

How to fix "Missing or Corrupt NTFS.sys" Error in Windows XP

One of my XP SP3 computers at home crapped out today with the error Missing or corrupt Ntfs.sys and would not get past the initial BIOS screen. I eventually got it back up and running without having to format the computer, but it took a little while and it wasn't super straightforward. So if you are getting this error, here are the steps you can take to fix it.

Causes:

Converting your hdd from fat32 to ntfs.
Malware corrupted your ntfs.sys file
Bad or defective hdd corrupted your ntfs.sys file
Overclocking or heat related issue
Bad memory or other failing hardware

The exact error message that you get from Windows is:

Windows could not start because the following file is missing or corrupt: System32\Drivers\Ntfs.sys

Three Things You Can Try

- 1 Pop in your CD into the computer and boot off the CD when prompted to Press any key to boot from CD.
When the Welcome screen appears, press R to select the To repair a Windows XP installation using Recovery Console, press R option.
- 2 Next, type the number for the installation you want to logon to from the Recovery Console.
You'll also need to know the administrator password in order to get to the command prompt.
- 3 `cd \windows\system32\drivers`
- 4 `ren ntfs.sys ntfs.old`
- 5 `copy d:\i386\ntfs.sys drive:\windows\system32\drivers`
Where d is the drive letter for the CD-ROM drive that has you Windows XP CD, and "drive" is the drive where you installed Windows XP (most likely C:).
Note: You can type in the cmd "map" to see exactly where your Windows Installation is located.
- 6 Go ahead restart your computer and see if you are able to log back into Windows!

Trying fixing Ntfs.sys Error by Using CHKDSK

- 1 You can run CHKDSK from the Recovery Console itself. So you would follow the same instructions as mentioned above, but instead of typing in the three DOS commands above, you would type in the following at the command prompt:
- 2 `CHKDSK /R` /R = Repair
- 3 Wait a while and reboot

Repair Ntfs.sys by doing a Repair Install of Windows XP

A repair install of Windows XP basically replaces all of the Windows system files.

- 1 Doing a repair install is pretty easy, the starting steps are the same as for getting into the Recovery Console, but instead of pressing R to repair, you press Enter to setup Windows.
- 2 Then you select the installation Of Windows on the HDD you want to repair and press R to start the repair.

Note: Note that it may look like Windows is actually re-installing a fresh copy of itself, but this is not the case! You'll see the install screens like if you were to do a fresh install, but don't worry, you'll still have all of your applications, settings, and data.

- 3 When it finished, reboot and try again.