

How to Export Snapshot on VMware without Losing Data

<https://www.ubackup.com/enterprise-backup/export-snapshot-vmware.html#case-2>

Can you export snapshot on VMware products?

Case: Copy VM Snapshot to a new VM Environment

We have 2 separate VMWare environments. What I would like to do is take a snapshot of the current state of one of our live VMs, and use that to copy to the other VMWare environment and create a new machine there, using that as the archive of that system. Is this going to be possible/easy?

- Question from Serverfault.com

You can export checkpoints on Hyper-V starting from Windows Server 2012 R2, but there is **no such an option** for export snapshot VMware ESXi. After all, snapshots are just some points in time and should not be exported alone, nor used for long-term storage.

But what if you want to copy VMware snapshot to another computer? Or VMware copy snapshot to another machine? Can you export VM with snapshots? In most [VMware backup solutions](#), you need to power off the VM and commit all the snapshots beforehand. If you [export a VM](#) with multiple snapshots, you will get a VM with only the last snapshot by importing. Also, it's not recommended to manipulate individual subdisks or snapshot profile, which may compromise the disk chain and result in data loss.

However, when you have actual needs of saving the particular state of the VM (such as testing or troubleshooting), there are still workarounds you can try to export snapshots on VMware ESXi and Workstation without losing data.

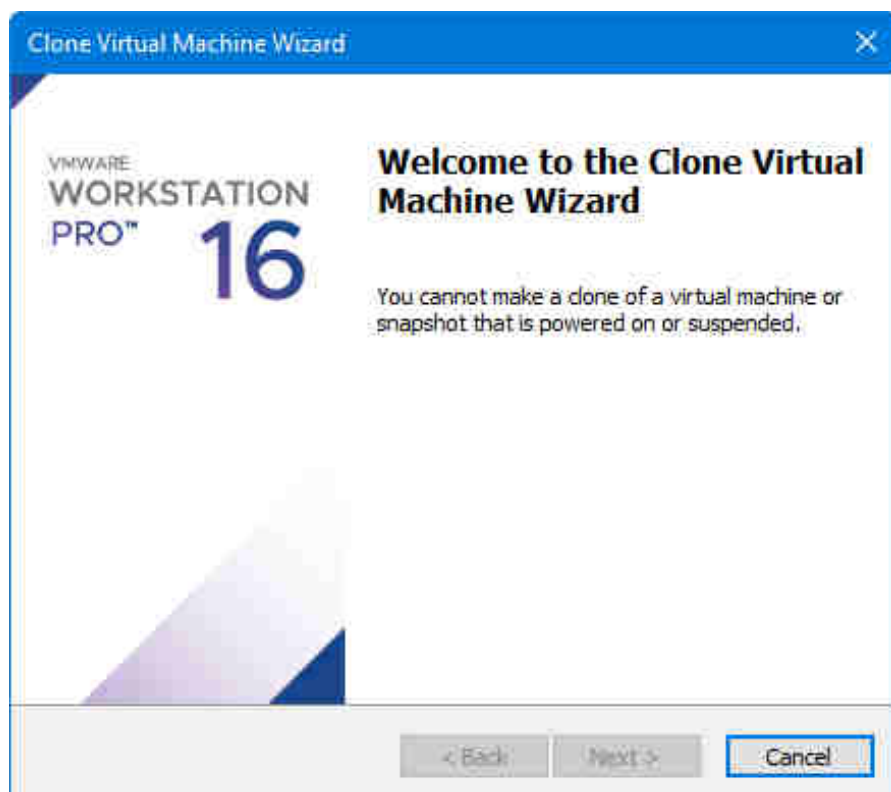
For example, you can manually copy all the files of the ESXi VM, including the snapshots, or VMware Workstation snapshot clone. In this article, I will introduce the detailed steps to achieve them.

- How to export snapshot on VMware Workstation
- How to export snapshot on VMware ESXi

How to export snapshot on VMware Workstation

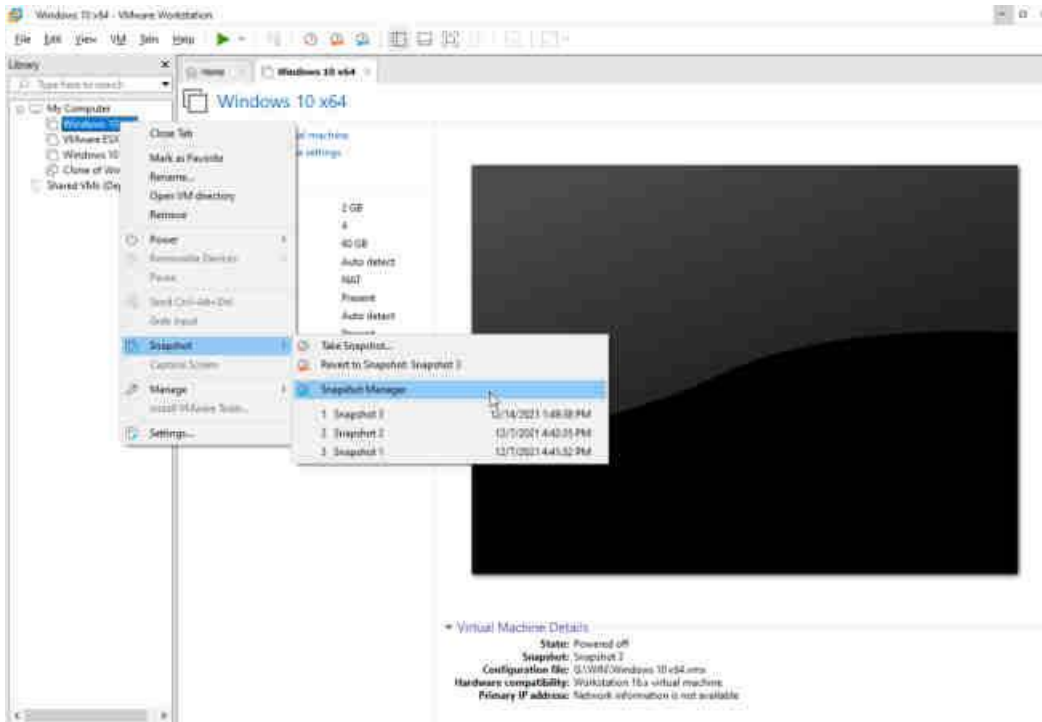
If you are using VMware workstation, you can export snapshot by **making a clone** from it. But please note that you can only make a clone from snapshots taken when the VM is powered off.

If the target snapshot is taken when the VM is running, when you are trying to make a clone from it, you will receive an 'you cannot make a clone of a virtual machine or snapshot that is powered on or suspended' alert.

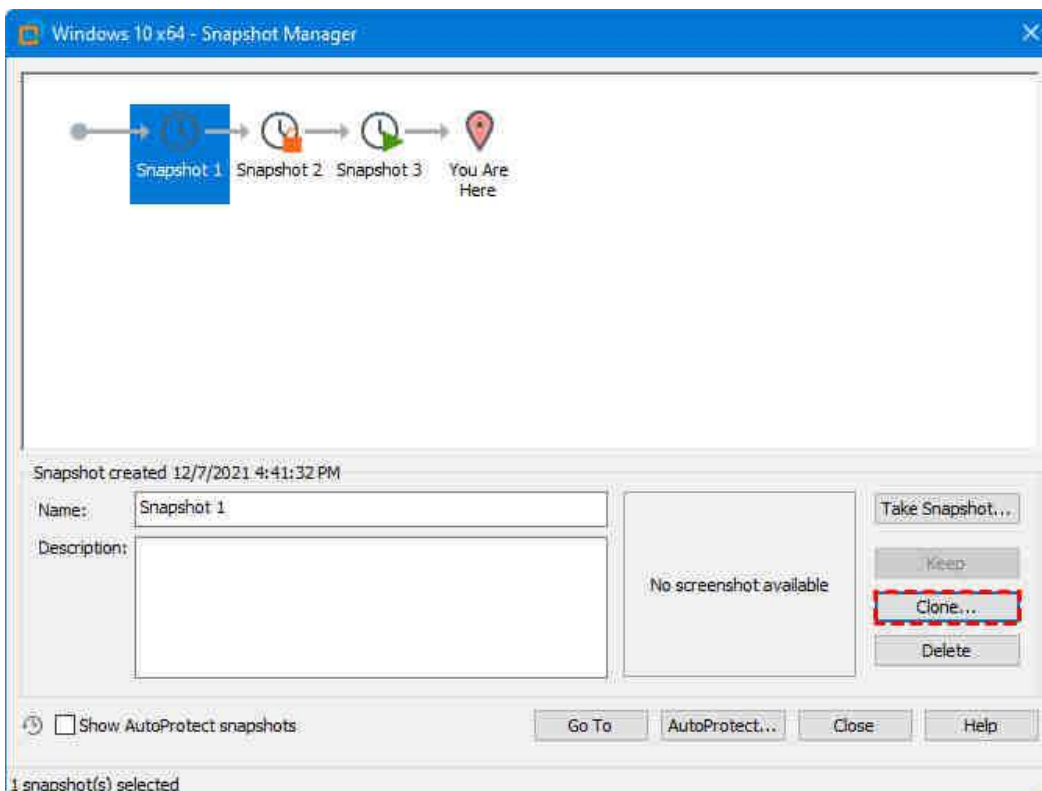


Clone a new VM from VMware Workstation snapshot

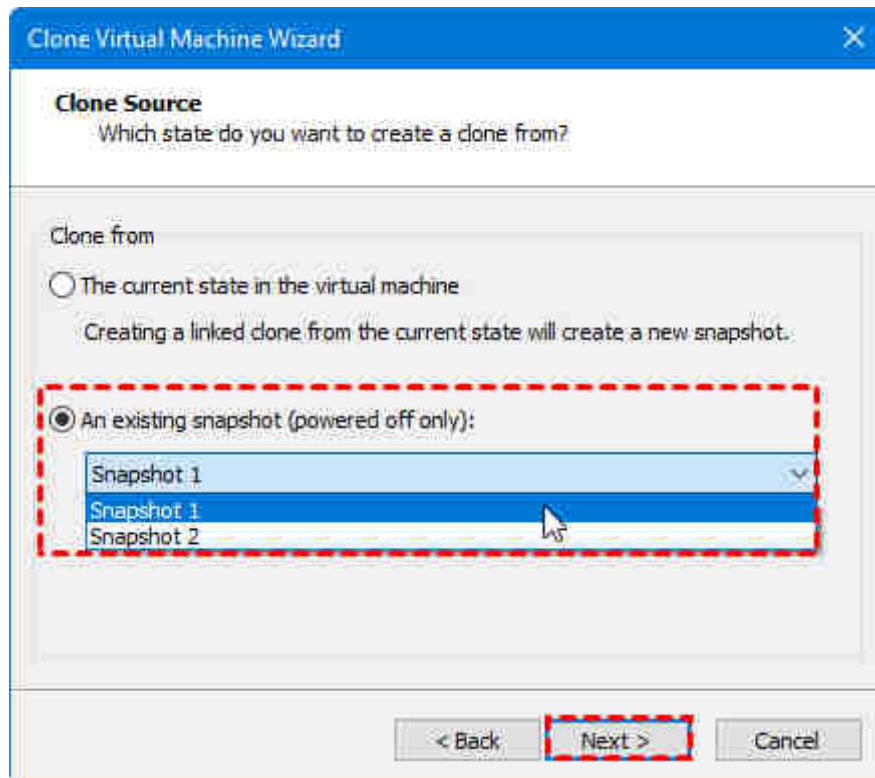
1. Launch **VMware Workstation**, and power off the original VM. Right-click on the VM name and select **Snapshot > Snapshot Manager**.



2. In the pop-up Snapshot Manager, select the target snapshot and click **Clone** to open the Clone Virtual Machine Wizard. Click **Next** to start.

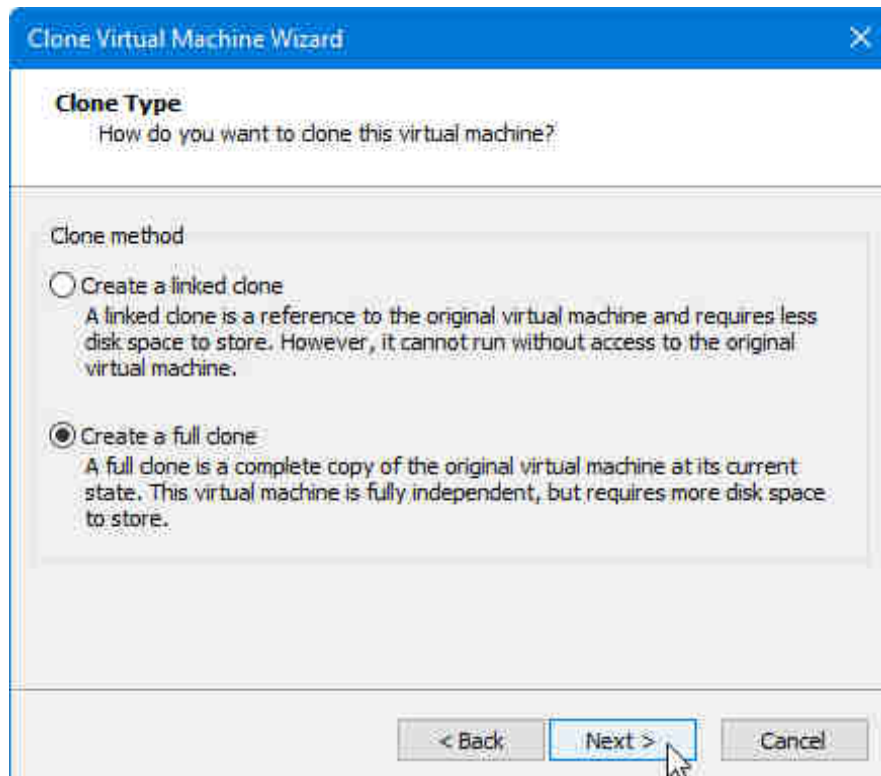


3. Select to clone from **An existing snapshot (powered off only)**, you can change the target snapshot here. Then click **Next**.

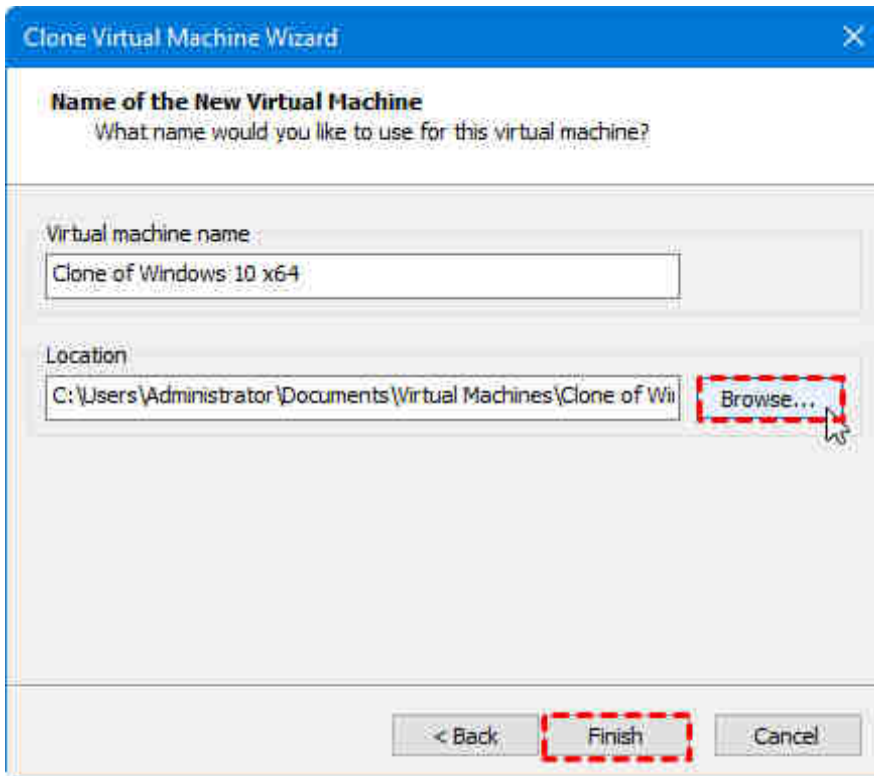


4. Select to **Create a linked clone**, or **Create a full clone**. Here I select Create a full clone and click **Next**.

Note:
Linked clone: A linked clone is a reference to the original VM and requires less disk space to store. However, it cannot run without access to the original VM.
Full clone: A full clone is a complete copy of the original VM at its current state. This VM is fully independent, but requires more disk space to store.



5. Provide a **Name**, and click **Browse...** to select a destination location for the new VM. They should be different from the original VM.



6. Click **Finish** to start. The progress will show on the wizard.

How to export snapshot on VMware ESXi

On VMware ESXi, there is neither a snapshot export option, nor a make clone from the snapshot option, then we need to consider other workarounds to export snapshot VMware ESXi.

Here I have summarised 2 ways. **Way 1** is using effective backup & restore tool; **Way 2** is to manually copy all the files of the VM to create an exact same VM, and then optionally revert one of the VM to a previous state. Here are the specific steps.

Way 1. Backup the VM for protection and restore to new VM securely

For those managing multiple virtual machines, copying VM folders to create a new virtual machine with snapshots seems to be troublesome. Also, snapshots are not secure for data protection which rely on the parent disk and easy to be damaged. So, what should you do to protect data security?

As we mentioned before, there is no in-built feature to export snapshots in ESXi, so you could only use a third-party tool to achieve data protection or restore VM to another host conveniently. In this part, I will use a backup software called [AOMEI Cyber Backup](#) to perform VM backup.

Batch VM Backup: batch backup large numbers of [VMware ESXi VMs](#) managed by vCenter Server or standalone ESXi hosts.

Restore to another VM/host. While restoring, you can easily choose to restore to original/new location.

Schedule automatic backup: You can automate the backup tasks to run daily, weekly, monthly, etc. which also offers the regular recovery points.

Secure backup: It provides a more secure and stable backup than snapshot.

Easy to operate: You can create a backup task with several clicks without installed any agents.

Support free ESXi: AOMEI Cyber Backup supports both paid and free versions of VMware ESXi.

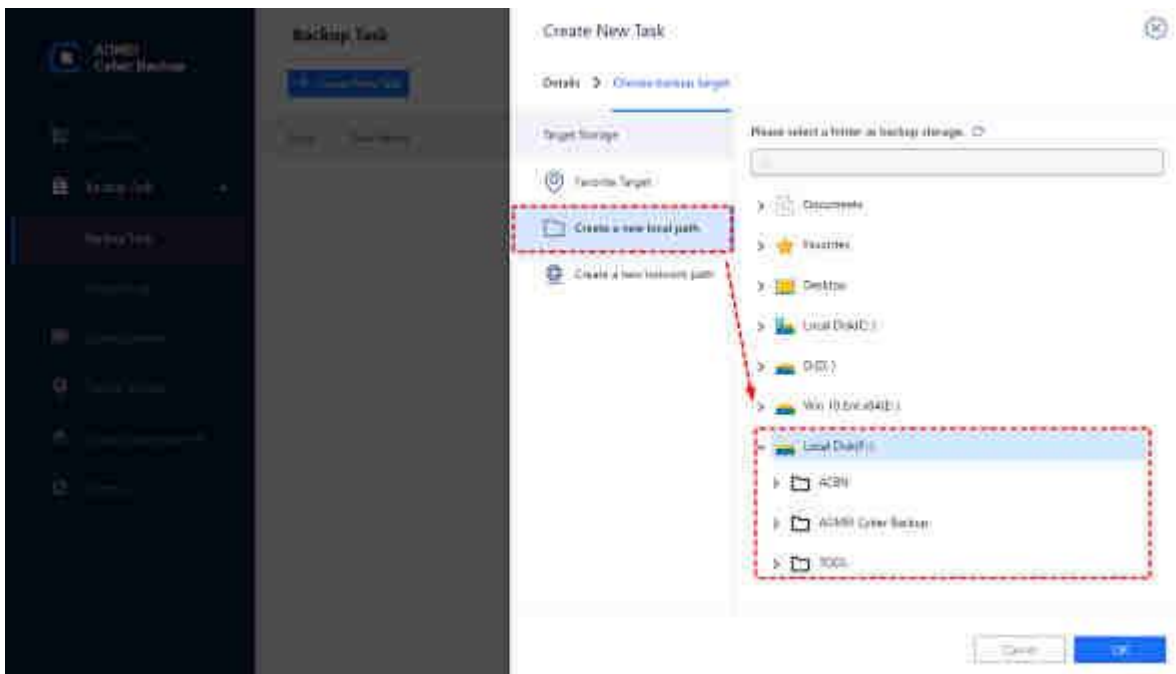
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Secure Download

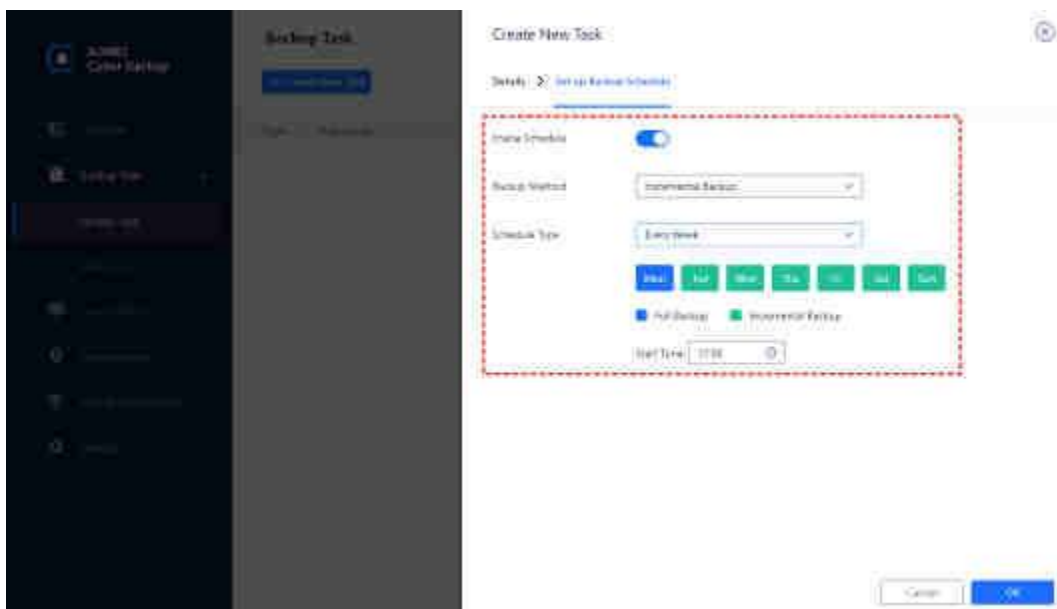
*You can choose to install this VM backup software on either Windows or Linux system.

► How to back up VMs with snapshots step-by-step:

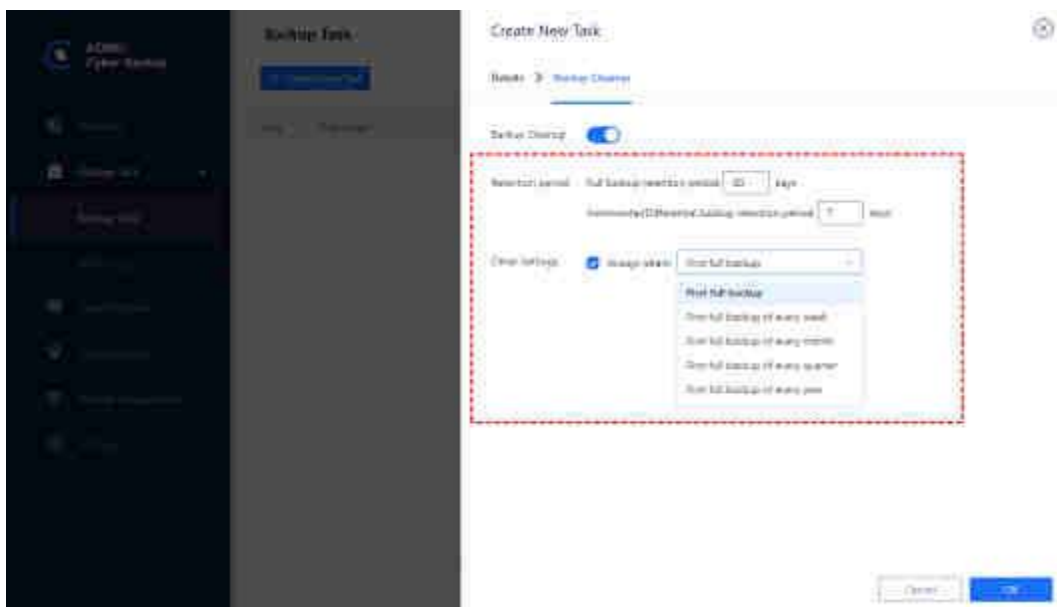
1. Download AOMEI Cyber Backup and **add vCenter or Standalone ESXi** host as the source device.
2. Click **Create New Task** to set up a backup task.
 - Select virtual machines and destination for backup.



- Schedule the backup task and choose the retention period for each backup.



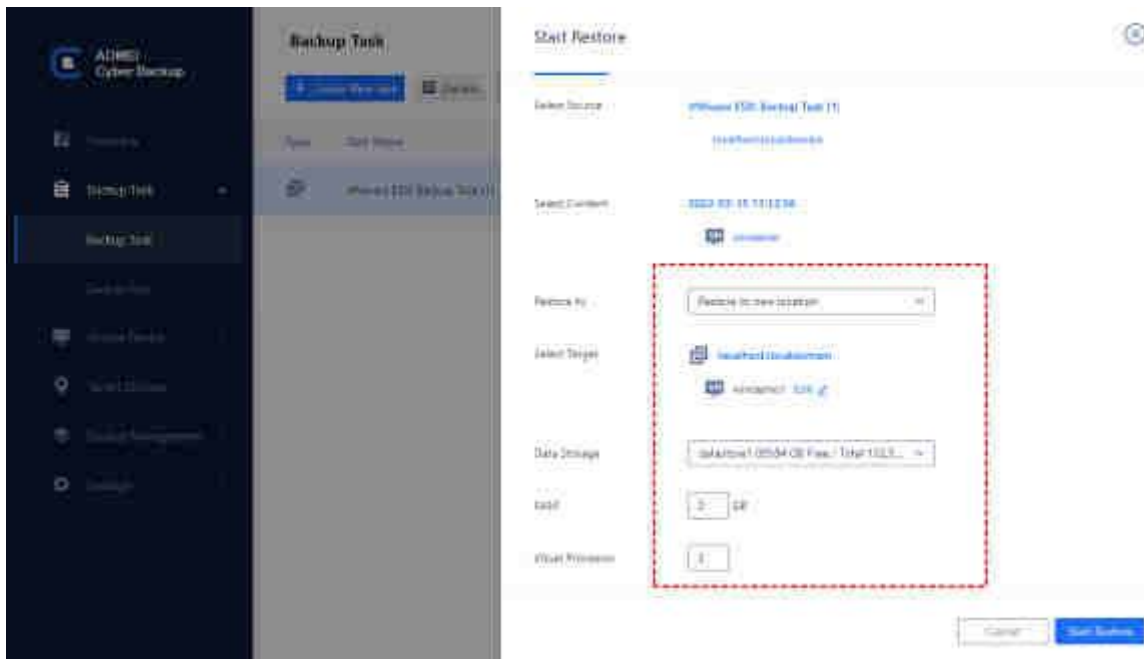
- Specify **Cleanup** task to automatically delete the old backup copies that exceed the retention period you specified.



3. Click **Start Backup** to execute the operation. When it's completed, you can find this task in **Backup Task** tab.

► **How to restore the backup to a new VM:**

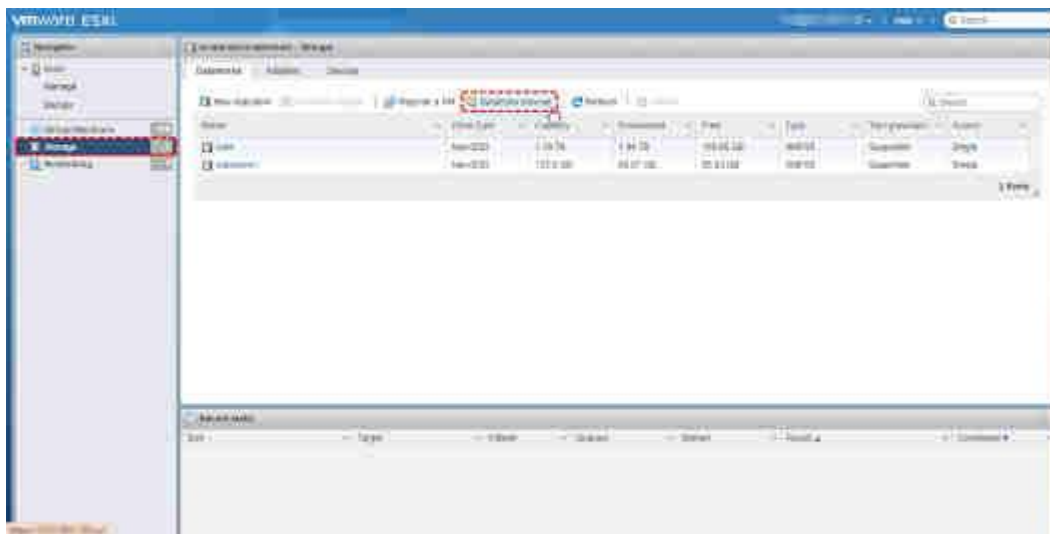
In the **Version** page, you can find the regular backup files, and restore the VM from any point. It is also convenient to create a new VM in another virtual environment by clicking **Restore to New Location**.



Way 2. Manually copy the VM folder along with all snapshots

If you want to directly copy VM files to create a same VM with snapshots, please refer to the following steps.

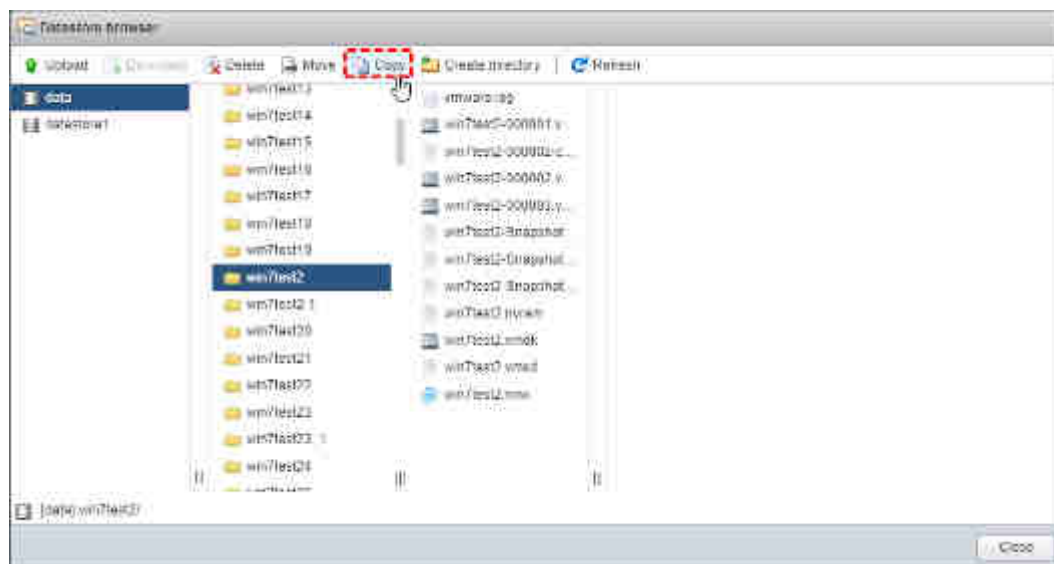
1. Access **vSphere Web Client**, click **Storage** in the left inventory, and click **Datastore browser** on the right page.



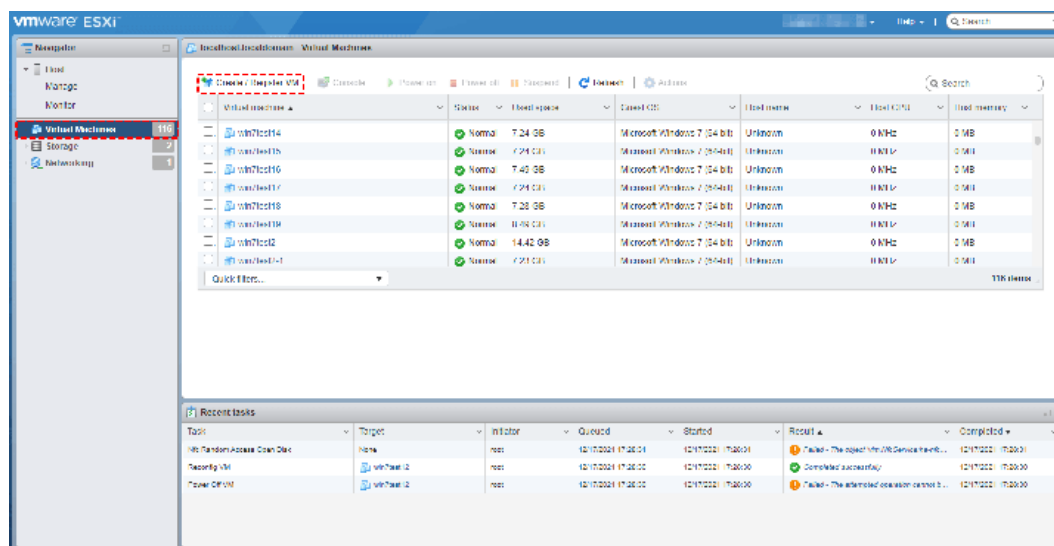
2. Click **Create directory** in the pop-up window, and provide a **Directory name** for the new VM. Click **Create Directory** to confirm.



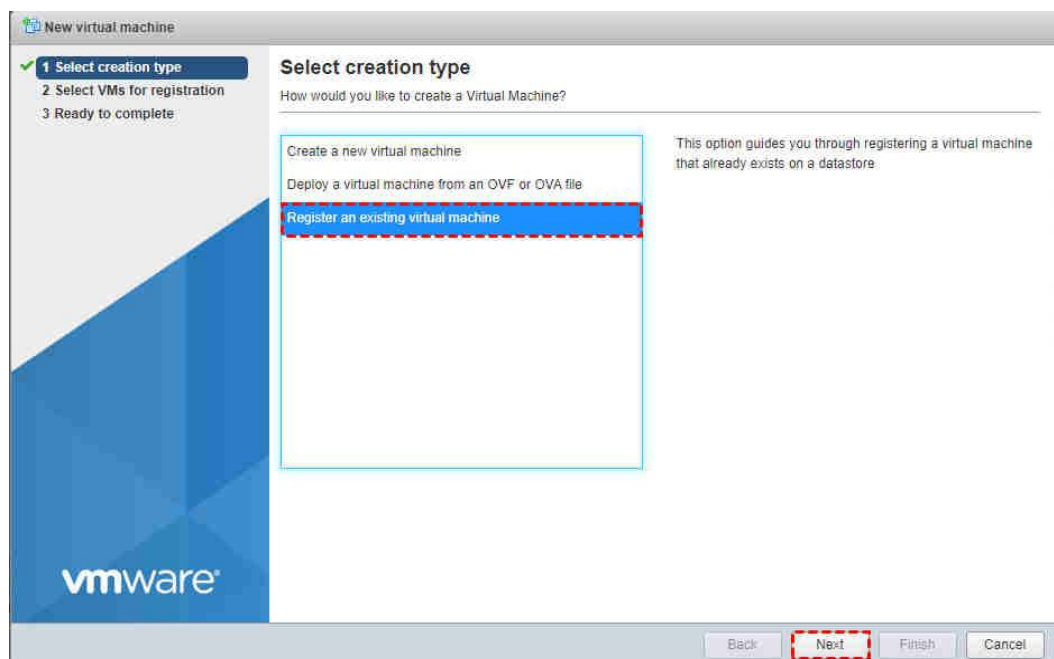
3. Back to the Datastore browser, find the folder of the original VM and click **Copy** on the toolbar to copy all files in it to the new folder you just created.



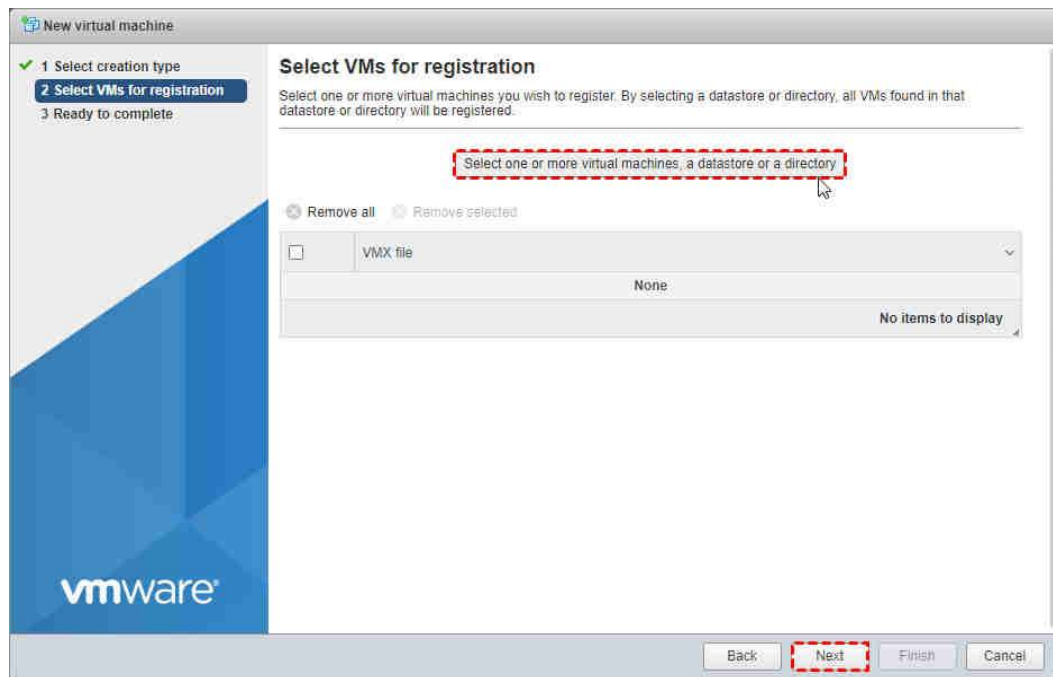
4. Close Datastore browser, and click **Virtual Machines** in the left inventory. Click **Create/Register VM** on toolbar to open the wizard.



5. On Select creation type page, select **Register an existing virtual machine** and click **Next**.



6. On Select VMs for registration page, click **Select one or more virtual machines, a datastore or a directory**, and select the newly created folder. Click **Next**.



7. On Ready to complete page, click **Finish** to close the wizard.

8. Back to Virtual Machines, now you can see the newly copied VM with the same name as the old one, that's because the name comes from the .vmx file in the folder. You can right-click on the VM name and **Rename** it.

9. Power on the new VM you just copied, select **I copied it** and click **Answer** in the pop-up window.

Exporting snapshots manually takes more time and is likely to fail if the [snapshot size](#) is too large.

Summary

VMware products currently provide no export snapshot VMware ESXi option. But you can use a professional software to offer regular recovery points like snapshots.

In this article I introduced the specific steps of how to manually copy all of the ESXi VM files and VMware Workstation snapshot clone, as well as how to create [VMware backup schedule](#) for data security. You can copy VMware snapshot to another computer by copying all VM files.