

# TIPS TO MAINTAIN YOUR PC OR LAPTOP

Our computers rarely run as fast as we want or expect them to. Whether you're a Mac or Windows user, it's maddening to sit in front of a taunting hourglass or spinning circle of death, especially when you have work to do. In the spirit of spring cleaning, we invite you to clean the dust bunnies out of your PC (literally and digitally). Here are five easy ways to get started.

## 1. Tidy-up Files and Folder and use Short-Cut

Most users tend to spend lots of time clicking through endless subfolders or waiting for search to retrieve files. The first step toward a smooth-running PC is to remove human error. That means setting up an intuitive filing system for your documents to make sure they're always where you want them, when you want them. Create a Short-Cut to the file or program that you use frequently. Clearing and reorganizing your desktop is an incredibly cathartic experience and will leave you with more peace of mind.

## 2. Remove the Unnecessary

Run disk cleanup. It will free up space on your hard drive and improve the performance of your computer. Picture your PC as a hiker with a heavy backpack — you can help him move faster by unloading all the unnecessary junk you've accumulated — temporary files, duplicate files, downloads — as well as the crapware and trialware that came installed on your machine.

## 3. To Defrag or Not to Defrag?

As you use your PC, files get scattered across the system in bits and pieces: fragments. Defragmentation brings them all back together. And while this may not have a noticeable effect on your system speed, it's good to make sure your files are all in one, correct place. Unless you're using a solid-state drive, you should probably defrag about once a month just to be on the safe side.

## 4. Start Over

There may come a time when your best hope is just to save all your data and wipe your hard drive, then reinstall Windows. This is the scorched earth option. But don't forget to back up all your data beforehand, so you don't lose anything important.

You may want to choose this time to upgrade to a newer operating system, like Windows 8. You should also double-check that you're running the most recent version of your software. If you aren't updating Windows constantly, you can set your PC to do it automatically.