

## Ten PC Maintenance Tips:

Greg Plough - 02/03/06

### 1. **Never, never, turn your computer off with the power switch until Windows has shut down.**

The one exception to this rule is when your computer locks up and your hard drive is not running (hard drive light is not blinking). In this situation, you can turn the power off without harming your hard drive. Cutting the power on your PC can also result in lost or corrupted data, you should only do this when you have to.

Following this rule will prevent permanent hard drive defects caused by the hard drive heads contacting the surface of the drive disc, and it will prevent a host of Windows problems.

Whenever possible, recover from crashes by pressing the Ctrl + Alt + Delete keys at the same time and attempting to end task on programs that are *hung up*.

2. **I highly recommend that you purchase an UPS** (uninterruptible power supply) for your computer. This will keep your computer from crashing during power outages, and will protect your computer from low and high voltage occurrences.

A UPS is far superior to a surge protector and will save your computer from almost type of electrical problem.

3. **Backup, backup, backup**, any data you cannot afford to lose to at least two separate physical drives. So backup data to External Hard Drives, Writeable DVDs, CD-RWs etc.

The time to backup is when you create something you can't afford to lose. I have heard far too many times that people lost weeks, months or years worth of data. If someone were to take your PC away from you right now, what would you lose?

4. **Run Scandisk and Defragment at least once a month.** This will keep your hard drive healthy and prevent crashes. Over a period of time the hard drive of a computer can become less efficient due to the movement of files. These utilities will help maximize your hard drive's performance.

5. **Never unplug peripherals from the computer when it is powered up.** Disconnecting your PC with the power on can short out the connector socket or even worse may cause internal damage to the PC.

The only exception to this rule is if you know a peripheral is "hot pluggable" such as a usb device like a digital camera. If you are unsure about this it is best to shut the PC down prior to installing or connecting anything.

6. **Keep at least 500 MBs of your C: drive free** for Windows to use. Windows needs this to run effectively due to the use of temporary cache files.

7. **Do not let a lot of programs load up when you start your computer.** They use valuable memory. All programs in your Windows System Tray (in the lower left of your screen) are running on your computer. Close them if you don't need them or run them and configure them not to load when you boot up.

8. **Do use a virus checker regularly.** Everyone should use a virus checker. The best type of

protection is continuous monitoring from a dedicated anti-virus program like Norton Antivirus, McAfee Antivirus or AVG Antivirus.

**9. If you have a high speed Internet connection you need a firewall program.** A firewall program keeps those who want to hijack your computer from gaining access to your system.

**10. Keep track of the software disks you receive** with your computer and new peripherals. These disks contain valuable software drivers and programs for Windows and are needed if you ever have a system crash. Keep these disks and your Windows software disks in a safe, dry, place -- you never know when you will need them.