

# How to make your computer run faster

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.

## 1. 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.

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## 2. 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.

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,