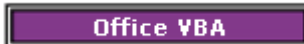
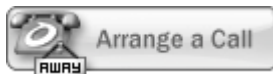


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Clean Your PC

These instructions have been around for a long time. They've been updated regularly to include the new operating systems, but the basic instructions are the same. These instructions are followed by major software support firms that have clients whose names you'll recognize, no matter who you are. So, if they're good enough for the big guys, they'll work fine for you too. We first made these instructions available through an auto-reply email, but it became overwhelming.

This is probably the most important information you can have about your computer. Unfortunately, the computer manufacturers won't tell you and Windows doesn't tell you.

These steps are slightly more aggressive than the Disk Cleanup utilities provided by Windows.

Anyone is welcome to distribute this information freely and in any manner. Copy it, put your logo on it, pass it out to your friends, coworkers, etc. We think everyone should know how to maintain their PC without installing special software that can often cause even more more problems.

In addition to the instructions below, it is imperative that you run virus-checking software and update the data files the moment new ones become available.

Running spycheckers, such as Ad-Aware, is also a good move.

Please read all of these steps carefully before implementing them. If you do not understand them, please ask for further assistance at our [free technical support forum](#). We cannot be held responsible for any loss of data or equipment incurred as a result of performing these steps.

If the PC in question is your work PC, please check with members of your IT department, network desk, or help desk BEFORE performing these steps. Some companies have special setups and following these directions could cause problems.

Instructions

Before starting, shut down your PC and restart it. It is not necessary to log into your network to perform these steps. When your PC has completely restarted, close any programs that run automatically.

Hit Ctrl-Alt-Del and choose your Task List. End Task on everything that appears EXCEPT Explorer and Systray.

Temporarily disable your screensaver if you use one.

Step 1: Delete trashy hard drive files (commonly referred to as temp files).

Hit Start-Find-Files or Folders. (Use Start-Search-Files or Folders on Windows ME, 2000, and XP.)

In the Named box, type:

***.tmp,~*.*,*.chk**

You must type it exactly as it appears above--double-check it to make sure it is exactly right. There are NO spaces between any of the characters.

NOTE: There may be programs that actually use these file extensions, though I've never been told which ones they are. It's unlikely that you will have a problem.

The Look-In box should have (C:) in it (or other hard drive [s]).

The Include Subfolders checkbox must be checked (not available with Windows ME, 2000, or XP).

Hit Find Now (or Search Now).

When it has completed searching, hit Ctrl+A to select all of the files that appear, and hit your delete key (see Note below). Delete all files you possibly can, even if you get a warning. Certain programs will not allow you to delete certain files. Do not be concerned if you can't delete files, just delete all that you can, even if you have to delete them one by one. Send all the files to the recycle bin. Close the Find/Search window when you're all done.

NOTE: For some reason, Windows 2000 stores certain folders in the TEMP folder. You should not delete these folders. When you choose to delete the files, you are told that it "is a system folder". You should not delete system files or folders.

Step 2: Delete Windows temp files.

Hit Start-Run and type **%temp%** and hit enter.

NOTE: The TEMP folder is a system folder. Do not use these folders to store your own files. Do not allow files to be stored here permanently.

The contents of the Temp folder that your system uses by default should appear in the window. Hit Ctrl-a on the keyboard to select everything in that folder and hit your delete key. Send the files to the recycle bin. Leave them there for at least a week to ensure that none of the files were needed. It's unlikely, however.

Close Windows Explorer.

Step 3: Delete temporary Internet files.

These steps valid only with Internet Explorer.

Open My Computer and note the Free space on your local drive by hitting View→Details. Now calculate a quantity of perhaps 10% of the amount of space available on your hard drive. Close My Computer.

Open Internet Explorer and hit Tools→Internet Options. If you are having difficulty running Internet Explorer, right-click the shortcut and hit Properties to bring up the Internet Options dialog.

On the General tab, click on the Settings button. Set the amount of disk space for Internet Explorer to use to the amount that is equal to 10% of your hard drive space. This is just a rule of thumb and is not necessarily appropriate for everyone.

If you've got DSL or Cable, check the box "every visit to a page". If you've got phone-line internet (DUN), check the box "every visit to a page" and groan while you do it. There's no point in going to web sites and NOT viewing the most updated page. If you want to see the old page, then add it to your favorites and tell it you want it to be available offline.

Hit Ok.

Click on the Delete files button. Do NOT click the checkbox for "delete all off-line content". Hit Ok.

The history section has 20 days by default. Another rule of thumb--3 days ought to be enough.

Click on the Advanced tab. Scroll down to the Security area and check the box that says "empty temporary internet files when browser is closed". This keeps them from building up and taking all the space on your hard drive.

Hit Ok.

Close any and all open Windows.

Step 4: Cleanup by running Scandisk and Defrag.

Ideally, at this point, you'll empty your recycle bin. The first few times you perform these steps, however, you may not want to empty your recycle bin. Give it a week or so. When it's obvious that you did not delete anything important, empty your recycle bin.

NOTE: Some operating systems don't have Scandisk. If yours does not, you don't have to run scandisk or defrag, you just need to reboot your PC and you're done. Check for Scandisk by double-clicking My Computer, then right-click your hard drive and choose Properties. Then click on the Tools tab. You may find Error Checking (Scandisk) there. Choose Error Checking. You may be advised that you'll have to run it after restarting your PC. Do so. Be warned it may take a half hour or more to run it when you've booted your PC.

Hit Start-Programs-Accessories-System tools-Scandisk. Run it on the C: drive, choose Standard test, and choose to Automatically fix errors. Hit Start.

When Scandisk has completed, it will tell you whether it "found problems and fixed them all" or "did not find any problems."

NOTE: If you don't get a report from Scandisk after it is complete, hit the Advanced button, then choose to "always" display summary, then hit Ok.

Hit Close. Hit Close again. Run a thorough scandisk once in a while if it makes you feel good or if you cannot complete a disk defrag (below). Generally, Scandisk will recommend that you run a thorough Scandisk if you need to. Scandisk can also be run by restarting the computer in MS-DOS mode and typing "scandisk" at the DOS prompt and hitting enter. This is particularly useful if you get the message "Scandisk has restarted 10 times."

If you're using these steps to troubleshoot a specific problem, you can skip the next step, but you should definitely do it as soon as you can.

Hit Start-Programs-Accessories-System tools-Disk Defragmenter. Run it on the C: drive whether it needs it or not. If you have never run Defrag before, or if you have not run it in a long time, this could take several hours! Hit the details button to watch your hard drive get defragged. When it's done, hit the Yes button to exit the disk defragmenter, and restart your PC.

NOTE: Some operating systems don't have Disk Defragmenter. Check for Defrag by double-clicking My Computer, then right-click your hard drive and choose Properties. Then click on the Tools tab. You may find Disk Defragmenter there.

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Physical Cleanup

Just in case you found this page because you want to physically clean your PC and components, here are some tips.

Always turn your PC and components off completely before cleaning.

We use a liquid bleach cleaner. Just dampen a paper towel with the cleaner and wipe. When it is clean, wipe down just as well with a water-dampened paper towel. Never put the cleaner or water right on your PC. Make sure it is not dripping wet!! If the cleaner or water runs while you're wiping--you're using too much and could ruin your PC!

For black or dark gray PC casing, just use water or water mixed with very little dish soap.

Be sure to wipe well with damp paper towels to remove all traces of cleaners or soaps.

Turn your keyboard upside down (take it outside like you would a dirty rug!). Then, use canned pressurized air to blow out the dust from underneath the keys.

Turn your mouse upside down and unscrew the plate. Take the ball out, remove any dust or buildup from the little black *rolling pins*, gently blow the open area out; put the pieces back together.

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