

Windows System Maintenance

Following are steps that you should take to help keep your system running in tip top shape.

1. Keep your Antivirus Software running and your subscription UP TO DATE:
Do NOT let it expire. Renew it at least 1 week before it expires!!
2. Reboot (restart) your computer at least once a day. If you don't turn your computer off at night (which is OK), you should restart your computer at least once a day to get it (keep it) running at optimal performance.
3. Disk Defragmenter: Run approximately once a month.
To do this you will click **Start, (All) Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Defragmenter.** When the defrag software opens, click **Defragmenter.**
Note: This may take several hours to run (especially the first time). While this is running do not use your computer. Maybe run this overnight.
4. Clean/Delete your Temporary Internet Files: (This could take 10+ minutes to run)
 - o Internet Explorer 7 or Newer:
 - Right click on Internet Explorer and click Properties
 - Click Delete (under Browsing History)
 - Then click Delete... (the appropriate item(s) you want to delete or click Delete All (at the bottom)
 - o Internet Explorer 6 or Earlier:
 - Click **Start, Settings, Control Panel, Internet Options.**
 - Click on the General tab (if necessary).
 - Click on the Delete Cookies button. Then click Ok to delete cookies.
 - Click on the Delete Files button. Then Click on the Delete all offline content when prompted.
 - Close all instances of Internet Explorer and log back into the site.
5. Check Disk:
Use Check Disk to "scrub" your hard disk to search for lost file fragments, cross-linked files, and bad areas of the disk's surface. Check Disk can free up disk space that contains unusable fragments or cross-linked files, and can mark bad disk areas so they are not used again. If Windows finds data in a bad disk area, it attempts to move the data to a good area before marking the bad area as unusable.

To run Check Disk, do the following:

- o Close all running applications.
- o Launch My Computer, and then select the icon for your primary hard disk. (The disk should be labeled Drive C.)

- Right-click the icon. When the shortcut menu opens, click Properties.
- The Properties dialog box opens for the disk. The General tab should appear on top. (Note that you can launch Disk Cleanup from this tab, if you want.)
- Click the Tools tab.
- Under Error-checking, click the Check Now button.
- The Check Disk dialog box opens, with two options (Select both options, and then click Start.)
 - Automatically fix file system errors.
 - Scan for and attempt recovery of bad sectors.
- Windows displays its progress as it checks your disk. The process can take some time, especially if your disk is large. Be patient and don't interrupt Windows as it scans the disk.
- When the disk check is complete, follow any instructions that Windows displays, and close all open dialog boxes.

6. Clean the dust out of your computer:

It seems too simple but just having a dirty computer can slow it down. If there is an excessive buildup of dust inside your computer, it will cause a heat buildup. This heat buildup will degrade performance as well accelerate wear and tear on the parts inside your computer which can lead to the premature failure of a critical part. Remember to unplug your computer before opening the case. Also, remember to NOT bump any of the internal parts with the vacuum to prevent damage.

7. Data Backup:

It's about \$100 to purchase an external USB hard drive. It's between \$5,000 - \$10,000 to recover from a dead hard drive. Visit <http://www.GetEasyComputerHelp.com/tips/misc/data.asp> for more info.

8. Disk Cleanup (I'm not a big fan of doing this but I included it anyway)

The Disk Cleanup utility searches your disk for unneeded files and deletes them. These files may be old temporary files that were not automatically deleted during a previous shutdown, expired Internet cache files, Recycle Bin contents, and others. (Don't worry—Disk Cleanup does not remove your data files or program files, only specific types of files that the system may have created but no longer needs.)

To run Disk Cleanup, do the following:

- Click the **Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools**, then click **Disk Cleanup**.
- The Select Drive dialog box appears. Click the drop-down arrow and then click the drive you want to clean up. (Your PC's primary hard disk is usually labeled as Drive C.) Click OK.
- The Disk Cleanup dialog box appears.
- On the Disk Cleanup tab, scroll through the Files to delete list and see which kinds of files Windows has targeted for removal. Select any/all types you want to delete, or deselect any file types you wish to keep. (Selected files are indicated with a check mark.)
- Click OK. When Windows prompts for confirmation, click Yes.

9. I tell people, computers are like cars. Every 6 months or so a tune up from an Information Technology Professional helps it run at its peak performance. It can also prolong the life of your computer.