

Making Music on Your Computer

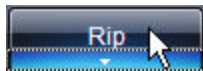
You already have the tools on your computer to create MP3, WMA, or other kinds of music files from the compact disks you have stashed somewhere around your house. And why would you want to do that, you say? You might have an MP3 player that would benefit from your personal music taste—and more and more new cars now have MP3 players. You can store more than 150 songs in MP3 format on a single compact disk, as opposed to a dozen or so that fit on a CD that you buy at the store.

You should already have the software on your computer to *rip* music—Windows Media Player. The most recent version is 11. If you have an earlier version, download and install 11. Just type *Windows Media Player 11* into Google and click “I’m Feeling Lucky.”

Another great piece of free software is *iTunes* (my preference over Windows Media player). Google *itunes*, click “I’m Feeling Lucky,” and click the download button for *iTunes 7*. If you prefer to purchase software, try Roxio Easy Media Creator 9.

Windows Media Player

Once you’ve installed the most recent software, open it. Using Windows Media Player for this example, launch the software. Insert an audio CD. You should see the name of your CD at the bottom of the Library list. Click the CD title and you will see a listing of the CD tracks.

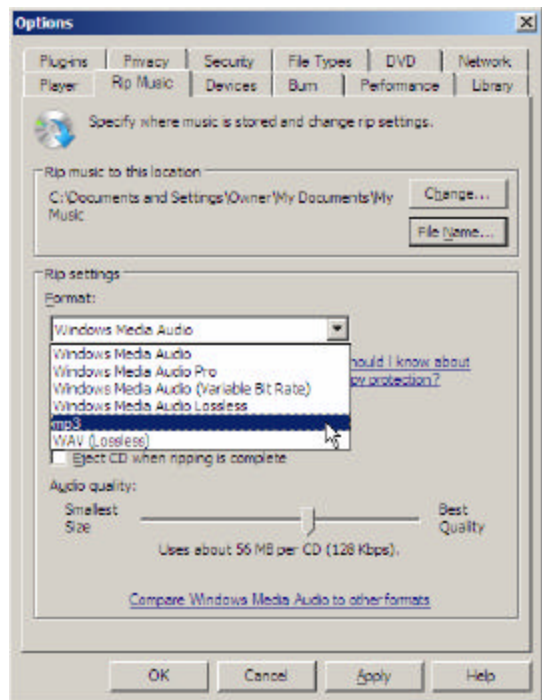


Now click the **Rip** button.

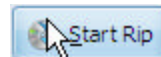
This is an improvement in WMP11 over previous versions, which would not download titles. Note that you must have an Internet connection active.

Click the arrow at the bottom of the **Rip** tab, select **Tools**, and select **More Options**. The **Options** dialog box will open directly to the **Rip Music** tab (see the illustration at the top of the next column). You will see a series of choices for Windows Media Audio (WMA files) and one for MP3. If you want to create MP3 files, select that option.

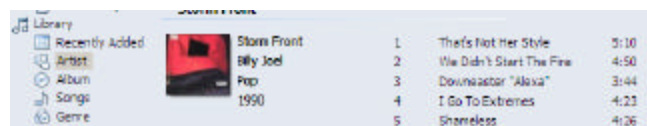
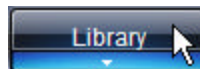
At the top of the dialog box, you will also see a section titled *Rip music to this location*, which tells you where the music will be stored. You may change the location by clicking the **Change** button.



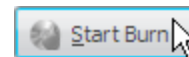
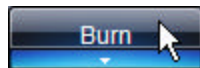
Once you’ve made your decisions about format and storage location, you’re ready to *rip*. Click the **Start Rip** button and the software will proceed to convert your music.



To find the results, click the **Library** tab. Look under *Artist*, *Album*, your choice. For some reason, WMP11 doesn’t seem to show the *genre* information, so you might want to depend on *iTunes* if you want to sort by genre (e.g., *Rock*, *Oldies*)



To *burn* your MP3s to a disk, click the **Burn** tab. Select **More Options** by clicking the arrow at the bottom of the Burn tab to choose the format you want to use for your CD. Then click the **Start Burn** button. Again, for some reason WMP11 does not let you *deselect* tracks that you don’t want to include, which was available on previous versions and is also available in *iTunes*.

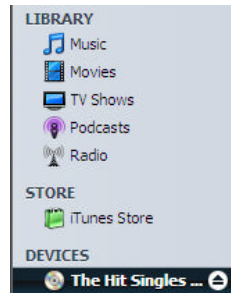


With either software, make sure you have enough storage space and memory on your computer!

iTunes

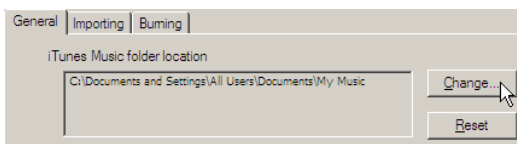
iTunes is, in my opinion, much better organized, more intuitive, and will save you lots of work. It's menus across the top make it easier to find what you need. Begin by launching the software and inserting your CD. You'll see your CD listed under

Devices. Click on it and you will see that the album name, artist, song titles, and so on are listed for you. That information will be stored with the file when you convert it.

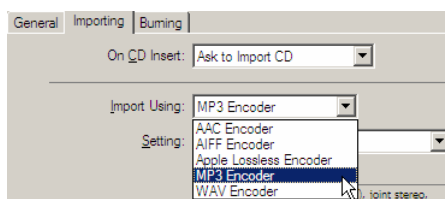


Note: If you have a dial-up connection, you must connect to the Internet to get this information.

Under the **Edit** menu, select **Preferences** and click the **Advanced** tab. Under **General**, click **Change** to change the location of where you want your music files stored.



Under **Importing**, select the media you want to use (e.g., MP3 Encoder). *iTunes* does not offer a choice for WMA files.



When you've made your choices and closed the **Preferences** dialog box, press **Ctrl+A** to select all of the songs on the CD (or choose **Select All** from the **Edit** menu). Under the **Advanced** menu, select **Convert Selection to MP3** (or whatever format you chose), or simply right click and make the same selection. The software will proceed to do its work.

Note that if you have some songs on the CD that you don't particularly like, simply **uncheck** them and they will not be converted.

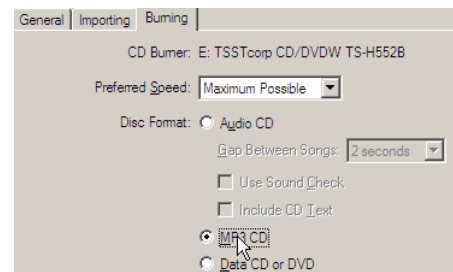
iTunes automatically assigns a *genre* to your music based on recommendations pulled from the album

information. You can change the *genre*, just as you can make corrections or changes to other album information.

All of the music you add to *iTunes* is listed in the **Music** library. You can create your own playlists, including *smart* playlists that can be based on the genre, artist, anything you choose. Although I don't often play music from my computer, I created smart playlists to organize music so I can easily burn disks.

When you're ready to burn, select **Preferences** from the **Edit** menu and click the **Advanced** tab. Click the **Burning** tab and choose how you want your music:

- **Audio CD** will add the songs to a CD in a format just like your original CD.
- **MP3 CD** will add the songs as MP3s.



If you do not want all the songs burned to a CD, uncheck the songs you do not want. When you have your songs selected, choose **Burn Playlist to Disk** from the **File** menu, or click the **Burn MP3 CD** button in the lower right-hand corner. If you have chosen more songs than will fit on one CD, *iTunes* will ask you whether you want to burn to more than one CD.

That's making music. Have fun.