

Your Mac is just as likely to break down as is any other machine. Some periodic maintenance is necessary to help prevent that breakdown or at least extend the time to it.

The first step is to backup your data. One method is to obtain an external hard drive that is of equal or greater capacity as your internal drive and make a clone of your internal drive, and update it regularly. This gives you a bootable duplicate and the opportunity to get back running easily. An external Firewire drive is faster and bootable all Mac models with firewire. USB2 is good too and bootable on Intel Macs.

De Dust

Macs have fans that circulate air into and out of their cases to keep components from overheating. Along with air comes dust and it collects inside forming an insulating layer and making things warmer than they should be. Follow the RAM installation directions in the manual for your to open it up. Manuals for many Apple products can be found clicking the appropriate link on this web page. <http://www.apple.com/support/manuals/> . Using canned air, a battery powered vacuum, or just blowing it out remove as much dust as you can being careful not to touch the components inside. If you cannot open your case blow or direct canned air across the air vents around the case to remove as much dust as possible being careful to not force the dust even further inside the case.

Clean Your Keyboard

Unplug it, turn it upside-down and give it a shake. You could also aim a blast of air along the keys to dislodge small particles. Use a moistened lint free cloth or a pre-moistened commercial wipe to clean the keycaps and surface.

Clean Your Screen

Use a moistened microfiber cloth or another lint free cloth to wipe the screen. Do not use ammonia or alcohol. Do not spray anything directly onto the screen (or any other parts). Spray or moisten the cloth.

Clean Your Mouse

Even the optical mice accumulate some dust and dirt on the laser lens on the bottom. A moist Q-tip is a good tool for this cleaning job.

Trash useless or never used files

This can improve hard drive performance, speed up searches, and give you more storage space for the more important files.

Your **~/Documents** folder is a good place to start. Those emailed jokes you copied and pasted into a TextEdit document and never read again can be trashed. You will not miss them. Those .dmg files you downloaded and forgot to delete after you installed their contents can go! You know of other candidates for trashing too.

You may have tried a demo of some new software, decided against using it and then never deleted it. There may be some applications you never have and/or never will use.

Look in **/Applications** (and **/Applications/Utilities**) for these to move to the trash. It is best to not delete Apple installed applications. Some of them depend on another for functionality such as Mail using the Address Book for quick fill addressing.

Look in **/Library**, **/Library/Application Support**, **~/Library**, and **~/Library/Application Support**, for folder names matching applications you no longer use, and delete them.

Your **/Library** and **~/Library** folders may contain other folders that store components of third-party utilities. Look in Application Enhancers, Bundles, Contextual Menu Items, InputManagers, and PreferencePanels for any system enhancements you no longer use, and drag them to the Trash.

Dashboard widgets live in **~/Library/Widgets**. Any third-party widgets you don't use can go.

Uninstaller programs may help.

AppDelete (<http://reggie.ashworth.googlepages.com/appdelete>)
AppZapper (<http://www.appzapper.com/>)

A visual map of your files can help find things to delete.

Disk Inventory X (<http://www.derlien.com/>)
GrandPerspective(<http://grandperspectiv.sourceforge.net/>)

Make Sure Scheduled Software Maintenance Tasks Run

Your Mac will run these automatically unless it is off or asleep. You can make sure they run by using one of these programs:

Anacron (<http://members.cox.net/18james/anacron-tiger.html>) **MacJanitor** (http://personalpages.tds.net/~brian_hill/macjanitor.html)

MainMenu (<http://santasw.com/>)

Maintidget (<http://www.giantmike.com/widgets/Maintidget.html>) **OnyX** (<http://www.titanium.free.fr/pgs/english.html>)

Clean Up Your Desktop

You have too many icons there. Move things to other folders such as your documents, pictures movies, etc. Each icon is considered a window by the operating system and each window requires processing power.

Use Disk Utility's Repair Disk Feature

Disk errors occur due to power failures, user error, buggy software, and hardware failures. Running the disk repair function of Disk Utility can fix and prevent problems.

Disk Repair cannot be run on the startup volume so you must startup your computer from another drive (that backup clone) or the install CD or DVD that came with your mac. To start from the install disk, insert it in the drive and launch the installer. After the restart, click through the language screen and then choose Utilities/Disk Utility, select your hard drive on the left and then click Repair Disk.

Exercise Your Notebook's Battery

At the Energy Saver panel of System Preferences set your laptop to never sleep and unplug the power adapter. when the battery runs completely down the computer will sleep and a key press will not wake it. Plug in the power adapter and leave it until the battery is completely recharged.

Change Your Passwords

No, really! Change them for extra security.

Credits to:

Take Control of Maintaining Your Mac

by Joe Kissell

An ebook available here: <http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/catalog.html>