

## How to Maintain and Protect Your Computers

If you've noticed that your computers are less efficient than they used to be, how can you extend their lifespan? Most small businesses usually don't have the budget to invest in new hardware or software, so how do you keep them up-to-date and protected without it costing much?

There are a number of possible reasons why your company computers might be slowing down, such as the amount of software installed, the lack of in-house IT know-how, and the fact that one's focus is usually more on growing the business than worrying about IT.

Many other factors can adversely affect your computers' performance. But even if you don't install programs or tinker with computers in other ways, their performance is likely to get reduced over time. Files start to build up clutter so they take longer to load, and various system software and hardware components may need to be updated. So what can you do?

### Perform simple maintenance tasks

Slow computers don't necessarily need to be replaced: a bit of regular maintenance and protection will keep them running just fine. You can do any of the following:

- Deleting unnecessary files by running [Disk Cleanup](#) regularly
- Running [ScanDisk](#) once a week to check the integrity of your hard drive and file system
- [Defragmenting your hard drive](#) every month or so to speed up your hard disk by consolidating files and placing frequently used system files together on the disk

Routine maintenance tasks like this take just a few minutes, but they'll help keep your machines up to speed.



## **Get free protection from viruses**

With [Windows Defender](#), you can protect your computers from pop-ups, slow performance and security threats by detecting and removing 'spyware' and 'malware'. Defender continually monitors your computer and finds unwelcome programs that slow it down, and recommends actions to minimize interruptions and help you stay productive. Windows Defender comes free with all versions of Windows Vista. It's also available to download for genuine copies of Windows XP Service Pack 2 or later.

## **Try patching**

Another way to keep your computers secure is by installing software updates as they become available. Software "patches" are small programs that fix potential system problems and security issues which become known after the product has been released. Patching can repair software 'bugs' and remove or prevent viruses that get onto your computers via the internet, helping improve the overall performance of your computers.

## **Get firewalled**

Your computers also need a reliable firewall in place. We recommend a hardware firewall for perimeter network security, but you can also use a software firewall to protect your computer. For instance, Windows Vista and Windows 7 both come with a built-in firewall – just make sure it's switched on, and it will stop 90% of viruses, spyware, spam and other threats reaching any of your computers.

## **Consult the experts**



No matter how busy you are handling customers and taking care of business, it's very important to maintain and protect your computers. There are many solutions out there to help without spending much, and of course there are those which are totally free! Those listed above is a good start.

It's also worth making your employees aware of the need for regular maintenance and security. If you don't have the right experience yourself, then consult an IT specialist for small businesses, such as [All Covered](#) to give them some training. By using and maintaining computers sensibly, your employees will not only be more productive, but you also avoid exposing your company to unnecessary risks. Contact us at 866-446-1133.

Contact All Covered Toll-Free Nationwide at (866) 446-1133 or at [www.allcovered.com](http://www.allcovered.com)

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