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Our Top Ten Tips – Part 2

This month, we continue with our 'Top Ten Tips' for looking after your computer:

6. **Cleanup your disk:** As you perform tasks on your computer (like browsing the internet), a trail of 'temporary' files are left behind, so your computer can access your information faster the second time around. Unfortunately, these are often not cleaned up again and the pile of temporary files grows bigger, taking up valuable space on your hard disk. The easy way to delete these (without deleting something important by mistake) is with Microsoft's Disk Cleanup program. In Windows XP you can find it under Start > All Programs > Accessories > System Tools > Disk Cleanup. We recommend you run this once a month.
7. **Defragment your disk:** How does your paper filing cabinet look? Is everything logically stored and labeled, or it is messy, with documents stuffed in wherever you could find room? You'd agree that it's much quicker to retrieve documents from a tidy filing cabinet. The physical storage of files on your computer can get messy too, slowing down the time it takes to open them. Microsoft's Disk Defragmenter program literally tidies up the 'fragments' of your files, much like tidying your filing cabinet. In Windows XP you can find it under Start > All Programs > Accessories > System Tools > Disk Defragmenter. We recommend you run this once a month too, after your Disk Cleanup.
8. **Remove and prevent dust:** A serious, hidden danger lurks in the room with your computer – dust. Just like a blanket, even a thin layer of dust inside your computer causes heat to build up which can cause permanent damage to your computer's vital internal components.



Do not place your computer directly onto carpet - it will suck up carpet fibres and dust. Check the outside of your computer case and brush off any dust from the fan grills (with your computer turned off!). If they are looking particularly dirty, call your local Computer Troubleshooter – they can clean the dust from the components inside your case too.

9. **Upgrade your hardware:** As technology advances, new software programs require more computing power. Asking your old computer to perform new tricks could place too much strain on it. You may have an option to upgrade individual components rather than buy a whole new computer. Consider upgrading your computer's memory, hard disk or processor to speed things up and handle your new software. Your local Computer Troubleshooter can advise if this is a cost-effective option for you.
10. **Address little problems before they become big ones:** If you notice a minor problem with your computer, call your local Computer Troubleshooter. It can be significantly more cost-effective to fix a minor problem straight away, than waiting for it to compound and then require major work. Keep a log book to record the details of any problems, including what you were doing at the time and the exact wording of error messages. This can help speed-up our troubleshooting process, as we follow your trail of 'clues' to help us determine the source of the problem.

Call your local Computer Troubleshooter to discuss how these tips can help in your particular situation.



**Contact your local Computer
 Troubleshooters**

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