Keep Your Computer Running Optimally & Prevent Future Issues

By simply doing a few things on a regular schedule you can insure that your computer is running at it's best and eliminate many issues you might otherwise run into.

By keeping your computer clean both inside and out and freeing it from digital clutter and physical dust, you can save yourself days and hours of painstaking grief and extend the life of your digital device.

Keeping Your Computer Physically Clean
Dust can potentially damage or destroy parts of your computer. Avoid potentially expensive repairs by cleaning your computer regularly.

Desktop Computer
Cleaning the keyboard
1. **Unplug** the keyboard. (If your keyboard is not a USB plugged in device, shut down your computer first.)

2. Turn the keyboard **upside down** and shake gently to remove any loose dirt and dust.

3. Use a can of **compressed air** to clean between the keys.

4. Use a **cloth** (a soft cotton or microfiber cloth) with a small amount of rubbing alcohol on it to clean the tops of the keys. *Do Not* apply the liquid directly to the keyboard.

5. **Reconnect** the keyboard to the computer.

Cleaning the Mouse
1. **Unplug** the mouse. (If your mouse is not a USB plugged in device, shut down your computer first.)

2. Just like with the keyboard, moisten a **soft cloth** with rubbing alcohol and gently wipe the mouse clean of any dust or debris.

3. *If your mouse has the older style rolling ball*: turn the ring around the ball counter-clockwise and remove the ball from the mouse. Using your **soft cloth** wipe the parts and area clean. *If there is build-up on the inside rolling wheels*, gently **use tweezers** to pull the debris off the wheels to remove it.

Cleaning the Monitor
1. **Turn off** the computer.

2. **Unplug** the monitor from the power source.

3. Use a **soft cloth** to gently wipe the screen (do not apply much pressure or use any kind of chemicals or glass cleaner as this can damage the monitor). If needed, the cloth can be slightly moistened with water.

4. **Plug** the monitor back in.

Cleaning the Tower
1. **Turn off** the computer.

2. Using an **anti-static microfiber cloth** (static is your computer's enemy) gently wipe the outside of the tower. If needed, you can apply a small

amount of water or mild glass cleaner to the cloth beforehand.

3. Use a can of **compressed air** to blow dust from the air intake slots.

4. Before turning the computer back on, **check the surroundings** of the tower. The area should be free of clutter and anything else that could prevent the computer from good air circulation.

<u>**Laptop Computer**</u>
Turn off Before Performing Any Cleaning

Cleaning the Keyboard
1. Use a can of **compressed air** to blow debris from the small cracks around the keys.
2. Use **cotton swabs** dabbed in a bit of water to clean any dirty surface areas of the keyboard. Make sure the cotton swab is only damp and will not drip any excess water into the keyboard.

Cleaning the Screen
1. Using a **soft cloth** dampened with water if need be, gently wipe the screen. Never apply water directly to a laptop.

General Cleaning
1. Use a **soft cloth** to gently wipe the laptop while it is closed. The cloth can be dampened a bit with water if needed.
2. Use a can of **compressed air** to blow out all the vents and openings (yes even the ports) to remove any dust and debris hindering air flow.

Keeping Your Computer Digitally Clean
Just as important as keeping your computer free of dust and debris, is keeping it free of digital dust and trash that can clutter it up and slow it down.

Cleaning the Inside of your Computer

1. Make sure all your **system and application updates** are up to date. Even applications such as word processors should be updated as some updates are patches to fix security issues.
   a. **Windows** – On the start menu, search and select Windows Update. Review & Install any pending updates, especially any security updates that might be showing.
   b. **Mac** - In the App Store, Click Updates in the toolbar. A list of updates that are available will be displayed. Click update on any that are applicable to your computer.
2. Make sure you are running some type of **security software**. You do not have to have the latest greatest (not to mention expensive) security software. Just make sure you have security software in place and that it is fully updated. Windows typically comes with Windows Defender and Mac computers usually are preinstalled with multiple security programs as well.
3. **Defragment your Hard Drive**. Unless you are blessed with a Solid State Hard Drive (SSD), you should defrag your drive for optimal performance.
   a. **Windows** – On the start menu, search defrag, then select Defragment and Optimize Drives. Click Analyze. Once that is complete, select Defragment Disk.
   b. **Mac** - Mac computers are configured to automatically defrag so manually defragmenting is not needed.
4. **Declutter Your Files**. Instead of manually going through and deleting files you don't need, using a utility program designed to do so is very time efficient. A program such as the free version of CCleaner (www.piriform.com/ccleaner) can rid your system of all kinds of files, cookies, and logs that pile up on a hard drive and speed up your computer dramatically.