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# Importing and exporting products in WooCommerce with a CSV file

Products & Catalogue

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# Importing and exporting products in WooCommerce with a CSV file

Products & Catalogue Created on **October 10, 2026** 3 min read



Creating a hundred products one by one is what makes people give up. WooCommerce comes with a built-in **product importer and exporter** that use a CSV file (a spreadsheet saved as text). It serves to load a catalogue in one go, to correct prices in bulk and to carry products from one shop to another. The trick is the first time: rehearse with a few rows.

## Export first, to see what the file looks like

1. **Open Products, All Products** and press “Export” at the top.
2. **Choose the columns, types and categories** you want. The first time, export a few products of each type (simple, variable).
3. **Open the file** in a spreadsheet. Each row is a product; the columns are the ID, the type, the SKU, the name, the price, the categories, the images, the stock and more. That is the template for what you will import.

## Importing

1. **Prepare the file** with the same columns. WooCommerce ships a sample file inside its data folder; use it as a model.
2. **Save as CSV with UTF-8 encoding.** If not, accents turn into symbols. In the spreadsheet look for “CSV UTF-8”.
3. **Take a backup first** and rehearse with five rows: **making and testing your own backup**.

4 **Open Products, All Products, "Import".** Pick the file. Tick "update existing products" only if you want to change products that already exist (WooCommerce recognises them by ID or SKU).

5 **Check the column mapping.** The importer tries to guess; make sure each column of the file goes to the right field.

6 **Run it and check a sample.** Open three products: price, categories, images, stock.

## The parts that fail most

| What you see | The usual cause |
|---|---|
| **Accents show up as symbols** | The file is not in UTF-8. |
| **Images do not appear** | The importer fetches them from the links you typed; if they are not reachable, it fails. Check that they open in a browser. |
| **Variable products come apart** | Each variation is a row of its own, pointing to the parent product. See **product variations**. |
| **The importer stops halfway, or gives a time or memory error** | A file too large for the PHP limits. Split it into smaller parts or see **PHP limits**. |
| **Duplicate categories** | Slightly different names ("Shoes" and "shoes "). Always type them the same. |
| **Duplicate products** | You imported without the update option, or without unique SKUs. |

**A bulk import cannot be undone with a button.**
If you updated the wrong prices, only the backup puts them back. Always take the backup first, and rehearse with a few rows.

**Use the SKU as the key.**
Give every product a unique SKU; it is what lets you update prices and stock in bulk without creating duplicates. And if the catalogue comes from a supplier, see **dropshipping**.

NEED A HAND?

Does the import always stop in the same place? Tell us how many rows the file has and what appears on screen, and we will look at the account limits.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- **Putting products on sale in WooCommerce** →
- **PHP limits: memory, time, upload size** →
- **Product variations** →

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