

Save Your Money Honey:

If you use the internet, especially Facebook, or Twitter, you've probably seen the Ads "Use this USB stick and speed up your computer" or "Buy this software and you'll be safe from Ransomware" and a host of other companies trying to sell you something.

If you use Windows 7 or Windows 10 on your computer there are lots of FREE utilities that are easy to use and can speed up your system, fix your harddrive(s) and protect your computer from basic viruses and malware.

Protect Your System:

Both Windows 7 and 10 come with Microsoft Windows Defender, a free malware protection service. It is usually installed automatically with Windows when you install Windows, but you need to make sure it's turned on and do a bit of configuring.

In Windows 10, click the Windows icon at the bottom left of your taskbar, and select Settings icon (the little gear at the left), then when the main settings dashboard opens type Defender in the search box at the top.

Windows Settings



This will take you to the Defender settings. Just make sure Defender is turned on, and Automatic Updates is turned on for Defender.

As I said before Defender gives you good BASIC protection.

We strongly recommend purchasing good commercial anti-malware protection, especially ESET Internet Security suite (available at www.eset.com) to really protect your system.

In Windows 7,

Click on the Windows icon in the lower left hand part of the taskbar, then type Defender in the Search for Programs/Files box. If Defender is not turned on, click the button to turn it on, and leave the default settings as they are.

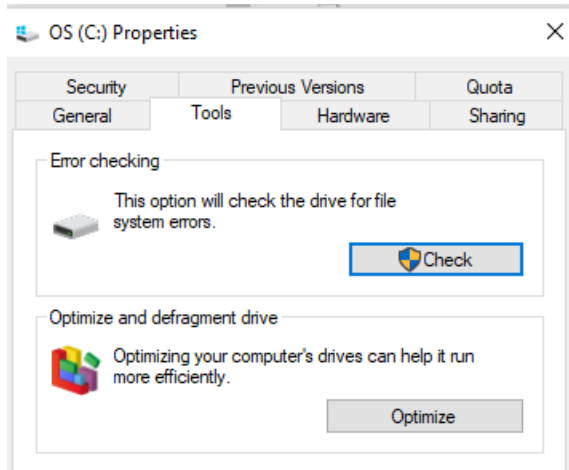
Again we recommend purchasing a good commercial anti-malware software like ESET.

Check the Health of Your Hard Disk:

Over time your hard disk 'wears out' a little bit, creating bad spots on the disk, kind of like the old cassette tapes we 'old folks' used. Remember how the tapes started to sound kinda crappy after thousand of hours of use. 😊.

To check and FIX your hard disk, simply right click the Windows icon in either version of Windows and choose File Explorer. This opens up the familiar window that lets you see your hard drive(s) (drive C:, maybe D: etc.) and the CD or DVD drive.

Again, right click on the drive letter (Drive C: here) and choose properties, then the Tools tab, and then the check button. In Windows 10 that should be all you have to choose or do.



In Windows 7, you'll be prompted to check whether to Automatically Fix Errors and Scan for and attempt to fix bad sectors. Check off both, then click OK.

If you're checking/fixing the boot disk (usually drive C:) then you'll have to restart your system before chkdsk runs and does its job.

Speed Up Your System:

Next to Malware, the biggest thing to slow down your system is bits and pieces of left over files/folders when you delete files/folders or uninstall some software.

Everytime you delete a file/folder it just removes the file/folder name from the visible files on the disk but leaves it in the Recycle Bin. The Recycle Bin is almost always on the desktop of the computer.

First recommendation is to empty the Recycle Bin. To do this, find the icon on your desktop. It looks like this



and is nicely labelled Recycle Bin.

Double click on the icon and select Manage in the Tool Bar at top of screen, then Empty Recycle Bin. This throws out all the 'trash' and really gives you back disk space.

Now, to REALLY speed things up we need to defragment your hard disk. It's kind of like vacuuming the nooks and crannies of the house after sweeping and dusting.

When you delete files or folders, uninstall software, or install software the data is NOT written to the hard disk in one long piece of data. It kind of writes the data wherever it feels like it and then leaves a note for the operating system where to find the pieces. Obviously not the most efficient way of handling your valuable letters or pictures or record collection.

To fix this, putting all the pieces together in one place and getting rid of the sticky notes you need to use the Windows DEFRAG utility.

To run Defrag, click the Windows icon then type defrag. You'll see "Defragment and Optimize Drives" popup up in Windows 10, or Disk Defragmenter in Windows 7. Click it, and it will show a list of your hard drives in your system.

To make things easy in the future, and keep your 'housekeeping' up to date, I suggest creating a schedule per below:

Windows 10 Defrag Schedule:

1. Click on the Change Settings button, then choose Frequency dropdown box and select Weekly.
2. Click on the Choose button and select all your drives.

Now Windows will automatically defragment your drives every week, and your system will be squeaky clean and run much more smoothly and quickly.

Windows 7 Defrag Schedule:

You gotta do a bit more clicking here, but

1. Click on Configure Schedule. A window will pop up giving you a list of options
2. Choose Frequency Weekly, pick the day you want, choose a time (early morning while you're sleeping is usually good)
3. Lastly click the Select Disks button and select ALL your drives.
4. Click OK until your back at the main Disk Defragmenter window then click Close.

Now Windows will automatically defragment your drives every week, and your system will be squeaky clean and run much more smoothly and quickly.

Conclusion:

If you follow these simple steps your system should be safe and should definitely be faster.

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