COMPUTER MAINTENANCE: WINDOWS XP

Print this one and perform these tasks monthly or more often if needed.

Frequency of maintenance: Those who use their computer daily and do frequent email correspondence, spend lots of time browsing the Internet or create lots of documents should probably perform computer maintenance on a weekly basis. Infrequent computer users might want to perform maintenance monthly, with the exception of updating and running your anti-virus program. **The anti-virus program and anti-spyware programs should be updated weekly at least. A second anti-spyware program, one of the free ones such as Microsoft Defender should be run weekly.**

I like to create a new restore point just prior to doing maintenance, and another restore point upon completion of maintenance. To create a restore point, Click Start…All Programs….Accessories…System Tools…System Restore. Select Create Restore Point. A box will pop up, type in Before Maintenance. The date will be automatically entered.

1. **Delete old mail, sent mail, deleted mail etc from your email program.**
2. **Click the big E to bring up Microsoft Internet Explorer. Click Tools…Internet Options. Press Delete. Three boxes should be checked to removeCookies, Delete Temporary Internet Files, and clear History.**

3. **Consider a Backup of important data files**, including documents, photos, Internet Favorite Places / Bookmarks and email addresses unless you're using AOL which keeps it's address book and favorites on it's server. Some of the information may require a lot of disk space and will be too large to store on a floppy disk or disks. Consider using a CD-RW or CD-R disk if you have a CD writer drive. (Sounds like a lot of work? How will you feel if your hard drive crashes and you lose these files?)

Note: It helps when backing up data files to save all files you create as a subfolder to the MY DOCUMENTS folder. Then all you have to do is copy the MY DOCUMENTS folder to a CD-R or CD-RW disk.

4**. Update your Anti-virus program.** Update your anti-spyware programs
5. Run a virus scan on __all files__, not just program files after updating your anti-virus program. Also, run your anti-spyware program and quarantine or remove all spyware.

6. Run Disk Cleanup. To do this click START…ACCESSORIES…SYSTEM TOOLS…DISK CLEANUP. Put checkmarks next to the types of files you want to delete. Temporary files, Temporary Internet files and the files in the Recycle Bin are the most common files that you would want to delete. I do not delete all Downloaded files, as you may need these again and I do not check the box to Compress Old Files.

DO NOT CHECK the following boxes:

Downloaded Program Files

Office Setup Files
Compress Files
Catalog Files for Content Indexer

7. **Run Disk Error-checking.** To do this doubleclick the **My Computer** icon on the desktop. Then, **right** click on Local Disk (C:) or whichever drive you want to check, click PROPERTIES.... TOOLS....and click CHECK NOW (in the Error-checking section). You will receive the message that Disk Error-checking can't be run now, would you like to schedule it to run at next power up. Select Yes. Click Start…shutdown…and restart to allow the Disk Error-checking to run. This will take quite some time to finish so do this when you have other things to do away from the computer..

6. **Run Disk Defragmenter. (Unless you have the Defraggler program which is free to download and takes less time to run)** To do this click START…ACCESSORIES…SYSTEM TOOLS…DISK DEFRAGMENTER. In the top window, select the drive that you want to defragment. Next, click on ANALYZE if you want to check if the drive actually needs to be defragmented. Click to run DEFRAGMENT even if it tells you there is only 1% fragmented. NOTE: Defragmenting a drive may take a long time, depending on the size and speed of the drive and your computer and the amount of disk fragmentation. All programs must be closed to run the defragmenter otherwise it will restart every time a running program does something. On some computers Defragmenter must be run in Safe Mode to prevent the restarting.

To run in Safe Mode, Click Start…shutdown…click Restart. Immediately when the computer shuts down and then brings up the black screen, indicating restarting begin tapping the F8 key which will bring up the list that allows you to select to start in SAFE MODE. When Safe Mode is selected, the computer will continue the startup process and at the desktop you will see Safe Mode written in all four corners of your desktop. While in Safe Mode, the peripheral equipment will not work, such as printers, scanner,etc. Now, click Start…Accessories…System Tools…Disk Defragmenter and allow it to run. This may take several hours if it has been some time since it has been run. I start the defragmenter before going to bed, turn off my monitor and just let it run.

When defrag is finished, restart your computer so it will go back into Normal startup mode.

7.**Create Restore Point**. Because I am more interested in preventing problems than fixing my computer, I also create a new STORE POINT upon completion of monthly maintenance and other times when my computer is working really good.
Click START…All Programs…Accessories…System Tools…System Restore and select Create Restore Point. I give it a name such as after Monthly Maintenance.

    NOTE: WINDOWS CAN BE SET TO PERFORM MOST OF THE MAINTENANCE AUTOMATICALLY.

    1. Click START...ALL PROGRAMS...ACCESSORIES...SYSTEM TOOLS...SCHEDULED TASKS

    2. Select ADD SCHEDULED TASK. Be patient. The task wizard may take awhile to make a list of the programs that can be scheduled.

    3. Select which program to run and when.

NOTE: Question: I also get an option to delete the " Compress old files" that is taking up over 900,000 KB of space. This is in the START / Accesories/ Disk
clean up option. Should I delete those files since it is offering me the option?

Answer: I got the information below from the Microsoft site. I wouldn't delete the compressed files unless you are sure that you don't use them. If you can't tell what the files are then I would not delete the files. Why take a chance?

Microsoft web Site info Compress Old Files -
Windows can compress files that you have not used in a while. Compressing the files saves disk space while still enabling you to use them. No files are deleted. Because files are compressed at different rates, the displayed amount of disk space you will gain is approximate. There is an **Options** button that you can use to specify the number of days to wait before an unused file is compressed."

NOTE: IF you are using Norton's System Works, you can use the UTILITIES, Disk Doctor and Speed disk rather than the Windows scandisk (Error-Checking) and Defrag. You should not interchange the programs. Either use the Windows Error-Checking and Defrag or use the Norton's Disk Doctor and Speed disk. The Norton's Disk Doctor and Speed Disk run a little faster.

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COMPUTER MONTHLY MAINTENANCE: Win95/98

Empty all old mail, sent mail, etc from AOL file cabinet and compact the file cabinet, or from your email program if you do not use AOL) Other ISP users should empty the Inbox, Outbox, deleted files.

Run a full anti-virus scan.
Run a full anti-spyware scan.
Run a second anti-spyware program.

1. Delete all the files in the C:\Windows\COOKIE FOLDER
2.Delete all the files in the C:\Windows\ HISTORY FOLDER
3. Delete all the files in the C:\Windows\TEMPORARY INTERNET FOLDER
4. Delete the files in the C:\Windows\TEMP FOLDER, from Windows Explorer
NOTE: ***Delete TEMP files only on startup or just prior to shutdown.***
5.Run **Scan Dis**k . Click Start…Programs…Accessories…System Tools…Scandisk.
6.Run Defragmenter. Click Start…Programs..Accessories…System ools…Defragmenter.
   See instructions below for each of the above.
7. Create a Emergency Startup Disk.
8. Copy important files to floppy disks zip disk or a CD if you have a CD-Writer.
9. Copy System Information file to a floppy or to a CD if you have a CD-Writer.

Instructions below
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A. **History folder:**
1. Go to Windows Explorer (rightclick START and click Explore) Scroll up until you see the History folder. Double click it to cause it to show files on right side of page.
2. Holding down the CTRL key click the A key to select ALL these files.
3.RightClick in the blue area and select DELETE.

B. **Cookie Folder**
NOTE: EMPTYING THE COOKIE FOLDER (on EXPLORE) is a personal preference.
I think it should be done, but you do whatever you prefer.
1. Scroll up to the Cookie Folder. Doubleclick it.
2. Hold down the CTRL key and click the A key to select ALL files.
3. Rightclick in the blue area and select DELETE.

C.**Temporary Internet Folder**
1. Scroll down until you find the Temporary Internet folder. Doubleclick it. If there are
subfolders, doubleclick each and delete all files inside each.
2. Hold down CTRL key and click the A key to select ALL.
3. Rightclick in the blue area and select DELETE. It may not allow you to delete all
these, sometimes it will keep one or two. That's ok, leave them by clicking the first file
below the file it refuses to remove, then holding down the CTRL key click the last files
on the page. Then rightclick in the blue and select DELETE.
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D. TEMP FILES
1. Scroll up now to find the TEMP folder. DoubleClick it.
2. CTRL+A to select All
3. Rightclick in the blue and select DELETE.
4. **Restart your computer.**

E. Run Scan Disk
(If you use Norton's System Works, you can run Disk Doctor instead of ScanDisk,
You should decide which you will use, Windows or Norton's and use ONLY that
method.)
1. Close any programs that are open - Press these three keys at the same time,
CTRL+ALT+DEL, a box will open, highlight any program listed there except the
EXPLORER and then click END TASK. Select each item listed in this box one at a time
and press CTRL+ALT+DELETE , then END TASK. Leave only Explorer and SYStray
on the list.
2. Now, click START...ACCESSORIES...SYSTEM TOOLS...SCAN DISK
3. Be sure 'Automatically Fix all Errors' is checked, then click THOROUGH and
START.
This will take considerable time, so start it when you need to do laundry or something, so
you can keep an eye on it. When it finishes, you're ready to run Defrag.

F. **DEFRAG**
(**If you have Norton's System Works, you may run Speed Disk instead of defrag.**
You should decide which you will use to defrag, Windows or Norton's and use
ONLY that method.)
1.Click START...ACCESSORIES...SYSTEM TOOLS...DISK DEFRAGMENTER. It
may say "you don't need to defrag now, only 4% fragmented". Ignore that and do it
anyway, 4% of a 40 gig hard drive is a lot of hard disk space.
2.When the box comes up click START   and SHOW DETAILS.

This will take several hours if it hasn't been run in a long time. If it runs and then stops with a message, "We have restarted 10 times, do you wish to continue?" It means there is some program still running in the background, or you've not turned off the screen saver. When any program comes up, the defrag has to restart. Sometimes you have to open in SAFE MODE in order to run Defrag to keep it from restarting.

G. **BACKUP**

You should also make a backup of your important data files. It is suggested that all files you create, or pictures you save should be saved to a subfolder of MY DOCUMENTS. Then you can copy the MY DOCUMENTS folder to a CD using your CD-Writer program, assuming you have a cd-writer in your computer. Label it, date it and place in a safe place along with your ER Win 98 Startup disk.

H. OTHER MONTLY MAINTENANCE TASKS:
1. Create a new Win 98 Emergency StartUp (boot) disk.
    a. Put a floppy disk into the A: drive.
    b. Click Start…Control Panel…Add/Remove Programs..
    c. Click the Create ER Startup disk tab
    d. Follow instructions given then put this ER disk in a safe place.
2. Copy the SYSTEM INFORMATION to a disk.
Click Start…programs…accessories…system tools…system information.
Put in a floppy disk and click SAVE and select Floppy A:
Keep in a safe place.

NOTE: WIN98 CAN BE SET TO PERFORM MOST OF THE MONTHLY MAINTENANCE AUTOMATICALLY.

(win98)

1. Click START...PROGRAMS...ACCESSORIES...SYSTEM TOOLS...MAINTENANCE WIZARD.
    3. Select CHANGE MY SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE.
3. Now you may select which tasks are to be done at what time, or you may select Express and let the computer do it's own thing.
I have my Wizard scheduled to do the following weekly instead of monthly:
Run run virus scan , Scan Disk, and Defrag on ALL files each Friday while I'm at the Troubleshooting session. Before leaving home, I use msconfig to shut down all running programs and restart my computer. IT's ready then to perform the tasks assigned. I allow an hour for Virus Scan, 2 hours for Scan Disk and defrag is set as last task and it may be still running when I get home.

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