

3. Partition And Format Your Hard Disk In Windows

Alright, we now look at how you can partition your hard disk in Windows. Windows has some nice built-in tools for partitioning. It is instructive to go some information about these tools so you have a better idea of what to expect the next time you're doing partitioning.

3.1 Creating A Partition In Windows

The first thing you must to create a hard disk partition in Windows is to ensure you have a new unused hard disk, or have some un-partitioned space available on an existing hard drive.

The steps I outline here will in fact work with any scenario, whether you're using a brand new hard disk, or un-partitioned space on an existing drive. I'll assume you're using Windows XP - but the steps should roughly be the same if you're using Windows Vista.

Here's what you need to do. In Windows XP, navigate to the *Disk Management Administrative Tool* from within the *Control Panel*.

- Just click on the *Start* button and select the *Control Panel* option.
- Select *Administrative Tools*, then double-click on the *Computer Management* icon.
- Next, you'll see that a *Computer Management* screen opens.
- Click on the *Disk Management* option under the *Storage* category. You will see a screen similar to the one below.

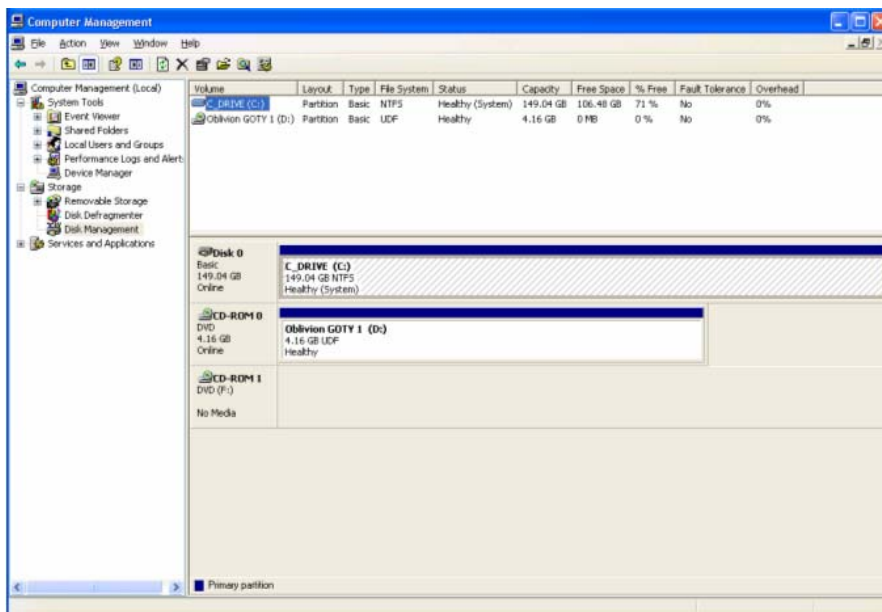


Figure 13: The Disk Management screen in Windows XP

In this example, you'll see that I have two hard disks installed. The first hard disk is called *Disc 0* and it has two partitions.

- The first partition is a 24 GB NTFS partition (assigned the drive letter *C*) - The second partition on that drive is a 87 GB NTFS partition (assigned the drive letter *E*)
- The other physical drive, has only one partition, the *D* partition. The rest of the space is unallocated and stands at 26 GB.

Right, next thing you need to do is to create a partition. Just do the following:

- Right click on the unallocated space listed in the *Disk Management* screen. When a menu comes up, select the *New Partition* option.
- There will now be a wizard to lead you through the partition creation process. Most folks will select a *Primary Partition*.
- At the next screen, specify the amount of unallocated space you would like used for the new partition. You can choose to use the entire amount of unallocated space or use only a part of it. So key in the size of the partition and press the *Next* button.
- Ok, on to the next screen. In the next screen, you select the drive letter you would like to assign to the new partition.
- The next step is to determine how the new partition is to be formatted. I'd suggest you use the NTFS file system. You should only select to format using the FAT32 file system if you need the partition to be readable by older operating systems (e.g. DOS, Windows 95, Windows 98, or Windows ME).
- The next step is to specify a name for the Volume Label field that will be tied to this new partition. If you can leave it blank if you wish.
- Alrighty, we will next see a summary screen that shows how the how the partition will be created. If all is ok, then click the *Finish* button to complete the partition creation process.
- Once the partition creation process is done, you'll be presented with the *Disk Management* screen again. The new partition and drive letter you created will now be visible and can also be used.

3.2 Deleting A Partition In Windows

We now take a brief look at deleting existing partitions on your PC. Why would you need to delete a partition? Well, if you need to use a partition's space for other purposes, you will first need to delete the partition. Be careful though – doing this deletes all your data on that partition.

Let's assume the following scenario. You have a 60 GB physical hard drive in your computer. This hard drive is partitioned into a 20 GB partition and a 40 GB partition. Now, you'd like to install a new operating system into your computer, but each partition on its own is not large enough. So what you do is to delete the existing partitions and create a new one using all the available space.