. The description states: 'Backup and restoration made easy. Complete backups; manual or scheduled (backup to S3, Dropbox, Google Drive, Rackspace, FTP, SFTP, email + others)'. Below this, it says 'By UpdraftPlus.Com, DavidAnderson'. At the bottom, there are five yellow stars with '(2,406)' next to them, '1+ Million Active Installs', and 'Last Updated: 3 weeks ago'. A checkmark icon is followed by the text 'Compatible with your version of WordPress'.

From your Website dashboard (yoursite.com/wp-admin) go to Plugins > Add New. In the search bar type in Updrafts.

Click **Install Now** and **Activate**

To access the plugin settings go to the Dashboard Menu > Settings > UpdraftsPlus Backups. You will be brought to the following screen:

UpdraftPlus Backup/Restore

Welcome to UpdraftPlus! To make a backup, just press the Backup Now button. [To change any of the default settings of what is backed up, to configure scheduled backups, to send your backups to remote storage \(recommended\), and more, go to the settings tab.](#)

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Current Status Existing Backups (0) Settings Advanced Tools Premium / Extensions

Backup Now Restore Clone/Migrate

Next scheduled backups:
Now: Wed, January 11, 2017 07:32 Nothing currently scheduled

Last backup job run: No backup has been completed

To do a manual backup all you need to do is click the **Backup Now** button. On the popup menu again click **Backup Now**. You will see a progress bar to show you how long your backup will take and when it is complete the Last log message will say: *The backup apparently succeeded and is now complete.*

To see this backup – click on the Existing Backups Tab:

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Current Status Existing Backups (1) Settings Advanced Tools Premium / Extensions

Web-server disk space in use by UpdraftPlus: 113 MB [refresh](#)

More tasks: [Upload backup files](#) | [Rescan local folder for new backup sets](#) | [Rescan remote storage](#)

Backup date	Backup data (click to download)	Actions
Jan 11, 2017 7:35	Database Plugins Themes Uploads Others	Restore Delete View Log

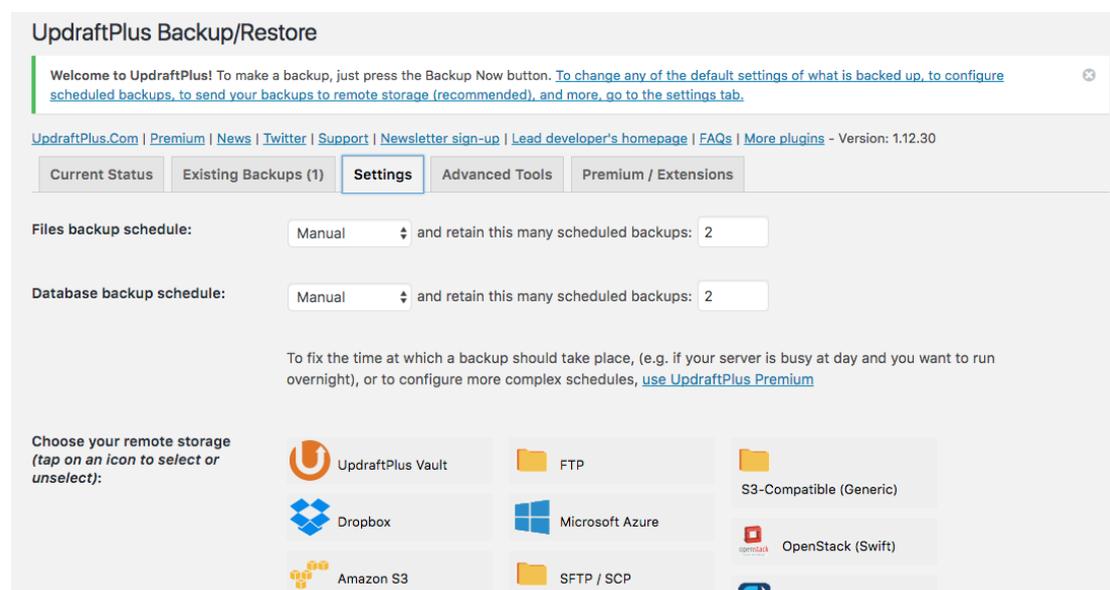
If you would like to download this backup – click on each of the individual components (Database, Plugins, Themes, Uploads, Others) and save them to a safe place on your computer.

I always recommend doing this after you have completed your website as it means you have a copy saved to your hard drive in case of emergency.

1.2 Setting up regular backups

I recommend doing a manual backup before doing any updates but having regular scheduled backups happening behind the scenes gives you a huge amount of piece of mind against hacking or server issues.

Click on the **Settings** tab.



The settings I recommend here are:

- Files: Weekly – retain 2 scheduled backups
- Database: Weekly: - retain 4 scheduled backups (Unless you blog regularly – then I would recommend daily database backups and retain a weeks worth – if you blog daily then you will notice any issues with your site more quickly.)

The more backups you save – the longer it will take your website to backup and larger your website will be (each of the backups are stored locally in your website hosting).

Scroll to the end of the page and click **Save Changes**.

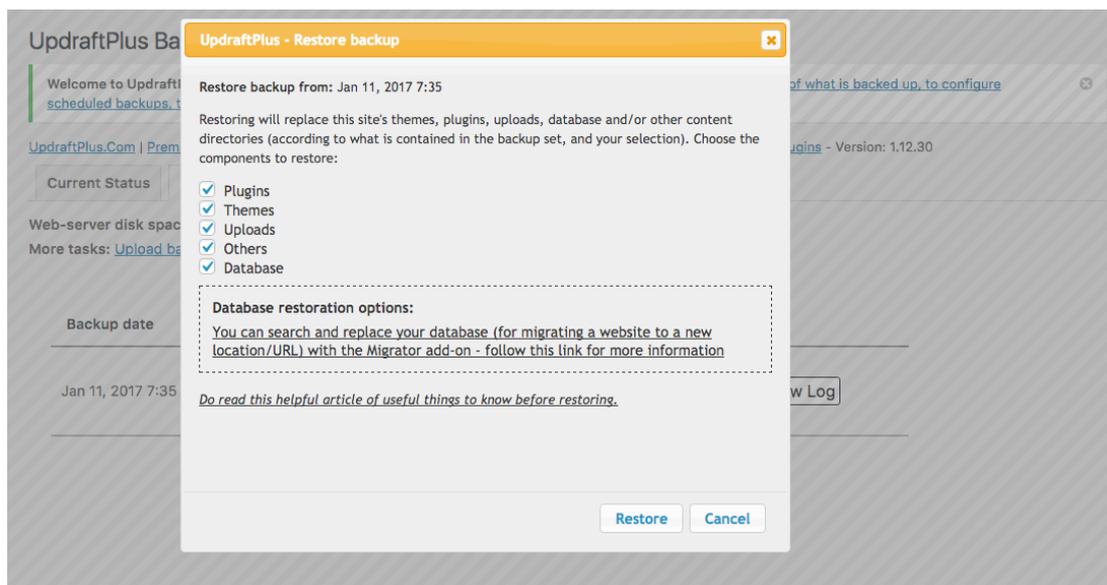
1.3 Sending backups to remote storage

Another recommended step is to send your backups to a remote storage area like Dropbox or Google Drive. The main reason for doing this is to insure against server or hosting issues. Updrafts plus automatically stores your backups locally on your hosting server but if anything were to happen your hosting company, your account was closed for non payment or the server your website was hosted on was hacked or damaged then there is the possibility of loosing your website. (Good hosting companies will have multiple backups of their servers but it is always better to be safe than sorry.)

To set up an external backup choose from the list available on the Settings page of Updraftsplus and follow the instructions provided to integrate them. Generally I use the Dropbox integration as it is easy to set up and Dropbox is free for up to 2gb of space. There are lots of good cloud storage options out there but Dropbox is the easiest to use and integrate with other services.

1.4 Restoring a backup

Restoring a backup couldn't be easier. Simply go to the Existing Backups tab and click Restore beside the date you would like to restore.



For a full restore tick all of the boxes and click **Restore**. When you click Database a warning shows up but you do not need to worry about this for simple restores. Again, click **Restore**. Updrafts will process the backup and when the restoration is ready to be completed you will need to press **Restore** for a 3rd time.

Now wait until the restore is finished. A long page of status updates will be shown but when you scroll down to the end you should see **Restore successful!** Actions: Return to UpdraftsPlus Configuration. Click this link to return to the plugin.

An important step now is to check your website to make sure that everything is restored to your previous position and working correctly. When you are happy with this come back to the Updrafts dashboard and Click the **Delete Old Directories** button to clean up your restoration. Again you can Return to the UpdraftsPlus Configuration when completed.

You have just restored your website – simple!