

# VMware KVM

VMware Workstation Pro 15.0

VMware Workstation Pro 14.0

VMware Workstation Pro 12.0



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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>VMware KVM</b>	<b>4</b>
	Use VMware KVM	4
	Set Hot Keys for VMware KVM	5
	Set the VMware KVM Log File	6

# VMware KVM

With VMware Workstation Pro, you can run virtual machines with VMware KVM, which allows you to use hot keys to switch among running virtual machines and the host, as if they were attached to a KVM switch.

To use VMware KVM, you must create virtual machines with Workstation Pro or Workstation Player, and you must configure keyboard shortcuts to cycle through the virtual machines. VMware KVM is only available with VMware Workstation 10 and later.

This chapter includes the following topics:

- [Use VMware KVM](#)
- [Set Hot Keys for VMware KVM](#)
- [Set the VMware KVM Log File](#)

## Use VMware KVM

The VMware KVM command `vmware-kvm.exe` starts and stops virtual machines.

You can include the command to start a virtual machine in a shortcut in the host operating system's startup group so that the virtual machine starts when a user logs on to the host computer.

You must run the `vmware-kvm.exe` command once for each virtual machine you want to start or stop with VMware KVM.

### Procedure

- 1 Open the Windows command prompt and navigate to the VMware Workstation Pro installation folder.
- 2 Type `vmware-kvm.exe [OPTIONS] vmx-file.vmx`, where *vmx-file.vmx* is a virtual machine you want to use with VMware KVM.

Option	Description
<code>--power-off</code>	Powers off the specified virtual machine. Add <code>=hard</code> to perform a hard power off to the virtual machine. When you power off a virtual machine, <code>vmware-kvm.exe</code> closes the virtual machine and switches to the next active virtual machine.
<code>--suspend</code>	Suspends the specified virtual machine. Add <code>=hard</code> to perform a hard suspend to the virtual machine.

Option	Description
<b>--reset</b>	Resets the specified virtual machine. Add <b>=hard</b> to perform a hard reset to the virtual machine.
<b>--detach</b>	Detaches the specified virtual machine. The virtual machine then runs in the background.
<b>--exit</b>	Exits <code>vmware-kvm.exe</code> .
<b>--preferences</b>	Shows the vmware-kvm preferences dialog box, where you set a hot key for switching between virtual machines.

For example, type `vmware-kvm.exe --power-off=hard MyVM.vmx` to hard power off the virtual machine `MyVM.vmx`. Type `vmware-kvm.exe --reset MyVM.vmx` to reset `MyVM.vmx`.

**Note** When a virtual machine is opened with VMware KVM, it cannot be opened with Workstation Pro or Workstation Player. To open the virtual machine with Workstation Pro or Workstation Player, you must close the virtual machine using `vmware-kvm.exe --detach MyVM.vmx`, or using the `--exit` command.

### What to do next

You can set specific hot keys to cycle between virtual machines and the host. See [Set Hot Keys for VMware KVM](#)

## Set Hot Keys for VMware KVM

You can specify a hot key or hot key combination for cycling through available virtual machines and the host computer.

Each time you press the specified hot key, the screen displays the next virtual machine or the host, in order. When you press the hot keys and a particular virtual machine is not running, it is skipped.

The default hot key is the Pause/Break key.

### Prerequisites

Review the hot key combinations to avoid selecting hot key combinations already recognized by Workstation virtual machines. See [Default Hot Key Combinations](#).

### Procedure

- 1 Open the Workstation Pro command-line.
- 2 Type `vmware-kvm.exe --preferences`.
- 3 Click **Modify**.
- 4 Press the combination of keys to use as hot keys.

- 5 Select the check boxes next to the other feature to enable or disable.

Option	Description
Allow ungrabbing	Allows the mouse cursor to be released using Ctrl+Alt.
Stretch guest	Allows the virtual machine to change the guest display to fit the full screen. The guest display resolution is not changed.

- 6 Select an exiting behavior for the virtual machines used with VMware KVM.
- 7 Click **OK**.

You return to the host system.

## Default Hot Key Combinations

You can assign a hot key to switch among virtual machines and the host. The default hot key is the Pause/Break key.

The following keys are reserved and cannot be assigned as hot keys.

**Table 1-1. Default Hot-Key Combinations**

Shortcut	Action
Ctrl+Alt	Release the mouse cursor.
Ctrl+Alt+Insert	Shut down or, depending on the guest operating system, log out of the guest operating system. This command is received solely by the virtual machine.

## Set the VMware KVM Log File

You can configure a log file for VMware KVM.

The log file records diagnostic information from `vmware-kvm.exe`. The log file is separate from the `vmware.log` file, which stores information on running virtual machines.

If you do not specify a log file, `vmware-kvm.exe` generates a log file in the `%TEMP%` folder.

Setting a log file is not required.

### Procedure

- 1 Open the `%APPDATA%\VMware\config.ini` file in a text editor.
- 2 Add `vmkvm.log.filename = "C:\filepath\vmkvm.log"` to the file, where *filepath* is a fully qualified file path to the desired location for the log file.

For example, `vmkvm.log.filename = "C:\Users\Default\vmkvm.log"`.