

# How to make a computer faster: 6 ways to speed up your PC

From Microsoft.com

<http://www.microsoft.com/atwork/maintenance/speed.aspx>

By following a few simple guidelines, you can maintain your computer, help increase your PC speed, and help keep it running smoothly. This article discusses how to use the tools available in Windows 7, Windows Vista, and [Windows XP Service Pack 3](#) to help make your computer faster, maintain your computer efficiently, and help safeguard your privacy when you're online.

**Note:** Some of the tools mentioned in this article require you to be logged on as an administrator. If you aren't logged on as an administrator, you can only change settings that apply to your user account.

## ***1. Remove spyware, and help protect your computer from viruses***

Spyware collects personal information without letting you know and without asking for permission. From the websites you visit to user names and passwords, spyware can put you and your confidential information at risk. In addition to privacy concerns, spyware can hamper your computer's performance. To combat spyware, you might want to consider using the [PC safety scan from Windows Live OneCare](#). This scan is a free service that helps check for and remove viruses.

[Download Microsoft Security Essentials](#) for free to help guard your system in the future from viruses, spyware, adware, and other malicious software (also known as malware). Microsoft Security Essentials acts as a spyware removal tool and includes automatic updates to help keep your system protected from emerging threats.

The [Microsoft Windows Malicious Software Removal Tool](#) is another utility that checks computers running Windows 7, Windows Vista, Windows XP, Windows 2000, and Windows Server 2003 for infections by specific, prevalent malicious software, including Blaster, Sasser, and Mydoom, and helps remove any infection found.

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## ***2. Free up disk space***

The Disk Cleanup tool helps you to free up space on your hard disk to improve the performance of your computer. The tool identifies files that you can safely delete and then enables you to choose whether you want to delete some or all of the identified files.

Use Disk Cleanup to:

- Remove temporary Internet files.
- Delete downloaded program files, such as Microsoft ActiveX controls and Java applets.
- Empty the Recycle Bin.
- Remove Windows temporary files, such as error reports.
- Delete optional Windows components that you don't use.
- Delete installed programs that you no longer use.
- Remove unused restore points and shadow copies from System Restore.

**Tip:** Typically, temporary Internet files take the most amount of space because the browser caches each page you visit for faster access later.

**To use Disk Cleanup:**

**Windows 7 users**

**Windows Vista users**

**Windows XP users**

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### ***3. Speed up access to data***

Disk fragmentation slows the overall performance of your system. When files are fragmented, the computer must search the hard disk as a file is opened (to piece it back together). The response time can be significantly longer.

Disk Defragmenter (sometimes shortened to Defrag by users) is a Windows utility that consolidates fragmented files and folders on your computer's hard disk so that each occupies a single space on the disk. With your files stored neatly end to end, without fragmentation, reading and writing to the disk speeds up.

#### **When to run Disk Defragmenter**

In addition to running Disk Defragmenter at regular intervals (weekly is optimal), there are other times you should run it, too, such as when:

- You add a large number of files.
- Your free disk space totals 15 percent or less.
- You install new programs or a new version of the Windows operating system.

**To use Disk Defragmenter:**

## **Windows 7 users**

## **Windows Vista users**

## **Windows XP users**

Running Disk Cleanup and Disk Defragmenter on a regular basis is a proven way to help keep your computer running quickly and efficiently. If you'd like to learn how to schedule these tools and others to run automatically, please read [Speed up your PC: Automate your computer maintenance schedule](#).

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### ***4. Detect and repair disk errors***

In addition to running Disk Cleanup and Disk Defragmenter to optimize the performance of your computer, you can check the integrity of the files stored on your hard disk by running the Error Checking utility.

As you use your hard drive, it can develop bad sectors. Bad sectors slow down hard disk performance and sometimes make data writing (such as file saving) difficult or even impossible. The Error Checking utility scans the hard drive for bad sectors and scans for file system errors to see whether certain files or folders are misplaced.

If you use your computer daily, you should run this utility once a week to help prevent data loss.

#### **Run the Error Checking utility:**

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### ***5. Learn about ReadyBoost***

If you're using Windows 7 or Windows Vista, you can use ReadyBoost to speed up your system. A new concept in adding memory to a system, it allows you to use non-volatile flash memory—like a USB flash drive or a memory card—to improve performance without having to add additional memory.

- [Learn more about ReadyBoost in Windows 7.](#)
  - [Learn more about ReadyBoost in Windows Vista.](#)
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### ***6. Upgrade to Windows 7***

If you try all the previous remedies and your computer still isn't as fast as you would like it to be, you may want to consider updating to Windows 7.

- [Find out if your computer can run Windows 7 using the Upgrade Advisor.](#)
- [Compare Window 7 editions.](#)

- [Read a third-party review of Windows 7 by David Pogue of \*The New York Times\*.](#)

If the Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor determines that your computer can't run Windows 7 and you still have the need for speed, it might be time for a new computer. There are some great deals on new computers right now:

- [Shop for new desktop computers.](#)
  - [Shop for new laptop computers.](#)
  - [Shop for netbooks.](#)
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