

15 New & Old Computer Dos & Don'ts

FOR YOUR HOME AND OFFICE COMPUTERS

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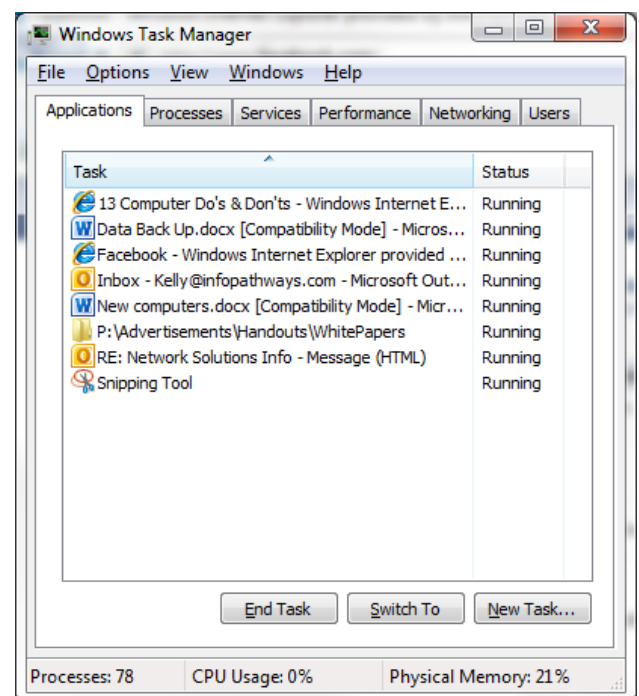


New computers are great! They run fast they look good and they have the latest and greatest processors and newest versions of windows. But clearly they don't stay that way forever. So here are a few tips and tricks to prolong the life of your aging computer.

1. Keep automatic update on, it will update every day or every few days.
2. Turn off your computer when you go to bed; this is for two reasons. First, it's good to give the computer a break. Second, shutting down gives your computer the time it needs to run updates. Use the Start Button on the Windows Taskbar to shut down. Also avoid leaving your computer powered on when it is not in use (this also reduces your power bill).
3. Virus and Spyware Protection programs are very important to keep your computer safe. AVG will protect you from viruses. Threat Fire is a great protection against spyware. Both are free!
4. Only download files and software from credible websites. Do not use software that is uncertified and/or illegally licensed. Often malware/spyware is associated with these.
5. Scan your computer on a regular basis.
6. Keep food and drinks away from the computer as best you can, as well as smoke.
7. Keep the computer in a clean environment and ONLY WHEN TURNED OFF, open it up to remove dust every so often. The fans tend to suck up dust along with the cool air to maintain the temperature of your processor, video card and hard drive. Do be careful how you dust; powerful vacuums and damp cloths can cause damage. Vacuum cleaners that are made specifically to suck up stubborn dirt and strands of hair have special nozzles meant for computer cleaning only. If doing this yourself, consider blowing out the dust with canned air or a blow dryer set to cool (wear a mask and/or goggles to protect your eyes). No static dusting materials (sorry Swiffer). Anti-static towels are safe and you can find them in computer stores and you can also use a soft brush. Also, do not use household cleaners. If your monitor, mouse or keyboard is gross, dust first and then use an antistatic cleaning wipe, also available in computer stores.
8. Keep your computer off the floor; this will help you avoid numbers 6 and 7.
9. Before moving your computer off the floor (or moving it in general), power down first. Moving running equipment can damage sensitive parts of your system.
10. Make sure your computer has proper airflow. If the fan breaks, get it fixed. If it's full of dust, clean it out (a good sign of bad dust is a faint burning smell meaning your computer is REWALLY hot and about to spark a flame). And don't smash the fan side of your computer against a wall – give it some breathing room.
11. Do not let your pets hang out around or on your computer; hair balls are a computers biggest nemesis.
12. Uninstall demo software you do not want or need as soon as you have the computer up and running.

13. An UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply) or APC is always a good investment. It will prevent your computer from crashing during a power outage and protect it from other electrical damage such as voltage peaks and falls. In an outage, do not continue use of the computer, save your work and power down the computer and resume work once the power is back up. We recommend APC units (American Power Conversion); make sure you buy the appropriate power size for your system.
14. Write down your password credentials if you find you have trouble remembering them all. They should be stored somewhere safe, not on a pad of paper or a word document on your computer. You can use password keeper software on a USB drive. To access them, you only need to remember one password to unlock the file. Every so often, especially if you think your computer has been hacked, change your passwords.
15. If your computer is beyond sluggish or frozen, there are a few options you should try to solve the problem before forcing power-down:

- a. Hit “Ctrl-Alt-Delete” – this will bring up a list of options. Choose to start Task Manager. Windows Task Manager’s default window (pictured right) will show you a list of running programs and opened windows. If you know which item caused your computer to slow down, click it to highlight that item and hit “End Task”. Do not use this to stop installations/uninstallations or when windows is running updates. You may find that when you opened Facebook or another website, your computer froze, so you would want to select and end that task and then see how your computer reacts. At this point, it would not hurt to save and close opened windows to restart your computer. If “Ctrl-Alt-Delete” does not work and the computer is still frozen:



- b. Allow the computer to sit for a while; there is a chance it will work out its problem and be fine later. If so, restart the computer so it is running fresh. If you come back later (20, 30 minutes) and the computer is still frozen:
- c. We don't like to suggest it, but sometimes forcing your computer to power down is necessary. DO NOT UNPLUG YOUR COMPUTER. Again, DO **NOT** UNPLUG YOUR COMPUTER!!! You should be able to power down your computer by pressing and holding down the power button for a few seconds. Don't hit it repeatedly, just hold down the button until it powers off. Let it rest for at least a few minutes before powering on.

Following these tips will help keep your computer working longer and running faster.

We wish your computer a long and healthy life!