

# Computer Maintenance

## Cleaning the Computer

1. Dust and clean the outside of the computer and keyboard once every month. Use a cloth with water. Do not use harsh chemicals, as it will remove the surface from the front of the monitor.
2. Take the computer apart at least once a year and blow the dust off the components inside the computer with compressed air (\$7 at Office Max). Do not use yourself as the air can as this could lead to worse problems in the future. If your computer is on the floor then you should do this twice a year.

## Rebuilding the Desktop Folder

1. This should be done at least once per month. What it does is organize the files on your computer so you do not end up with the computer constantly crashing.
2. To do this just hold down the command and option buttons down at start-up until a window appears asking you to rebuild the desktop.
3. Answer yes to the question and the operation will start. It takes about 1 – 2 minutes to complete.

## Optimizing or Defragging your Hard Drive

1. For the Macintosh – You need to use an outside program. You can use either Norton's Utilities (\$70) or TechTools (\$60). Put the utility program disk in and open the program and follow the instructions. You are looking for Speed Disk on Norton's.
2. For Windows – This utility comes with every PC. It is called Defrag. Look in your User's Manual to find out how to do this.
3. You should optimize or defrag your hard drive once every six months or every three months under heavy usage. If you notice that your computer is running sluggishly this is a good indication that you need to do this.

## How to Retrieve a File You Threw Away by Mistake

This is another reason to get Norton Utilities. If you threw a file away by mistake, then do not use your computer and use Norton's Utilities to retrieve your file. If you used your computer you stand the chance that the computer will overwrite the trashed file. In windows I believe they have an unerase command.

## Get Organized

Make sure to put things into folders and organize your files. To create a new folder go to the **File** menu and release on **New Folder**. Title it and place the files inside it.

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## Crash Recovery

1. If you get an X appearing on your screen when the computer starts up it means any one of two things: the hard drive needs to be replaced or the System folder is missing or damaged. To determine which of the two it is you need your Original System disk.
  - a. Put the CD into the disk drive and start-up your Mac with the C key held down at start-up. This will start the computer from the CD instead of the hard drive.
  - b. Once the computer has started up, check to see if the hard drive is on the screen. If it is not there then the hard drive needs to be replaced. If you need to get any files off the computer you need to send the hard drive to a Disk Recovery outfit. It will cost around \$100 plus the cost of a new hard drive.
  - c. If the hard drive is there, then you need to reinstall your system files. Double click on the Install icon and follow the instructions.
2. If you get a ? at start-up then you need to fix your system file.
  - a. Put the CD into the disk drive and start-up your Mac with the C key held down at start-up. This will start the computer from the CD instead of the hard drive.
  - b. Go to the Utilities Folder and find Disk First Aid. Open it and select the hard drive and see if it can fix the problem.
  - c. If Disk First Aid does not work, then start from the CD again and open the system folder on the CD and find the file called Finder. Drag it to the system folder on the hard drive and restart the machine.
  - d. If the above did not work then you need to reinstall the system files again. Double click on the Install icon and follow the instructions.

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## How to recover from a computer freezing?

1. Check to see that everything is plugged in correctly (mouse, keyboard, etc.),
2. Try to restart the computer.  
(On iMac) – hold in the power button on front of computer until the screen goes blank, then press button again to Restart computer.  
(On older Macs) - This is done by pressing the following keys together: the apple key, control key and power key (upper right of keyboard). A startup sound should be made and the computer will restart. If you were working on something and did not have a chance to save it then you will have to do it over again.
3. If the above two did not work then:  
(On Older Mac) - switch off the computer in the back. Wait ten seconds then turn it back on again (you need to wait so you do not destroy the hard drive inside the computer).  
(On iMac) – press the little button with the arrow on it on the right side of computer or pull plug.