

Tidy up your QuickBooks data file and watch its performance improve

AT A GLANCE

A QuickBooks company file constantly grows as you store data over the years, but when the data file's size starts to drag down your application's performance it's time to take proactive steps. The Clean Up Company Data Wizard walks you through a spring cleaning that strips out the dusty records and transactions you don't need anymore, making it more efficient when it comes to saving new data.

To streamline the performance of our QuickBooks data file with the Clean Up Company Data Wizard, we'll:

- Describe exactly what happens when you clean up a file and what elements are affected.
- Outline the types of transactions that QuickBooks retains despite the clean up.
- Step you through the Clean Up Company Data Wizard.

When QuickBooks cleans up a data file, it deletes transactions that you no longer need and replaces them with transactions that summarize the deleted information by month to keep your records accurate. This way, you can improve QuickBooks' speed and performance and make way for further company growth in your data file.

Version alert: Earlier versions of QuickBooks have an Archive & Condense Data Wizard that functions similar to version 2006's Clean Up Company Data Wizard. Although the name has changed, you can still follow along with this article if you have an earlier version of QuickBooks using the Archive & Condense Data Wizard.

Clean up based on a specific date

During this process, you specify a date and QuickBooks cleans up transactions with dates on or prior to that

date; QuickBooks doesn't change any transactions in your company that fall after the date you specify.

At the same time, condensing can remove other elements — primarily list items — as long as you've reconciled all transactions related to these elements. In particular, QuickBooks can remove any of the following elements:

- Unused accounts
- Unused customers, vendors and other names
- Unused invoice items
- Completed To Do notes

In addition to these list items, QuickBooks can remove additional transactions that you identify during the condensing process.

Limitation: You can clean up a data file only by date; you can't choose particular accounts to clean up.

Summarize the clean up process

It's important to understand that QuickBooks deletes and summarizes only those transactions that fall on or before the date you specify *and* that have no effect on transactions dated after that date.

For example, QuickBooks will delete the details of any fully paid invoice with a date prior to the specified condensing date. In the invoice's place, QuickBooks includes the invoice amount in a summary transaction showing Accounts Receivable and the income accounts. The summary transaction contains neither the customer name nor the items sold — that information is lost.

On the other hand, QuickBooks keeps any unpaid invoices even if the invoices are dated prior to the specified

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date; that way, you can apply payments to these invoices when the payments arrive.

What QuickBooks just can't let go

QuickBooks retains the following types of transactions that fall before the date you specified:

- All uncleared transactions such as unreconciled transactions in checking or credit card accounts
- Payroll transactions for the current year
- All transactions with open balances

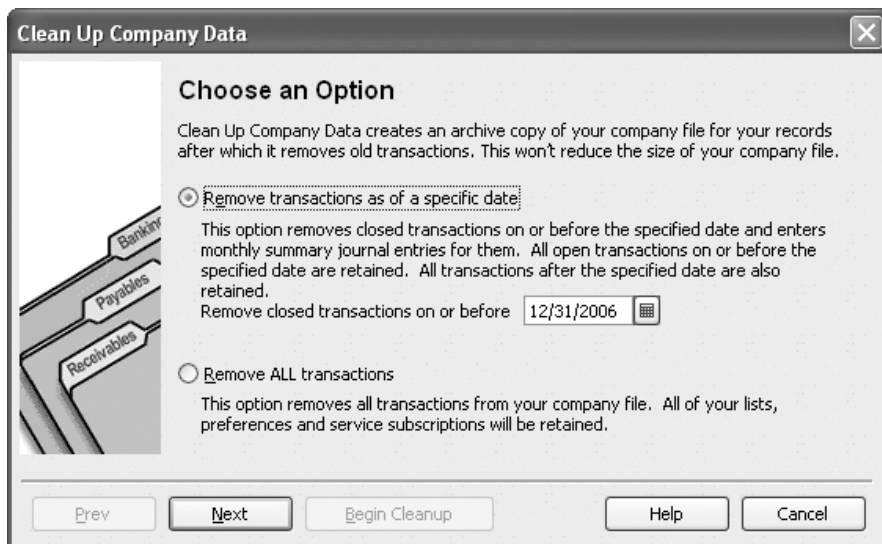
such as unpaid or partially paid invoices, customer payments that you haven't deposited, unpaid bills or unused credit memos

- Any transaction linked to another transaction that has an open balance such as an undeposited customer payment that you applied to an invoice. Although the invoice may be paid in full, QuickBooks retains the invoice because it's linked to an open transaction — the undeposited payment
- Unbilled reimbursable expenses

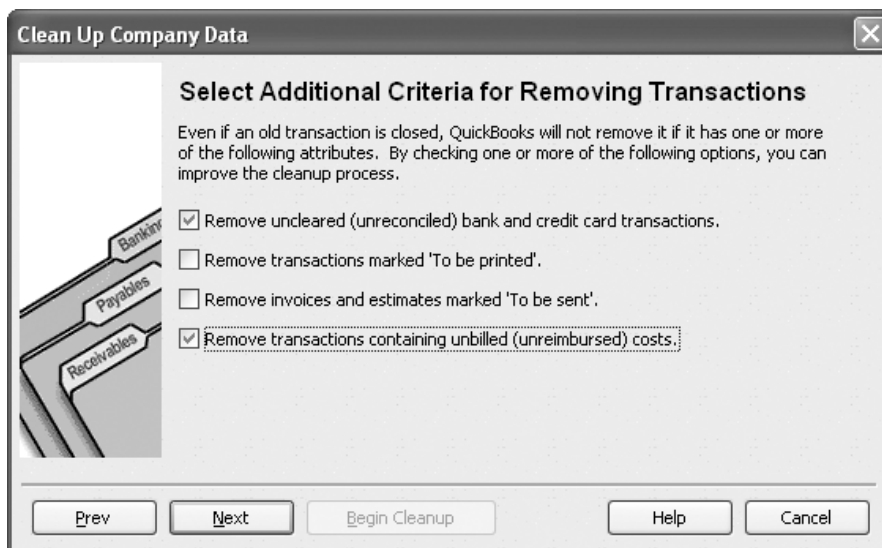
- Incomplete online transactions

These transactions are normally not deleted with the clean up, but you can override some of these defaults by making particular choices throughout the Clean Up Company Data Wizard, as you'll see later in this article.

Clarification: You won't see a dramatic decrease in your data file's size after you clean it up with the wizard. However, your data file won't grow in size very quickly either. Cleaning up the file makes it use its space more efficiently so it can handle more data without blowing up the file size and causing performance problems.



1: Any closed transactions on or before the date you enter in the wizard are subject to the condensing process.



2: By default, QuickBooks keeps these transaction types intact but you can choose to remove them instead.

Seek out the stored summary transactions

QuickBooks creates monthly summary transactions for deleted transactions; the summary transaction amount is the total of the deleted transactions. QuickBooks places the transactions in your registers as journal entries. (In the Type field, you'll see GENJRNL; the Memo field identifies the journal entries as condensing transactions.) Typically, you'll find one GENJRNL transaction for each month in which QuickBooks deletes transactions.

Report cleaned up data (with limitations)

You'll also notice the effects of condensing on reports. For example, you can still create reports that summarize financial activity for the time period you cleaned up, because QuickBooks adds summary transactions to your company file to preserve account balances. And, QuickBooks keeps information about each of your taxable items and vendors so you can get accurate reports about your tax liability.

However, you can't create reports that show daily detail for the time period that you cleaned up, because QuickBooks deleted the individual transactions that would have provided the detail. You also can't create reports that show balances for individual customers or vendors for the cleaned up period of time.

Clean up your data file

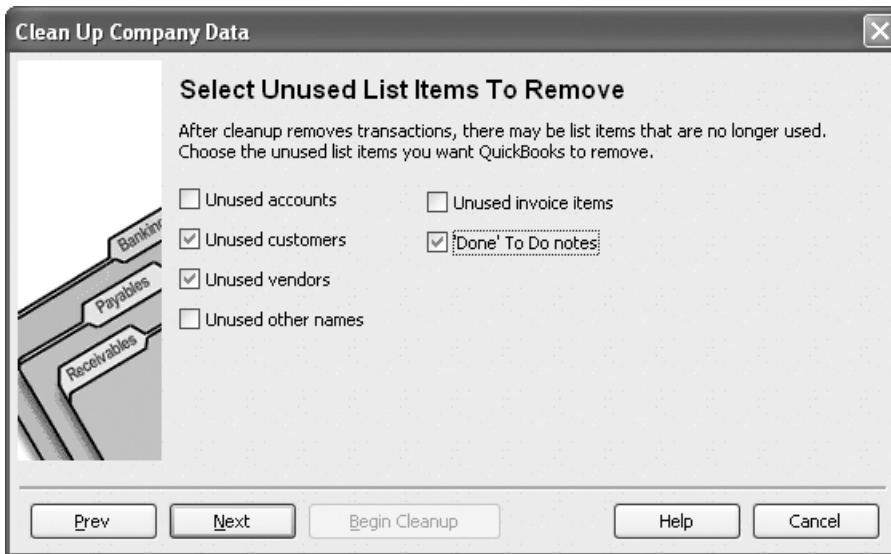
Now that you know what to expect from the condensing process, let's follow the steps to accomplish it.

To clean up your data file:

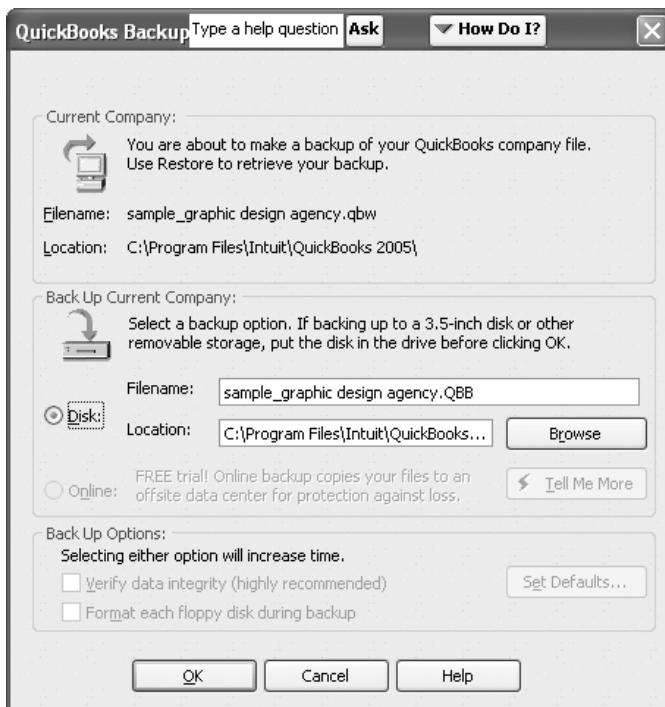
1. Launch QuickBooks and open your company file.

2. Choose File | Utilities | Clean Up Company Data (File | Archive & Condense Data in earlier versions of QuickBooks) from the menu bar.

Confirmation: When you clean up a company file in QuickBooks 2006, QuickBooks warns you that budgeting data may be affected. Click OK to continue to the Clean Up Company Data Wizard.



- 3: You can further customize what you include in the condensing process by selecting list items to remove.



- 4: QuickBooks suggests a default filename and location, but you can change them if you like.

3. Enter the date you want QuickBooks to begin archiving and condensing closed transactions in the first screen of the Clean Up Company Data Wizard, as shown in **Figure 1**.

4. Click Next and select any check boxes corresponding to transaction types you want QuickBooks to remove, as shown in **Figure 2**. By default, QuickBooks retains these transactions, but selecting additional transaction types to clean up helps the data file store new transactions more efficiently. Click Next again.

5. Select any check boxes corresponding to unused list items you'd like QuickBooks to update if, after removing transactions, elements on the list aren't used any longer, as shown in **Figure 3**. Click Next to advance in the wizard. If you want more control over what list items are removed, leave these boxes unchecked and delete them manually after cleanup is done.

6. Review the summary of actions QuickBooks will perform while cleaning up and click the Begin Cleanup button (Begin Condense button in earlier versions) when you're ready.

7. Click OK when QuickBooks prompts you to create a backup data file. QuickBooks displays the QuickBooks Back Up Company File dialog box.

Back it up before you clean it up?

If you're using QuickBooks 2002 or later, you don't need to make a backup before cleaning up because QuickBooks automatically creates an archive copy of your data as it was prior to condensing. At any time you can open the archive copy and print reports or review transactions. However, you shouldn't enter or edit data in the archive copy.

8. Enter a name and file location for the backup copy in the appropriate text boxes (or accept the default name and location QuickBooks generates), as shown in **Figure 4**, and click OK to save it.

When the cleanup data file is complete, QuickBooks informs you of the file's name and location, as shown in

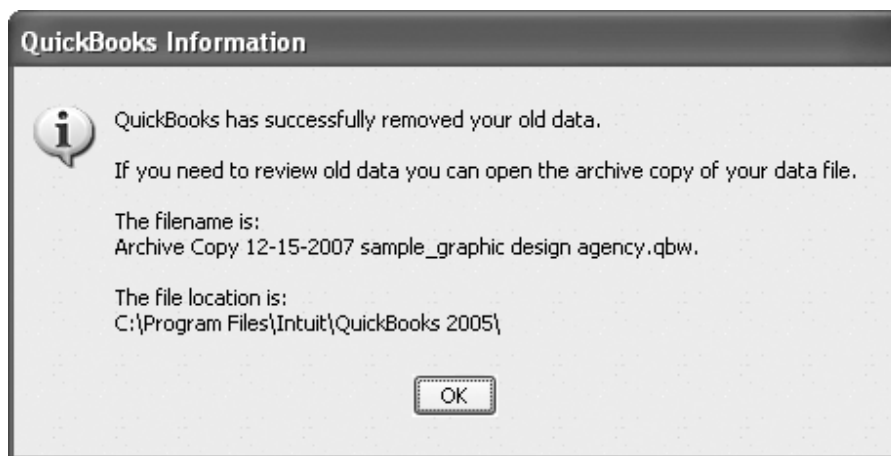
Figure 5.

Access your archived data file

You can open your archived company file just like any QuickBooks company to view transactions or print reports. Just choose File | Open Company from the menu bar and locate the archive copy on your hard drive in the Open A Company dialog box. Click Open to display it.

Head's up!

If you open an archive copy, be careful to return to your regular company when you want to enter new transactions. You might consider setting a password-protected closing date in the archive company that's dated several years in the future. That way, you'll see a warning message if you start to enter transactions reminding you that you're in the archive copy.



5: QuickBooks provides the name and location of your archived backup company file for future reference.

**From
The
Offices
Of:**

Cannon Wright Blount, PLLC

756 Ridge Lake Blvd Ste 100
Memphis, TN 38120