

Computers Behaving Badly

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PC HOUSEKEEPING

This article describes the basic processes that should be routinely performed on your computer to improve speed and reduce wasted space.

Delete Temporary Files (caution required)

- From Windows Explorer, expand My Computer, then expand C:\ drive
- From the drop down tools menu at the top, select Tools then Find and find folders named Temp
- Look in any folders named \temporary internet files or \temp. The files within these folders should be checked and any files found should be able to be safely deleted as long as these folders have been used for the purpose their name implies.

Empty Recycle Bin (safe)

- From Windows Explorer, select the Recycle Bin Folder shown in the Folder List on the right hand side
- From the drop down menu bar at the top, select File, Empty Recycle Bin
- Select Yes to pop-up dialog box if Recycle Bin contents can be deleted

Run Disk Cleanup (safe)

- From Windows Explorer, expand My Computer from Folder List
- Right click C:\ Drive and select Properties
- Click Disk Cleanup box (while you wait - go wash the car)

Do a Scan disk (safe)

- From Windows Explorer, expand My Computer from Folder List
- Right click C:\ Drive and select Properties
- Select the Tools tab and click Check Now to scan the hard drive for errors

Defrag (safe)

- Reboot PC in Safe Mode (hit F8 during boot-up) to ensure no other program clashes
- From Windows Explorer, expand My Computer from Folder List
- Right click C:\ Drive and select Properties
- Select the Tools tab and click Defragment Now (potentially time consuming – get a coffee)

3rd Party Software (safe)

- Run any additional software, eg Norton Utilities, that can check the integrity of the Operating System

Backup (safe)

- Any software installed from a floppy or CD, eg Windows, Office, MYOB etc need not be backed up as they can be recovered from the original source
- Backup any personal data, eg: emails, My Documents folder, music, pictures, address book, Quicken/MYOB data and any other data that can be exported from an application package.
- How often the data is used and its importance should determine the backup regularity

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Windows Updates and Service Packs (caution required)

- Regularly check the Microsoft Update Web site and apply any fixes or patches deemed necessary (it has been know for this to create as many holes as it fixes)
- Certainly apply any Service Packs

Updates (safe)

- Be sure to keep any protective software updated, eg: Antivirus, Firewall, Spyware and Adware.

Startup Programs (caution required)

- Check the programs that automatically run each time Window starts are the ones needed
- Go to Start, Programs, Startup and remove any programs not required

Emails

- Check Sent and Deleted Boxes for emails that can be deleted
- Compact these boxes. In Outlook Express 6: File/Folders/Compact All Folders. In Outlook: Select Personal Folder, then File/Folders/Properties, then Advanced and Compact Now