

## 4. Preventive Maintenance



So what's the best way to avoid having to troubleshoot your PC? Well, the answer is to do preventive maintenance! By doing some specific maintenance tasks on your PC on a regular basis, you severely increase its durability and ward off some very troublesome problems. Let's take a look at some ideas now.

### 4.1 Maintaining The PC Case

Your PC case is an important component. It houses all the parts of your computer and helps protect its innards from the external environment. It is hence imperative that you keep it spick and span and maintain it well. Here are some thoughts on how to maintain your PC case as part of preventive maintenance.

- **Clean the PC case regularly.** Dust accumulates very easily on your computer case. Be sure you spend time wiping away that dust on a regular basis. Dust build up on your computer case and its fans is especially dangerous – since it makes those fans work less efficiently. This can lead to excessive heat build up which will damage temperature sensitive components like the CPU and video card.
- **Discharge yourself.** Discharge yourself before dismantling the case and working on components. It is important to bear this tip in mind. I sometimes forget it and it is really quite dangerous for your PC. If you don't discharge yourself, you leave the computer components inside the case prone to being damaged by excessive static.

To discharge yourself, simply do this: touch an unpainted part of your PC case (or any other metal substance). Yes, that's all there is to it. Do that before you open up the case and touch the components inside.

### 4.2 Maintaining The Hard Drive

The hard drive is a critical component of your PC. You absolutely need to maintain it on a regular basis to ensure that it functions smoothly. Let's take a look at some things you need to do to help keep that hard drive in tip top shape.

- **Defragment the hard disk regularly.** There is a Disk Defragmenter tool in Windows which does a very good job of defragmenting your hard disk. Try to do a disk defrag every week – that will keep your hard disk very healthy. Defragmenting your hard disk also helps to speed up data access, since the data is now kept in continuous blocks instead of being all over the place.
- **Back up your data regularly.** Although hard disks these days are a lot more reliable, it is still useful to do a backup of your data at least once a week. There's just no telling when the hard disk might end up failing. Copy all your critical

documents to an external hard drive so that all your data is there if disaster strikes.

### 4.3 Maintaining The Display Monitor

The computer display monitor shows you all the graphics in your games and applications. It is important to do preventive maintenance on it so that it lasts as long as possible.

- **Switch off the monitor if not in use.** One key thing to remember is to switch off the monitor when you're no longer using it! Many people forget that. Remember, a display monitor only has a limited lifespan of a certain number of hours. If you're not using the display, power it off so that you reduce the number of hours you've used.



- **Clean the monitor regularly.** The monitor should also be cleaned regularly. Dust build up on the monitor may not be as damaging or as dangerous as dust on cooling fans, but it can make the monitor look dirty and unkempt. If you've got a huge LCD monitor, be proud of it and make it shine from time to time by wiping it clean.

### 4.4 Maintaining The Keyboard And Mouse



Just like you should maintain the monitor, the computer keyboard and mouse is no exception. Be sure that you using a small brush to get dirt out from between your computer keys. Also, if you've got a wheel mouse, unscrew the mouse and start cleaning the track ball inside. Doing these cleaning procedures on a regular basis will definitely serve to improve your PC components' life.

### 4.5 Maintaining The Operating System

I have a special tip for “maintaining” the operating system. What's that tip? Well, it's to capture an image of the operating system just after you've finished installing it on your brand new computer, along with your most critical applications. Use a good disk mirroring program like [Acronis True Image](#) to do it.

This is one of the most important preventive maintenance tasks you can make. So please do it. Once you've captured an image of your working operating system,