

Give your Computer a Tune-up

There are several simple things you can do to improve the performance of your computer. If you have any questions, or feel uncomfortable performing any of these tasks on your office computer, feel free to contact the Help Desk (920/403-4357) for assistance.

You don't have to perform every step of the tune-up every time, but they are listed here in the order that makes the most sense when doing them all.

Delete files you no longer need

Start by going through your documents and getting rid of anything you no longer need. You may have several years' worth of files saved, so now is a good time to weed them out. If you find any leftover backup files (e.g., those Word files with names like ~WRD0711.tmp, ~\$File.doc, or Backup of File.wbk), you can delete those too.

Warning: Be very careful when deleting files. Never delete or move any files you can't identify. If in doubt, leave it alone. Just because you don't know what it is doesn't mean that your computer doesn't need it!

Back up your files

It's a good idea to make regular backup copies of all your important files, just in case you have problems with your hard drive. For details, see the handout *Backing Up your Files*, at <http://www.snc.edu/techsupport>.

Uninstall unused programs

If you have any programs installed on the computer that you never use, you might want to uninstall them, to free up that space on your hard drive.

Note: To uninstall a program properly, you must either run the uninstall option for that program, or remove it through the Add/Remove Programs control panel. Do **not** just delete the files associated with the program.

1. Go to Start ▶ Settings ▶ Control Panels ▶ Add/Remove Programs. You'll see a list of the programs installed on your computer. If you don't recognize a program, *do not* remove it – it could be something your computer needs.
2. To remove one, click on it and click the Add/Remove, Remove, or Change/Remove button.
3. Follow the instructions on the screen to uninstall the program.

Identify & remove spyware

When you install programs on your computer, they sometimes install *additional* programs without your knowledge. This is especially true of file-sharing programs like Morpheus, Kazaa, etc. Those additional programs are often malicious "spyware," software which may send information about you, your computer, your web surfing habits, etc. back to their creators, or to other companies. That information can then be used to invade your privacy in various ways, including sending you spam (junk e-mail).

"Spybot – Search & Destroy," "Windows Defender," and "AdAware" are free programs that can find spyware on your computer and remove it. You can download these programs and instructions from our Downloads page at <http://www.snc.edu/techsupport>.

Delete unneeded shortcuts from your desktop & Start menu

Too many icons on your screen? You can delete any shortcuts from your desktop (screen) that you don't want. Just drag them to the Recycle Bin, or highlight them & press DELETE. Shortcut icons are the ones with the small arrow in the lower left corner. Realize that deleting the shortcut does **not** uninstall the program.

Windows 98, ME, 2000, and XP

1. Right-click on the item and choose Delete.

Windows 95

1. Right-click on the Start menu and choose Open. You will see a shortcut for each item on your Start menu.
2. Delete the shortcuts for any items that you don't want on your Start menu.

Stop unneeded items from starting automatically

Having programs automatically start when you turn on your computer can come in handy sometimes, but you also may want to eliminate some things which are starting automatically. This will make your computer boot up faster.

1. Right-click on the Start menu and choose Open.
2. Double-click on Programs.
3. Double-click on Startup. You will see a shortcut here for any programs which are starting automatically.
4. Delete the shortcuts for anything that you don't want to start automatically.

Control what starts automatically: Advanced

For advanced users: In addition to the items in the Startup group (previous section), there are other things that start in the background when your computer starts up. There are utilities which allow you to see what these things are, and turn them on and off selectively. **Note:** This option is for advanced users only. (It is possible to really mess up your computer with this!) On campus, the Help Desk can do this for you if necessary.

Get Windows updates

Microsoft regularly releases updates and security patches for its Windows operating systems, as well as its application software (e.g., Internet Explorer, Office). To get these Windows updates:

1. If you have a dial-up Internet connection, first connect to the Internet.
2. Go to Start ► Windows Update. You should be taken to the update page on Microsoft's web site.
3. Follow the instructions on that screen to download and install all of the updates pertaining to your version of Windows and your other software programs. Always download all of the updates listed as "critical."

Get Software updates

Just as Microsoft regularly releases updates and security patches for its software, other companies may do this too. To check for updates to software installed on your computer, go to that software manufacturer's web site.

Delete temporary Internet cache files

For Internet Explorer

1. Go to Start – Settings – Control Panels – Internet Options.
2. Under Temporary Internet Files, click the Delete Files button.

For Firefox

1. In Firefox, go to Tools – Options. In the Privacy category, under Private Data, click on Clear Now.
2. Check the Cache box and click the Clear Private Data Now button. Click OK.

Empty the Temp folder

Windows uses the temp folder to store files it uses temporarily. These files remain in the temp folder until the folder gets too full; then the oldest items will be deleted automatically. You can also empty this folder manually.

1. In My Computer, go to `c:\windows\temp\` (Windows 95/98/ME/XP) or `c:\winnt\temp\` (Windows 2000).
2. Press Ctrl+A (or choose Select All from the Edit menu).
3. Press the Delete key. If some items can't be deleted, don't worry, just delete all the rest of them.
4. Close all of the open folders.

Empty the Recycle Bin

After you clean up all of your unneeded files, you should empty your Recycle Bin. Just right-click on the Recycle Bin icon and choose Empty Recycle Bin. Once you do this, any files you have deleted will be irretrievable.

Update virus definitions

You're doing this regularly anyway, right? ☺ You should download and install updated virus definitions – to keep your antivirus software working effectively – at least once per month, but ideally every week. On campus, this is done for you automatically when you log in.

At home, if your antivirus software has an automatic update feature, that's the easiest way to do it. If you have the College's antivirus software, McAfee VirusScan, installed at home, you can download the newest definitions from our Downloads page at <http://www.snc.edu/techsupport>.

Scan for viruses

After you download and install the updated virus definitions, you should do a complete scan of your hard drive (not every time, just when you're giving your computer a tune-up or you suspect you may have a virus). Open your antivirus software and tell it to scan your entire C drive, including all files, subfolders, & compressed files.

Other utilities

If you have Symantec's Norton Utilities, you can run the Norton WinDoctor program. This program can diagnose and repair many of the most common types of Windows problems, to help Windows run more efficiently.

Run Scan Disk

After the above steps, run Scan Disk, a Windows program which will perform a variety of tests to diagnose problems on your hard drive and may be able to repair them. ("Disk Doctor" is the equivalent program in Norton Utilities.)

Windows 95/98/ME/XP

1. Close all open programs, including those running in the background (press Ctrl+Alt+Delete **once** to see what's running; you may close everything but Explorer and Systray).
2. Right-click on the desktop & choose Properties. On the Screen Saver tab, choose None.
3. Go to Start ▶ Programs ▶ Accessories ▶ System Tools ▶ Scan Disk. Follow the instructions on the screen.

Windows 2000/NT

1. Go to My Computer, right-click on your C: drive, and choose Properties.
2. On the Tools tab, under Error-checking, click the Check Now button. Follow the instructions on the screen.

Run Disk Defragmenter

After you finish running Scan Disk, run the Disk Defragmenter, known for short as "Defrag" (or Speed Disk, which is the equivalent program in Norton Utilities). Defrag is a Windows program which essentially rearranges the data on your hard drive to make it more efficient, to make saving and opening files faster.

Windows 95/98/ME/XP

1. Close all open programs, including those running in the background (press Ctrl+Alt+Delete **once** to see what's running; you may close everything but Explorer and Systray).
2. Right-click on the desktop & choose Properties. On the Screen Saver tab, choose None.
3. Go to Start ▶ Programs ▶ Accessories ▶ System Tools ▶ Disk Defragmenter. Follow the instructions on the screen.

Windows 2000/NT

1. Go to My Computer, right-click on your C: drive, and choose Properties.
2. On the Tools tab, click the Defragment Now button. Follow the instructions on the screen.

Assistance and Questions

If you have any questions or need more information, please call the Help Desk at (920) 403-HELP (4357), contact us via e-mail at helpdesk@snc.edu, or stop by the Help Desk in Cofrin 101. The Help Desk is for St. Norbert College students and employees only.