

## Be Good to your PC

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## Here's how to keep it in top shape

Let's be real: You probably can't swap your PC in for a new one as often as you'd like. A PC is an investment—and taking good care of it pays off in the long run. If your PC has a few years on it and you want to make it last—or you have a new machine and you want to treat it right—here are some simple ways to keep it running smoothly and extend its life.



## Keep it clean

This may seem obvious, but seriously, do not let the Sriracha sauce from your lunch drip into your laptop—it'll cause more problems than just a sticky keyboard. Make sure these other parts are spiffy as well for maximum longevity.

- **Wipe your monitor.** First dust it with a cloth, then wipe it down with glass cleaner. Better yet, use monitor wipes for serious cleaning.
- **Inspect your tower.** Check the air vents on the back and remove dust and buildup. If your tower opens, clean the inside with a can of compressed air.
- **Keep peripherals tidy.** Use compressed air on your keyboard and wipe it down with a cloth. Check over your mouse as well—if it has a roller ball, remove the plate and swab it with isopropyl alcohol to get the gunk off it.

## Perform basic software maintenance

Even if you haven't been doing these things from the get-go, it's never too late to start. Here are a few ways to avoid the Blue Screen of Death.

- **Check for memory problems.** A faulty memory stick can cause all sorts of headaches. Windows 10 comes its own memory diagnostic tool (you'll find it under Control Panel > System and Security > Administrative Tools) that'll identify if this is an issue.
- **Keep Windows 10 up to date.** The Windows Defender Security System is constantly being updated to fight the latest malware and spyware that could be slowing down or harming your PC. Open it up and double-check that you have Real-Time Protection on, too.
- **Download other program updates.** It'll keep them running smoothly and at their optimum speed.
- **Do a disk cleanup.** Yeah, remember doing those back when you had one-tenth of the RAM you have now? Getting rid of old files is still a good way to keep things moving. (Remember to empty the trash when you're done, too.)

## Give your battery some TLC

With today's lithium-iron batteries, the old adage of letting your battery drain to zero before recharging it has gone the way of the dodo. Here are some better ways to extend your battery life.

- One of the worst things you can do is keep the battery fully charged in a situation where it can overheat. Always keep airflow unobstructed.
- Cold temperatures will also damage you battery. Try to keep it in the Goldilocks zone—not too cold, not too hot—between 68°F and 77°F.
- Keep your battery in top shape by running Battery Check in HP Support Assistant once a month.
- If you plan to store your PC for more than a month, discharge the battery at 70 percent power and remove it. If you have a laptop with a non-removable battery, put it into ship mode and check it

every few months.

## Upgrade your hardware

One of the greatest strengths of PCs is their excellent flexibility. The right parts can make a middle-aged machine feel downright young again. Here are some simple replacements that'll make a big difference.

- Using an older HP? Upgrading your hard drive to an SSD (solid state drive) will increase the speed and provide better performance and reliability.
- If you have a choice of battery types for your PC, get the one that has the highest capacity rating.
- Make sure your machine is getting a fast, efficient charge with a new AC adaptor and power cord.
- When you're working with memory-hogging software, adding extra RAM makes everything run more smoothly.