

How to keep your computers running smoothly- Maintenance tips

Here are a few simple things you can do to keep your computers running well and speed them up somewhat.

Be sure to reboot your computers at least once every 24 hours. This allows any downloaded updates to be installed and frees resources that may be being hogged by buggy programs or Windows processes. If you shut your computers off every night you don't have to worry about this.

Run disk cleanup at least once a week.

- Go to all programs.
- Click on accessories and then system tools.
- Scroll down to disk cleanup.
- Click on it.
- A window will pop up. It will ask you to choose the drive you want to clean. In almost all cases this will be the C drive. Be sure that drive is highlighted and then click okay.

Defragment your hard drive regularly.

How often you need to depends on how much the computer is used and when the last time you did it was. (Your computers probably need to be defragmented now. Once you have done that you could probably do it monthly as needed.)

- You can find the disk defragmenter under system tools. (Get to it the same way you got to disk cleanup.)
- Click on it.
- When the window pops up choose your drive (C most likely. Although you may also have a D partition on your systems.)
- Click on analyze.
- This will tell you if the drive needs defragmenting.
- If it does you can then click on the defragment button.

This process will take a few hours. It is best to do it at a time the computers won't be used much.

If residents can still access the computers during your maintenance process it is a good idea to hang a sign on the monitor explaining that maintenance is going on and the computer is not available. (An example has been provided.)

Scan your computers for viruses and malware regularly. I would suggest scanning for viruses twice a month and spyware weekly.

AVG is your antivirus and Internet security program. You may also have Malwarebytes anti-malware installed on your computers.

Avoid downloading too many toolbars and web browser helpers. These programs run in the background and can slow the system down. (Some of them can also include adware.)

Check the startup folder periodically.

Go to all programs then scroll down to startup.

All the programs set to launch on boot up will be listed.

Remove any you don't need to start immediately every time you start the computer. (Adobe reader and Openoffice for example.)

You can also check what processes and services run at start up. (You will need to be in an administrator account to do this.)

- Click on the start button.
- Click on run.
- Type in msconfig.
- The system configuration utility will open.
- You can use the various tabs to see what programs run at start up, what services, what processes, and change start up settings.
- Deselect any services you know aren't used. This varies but task scheduler, net meeting, and terminal services are good examples. (If you use any of these leave them checked.)
- You also can uncheck things like Google toolbar notifier, Adobe reader, Openoffice, Microsoft Office, and Quicktime.
- Don't mess with anything you are not sure about. If you're in doubt, leave it.
- Once you are finished the computer will reboot.
- Hopefully you'll find it starts up a bit faster.

Another helpful tool is the group policy editor.

- Click run.
- Type gpedit.msc.
- Most of the settings you may want to change are located under user configuration.
- The most commonly used folder is administrative templates.
- In the various folders here you will find settings to disable access to certain programs or control panel applets, prevent changing the desktop wallpaper or settings, and a number of other helpful things.