

Defragmenting Automatically

Files become fragmented because of the way clusters are re-used and allocated on a hard disk. If you delete a file that takes up two clusters, and then write a file that takes four, the new file might be split - two clusters where the old file was, and two clusters somewhere else entirely. Multiply that scenario by thousands of file operations and deletions on your disk every day, with much larger files, and you can see that fragmentation can add up very quickly. The result is your machine gradually slowing down.

Defragging your hard disk is easy. Right click on **My Computer**, select **Manage**, and click on **Disk Defragmenter**. Click on the hard disk you want to defrag, and click on the **Defragment** button. Defragging can take time, but you'll be able to see the progress as the graphical display of your hard disks state is periodically updated.

Rather than doing it manually, though, if you leave your computer on there's an easy way to schedule the defrag to happen in the middle of the night.

Fire up notepad, and enter the following:

```
defrag c: >c:\defrag.log 2>&1
```

Now save that as "c:\defragit.cmd".

Now, in **Control Panel, Performance and maintenance, Scheduled tasks**, create a new scheduled item. It should run **c:\defragit.cmd**, and I'd suggest doing it every night when you're not using your machine. Check the log every once in a while to make sure that the process is happening as you expect.

You can run defragit.cmd at any time yourself, if you like. Just open up a command prompt and type **c:\defragit.cmd** Press OK or ENTER

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