



PROTECT YOUR NEW COMPUTER FROM THE BAD STUFF

You should be able to enjoy a new computer and keep it in good working order for many years by following these 5 simple steps:

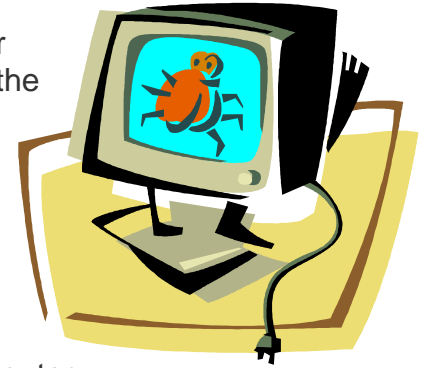
1. **PROTECTION** - Install a good full-featured Internet Security Software Package that includes a minimum of Antivirus, Antispyware, and Firewall. Always keep an eye on it to make sure it is still working, up-to-date, and NEVER let it expire.
2. **MAINTENANCE** - Once every few months run Disk Clean to clear your computer of unwanted temporary files, install Windows Updates immediately, and vacuum or blow out all the dust from the back of your computer once a year.
3. **CAUTION** - Be very cautious about where you surf, what you download, and what email attachments you open.
4. **SHARING** - Do not let anyone else use your computer. This includes family members and especially **children** and **teenagers**.
5. **BACKUP** - Come up with some kind of backup strategy that meets your specific needs for preserving your data in case something goes wrong.



To improve your odds of achieving years of trouble-free computing at the maximum performance level, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

1. **INITIAL CLEANING** – Depending on the exact make and model, your new computer probably came with tons of pre-installed trial, free, and junk software. All of this stuff can slow down even the fastest computer. Take your time and go through every program that is listed in ALL PROGRAMS and determine what you want and don't want. Uninstall everything that you do not need. Leave anything that you are not absolutely sure about. Better still, next time consider purchasing a business class computer from someone like Dell Small Business, Fujitsu, Lenovo (IBM) or some other dealer that specializes in selling to the business user. Business computers do not come with all of the extra junk pre-installed.
2. **INITIAL SETUP** – The next thing you need to do is decide how and who will be using your new computer. You may want to setup User accounts and passwords, if needed, for everyone that will be using your computer. This way they will be less likely to make changes or install things that might affect the operation of your computer. Set Windows Updates so that you have a choice as to when updates get installed instead of automatically.

3. PROTECTION – You absolutely need some form of security software installed on your computer to protect you from viruses, spyware and other nasties that linger out in cyberspace or come attached to your emails. At the very least you will need a good Antivirus program, however I highly recommend having 1 antivirus, 1 firewall and 3 antispyware programs installed.



If you like you can purchase an all-in-one package that includes many levels of protection in one package such as McAfee Total Protection, Norton 360 or even Microsoft Windows Live OneCare. Keep in mind that installing any of these all-in-one packages can really slow down your computer, especially on a slightly older or entry level computers. Chances are that your computer came packaged with some trial version of Norton or McAfee Internet Security. These will normally expire in about 30 days or so and must be renewed to continue protecting your computer. Before you actually fork out any money, check out all the possibilities that may be available to you.

Many Internet service providers will offer free security software to you just for the asking. Comcast, for example, offers free McAfee to its users. AOL has a free offering as well. Be careful; some providers like Verizon may make it sound like they are offering it for free but will charge you a monthly fee tacked on to your bill. Beware of security contracts that will automatically charge your credit card every year for renewal even if you are no longer using their software.

If you don't mind digging in and working a little there are many ways to get free security software as well. You can put together a great security net with **free programs** like Avast, AVG, SpyBot, Microsoft Defender, ZoneAlarm, and AdAware. You can find any of them by typing the program name into Google, then clicking on links until you find a website that will download the program you want for free.

No matter which way you decide to go, the most important thing is to always check to make sure your security software is working, updated, and has not expired.

4. MAINTENANCE – You do not need to get totally carried away but a little maintenance can go a long way toward keeping your computer in good working order.

- a. Running **Disk Cleanup** once a month or so.
- b. **Check Disk with Error Checking** every few months.
- c. Run **Disk Defragmenter** about every 6 months.
- d. Update and Run your manual spyware scanners each month.
- e. Run **Windows Update** if it is not set to Automatic.
- f. Check for other updates for your computer every few months.
- g. Clean the dust out of all cooling vents at least once per year.
- h. If you plan to keep your computer, you should replace the hard drive every 3 or 4 years whether it needs it or not. A new hard drive costs about \$100 (that comes out to less than \$30 per year). Being one of the few moving parts in a modern computer, it WILL fail at some point. Replacing it while it is still in working condition is much easier than waiting for it to fail.

CAUTION

5. CAUTION – Always exercise extreme caution when **surfing the Internet, clicking on links, or opening email**. All of these have the potential of not only infecting your computer with viruses and spyware but could also result in handing over your personal information to less than desirable people. Take note of any changes to your computer and don't just automatically click on allow, ok or continue when Windows or your security software is warning you about a system change.

6. SHARING – I know we were all taught to share while growing up, but if you want your computer to stay in tip top shape, **DO NOT SHARE YOUR COMPUTER** with anyone.

7. BACKUP – If you have information on your computer that you don't want to lose, then back it up. There are so many ways available now to backup, there is simply no excuse anymore for getting caught when a hard drive decides to quit. Enough said!

8. SURGE PROTECTOR – Surge Protectors can go bad over time from repeated surges and should be tested or replaced. But better still is the UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply). A UPS is probably one of the best investments you can make for a computer. It contains a surge protector and a battery backup that will take over in the event of a power failure or brownout and continue to power your computer for several minutes or even hours if you purchase a really large one. If your power does not return within a predetermined period of time you can program it to shut down your computer in an orderly fashion thus preventing a possible major disaster.

A single event such as loss of power or a lightning strike can cause irreparable damage and data loss if it occurs at just the wrong time. Power surges can have the potential to not only cause immediate damage but can become accumulative and cause what is know as latent failures. This is where each surge stresses some of the components within the computer, weakening them and eventually causing them to fail at a later date. The price of UPS units has fallen over the years and you can get a small one for about \$50 that will power your computer and LCD monitor for 10-15 minutes. If you live in an area where power outages are more common, you might want to go for one of the higher end models.

Enjoy your new computer!